

Birds' Christmas Carol *by* Kate Douglas Wiggin



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Author: Kate Douglas Wiggin

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Reviews of the *Birds' Christmas Carol* *by* Kate Douglas Wiggin

Cerekely

My father was killed in World War II when I was 7. The following summer my mother's best friend's parents invited my mother and me to spend the summer at their camp in Northern Wisconsin. The house overflowed with children and we swam and fished and generally acted our various ages, but what I remember best is what happened every night just before bedtime. 'Grandpa', as he asked us all to call him, read us a story. He read Dickens' Christmas Carol, a chapter each night. And then he read "The Birds' Christmas Carol". It is pure Edwardian sentimentality and, as literature, can't compare to Dickens. But something about it helped to comfort my bewildered 7-year-old heart.

I have never forgotten 'Grandpa' and those books. Dickens is easy to come by, but I never came across this book until now. It still starts the tears flowing, but they are tears of gratitude. Perhaps Edwardian sentimentality has its value.

Walan

"The Birds' Christmas Carol," first published in 1887, offers a short, interesting read to those who are broad-minded enough to enjoy a little Victorian sentimentality. The author, Kate Douglas Wiggin, also wrote the children's classic, "Rebecca of Sunnybrook Farm," and was a leader in the American kindergarten education movement.

Aimed at an audience of Victorian children, "The Birds' Christmas Carol" is overly sweet by contemporary literary standards. Carol Bird, the terminally ill heroine, is saintly; and her loving family is somewhat idealized. Nevertheless, the writing is crisp and vivid; and Wiggin successfully evokes family life and the celebration of Christmas in 1880s urban America. To me, this was the most delightful aspect of the book.

As this is a Christmas tale, it could be read aloud during the season along with other Christmas classics. Older children might enjoy reading it for themselves, but parents and teachers should be aware of the facts that the young heroine dies at the end of the book and that the book is mildly religious. In 1887, apparently, religion, serious illness, and death were not as controversial in children's books as they are today.

Xava

I read a part of this a long time ago when I was younger in one of those books with snippets from lots of different children's stories. It was the part from the Ruggleses' point of view and I LOVED it and thought it was so funny. I decided to read the full thing this year--I was a little disappointed it wasn't all from the Ruggles children's point of view, but oh well. Carol Bird is good--almost angelic--and so it can be difficult to relate to her or feel much for her. However, she is very sweet and kind, and so that redeems her from being a cardboard-like "good character". Uncle Jack--there's not a whole lot about him but I wish there was! He's awesome. ;) Overall it's a light, thoughtful and amusing read and I'd recommend it.

Hra

I read this as a girl and remember loving it, so I reordered it for myself. It's a sad, 19th century tale of a young girl's generous spirit and peaceful passing--a kind of morality tale for the time period. Reading it as an adult, many parts made me giggle at the hyperbolic stereotypes, yet others reminded me of our need to treat one another with more grace.

fetish

My mother use to read to us as children, this book left a mark on me. It was a good story but it is a tear jerker. I am in my 50's now and my mother passed a few years back. When I went through her house I looked for this book and I could not find it. I could only remember "Christmas Carol". I asked my brother and sure enough he remembered. I have the best memories of this book there was my older brother and I and 3 neighbor kids she use to read to us for an hour or two at night.

Grotilar

family tradition. My grandmother's mom read it to her, she to my mom . . . check out the author's more famous books and you will be sold. Sad in some sense because Carol is sick but a heartwarming story, more for the slightly older crowd than the pre-K but its fun to pass along the tradition. Too bad its not a beautifully bound version but its ultimately the words that matter.

INvait

All the things said about this story in the other positive reviews are true. This story teaches timeless lessons. It is very touching. Its values are spot on. And it has the elements of a "classic." As a "Christmas" book it achieves the rare balance of addressing the nostalgic "spirit of Christmas" while also not forgetting the true reason for Christmas...namely Christ and His Spirit. That said, this story is near impossible for a child to read. It was difficult for this relatively literary dad to read. The reason is that there are long stretches written quoting people in a slang dialect from some time in the 19th century. This dialect is completely foreign to us today making it difficult to figure out what it is that they are supposed to be saying. Even the true "english" in the story is often structured in

the manner common to 19th century writing. This also is difficult for little ones to follow. If you have older children (8+) and are up for working through some of the linguistic issues, this book has a lot to offer.

When I was a child, an aunt gave us a copy of this book. We read and thoroughly enjoyed that book till it was singed years later in a house fire. Now, I have the eBook. There's so much to love about this story--from the doting Bird parents and brothers, to visiting Uncle Jack, to the feisty Mrs. Ruggles and her ragamuffin children next door, to the long-suffering but big-hearted Carol who brings them all together for an unforgettable holiday. This is a classic for the whole family to read and re-read every Christmas season.

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