



The Christmas Mouse

Miss Read

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Mrs. Berry is frightened by a mouse and goes downstairs to sit-out the stormy Christmas Eve. While cosily by the loungeroom fire, she is disturbed yet again. This time the intruder proves to be a young run-away boy.

The Christmas Mouse Details

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Laura says

This was nice, old story about a mother (Mrs. Berry), her daughter (Mary) and her two granddaughters living in London at Christmas time. The whole story happens in 24 hrs., Christmas eve to Christmas day.

Both Mrs. Berry and Mary were widowers and they didn't have much money so that is why they lived together. It is Christmas Eve and the girls and Mary go out to get some last gifts. The girls get sent to bed and Mary and Mrs. Berry stay up to wrap some gifts. The oldest gets up because she wants to stay awake to see if she can find out the truth about Father Christmas. She comes downstairs and has some milk and gets sent to bed. Then Mrs. Berry goes to get ready for bed and she screams and finds a mouse (which she is terribly afraid of) in her bedroom. Mary sets a trap but the mouse gets away. Mrs. Berry decides she is going to sleep downstairs. She wakes to find a young boy in the kitchen trying to eat her cake. He is soaking wet from the rain and she makes him come in by the fire to dry off. She feeds him and they talk. He is the son of an immigrant and a local girl. She knew his father, Pepe. He wasn't allowed to stay with his mother and aunt as they were basically, loose women so he was with the Rose's, a foster family. He explained how he was jealous of the Rose's two actual children and then fell asleep.

Mrs. Berry let him rest and then told him that if he could sneak in without being found out that he should get back home and to bed. If the Rose's knew then he should admit the whole thing. The whole time she kept thinking how mouse like he looked. She also told him that he should appreciate what the Rose's have done for him and given him. He needed to stop acting as he was.

He left and Mrs. Berry decided that she wanted to sleep in her bed. So she went up, sprung the trap and fell asleep, only to hear a scratching at the window. She decided to just let it out the window, so she opened the latch and let it scurry down.

She slept late the next day and was happy that it was Christmas, but she never told her family about the boy. Mary also got a letter from Bertie, a man who used to work with her late husband, inviting her to the New Years concert. She decides to go and it makes her happy.

They take a walk after dinner and they walk to Tupps Hill, where Pepe's son lives with the Rose's. Mrs. Berry said she might go there sometime to visit the Roses. They go home and finish the rest of their Christmas celebration. We find out that Pepe's son acts better toward his foster family and they all feel he is really one of them now. The mouse can sense danger and now doesn't go too far from its home.

Obviously the mouse and mouse like boy are meant to be similar. They are both "Christmas Mice." I do feel that there is some other comparison and I'm just missing the bigger picture.

Suzanne Price says

Heart warming

A short and sweet Christmas story, enjoyable and light though just a little too sugary for me. Nicely written but not something I would choose again.

Jane says

I'm not the market for this series.

Gwen says

My favourite 'comfort book' I read it many times a year although I almost know it word for word. I don't know why I love it so much!!

Kathleen Curtin says

I love Miss Read books. I reread this one every year for memories, nostalgia, innocent Christmas delights. It's a trip down memory lane for me.

Dannielle Potts says

A Charming Little Book. Lovely Ending. Would've Liked It To Have Been Longer

Julia Wilson says

The Christmas Mouse by Miss Read is a delightful Christmas story set over Christmas Eve and Christmas Day in the early 1970's. It evokes childhood memories for me when Christmases were simpler affairs and children were happy to receive such things as dolls, slippers, handkerchiefs and oranges as presents.

Mrs Berry, a widow shares her home with her daughter Mary, also a widow and her two granddaughters aged five and seven years old. The story tells of their preparations for Christmas. Mrs Berry also reminisces of times past.

It was a wonderful little heart warming story. As a child of the 1960's, I too was reminded of Christmases past. A timeless tale that can be enjoyed by generations to come.

Mary says

Perfect Christmas read!

Sarah Crawford says

Another Fairacre book, this one settled on the events in one house. There's a grandmother, a mother and her two young girls living there and it's time for Christmas. The husbands of both women are dead. The young girls are really looking forward to the toys and other things they will get for Christmas.

What wasn't counted on was a mouse showing up in the grandmother's room. She's terrified of them and ends up staying downstairs on Christmas Eve. That accounts for 1 mouse.

The next one is a young boy that she catches who entered the house illegally and is trying to steal food. This accounts for the 2nd mouse. The boy is obviously very hungry and very cold. She informs him she could call the police and have him arrested or he could stay and listen to her telling him why what he did was wrong. There's a long, decent conversation between the two and things work out well for both mice.

A nice story.

Ivis says

I love this book and read it every year at Christmas time (along with my other Christmas books in English and German). A dear story very similar in tone to the Number One Ladies Detective Agency books, although with a very different setting and no mystery: rural England in the 1960s. This little tale concerns a widow, Mrs Berry, who lives with her also-widowed young daughter and two little girls. Their preparations on Christmas Eve for a simple old-fashioned English Christmas, despite their lack of money, are a trip back to a much simpler time. Mrs Berry is frightened by a mouse in her bedroom, but is later startled by another interloper, this time a mouse-like runaway boy. Full of gentle wisdom, Mrs Berry, like Precious Ramotswe, does the right thing and persuades others to do the same.

I'm sorry this book is probably not available in the US; I bought my copy when I was living in London in the 1970s, when books by "Miss Read" were set not all that far in the past. She has a series of books based in English country villages, very observant of the life and times of the people; the main character is a retired (or not, depending on the time of the book) single elementary teacher.

F.J. Commelin says

nostalgic , a good feel story.

Mary Garner says

3 1/2 stars. In the hectic days before Christmas, I wanted an good, relaxing story...antagonists and challenges okay, but spare me the gruesome, disgusting, or vulgar. I found what I wanted in The Christmas Mouse, one of a series of books written by "Miss Read" in the 60s and 70s. Set in an English village, it's a gratifying story about people who face small and big problems with forthrightness and who truly care about one

another. Put a log on the fire, pour yourself a cup of tea, and enjoy!

Robin_R says

I just love the Fairacre series by Miss Read! This Christmas story was a warm and wonderful way to begin my holiday reading.

Marcia says

Read this on a day when I needed some cheering up. It did the trick.

Melody says

Mrs. Berry is my new hero. Grimly determined to do the right thing, she surprises even herself with her own bravery in the end. Another charming English village tale from the able pen of Miss Read. Going back to my normal dystopian sci fi after this series is going to be jarring.
