



Five Little Peppers Midway

Margaret Sidney

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Five years after the events in The Five Little Peppers and How They Grew, the Peppers are living with Mr. King in his grand mansion, but his spiteful cousin seems determined to spoil their happiness. A Dell Yearling Classic.

Five Little Peppers Midway Details

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Author : Margaret Sidney

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From Reader Review Five Little Peppers Midway for online ebook

Emily says

I wasn't a fan of FIVE LITTLE PEPPERS AND HOW THEY GREW, but it was solid gold compared to this trainwreck. The best part of the book was the fantastically kind and understanding afterword by Ouisa Sebestyen. She graciously excused the book's trite plot and cartoonish characters with the idea that it was wishful thinking on the part of the writer.

Karen says

We love this series! This edition wasn't our favorite because it wasn't illustrated and my kids are still young. They love pictures. But with time they settled in and loved the story just as much as the first one. Sweet, charming, surprising, and a bit dramatic. There is so much to learn and discuss about the different life of the early 1900s. Such a great series!

Ann Jacob says

Of course, i have always loved the five little peppers. Phronsie the best! And i am hoping in reading all the books of the five little peppers. There something like 11 or 12 books. It's a wonderful story with unexpected turns and written very nicely. Congrats to Margeret Sidney for such an awesome book!

Sara says

The Peppers books (I re read the first last year) only kind of hold up for me as an adult. Their grinding poverty is so apparent to me now, wasn't as a kid. Also I now can't stand Joel, he is always screaming or fighting! As others have said, everything is a Big Deal drama with the Pepper kids, with lots of exclamation points; and, the rich patron aspects don't have total verisimilitude. Still, these hold up better than some 100 year old children's books.

Gehayi says

I had never read this book before and did so only out of curiosity. I'm sorry that I did. It has two truly racist scenes: one involving Phronsie and the King's black cook, and the other involving a black dollmaker who makes Phronsie a black rag doll (judging by the description, the doll is a sort of toy called a golliwog, and is therefore a caricature of black people). In both cases, the black people are ridiculously sentimental toward the little blonde girl--seriously, this was a trope in Victorian lit--despite being scolded for Phronsie's mistakes while cooking or being mocked for their kindness. Phronsie is also patronizing toward the cook, telling him that she doesn't mind that he's black.

(I really wanted him to say in a dry voice, "I'll always be black whether you mind or not," but that would involve calling one of the Peppers out on their bullshit, and that never happens in this book.)

This book starts to show one of Sidney's key problems: Writers Cannot Do Math. Although five years have supposedly elapsed since the end of the last book, when Polly was eleven, you would never know it. Ben is supposed to be seventeen, Polly sixteen, Joel thirteen, Davie twelve, and Phronsie nine...but Sidney is apparently incapable of remembering that the children have gotten older. Throughout the book, the kids talk as if they just moved into Mr. King's house a few months before. Phronsie is an especially egregious offender, continually climbing into Mr. King's lap, holding his hand on walks, and speaking as if she was still four.

Polly, who could at least be mischievous before, is now a prig who cannot even bear to hear a group of girls briefly laughing at one of their number. She lectures the girls about how horrible they are--and yes, it's clear that the girl, Cathie, is upset, but it's also clear that this is not the calamity that Polly believes it to be--and then informs them that she doesn't want to be friends with them any longer. Naturally, this sort of emotional blackmail not only works, Polly ends up being admired for it.

There is a lot of passive-aggressive behavior in this book. When Joel, who is not academic and would prefer to be working, tells his mother that he hates school because he doesn't understand the lessons and the older boys keep bullying him--all perfectly reasonable problems--his mother's response is to tell him that she'll have to give up a long-planned trip because after all, a boy who doesn't like school is *clearly* a baby who needs his mother. Basically, she guilts him into shutting up. Which doesn't eliminate Joel's problems, but somehow Mrs. Pepper seems to think that his difficulties stem from immaturity, not from attending a school that is all wrong for him. (Also, apparently bullying is only bad when girls do it.)

Sidney also recycles a plot point from the last book--burglars breaking into Mr. King's house and then then being caught in the act by a Pepper child. In the first book, it's Phronsie. In the second, it's Joel, who gets shot in the shoulder. (After a feverish night or two, he's fine. Nothing of lasting badness EVER happens to the Peppers.)

There is also a wedding that comes right out of left field. Mrs. Pepper weds Dr. Fisher from Badgertown (where they lived before moving into Mr. King's house). Never mind that he barely spoke to her before this, even when the kids were sick with the measles; now he has loved her for years upon years, as any straight man must, and can't wait to be her husband and the kids' stepfather. Oh, and his name is Adoniam...though it's rarely used. (Mrs. Pepper...er, Mrs. Fisher...has a habit of calling him "the little doctor," and he calls her "wife" or "my little wife," as if they honestly don't know each other's names.)

And finally, there is Cousin Eunice. Cousin Eunice is the closest thing that this anecdotal novel has to an antagonist, as she detests the Peppers and feels that they have Mr. King wrapped around their fingers. (Which, spoilers, they do. It's stated several times in the text that the kids know how to get Mr. King to agree to anything--have Phronsie ask him. He can't turn her down.) Cousin Eunice likewise feels that they are low, common gold diggers who are taking Mr. King for all they can get. She has a particular hatred for Polly, whom Eunice feels should keep her voice low and her head bowed in the presence of her betters. Eunice persists in treating Polly like a scullery maid, and Polly insists on martyring herself by doing all sorts of favors for the old woman because anything else would upset Mrs. Pepper/Fisher.

Frankly, I thought that Mrs. Pepper/Fisher needed to be upset. And to have her kids defy her and tell her that she was dead wrong. But of course that didn't happen.

Things come to a head when Cousin Eunice speaks ill of Polly's mother. Polly, for once, tells Eunice what she thinks of her, Eunice falls ill from shock, and Polly is guilt-stricken and eager to be more self-abasing than ever. Eunice naturally doesn't understand why Polly is so upset, Polly bursts into floods of tears (as usual--the Peppers are in dire need of antidepressants), and Eunice tells Polly to stop as she can't abide tears. Polly stops talking to her, at least for a while. But she doesn't stick it, because that would be too mean.

Also, Cousin Eunice tries to inveigle Phronsie into total obedience, thus teaching her to be the perfect maid by the time she's grown, which results in Phronsie accidentally locking herself in a spring-locked wardrobe for the better part of twenty-four hours. Phronsie ends up with brain fever, for some reason, and even after she wakes up, she doesn't tell anyone that Cousin Eunice told her to look for something in the wardrobe in the first place. By the end of the book, Cousin Eunice has unaccountably decided to leave Phronsie Pepper her entire fortune. This is never explained. It just happens.

The book ends with Mr. King, Jasper, Dr. Fisher, Mrs. Fisher, Polly, Phronsie, and Marian Whitney sailing off to Europe for a year.

As you can tell, I didn't care for it. I loathed the racism and the treacly sentimentality, the plotting was poor, and the characterization was patchy and inconsistent. I wouldn't recommend it to anyone.

I will be covering *Five Little Peppers Abroad*, however...for completion's sake. If the books don't improve by then, I won't bother reading the other nine.

Michelle says

This is the second in the Five Little Peppers series. These books remind me of Louisa May Alcott's. While the setting and some of the actions are dated, the story is still fun.

Leah A. A. says

This volume continues the story of the Five Little Peppers in their newly prosperous life. If you enjoyed the first book, this and the sequels will continue to charm. If you thought Polly Pepper, her siblings and their Mamsie were too thoroughly good to be true, don't read farther into the series because they just keep on.

Despite the dates attached to the books, the stories seem to go in this order:

The Five Little Peppers and How They Grew, 1881

The Adventures of Joel Pepper, 1900

The Five Little Peppers at School, 1903

The Five Little Peppers and their Friends, 1904

The Five Little Peppers Midway, 1890

The Five Little Peppers Abroad, 1902

The Five Little Peppers Grown Up, 1892

Rachel says

Story had no real plot to carry it; everyone tended to baby one another and speak in a “pettish” sort of way, even the adults. Was not pleased with it at all and saddened to see beloved characters not being at their best as far as writing quality could have been.

Alyssa says

It's the continuing adventure of the five Pepper children, three years from the first book, Five Little Peppers and How They Grew. They are all still living with the Kings-Whitneys and are having the grandest times of their lives. Things, as they are bound to, happen quite a lot, starting with the unfortunate arrival of someone who despises the Peppers. An accident occurs, as well as another burglary (just as in the first book), someone accidentally gets shot. Exciting things aside, the Peppers have many lessons to learn, not just for academics, but for character as well.

Just as the first book, I really enjoyed this one and most, if not all, the characters. Polly's friends are a little bit annoying, Phronsie is sweet as ever, and Ben and Jasper are so nice and responsible and big brother-ish. Really, really love this series.

Janelle says

I really tried hard to finish this, but some books just make it so difficult to like them. This is the second book in the series, supposedly taking place five years after the first. But the characters feel like they haven't aged, especially Phronsie who in many ways still behaves like a four year old. It's almost as if the author forgot that children grow up. And I didn't care for any of the characters, particularly Mr King, who does a thorough job of dominating his African American cook in the first chapter.

I didn't care for the author's writing either. There are abrupt jumps in plot without explanation and other idiosyncrasies that frustrated me. And I know this was written in the Victorian era, but it really annoyed me when the author said crying is weak.

Reading this book in the published order makes me wonder what was going through the author's mind. Obviously she had had her own ideas of what occurred in the intervening years, but she forgot to let the reader in on the secret, and this makes the jump between the books abrupt and somewhat confusing. The author eventually wrote other books to fill in the gap and I suggest that readers interested in this series follow the chronological order rather than publishing order.

Ryan says

More great tales from Polly and friends. The family continues to live with the King family, and none of the

honeymoon has worn off. Grandpapa (Mr. King Sr) is still smitten with young Phronsie, now eight (I think...), but there is the possibility of a rival in his cousin's wife - but only because Phronsie is more amazing than anyone would really ever be and likes the mean old lady...or at least has managed to charm her. I would have failed as a Pepper. Polly is the center of most universes - all, perhaps. All the young ladies adore her, the young men pine after her, yet she remains completely herself and focused on music and her family. It can be a lot to take, their perfection, but I like it anyway.

Sidney's stories remind me of Alcott - though Alcott has a darkness that makes hers better, I think - and they were writing in at least a similar time frame. Alcott's stories often present her abolitionist convictions. Sidney has some clear sympathetic notes - Phronsie adores and is courteous and respectful to the older African American cook in the household, and a favorite of an older African American lady in the neighborhood. Polly is too. Others - perhaps to highlight further the amazingness of both girls - less so (Mr. King, included though he treats everyone who isn't Phronsie with the same tone).

Applsd says

Not as amazing as the first book, but related to the first book, so I had to read it.

Now for the other ten follow-ups!

sigh

Teri-K says

In this, the second chronological volume about the Five Little Peppers, five years have passed since the end of the previous book. The Pepper family is now living with their patron in his large house. Ben is in trade, Joel and David are away at school and Polly is going to a girl's school, where she has made some new friends.

Still, the stories revolve around the family and their little joys and troubles. There's a lovely surprise for Mother that makes the children's situation even nicer, and an especially nice section has everyone revisiting the Little Brown House where they grew up. (If you want to read the books in order, *Abroad* will come next.)

I gave this book 4 stars, because I believe books should be rated in terms of how well they stack up with other books of their type, and how enjoyable I find them. So, though these aren't on par with Laura Ingalls Wilder, say, they are good examples of their type.

Rebecca says

I loved the first book when I was little, mostly because my mother had loved it as a child, and her mother. The first book is definitely the strongest; the others are fine, episodic Victorian family stories, with all the requisite didacticism, melodrama, and saccharine emotions. Just go in expecting that, and you'll be fine. This one, in particular, I just couldn't tell the children apart, not surprising since there were nine of them! Hard to make that many characters distinct, and Sidney tried, but the boys were still interchangeable. Also, the representation of the black cook in the first chapter is fairly offensive to modern sensibilities.

June Geiger says

I am ELATED (and slightly flabbergasted) that my little 1965 edition is listed here. This is IT! The very one that went with me EVERYWHERE the summer I turned 10...from the lake, to grandma's, to the quilt under the oak tree in our back yard. This book will always spell summer to me...and of course there are infinite other reasons to love it year-round.

Sarah says

Five Little Peppers Five Years Later. If you have read the first book, well, you've pretty much read this book except the characters are older, have even more friends and are even nicer to each other (if that's possible). The Cult of Phronsie and Polly grows apace and threatens to take over the city where they live. One of Polly's friends seems somewhat jealous, and I want to tell her it is because her name starts with an A, not a P; which is why She Will Never Be Truly Popular. I have to say, this may be it for a bit.

Gale says

“Quaintly Saccharine Family Drama”

After the success of THE FIVE LITTLE PEPPERS AND HOW THEY GREW author Sidney decided to continue the domestic adventures of the impoverished Peppers--five years later. Having left their beloved “little brown house” and dear friends in Badgertown, the fatherless family is installed in the mansion of wealthy Mr. King and his son, Jasper. But wait—there are still more children to sort out: the three Whitney boys who also live there with their mother, Mr. King’s sister. Not to mention assorted friends of the older Pepper children who are thrown into the literary mix.

The darling of the family is still blond Phronsie, now 8, who charms and captivates all she meets—Shirley Temple style. Polly at 16 is well on the road to being a heart-breaker, as boys already vie for her attention and favor. Alas, the bitter pill in all this sweetness is the arrival of Mr. King’s disagreeable sister-in-law, Mrs. Chatteron, who proves an insufferable snob, as well as a hypochondriac. She has no use for the working class—with whom she is temporarily forced to share living quarters. Can this disdainful socialite be humanized to appreciate the homespun values cheerfully spread by beloved Mamsie (Mrs. Pepper)?

This book may prove difficult to swallow for 21st century tweens, who prefer fast action and snappy dialogue with modern social interaction. Many terms are quaint in this turn-of-the-century story, which might require brief dictionary research to understand--such as childhood remedies and articles of clothing. Yet this series provides a gentle introduction to a pre-automotive era. The author includes some references to events in the first book, which should appeal to FIVE LITTLE PEPPERS fans. Spiced up by a shooting, a surprise wedding, two instances of burglary, and a broken leg this book may still meet the challenge to interest modern young people. A book for several generations of feminine readers.

Kate McMurry says

Review of the Project Gutenberg Free eBook Edition of this nineteenth-century children's classic,

This is Book 2 in the Five Little Peppers series of nineteenth century children's books. Book 1 is Five Little Peppers and How They Grew.

I was delighted to discover I could instantly download to my Kindle what I presume is the Project Gutenberg free version of this children's classic. The formatting is not the most presentable I've ever seen in an ebook, mostly due to missing tabs and hard returns that are crucial for distinguishing paragraphs from each other. Fortunately, though, there are few typos, so the this version of the book is readable enough that I donated my paper copy to the library as I am gradually moving almost entirely to ebooks since I got my Kindle a year and a half ago.

This book contains more adventures of the Pepper family of five children and their widowed mother, whom they call "Mamsie." We are told it is five years after Book 1, however, given the fact that Phronsie is only eight, in reality it is more like four years later. Mrs. Pepper has been working in these intervening years as housekeeper to rich Mr. King, whom we met in Book 1. He has adopted the Peppers informally and the five Pepper children call him "Grandpapa." The Peppers have been living in the King family's Boston mansion in wealth and splendor, but the high life has not spoiled them.

Polly has been taking piano lessons, and because she practices constantly and is passionate about her music, she has become quite proficient. Even though this is an era in which upperclass women did not work, presumably because Polly was not born upperclass, and her mother works at a job, Polly's goal is to have a job when she grows up, too. She very much wants to be a piano teacher.

In spite of her humble beginnings and life goals, Polly has plenty of society girlfriends. Many of them are arrogant and condescending to the rest of the world, but they are good to Polly because they adore her. Mainly because she is creative in many ways. She is great at coming up with stories, plays, making costumes, and generally keeping everyone--no matter the age or background--fully entertained. In addition, she is a born peacemaker and is generally accepted as the leader of any group of peers she is part of, and often even of adults, who frequently come to her for assistance. Mamsie has trained all her children to work hard and do their duty with good cheer, but Polly and Ben have been the most fertile ground for her teachings. Polly passes on these teachings to anyone who comes into her sphere.

Though the story reads like an historical novel to modern readers, it was actually a contemporary novel when it was written in 1890. There are horse-drawn carriages instead of cars, gaslight instead of electric lamps, no running water, no refrigeration, and no central heating.

The Peppers frequently recall fondly their "little brown house," which still belongs to them and is maintained by Mr. King, who hires Badgertown locals to care for it. During this book, "Grandpapa" takes all the Peppers, Jasper, his daughter Marian and her three boys, Percy, Van and Dick (who is a year older than Phronsie) to visit the little brown house (it is never spelled out, but I assume Badgertown is in Connecticut). There are many other adventures as well, including burglars, a snooty visiting relative of Mr. King's who sneers at the Peppers, and Phronsie, the adored pet of the whole family still, getting lost again (as she did in Book 1, but in a different manner). Mostly, though, this is a book that provides the reader with quiet

enjoyment of the ambiance of the nineteenth century and the warmth of the Pepper family.

As the title of the book states, all five Pepper siblings appear in this story:

Ben (Ebenezer) is very likely 16 since Phronsie is eight. Ben, like Polly, doesn't want to be beholden to generous Mr. King, who would gladly send Ben to boarding school as he does the younger boys. Instead of going to school, though, Ben is already working at a job at some kind of business firm. (It is unclear, because no backstory about the intervening years since Book 1 is provided, if poor Ben at least had a tutor.) The owner predicts to Ben that he will advance into a comfortable, lifetime position--though not, the man says rather condescendingly, in management because Ben is a steady plodder, not an innovator or leader. He is instead hard-working and reliable, just as he was as a child. In addition, Ben remains utterly loyal to and affectionate toward his family, especially Polly.

Polly (Mary) is now presumably 15 years old since Phronsie is eight and she is seven years older than her sister. However, since Polly has her fifteenth birthday during *Five Little Peppers Abroad*, she is apparently 14 going on 15 in this book. Polly and Ben have much less need to act as second parents to their younger siblings than they did when living in poverty during the events of *Five Little Peppers* and *How They Grew*. Polly doesn't have to cook and clean and babysit anymore. She studies with a tutor, practices her piano, and spends pleasant time with her friends and family. She is less the major player of this book than she was in the first book. The story's focus is spread over the whole family.

Joel would be 13 based on the ages of the other children. He has the same passionate, impulsive, choleric disposition he did as a child, which means it continues to be difficult for him to maintain the uncomplaining, sacrificial attitude Mamsie has worked hard to instill in her children. That approach to life comes with no effort to Ben and David, very little effort for Phronsie, moderate effort for Polly, and huge effort for Joel, who wants what he wants this instant. Joel continues to loudly express his disappointment if he doesn't get his needs met. In short, he's a normal, boisterous boy in a family where the norm is to be a docile gentleman. Fortunately for excitement in the story, Joel's passion puts the house in an uproar from time to time, in no small part because his two housemates Percy and Van (who are around 14 and 12 respectively) delight in tormenting him. Fortunately for Mamsie's hopes for Joel, he has a warm heart and, as in Book 1 when he was a young boy, he continues to be readily brought into line with a judicious application of maternal or sisterly guilt. As stated above, he and Davie (as well as Percy and Van) go to boarding school and come home for visits during school breaks.

Davie (David) is now presumably 11 years old. He continues to have a mild disposition and remains in Joel's shadow as a person and as a character in this book.

Phronsie (Sophronia) was four at the time of the last book and, as stated above, is described as being only eight in this book. Though she is indulged by everyone as both the adored baby of the family and because she is an angelically beautiful, blond child, she still has a remarkably unspoiled disposition, and her generosity and kindness instantly inspires worship in every man, woman, child, dog and crotchety old lady who meets her.

Jappy (Jasper) King is now presumably 17 (a year older than Ben). He is not at a university, though he is presented in Book 1 and this book as intelligent and well read (and we learn in the next book that he speaks multiple languages). During this book, Jasper doesn't have a job yet, and he is not longer under a tutor. He and his father, "old" Mr. King, mostly hang around the mansion living a life of leisure. It is never fully spelled out in this book, but my presumption is that Mr. King, who is a very arrogant, demanding man, doesn't want Jasper to go away from home, not to boarding school as the other boys do (and which was

common for the upperclass then--and often these days, too), or to university, which Jasper is certainly old enough to attend. Davie is only 17 in *Five Little Peppers Grown Up* and he attends university with Joel. As a matter of fact, I am quite amazed, given how possessive Mr. King is of Jasper, that the old man actually allows Jasper to get a job in Connecticut as an adult of 22 in *Five Little Peppers Grown Up*. However, in that book Mr. King does continue to demand absolute obedience at all times from Jasper--something that Polly encourages Jasper to go along with as his filial duty.

Speaking of Mr. King, his source of wealth isn't mentioned in this book any more than in Book 1, but we learn in *Five Little Peppers Grown Up* that he inherited his wealth and has never worked a day in his life. It may strike a modern reader as odd that Mr. King is referred to constantly in Book 1 and this book as "old." It certainly made me curious enough about his age to try and calculate what it might be. In Book 1, Jasper's sister and only sibling is obviously much older than he is, since her oldest child is 10. Assuming she didn't get married any younger than 18, she would be around 29 to 31 in Book 1, and at that time Jasper is 13. Mr. King is unlikely to have had her earlier than age 20, and more likely he would have been at least 23 or 24. This means that in Book 1 he is between 49 and 55. He is presented as having ill health in Book 1, but since he completely perks up after Phronsie comes into his life, it is obvious he is merely suffering from the boredom of a non-productive life. He certainly remains quite lively and physically strong, without a hint of ill health, in this book and all of the first four books of this series (see list below), even though chronologically at least 15 years pass and he would be as much as 68 years old at the time of *Five Little Peppers Grown Up*.

It is possible that the author refers to him as "old" in Books 1 and 2 when he is still in his late 40's or early 50's is because to young people the age of the "five little Peppers," anyone over 25 might seem "old." Or the author might possibly have seen Mr. King as "old" herself even at that age since the average life expectancy at the turn of the twentieth century was little more than 40, and often people in their 50's in nineteenth century novels are labeled by the authors as "old."

Prince, Jasper's dog from Book 1, is missing in action here, oddly enough, but the bird, Cherry, that Jasper gave Polly in Book 1 appears several times.

Margaret Sidney was the pseudonym of successful, American children's author, Harriett Mulford Stone Lothrop, who was born in New Haven, Connecticut in 1844 and died in 1924, eight years after writing the last Pepper book. She began her writing career in 1878 at age thirty-four by publishing stories about Polly and Phronsie Pepper in a Boston children's magazine. She married the magazine's editor, Daniel Lothrop, who began a publishing company and published Harriett's "Five Little Peppers" series, starting in 1881. Here is a list of the twelve Pepper books by date written, which were produced over the course of thirty-five years:

Five Little Peppers and How They Grew (1881)
Five Little Peppers Midway (1890)
Five Little Peppers Grown Up (1892)
Five Little Peppers: Phronsie Pepper (1897)
Five Little Peppers: The Stories Polly Pepper Told (1899)
Five Little Peppers: The Adventures of Joel Pepper (1900)
Five Little Peppers Abroad (1902)
Five Little Peppers At School (1903)
Five Little Peppers and Their Friends (1904)
Five Little Peppers: Ben Pepper (1905)
Five Little Peppers in the Little Brown House (1907)
Five Little Peppers: Our Davie Pepper (1916)

Margaret Sidney originally had no plans to write more Pepper books after the fourth book, "Phronsie Pepper", was published in 1897. She stated this firmly in her introduction to that book. However, over time the pleas of avid fans from all over the world caused her to give in and write eight more Pepper books. The events in the last eight books take place before the events of the third book in the original series of four books. If you would like to read the six main Pepper books in chronological order, rather than by publication date, this is the ideal sequence:

"Five Little Peppers and How They Grew"
"Five Little Peppers Midway"
"Five Little Peppers Abroad"
"Five Little Peppers and Their Friends"
"Five Little Peppers Grown Up"
"Five Little Peppers: Phronsie Pepper"

If you read all the Pepper books, you will discover that the author did not take great care as to continuity in the later books, perhaps because so many years passed between writing these books.

The Pepper books are products of a much slower-paced era, and I personally find it relaxing to experience that approach to children's fiction while being warmly enfolded into the loving Pepper family.

This book, and all the Pepper books, are strictly G-rated, and the values they show (not tell through preaching) are very useful ones for any child to be exposed to, including loyalty, civility, kindness, consideration, keeping commitments, not betraying confidences, accepting difficult circumstances without complaint and forging through them, being organized, thinking before acting, and not taking one's anger out on others.

I highly recommend this book for all ages.

Sps says

This book starts with a nauseatingly racist exchange that serves no purpose but to demonstrate a little white girl's supposedly Christlike--or maybe more precisely, Fauntleroy-esque*--qualities while simultaneously demeaning people of African descent. So far this sequel also lacks the little charming foibles of the first and fourth books. (Though the fourth also had a brief but alarming racist incident; Margaret Sidney can't seem to incorporate black people into her books in a non-racist manner. Prejudice and paternalism, Ms. Sidney, are neither wholesome nor child-friendly.)

It is evidence, though, that we have made a little progress in the world, since publishers/writers for children generally wouldn't put that gunk in their books today. Further evidence is that we have *The Bluest Eye* to break our hearts.

*Burnett's *Little Lord Fauntleroy* came out in serialization in 1885, then as a book the next year. *Five Little Peppers Midway* was first published 1890. Just saying.

J.L. Day says

Oh my, how I loved these books as a child. They were very dear to me and are firmly entrenched into my memory strong enough to have become parts of my character. There are a veritable plethora of life examples and lessons to be learned through these works of literature that take us back to a simpler time and place, entirely different family values and senses of morality and ethics; there is much to be learned from these simple books. Most of all, family and love, loyalty and a moral compass much needed in today's society, camaraderie and ...well, the list is entirely too long. I think the books are relevant to the youth of today, if nothing else to provide an example that though some things change with time, a great many others do not.
