



Meet Samantha: An American Girl

Susan S. Adler, Renée Graef (Vignettes), Nancy Niles (Illustrator)

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Samantha Parkington is a bright Victorian beauty being raised by her wealthy grandmother in 1904.

Samantha's stories describe her life during this important period of change. Her own world is filled with frills and finery, parties and play. But Samantha sees that times are not good for everybody. That's why she tries to make a difference in the life of her friend Nellie, a servant girl whose world is nothing like Samantha's. Samantha befriends a servant girl named Nellie who moves in next door. The girls become fast friends, though their lives are different.

Meet Samantha: An American Girl Details

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From Reader Review Meet Samantha: An American Girl for online ebook

John Doe says

Remember me? I don't know how to reach you.

I hear that you spoke to R. a few times. He says he is worried about you, but that he doesn't know how to help. I feel that way too.

I can listen.

I am still your friend.

I know you have had some hard times, but remember that you still have friends and people here who care about you. When you left, K. was really worried. L. too. And, R. was a mess.

With absurd amounts of platonic love,

Your friend

Caylina says

I remember when I switched grade schools and all the girls at my new school were obsessed with American Dolls. Everyone seemed to have one and I had never even heard of them before since no one at my old school had them and I could care less about dolls (I was a tomboy and loved Lego sets and video games). Anyway, one of the girls ended up giving me this book as a birthday present and I remember thinking "What am I suppose to do with this?". I tried reading it but it just sat on my bookshelf and eventually got tossed. From my experience, this would be good for girls who are really into dolls and are from families who tend to be on the richer/suburban/white side. Harsh, but true.

Emma Rose Ribbons says

Really excellent with a very socially conscious plot dealing with poverty, child labour, racial segregation and the women suffrage campaign. The illustrations are beautiful too and I love the ethos behind American Girl, 'American Girl celebrates a girl's inner star - that little whisper that encourages her to stand tall, reach high and dream big. We take pride and care in helping girls become their very best today, so they'll grow up to be the women who make a difference tomorrow.'

Landon says

Bro, I swear I think this is one of the books, I've been dying to find. Because I remember reading them in

elementary. Even my oldest brother knows what I'm talking about because he read the exact books. Every time we had library class, I'll go to the book section where these books were located at and checked them out. This used to be one of my favorite books when I was a kid. These the books that made me get into reading besides Junie B Jones books. Up to me I'll buy the full collection swear lol.

Kelsey says

For Christmas one year, I opened a big, rectangular box to find a beautiful doll with brown, wavy hair, brown eyes and a cute plaid dress. Everyone said we looked alike and I didn't disagree. American Girl dolls were all the hype when I was little. When I got Samantha from my grandparents one year, I took her everywhere with me. I began collecting clothes for her, furniture items and I, of course had to get her adorable puppy Jip to keep her company.

Each of the American Girl dolls come with a story about the time period of which they live in. For example, Samantha's life is set in the beginning 1900's while Felicity's life is set around 1776. These stories educate young girls about a different time period and culture that their dolls live in. After reading this book about Samantha's life, I wanted to research more about what was considered to be ladylike in the 1900's.

In the first book of the Samantha series, Samantha is an orphan living with her Grandmama and several maids, cooks and butlers. Jessie, one of her maids, is one of the closest people in Samantha's life. And when Jessie leaves abruptly without telling Samantha why, Samantha is determined to leave all aspects of being "ladylike" behind to try and find out where she went. Along the way, she befriends a little servant girl, Nellie who becomes her partner in crime until Nellie becomes ill. Samantha soon finds that she is able to please her Grandmama and be "quite a fine young lady."

I really enjoy the "A Peek into the Past" part of the book. It gives a little bit more insight as to what the 1900's were all about.

I would recommend this book, as well as the entire American Girl Series books for little girls (and boys if they are interested in those types of books) ages 9 and up.

Sarah Pfingston says

As a young girl I actually had an American Girl Doll, so this promoted me to want to read the collection. I remember reading this series as a young girl and I remember thinking the books were too long and never finishing them. When I reread this book I loved it. I thought that the lessons are wonderful for young girls. Even though the only negative I think the students today would have with this story is that it is set in 1904, which may appeal to them as boring. Nine year old Samantha is an orphan who is being raised by her wealthy grandmother. Samantha deals with the struggles of being teased by the neighbor boy. Also, considering that the grandmother, Grandmama, is wealthy they have people that work for them. Jessie the seamstress leaves the staff and this worries Samantha, which then leads to an adventure for her and her new friends! Nellie a nine year old girl has become the newest member of the staff next door. Nellie friendship also leads to adventures for Samantha.

Josiah says

The Pleasant Company has done a great job through all of its American Girl stories and products in helping to make history interesting for kids in a variety of different ways, while making it a priority to address their

contemporary concerns as well. All of the American Girl dolls have a finely tuned background, family history and unique niche in the timeline of our nation's past, and the books about them marvelously capture what makes everything about their historical narratives so special.

Samantha has always been one of my favorites, and this story was the first to bring her to life as a living, breathing literary character. Living with her wealthy, stern grandmother in 1904, Samantha leads a privileged existence that is starkly different from the experiences of most other Americans of the time. Samantha isn't expected to do chores or help around the house, or even to prepare to one day get a job and earn her own income. Such things were not expected of girls in those days, especially of one born into affluence. When a girl her age named Nellie moves next door, however, Samantha begins to really see for the first time that this world she inhabits is not all like her own. Nellie is only nine years old, yet she has been hired out alone from her family as a servant girl for the people living in the mansion next to Samantha's, where Nellie now works valiantly to earn her dollar-a-week salary.

Their class differences mean nothing to Samantha and Nellie, though, and the girls quickly form a close friendship. When Samantha wonders why Jessie—the serving woman who had been a fixture in her grandmother's house for many years—abruptly leaves, she and Nellie even sneak out one night to locate Jessie's house and find out the real story behind the mystery. Such clandestine activity with a good-hearted motive serves to strengthen the bond shared by the two girls.

As the book moves along, Samantha begins to see past the wall that her family's wealth has inevitably erected between themselves and much of the world. She sees that what really matters to a compassionate girl like herself is to be kind to others, to treat them with the respect they deserve, and to be able to reach out to make friends with a kind girl like Nellie. When Samantha hears the sad news that Nellie will be leaving to go back with her own family, she gathers the courage to show one last act of uncommon generosity toward her departing friend, and it becomes clear that Samantha has learned well what it takes to be a real friend.

Some of the old-fashioned rules in this book about how kids are supposed to behave can be hard to understand. Why weren't they permitted to initiate questions to the adults around them, or to speak their mind without first being directly addressed by an adult? This was the world in which Samantha and Nellie lived and grew, though, a real world of disparity and sometimes frequent unfairness, and the inclusion of such details helps to give us a clear window into what life was like for everyone involved. So often history is presented mainly as the big things that are done by adults, but this story makes it very accessible to kids by showing that history really is comprised just as much by the everyday lives of kids like Samantha and Nellie as it is by anything else. Samantha's story will warm hearts and inspire, and I think that it will do much to cultivate a keen interest in history in the minds of many early readers.

Jess says

I'm reading some series I loved as a child this year. I started with Charlie and the Chocolate Factory & Charlie and the Great Glass Elevator.

I remember devouring these books when they came out. I'd hound the library for them. This was waaay before the dolls were a thing. I vaguely remember a pull-out send-in card in the back of one of the books, but never bothered.

They hold up well. I have 5 more to go for this Girl and then I think I'm going to read Molly next. I think she

was one of my favorites.

Carson says

Samantha is the only authentic American Girl doll I own. I bought glasses for her and relate more to Molly, so you get the idea. Samantha is not my favorite after having read all character series. She was my favorite at the time I got the doll.

Going back and rereading the first book made me view Samantha as a brat. I know there are plot devices that need to be used to not make the young girls reading these books feel dumb for not knowing what a historical word means. But I feel like it was too much Samantha asking Nellie what was going on and then feeling sorry for Nellie, not really being her friend as she invited her over and waved her richer lifestyle in Nellie's face. Also, there's a difference between plot device and stupidity/cluelessness.

Alexandria Rogo says

My favorite American Girl when I was little and the only American Girl doll I had :) I loved her books and stories- particularly the era she was in. I recommend this for young girls that are just starting to get into chapter books.

Littlevision says

The last time I read this, I was unable to see the subtleties of the characters. I was unable to read between the lines.

Now I am a dignified woman of eighteen and the atrocities contained within this book are extremely alarming to me.

The story begins with Samantha falling out of a tree, the little uncoordinated waif that she is. Little does the reader know that Samantha ends up to be a crack whore in the last book. She is always falling out of trees, out of relationships, out of addiction. This foreshadowing happens in the first page of the first book.

At witnessing this extreme example of Samantha's clumsiness, her neighbor Eddie Ryland calls her "dumb". He says she's "so dumb [she] doesn't even know how to climb a tree". A few pages later, Eddie tells her that she lacks beauty and implies that she would scare many a woodland creature with her facial features.

On the second page, we are shown that Eddie Ryland fails at elementary level mathematics, unable to perform a simple mathematical action like 3×4 . But unlike Samantha, Eddie doesn't fall out of trees or relationships or addictions. He applies himself and later becomes a successful and wealthy banker, owner of Eddie Ryland Enterprises Corporation Incorporated.

Whenever he walks down the street named after himself, Samantha is working the corner, and offers her services to him. He throws the same line back at her. "Samantha, you're really dumb." He gives her a look, then pauses. "You're so dumb you don't even know how to put on makeup properly. Also, you're so ugly you would scare a moose."

Lyd's Archive (7/15 to 6/18) says

It would mess up my rating algorithm to add books I read more than half a lifetime ago, but this one holds a special place in my life. American Girl got me into Dear America three years later, which subsequently led me to Anastasia: The Last Grand Duchess, Russia, 1914 which, along with The Black Circle began my interest in Russian history and brought me to the place I am right now. It's hard to imagine my life if I hadn't read this series. I know it sounds weird.

Tijona says

I think this was the first American Girl book I ever read. I enjoyed picking this one up again! I love how Samantah is very active, has a hard time settling down and being ladylike. I love how she has to practice piano, an hour seems like such a long time when you are 9! I also love how she has such an intese love for people, and also has compassion for those around her. Her friend Nellie just breaks my heart, and I think it is because I know there were lots of families like Nellie's who had to work so hard just to live in a one bedroom apartment. What an interesting time that would've been, to see cars start to replace horses and to see women have the right to vote!! I love the description of the clothes and the housing also! I think it is cute how Samantha threatens the little neighbor boy who tortures her, I remember thinking boys were such pests at that age too! Overall, such a cute book!

Kaley Catron says

These books make me so happy. Ugh.

Crystal Lough says

Meet Samantha is one book in the American Girls series. The book is targeted towards intermediate children. The book takes you essentially through Samantha's life. It begins when she was just a little girl. She was raised by her elder grandmother as her guardian. She lived in a time, 1904, where being a "lady" was a very valued concept. For example, one day while playing outside, Samantha was teased and bullied by a little boy. She ran home to tell her housekeeper and the house keeper simply said, "Here you are, nine years old, almost a lady, and still getting into mischief like a raggmuffin." She was forced to grow up rather quickly. Throughout the book and her life, Samantha goes through many trials and tribulations while just trying to find herself. I rated this book with 5 stars because while I am never interested in anything historical, the book was well written, had great illustrations and included additional information about the times in addition to photographs of the time period. By reading the book you get a true feel for what she went through. I think this book would be appealing to the majority of students mostly being girls. I could use this book while discussing women in history.

Sharon says

Samantha Parkington an orphan lives a privileged life with her Grandmary in a luxurious home in 1904. She is expected to be a proper young Victorian lady who practices piano and works samplers. But Samantha doesn't quite fit the profile.

Samantha meets Nellie who works as a servant for the Ryland family and the two nine-year-olds become good friends. Samantha soon realizes that Nellie's circumstances are quite a contrast to her own elegant life.

Meet Samantha is the first book in the Samantha series.

"A Peak Into the Past" shares life in 1904---no refrigerators, no freezers, no vacuum cleaners and little prepared food! People who lived in luxury depended on servants who earned little money and lived in poor conditions.

Ashley Campbell says

Meet Samantha: An American Girl was a true blast from the past for me! I found my original copy of this book at my mother's house and enjoyed every minute of bringing back memories.

Meet Samantha is the first of the Samantha, American Girl series. This book introduces Samantha as a nine year old girl living in the 1920's. This book illustrates Samantha's everyday life and the trials she faces as a girl learning how to grow up in the 1920's.

I believe these books are extremely beneficial for children because it helps them relate to other children in different time periods. This is a great historical resource and I know this personally because I read them as an elementary aged girl. The American Girl series is also extremely beneficial because they feature stories about girls from all different time periods and ethnicities.

Madison Cosby says

I would consider this book, by Susan S. Adler, to be in the genre of realistic fiction. I would use this book for any of the grades 3-5. I think it is a nice read, not too complex, but also has a lot of room for discussion.

One idea of how I would use this book in my classroom would be to talk about the time period of this story. It is taken place in 1904. There are so many ways that this book could lead into discussion about history. It could be in talking about men and women's roles back in the day, what they were and weren't allowed to do. It could be used to talk about black people versus white people and how they had to live in certain areas, like Jessie did. Another idea is that this could lead into talking about poverty and the different ways that people grow up, but how no matter their differences they were still friends. It could be used to talk about how to treat people. Whether in how Samantha and Eddie weren't kind to each other, or how Samantha was always thinking of Nellie instead of herself. There are many ways that a lesson could be made after this book, or a discussion could be had, it could even be as simple as talking about the value of education, and how not everyone had access to education, but how fortunate we are to have education. There could also be literary analysis of the book done as well.

This would be a WOW book for me because it just shocks me to see how differently people grow up, and

how much has changed over time. I knew this story before because of watching the movie growing up, but still my heart ached when I thought about how girls weren't suppose to work, or how 9 year olds were working in factories with such poor conditions. It really made me be grateful for a lot in my life, and any book that has an effect on my heart or my life, is a WOW book for me.

Brooke Brodsky says

Commercialism aside, I think that the American Girl series is a wonderful example of Historical Fiction for children. Samantha is a young girl in the early 1900s who has lost her parents and now lives with her grandmother. Samantha makes new friends of different backgrounds and has fun experiencing new things in her new city. Although I see why people like these books, as a teacher, I dont. I feel that the storys are not accurate enough to give a young reader a feeling of what it might have been like to live at that time. Samantha lives with her very wealthy grandmother, and she lives a privileged life. Although Susan Adler attempts to explain how the "other half" lived in America in the turn of the century by giving Samantha a poor friend, I think it glamorized the poor lifestyle and girls will not walk away from this book having learned anything. As a teacher, I would augment this book with other sources on poverty.

Sami Wilson says

Meet Samantha: An American Girl was one of my favorite books when I was a child. I loved this book because we had the same name and I always wanted an american girl and to be an american girl. I thought that the story about Samantha was very relatable and I think that young girls will feel the same way when they read the story. I liked that Samantha met a young girl who was different from her yet never let that stop them from being friends. It tells your girls that it doesn't matter what someones background is just as long as you are nice to one another anyone can get along and be friends. I read this story over and over again and still do to this day. It is a classic book, in my eyes. The illustrations throughout the book I believe to be very calming and well done. I think that this book would be a good one to read with parents at home or on your own but would not be appropriate for a school book report.
