



## ***Kit Kittredge:***

Just Right for Both Kids and Adults

By Rebecca Sutich

SPECIAL FOR FILMS FOR TWO<sup>©</sup>

### ***Kit Kittredge***

**Directed by Patricia Rozema**

**Adapted Screenplay by Ann Peacock**

**Based on stories by Valerie Tripp**

I was very eager to see ***Kit Kittredge: An American Girl*** despite the fact that, at 16, I'm slightly older than the target audience. When I was younger, almost every girl I knew had an *American Girl* doll. Everything about these dolls appealed to us: the books, the clothes, the accessories. I was one of those girls who fell in love with everything "American Girl." The *Kit Kittredge* doll was my favorite; her story line and her look hooked me, so naturally "Kit's movie" was a must-see for me. I was nervous though. I worried that it might be a typical "family film" with bad acting and a terrible story line. But ***Kit Kittredge*** not only didn't let me down, in fact, it far exceeded my expectations.

The heroine of the story is a young girl named "Kit Kittredge" (played by Oscar-nominated actress Abigail Breslin) growing up in Cincinnati, Ohio during the Great Depression. Her father (Chris O'Donnell) owns a car dealership, and initially the family has sufficient resources to get by during this challenging time in American history. But everything goes downhill when her father's business fails and he has to move to Chicago to find work.

In order to save their house, Kit's mother (Julia Ormond) begins taking in boarders, and each new member of the household has an interesting story to share. Kit also has a passion for journalism, and her aspiration is to publish a story in the local newspaper. So she writes stories about her experiences in the world around her, and persistently submits them to an intimidating editor (Wallace Shawn). Unexpectedly, money and valuables are stolen from the neighborhood, and Kit uses her inquisitive tendencies and her journalistic skills to dig up information and solve the case.

Director Patricia Rozema does a great job doing something that most "family films" fail at: reaching both the adults and the kids in her audience simultaneously. She not only gives kids an idea of what life was like during

the Great Depression, but she also gives girls, specifically, an opportunity to see a positive and hard-working girl battle through tough times successfully. Adults also get an interesting plot, including both mystery and comedy.

It's great to watch this movie unfold. All the actors are wonderful, most especially Abigail Breslin as Kit. She balances child-like emotions with adult-like situations easily. The rest of the cast performs equally well, and they all fit together well with strong chemistry.

Before I went to see ***Kit Kittredge***, I was worried about being distracted. Would I sit in my seat busily comparing the movie with the books I'd enjoyed reading so much? But I left the theatre greatly impressed. With or without the books, ***Kit Kittredge*** is a wonderful movie for everyone: for families, teenagers, and adult friends too.

© Rebecca Sutich (8/15/09)—SPECIAL FOR FILMS FOR TWO®



Photo Credit: Cheryl Corley (5/2/09)