

Kit



Read All About It!



Good News

✧ CHAPTER 1 ✧



lick, clack, clackety!



Kit Kittredge smiled as she typed. She loved the sound the typewriter keys made as they struck the paper and the *ping!* of the bell when she got to the end of a line. She loved the inky smell of the typewriter ribbon and the way the black letters looked as they marched across the page, telling a story the way *she* wanted it told.

It was a hot afternoon in August. Kit and her best friend, Ruthie, were in Kit's room writing a newspaper for Kit's dad. Every night when Dad came home from work, he gave Kit the real newspaper so that she could read the headlines and the baseball scores and the funnies. He was always very pleased when Kit gave him one of her newspapers in return.

Kit finished the paragraph she was typing about her brother Charlie, who was sixteen. "Read me what we have so far," said Ruthie.

Kit read:

Congratulations to Charlie Kitoreage!
 He et set a World's Record today. He
 ate A a Hole ~~x~~whole plate of gingersnaps
 that were supposea to be fore Mother's
 gargen club. Charlie is going to college
 in a few weeks. He should try out for ~~xx~~
 the Eating Team!

Ruthie looked over Kit's shoulder and giggled as she read what Kit had written. "Now what?" she asked.

"I don't know," Kit sighed. "I wish something would happen around here. Some dramatic *change*. Then we'd have a headline that would really grab Dad's attention."

"Like in the real newspapers," said Ruthie.

"Exactly!" said Kit.

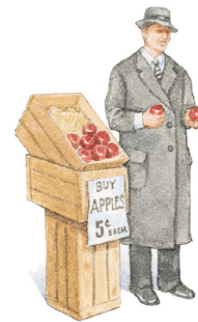
"Well," said Ruthie. "When my parents read the headlines these days, they get worried. The news is always about the Depression and it's always bad. I don't think we want our paper to be like that."

"No," said Kit. "We want *good* news."

She knew there hadn't been much good news in the real newspapers for a long time. The whole country was in a mess because of the Depression. Dad had explained it to her. About three years ago, people got nervous about their money and stopped buying as many things as they used to, so some stores had to close. The people who

worked in the stores lost their jobs. Then the factories that made the things the stores used to sell had to close, so the factory workers lost their jobs, too. Pretty soon the people who'd lost their jobs had no money to pay their doctors or house painters or music teachers, so those people got poorer, too.

Kit was glad that her dad still had his job at his car dealership. She and Ruthie knew kids at school whose fathers had lost their jobs. They'd seen those fathers selling apples on street corners, trying to earn a few cents every day. Some kids had disappeared from school because their families no longer had enough money to pay the rent, and they had to move. Dad said the Depression was like a terrible, slippery hole. Once you fell in, it was almost impossible to get out. Kit knew that the Depression was getting worse all the time because the newspaper headlines said so nearly every night.



Just then, Charlie popped his head in the door. "Hey, girls," he said. "Mother's garden club's here. You better get downstairs quick if you want anything to eat. I saw Mrs. Culver already diving headfirst into the nut dish."

"Oh, boy!" said Ruthie. "Maybe there'll be some cake for us!"

“Maybe there’ll be some *news* for us!” said Kit. “Come on, Ruthie!”

Kit and Ruthie thundered down the stairs. Kit’s mother smiled when she saw the girls. Then she turned to her guests and said, “Ladies, you remember Ruth Ann Smithens and my daughter Kit, don’t you?”

“Yes, of course!” said the ladies. “Hello, girls!”

“Hello,” said Kit and Ruthie politely.

“Do help yourselves to some refreshments, girls,” said Mother.

“We will!” said Kit and Ruthie, smiling broadly.

The girls filled their plates and retreated to a corner behind a potted palm to enjoy their feast and observe the ladies. At first the ladies discussed garden club business, such as how to get rid of bugs, slugs, and other garden pests. It was pretty boring, although the girls did get giggly when Mrs. Willmore said she was just beside herself because she had spots on her phlox.

Then the talk moved on to who was going to weed the flower bed at the hospital, which the garden club ladies took turns doing.

“I believe it is my turn,” said Mrs. Howard. “But I’m afraid I won’t be able to weed this month. In fact . . .” She hesitated, and blinked her big round eyes. “I’m afraid I won’t be able to be part of the garden club at all anymore.

I’m moving to Chicago. My husband is already there, and so my son Stirling and I are going to join him. He’s pursuing a business opportunity.”

“Ahh!” said all the ladies brightly. They all knew what that meant. Kit did, too. It meant that Mr. Howard had gone to Chicago to look for a job. Everyone knew that Mr. Howard had not had a job for two years, ever since the company he worked for here in Cincinnati had gone out of business.

“Where will you live in Chicago?” one lady asked.

“I’m not sure yet,” said Mrs. Howard, blinking again. “Mr. Howard hasn’t settled anywhere. We’ll be hither, thither, and yon for a while!”

The whole thing sounded pretty fishy to Kit. *If the Howards have no place to live in Chicago, why are they leaving their house in Cincinnati?* she wondered. Then suddenly, it dawned on her. The Howards *couldn’t* stay in their house. They didn’t have enough money. And Mr. Howard didn’t have a job or a place for them to live in Chicago, either. That was the truth—Kit was sure of it. She was pretty sure that all the ladies knew it, too, but no one would say it out loud.

There was an awkward silence. Then Mother spoke up and made everything better. “I have a marvelous idea, Louise!” she said to Mrs. Howard. “We’d love it if you and dear Stirling would stay in our guest room until your

husband is settled in Chicago and sends for you. Stirling is about Kit's age. I'm sure they'll get along beautifully."

"Well," said Mrs. Howard slowly. "If you're *sure* it isn't too much trouble, Stirling and I would love to stay. Thank you, Margaret."

"That's all settled, then," said Mother calmly.

All the ladies brightened up, as if a cloud had blown away. Kit started scribbling notes on her notepad, and Ruthie whispered to her, "Who's this boy Stirling?"

Kit shrugged. "He's Mrs. Howard's son, I guess," she said. "I haven't met him, but he's already done us a favor. Come on. I'll show you."

The two girls ran up the stairs to Kit's room. Kit stood in front of the typewriter. "Stirling's given us a headline," she said to Ruthie. "Look."

Kit typed in capital letters:

THE HOWARDS ARE COMING!

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