

Kit



Turning  
Things  
Around



# Spring Arrivals

✧ CHAPTER 1 ✧



Kit Kittredge grinned at the headline she had typed:

Spring Arrivals

*Spring*, she thought. *Now there is a word with some bounce to it.*

Spring was Kit's favorite season. Her birthday was in the spring, and even though Kit knew her family had no money for a party for her, she couldn't help *hoping* for one.

It was a sunny Saturday morning in April. Kit was sitting at the desk in her attic room making a newspaper. What Kit was *supposed* to be making was her *bed*, but the newspaper was much more fun. Kit loved to write. She loved to call attention to what was new, or important, or remarkable. So, as often as she could, Kit made a newspaper for everyone in her house to read.

That was quite a few people these days! When Kit's dad lost his job nine months ago because of the Depression, her family turned their home into a boardinghouse. At first,

Kit resented the boarders. But she had learned to be grateful: Without the rent they paid, Kit's family would have been evicted from their house. Kit was glad there were eleven people living there now. There was Kit's mother, dad, and older brother Charlie, two nurses named Miss Hart and Miss Finney, a musician named Mr. Peck, a friend of Mother's named Mrs. Howard, and her son, Stirling, who was Kit's age. At breakfast this morning, Kit had interviewed Mr. and Mrs. Bell, an elderly couple who had just moved in. Later, she would write an article about them to help everyone else get to know them. But now Kit had chores to do.

Every Saturday, it was Kit's job to change the sheets on all the beds. She went room to room, and by the time she had gathered all the sheets and pillowcases, the pile was so big that she could hardly see over the top of it. Just then, the doorbell rang.

"I'll get it!" she called. When she saw who was standing outside, Kit dropped the pile of sheets and flung her arms open wide. "Aunt Millie!" she cried as she plunged into a hug. "What a great surprise!"

"Margaret Mildred Kittredge," said Aunt Millie, using Kit's whole name. "Heavenly day! You've sprung up like a weed! You must be two feet taller than you were when I saw you last July! And still the prettiest child there ever

was! It's worth the trip from Kentucky just to see you."

"I'm glad to see you, too," said Kit, practically dancing with excitement as she led Aunt Millie inside. "I didn't know you were coming."

"No one did," said Aunt Millie. "I just took it into my head to come, and here I am, blown in on the breeze like a bug. Now where are your dad and mother? And where's your handsome brother?"

"Charlie's at work, but he'll be home soon," said Kit. "Mother and Dad are cleaning out the garage. We're so crowded in the house now with all the boarders, we need room out there for storage."

As Kit spoke, Aunt Millie put her suitcase and basket in the corner. She took off her hat and coat, put her gloves in her purse, and hung her things neatly on a hook in the hall. She turned and saw the pile of laundry Kit had dropped. "Changing sheets today, are we?" she observed. "Odd to do it on Saturday, with everyone underfoot. Still, it's a good drying day today." She scooped up half the pile. "We'd better begin."

"But Aunt Millie," said Kit as she picked up the rest of the sheets. "Don't you want to say hello to Mother and Dad first?"

"Time enough for that after we get the laundry started," said Aunt Millie. "Work before pleasure. Come

along, Margaret Mildred. If we dillydally, we'll waste the best sunshine."

Kit grinned. *That's Aunt Millie for you, she thought. Never wastes a thing, not even sunshine.*

"I can't wait till Mother and Dad see you!" said Kit as she led Aunt Millie to the basement and put the sheets in sudsy water to soak. "They'll be so glad you've come for a visit."



"Out of the blue," said Aunt Millie. She smoothed her dress, straightened her shoulders, and smiled at Kit. "'Lead on, Macduff!'" she said, pointing up the basement stairs. Kit was used to the way Aunt Millie quoted poetry and

Shakespeare right in the middle of a

normal conversation. Aunt Millie was a schoolteacher and she couldn't stop herself from teaching wherever she was.

"Mother and Dad!" Kit called as she and Aunt Millie crossed the yard. "Come see our surprise!"

Mother and Dad came out of the garage blinking from the brightness and from amazement.

"Aunt Millie!" Dad exclaimed, striding forward to hug her. "How wonderful! I'm glad to see you!"

"Miss Mildred, we're honored," said Mother. "It's so kind of you to make the trip. You look well."

"Fit as a fiddle," said Aunt Millie. "And—"

"—twice as stringy," she and Dad finished together.

Dad threw back his head and laughed with Aunt Millie at their old joke. Kit beamed. It'd been a long time since she'd heard Dad laugh so heartily. No one could make him laugh the way Aunt Millie could!

"I never thought I'd see the day you'd leave your home and come to the city," Dad said to Aunt Millie. "How's everybody in Mountain Hollow?"

"The town's been hit pretty badly by this Depression. Last week, they closed the mine. Just couldn't make any money from it. When they shut the mine, they closed down the school, and of course my house went with my job, so I lost *it*, too."

"Oh, no!" exclaimed Dad, Mother, and Kit.

But Aunt Millie did not sound the least bit sorry for herself. "My friend Myrtle Peabody has been after me for years to live with her," she said. "So I guess that's what I'll do." She smiled at Kit and tousled her hair. "I just thought I'd come and see how you folks are doing for a while first."

"You are very welcome," said Dad. "Stay as long as you like."

“Yes,” said Mother. “You’ll stay in our room while you’re here. Kit can take you there now for a rest. You must be tired from traveling.”

“Heavenly day, Margaret!” said Aunt Millie. “I wouldn’t dream of taking your room. I can park my bones anyplace.”

“Dear me, no!” said Mother. She smiled, but Kit saw she was worried.

“Aunt Millie can share with me,” Kit offered. “There’s plenty of room in my attic, and an extra bed we can set up, too.”

“I guess it’ll do,” said Mother, “since it’s just for a while.”

“Come on, Aunt Millie,” said Kit, taking her hand. “I’ll show you the attic.” She grinned. “And after I finish the laundry, I’ll write a newspaper article about you!”

“That’ll be jim-dandy,” said Aunt Millie.

Kit looked at Aunt Millie and grinned from ear to ear. *When I wrote my headline this morning, Kit thought, I never guessed who the very best and most surprising spring arrival of all would be!*

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