

Greenglass House by Kate Milford

On top of a hill overlooking a river, there is an old mansion known as the Greenglass House. Once the home of a friendly, well-liked smuggler known as Doc Holystone, it's now run by the kind Nora and Ben Pine and their curious son, Milo. The house is known as a safe hotel for various criminals to stay without scrutiny. But, as Milo knows, criminals have their seasons, and the Pines are looking forward to spending their Christmas season alone. Little did they know, in the middle of a snowstorm, many curious strangers will show up and catapult the house into mystery. What will happen when no one can leave, but everyone's keeping secrets? Prepare yourself for a tale ripe with snowstorms, stained glass, suspense, and, of course, hot chocolate.

While I'm not a big fan of mystery novels, *Greenglass House* has me hooked! It's intriguing without pretense, sweet without being sappy, and seemingly effortlessly interesting. At the same time, it's a tale perfect for both storytellers and book nuts, mystery lovers and ghost hunters, and adventure seekers along with those who seek comfort at home. This is a mystery with just the right amount of risk, twists, and optimism to be engaging for all ages while being safe for kids.

Throughout the story, Milo is going on a journey that teaches him that he is braver than he knows, more valuable than he feels, and, most importantly, loved and supported by his family come what may. Even though the house is filled with secrets, the book promotes kindness and consideration for others and their needs. Most uniquely, *Greenglass House* tackles the tricky feelings that come with adoption with grace, something I've rarely seen in children's books.

While a bit more dense than a typical children's story (373 pages!), *Greenglass House* is the winner of the Edgar Award for Best Juvenile Mystery and more than ready to be placed in the hands of any preteen. Readers should note that there is some content that may paint government in a bad light and criminals in a good one (but, in my opinion, it is not underhanded or unwarranted in light of the story and more on an individual basis).

Katie Kruger