

Kris Kringle

Maria Ciampi

Reviewed by: Vivien Lee, 16

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Kris Kringle, written by Maria Ciampi, invites the reader into a world of Santa and his north pole. Over the history of Christmas, there has been a series of attempts to end it; from the Grinch to the Blizzard of 1963, Santa battled out all threats to make this holiday happen year after year. A new enemy, Mr. D, his minion, and the cunning toymaker Mr. Reedy try to end Christmas once and for all. Kris Kringle, the grandson of Santa's brother John Kringle, is a messy toy inventor who hopes to be recruited as an elf. His relation to Santa makes him the best candidate to use as an accomplice in Mr. D's plan; Kringle finds himself helping Mr. D unknowingly! Winning the affections of Mrs. Claus and Santa's adopted daughter Eveyln, Kris follows through with Mr. D's evil plan. In a series of events, Kris is expelled from the north pole; however, by using his wits, his kind nature, and help from his loving friends, he heroically saves the night of Christmas Eve!

Ciampi had an original and creative idea in that the entire book is written in a screen script form. The audience is given no limit to imagination and they are free to play any character of the story. It is excellent for in-class plays for ages 7 through 10. The story progression is relatively clear and the narrations set up the story very well. The characters were slightly mediocre; there was the obvious hero, the humorous sidekick, the perfect love interest, and the vilest-of-all enemy. The writing and the romance was also cliché; a lot of the dialogues were straightforward without any clever wordings or subtlety. However, these commonly seen characterizations and writing may be the best for books with younger audiences; complex storylines and words would be too confusing for children. Overall, the author made wise choices about her story considering the potential readers of her book. If the reader is a fan of drama and acting, I recommend buying this book; he or she could perhaps set up a show as well!