

[Free] Heidi's Alp: One Family's Search for Storybook Europe

## Heidi's Alp: One Family's Search for Storybook Europe

*Christina Hardyment*

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**Christina Hardyment : Heidi's Alp: One Family's Search for Storybook Europe** before purchasing it in order to gauge whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Heidi's Alp: One Family's Search for Storybook Europe:

3 of 3 people found the following review helpful. Captivating Story of a Family's Tour of Storybook Europe By L. M. Young One of the most delightful books about children's books ever. Hardyment and her four daughters, first accompanied by a friend and her baby, and then by her husband, set off from their home in England in an aging camper van nicknamed "Bertha" to discover the Europe of children's books: from Denmark and the sites of Hans Christian Andersen (and Lego bricks), through the Netherlands and Switzerland (where they discover their very own Alm Uncle in "Heidi country"), Germany, Italy, and France. It's part travelogue, part family story, and always referencing children's books, starting with the world of HANS BRINKER AND THE SILVER SKATES as the family crosses the English Channel into the Netherlands. Along the way they try to discover the real history behind the legend of the little Dutch boy with his finger in the dike, the disappearance of the children of Hamelin (was it really due to the Children's Crusade as so often theorized?), and the truth behind William Tell. As far as I'm concerned this was a dream of a trip and a wonderful tale told in appealing, descriptive narrative. I envy the Hardyment girls their adventure and wish I'd been along for the ride. [I didn't realize until after I'd finished the book that I'd read another of Hardyment's books many years ago, DREAM BABIES, about how babies were portrayed in child-rearing manuals through the years. Another cool book.] 11 of 11 people found the following review helpful. brilliant adventure By Genevieve S. Jenner This quiet little gem sat on one of my mother's many bookshelves for a number of years. She would read it

periodically and kept telling me how neat it was and that I really ought to read it. Finally when I had taken a deep interest in children's literature (I was catching up on things I had missed as a precocious child reading 'Gone with the Wind') as an adult, I decided to take a look. It was astounding. It was a smart travel guide, (the author traipsed through western Europe in a caravan with small children) combined with history, thoughtful opinions about classic fairytales, and memoir all rolled into one. One couldn't help but want to reread a number of books, fulfill a yearning to travel about the countryside in search of the very places one reads about. It definitely reminds me of Anne Fadiman's essay on 'Being There' where one reads a book in the place where it may have taken place. Imagine being on Heidi's alp, or the shore where the little mermaid found herself with legs, or in the dark woods that Hansel and Gretel wandered in fear. A true highlight of the book was the story of Hamelin. It left me with nightmares and deep curiosity about the children who disappeared so many hundreds of years ago. One will not be disappointed with this small book. 9 of 9 people found the following review helpful. Even the children are enjoyable. By Kevin Killian. Imagine being a mother with a large family of girls and putting them all on a trailer, like Lucy and Ricky, and driving thousands of miles through Europe on a journey into the heart of children's literature! That's the prospect of Christina Hardyment's wonderful if far-fetched book. The family comes armed with an encyclopedic knowledge of children's literature from Hans Christian Andersen to Pinocchio, and a lot of research was done which, back in the days before the internet, must have been tedious to the extreme. They all seem to have had a splendid time. It makes me want to take the same trip and follow, a generation later, in the footsteps of this intrepid, charming family. I wonder if the low key theme parks that Christina Hardyment describes have been upgraded (or downgraded, depending on your point of view) into more high-tech and impersonal thrill rides. And yes, one does wonder how the little girls grew up and what kind of family life do they see themselves as having! I suppose that's just human nature, wondering "what happened afterward," just as in a fairy story.

One spring morning in 1985, Christina Hardyment and her four daughters set out from their Oxford home to trace the roots of stories that have captured the imaginations of generations of children worldwide.