



WHAT KATY DID is an August, 2017 LVCA dvd donation to the Hugh Stoupe Memorial Library of the Heritage United Methodist Church of Ligonier, Pennsylvania. Below is Kino Ken's review of that dvd movie.

Canada 1999 color 90 minutes live action feature drama telefilm
Catalyst Entertainment / Tetra Films Producers: Paul Brown, Paula Devonshire, Alan Horrox

Key: *indicates an outstanding technical achievement or performance

(j) designates a juvenile performer

Points:

- 1** Direction: Stacey Stewart Curtis
- 0** Editing: Michael Pike
- 2** Cinematography: Derek Rogers
- Still Photography: Pief Weyman
- 2** Lighting

- 2 **Teleplay: Olivia Hetreed from the novel by Susan Coolidge**
- 1 **Music: Tony Flynn**
- 2 **Production Design: Ian Brock Art Direction: Allan Crawley**
 Set Decoration: Matthew Wright
 Set Dressing: Matt Horrox, Jeff Silver, Robin Whaley
 Costume Design: Debra Hanson
 Makeup: Barbara Barkey
- 0 **Sound: Chris Nuttall**
- 1 **Acting**
- 1 **Creativity**
- 12 total points**

Cast: Alison Pill (j) (Katy), Megan Follows (Cousin Helen), Martha Burns (Aunt Izzie), Kevin Whately (Dr. Philip Carr), Sophie Bennett (j) (Elsie Carr), Michael Cera (j) (Dorry Carr), Bryn McAuley (j) (Joanna Carr), Brittany Allen* (j) (Cecy Hall), Patrick Thomas (j) (Ned), Jan Rubes (Dr. Reinhart), Dean Stockwell (Tramp), Catherine Fitch (Debbie), Gerry Mendocino (Signor Rinaldo), Vickie Papavs (Mrs. Hall), Karen Kennedy (Coffee Shop Woman), Paul Braunstein (Telegraph Operator), Kay Hawtrey (Mrs. Worrell), Marcia Bennett (Mrs. Pettifer)

Though this production came out of Canada, **WHAT KATY DID** is actually based on an 1872 American novel written by Sarah Chauncey Woolsey under the pen name of Susan Coolidge. The story is set in an Ohio town called Burnet sometime shortly after the end of the Civil War.

For the Canadian movie adaptation the character of Imogen Clark has been dropped. Two comic relief characters intended to lighten the drama are prominent. Only one of these, Dean Stockwell's tramp, proves charming. Catherine Fitch's klutzy maid Debbie is positively irritating, with mannerisms recalling the least winning television sitcom domestics.

A superior teleplay contrasts the untrammelled, disastrous behavior of imaginative, adventurous protagonist Katy Carr, twelve-year-old tomboy and instigator of infelicitous escapades, with her subdued and pessimistic attitude

after a forbidden limit-stretching push on a deteriorating swing results in a fall which severely injures her back. Consequently, for much of the second half of the drama Katy is bedridden, morose, and anti-social.

Unlike most contemporary children's tales, there's no shying away here from the sobering question of why some people, such as terminally ill Aunt Helen and Katy's deceased mother, are afflicted in their youths with chronic ailments requiring dependency on the graciousness of caretakers. As Katy discovers firsthand how wretched such a situation is and how it colors attitudes, aspirations, and relationships of sufferers, she matures into a more recognizably caring human being, capable of at least listening to the needs of others, particularly younger relatives looking to her as a model.

Early in the proceedings, she finds and assists a drunken tramp, an episode intended to showcase oft-buried compassion. This kind of sympathy is intermittently present, however, as a later tug-of-war over delivery of a breakfast tray nearly incapacitates younger sister Elsie, sent tumbling backwards down a set of stairs by obdurately self-righteous elder. Elsie recovers quickly enough physically. But the psychological wound inflicted takes much longer to heal. Since Katy asserts defensively the incident was purely accidental. Assuredly not the case. Her own pushy obstreperousness was immediate cause of a highly avoidable and belatedly regretted mishap. The sort of thing that reckless, inconsiderate Katy specialized in generating during her naïve, pre-invalid days.

As Katy, Alison Pill is ideal initially, an overindulged egotist with too much imagination and far too little prudence. She strains devotedly to match script demands in the darker half of the tale where her physical countenance bespeaks too strongly glowing good health.

Martha Burns gives a fine, tart performance as the only responsible adult member of the Carr household. Jan Rubes makes the most of a brief appearance as philosophical Doctor Reinhart. Brittany Allen finds and maintains a warmly empathetic tone playing Katy's devoted best friend, Cecy Hall.

There's little support provided by other cast members. Karen Kennedy's snobbish coffee shop woman, Patrick Thomas's unequivocal Ned, Vickie Papav's gossipy matron, and Gerry Mendocino's Signor Ronaldo, spa proprietor, are all

played as mere stereotypes. Michael Cera's Dorry Carr is simply a preadolescent eating machine. Though Sophie Bennett shows signs of life periodically, she's somewhat too tentative in expression. More active guidance from the director would have helped her considerably to create a more integrated characterization. Bryn McCauley fails to overcome writing which consigns her to a totally unmotivated flip-flop from dissatisfied little girl with strongly-held belief in male superiority to feminine clotheshorse completely enchanted by new store-bought dress from Aunt Helen. Right.

Kevin Whately's Dr. Philip Carr, overly attached to the past and defeated by surrender to a perceived malignant familial destiny, is colorlessly indecisive. It's impossible to credit him as the father of exuberant Katy.

The key role of damaged goods Aunt Helen is handled by Megan Follows, best remembered as whimsical, verbose Anne Shirley in Kevin Sullivan's ANNE OF GREEN GABLES color film of the 1980s. She's effective in a far less effusive part, confined much of the time to wheelchair or bed, yet dispensing hard-gained wisdom about patience, reinforcing whatever crumbs of determination Katy reveals about recovery and resuming interest in life. Despite intense personal agony.

Lighting and cinematography are choice, with especially vibrant shots of flowers and fine payoffs in facial close-ups.

Ian Brock's production design skillfully recreates post-bellum America, with plentiful period props used profitably throughout the film.

For no apparent reason, the movie's soundtrack is plagued by sonic dead patches frequently occurring at the beginning of speeches. First words are lost completely at times, presumably not because of any failure of the actors to deliver them. Tony Flynn's music makes for suitable emotional accompaniment without supplying sufficient harmonic depth or melodic hooks to insure long-term residence in auditory memory.

Lapses in editing, some the direct result of commercial breaks in original broadcasting, are not only present but attenuated. To the disadvantage of the movie.

Nonetheless, WHAT KATY DID is an unusually potent dramedy suited admirably to viewers ages ten to fourteen. Free of profanity and sexual

innuendo, the Bridgestone dvd offering is highly recommended, despite having no bonus features. It's been honored by the Dove Foundation with its Family Seal of Approval and is now available to borrow from the Hugh Stouppe Memorial Library of the Heritage United Methodist Church.