



The Legend of Jimmy Spoon

By Kristiana Gregory

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Editorial Review

Review

"[A] carefully researched, sympathetic, well-balanced picture of life on the frontier; authentic details of daily life are deftly woven into a moving story."--*Kirkus Reviews*

"Vividly real."--*The Bulletin*

"An exciting story."--*VOYA*

About the Author

KRISTIANA GREGORY is the author of *Earthquake at Dawn*, *The Legend of Jimmy Spoon*, and *Jenny of the Tetons*, which won a Golden Kite Award and was an NCSS-CBC Notable Children's Trade Book in the Field of Social Studies. She began writing when she was eight years old. She has worked as a reporter, an editor, and a children's book reviewer. She lives with her family in Boise, Idaho.

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An Unhappy Birthday

Drums.

Jimmy awoke with a start. His mother was rushing toward the door with baby Annie in her arms. Emma and Frances were hanging on to her apron, crying in panic.

"Jimmy!" she yelled. "Hurry."

No moon lit their way, and there were no torches this time. The warning drum pounded on as women and children ran through the darkness. They crowded into the log schoolhouse in the center of the fortress.

"Shh," the mothers whispered. But the babies still cried. Jimmy was certain one night the arrows would stop them before they made it to safety.

His family was new to Brigham Young's Mormon settlement, and every night they went to bed in fear. Would they be killed in their sleep? Or would the terrible sound of the drum wake them in time?

To the settlers' relief, attacks by the Gosiutes eventually became demands for food or supplies, and the walls of the protective fort were taken down, its wood used to build simple houses. The Shoshoni and Bannock tribes migrated north and only appeared for trading.

"It's cheaper to feed an Indian than to fight him," Brigham Young told Jimmy's father. "A few thousand bushels of wheat a year and whatnot should take care of them."

The pioneers Brigham Young had led across the Great Plains in 1847 were now homesteading the parched Utah territory that bordered a great salt lake. Seeds carried on the fourteen-hundred-mile trek in pouches and

letter boxes from Nauvoo, Illinois, had been planted immediately, as were the rose cuttings, geraniums slips, and seedling trees that had survived.

Brigham Young told his followers that only by thrift, industry, and working as hard as bees would they prosper. Soon orchards were fragrant with cherry, peach, apple, and apricot blossoms. Rows upon rows of fast-growing poplars waved in the wind. Streams flowing from the towering Wasatch Mountains were used to irrigate the land, and before long trees were shading porches along broad avenues. The Mormon colony flourished at such an amazing pace that it was to be nicknamed "The Beehive State."

On the sunny afternoon of May 13, 1854, Jimmy blew out the candles on his birthday cake and made a wish. He was twelve now, and more than ever he wanted a horse.

While his mother sliced through the chocolate icing and layers of fluffy white cake, Jimmy stood next to her, savoring his wish. The yard was noisy with the laughter of his sisters, who chased each other and twirled in their long skirts.

Nine sisters. Jimmy sighed. He yearned for a brother with whom he could wrestle and climb trees or explore the outskirts of town. A brother would understand Jimmy's desire for adventure. A brother would understand why Jimmy hoped his birthday present would be a horse.

But the small, square package his father proudly handed him had nothing to do with a horse. Tucked inside the paper was a silver pocket watch, engraved with Jimmy's initials.

Mr. Spoon watched expectantly as Jimmy unfolded a note lined with elegant blue script. It was an announcement. Silently, Jimmy read the words.

He was now the honored Junior Partner at Spoon's Fancy Store, where he would be in charge of polishing and arranging the pocket watches displayed under glass. Instead of smiling, as his father surely hoped he would, Jimmy closed his eyes and tried to hide his disappointment.

It was a job that he knew would be painfully quiet.

Already Jimmy's heart ached with boredom.

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