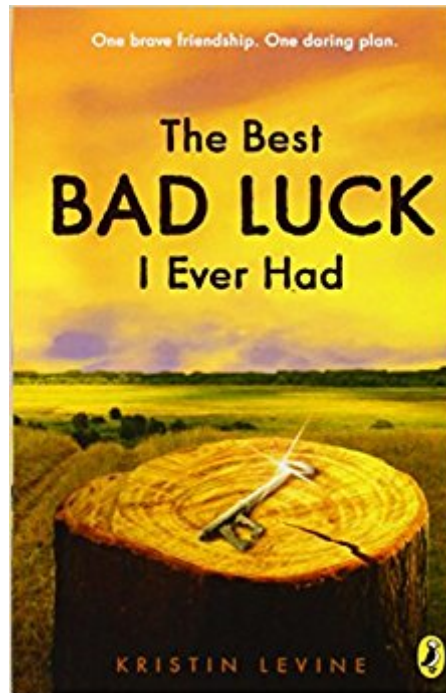




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# **The Best Bad Luck I Ever Had**



## Synopsis

A powerful story about race and an unlikely friendship from award-winning author of *The Lions of Little Rock*. An ALA Best Book for Young Adults. The last thing Harry "Dit" Sims expects when Emma Walker comes to town is to become friends. Proper talking, brainy Emma doesn't play baseball or fish too well, but she sure makes Dit think, especially about the differences between black and white in the 1910s. But soon Dit is thinking about a whole lot more when the town barber, who is black, is put on trial for a terrible crime. Together Dit and Emma come up with a daring plan to save him from the unthinkable. "Tension builds just below the surface of this energetic, seamlessly narrated first novel set in small-town Alabama in 1917." Publishers Weekly, starred review "This classic story of how unlikely persons can change things for the better should appeal to all readers." VOYA, starred review

## Book Information

Lexile Measure: 0680 (What's this?)

Paperback: 272 pages

Publisher: Puffin Books; Reprint edition (September 16, 2010)

Language: English

ISBN-10: 0142416487

ISBN-13: 978-0142416488

Product Dimensions: 5.1 x 0.7 x 7.8 inches

Shipping Weight: 7.2 ounces (View shipping rates and policies)

Average Customer Review: 4.9 out of 5 stars 44 customer reviews

Best Sellers Rank: #269,724 in Books (See Top 100 in Books) #147 in Books > Children's Books > Geography & Cultures > Where We Live > Country Life #269 in Books > Children's Books > Growing Up & Facts of Life > Difficult Discussions > Prejudice & Racism #373 in Books > Children's Books > Literature & Fiction > Historical Fiction > United States > 1900s

Age Range: 10 and up

Grade Level: 5 and up

## Customer Reviews

This spirited, early-20th-century coming-of-age story presents a small-town cast of well-drawn characters, an unlikely friendship, engaging adventures, and poignant realizations. When a new postmaster arrives in Moundville, AL, 12-year-old Dit is surprised to discover that Mr. Walker is African American and that his refined daughter knows nothing about

baseball, hunting, or fishing. With his best friend gone for the summer and in search of companionship other than his nine siblings he reluctantly hangs out with proper, opinionated Emma, who tags along with him asking questions and trying to keep up. Gradually, Dit begins to respect her independence, intelligence, compassion, and determination. But the harsh realities of segregation and racist attitudes threaten their friendship and open Dit's eyes to injustice. After witnessing the town barber's self-defense shooting of the alcoholic and abusive sheriff, Dit and Emma hatch a plan to save the black man's life. Dit's episodic story resonates with youthful authenticity. Peer pressure and racial barbs weigh on his competitive but sensitive spirit. Dit's insular world expands on drives to Selma with Dr. Griffiths, when the influenza epidemic of 1918 invades Moundville, during his pa's shotgun vigil to protect neighbors from nightriders, and in his shared exploits and lively discussions with Emma. Adult characters offer a range of guidance, perspective, and tolerance that helps shape Dit's understanding of his world. Readers will find humor in his candid account, universality in his dilemmas and blunders, and inspiration in his friendship with Emma and their mutual desire for social justice. --Gerry Larson, Durham School of the Arts, NC Copyright © Reed Business Information, a division of Reed Elsevier Inc. All rights reserved. --This text refers to an out of print or unavailable edition of this title.

While most of the residents in the tiny, World War I-era Moundville, Alabama, are shocked that their new postmaster is African American, Dit is simply surprised that said postmaster's child turns out to be a girl, not the boy his own age he was expecting. Bookish, timid Emma can hardly fill the role of fellow adventurer and baseball player that easygoing Dit, with more than a trace of a Huck Finn-like charm, had his heart set on. In unexpected ways, though, the unlikely twosome cross each other's paths and slowly build a partnership of complementary strengths. When Jim Crow rears its ugly head in the person of the menacing and blatantly racist sheriff, Emma and Dit embark on a risky adventure to save the life of a man sentenced to hang on trumped-up charges. Levine's story treats racism frankly and with no mincing of words. The highlight of this coming-of-age journey comes from watching the two kids learn about the world and come to care about each other in the way of 13-year-olds. Grades 5-8. --Anne O'Malley --This text refers to an out of print or unavailable edition of this title.

I purchased this for my 12 year old, as she loved the other book by this author. She loved this one as well. We were very lucky in that the author visited the middle school and my daughter was able

to get her books signed! Hope the author continues to write more great books.

1917. A "negra" girl. A white boy. Friendship is the highest form of love. But just maybe for Emma and Dit, there is something more.

Not bad at all

This was recommended to me by a friend/colleague at an elementary school I often work at. I read it first and absolutely fell in love with it. It's a powerful and poignant story about two kids around the turn of the (last) century who are breaking racial barriers by getting to know each other and become friends: a white boy and a black girl in the south. I loved this story so much, I bought this copy for my mom and asked her to send it to another friend of mine when she was done. It's a fantastic and touching story, not predictable, and truly well written with wit and humor and sadness and magnificent joy.

Wonderful book. I would compare it to Harper Lee's *To Kill a Mockingbird*. The story line and issues are similar and has a remarkable effect on young readers, who may think Ms. Lee's book too mature. The characters in *The Best Bad Luck* are written with depth and meaning. I met Kristin once and she is a lovely lady and I look forward to more of her books.

*The Best Bad Luck I Ever Had* is southern historical novel featuring characters the author unearthed in her own family history. It's impossible to know how much was truth and how much was fiction, because each and every character in this moving tweenage drama was well-developed and believable. The law man ironically serves as villain in chief of the tale, and though he was easy to dislike, he was also complex: Levine didn't simplify him but instead let readers see the internal turmoil he felt. It's refreshing to read a book for young readers that explores challenging issues without dumbing them down or getting preachy. The unlikely but life-changing friendship between Dit and Emma is truly an inspiration, as is the subtly unfolding story of Dit's relationship with his father. Highly recommend this book.

My 13 yr old son had to read this book for school and of course, he wasn't looking forward to it. Now that he is 3/4 through the book, he says it's really good (ie. he loves it!). He was excited to tell me about the author and her story after he had the privilege of meeting her at his school today. He said

that she has only written two books, but that he hopes she will write more. This mom says 5 stars!

I read this book to my 5th grade class after reading another book, by Kristin Levine, The Lions of Little Rock. This is another excellent period piece dealing with racial tension and the conflicted friendship between a black girl and a white boy. This book is well written and as with her other book written by the perspective of the white child.

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