

The American Girl Store is Totally Ridiculous

by **Lindsay LaVine**

My 8-year-old niece has an American Girl doll who is better dressed than I am. For her birthday — the doll's, not my niece's — my Mom asked me to pick up the roller skating outfit for Kit Kittredge. So, being the good daughter that I am, I dutifully went to the store. I've never been to the American Girl store but HOLY SHIT.

For those who don't know, Kit Kittredge is described as "a resourceful girl growing up in the Great Depression." Last time I checked, they didn't wear roller derby helmets and in-line skates, or have braces back in 1934, but I'm not a history major so I'll just go with it.

This place is a money pit. The dolls cost a hundred bucks, and then there are the accessories. For \$10, your doll can wear glasses made by the tiny hands of Chinese children. Can you

imagine how the nightly conversations at the dinner table go? "And how was your day?" "Mine was great, I made glasses to help kids see." Um, no. These aren't for real children. They're for rich kids who want their dolls to suffer from astigmatism.

Did you know you can get a get-well set for your doll? My cousin's able-bodied daughter asked for a kit, complete with crutches, casts, and a wheelchair. It's nice to know Munchausen's Syndrome by proxy will continue into the next generation.

The American Girl Store has a hospital, right next to the hair salon. The hospital is manned by a lady wearing a Clinique Counter lab coat. You can bring your doll in for a "Wellness Visit" (for real, that's what it's called.) For \$14, you can get her ears pierced in a sterile environment to avoid infection. And then there's the major surgery. If the doll's "admitted," she'll get a hospital gown and ID bracelet. It's really unfair to dolls who think they're going in for a blowout and realize they're

getting their tubes tied instead. It's a pretty sad area. What if the owner, who has already forked over several hundred dollars at this point, is unwilling to pay for morphine? How do they muffle the dolls' screams?

Then there's the hair salon. The hair salon has five different stylists giving perms. Somehow, I don't think giving up-dos to dolls was in their five-year plan. They look dead inside. (Both the dolls and the stylists.) When I went in the other day, ALL THE CHAIRS were filled. Want to see how the economy's doing? Go to the American Girl Store and check out the number of dolls sitting under dryers.

Your American Girl can't just sit at home, being bored. Oh, no. She needs a \$58 game night kit, complete with a checkerboard with real game pieces, a giant plate of nachos for her future eating disorder, two trendy bottles of pomegranate sparkling soda, and play money so she can tip the delivery driver.

I couldn't take it anymore. I stuffed the play money into the nearest doll's (Caroline?) sports bra and left the store. What? She didn't have a fanny pack — how else was she supposed to carry her money?

I peaced out of there before I was escorted out by the American Girl police and thrown into the American Girl slammer. I haven't been back to the store, but I'm pretty sure Caroline's wearing a turtleneck by now.

Lindsay LaVine is a comedian living in Chicago.



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