



Katie and the Mustang, Book 1

Kathleen Duey , Robert Papp (Illustrator)

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Orphaned at age six and taken in by a heartless couple, nine-year-old Katie Rose spends her days doing chores and dreaming of going west to find her Uncle Jack. Then Mr. Stevens brings home an unbroken Mustang, and Katie's world changes. Katie is drawn to the horse's wildness, and he seems to sense her need for companionship. So when Katie learns that the Stevenses plan to join the expansion West - without her or the Mustang - she makes a desperate decision to go on her own. And she will not leave the Mustang behind.

Katie and the Mustang, Book 1 Details

Date : Published May 24th 2004 by Puffin Books (first published May 1st 2004)

ISBN : 9780142400906

Author : Kathleen Duey , Robert Papp (Illustrator)

Format : Paperback 144 pages

Genre : Animals, Horses, Historical, Historical Fiction, Childrens, Middle Grade

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From Reader Review *Katie and the Mustang*, Book 1 for online ebook

Taylor says

I forgot about these books! Perfect for my horse loving childhood. I think I read this series around 5th or 6th grade? I remember really enjoying them at the time.

Kaleigh says

I think it is a great book even though i am only on chapter 3, it still is a greatbook! What I ave read so far is so touching. It will always be a good book to read for ages 9-15.(if younger have some one to rea it to you.)

Anonymous says

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‘Ware Spoilers!

Generalized Synopsis: Basically the story is a series of small plots in an overarching theme. The best way to experience the books is to read them all in one sitting (very easy to do) once you have them. All but book 2 is available from Archive.org.

The story centers around Katie, a little girl who ends up, after some bad circumstances, an orphan being taken in by a childless couple. In a Harry Potter-esque fashion, Katie ends up in an even worse situation – which weirdly fits the timeline this is all happening- and finds herself escaping her stepparents with a mustang that the man had bought. The horse is, of course, wild to anyone who isn’t Katie. The rest of the books revolves around Katie traveling the Oregon Trail, first with the farmhand who helps her get there, then again with another family all the way to Oregon City.

What I liked: The one thing I’ve come to appreciate about Duey’s plots is they’re entirely grounded in realistic expectations. She follows in Marguerite Henry’s fashion, where the protagonist doesn’t always get what they want in the end, or does get something close to what they wanted, despite everything. I appreciate it and find it terribly depressing at the same time. I grew up with the books where everything tied up perfectly in a bow, the protagonist’s dreams and wishes become reality and the bad guys got their just desserts. This doesn’t completely happen in this book. The whole book gravitates around the girl’s relationship with this horse, and yet at the end she’s forced to make a difficult decision. The whole drive behind the plot is to find her uncle, as we’re reminded constantly all the way up to the end, and that doesn’t exactly end how she expected, either. It’s great in that it shows children this ... sense of realism, reality, what the world is actually like. But at the same time it’s just like man something needs to go right, something über positive needs to happen here.

What Annoyed Me: While I liked the realism, some of the wishy-washy characters were frustrating, and only showed just how weak the plot really is. It is a children’s series. The plot revolves around relationships and

circumstances, and some of those characters only existed to be the antagonist, to cause conflict, or to...evolve into protagonists later in the books for no real reason other than the author wanted them to.

Overall: This series has its faults, sure, but it's a really good animal/historical fiction series. It does have negative notes, and I would suggest reading it yourself before deciding if your child is up for it. I'd say it's for mature older children, or children who enjoy these types of books.

I give this series 3 Stars.

Elizabeth says

Skyped with author. I would have loved this series as a kid. A nice alternative for those who have already read all the little house and American girl series.

Kim Burean says

This book was a historical fiction book about a girl, Katie, whose parents and sister have died. Katie works for a harsh couple named Mr. & Mrs. Stevens. One day, Mr. Stevens brings home an untamed mustang. Most of the book focuses on Katie working to gain the mustang's trust while dodging getting in trouble with Mrs. Stevens.

This is the first book in the "Hoofbeats" series. It would appeal to girls who like horses, but would probably be boring to anyone else.

Kate says

Gosh the Stevenses were mean to Katie! I think that Hiram and Katie made the right decision in the end of this book.

Rachel says

Kathleen Duey's books are wonderful, so good that even though they are for my daughter, I just can't put them down. I don't know who enjoyed them more, me or her.

Bonnie says

A pretty straightforward young readers chapter book about an orphaned girl in the mid-1800s and the wild mustang her foster father buys and she tames. Each chapter opens with a few brief sentences from the mustang's POV and then moves to Katie's first person POV. A bit slow moving overall (and it bugs me that she's not naming this mustang!), but it managed to surprise me a bit more than once near the end, and that's always a good thing in my book (pun intended). I would've like more character development for Hiram, but

it looks like that might happen in Book 2. And if I like it, then I'm going to have to track down #3 and #4 in this series.

McKinney says

I know there are a lot of girls-and-horses books out there, but the hoofbeats series is special. I saved my own money when I was 10 so that I could buy every one of them. Historical fiction and coming-of-age, this series is the perfect combination of genres. The books are sweet, and I reread them over and over. I love the cover art on them all, too.

Rebecca says

After she was orphaned in an epidemic at the age of six, Katie was taken in by the Stevenses, a childless couple. Three years have gone by, and Katie continues to be unhappy. She has no friends, and the Stevenses treat her more like a servant than a daughter. When Mr. Stevens buys a wild Mustang and brings it home to the farm, Katie falls in love with the horse. She forms a bond with the Mustang, and when she learns Mr. Stevens plans to sell it, Katie takes the horse and runs away, eventually joining a wagon train west on the Oregon Trail, hoping to find her uncle, who had gone west years before.

This four book series is really cute and is sure to appeal to young girls who enjoy historical fiction and horse stories. I liked the details of life along the Oregon Trail, and Katie's bond with the Mustang is very sweet.

Mazzou B says

When I read this as a teen, I said it was "Nice. Boring ending."

Dani says

Love this book (and the whole series) Kathleen Duey is an amazing author I also love the movie Spirit and of course she wrote the book too (want to read it SO bad)!!!

Abby Ann says

If you like horses or adventure you will love this book!

Catherine says

I thought this book was very good. It is definitely below my level, but I always love a good horse book.

Sometimes they're hard to find. I am going to read the rest of the series to find out what happens.

Ella5742 says

This story takes place in Scott Country, Iowa where a young girl named Katie is thrown through the hardships in life after losing her family. Orphaned and alone, Katie seeks comfort from a mustang that her guardians have recently bought. As we go through the story we see Katie and this mustangs relationship grow as they try to get past the obstacles in the 1800s.

Although the book is short their are four more books in the series. The first book to me feels more like the beginning of a larger book.
