

Hooked on Horses



Chapter One by Kay Hively

Suzanne Walker was in love with horses. Because she lived in a big city, however, she could not have one of her own. Instead, she took lessons at a nearby stable.

After her first lesson, Suzanne was hooked on horses. Her instructor even told Suzanne's mother that "Suzanne looks like she was born in a saddle." Because she was crazy about horses, Suzanne was happy when her father told her that the family was moving. He said they were going to the small town in Missouri where her grandparents lived. He said he had a job in a large factory there.

Her father also said they would live on a farm. He said Suzanne might even get a horse.

When the school ended in June of 1934, Suzanne said good-bye. She was sad to leave her friends, but she knew there would be new friends in Missouri. And maybe there would be a horse.

It was a big job to move. Suzanne helped all she could. She packed her dolls and tea sets carefully. She didn't want them broken on the move. She also helped her mother take the pillows, sheets and covers from her bed and pack them into big boxes. In the box of pillows, Suzanne packed two trophies she had won in horse shows. She thought the little bronze horses would be safe nestled deep between the pillows.

After working all day, everything was finally packed. Because their beds had been taken down, the family slept on blankets on the floor. Suzanne said it was like a camping trip.

The next morning two men came to the house and loaded the boxes and furniture into a truck and drove away. Then a taxi came to the house.

Suzanne and her parents got in the taxi and rode to the train station. Soon they had their tickets and were on the train. Her father put their suitcases on a shelf while Suzanne and her mother settled into their seats. Suzanne sat by a big window. As the train started to roll out of the depot, she could see all the big buildings of the city. Then as the train moved farther along, she saw small stores and houses. Finally, the train left the city behind and Suzanne could see little towns and farms – and horses. There was much to see as the train rattled down the track.

On the train, Suzanne's parents talked about their future. Suzanne sat quietly looking out the window, listening to the sounds of the train and thinking about her own future. She wondered what life would be like in a small town.

After lunch Suzanne fell asleep in her seat on the train. As she slept, she dreamed about owning a horse.

Would that really happen? Would she really have a horse of her own?



Classroom Extensions

Things to Think About and Do –

- A. What did her instructor mean when he said that Suzanne "looked like she was born in a saddle?"
- B. Have you ever ridden on a train? Does a train come through your town? What is the difference between a freight train and a passenger train? Name three things that a freight train might carry.

Author Kay Hively and Illustrator Billie Gofourth-Stewart are both of Neosho, Missouri. Produced in partnership with this newspaper and the Missouri Press Foundation with support from Verizon Foundation. Copyright 2002.

Next Week: Chapter Two – Home on the Farm