

# Hooked on Horses



## Chapter Three by Kay Hively

Things were very busy after Suzanne and her family moved into their house in the country. Her father began working in town, and her mother worked around the house. Mrs. Walker wanted new curtains. For her room, Suzanne asked for curtains with horses on them.

Each morning Suzanne got up early to get her chores done. Her father said if she wanted a horse, she must prove she could do chores without complaining. He reminded her that a horse needs feed, water and exercise every day.

When she finished her chores, Suzanne was allowed to walk down the road to see her grandparents. Sometimes they had chores for her. She didn't mind because, as a reward, she was allowed to ride Babe. Most of the time, her grandfather would saddle Bill and go riding with her. Usually they rode around the farm or down the road to Suzanne's house. But one hot July day, they decided to ride into town.

As they reached the edge of the city, Suzanne saw the big stables she had seen the day she went riding in her father's new car. In the corral, several kids were riding horses. Her grandfather said many children in Mexico, Missouri, took riding lessons. He said Mexico was one of the finest horse towns in the whole country.

Grandfather flicked Bill's reins and turned the big horse toward the stables. Suzanne followed her grandfather up to the fence of the corral. She watched with great interest as the kids worked their horses in the corral. Many of the children were about Suzanne's age. They seemed very serious in their lessons.

Grandfather said the kids were working hard because a big junior horse show was coming up in a neighboring county. He said they all wanted to win a blue ribbon.

Suzanne was surprised as she watched the kids in the corral. Everything was very quiet. There were two men in the ring with the kids, but they hardly spoke a word. The two men mostly watched. But sometimes they would stop a horse and speak quietly to the rider. This was very different from the riding lessons Suzanne had in the city. Her city instructors were always yelling.

On their way back to the farm, Suzanne told her grandfather that she would like to compete in a horse show. He said it took a good horse and lots of work. If she was willing to work, he said, she should be able to compete just like any other youngster.

All the way home Suzanne thought about competing in a horse show. She knew she could work hard, but what about a horse? Grandfather said it took a good horse, and she didn't have a horse. There must be some way to get one, she thought.



## Classroom Extensions

### Things to Think About and Do -

- A. Suzanne had chores each day. What chores do you have at home? Are there other things you could do to help your family? Make a list of indoor and outdoor chores you think children can do.
- B. Suzanne needs a horse. What do you think she can do to get a horse? If she gets a horse, what other things will she need to compete in a show?

*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 Four – Problem Solved!**