

Hooked Horses



Chapter Four by Kay Hively

Every day Suzanne thought about a horse of her own. She wanted to ask her father about it, but she was afraid there might not be enough money for one. Grownups were talking about hard times. Someone said the country was in a “great depression.” Suzanne didn’t know what that meant, but she knew it wasn’t good.

One day, as Suzanne and her grandfather went riding, she told him about her problem. She asked how she could get a horse to compete in the show.

Grandfather smiled and said he had a solution to her problem.

A solution! Suzanne begged her Grandfather to tell her his idea.

The solution, he said, was right underneath Suzanne’s saddle. She could compete on Babe, he said. Babe was a fine saddle horse, Grandfather declared.

Suzanne was speechless. But yes, she said, Babe would do just fine. With this news, Suzanne’s head was in the clouds with dreams of competition. Her grandfather brought her back to earth. Many kids around Mexico have been taught by some of the best teachers in the world, he said. He also said some of the finest saddle horses in the country would be in the show.

Suzanne didn’t care about the other horses. She really didn’t even care if she won; she just wanted to compete.

That night after supper, Suzanne sat down beside her father and told him what her grandfather had talked about. She said that competing in the show would be the most important thing in the world.

To Suzanne’s delight, her father agreed that she should compete on Babe.

Even her mother agreed that it was time to start training so she could do a good job in the show ring.

The next morning Suzanne was up earlier than usual. Like a tornado, she tore through her chores and headed down the road to tell her grandparents.

Training, her grandfather cautioned, must begin right away if she had any hope of doing well. Babe needed work, he said, and so did Suzanne.

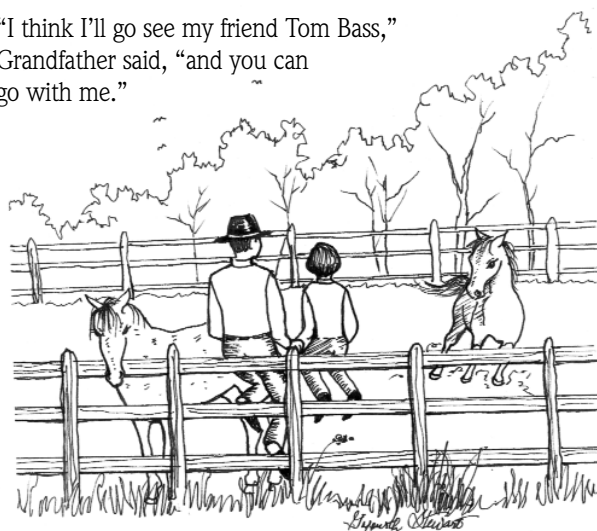
Grandfather agreed to help Suzanne prepare for the show. He promised to put Babe on a proper diet. He said he would take better care of Babe’s coat, so she would look good in the show ring. But, he said, Suzanne must find someone to teach her how to show a saddle horse.

Grandfather said Babe would have to do many fancy steps, and Suzanne would have to be able to get the little mare to do them on command. They both would need lessons.

But lessons cost money, Suzanne told her grandfather, and she didn’t have any.

Suzanne and her grandfather sat on the corral fence and talked about how they would find and pay a teacher.

“I think I’ll go see my friend Tom Bass,”
Grandfather said, “and you can
go with me.”



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Classroom Extensions

Things to Think About and Do -

- A. What was the “great depression?” When and why did it occur? Ask an older person you know to tell you about the “great depression.”
- B. See if you can find Mexico, Missouri, on a map. Using a road map, figure out how far it is from Mexico, Missouri, to Mexico City, Mexico.

Next Week: Chapter Five—Suzanne Meets Tom Bass!