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Hattie Ever After



Synopsis

After leaving Uncle Chester's homestead claim, orphan Hattie Brooks throws a lasso around a new dream, even bigger than the Montana sky. She wants to be a reporter, knowing full well that a few pieces published in the Arlington News will not suffice. Real reporters must go to Grand Places, and do Grand Things, like Hattie's hero Nellie Bly. Another girl might be stymied by this, but Hattie has faced down a hungry wolf and stood up to a mob of angry men. Nothing can squash her desire to write for a big city newspaper. A letter and love token from Uncle Chester's old flame in San Francisco fuels that desire and Hattie jumps at the opportunity to get there by working as a seamstress for a traveling acting troupe. This could be her chance to solve the mystery of her "scoundrel" uncle and, in the process, help her learn more about herself. But Hattie must first tell Charlie that she will not join him in Seattle. Even though her heart approves of Charlie's plan for their marriage, her mind fears that saying yes to him would be saying no to herself. Hattie holds her own in the big city, literally pitching her way to a byline, and a career that could be even bigger than Nellie Bly's. But can making headlines compensate for the pain of betrayal and lost love? Hattie must dig deep to find her own true place in the world. Kirby Larson once again creates a lovingly written novel about the remarkable and resilient young orphan, Hattie Inez Brooks.

Book Information

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Age Range: 12 and up

Grade Level: 7 and up

Customer Reviews

Gr 6-10-The feisty protagonist from *Hattie Big Sky* (Delacorte, 2006) returns. In 1919, the 17-year-old is working at a boardinghouse in Montana. The restlessness that she has been feeling comes to a head when a surprise visit from Charlie makes her see that she cannot contemplate settling down as his wife until she pursues her own ambitions as a reporter. Hattie travels with a vaudeville troupe to San Francisco. At first, it seems that her only exposure to the newspaper world will be as the night-shift cleaning woman for the *San Francisco Chronicle*, but perseverance and a few lucky coincidences allow her to achieve her dream of being a full-fledged reporter in a way that highlights the struggles of women in the workforce in the aftermath of World War I. Along the way, Hattie struggles with her decision to leave Charlie behind, especially as she is betrayed by people she thought were friends. As difficult as some of these incidents are, Hattie manages to find true friendship in surprising places. Larson's meticulous research brings early-20th-century San Francisco to life, and readers will feel that they are right there with Hattie in the hustle and bustle of a booming city. The way in which she achieves not only her professional ambitions but also personal growth and fulfillment leads to a wholly satisfying conclusion, and the author's note gives readers a good feel for the solid historical foundations of Hattie's story. While this novel stands on its own, references to characters and events in the earlier book may be confusing to those meeting Hattie for the first time.-Kim Dare, Fairfax County Public Schools, VA (c) Copyright 2011. Library Journals LLC, a wholly owned subsidiary of Media Source, Inc. No redistribution permitted. --This text refers to the Audio Cassette edition.

Readers first met Hattie Brooks in the Newbery Honor Book *Hattie Big Sky* (2006). Now Hattie has left Montana for San Francisco, hoping she can somehow find a way to become a newspaper reporter. In quick succession, Hattie works as seamstress for a vaudeville troupe, a char woman at the *San Francisco Chronicle*, and then becomes a researcher there as she finds ways to help people to work her way up the ladder. One of the best parts about this is the way Larson brings San Francisco, circa 1919, alive—especially the opportunities and stumbling blocks for women. Less successful are a few of the plot points, including the introduction of a scammer, who seemingly spends more money on Hattie than the small change she is able to swindle from her. But fans of the first book will be thrilled to see the ups and downs of Hattie's romance with old boyfriend Charlie, while her relationship with another fellow leads to an interesting twist. This is reminiscent of Maude Hart Lovelace's later Betsy books, whose heroine also wanted to write. And that's high praise. Grades 7-10. --Cooper, Ilene

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Life was hard on the plains, and Hattie struggled mightily. As we re-enter the story, Hattie is now 17 and working as a cleaning woman in a boarding house in Great Falls. But Hattie still yearns to carve out a place for herself. She's got big plans for herself: throwing "a lasso around a dream even bigger than a Montana farm," she has decided to become a reporter. Hattie leaps at the opportunity to go to San Francisco with a traveling acting troupe. The city draws her even more so, as she's sure she can learn more about her Uncle Chester - was he really the scoundrel he said he was? Nothing in Montana seemed to suggest that he really was. And though her childhood friend Charlie wants to marry her, Hattie worries that "saying yes to him was saying no to myself." With her head full of questions, Hattie sets off for San Francisco in the summer of 1919. Larson hits her stride when Hattie reaches San Francisco. The city comes alive with the many details she weaves into the story. From her first glimpse of Newspaper Row, with the Call, the Examiner and the Chronicle Buildings all next to each other, to an exhilarating airplane ride over the bay, Hattie is like a little child soaking in every sight. Readers will cheer Hattie on as she steps into the Chronicle Building to apply for a job. Hattie has pluck and determination, realizing that she might need to start on the cleaning staff of the newspaper, but with a little luck and hard work she might be able to get a break. Larson builds suspense as Hattie makes new friends, investigates news stories, and gets a lucky break at the Chronicle. Throughout, she is passionate and earnest, following her dream. Many young readers who are drawn to Hattie's story will empathize with her dream of becoming a writer and making her mark on the world.

Nice to have more of Hattie's story, but not as emotional as the first story. Still, a good read for all age groups.

I enjoyed reading Hattie Ever After. The target audience may be middle & high school students, but the adventure, history and hardships are told in a fine tale, and are good reading for any age. I discover Hattie on tape in the story, Hattie Big Sky. I was delighted to learn (thank you & my iPhone) about a second book and while sitting at a restaurant with my mother (95 years!), ordered Hattie Big Sky & Hattie Ever After. The less than 2 day delivery to my mother pleased her and both books have been enjoyed by her many friends in their delightful, independent living home. Thank you,

I thoroughly enjoyed Ms. Larson's other book about Hattie, "Hattie Big Sky", and was very excited to find this "Part 2." I am deeply entrenched in Hattie's story and though I wasn't sure about her "relocation", I found myself cheering for her to make a go in the big city. Ms. Larson writes her character in a well-rounded way, not just one-dimensional -- Hattie is just like most young women: filled with dreams, a desire to succeed, and a craving for attention and love. The era in the story is fascinating and subtly teaches a history lesson, just as the author did in the original "Hattie story." Another true gem for Kirby Larson!

After finishing Hattie Big Sky I could not wait to get my hands on Hattie Ever After. It must have been my lucky day to find out that after I finished the first book the sequel was due out two days later so I did not have to wait long. As a reader of many historical novels over the years and a big fan of stories regarding the pioneers on the prairie I immediately fell in love with Hattie in the first story and knew I would grow to appreciate her more as she moved to the big city in the sequel. At the beginning of the story the reader finds Hattie with many choices to make. This theme runs throughout the story as Hattie calls on prayer, friends, and at times her inner voice to help her find her place in life. When Hattie left her Montana homestead she also left dreams and a sense of purpose. Throughout this novel we find Hattie not taking no for an answer and working hard to meet her goals. We are introduced to new characters, some we will cheer for and others we will jeer. The characters are well developed, while still giving the reader the opportunity to make them. It is great to find old friends from Hattie Big Sky in this novel as well. There is less of a focus on the war in the sequel, but it does give readers insight to life after the war as the "boys" returned from fighting overseas. The readers are led through an adventure in perseverance and will as Hattie works to become a female reporter in a world where they are few and far between. We learn about Hattie's unwillingness to accept no for an answer and that she is not afraid of hard work. Hattie is a tremendous role model for all girls. She is strong and determined. She does not let being a girl stand in her way of things or use it as an excuse either. She thinks for herself and does not allow her judgement to be clouded by suitors. I loved how this book ended and thought that it brought together all the loose ends and gives a sense of closure more than the previous novel. I think it shows that hard work pays off and that if something is important to someone they will find a way to make it all work out. Hattie is a character that will stay with many for many years. I will enthusiastically recommend this book to my middle school students! I have suggested it to quite a few adults already as well!

Hattie Ever After was fun but also predictable!

I purchased these for a teacher in my school district as requested. She has been very happy with them so far.

It was great for my upper level reading students in the Middle School great to use after reading Hattie Big Sky.

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