

Reader's Report: Lucky's Horse Shoes

Captivated by the glamour of beautiful high heels and elegant hats, a spirited racehorse becomes determined to emulate race-day fashion in her quest to win the cup. *Lucky's Horse Shoes* is an amusing and light-hearted story of the pros and cons of impractical footwear. Written by Kathy Creamer, this delightful children's story is a work of fiction and is comprised of five hundred and ten words (510).

At the beginning of the story, the reader is immediately introduced to the protagonist, Lucky: a fiercely independent and highly capable racehorse who is described as being the 'fastest horse in the stable'. Privately, she holds a particular fascination for ladies' race-day fashion. One day, she reveals to her trainer that she too would like to wear an elegant hat and she asks him to fetch her one. Taken aback by her strange request, Mitch replies that such a hat would interfere with her ability to see while running a race. Even though she knows this is true, her desire to have one does not fade away. Eventually, they join the other horses as they trot around the enclosure before the race begins. It is here that Lucky spots the beautiful high heel shoes worn by the female spectators. Once again, she communicates her desire for another fashionable accessory, and she asks Mitch to retrieve some high heels. He reminds her that her own lucky horseshoes are the most practical shoes and that heels would seriously hinder her ability to win the race.

When her request is denied, Lucky begins to snort with indignation and stamps her feet. She then kicks and bucks so much so that her jockey cannot climb upon her saddle. Unable to reason with Lucky, Mitch decides to borrow some ladies' shoes and presents them to her. With her new shoes on, Lucky trots around the enclosure as if she were a show horse. The other horses, perceiving this, become envious of Lucky's shoes and soon they too begin to kick and buck. Accordingly, all the horses are given high heels before the start of the race. With the crack of the starting gun, the horses begin to wobble and stumble all over the track, their heels becoming firmly embedded in the turf. Realising that her new shoes are completely unsuitable for running, Lucky kicks them off and runs as fast as she can with her old lucky horseshoes. After winning the race, she decides to put the heels back on again despite their impracticality. She admits to her trainer that she will only wear such shoes when she wants to feel 'fashionable' and that nothing will ever replace her own horseshoes if she wants to be the fastest horse in the stable.

This highly entertaining short story is bound to be a favourite among young readers and adults alike, particularly those who are familiar with race-day conventions. It tells the familiar story of an individual's desire to express themselves through a new and unfamiliar medium. In the case of this story, however, the protagonist must learn to balance her desire for outrageous fashion with the practical needs of her day to day life—a dilemma that many young children may already be familiar with. The written text is creative, amusing and succinct; it enables the reader to develop a vivid picture of the story's events and characters in their own imagination. Of course, Kathy Creamer's story will be greatly augmented by the inclusion of vibrant and original illustrations that uphold the art brief.

Lucky's Horse Shoes is an engaging and imaginative work that would be ideally suited to children aged between 4–9 years, depending on their language and literacy skills. It would be an invaluable addition to both private and public collections.