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In Kate Hoefler's realistic and poetic picture book debut about the wide open West, the myth of rowdy, rough-riding cowboys and cowgirls is remade. A timely and multifaceted portrayal reveals a lifestyle that is as diverse as it contrary to what we've come to expect.

Real Cowboys Details

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Author : Kate Hoefler , Jonathan Bean (Illustrator)

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From Reader Review Real Cowboys for online ebook

Silence says

Audience: Preschool / Grade School

Illustrations: Bright and busy. Jonathan Bean uses multiple layers of silhouettes and texture to create his compositions which gives reads A LOT to look at.

Plot / Review: I really liked the message of this one. Many children go through a period of fascination with cowboys, so I appreciate that this book talks about more than steering cattle. It addresses their connection with the land and their herds. It shows that women can be “cowboys” too. It makes children aware of the fact that there is a code and culture associated with life on the range, and that isn’t something I’ve really seen with other picture books on the topic.

Read Aloud: Yes, but would also work as a one-on-one.

Megan says

As someone who hates Westerns almost as much as the patriarchy, I thought this book would be a total miss. But, *but*, I *loved* it. I’m all for children’s books that introduce diverse ways of living, and this book does that to a T. The illustrations are as captivating and immersive as the author’s prose, and I adore the message that you can be strong & kind, tough & emotional, find beauty in nature & solitude, and find happiness by yourself & with others.

Abigail says

With a simple text exploring the true nature of cowboys - cowboys, the narrator assures us, are gentle, thoughtful, and know how to listen and to ask for help - and appealing artwork that captures both the broad sweep of life on the range and the specific experiences of one cowboy, Real Cowboys takes an iconic image and uses it to deconstruct notions of what that image represents. Although tough and hard-working, cowboys are also considerate and caring; although practical and down-to-earth, they are also dreamers and star-gazers. In short: like any other group of people, they contain multitudes...

I really appreciated Kate Hoefler’s use of the image of the cowboy in her exploration of stereotypes, as I would imagine that this is not a figure that springs immediately to most people’s minds, when they consider the issue of preconceptions and prejudice. And yet, the cowboy has often been one of the archetypal images of masculinity in American culture, so it stands to reason that any number of preconceptions are bound up in how it is viewed. Hoefler gently prompts the reader to reconsider some of those preconceptions in this book, hopefully also leading them to a broader understanding of masculinity. Recommended to anyone who loves cowboy stories, or who is looking for books that explore a wider range of masculine traits than has been traditionally seen in cowboy depictions.

Mary Ann says

I love it when my young readers really get the big ideas--the surprising, unexpected ideas that authors and illustrators layer in their books--even when they haven't yet developed sophisticated language to describe these ideas. In *Real Cowboys*, Kate Hoefler and Jonathan Bean ask young readers to reconsider the stereotype of a macho cowboy.

Right from the cover, my students could tell that this cowboy was concerned and worried about the animal he was holding. They noticed the cowboy's expression and the way he was holding the calf, with his arms wrapped around it--and they could imagine a story behind this picture.

Hoefler's text flows gently as we start to read the book. Real cowboys, she tells readers, are quiet, thoughtful, gentle, and careful. They stay with their cattle on long rides, through day and night. While the text encompasses all cowboys, Bean's illustrations help young readers see a more distinct story, following a specific cowboy, his herd and his team through their work.

My 3rd graders were not quite able to put into words how this picture book challenges the stereotypes of cowboys, but they definitely got the message that Hoefler and Bean want us to think of cowboys as caring, thoughtful and patient--and not just rushing around on horseback, chasing cattle. Even more importantly, they could make connections to how they want to act in their own lives, how they want to treat others and care for animals. As we ended the story, a quiet hush fell over the room. It was a beautiful moment.

Jon(athan) Nakapalau says

Wonderful book that introduces children to what cowboys (and cowgirls) really do.

Janet says

If I could give a separate rating for illustrations it would be a 4 star as I did enjoy the colors used as well as the rather indistinct look of the illustrations.

The text well it just doesn't ring true that now we have the real way a cowboy is: all soft and gentle like and his work day goes smoothly because he is in harmony with everything. Seems to me this title is as much of a stereotype of what a cowboy is as the macho stereotype. I am disappointed in this title.

Jennifer says

I am a little bit in love with this book! I briefly met Kate last winter and I'm excited to finally see the finished product.

Hoefler's poetic, poignant text is set off so beautifully by Bean's illustrations. I especially love the spread of depicting a lone cowboy gazing out over the prairie with the line "Real cowboys cry." Having known more

than a few real cowboys in my day (my dad's family is from Oklahoma), I'd say many of them might tear up over this nuanced and honest portrayal of their lives, work and world.

This would be a great book to share for storytime with preschoolers or older children, but even better for a bedtime story for all those little ones who dream of being cowboys (or cowgirls). Highly recommended.

Cindy Mitchell *Kiss the Book* says

Hoefler, Kate. Real Cowboys, PICTURE BOOK. Houghton Mifflin Harcourt, 2016. \$16.99.

Giving insight into how “real” cowboys spend their days, this picture book is full of details. In essence, real cowboys are respectful, hard working, and devoted. They have kind souls and do their jobs well. I also loved that it states that cowboys are many different colors of the earth and that “Real cowboys are girls, too.” This is essentially a poem in picture book format and it’s outstanding. The pictures are fabulous, the message is on point, and the text is full of imagery. I was very pleasantly surprised by this unassuming treat of a book.

EL (K-3), EL- ESSENTIAL. Reviewed by Shay, School Librarian
<http://kissthebook.blogspot.com/2016/...>

Sylvester says

5* art

3* story

Not exactly a story. Squirt would've liked it better if it was - I mean if he had to choose between this and "Cowboy Small" by Lois Lenski, he would choose the latter every time. The author wanted to get a message across (even tough cowboys have feelings) which is fine, but much better conveyed within a real story. Absolutely gorgeous illustrations, though.

tracy lou says

I might be naive, and I'm sure there are probably a million problems with this book that many of my friends would love to discuss in a graduate course, but I think that, in general, this book is a very appropriate response to the toxic, disturbing masculinity running rampant in U.S. culture today. This is a great book if you want to talk about character traits.

Malia says

This book is so gorgeous and perfect, and is a lovely positive portrayal of masculinity.

Laela says

Right away this cover grabbed me. The many textures, patterns, and subtle use of color just draws the eye in. BUT THE STORY, oh my goodness, it speaks to me.

I like the way Hoefler portrays cowboys as real people with real feelings. There is nothing rough or tumble about these cowboys. They are patient and kind, lovers of animals and Earth. It is a refreshing change of pace to read about something that is so manly but so gentle and caring.

Thank you Kate Hoefler

Tasha says

This picture book takes a look at the skills that really make up a cowboy's work. It's not a book about lassoing and riding quickly. Instead the skills that a cowboy needs are things like patience, something that allows them to ride slowly along with the herd. They need to be about to ask for help from others and treat their dogs well. They have to be considerate of those around them and of the environment they ride through. They need to be strong but also careful and caring. They can be girls and are people of all colors. Their jobs may not be all fast horses and wild ruckus, but somehow the quiet reality is all the more heroic.

Hoefler chooses qualities of cowboys' lives that match those that small children will be learning in classrooms and at home. They ability to share, to take turns, to be considerate, to ask for help. They are all things that we all need to know how to do in our lives. She then writes them in a poetic way that demonstrates how those qualities really matter when out on the range, how they make the job safer. Hoefler also speaks to the loneliness that cowboys feel and the sadness when cattle and dogs are lost.

The illustrations by Bean are bright and stylish. They move from glaring sun to winter storms to deep blue night. Throughout there are the shadows of the land they move through and the cattle they watch. Bean captures the slump of tired shoulders, the wild movement of a stampede, and the beauty of stars above.

A surprising look at cowboys that makes it clear what it takes to be a hero and a good human being.
Appropriate for ages 3-5.

KC says

Excellent artwork.

Linda says

A picture book illustrated by Jonathan Bean's interesting colorful cut-outs and collages is always entertaining, and this time Kate Hoefler defines cowboys (who can also be cowgirls) in the most loving of ways. They are strong, patient, kind. They sing to calm the cattle, and keep away the loneliness. It's a tough job to be away from home so long and to take constant care of the herd. I think there might be acres of conversation when reading this book to a class. I loved that the story shows so many layers of a cowboy's life. And I wonder if there is a short YouTube that might add to the realism this book implies.
