



The Happy Hollisters

Jerry West (Pseudonym) , Helen S. Hamilton (Illustrator) , Andrew E. Svenson

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The adventures for the Hollisters begin as soon as they move into their new house on the shore on Pine Lake in Shoreham. First, the moving van carrying their toys and their father's important new invention disappears. Next, they learn that their house may be haunted, with a treasure hidden somewhere inside! Right away they all set out to solve these mysteries. Each one of the Hollister children - Pete (age 12), Pam (10), Ricky (7), Holly (6) and Sue (4) - plays an important role in finding clues, along with their parents who are always ready to join in on the excitement. Even Zip, the collie, and White Nose, the cat, are part of the family, and find thrilling adventures of their own. As the Hollisters explore their new town and make friends, they discover what happened to the moving van, and learn more about the mystery surrounding their new home. Excitement abounds when a secret stairway is discovered. Then, on the trail of a mysterious intruder, their chase leads them to a deserted hut on nearby Blackberry Island. Over seventy action-packed illustrations make the story- and the Hollister family- so vivid that the reader has a feeling of really sharing in on the adventures of this lovable and interesting family.

The Happy Hollisters Details

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Author : Jerry West (Pseudonym) , Helen S. Hamilton (Illustrator) , Andrew E. Svenson

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From Reader Review The Happy Hollisters for online ebook

Katie Kempski says

This is probably one of the best books I've ever read.

Honestly. What other books contain characters that are NEVER down or weirded out by their inability to escape unfortunate events (i.e. having ALL their toys stolen, falling in quicksand, having their house broken into every night, etc)? And what other book contains such realistic storylines that involve children single-handedly capturing a criminal and throwing an animal parade all in the same weekend?

Lovely. C:

Katie Fitzgerald says

There are seven people in the Hollister family: Mr. Hollister, who has just opened a store called the Trading Post in his new hometown of Shoreham, his wife, and their five children: Pete, Pam, Ricky, Holly, and Sue. In this first volume of the mystery series named for this cheerful family, the kids try to solve two mysteries. One is that the small moving truck containing all of their toys never shows up to their new house, but the toys keep appearing in the possession of different people all over town. The other is about the house itself, which some say is haunted, and which the Hollisters are certain has been visited by an intruder on multiple occasions since their arrival. As they work to uncover clues in both cases, the Hollister children also get to know their neighbors: Tinker, who takes a job working for their father, Ann and Jeff, who welcome them with open arms, and Joey Brill, who antagonizes the family with his cruelty and occasional violence and generally wreaks havoc everywhere he goes.

This vintage mystery is similar in both tone and content to The Boxcar Children and Bobbsey Twins books. The characters mostly have very generic upbeat personalities, but their never-ending opportunities for adventure make them appealing to young readers. Though the mysteries form the central plot of this book, the kids' effort to discover clues also provides many chances for them to fall into danger or to have an exciting experience that brings vicarious enjoyment to the child reader. Nearly every chapter ends on a cliffhanger, which may seem silly to an adult reading them aloud, but which has made my four-year-old want to sit through as many as six chapters in one sitting.

The writing in this book has an old-fashioned flavor to it, which feels a bit more formal in comparison with newer chapter book mysteries. The characters all speak to each other in the language you might expect to hear on a 1950s radio or TV sit-com, and sometimes the dialogue just sounds unnatural. The Hollister kids also rarely do anything wrong, whereas Joey Brill can't seem to do anything right. This gets old after a while, and is certainly unrealistic, but it is also appealing to young kids who are still sorting out the black-and-white definitions of right versus wrong. My four-year-old loves to become indignant on behalf of the Happy Hollisters whenever Joey Brill comes on the scene, and she worries each time one of the Hollisters ends a chapter in an uncertain or dangerous situation.

I originally started to read this book because it was free for Kindle one day and I was curious. Then I started reading it to my daughter when we were sitting in the car with a sleeping baby while my husband ran an errand, and she took such a liking to it, we are now well into the second book. I'm not sure how this series

would hold up for older kids who have already been exposed to very action-packed and highly fantastical stories, but for kids who have yet to read a mystery, it is a great first introduction to the conventions of the genre without a lot of scary situations. Even the most dire circumstances are painted with a light brush, and these characters make it feel safe to explore some edgier storylines. My plan is to use them to pave the way for my daughter to read *The Boxcar Children* independently when she is ready.

This review also appears on my blog, [Read-at-Home Mom](#).

Trish says

This series gets checked out a lot from the Logos Library, so I was curious. It's written in the 1950's when kids could still roam all over small town America. It's a fun little mystery - along the lines of Nancy Drew and Hardy Boys for younger kids 2-4th grades. It did remind me a bit of my own childhood when our little town was our playground, and all the people one's neighbors and friends.

Bairbre says

Every one of the Happy Hollister books was an adventure and joy to behold! Of course, I read them back when I was 6-8 years of age, so the fact that I can remember them after forty plus years should encourage all the oldsters to recommend these books to their young reading aficionados! :)

F.C. says

I love the life-style of the 50s portrayed in these books! It made we long for an old simpler time when sons admired their fathers, children helped their mother willingly with chores, and small towns were safe enough for kids to roam freely....

Perhaps that's too idyllic and the past was not like that...but I like to think it was

Deb says

Four ??????? for nostalgia and the joy this series brought me as a child.

I grew up on the Happy Hollisters & plowed through all the books when I was in first grade. My brother who had challenges reading, didn't believe I read as fast as I did & would quiz me on the books. When I found them on Kindle Unlimited, I thought I'd reread a few.

Definitely dated (what I'd expect from a book first published in 1953) & reading them on an e-reader lessens the charm-but still a fun, quick nostalgic read.♥?

Rebekah says

I received my first **Happy Hollister** book many, many Christmases ago. I think I was around eight years old. I distinctly remember falling in love with this series and kept reading them well into my early teens. It is about a large family living during the 1950's that solve mysteries together.

Melissa says

I'm so glad this series is back! As a kid I read the entire series through the Happy Hollister's book club, and regularly lost myself in the mystery of the day. I once asked my Mom if she saw the end of this movie I was watching (I weirdly couldn't remember the movie title, when I saw it, or who played the characters). Turns out the plot I was describing was a Happy Hollisters plot, and I was enjoying the book so much and it was so vividly playing out in my tiny kiddie brain, I mistook the action in the book for a movie! I will have my daughter reading these since I now know they are in reprint in paperback. Sadly, my box of Happy Hollisters was left in an attic, or in a garage, or in a garage sale.

Cynthia says

I've read actually all of these, but I just put one on the list. These are wonderful children's books that were a mainstay in my life.

Linda says

A friend recommended The Happy Hollisters to me when my children were very young so I gradually accumulated the entire series. My dear husband read them faithfully each night to the girls and everyone (young and old) thoroughly enjoyed them! Good, clean, family read-aloud material. Highly recommend!!

Ellen says

Oh how I loved the Happy Hollisters. I read them all. I was around 7 or 8 when I started reading them, and I had quite a crush on Ricky. I guess the fact that I had a crush on a character from a book instead of, say, Ricky Schroder, makes me a gigantic dork. Oh well. What are you going to do?

Terri says

I first read these books when I was a little girl. They are aimed at a slightly younger age than Nancy Drew and the Hardy Boys, and they were the series that began my lifetime love of mystery novels. I believe that

they are currently out of my print, but my husband found me a copy of the books for Christmas 2009. I can't give an honest review separate from the nostalgia factor, but I can say that they are a bit dated. The family is fun-loving and joyful, and the books make me feel good when I read them and that's good enough.

Jessaka says

What a sweet and fun children's series about the Hollister family. Their motto as I figured out on my own is this: A family that plays together, stays together. This is a mystery series put out by the Stratemeyer Syndicate, the same group that wrote mystery books for older kids, like Nancy Drew, The Hardy Boys, Tom Swift, Rover Boys, and etc. Of course, I have no idea how old the kids are in Tom Swift or in The Rover Boys. I guess I will have to read each of them someday.

But I am not sure if I will ever read another book in this series as it is written for 7 and 8 year olds, and I have at least raised my mystery book reading level to teenage mysteries, not liking adult ones.

In this book the Hollisters move to a new town where their toys are stolen in route, but they keep finding them all over town. Two items were found in junk stores, and one of their daughter's buggy and doll were found on the street being played with by another little girl.

Then they have to deal with the town's bully. I would have thought that this bully would have been taken care of sooner, but I just read on Wikipedia that he is in every book. Ugh.

And someone is sneaking into their house at night. Scary.

The Hollister family has a lot of good times together. One tie they went on a picnic to a park where a dog runs off with a link of hot dogs. (I didn't know that they ever came in links tied together.) So they chase the dog.

My father used to take us on picnics, and he would barbecue steaks. I loved his basting sauce and have the recipe.* On one such trip we went to a forest near Palo Alto. We parked on a hill and had to walk down a steep path and then walked along a creek to get to the picnic tables. After our picnic, we headed out, but when we passed the creek again there was a cow standing it in drinking water. My dad had us all climb this large boulder that was in the creek in order to protect us from the cow. My older brother, probably age 10, was wading out in the water ignoring Dad's pleas to get on board. After the cow left, we got down; Dad grabbed the box of picnic supplies and walked ahead of us. I guess he wanted to hurry to the car before the cow returned. After walking some distance, we saw that the picnic box had been left behind and our dad was nowhere in sight. Mom picked up the box and when we got back to the car our dad was sitting inside. He had seen the cow again and thought it best to run. Born and raised in the city of Chicago my dad didn't know the difference between a bull and a cow or steer or even know that they were both harmless unless you are fooling with them seriously. My mother was a fearless Texan.

Back to the Hollisters. The kid's parents allow them to turn a baby buggy into a cart so they can have their collie dog pull them around. Then the kids decide to have an animal parade. What a fiasco that was, as was having the dog pull the buggy. Then two of the kids are left to take care of their dad's general store, and that too is a fiasco. Now that I think of it, everything these kids did ended up with problems, but their parents still allowed to do them. They even allowed them to go after the criminals, do detective work.

*MY DAD'S BARBECUE BASTING SAUCE

1/5 red table wine (less than a quart)

Rosemary leaves to taste, crushed

Salt and pepper to taste

1 onion, chopped

1 c. oil

2 to 3 cloves garlic, minced

Thyme to taste

Add all ingredients in a saucepan; bring to a boil. Turn off heat. Pour into a jar with a lid. Let it sit a day or two in the refrigerator before using.

Notes:

Sometimes this book reminded me of Our Gang (The Little Rascals). Now The Little Rascals would be a fun series for kids and for me, so I just bought the complete collection.

booklady says

Please understand the five stars is for wholesome reading and nostalgia, not necessarily great literature. And yet, I grew up with this series and dearly loved it as a child. Even then I think I knew it was too-good-to-be-true *in a sense* ... and yet the Happy Hollister clan are a fully functional family who work, love, and learn together the way families *should* and *would* do in an ideal world. So maybe that is what makes this book and series so wistfully appealing. It is that we so want it to be true or perhaps we realize if everyone were all we're called to be, Life and families could actually be this happy. I am not sure ... just a theory.

Certainly not everyone (even here) is living up to his/her potential. There is one bully among the children's friends and there is a mystery. So yes, there are a 'bad' guys.

This is the first Happy Hollister book in the series and the first I have read in a long time. My mother-in-law indulged me a few years back and bought me a few as gifts. One is an evening's read. I hope to space out the remaining books to savor them...

A trip down memory lane...

Kathy Barnett says

I LOVED The Happy Hollisters when I was a kid and have read them all! I sold a bunch on eBay for quite a bit of money a few years back, so they're kind of collectible. I tried to get my nieces to read these when they were younger, but they have so much reading in school these days, which I think is good, but it doesn't give them much time for pleasure reading. They even have reading lists for over the summer now.

John says

I read all of these and received an award from the school librarian for my commitment to reading even though they were cheesy and formulaic which was just what a grade school reader looks for in a book. The same man chastised my sister for not expanding her reading because she was reading too many of the Little House books.

Beth says

(How many of my favorite series as a child were actually written by conglomerates? *All of them?*)

This is ooooold. Reminiscent of those Edward-and-Betsy-books old. Feels older than the Russell-and-Nora-books old. *Old.* Almost nostalgically idyllic, with one bully marring a charming neighborhood and the barest hints of financial trouble.

It's almost amazing that you could write a successful series about - well - nothing. Children playing outside. I guess "successful" is relative, though: I have a shelf of these, but they aren't really *good*.

Melissa says

I have seen these books in antique stores for years, but really knew nothing about them. Until my blog entry on the Statemeyer Syndicate and an e-mail from one of the descendants of the author.

If I had first discovered these books as a kid, they would have been 4 or 5 stars. They're funny, with just enough page-turning adventure. The kids are smart and given the freedom and opportunity to do a few things on their own. The characters are all genuinely likable, except for Joey Brill. What is up with that kid?

There are some wonderful scenes--an animal parade! Balloons from the church steeple! And a great old house, complete with secret passageways.

As an adult, the writing doesn't flow as easily as some other middle grade books. But there's just enough period details to give these books their place in the 1950s. And plenty of charm for me to pass these on to little ones that like old-fashioned books.

Sarah says

Enter a simpler and happier time with Jerry West's classic book "The Happy Hollisters," the first installation in the eponymous series. First published in 1953, the quaint story features the charming Hollisters, a traditional family comprised of five children—Pete, Pam, Holly, Rick, and Sue—their parents, and their faithful collie, Zip. The premise of the narrative is a simple, rather mundane mystery. The Hollisters move to Shoreham, and somewhere en route the moving van goes missing, along with the children's toys and Mr.

Hollister's inventions. As the family settles into their new home and opens the Trading Post store for business, some light and rather benign trouble concerns them. A mysterious man is seen in their attic and basement, and a local boy named Joey Brill is determined to cause mayhem. Furthermore, rumors circulate about a possible treasure hidden somewhere in the house, and it is up to the Hollister children to puzzle out the mystery.

“The Happy Hollisters” presents the idyllic white-picket-fence family characteristic of the 1950s. Devoted fans of such memorable shows as “Leave it to Beaver” will enjoy taking a trip down memory lane with this book. The nostalgic blue, black, and white illustrations enhance the classic feel of the story. If noticeably lacking in exciting plot structure, “The Happy Hollisters” nevertheless evokes fond reminiscences of halcyon days gone by for older readers, while a younger audience can enjoy a happy resolution to the story while learning about life during their parents’ and grandparents’ generations.

Clarissa says

My eight year old was enthralled with this book. She could not wait for the next chapter to be read and begged for "just a little more" each night. The chapters end with cliff-hangers and I would have to read just a page or two more to satisfy her. The mild suspense was delightful to her. The picture of a happy family is very encouraging and we learned a lot about how to treat our siblings from this book.

We're searching the library for the next in the series!
