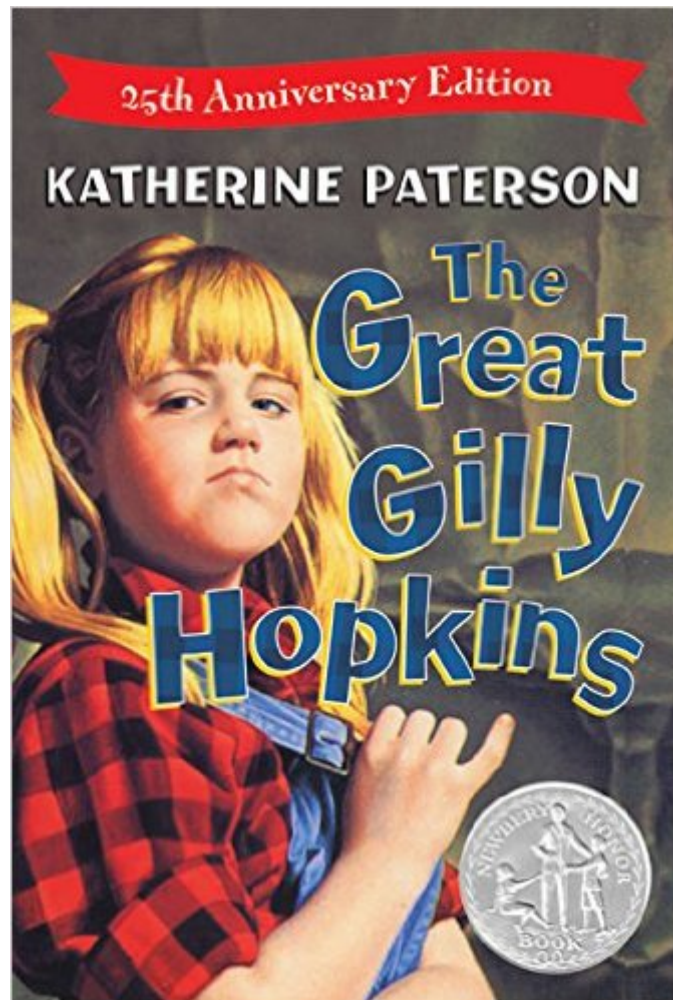


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The Great Gilly Hopkins



Synopsis

This Newbery Honor Book from bestselling author Katherine Paterson will simultaneously tug on the heartstrings and cause laugh-out-loud laughter. Eleven-year-old Gilly has been stuck in more foster families than she can remember, and she's disliked them all. She has a reputation for being brash, brilliant, and completely unmanageable, and that's the way she likes it. So when she's sent to live with the Trotters "by far the strangest family yet" she knows it's only a temporary problem. Gilly decides to put her sharp mind to work and get out of there fast. She's determined to no longer be a foster kid. Before long she's devised an elaborate scheme to get her real mother to come rescue her. Unfortunately, the plan doesn't work out quite as she hoped it would...

Book Information

Lexile Measure: 800L (What's this?)

Paperback: 160 pages

Publisher: HarperCollins (April 13, 2004)

Language: English

ISBN-10: 0064402010

ISBN-13: 978-0064402019

Product Dimensions: 0.5 x 5.2 x 7.5 inches

Shipping Weight: 4.8 ounces (View shipping rates and policies)

Average Customer Review: 4.3 out of 5 stars See all reviews (209 customer reviews)

Best Sellers Rank: #12,228 in Books (See Top 100 in Books) #48 in Books > Children's Books > Growing Up & Facts of Life > Family Life > Orphans & Foster Homes #138 in Books > Children's Books > Growing Up & Facts of Life > Friendship, Social Skills & School Life > Girls & Women #202 in Books > Children's Books > Growing Up & Facts of Life > Friendship, Social Skills & School Life > Emotions & Feelings

Age Range: 8 - 12 years

Grade Level: 5 and up

Customer Reviews

Contemporary. Absorbing. Insightful. Reflective. Dramatic. Humorous. These are just a few adjectives that can be heaped on this excellent novel for children. Ms. Paterson has written a book that can stand the test of time with its multiple themes: conflict resolution, facing reality, the universal need by all for security, and to a lesser degree, the inhumanity of man to man. As Gilly may have put it, "This is one damn good book!" As I began to read the selection, I was unnerved

somewhat by Gilly's frequent uses of profanity. I thought this be unsuitable in a book intended for children. However, as I progressed, I realized that his provided the reader with an essential character trait of the young lady. From years of being shuffled from one home to another, Gilly had become angry and mistrusting of others. Her language and actions were defense mechanisms she used to cope with her feelings of unworthiness. I could relate to the child's prejudices because as an African-American, I have been witness to some of the same ignorance possessed by the story's central character. It is admirable of the author to include such thinking for it promotes discussion about how we see each other. The supporting characters are memorable and well developed. From the kindness of the overweight Maime Trotter to the poetry-reciting blind Mr. Randolph, the "people" in the story are so realistically portrayed that the reader cannot help but have concern for them. Honestly speaking, I almost shed a tear when Gilly had to leave her new "family." Speaking of Gilly, the young lady changes from an angry child to a loving individual who discovers that life is not always the way it's supposed to be.

Gilly Hopkins, the main character of this book, is an imaginative and manipulative 11-year-old in the trying to control her life in the midst of the foster care system. The story begins with Gilly and her social worker going to meet Gilly's new "family" for the first time. This new family consists of a "mammoth-sized guardian and a freaky kid." As we learn that this will be her third foster home in as many years, we know that we are in for an exciting and tumultuous adventure! Gilly's initial reaction to her new setting is that it is dark, cramped and filthy. Inside this home is where the majority of the book takes place, as they dine nightly with the old and blind man next door and where she concocts the drama behind her escapades. Written in a limited point of view, the reader is given insight into understanding the mechanisms this child has adopted in order to adapt to her environment. She creatively gets the attention of her teacher, uses a classmate to her very best advantage, and uses loads of intimidation to control another foster child in the home. The plot is one of the individual (Gilly) against society (in this case the foster care system), and we receive creative insight into the workings of such a complicated system in our society. Gilly's main goal is to escape her current situation, dreaming of the pot of gold at the end of her rainbow. She eventually gets her long awaited wish, only to be disappointed again by life. Gilly is eventually able to bond, in a unique sort of fashion, with the "misfits" whom she was thrust into a relationship with. She is able to care for them when they are sick, and form her own important place in the family structure.

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