



RedRover Readers and Early Ages Gathering to Learn Empathy Through Stories (EAGLES) Program

GRADE(S): 3-5 **SEL ALIGNMENT:** Self-awareness; Responsible decision-making

THE GIRL WHO LOVED WILD HORSES

Written and Illustrated by Paul Goble

TIME: 45 minutes (reading and discussion - 30; activity - 15)

MATERIALS: The Girl Who Loved Wild Horses book, crayons, paper, construction paper

KEY CONCEPTS:

- Connection between a girl and a horse, emotions, observing animals

Land acknowledgment: You may want to do a land acknowledgment before this reading and lesson to determine what land you are on. [Native-land.ca](https://native-land.ca) is an app to help map Indigenous territories, treaties, and languages.

BEFORE READING: As a group, discuss the following topics.

- How many of you have seen a horse in real life before?
- What is a mare? (A female adult horse.)
- What does the word “lonely” mean? (Alone, in solitude, without anyone.) What could be the opposite of feeling lonely? (Togetherness, companionship, friendship, with someone.)
- Share the book cover and the inside first page with the students, and ask them to observe the illustration. Ask: What do you see? Ask them to predict: What do you think this book will be about?

DURING READING:

- On the page with the girl watching the horses with the rising sun, ask: What is the girl doing on this page? Why do you think she is doing that? (Possible answers include: She is watching and learning, observing. Because she likes horses.)
- Read the part that says, “If a horse was hurt, she looked after them.” Ask: What does this tell you about the girl? (Possible responses: she is kind, she cares, she likes animals or horses, she worries about the horses.) Ask: Have you ever cared for someone or looked after them? If so, who?
- On the page with the black sky that says, “Fear drove them on and on.... she knew they were lost.” Ask: How do you think the girl felt if she was lost? How do you think the horses felt after the storm settled?
- When the girl wakes up and sees the horse, how does the author describe the horse? (“Strong, proud, more handsome than any horse she had ever dreamed of.”) Encourage the students to use their body language to make themselves look strong and proud, with their shoulders back and sitting up straight to mirror the horse’s description.
- On the page that says, “She was glad. All the horses lifted their heads and neighed joyfully, happy to be free with the horses.” Ask: How did the horses feel in this picture? Why?



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DURING READING CONTINUED:

- On the page that begins, “She was glad to see her parents...” Ask: What did the girl think would make her better when she became ill? What did the girl say would make her happy forevermore? (To go back to the wild horses.) Where do you think the girl feels like she belongs? Where does she feel accepted? (Possible answers include: with the horses, with her people, both.)
- On the page that says, “The people gave them fine things to wear, colorful blankets and decorative saddles, they painted designs on their bodies, tied eagle feathers to their manes and tails. In return, the girl gave a colt to her parents. Everyone was joyful.” Ask: What do you notice on this page? What are the pictures showing?

AFTER READING:

- Reread the last page. Ask the students: What do you notice about this picture? (There are pairs of animals. Touching noses.) What do you think might have happened to the girl? (Possible responses: she turned into a beautiful mare, she died, she lives with the horses.)
- On the page that says, “Today we are so glad we remember we have relatives among the horse people. It gives us joy to see the wild horses running free. Our thoughts fly with them.” Ask: How do you think the wild horses feel running free? What does it mean to have relatives among the horses? Talk about feeling connected to animals and acknowledge that family can take many forms.
- Go back to the page that begins, “She was glad to see her parents...” Ask: Why do you think the girl was sad when she returned to her people?” And, read: “Each evening as the sun went down the people would hear the stallion neighing sadly...calling for the girl to come back.” Ask: Why do you think the stallion was neighing?”
- Go back to the page that reads, “People noticed that she understood horses in a special way.” What do you think that means that she understood horses in a special way? Ask: Are there animals that you understand in a special way? If so, which animals?

AFTER READING ACTIVITY:

- Emotion chart. There are many emotions noted throughout the story. Go back to the beginning of the story with the students and summarize the pages. Have the students call out every emotion they think the girl or the horses might be feeling on each page and then ask why they think she feels that way. Create a chart with the emotion in one column and why they think that emotion is happening in another column on a board or a piece of chart paper. After filling in each row for each emotion, ask students if they have ever felt that way. Allow time for students to share their stories.



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AFTER READING ACTIVITY CONTINUED:

Emotion	Who	Why/Reason

EXTENSION ACTIVITIES:

- Write or tell a story. The girl feels connected to the wild horses. Invite the students to write or tell a story about an animal, person, or other natural thing they feel connected to and why. Share with the group.
- Draw and color a picture. Think of an animal you feel a connection with or that you imagine you could feel a connection with. Draw and color a picture of you and this animal. Extension: Share your drawing with another student or the class. Describe why you picked this specific animal, what is happening in the drawing, and how you imagine you feel when you are with this animal and why. Can you imagine feeling that with someone in your life? Why or why not?

AT THE END OF THE LESSON: Ask students to reflect on these questions. Try this with the whole group, in a sharing circle or ask students to fill out index cards.

- How did you feel about today's book and discussion?
- Did today's book and discussion change how you think about anything in your life?
- What is one lesson from this book that you are taking home today?
- What is one thing from our time together that you can apply to your own life?
- What did you learn from today's book and discussion that you didn't know before?

DON'T FORGET TO REPORT YOUR READING:

RedRover.org/reportreadings