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Picture Books

Molly the Pony: A True Story
Pam Kaster
Louisiana State University Press
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Every child, everyone affected by Hurricane Katrina, and every animal lover will adore this sentimental yet informative book about the true story of Molly the Pony. Accidentally left behind as her owners fled the oncoming storm, Molly survived in her barn because she "found hay to nibble and small puddles of water to drink while she waited."

Molly was rescued by chance two weeks after the hurricane and taken to Ms. Kaye's farm, where she waited for her owners to claim her. Three months later, Ms. Kaye tells Molly, "This is your home now. Your owners said you can live here with your new farm friends and me." Very young readers will be especially thrilled at this moment in Molly's story.

Tragedy strikes, however, on the next page: "Suddenly, without any warning, a large dog ran into the pasture and bit her." Most ponies can't live long with only one front leg because the weight of their chests is too great for only one leg to bear. Just as all looks bleak, however, observant veterinarians notice that Molly can shift some weight to her back legs. They decide she might be able to adjust to a prosthetic leg—and she does!

The second half of Molly's story might challenge readers younger than six, and kids who are squeamish might have trouble looking at the picture of Molly's surgery and her x-ray. However, brightly colored pages imprinted with the smiley face on the bottom of Molly's rubber hoof help to navigate this material, as does the ultimate success of Molly's surgery. Pictures of Molly stumping along, leaving smiley face prints from her artificial hoof, will help readers to celebrate Molly's triumph over double adversity.

Author Pam Kaster also wrote *Zydeco Goes to Horse Camp*. She has managed an equestrian riding program for disabled riders, and she is a member of the Equine Photographers Network. Most of the photographs in the book are hers. Large white borders surround each photograph, making the book reminiscent of a photo album and helping to mitigate the browns and grays that dominate some of the barn pictures early in the book. This book will help ensure

that Molly and other animal survivors of Hurricane Katrina will have many friends to help them on their way.

Elizabeth Breau