

Study Guide for *Half Broke Horses*

Part I: Salt Draw (pp. 3-29)

Setting:

- Homestead by Salt Draw river - 160 acres in west Texas

Characters:

- Lily Casey Smith - narrator
- Helen - Lily's sister
- Buster - Lily's brother
- Mom and Dad

Events:

- Flash flood on the ranch
- Lily's dad constantly files lawsuits against his brother for better land
- Family builds a new house after flood
- Dad teaches Lily all about horses and how to bargain for goods (skills to help her realize her purpose in life)
- Family moves to KC Ranch in New Mexico (where Lily's dad grew up) after a Tornado wrecked their house

Part II: The Miraculous Staircase (pp. 33-55)

Settings:

- KC Ranch (renamed from Casey Ranch) in Rio Hondo valley in New Mexico, where Lily's dad had grown up before moving to Salt Draw in west Texas

Characters:

- Mother Albertina - Mother Superior (the head nun) at Lily's school
- Old Man Pucket - neighbor of ranch
- Patches - mare (female horse)

Events:

- Lily attends the Sisters of Loretto boarding school in Santa Fe
- Lily is forced to leave the academy due to her parents' lack of payment
- Old Man Pucket kills Lily's dad's Great Danes; Pucket is required to pay restitution for the dogs in the form of livestock (he gives Lily's dad horses)
- Lily befriends one of the horses, a mare, and names her Patches, and Lily begins "breaking" Patches
- Lily passes a test to become a teacher, and decides to take a teaching job in Red Lake, Arizona

Part III: Promises (pp. 59-86)

Settings:

- On the road from Tinnie, NM (near the KC Ranch where her parents live) and Red Lake, Arizona (500 miles away)
- Red Lake, AR (and other small towns)
- KC Ranch in Tinnie, NM
- Chicago

Characters:

- Priscilla - half-Navajo woman whom Lily meets
- Mr. MacIntosh - Superintendent of school district in which Lily is employed
- Dorothy - Buster's wife on KC Ranch
- Minnie Hanagan - Lily's roommate in Chicago
- Ted Conover - Lily's (lying) husband

Events:

- Priscilla tries to steal from Lily, but she is unsuccessful
- Lily begins teaching in a one-room schoolhouse in Red Lake, but Superintendent MacIntosh moves her to many other small towns over the next three years, whenever the better-certified teachers return from factory jobs (when men return from the army)
- MacIntosh has to fire Lily once WWI ends (because the men regain the factory jobs, and the better-certified female teachers regain the teaching jobs)
- Lily feels unwelcome at the ranch, now with Buster's wife, Dorothy, around, so she decides to move to Chicago
- Lily finds a room in Chicago and gets a job as a maid (and finds another job as a maid when she's fired from her first one)
- Lily's friend and roommate, Minnie, is killed in a bottling plant in the grinding gears
- Lily cuts her hair as a result of Minnie's accident, and feels like a Chicago flapper
- Lily falls in love with Ted, and they get married after six weeks of meeting
- Lily works her job as a maid and attends night school, and earns her diploma at age 26
- Lily discovers, after being hit by a car, that Ted has another wife and a family, so she throws the wedding ring in the lake and applies to the Arizona state teachers' college in Flagstaff, AR

Students: By this point, you are far enough into the story that you should be able to track the settings, characters, and events on your own. If you are struggling, make a list, like you see for the sections above, for every subsequent section of the book.