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The Misadventures Of Maude March



Synopsis

Eleven-year-old Sallie March is a whip-smart tomboy and voracious reader of Western adventure novels. When she and her sister Maude escape their self-serving guardians for the wilds of the frontier, they begin an adventure the likes of which Sallie has only read about. This time however, the "wanted woman" isn't a dime-novel villain, it's Sallie's very own sister! What follows is not the lies the papers printed, but the honest-to-goodness truth of how two sisters went from being orphans to being outlawsâ and lived to tell the tale!

Book Information

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Series: Maude March

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Age Range: 8 - 12 years

Grade Level: 3 - 7

Customer Reviews

Starred Review. Grade 5-8â "Sallie March, 11, devotee of dime novels, narrates this rollicking Wild West adventure. The irrepressible tomboy and her ladylike older sister, Maude, have been living in Cedar Rapids with their stern Aunt Ruthie since their parents died. When she is shot dead by a random bullet, Reverend Peasley takes the girls in, but works them like servants. Then grandfatherly Mr. Wilburn proposes to Maude, and it's the last straw. The sisters take two horses and head to Independence, MO, in hopes of finding their uncle. They disguise themselves as boys and begin to live as dime-novel heroes, hooking up with Marion Hardly, aka Joe Harden (the Joe

Harden, of the dimer series?), who is also their aunt's killer. Although the girls' intentions are never bad, they end up in the midst of a bank robbery and committing murder. The newspapers are full of news of Mad Maude March, gone crazy with grief. All ends well as they make it to Missouri, where everyone has a reputation anyway. Sallie's narration is delightful, with understatement that is laugh-out-loud hilarious. While this novel at first seems a departure for Coulumbis, there are many similarities to *Getting Near to Baby* (1999) and *Say Yes* (2002, both Putnam). Her strong females are memorable, largely due to her perfect pitch in conveying their unique voices. Hard to put down, and a fun read-aloud.â “Connie Tyrrell Burns, Mahoney Middle School, South Portland, ME
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Audrey Coulumbis's first book for children, *Getting Near to Baby*, won the Newbery Honor in 2000. She lives in upstate New York and Florida with her husband, Akila, and their dog, Phoebe. They have two grown children.

Bottom line - this is one of the best sister books I've read in a while. Sure, it's a western adventure with a cowgirls-on-the-run plot. It's sort of a dryly funny "True Grit" for a slightly younger crowd. It has a lot of action and horses and chases and bad guys and dusty towns and accidental shootin's and trail riding and such, and that's all fun, but it's not the main point. What we have is a teenage girl, Maude, who accidentally ends up as a hunted desperado, and her younger sister sidekick, Sallie. This younger sister is a gimlet-eyed, practical, deadpan, dry-as-dust funny narrator of our tale, and her flinty throw-away lines pepper the book. But get this - the two sisters like and admire each other, support and encourage each other, understand each other, and are loyal through thick and then. No phoney-baloney, no ironic detachment, they are sisters and a team. This doesn't come across as dopey or preachy; it's just the basic nature of their relationship and who they are, and it informs all of the action. When one is weak the other is strong; when one is confused the other is decisive. And you like them both, you root for them, and you cheer their little escapades and victories. I think the western setting really helps. We avoid all of the modern cliches - no school or fashion angst, no mean girls, or bullies, or cell phones, or dreamy jocks, or any of the staples of modern teen fiction. The western time and place strips the story of the two girls down to its essentials and eliminates modern distractions. This leaves the field open for the characters to really shine, and reminds us why westerns remain a classic story-telling form. The upshot is that you get a funny and sharply observed picaresque with two great female leads, finely sketched and

entertainingly eccentric secondary characters, and spare western dime novel deadpan narrative. This book is loaded with vinegary one-liners, straight faced cowboy humor, and laconic cowboy understatement. I would press this into the hands of any young reader who possessed an ounce of spunk, and would especially recommend it for those seeking strong and courageous heroines.

Much like the "dimer novels" Sallie enjoys reading in this novel, "The Misadventures of Maude March" gets off to a rollicking start and continues at this fast and furious pace. Bank robberies, mountain lions, ornery mules, shooting, snake attacks, outlaw gangs--it is full of everything a reader could want. When Sallie and Maude are orphaned by the stray bullet from a dimer hero Joe Harden, they are sent to live with the preacher who sees them as potential maids. Anxious to marry off Maude, the sisters decide to escape in search of long lost Uncle Arlen. Stealing two horses and disguised as boys, they fall into one wild escapade after another. Interspersed are highly exaggerated newspaper articles about Maude's escapades. With its fast action, humor, fully developed and strong heroines, it is a perfect novel to suggest to those readers looking for more than a girl wants boy, chases boy, falls in love type novel. A great read aloud as well, and one that has enough excitement to appeal to male listeners. A thoroughly enjoyable book, worth 5+ stars!

Great adventure story with quirky heroines! I use it with grades 4/5.

I was introduced to this book by way of my daughters' 4th grade class. I absolutely loved this book and this was a good weekend read. I am positive that I will read the other Maude March books.

great book for 8 years old

Pretty good for younger readers, although it has some challenging vocabulary and some mature elements to the story. Overall though I would recommend it for 4th or 5th grade readers

Very good story. This would make an interesting western film.

I bought this book for my 9 year old daughter and she absolutely loves it! a great read and I highly recommend it

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