



# Hound Dog True

*Linda Urban*

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## **Hound Dog True** Linda Urban

A story about small acts of courage from the author of *A Crooked Kind of Perfect*.

*Do not let a mop sit overnight in water. Fix things before they get too big for fixing.* Custodial wisdom: Mattie Breen writes it all down. She has just one week to convince Uncle Potluck to take her on as his custodial apprentice at Mitchell P. Anderson Elementary School. One week until school starts and she has to be the new girl again. But if she can be Uncle Potluck's apprentice, she'll have important work to do during lunch and recess. Work that will keep her safely away from the other fifth graders. But when her custodial wisdom goes all wrong, Mattie's plan comes crashing down. And only then does she begin to see how one small, brave act can lead to a friend who is hound dog true.

## **Hound Dog True Details**

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Author : Linda Urban

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## From Reader Review *Hound Dog True* for online ebook

### Betsy says

There's identifying with a work of children's fiction and then there's wondering if the author of the work has somehow discovered time travel and was able to observe your younger self. Such were my feelings upon picking up and reading *Hound Dog True*, the latest from A Crooked Kind of Perfect's Linda Urban. I don't want to cast aspersions on Ms. Urban, and if she wants to use her highly developed time travel technology to spy upon my elementary years that is her business. Of course I appreciate that she changed the names in this book to protect the innocent (which is to say, me). It occurs to me now that there may be a chance that Ms. Urban wrote this book with another child in mind. Indeed, after having finished the title I can see sheer hoards of kids who were exactly like me when they were young picking up this book and finding in its heroine Mattie a kindred spirit. It won't be hard for them to do. She's the underdog's underdog.

She has it all worked out, you see. The plan is perfect. It can't possibly fail. After traveling from place to place with her mother for years, Mattie and mom have finally moved in with mom's brother. Uncle Potluck is exactly the kind of uncle you'd want to have around too. He tells great stories, and talks to the moon, and best of all he lets Mattie tag along as he fixes up the local elementary school for the coming year. In fear of the kids in her new class, Mattie has determined that if she's a good enough assistant to Uncle Potluck in the summer then she'll be able to assist him over her lunch and recess period every school day and avoid her compatriots. She's sure she'll be able to convince him, but when she meets the niece of her new next door neighbor, Mattie starts discovering that maybe other kids aren't entirely frightening.

There are books for kids out there where the protagonist is supposed to be shy. They almost never ring true. Sure, the kid will act hesitant to do one thing or another, but eventually they'll have these moments where they go out of their way to be brave and they lose me. I was a shy kid. I understand the crippling fear a person can feel when they encounter a potentially hostile fellow student. And Linda Urban gets all of that. She gets how you can worry about being babyish one moment and then fall into old habits the next. She gets how a person could view lunch and recess as "the lawless times" when the safety of adults lessens and kids are allowed to pick on one another openly. It doesn't take much to instill in a child a fear of their fellow man. *Hound Dog True* understands.

One remarkable aspect of the book is the fact that Urban manages to create a passive protagonist that doesn't drive you up the wall. Generally when a writer conjures up a character that is afraid of basic human interactions the reader's response is a uncontrollable urge to shake the hero for all they're worth. You don't feel that way with Mattie, though. This is remarkable when you realize that it's when Mattie attempts to be proactive that she gets herself in the biggest messes. Her plan to become a janitorial assistant is flawed from the start and her attempts to help her uncle fail in a magnificently overblown fashion. Rather than annoy the reader, though, these moments just heighten your sympathy for poor Mattie. You wouldn't want to be her, and a whole slew of kids are.

This is a silly way of looking at it, but I sort of saw this book as a middle grade version of that old Caldecott winning picture book Officer Buckle and Gloria. There's something about the constant use of rules that reminds me of it. Maybe the gentle humor does too. Certainly the authenticity of the book lets it stand apart from the pack. It's not a long book by any stretch. Just a scant 176 pages, making it the perfect length for the kids that'll need it most. Which is to say, the ones teetering between the "babyish" and the "grown-up". Urban's writing style can be summed up in one word: likeable. And this is a supremely likeable book. A great new Urban title that won't disappoint her already existing fans and may lure in new ones.

### **Hirondelle says**

For such a short book, this is remarkably thought provoking. So much I have mulled for a couple days on what to say about it, and really still not sure. It's wonderfully written, one of those books where the meaning is often in the silences. I think it might be a great book to read aloud as well.

And I love love love Uncle Potluck. If any complaints is that I wish we had a little more of him and decisions he must make towards the ending - but then again it's me, irrevocably an adult by now, who wants that, not sure if that is a flaw for this book.

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### **Frezanda says**

It's a bit hard to get into this book at the beginning. But I guess the second half of the book somehow make it worth it. There is no big bang or drama but I felt elated by it. In the end I thought to myself, " Ahh, this girl is going to be fine. She can do it. Facing life with its difficulties."

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### **Melanie says**

Is it wrong to say I had a literary crush on Mattie's Uncle Potluck? He is so intelligent and kind. He's exactly what this main character needed in her life.

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### **Andrea says**

While I was hoping for a story about "small acts of courage," the plot was watery and meandering and ultimately it was too easy to put down. DNF with 20 pages to go!!!

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### **Shannon says**

This book is so well-written. I can't even fully express why it's so perfect. It's the best example of subtle, strong writing that I've read in a long time.

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### **Michael Scotto says**

Such depth through such economy; not a single word is wasted or misplaced in this wonderful novel. I started it with a plan to read a few chapters and then go to sleep, and two hours later, I find myself not only having finished the whole book, but compelled to write about it lest it keep me up all night.

This is a small story about huge things. It spans not much time, and certainly not flashy in its plot or incident. But in Mattie, the protagonist, we witness such a stirring and true battle as she wrestles with tumultuous feelings of self-doubt and insecurity. It brought me back to my own experiences -- 11 years old, in a new school, out of step and out of place -- and then it brought me past them, to a picture-perfect closing that feels like a warm embrace.

Even having been told beforehand by a friend how good this book was, it seized me by the heart. An absolute must-read.

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### **Paul Hankins says**

Special characters like Mattie Breen come around now and then. . .please take some reading time to get to know her. She writes stories.

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### **Chris says**

I think Hound dog true was a interesting book because a girl named Mattie had to face her fears . That is part of the reason why i like this book . Another reason is because Mattie meets friends and her friends can model good actions for young students that are currently learning how to read . It also has challenging words for older people who are pros at reading . Also the length of the book is pretty good for a average readers even though they have challenging words , it is still fun to learn theses words so that in the future you can have a better skill of use of words . That is why reading is so important for people . So that they can have a good grade in their writing . Also because writing is fun . That is why I think Hound dog true is such a good book .

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### **Eva says**

Lovely, lovely, lovely. The atmosphere of this story is so wonderful and all the relationships are so crisp and beautifully rendered. It's a slightly removed version of our world that doesn't deny the realities of cruel children and cruel circumstances, but gives us a rounded edge to soften the cruelty and the words to come to grips with it.

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### **Elizabeth K. says**

I thought this book was weird, but can't really put my finger on why I didn't like it more. A shy girl and her mother move back to her mother's hometown, where they live with two uncles -- one of them I kept forgetting about because he's hardly ever in the story, and the other one who is a custodian at the school the girl will attend in the fall.

All the elements are pleasant enough, but they come together in strange ways. I know shy kids learning how to make friends is a common theme in literature, but this kid's shyness was borderline pathological, I was waiting for a deeper issue to emerge. Certain incidents seemed to be presented with a heavy import, and then never went anywhere.

Grade: B-

Recommended: Not really.

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### **Kate says**

Linda Urban has a gift for capturing the small things about a kid's life that matter. She understands that little things can mean everything...those tiny moments that the grown-ups shrug off can be something a ten-year-old carries around for years...and maybe forever.

HOUND DOG TRUE features Mattie Breen, a painfully shy girl who moves to a new town with her mom and apprentices herself to her Uncle Potluck, the school custodian, in the hopes that her studies of janitorial arts will allow her to avoid talking to her new classmates when school starts. But of course it doesn't work out that way. Mattie has a new neighbor, Quincy, who's older and cooler and...could she be a friend? This is a warm, wonderful book about letting people into your world, finding your place in that world, and finding your voice, too.

Like A CROOKED KIND OF PERFECT, this book has a voice that's unique, touching, and funny - just wonderful. I highly, highly recommend HOUND DOG TRUE...especially for sharing as a read-aloud.

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### **katsok says**

I stare at this blank screen, how to describe this book. Mattie and her mom have moved, again. This time they have moved in with her Uncle Potluck. While her mom seems a bit clueless as to who her daughter is, Uncle Potluck "gets" her. He is the janitor at the local elementary school and Mattie tags along with him while he prepares the building for a new school year. Uncle Potluck seems to one of those adults who has a bit of magic in him. He can spin an amazing story, speak to the moon, fix a doorknob, and see into Mattie's soul.

See Mattie is shy, painfully shy. I've had students just like Mattie. I was, at times, Mattie. It is hard when you live in your head so much, you forget how to interact with reality. Linda Urban writes Mattie so that you can understand her. You can also see how she is just on that verge of growing up, torn between the kid and teen years. This is a beautiful story to share with our students.

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### **Clara Herrera says**

I think this book was an good book to start off the year.This book is about a girl who is shy and moves to different schools and towns.At school it is very hard for her to have a friend and to speak up in front of the class room. When her uncle meets a girl named Quincey, Mattie immediately says that she does not want to hang out with a person who is an older grade. When they invite her to her house she quickly hides from her.Later Mattie has to come out of her room and had to meet Quncey. It was awkward at first but then they start talking with each other.

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## **Natalie Tyree says**

This is one of my favorite book it is one of my favorite books because it has a lot of humor in it from Mattie and from uncle potluck the one thing i that i think is funny from Mattie and uncle potluck is that Mattie will not go talk to Quincy because she is older than her and thinks she is a bra wearing girl .The thing from uncle potluck is that he is always trying to be just a funny person to me and i think he is a funny person. That is why i like hound dog true.

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