



# The New Class

*Lauren Brooke*

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## The New Class Lauren Brooke

From the author of the popular Heartland books comes a smart, sassy series set at an exclusive, all-girls boarding school in Virginia, where horses--and status--mean everything.

Welcome to Chestnut Hill, a prestigious boarding school with a rich tradition of academics, horses, and rivalry. This year, five girls from different backgrounds will challenge the Chestnut Hill stereotype. There's witty, spunky Dylan; secretive Malory; western tomboy Lani; Honey, the soft-spoken Brit; and polished New Yorker Razina. None is prepared for the social or riding rigors, and they all doubt they will fit in -- certainly not if queen bee Lynsey and her clique have any say. But if this unlikely fivesome can band together, they may prove themselves the true stars of Chestnut Hill.

## The New Class Details

Date : Published August 1st 2005 by Scholastic Paperbacks

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Author : Lauren Brooke

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# From Reader Review The New Class for online ebook

## Cecilia says

I loved the book, but I have reasons why it's only 4 stars.

First, why are all these 7th graders so mature? They're wearing blush and Gucci dresses!!

Secondly, I didn't like how there had to be a girl who called everyone by their last name. I feel like the author tries to differ her characters way too much.

Last, Dylan was a huge brat! The world doesn't revolve around you, Dylan! She thinks everyone is so rude and is always rolling her eyes. Not cool. (I am looking forward to reading the next one, though!)

All in all, it was a great book with some flaws, but that's okay. 4 stars for The New Class (Chestnut Hill, #1) by Lauren Brooke!

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## Molly says

I'm 29 years old, so this book is clearly not meant for me. However, as a former Saddle Club and Thoroughbred addict, when I come across a horse YA book, I tend to pick it up. And I have to say, I really liked this one. The teenagers, for the most part, act like teenagers. Dylan, bratty though she can be, is so delightfully realistic it's easy enough to overlook or even enjoy her bad attitude. Most of the horse book tropes are neatly avoided, though we do have the token mean girl.

One thing I love is that the main character is not in possession of AMAZING NATURAL TALENT. She's not the best rider in her group. Even better, she's not That Girl who would be totally amazing Olympic caliber if only she weren't tragically not rich enough! There are no "I'm so hard on you because you have the most talent if you would just apply yourself!" speeches from the trainers! This is such a rarity.

Two problems I did have with the book:

The author is REALLY weirdly obsessed with having every freaking horse mentioned be of a different color. Now, you can expect a paint, a palomino, a buckskin, a paint and a roan all in a row in a Western barn, or even your average lesson stable. But cream of the crop elite jumpers? You're going to be looking at bays, chestnuts and the occasional grey. But that's a minor thing.

My bigger issue is Malory (WHY do all the characters have such weird names?) I'll be blunt: she's the kind of character I hate the most. She's a judgmental bitch who's rude and condescending to the other girls...but she gets her panties in a wad over something, and all the other characters are meant to believe that they were the ones doing wrong by not lying down and taking it, because Malory is POOR. And we all know that poor people are morally superior. When they act like assholes, it's always justified because they're just telling the hard truth. Anyone else does it? They're a bully. It's one of my bigger YA pet peeves, or else I wouldn't be making such a big deal of it.

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## Amanda says

Note: I purchased a used copy of this book at a charity second-hand store local to my home. I did not purchase the book new.

**SYNOPSIS:** Welcome to Chestnut Hill, a prestigious boarding school with a rich tradition of academics, horses, and rivalry. This year, five girls from different backgrounds will challenge the Chestnut Hill stereotype. There's witty, spunky Dylan; secretive Malory; western tomboy Lani; Honey, the soft-spoken Brit; and polished New Yorker Razina. None is prepared for the social or riding rigors, and they all doubt they will fit in -- certainly not if queen bee Lynsey and her clique have any say. But if this unlikely fivesome can band together, they may prove themselves the true stars of Chestnut Hill.

**MY THOUGHTS:** While I enjoyed this book, and was able to read it in one two sittings (would have been one, but I needed to make dinner for my kids) it sort of felt like a repeat of other books that I have loved in the past.

For example: Grade 7 student goes to boarding school with a fantastic, prestigious riding program. Away from home for the first time ever, she doesn't know how she's going to fit in away from home. I'm sorry, but this sounds an AWFUL lot like the Canterwood Crest stories. Same age, same basic concept.

Example B: Dylan takes a dare to ride Morello through the second half of the jumping course that she wasn't allowed to complete earlier in the day. She gets caught. I'm sorry, but this sounds an awful lot like a scene from The A Circuit, where the top riders take out one of the expensive show horses and jump at night, causing the horse to injure himself. Been there, read that.

Example C: Amy Fleming comes to Chestnut Hill to discuss alternative therapies. Total Heartland series Tie In... I understand the books are written by the same author, but shouldn't the series' be a little independent of one another?

There were a couple of other things that also kind of bugged me about this book:

- The conversations between the characters weren't very believable.

- Seriously? A 12 year old getting upset about Versace? When I was 12, I didn't even know who or what Versace was...

- Again, 12 year olds worrying about boys, and dating, and crushes? When I was 12, I still thought boys had cooties.

- really could have done without the token mean girl that surfaces in every girl's horse book, ever

Anyways, despite all of the above, I did find it enjoyable enough to say that I liked it. It had a LOT of horse-speak and horse scenes, which made my inner horse-lover happy. Most of the horse scenes were realistic, and I loved that it portrayed the girls riding in a safe and fun environment, and riders who failed to ride in a safe environment were reprimanded severely. There was a fair bit of adventure and action throughout the book, and there was more than enough to keep me entertained and reading through.

Overall, I give this book a solid 3 stars, and would recommended it to horse crazy girls aged 9-12.

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## Mehsi says

I have found a new Boarding School + Horses series to read!

Yay! I finally got this book, it was a trial to get it (first Amazon didn't have it the regular way, then I had to get it from their marketplace, and finally after a few weeks I got the book!). I guess the other books will also be hell to get, this edition (the one with the ribbon) is the only one that is available at all, and only at the marketplace. Oh well, it will be a fun quest.

Let me get started on what I thought of the book. I was really interested in the whole boarding school + horses part. I love the Canterwood Crest series, and I was really looking for a new series now that I am almost done with that one. I think I have found it with this one. It has several elements that I also saw in Canterwood Crest (the dare, the who can you trust, how Dylan acts at times), that is also a reason why I gave less points for this book, at times I felt like I was reading CC. And yes, I know that CC is the one who came after this one in publication, but I did read CC before this one, and that is why. I am sure if I had read this series first and then CC I would have removed points as well.

This book is all about Dylan (it seems each book switches POV, the next book is about Malory, and it isn't until book 5 that we get Dylan again). I have to say I really liked Dylan, though I didn't always like her attitude. I found her a bit snobbish and annoying. At times I just wish she had spoken instead of keeping silent. Other times I wonder if she is intentionally saying those cruel words or if she is doing it accidental. But most of the time she was an interesting girl, hardworking, dedicated to what she loves, a girl who loves friendship, a girl you can trust, a girl who will bring happiness to a party. She had a fun kind of humour, though I think that most girls didn't appreciate it at all times.

I loved her when she was with her pony Morello, she really has a connection with him and I was just awwwing every time they bonded and did lessons.

Then we have a whole bunch of side-characters, including a few I didn't like all the time. I am not entirely sure what I think of Lynsey, at times she seems the mean queen, with Patience as her sidekick, but at other times she also shows a different, kinder, side. I hope we will see more of her, maybe learn a bit more about her in the later books. Maybe she is just like Heather in the CC books, I do hope for that at least.

Malory. Meh, she was so-so. I am getting kind of pissy though at characters who expect people to just know that something is bothering them, or that they are somewhere for a reason. Hello!!! People are still not telepathic. If you have something on your mind, if something bothers you, tell them! Don't go boohooing when they get angry or when someone speaks their mind on how you do stuff. I can totally imagine why people would react like they did in this book.

Lani and Honey were my top side-characters in this one. I really loved both of them, and I hope that we will see more of them in the next books when they will be getting the spotlight.

I didn't always like Dylan's aunt, I found her a bit too strict and a bit too much towards Dylan (if she did it towards everyone else, I wouldn't have minded, but this just stood out, it even stood out so much the others noticed).

The horses, the lessons, the barn, everything about that was fantastic, I could just imagine myself walking around there and enjoying a relaxing time. I really loved the descriptions of all the horses/ponies, I still have to look up some terms, but in general I know what all the various horse-related thing means.

The boarding school setting? I loved it, it is one of my favourite settings in a book and Lauren Brooke did a great job on describing life there.

All in all, I will be sure to get the other books (if I can find them), and I would recommend this book to everyone who likes horses or boarding school settings.

Review first posted at <http://twirlingbookprincess.com/>

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### **Ellen Hamilton says**

I love horses, I love reading about them, I like reading about girls and how they get along at boarding schools. So, yes, I enjoyed reading this book very much, but I'm not sure if I want to read the next one.

Everything was good, the characters, the setting, the plot, the description, the language, but some things felt unexplained, so I felt like I was missing out on something. This book was just like a cup of tea that didn't turn out exactly to my taste if that makes any sense. :)

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### **Grace says**

Dylan is sent to this private school where you mainly learn about horses and Dylan has been dreaming to go. Her aunt works there. Dylan makes friends with some girls but she makes bad decisions and decides to play truth or dare and gets dared to go outside at night and ride her horse, which leads to her getting in major trouble. She gets a week of afternoon and evening detentions and 2 weeks of not being able to ride. Which would only give her a week to prepare for the junior jumping team tryouts. After the 2 weeks are over she starts to prepare right away. She tries out and lands a spot on the junior jumping team.

I thought the novel was really good and interesting I personally thought that there was a plot twist around the middle of the book.

I chose this book because I personally love horses and I have a horse of my own at my grandmas and I defiantly understood the book more since I know how to ride.

I would recommend this book to another student because I know some of my friends also like horses and would really get into this book.

My favorite part of the book was when she was trying out for the jumping team because the way the author explained everything was really good because it told not only her score it told everyone's score and how they did during tryouts, and it just made you wanna keep reading so you could find out who made it on the team and who didn't.

The main character changed throughout the story as at first she acted all happy to be there and trying to fit in, and around the middle she had more rough times she had ran into problems of trying to fit in and got into couple fights with people, and in the end she found out who was her real friends and trying her best at riding. The part of the book that made me most puzzled was when she got in trouble for riding at night, I was wondering why she didn't tell on anyone else and tell about truth or dare, and who had told on her that she was outside.

This book does have sequels and I will defiantly be reading more, I personally think she will watch her back more and focus more on riding and her horse. I think that because I think she will want to stay out of the drama and just do what she is there for and that is ride and learn.

I found it surprising that Dylan's turned on her friend from the beginning for Lindsey the popular one.

I learned that I should think before I do things like how Dylan did at night with her horse.

I have one lingering question and that is why did Dylan take all the blame for what she did and didn't tell on Lyndsey or any of the other girls?

I think the author wrote this book to not only entertain but to also teach about horses and teach lessons that you might run into in the future.

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## Claire says

I feel like tearing something apart, so Lauren Brooke, watch out. You may want to avert your eyes. I would primarily like to state that I have never been enamored with the Heartland series, but I had hoped for more from this. The unwavering admiration for the heroine of Heartland the girls of this book have is shameful advertising of Brooke's other series and is borderline religious in its devotion to the "alternative" methods central to the Heartland books. And since this girl is a vet student, everything she says is credible. But everything she vouches for is a little too Parelli-esque for me, and that is a serious deterrent. While reading, I was expecting this girl to tell me to purchase a DVD series detailing her methods for \$200 after her presentation. Plus \$80 for a membership (renewed yearly at a discount price of \$75). Don't forget \$50 for a book explaining the theory and containing glowing testimonies for the program. And you need all the equipment, so you must purchase a special stick priced at \$35 that you could create for no charge by simply picking up a branch off the ground. But let's stick to the point. This series is an older version of Canterwood Crest, and if you've read any of my other reviews, I both hate and adore that series. This series is achingly boring compared to Canterwood. It is also less thought out than Canterwood, a remarkable achievement, because I believe absolutely no forethought was put into Canterwood Crest Academy. But for some reason, JB's scenario works. It's not too outlandish (usually), and I find myself going along with it, laughing at some of the more extreme blunders. Chestnut Hill does not make me laugh. In fact, it does not provoke a single emotional reaction within me. I'm completely apathetic and often annoyed by everything these girls do and their bland, stereotypical storylines. I feel like JB manages to break stereotypes more than Brooke, and JB's entire plot basis revolves around stereotypes. But I have to hand it to you, Lauren Brooke, you are not preaching at me like Lauraine Snelling. Wait, I take that back. You are preaching at me about T-touch and other alternative methods. Don't get me wrong, I'm all about that stuff, but I have spent a fair amount of time in the world of veterinary medicine which has strengthened the streak of skepticism already engrained within me. My main problem with people who so actively subscribe to these alternative treatments is that they are so quick to believe EVERYTHING people tell them, even if it makes no sense. In the horse world, you really need to keep your wits about you and use common sense or you will get screwed over. You probably will get screwed over even if you do employ these preventative measures. That's how the horse world works. By the way, I couldn't remember the main character's name probably because this book made so little of an impression on me and that is why I haven't mentioned her by name to complain about her. Armed with my copy of this book, I have ascertained that the main character is Dylan Walsh, a rich (but not rich girl) who doesn't have a horse (but regularly rides her aunt's horse), who doesn't want favoritism (but is annoyed by her aunt's tough scrutiny), who is a very talented rider (but seems to know very little), and has far too much internal dialogue for someone narrating a book in third person. I will note that this book carries on the trend of the boarding school girls having some ridiculously outlandish names. Take Tanisha, or the intentionally spelled wrong Lynsey, or Felicity, or Honey, or Patience, or Wei Lin, or Razina, or whoever else because I'm sure there's more. Now that we're done with names, I'm going to admit that I don't have the patience to actually review this book and bother commenting on anything else. Gotta love horsey boarding schools.

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## **elsactement says**

Don't laugh at me... But this got me out of a huge reading slump I had since january... I read it as a child, when I was 8 or 9, it was my favorite series, and I decided to give it a second try, now that I'm 18. It worked. It worked really well because I read it in a day, and now I'm reading the second book. It's good and cheesy, just what I needed

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## **depletive says**

I didn't really liked this. I found that there was no interesting things about it. I do like horses to SOME extent, but this actually lowered it. Black Beauty is a good one though.

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## **Kate says**

Dylan is super excited about going to the Chestnut Hill boarding school, which has one of the best equestrian programs in the country. She's less excited that her aunt Ali just got hired as the riding instructor there - worried that the other girls will think she's getting special treatment. Unfortunately, it seems like Ali is being *harder* on her than on the other girls, like perfect (and rich and snotty) Lyndsey, and secretive scholarship student Malory. When Dylan decides to take a dare that gets her put on probation from riding, she learns who her real friends are.

There was a lot going on this book, because it's the first in the series. I felt like the characters were pretty realistic - even though Lyndsey was clearly the "mean girl" she was also able to be manipulative and fake nice, and while Malory was the "poor scholarship student" her reasons for not revealing anything about her personal life weren't all about money. Dylan had some spunk even though she was also kind of a rich girl, but more the kind of rich girl who didn't seem to realize that there are people who don't have money.

This didn't have quite as much heart as the Heartland series - it's just your basic middle-grade horse series, essentially just like the Riding Academy series by Alison Hart. Unfortunately the pop-culture references also seemed a bit dated (although it was written 10 years ago).

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## **Sally says**

Picked this up at an op-shop because it was 2 books for \$1... that was about the extent of my reasoning ;) It was pretty decent actually, but way more fun if you're into horses because there's LOTS of horsey-speak! I was never into horses but I kind of liked The Saddle Club when I was younger. They're definitely the superior horse-group :P Though Dylan herself wasn't that bad, and I really liked Lani... Honey would have been cool if she hadn't had such an annoying nickname! As far as mean girls went, Lynsey was kind of wimpy. And Malory was just plain unlikable and self-righteous.

Of course it's all very predictable, except for Who Dobbled Dylan In. (view spoiler)

A harmless way to pass the time, but I won't be hunting down more in the series. Although if they randomly



fell into my lap I'd probably read them.

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### **dom ?\*?? says**

i read this series when i was younger and loved it so i decided to read it again and honestly i'm loving it all over again.

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### **Rlygirl says**

This was a fun read. I enjoyed the strong, spirited protagonist and her adventures starting and learning to fit in at Chestnut Hills riding academy.

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### **Virag says**

*Chestnut Hill* is the new series from the author of *Heartland*. There's only half a dozen books, but I read and liked them all. I also liked that the girls were sixth graders like I was when I read these books, haha. The only weird thing is that there seemed to be a big deal about dating between some of the characters, and they were like, 11 or 12. That was a bit unnecessary - they're so young, why should they be worried about getting boyfriends?

Anyway, pretty good horse series for ages 9-12.

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### **Nina says**

Hehe... I read this book in 3rd grade and used to love it and I recently happened upon it and read it, and realized how stupid and unrealistic these books are.... however it brought back some third grade memories.....=]

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