



A Horse Called September

Anne Digby

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The moving story of a passionate friendship between two girls growing up together on an isolated Devon farm in the 1970s, the break-up of that friendship -- and the horse that changed their lives forever.

Now available as an ebook for the first time, Anne Digby's debut novel is a childhood favourite both with English-speaking readers and with readers of various editions in translation. Other Straw Hat ebook titles for lovers of classic horse stories include Anne Digby's THE QUICKSILVER HORSE and Alan Davidson's QUEEN RIDER.

A Horse Called September Details

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Author : Anne Digby

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From Reader Review A Horse Called September for online ebook

Kilian Metcalf says

I remember Disney movies starring Annette Funicello. This book could have been one of those movies. Two horse-mad girls, one rich, one poor, share the love of a horse called September. He belongs to the rich girl's father, an English farmer. The poor girl is the daughter of one of his employees. All goes well between the girls until the rich girl is sent off to boarding school, where she will learn more about riding, and the poor girl is left behind. The girls drift apart, and the horse is left in the hands of the poor girl. The owner/farmer/father is determined that his daughter will win some big horse show jumping event because he has hocked everything he has to put his daughter into this school.

Unfortunately, September is injured and sent off to the knackers. Not-so-rich daddy decides he will sell his beloved expensive car to buy another horse for his daughter to win the Cup. Poor girl scrapes up the money to rescue the injured horse and hides him until he heals.

Both girls enter the competition. Rich girl on rich horse; poor girl on poor horse.

Guess what happens?

You got it.

No surprises and lots of previously traveled territory, but this book would be an enjoyable read for any horse-mad girls you know. Maybe you were one. I was, and I enjoyed every predictable, unbelievable bit of this formulaic story. I was surprised it was published in 1978. It reads like the books I read in the 1950s.

Pia Veleno says

Picked this up for free on Amazon. Cute little story that reminded me of all the horse tales I read as a kid.

Kirsten says

What I can I say -- it's a book about horses and a girl's love for her horse. September belongs to Anna, but it is Mary who loves and cares for September while Anna is sent away to a boarding school to train Anna to be a competitor. Anna's father has only one goal --- for his daughter to win and he has no patience for September and no understanding about Mary and her love. He treats her as the help. But when things go bad and September can no longer jump, only Mary has enough guts to do something about it. This is the story of Mary who loses her best friend to the snobby boarding school and about her unique relationship with September a prize jumper who gets injured and is sold off....where I won't say as I won't spoil it. It reminds me a bit of King of the Wind where the boy is always with his Arabian. Hear warming story for young girls and some boys to read. Set in England with jumping at its core.

Emma Rose Ribbons says

Forgettable yet readable novel, mostly because the characters aren't fleshed out enough (reading K.M. Peyton clearly spoiled me). What I found most interesting is what it has to say about class. Anna and Mary come from different social backgrounds and quite apart from the horse story, it's really about overcoming this particular barrier. September made zero impression on me as a horse, he has no personality of his own and seems to be the mere extension of Mary's thoughts. Details I enjoyed: the girls exchanging tokens of friendship (how I miss that), riding double saddle on horses, exchanging letters during term. It's hardly a horse story, it's more a friendship story that would have benefited from tighter writing, the one I found in Trebizon for example.

Deborah says

A young friend asked me to read this book. I like to read what the children are reading, so I happily agreed. It was a charming little book, for middleschool aged children. The modern reader might have a slight problem with the style of the book. A lot of things are "told" instead of "shown" as is the more current fashion, and the writer claims the "all knowing" viewpoint so the reader has access to the main character's thoughts and emotions, but also at times her friend's emotions, which again is an "older style of writint." Basic plot...owner and her horse overcome obstacles to reach their goals....and in the meantime have to face some hard truths. It is a story about "growing up." Good story, intersting twist, a little predictable.

Sarah says

It was exactly what I expected from a book written for girls.

Karen says

I got this on Kindle as a free download and was enchanted by this book, typical of what I read growing up in the fifties. It is about friendship, love home and family and horses, particularly a horse called September.

It's about a girl from a poor home in the British countryside discovering her talent while staying true to her values, where everything ends happily and good works are rewarded. How refreshing!

Although the main character is 16 or 17 she seems younger compared to today's 17 year old girls. Significantly, there is no romance. This was back when young people read books that taught them life's lessons while entertaining with a solid story. Not every book had to have a romantic subplot. There were no young men in this story, not even a handsome neighbor boy that Mary wanted to impress.

How interesting that 50 years later, after decades of women's rights, our girls now read modern YA novels where the female main character always needs a boy's interest to validate their worth. In A Horse Called September, Mary's worth is validated by her having a dream, setting a goal and then working to attain it.

I am pretty sure I read this as a young girl, although that was so long ago I can't remember exactly but it's just the type of book I would have loved then, and I loved it now.

cheryl doerr says

Awesome

I love reading books about animals. This a really book. I would recommend it to everyone on the planet earth.

Sheila says

This is your classic, preteen horse loving girl story, happy ending and all. I have to admit I even enjoyed it, and my preteen years are LONG gone, though when I was a preteen and teen I was horse crazy.

The story itself is a bit dated, set in rural England in a bygone time, where you had to run into town to use the payphone to make a call, but also in a setting where nothing is impossible for a young girl who sets her mind to it, and dreams can come true, and goodness might always prevail.

Marsha Graham says

Predictable coming of age book

Melinda Matthews says

A timeless classic!

What a wonderful, classic story!! It's so good I find it hard to properly "review" so I'll just say it's a MUSTREAD ~ not just for middle-grade and young adult readers, but for horse lovers and literature lovers of all ages. Can't imagine anyone not enjoying this book. Highly recommend!

Valerie says

An excellent book for any child that loves horses. This book was fun to read aloud to my eight-year-old daughter.

Ian Wood says

This is the complete review as it appears at my blog dedicated to reading, writing (no 'rithmetic!), movies, & TV. Blog reviews often contain links which are not reproduced here, nor will updates or modifications to the blog review be replicated here. Graphic and children's reviews on the blog typically feature two or three images from the book's interior, which are not reproduced here.

Note that I don't really do stars. To me a book is either worth reading or it isn't. I can't rate it three-fifths worth reading! The only reason I've relented and started putting stars up there is to credit the good ones, which were being unfairly uncredited. So, all you'll ever see from me is a five-star or a one-star (since no stars isn't a rating, unfortunately).

This debut novel is now forty years old, so it has to be read in that context with an eye on whether modern readers of the middle-grade age group would appreciate it. That said, it's actually quite timeless in general terms, so you can read it and imagine it's happening today, if you ignore that the girls communicate via hand-written letters rather than through email, and have no ubiquitous cell phones/p>

It's set in Britain and features Mary, who is friends with Anna, a relatively well-off farmer's daughter who is attending boarding school in the hope of pursuing her show-jumping dreams. While Anna is off with her hoity-toity friends, becoming, in Mary's eyes, a different person, Mary is left behind to take care of Anna's horse, named September.

The author writes in very simplistic, overly dramatic, black and white terms, and anthropomorphizes the titular horse shamelessly. I know horses are smart, and any intelligent animal can sense moods and emotions in others - not through any telepathy or human-like quality, but through simple observation of how we hold and carry ourselves, and probably through facial expressions, too. The problem is that the author almost turns this horse into a four-legged human in its purported prescience, and it gets worse as the story progresses.

At boarding school, Anna encounters another horse, named King of Prussia, and she starts riding it exclusively, and winning several competitions with it - and evidently drawing away from Mary into a world of new and rich friends. After Anna returns home for the summer holidays and her over-bearing and domineering father demands that she jump September over a particularly hard jump, the horse becomes injured on the dreaded Demon's Dyke fence. Suddenly it's a question of whether he's worth saving or whether the knacker's yard can make better use of him - a question that seems to be answered when Anna's parents decide to sell their luxury car to buy King of Prussia for their daughter.

This deadeningly predictable story continued downhill from there with an ridiculously absurd everyone wins ending which just about made me puke, it was so very perfect. A very young, very un-discriminating child may enjoy this, but in 2015, I think it's below most middle grade readers' credibility level.

Grace Harwood says

This is a wonderful, wonderful horsey story which I discovered via a Kindle offer (and I'm so happy I did!!) Published in 1976, I can't think how this one evaded me when I was a child because I would have loved this story about friendship and horses (I was horsey mad as a child and this would have been the stuff that my pony-mad dreams were made of). So, Mary and Anna are great friends. Anna is the rich child of her landowning father and Mary is the poor daughter of the farmhand (an employee of Anna's Dad). They've grown up together and the difference between them in terms of what they have and have not got has never entered the equation before. Anna has a horse called September who she shares with Mary and it's all very

happy and idyllic. UNTIL... Anna's Dad decides that Anna needs to go to a posh boarding school where horse-riding is on the syllabus and Mary is left behind. Suddenly, Mary is being treated like a groom/a hired hand to look after September, but she's not allowed to ride him at all. This is the story of how Anna changes and Mary struggles to regain their friendship and keep September. There's an awful lot about class in here and one can't help but get a bit annoyed with Mary who really does seem to "know her place" (as Anna, at one point, obnoxiously tells her she should do). After all, it's Mary who saves the day and when the inevitable happens and there's a rapid turnabout in their fortunes, Mary still seems anxious to stay as the working class underdog. Despite the fact that she has the power to change her life at this point, she just doesn't seem to see it.

That said, I LOVED this book - I read it in nearly one sitting because I just couldn't put it down. If you love horses, don't miss this one. I might even buy the other one ("Quicksilver") despite it being aimed at the 8 to 12 year old market. (I'm 42 - but you're never too old for a fabulous horsey story - once horse-mad, I reckon you'll always be that way...)

Sandra Megyesi-hallas says

Excellent YA book. Along the lines of Black Beauty or The Black Stallion.

If you love horses and enjoyed the above referenced books, or if you young adult loves them, then this must be in your library. An excellent, memorable book that I really enjoyed. I'm an old adult with a young heart and I'm very glad I found this little book. I think you will love it. I highly recommend it.
