



## A Horse Called Wonder

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## **A Horse Called Wonder** Joanna Campbell

Ashleigh Griffen swore she'd never give her heart to another horse - not after a terrible disease wiped out her family's breeding farm, along with Ashleigh's favorite mare, Stardust.

## **A Horse Called Wonder Details**

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Author : Joanna Campbell

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## From Reader Review A Horse Called Wonder for online ebook

### Lissa says

Indulging my inner child.

Wonder has a snip on her nose, not a blaze! This cover is wrong. Minutely, but wrong. LOL!

I think I would have enjoyed this book a lot more when I was a child. Because, obviously, that's the age range it's appealing to. I was horse mad and devoured everything with a pony on the cover.

The best thing about this book is probably the wish fulfilment angle. I reckon a lot of young horse-crazy girls would love the idea of living in Ashleigh's shoes and raising their very own filly.

I love Wonder. I've always loved the way Joanna Campbell writes about horses. Sometimes it's not very realistic - the horses understand things way too much - but it's a nice story to read because you want to believe that horses are smarter than they really are. They're not anthropomorphised, but they're given way too much credit. It's a fantasy that I welcome.

Ashleigh's a realistic character as well. She's not perfect. She struggles to balance her school life with her horsey responsibilities. Her grades fall and her health suffers as she concentrated more on Wonder.

I'd almost go so far as to say that I wish this book was longer, but it's a children's book so I won't.

I want to track down all the books in the series up to number 23 (afterwards it's a whole cast change). Wish me luck!

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### Wendy says

I liked this a lot the first time I read it as a youngster, but it suffers on re-readings. Particularly as an adult--I know it's aimed at kids, but the best in children's literature is usually enjoyable for adults as well--I thought it was not...great. It was just okay.

The writing is simplistic, as one would expect from a kids' book. I might go so far as to say *too* much so, like the author doesn't expect children to be able to understand words longer than five letters, or complex sentence structures.... I don't know. I'm not an expert at children, I'm not really sure what they would and wouldn't understand, but I think most kids in the age demographic this book is going for would find this an easy read.

The story is very simple but good. A girl loves a pretty little filly, but it's born very sick and she has to nurse it back to health, and then after it gets better, she has to convince the filly's owner to keep her. A simple but admirable struggle, and a good look at the love that can grow between a pet and a child. Ashleigh doesn't help the filly all by herself, she has adult aid, so that's fairly realistic. Also realistic is the fact that Ashleigh's grades suffer while she pays all of her attention to Wonder.

Ashleigh herself is supposed to be the 'every-girl', I guess, so that any horse-crazy girl can identify with her. I didn't really identify with her as a kid, and as an adult I found her overly dramatic and slightly annoying. Still, she's relatively harmless as protagonists go.

All in all, I think this is a pretty harmless book series, but your kid could probably be reading something better, and adults might as well not even bother.

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### **Kacy\* says**

Absolutely loved this series as a kid! This might be the very first "series" (aside from Dr. Seuss obviously) as a kid that REALLY got me into reading. I have loved horses ever since I could say the word, and this just wrapped everything I loved in a wonderful story. You would always see me with a book in my hand. If I got grounded (I was a good kid I swear)...no problem! Give me a book and I'm good for hours. I guess this series just holds a special place in my heart because of it introducing me into the wonderful world of books. When I "outgrew" these books because I read them a bazillion times, I wanted to donate them so another girl could enjoy the worn down books like I did. I literally cried when I gave them away! I hope the next girl loved them too.

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### **Rebecca McNutt says**

*A Horse Called Wonder* is a real trip down memory lane (I had this whole series as a kid when my grandparent's neighbours went to university and gave me their downsized book collection), and for a relatively small middle grade novel, it's actually aged well and still holds up as a decent story. The main character is still grieving the loss of her beloved horse but learns to appreciate another as she befriends Wonder. Wonder might be sick but with determination Ashleigh is able to help him and rekindle her love of animals. I'm not really much of an animal person myself but I still liked this book and the beautifully-depicted rural scenery especially.

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### **Rena Sherwood says**

The reasonably good beginning to what would ultimately become a Nancy-Drew type crap young adult series. Only the first five books in the series (apparently written by Campbell) are any good -- the rest is warmed-over rehash of the first five books. The Thoroughbred series was eventually written by a conglomeration of ghostwriters. Although some young adult series are entertaining for adults to read, I found the Thoroughbred series (from book 6 to 10) to be staggeringly tedious. I stopped buying them around book 10 but occasionally the later books I've borrowed from my local library have been stress-reducing fun reads.

One weird part I'd forgotten until I recently re-read the book: Briefly shown to the Griffen family is a prize bay stallion named BARBERO. (Just a slight spelling difference from the ill-fated 2006 Kentucky Derby winner BARBARO.) I know that eventually there will be a tragic racehorse sharing the same name as a past fictional racehorse BUT STILL--

There are some really good moments in this book. I particularly enjoyed that Wonder was given a distinct personality and wasn't just a horse in the background like in most other girl-and-horse books. I also liked that Ashleigh felt pretty helpless because there were so many things out of her control and yet she tried anyway, fully knowing that her efforts could be futile. I missed that lesson the first dozen or so times I read this but now in my 40s I think I got it.

### **Michelle-- Fawn & Fern Books says**

This may have been the one book that started my horse obsession. As a young teen, the library became my favorite place to go. I found this book by accident, and the rest is history. I read the first three in the series and was forced to stop because it was all the library had. One day while I was in there, the librarian pointed out an entire box full of the series, left by a Mom whose daughter grew out of the horse stage. I read the entire series in just a few weeks and bought as many as I could after that. That was back when books were only around \$7.99 a piece. These books bring me back to summertime when I was younger, sitting outside with a glass of water and my horse books. I wish I could go back for just one day!

Joanna Campbell definitely wrote some of the best horse books out there. I recommend these to any horse crazy girl out there.

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### **Shelly says**

Good book. Not... more like GREAT BOOK!!! It's a little slow at first, then as you get more toward the middle, you can't put it down! Actually, the whole series is like that. I'm now reading the 6th one, and is soooooo good.

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### **Stefanie says**

I LOVED this book! Take an eleven year old girl, a sick little filly and you get a sweet, realistic, and heartwarming story! I loved Ashleigh's tenacity and determination to save the filly she loves even when nobody had faith in her becoming anything but a mediocre broodmare. Stories like this should be everywhere, there's no violence, nothing inappropriate, and the story moves along like your watching a movie, I hope someone decides to make the entire Thoroughbred book series into a t.v. series as I would love to see all the characters come to life!

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### **Haley says**

This book was about Ashleigh Griffen, a young girl who just moved from her old family stable, Edgarwood, to a much larger racehorse stable called Townsend Acres. Her family had been breeding Thoroughbred horses for racing when a horrible disease went through the horses and killed many. Now the family is hoping for a new start by becoming breeding managers at Townsend Acres.

Ashleigh is unhappy about moving until she discovers Wonder, a small, sickly filly expected to die. Ashleigh fights to take care of the little filly, helping her recover and gain strength. She comes to love the gorgeous filly and names her Ashleigh's Wonder.

During the entire book she fights for her right to care for the filly and endures sickness, pain and doubt. She

has to convince Mr.Townsend that Wonder is worth it.

I really liked this book because it was about horses.

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### **Jes (RebelReads) says**

2016: still one of the best horse series for kids. still my favorite.

2015: Ahhh, such a flashback to the past. I was wondering if these would stand up to the test of time for me and it sure did. Ashleigh is such a fighter, reminds me of how determined I used to be with horses. It may have even brought back a bit too many memories. I grew up riding at a big barn and it was me and four other girls that formed a bit of a posse. The girl I was closest to and I would read these books and talk about them all the time, even sneaking out behind the barn and racing our horses. I had a 23 year old retired Thoroughbred racehorse at the time so it was just a blast to go play jockey with her and the other girls. All because of these books. I wish I had known when I was reading them but I just found out the author of this lives not too far away from me. The author's note in the back shows her with a horse in Maine. I must have forgotten about that over the years. Anyway, I can't give this a legitimate review because it's so near and dear to me after almost 20 years since I first read them. I will say they are amazing books for kids who do ride horses as a lot of the terminology is very accurate. My biggest pet peeve with horse books is when the author doesn't know the horse world. Flaws are so obvious to horsey kids who know the lingo. I'm now on a mission to get the whole series again, so nice to have a part of my horse world with me again now that I can't ride anymore.

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### **Ashley says**

Oh this book! I LOVED this entire series when I was around 7 or 8 eight years old, and I continued reading them until I was about 11 or 12 (it was up to #50-something by then, I think). I don't have my copies any more but I am tempted to buy the first few again just for sentimental reasons. This book and the next two or three about Ashleigh and Wonder are probably still the best of the bunch, but the whole series is pretty cute. I've ridden all my life (hunter/jumper for the past ten years) and while this is mostly racing, it's still great fun for a horse-crazy young girl.

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### **Tara Lynn says**

I've always been a horse crazy person. As a horse crazy little girl with little actual access to horses (I grew up in the city,) most of my horse love centered around any horse fiction that I could get my hands on. I discovered the Thoroughbred series at around 11 or 12 during one of the school book fairs, and became hooked. The story focuses (for the first 6 or 7 books, at least) around a young girl of 11 or 12 who works to save a horse named Wonder. Through her love and total devotion, Wonder goes on to become a champion racehorse. While the plot may sound cliché, it was still emotionally riveting to a little girl who desperately wanted a horse of her own. Now that I'm a horse crazy adult, I still understand the pull that books like the Thoroughbred series and the Saddle Club books have for young girls (and boys.)

Having read some of the later books in the series as a teenager, I'll explain some of the ratings I've given the series. Books 1-5 focus exclusively on Ashleigh and Wonder, and are by far the best books in the series, with

the notable exception of the story arc "Without Wonder," which I believe starts at book 36. Later books focus on Ashleigh's daughter Christina and her cousin Melanie. While these books are great in their own right, they're just not as moving as the original Ashleigh arc. The "Super" editions, including books like Ashleigh's diary, were also great, although not as good as books 1-5.

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### **Hannah says**

I will forever love this series. Growing up horse crazy, these books were my absolute favorite, and years later, I've decided to reread them.

Ashleigh Griffen isn't interested in getting close to any of the horses at Townsend Acres. Her parents were lucky enough to assume the roles of breeding managers at the prestigious farm, but it wouldn't be the same as owning their own horses like they did at Edgardale before the devastating illness took over. Most of their horses had died and those who survived had to be sold, including Ashleigh's favorite horse.

Still, Ashleigh finds herself hanging around the barns and getting to know all the racehorses at Townsend Acres. Holly is an old broodmare that is due any day to one of the farm's most promising studs, Townsend Pride. When she finally delivers a beautiful foal, Ashleigh is immediately drawn to the Thoroughbred filly. Unfortunately, the filly is weak and unable to stand or nurse.

Ashleigh cannot allow another horse to die, so she puts all of her effort and time into the little foal that soon becomes known as Ashleigh's Wonder. With help from stables hands and family, Ashleigh fights the uphill battles that Wonder must face throughout her first year of life. Everyone questions if Wonder is truly worth saving, but Ashleigh knows she is a special horse.

Horse lovers will relate to this book in so many ways, from the highs of riding, the excitement of new foals, to the lows of sickness and the sadness of letting go of the precious animals that we so dearly love. I enjoyed this book just as much as I did 15 years ago and look forward to reading the rest of the series again.

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### **Cori says**

After a disease wiped out her family's breeding farm, Ashleigh Griffen swore she would never care about another horse again. When her family relocated as breeding managers at Townsend Acres, Ashleigh fell in love with a small foal named Wonder. No one but Ashleigh thinks the sickly foal will survive, so with love and care, Ashleigh does her best to prove them all wrong. This book was simply heartfelt and touching as I read how Ashleigh helped Wonder with the odds against her. It strengthened my love for animals, as I became more hopeful about difficult situations. I think it's important to share this message of fighting for what you believe in with children in the upper grades as they start to come up with their own mindset and perspectives.

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### **Biblio Curious says**

Happy sighs!! One of my favourite series as a middle grade reader. I've got to re-read it as an adult to see how it compares.

But I remember it as being a wholesome book about a girl caring for her horse with a love of her sport. There's some sad bits but nothing that shocked my young, impressionable self. Awesome series for emotional children.

