



# Thunderhead

*Mary O'Hara*

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## Thunderhead Mary O'Hara

A follow-up to the childhood classic *My Friend Flicka*. "That rare achievement, a sequel to a great and richly deserved success that in no way falls short of its distinguished predecessor . . . a fine and singing story."--  
*New York Times*

## Thunderhead Details

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Author : Mary O'Hara

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## From Reader Review Thunderhead for online ebook

### CindySlowReader says

In part two of the My Friend Flicka trilogy Flicka has two babies, Rob and Nell's marriage suffers because of finances, both Ken and Howard mature and The Albino returns.

Flicka's first foal turns out to be a snow white throwback to his grandfather The Albino. He's a crazy little guy who earns the nickname "Goblin" but soon he becomes what he is destined to be, the fast and furious Thunderhead. Will he become the racehorse that helps the ranch get out of the red? Will Rob and Nell reconcile? Will I read part three next? YES.

I wonder if all 3 installments have been published under one cover. I'd buy it. There is absolutely no change in tone or flavor between the first two, I don't remember the third book very well so stay tuned!

P.S. This is NOT a children's book due to animal violence and death and descriptions of marital stress. Who the heck tagged it as children's?

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### Janie says

Quotes to remember:

"I've got it all figured out about cats and dogs. Dogs are like lovable children. But cats are entirely adult."

"Ken, you can't always win. Much more of life is failure than success."

"Growing pains were beginning already. No such seed as fortitude can be planted in a young heart without pain."

"Faith."

"You know what that is. That's believing when you can't understand. You believe in God; you know He's there and He made us, and He is wise. And in the end will bring everything out right if we don't spoil things."

"An old woman was standing beside the car, her thin gray hair, which had pulled loose from the little knob at the back, whipped by the wind. It was a face often seen on marginal farms and ranches deep in the country. A face of character and refinement -- the beak of a nose just a blade like bone covered with skin, the long hanging jaw, the small shiny false teeth, the walnut-colored skin quilted with deep line, and in the sunken colorless eyes, the look of endurance that had begun ages ago -- and would never end."

"Well, I've decide that life is a gymnasium. It you take it that way -- a training school, not just a vacation or a pleasure trip, then you're not too upset when you find yourself up against things you can't handle -- you just know it's the apparatus -- you're making muscle -- spiritual muscle --."

"Now and then people ought to overhaul themselves the way you would an engine. Overhaul your habits. Take inventory. See if you've got any traits on your shelves that are no use to you! Stock up with different goods."

### **Michelle says**

Another great "slice of American life" but so much more too. The relationships between father and son, husband and wife, brothers... something young readers can handle and yet very mature themes for us adults. Grand. Everything you want in a book, when you're looking for a really good book to read.

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### **Teresa says**

I am not sure what it is about this book, but it is just such a wonderful read. I loved it! O'Hara is a wonderful writer. She brings the characters to life, she expands on life on the ranch, the joys and difficulties. With weather, the animals and family. I loved the way Kens dad and mom instilled strength and good unselfish decision making in their sons. The first book, My Friend Flicka is just as enjoyable.

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### **Maddie Geremia says**

I loved this book even more than the first book, "My Friend Flicka" which I never even thought was possible. I think it's so cool how Thunderhead kills the albino and takes over his herd and keeps them in the valley of the eagles.

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### **Fleur says**

My favourite childhood book. I read the trilogy it belongs to dozens of times. Actually, although I was horse mad, the angst and effort of the boy Ken is as engaging as that of the eponymous equine hero. The three books - My Friend Flicka is the first, this the second and The Green Grass of Wyoming is the third - totally entranced me, and left me with a lifelong wish to see Wyoming. Or at least the Wyoming of the book. I still mentally quote from it!

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### **P.S. Winn says**

I love his story, which is a continuation of the author's first book about life, love and hard times growing up.

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### **Trisha Owens says**

Having NOT read My Friend Flicka, or any others in the series, this book about a rare white stallion, Thunderhead, and Ken, a adolescent boy, is superb. I found the correlation between Thunderhead and Ken's

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maturation, similar and in the end gratifying. Descriptions of the Western mountains and valleys are enrapturing and thought provoking. The struggles of being a wild stallion, and confrontations with other stallions protecting their mares in the wild, are just thrilling, but sometimes down right gruesome. Ken, trying to be mature and take responsibility for this White horse ( at one point called Ghost) tries his best despite the horse's resistance to control and supervision. Ken wants to save his family from economic collapse and turn this horse into a paying winner at the track. Enjoy this one, and revel in its conclusion, as I did!

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### **Beth says**

This is the best of O'Hara's trilogy. Everybody secretly wants a horse like Thunderhead -- even people who have horses and should know better. Goblin / Thunderhead is a fierce personality wrapped up in a horse's body. As he comes into his own, he wavers on the edge between triumph and infamy, and this novel explores the tragedy that is always twinned with greatness.

Be forewarned, this book is brutal in places -- but so is real life when the sanitation of what we call civilization is stripped away. I appreciated the author's balance in those instances; O'Hara handles those moments with realism but no sadistic descriptions of gore or deliberate use of the shock factor. The novel is a violent play on emotions from the heights of fierce triumph to desperate unhappiness and heartbreak; it ends well, but leaves a lingering, wistful thought of what could have been but will never be. Unforgettable.

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### **Sandy (WI girl at heart) says**

Finished Mary O'Hara book "Thunderhead". I have read this book a number of times as a kid and still love it as an adult.

Great "horsey" story. Very quick read with glimpses of a slower paced life on a horse ranch.

Would I recommend this book to others: Yes. Would I read it again: Yes,

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### **Kwilson says**

I read the entire trilogy multiple times in childhood. Thunderhead was always my least favorite. As a preteen, crazy for horses, Flicka was my favorite. As a young teen, the romance in Green Grass appealed to me the most. Rereading the trilogy now, as an adult wife and mother, I have found Thunderhead to be my favorite of the three. As a child, I found Nell and Rob's story extremely boring and skipped over many parts. Those parts are the most enjoyable now

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### **Sandra Visser says**

An enjoyable and readable adventure that deals more with the interpersonal relationships on the farm than one would have expected from a YA book about horses. The book was initially aimed at an adult market and this can be seen in the sometimes overwrought descriptions of the emotions experienced by parents Nell and

Rob. Some descriptions of the landscape, although evocative, are a bit drawn out and halt the pace of the story, which is already thinly spread over almost 400 pages. The cruelty of nature fits the setting but is nevertheless upsetting and the relish O'Hara ostensibly feels in describing horse brains being eked out onto the ground, for example, is a bit disturbing. But the love between boy and horses Thunderhead, Flicka and Touch And Go is brought vividly to life as well as Ken's struggle to become a man and "to take it".

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### **Rena Sherwood says**

This is a really bizarre book, a bit schizophrenic at times. That's only appropriate since the main character, the first foal from Flicka (from **My Friend Flicka**) goes through a phase where he is known as Goblin and then matures into Thunderhead. Thunderhead/Goblin is arguably the most interesting character in the My Friend Flicka trilogy but his surroundings can be appalling at times.

This series is one of those books which were considered perfectly innocent books for children's libraries when I was young. Now I wonder if in a few years these will be moved into the adult library or just banned altogether for the violence. I think the violence is mild but you know there's going to be those hyper-sensitive parents that equate their precious children having a (GASP) nightmare equates with the Holocaust.

As I get older, I am getting increasingly uncomfortable with how violently the horses are treated -- which was not considered violent at the time, I know. So maybe we all become wusses as we age. But I feel for my fictional equine friends who I've grown up with. Do they get beaten worse the more times I read the books? It's thoughts like these that keep me awake all damn night.

So now I consider this a historical novel of a supremely weird time in the West where men were men, women were women and horses were incestuous fire-breathing dragons.

One other point -- there are no such things as albino horses. There are horses who appear white, but they are not albinos. Albino foals do not survive long after foaling since they are always born with an incomplete digestive system. Horse color genetics were not known at all back when this was published. Or horse training. Or the effects of inbreeding.

The book is (predictably) different from the 1945 movie of the same name starring Roddy McDowell. In some ways I liked the movie better than the book since a lot of the violent scenes were removed -- although Banner dies in the movie. The movie and the book are two like two different but tasty flavors of ice cream. Unless you're Banner. Then the movie sucks.

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### **Harini Srinivasan says**

If you love animals and the outdoors, this is sure to be one of your favourites! A sequel to My Friend Flicka, this book about Flicka's son completely outshines both the previous book and the one that follows, Green Grass of Wyoming. A real tour de force!

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## Janet says

I read and reread and reread this book again and again while I was in middle school, in love with horses and just discovering boys. What a marvelous story.

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