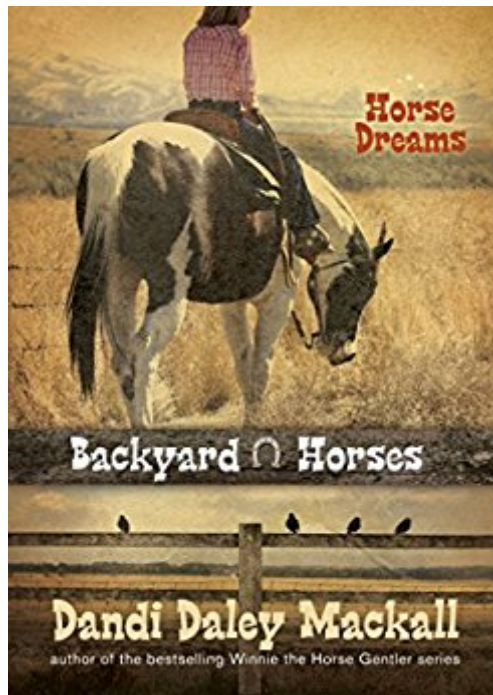




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Horse Dreams (Backyard Horses Book 1)



Synopsis

Fourth-grader Ellie James has a great imagination. She spends a lot of time daydreaming of owning a black stallion show horse and winning trophies in the horse show. But when the answer to all her dreams and prayers gallops into her life, will Ellie be able to recognize it? Join Ellie and her quirky family in their exciting, horse-loving adventures.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

This book is about Ellie and her dream of owning a horse. A beautiful, black stallion, to be exact. She's begged and cried and prayed for one for years. Ellie gets a lesson that prayers aren't always answered in the way we imagined them. I don't know where this book falls in the series, but I feel like so many more details are probably filled in through the rest of the books, though it does read fine as a standalone. As you would expect from the title and cover, this book really is a great deal about horses. If your child doesn't care for them, this probably isn't the best choice. I imagine Christian fans of horses will love it, though! I enjoyed the sign language addition to the story. Ellie's brother is deaf, and sign language is used. The chapter titles are even in sign language (along with words).

There's a sign language alphabet chart in the back, along with a dictionary of the "horse" words used throughout the story. I do have a few complaints. It's mentioned different times that the mom is WAY taller than the dad. I love this part! I think it's awesome to see that parents/couples don't always have to fit a mold. ((two thumbs up for that part)) BUT, I feel like the dad should have been given a backbone. At one point, the mom has to step up and "save" him when he's scared of a certain man. I was disappointed he wasn't created to be stronger, considering this is a Christian series. Also, I didn't care for the gossiping that went on within the story. There is one point that Ellie leaves where she's supposed to be, asking her friend to lie for her. She walks alone in the dark during this "adventure". There are no consequences, whatsoever, and that's just not okay! If you can overlook those parts, this is a sweet and funny little story, and I really enjoyed it!

Ellie James is a fourth-grader who loves horses and dreams about owning a horse of her own. She daydreams and prays about someday owning a black stallion. Ellie daydreams so much about horses (including in class) that when she tells her teacher that she sees a horse outside the school, no one believes her and they think she's just daydreaming again. But is she? Horse Dreams is a cute horse related story for pre-teen age girls. In the book, Ellie learns that prayers aren't always answered in the way we want them to be or the way we expect them to be answered. Another theme of the book is that we shouldn't judge people (or in this case, a horse) by how they look. Ellie's brother Ethan is deaf and communicates with Ellie, her parents, and her friend using sign language. The title of each chapter is spelled out in sign language along with the English title and the whole sign language alphabet is listed in the back of the book along with a glossary of horse related words and terms. I thought both made a nice addition to the book. I like the way Ellie's faith is portrayed throughout the book and how genuine it feels whenever Ellie is praying or thinking about God and her relationship with him. Bible verses are also quoted at the beginning and the end of the book (1 Samuel 16:7 and Ephesians 3:20). One thing to mention for parents is that in one part of the book Ellie leaves a horse show without telling anyone where she is going and walks alone to and from an animal farm a good distance away at night, which isn't a safe thing to do. Her parents never question her about this decision later in the book. This book was an enjoyable read and I think it is a great book for Christian girls, especially girls who like horses.

Horse Dreams is such a cutie story. This is the first book of a series. I can tell you that my daughter and I will have to continue the series. In this book, you are introduced to Ellie, a young girl who is

wishing for a black stallion show horse. Then she comes across a poor horse in need of rescuing. I thought this was a beautiful little story about the true meaning of love. 5 stars.

As a child I loved horse books so I was excited to read this book but ended up finishing very disappointed! Some other reviews on here say that it had good Christian values and I don't disagree but I wanted MORE! I was discouraged that the kids were always talking about praying but the parents never were! I was also disappointed because the girl literally only prayed one thing and it was really more of a wish!! I want my children to read books that encourage them to delve deeper into prayer life than this book did.

"Backyard Horses" by Dandi Daley Mackall is the first book in her "Horse Dreams" series for middle-elementary-aged children (probably most appealing to girls). Ellie James, the main character, is ten-years-old and in the fourth grade. Her younger brother, Ethan, is deaf, so she and her best friend, Colt, have both learned sign language in order to communicate more easily with him. This also allows them to send secret messages to each other in public places, such as in their classroom at school. Ellie loves to daydream. She also loves horses. Her favorite daydream is about owning a horse, a Hamilton Royal Champion Horse. Some of the other girls at school have their very own perfect show horses, but Ellie is still waiting and praying for hers. Begging her parents and crying to them haven't brought this horse into being, so now she's trying prayer. "Backyard Horses" tells us what comes of that. I enjoyed reading this clever story and wouldn't hesitate to recommend it to parents looking for good books for their children to read. Positives: Though there's a mean girl in the story, Ellie and Colt both handle her with patience and grace. When adults in the story make mistakes, Ellie is respectful and polite, yet stands up for what is right in creative ways. Ellie's relationship with her family, best friend, and school teacher are all quite sweet. Best of all, Ellie learns some significant lessons about God's nature and prayer. The message of 1 Samuel 16:7 is the subtle theme of the book.

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