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A Hundred Horses

Cynthia Frazier

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Book Review

Title: A Hundred Horses
Author: Sarah Lean
Reviewer: Cynthia Frazier
Publisher: Katherine Tegen Books
Publication Year: 2013
ISBN: 9780062122292
Number of Pages: 217
Interest Level: Primary, Intermediate, Young Adult
Rating: Outstanding



Review

Eleven year old Nell leads a very busy life full of classes and clubs that she hates. Now she is being forced to spend her spring break in the country with an aunt she can't remember and two small cousins she doesn't even want to get to know. On top of that, a suitcase containing a special project has been stolen by someone riding a big black and white horse. Somewhere between Maggie the pig having piglets, rescuing flying chickens, and tracking down a missing goat Nell meets an unlikely friend in a girl named Angel. People say that Angel tells lies and steals but Nell listens as Angel recounts a local legend about 99 special horses and what happens when the 100th horse is born. Nell sees that Angel is the one who really cares about animals in trouble and who is trying very hard to bring magic back to the farm she loves.

An award winning author of children's fiction, Sarah Lean, weaves a lovely story in rural England. One of Lean's strengths are the believable characters she depicts. Her small children do normal and cute things that young children do everywhere. Nell and her mother have problems communicating and understanding one another, which often happen as girls start growing up. Many readers enjoy reading about animals, and this book is full of scenes about ordinary farm animals that are amusing and touching. Angel, a seemingly complicated character, is really the most simple of all; she just wants to help preserve the place she considers her home for herself and the horses she loves. A touch of magic pulls the whole book together into an enchanting story that will interest readers aged 7 – 14. It is also a good book to read to or with a child.