

GREAT HORSE
STORIES
for
Girls

REBECCA E. ONDOV



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*To Cindy Peterson.
Thank you for showing me how to live my faith.
Your friendship is priceless.*

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To God: I am forever grateful for Your grace and mercy.

To my prayer team: Thank you for all the hours you prayed for me and encouraged me.

To Harvest House Publishers: I'm thrilled to be part of your team.

To Barbara Gordon: Your wisdom adds zing to my writing. Thank you! (By the way, I can't wait till we get to the coast and hang out together. Will anyone be safe on the beach if we rent dune buggies?)

To Tom Fox, my daytime boss: Thanks for your encouragement. I appreciate you.

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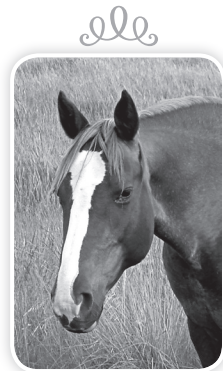
Meet the Stars



Czar and Rebecca*

Czar. It was love at first sight when I saw the lanky, month-old, bay colt. He grew up to become my all-time dream horse. He and I traveled thousands of miles when I took people on pack trips in the Bob Marshall Wilderness of Montana.

Dancer. I bought this beautiful, sorrel, Tennessee walker mare without asking God first. What a mess I created. I'll explain later how things went really bad quickly. But, thankfully, when I asked God to fix it, He turned the situation around and blessed my socks off with Dancer.

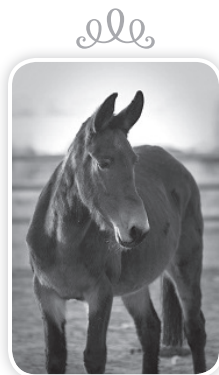


Dancer

Dazzle. One day when I was shopping for knobs for my kitchen cupboards, I took a break and opened a classified ads paper. On the page before me was a beautiful, black Tennessee walker mare. I knew she was mine. Instead of buying knobs, I went home with a horse!



Dazzle*



Little Girl*

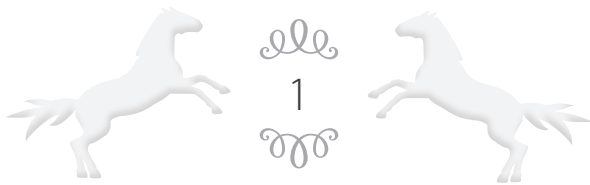
Little Girl. When she was two days old, Little Girl was kicked in the head by a horse and her jaw was shattered. Some ranch hands found her lying motionless in the field. They brought her to the house, and I scooped her into the car. While rushing her to the clinic, I had to stop and give her CPR three times. The vet pinned her jaw and doctored her wounds. That night I bedded her down in my kitchen. The following day I moved her into a safe shed. Over the next couple months, I milked her mom every two hours around the clock and bottle-fed Little Girl. She recovered and turned into the biggest, long-eared, love bug blessing I've ever met.



Horses. Why do they take my breath away? Why does my heart pound when I catch a glimpse of them? I think it's because God tucked a special gift inside every girl's heart—the love of horses. Through horses God has taken me on an incredible journey filled with adventures I want to share with you. As we step into green pastures, I hope your love for horses will deepen. I also pray that you'll discover what a miracle you are and how much God loves you.

Blessings,
Rebecca

P.S. Would you and your friends like to use this book for a Bible study? Find out more by going to <http://www.rebeccaondov.com> and click on the “For Horse Girls Only” link.



Chosen

*God said,
"Let us make human beings in our image."*

Genesis 1:26 NLT

All was still in the indoor arena except for the cooing of the pigeons from the rafters and the sound of the horse's hooves digging into the sand. I sat tall in the saddle, paying attention to the sorrel-colored mare with the reddish-gold mane. Through the thick leather of the western saddle, I could feel the muscles ripple in her back. She quickly paced around the arena. Her hooves kicked up a light haze of dust that hung in the warm, spring air. My heart thumped in my chest. *Could this be the one?*

I was "trying out" a Tennessee walker (the formal name is "Tennessee Walking Horse"). I wanted to buy another riding horse. At home in my pasture stood my very old and retired saddle horse, a mule I used to pack, and a horse with joint problems that couldn't be ridden. I didn't have a saddle horse I could ride every day. In another month the snow would melt off the sides of the mountains, and horseback-riding season would start in Montana. I didn't want to miss a single day in the saddle.

I gathered the reins with my sweaty hands and gently laid them against the side of the mare's neck. Instantly she turned. Over the next hour she willingly changed gaits, stopped, and backed up. I rode her down the dirt road, and my body barely rocked side-to-side because her gait was so smooth. It was as if she was dancing on air. When I was

done with the test ride, I reined her into the barn and stopped next to her wooden box stall. I stroked her neck. A grin brightened my face as I announced, “Well, girl, you passed the test. I’m choosing you!”



Dancer, Tessa, and Rebecca chitchatting.

• Just Between You and Me •

Have you thought about how exciting it is to be chosen? How do you feel when you're picked to be part of a school team? A school play? A member of the band or orchestra? Have you or one of your friends been invited to be part of a special class of some kind?

Have you noticed that the great feeling gradually fades away? Especially when the spotlight of acceptance shifts and shines on someone else?

What if instead of looking to others for approval and good feelings, you could *know* deep inside your heart that *you are important and valuable*? What if the very One who created the universe and hung

the stars in place—the most powerful and important Being who ever existed—chose to create you?

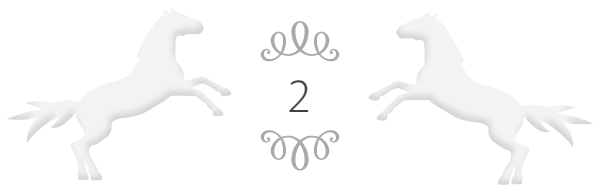
The best part is that this is all true! You are a one-of-a-kind person created by God Himself. *Wow!*

Lord, help us understand how special we are to You. Amen.

• Just for Fun •

Did you know there are lots of breeds of horses? Why not make a list and see how many you can name? When you're done, look up horse breeds on the Internet. Just go to a search engine (like Google or Yahoo) and type "compare horse breeds."

If you were to choose a horse, what breed would you want and why?



What's in a Name?

A good name is more desirable than great riches.

Proverbs 22:1

The sorrel mare turned her head and watched me. I loosened the cinch of the western saddle sitting on her back. Her deep-brown eyes followed my every move as I slipped the saddle and blanket off. I was excited because I'd just decided to purchase her. After lugging the saddle and blanket over to the rack and hanging them in place, I walked back to her.

What am I going to name you, girl? Coming up with the right names for my animals is important to me. I want the names to reflect not just who the animal is, but what I'd like the critter to become. I enjoy thinking about names—sometimes for days or even weeks before just the right one comes to me.

Standing next to the mare, I stroked her soft, red coat. She sighed, lowered her head, and dozed. I considered what I would call her. My mind reviewed the ride I'd just taken. I'd never been on a horse whose gaits were so smooth. I felt she'd been dancing on air. I inhaled excitedly. "That's it! Your name needs to be *Dancer!*" The mare woke up, curled her head around, and batted her red eyelashes at me. I was sure she was agreeing with me.

• Just Between You and Me •

Names are more than just the sounds of letters strung together. We attach meanings to them. We often view them as clues that tell us

what's inside the person. When I hear some people's names I think, *She's probably considerate* or *He's probably helpful*. Have you ever heard someone's name and shuddered because words like "bossy" or "rude" immediately came to mind? That's the wonderful and horrible thing about names.

Unlike a horse, who doesn't have a choice in what they become, we humans make our own decisions. We've been given a wonderful gift from God—the ability to decide how we'll act and who we'll become. Through those decisions, we're choosing what our names will mean to those around us.

When someone mentions your name, what would you like them to remember?

Would you like to make your name super special? You can! First, write down three things God would like you to become. Now create a sentence that includes all three characteristics. Something like, "I have lots of friends because I'm *kind*, *considerate*, and *helpful*." Now, make it your goal to live up to those attributes. Copy the sentence into your phone or in your school notebook. If you read it several times a day, you'll be reminded of your goals to be more kind, considerate, and helpful. You might be surprised at how quickly your name will come to mean those wonderful things to your friends and to God.

*Lord, show us how to create great names
for ourselves that will honor You. Amen.*

• Just for Fun •

Challenge: Can you come up with the name of this famous horse?

- He appeared in more than 80 movies, 101 television show episodes, and won the P.A.T.S.Y. award (an award for animals that's like the Oscars some actors win).
- He was a palomino (gold) with a glossy white mane and tail.

- You may not have seen this horse because he died a long time ago, but you've certainly heard of him.
- He was often called the smartest horse in Hollywood. He could shoot a gun, untie ropes, and was even known to climb stairs at hospitals to visit sick children.
- He was owned by Roy Rogers.

Have you guessed the horse's name?

Yes, it's Trigger! For more information on this amazing horse, type "horse Trigger" on the Internet.