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Stake Night



Synopsis

Stake Night is the story of a single year in the glamorous and competitive world of show horses, where the rewards are large and so are the lengths to which people will go to win. For the owners, it is about wielding power through money in their quest to proudly hold the prestigious World Championship trophy. For the riders, it is about demonstrating technical skill and nerve by out-riding their competitors and maneuvering their horse in the frenetic ring so the judges notice it. For the trainers, it is about finding the key that makes your horse out-perform others that might actually be more talented and achieving the professional recognition that leads to new clients and financial security. For everyone, it is about settling scores and finding a way to win the championship. The central character is Jennifer, a young, relatively unknown trainer. She can't believe her luck when a rich client brings her the reigning world champion horse and tells Jennifer to prepare the horse for her timid daughter to ride. Jennifer quickly learns that this horse and rider are a dangerous and doomed combination, and she must move carefully to find an alternative that keeps her important client from leaving the barn and ruining Jennifer's chances to finally join the ranks of the most well-known and respected trainers.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

I really loved reading this. Being a former assistant trainer and having friends at all levels in the Saddlebred world, I felt like I was right there along with the characters every step of the way. She nailed the different personalities you find, and I had a real life person in mind for every character. There has to be a sequel!!! I want to keep following these characters!!

This book totally fascinated me! I knew nothing about the Saddlebred horse or that it was "The Horse America Made." This book provides an in depth look at this industry with incredible behind the scene details of the lives of the owners, trainers and riders of these beautiful horses. I didn't know there were five and three gaited horses, or the various competitions that are held each year and how these contests must dominate the lives of the people involved. The characters in the book are wonderful and very real and credible. From the shy and Timid Blair to the "win at any cost" Johnny, and Kenny and Angela, who are struggling in their marriage, all seem very real and I think I would recognize them if I met them. The book was great. I learned a lot and enjoyed both the characters and their stories.

Can't believe this is a self-published book. It is THAT highly accomplished. I rank this book in my top 5 equestrian novels of all time and I congratulate the (apparently?) first time author. I equate this book with Jane Smiley's Horse Heaven, insofar as even if you don't know anything about the particular horse show discipline involved, you will still learn a lot and gain valuable insights into what makes us horse show people tick, and why we do what we do. The characters - both human and horse - are so well drawn that you find yourself filled with empathy for even the unlikeable ones. This is a top-notch debut from someone who has obviously competed at the very highest levels of the sport. Every detail is correct, present and accounted for. I cannot recommend this book more highly. If you are a true equestrian you will get tons out of it.

I seem to be one of the few reviewers here who knows nothing about the world of competitive equestrian events, which I hope qualifies me to comment on the fact that this is great storytelling. It was clear to me that the author knew her stuff-- it's hard to miss authenticity even when you don't know the subject matter-- and I learned quite a lot that I didn't know before reading this book. I always love that. However, it is also a ripping good story built around well-sketched people and their

horses (the horses are most certainly characters too) and the emotional ups and downs of playing for high stakes. Archer builds a world that draws you in and makes you really care about what happens here and, like most good sports stories, it is a thrilling tale of struggle and triumph, A great ride (sorry, couldn't resist)! Highly recommended.

This is the first book in a sea of show horse books about Saddlebreds. The characters were charmingly, interesting, the horses were, big, beautiful and breathtaking. I enjoyed all the different horses owners and different show horse barns. A little romance at the end. It was really informative and the author was correct in her terminology. Always bothers me when horse authors say they steer with the reins and trot is a gait. Can't wait for a sequel. I hope that is being written now.

It's not a romance and it's not a standard horse book of the type that has one central horse that gives its all for the owner it loves, etc. It's about a number of interesting and seemingly quite real people whose way of life is riding, training, owning, and/or showing Louisville-level five-gaited Saddlebreds. The story works its way through the season from the points of view of these owners and trainers, not to mention their quite believable horses, reaching its climax on Saturday night at State Fair. I couldn't put it down and yet I didn't want it to end! You sure could tell that Susan shows Saddlebreds. :)

The writing wasn't good enough to make up for the awkward third-person present tense (She listens to the announcer, as he names the winner . . .). I couldn't make it to the end of the second chapter.

I really enjoyed learning about Saddle bred horses and their human handlers. The story and the timeline allowed me to understand some of the technical issues with training and needs of each horse. With well developed characters and story line, this book kept my interest throughout and left me wishing there was a sequel I could start immediately.

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