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Summer Circuit (Show Circuit Series -- Book 1)



Synopsis

WARNING: CONTAINS MATURE CONTENT. RECOMMENDED FOR AGE 16+It's the summer before college. Hannah Waer is on her own at the seven-week summer horse show circuit in Vermont. Her father wants her to learn independence and responsibility so she has to take care of her own horse—which might not be a problem if she'd ever picked out a stall, or prepared a horse for the ring. It also doesn't help that her horse won't jump. When Hannah crashes (literally) into gorgeous and accomplished grand prix rider, Chris Kern, on her first day at the show, she's certain her life is over. In fact, it's just beginning. The summer becomes one Hannah will never forget—a time of first love, of hard choices, and of learning that life is what you make of it.

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Customer Reviews

Having been disappointed by Georgina Bloomberg's the A Circuit, I was thrilled to find an author who can write about horses and keep it one hundred percent real. In fact, this is not just a great horse book, it's a great book in general. Though I picked it up for the horses, I kept reading for the characters, who are strikingly realistic. Kim obviously knows the A Circuit (and the horse world in

general) well and she does an awesome job of humanizing the often stereotyped riders at this level. As an adult amateur who lessons with a Grand Prix rider but could never in this lifetime afford to show the AA shows regularly (much less afford a horse that could really win) I get to see all the different types of people involved in the show world from a very neutral standpoint. Let me tell you this: Kim's characters are spot on. The awesome rider trying to eek out a living through sponsors and show wins, the parent trying to live vicariously through their kid, the groom who will teach you anything if you just ask, the rich kid learning that money doesn't buy happiness, the gay kid only out at shows... I know them all, and they're all in this book, but they are definitely not cardboard characters. Every single character in this book pops to life, with all the complexities and quirks of real people. It's also nice that plot is actually a real plot, not the old "girl who was a loser somehow becomes a winner" tale that most horse books fall trap to. The romance is believable but not overdone, and the plot twists are surprising.

18 year old Hannah's wealthy, self-made father doesn't pay much attention to her, but when he does, his gaze is intimidating and fearsome. Hannah likes horses and had shown an older leased horse, so during a business conversation, he's persuaded to buy a young warmblood - too much horse and too green, truly, for Hannah. Hannah's trainer gives her hardly any guidance (mostly she yells) and Hannah is a little frightened and knows she's overhyped. But her dad wants her to learn self-reliance, so he agrees she can go do the summer horse show circuit in Vermont as a last horse fling before college - as long as she does it on her own. No groom, no help. Just her, the horse, and the trainer who yells that she can't do anything right. I loved Kim Ablon Whitney's earlier horse books, "The Perfect Distance" and "Blue Ribbons," and this is another top-notch bit of horse literature. The horse show setting is accurate and realistic, showing the author's true knowledge of the scene. The relationships with the horses are spot-on - not anthropomorphized, but real horses doing real things that are both wonderful and exasperating and sometimes a bit dangerous. The main characters are richly drawn, and the side characters are real people too, neatly depicted and not left as props. The action is real, derived from the characters, and nuanced - believable and none of that "girl loves horse and now they win blue ribbon after blue ribbon against all odds" that is pervasive in a lot of horse fiction. There are good days and there are bad days, and the good days aren't necessarily about winning a particular prize. The friendships made and lost are what makes this novel sing. I especially enjoy horse fiction and read a lot of it; this is one of the best I've read.

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