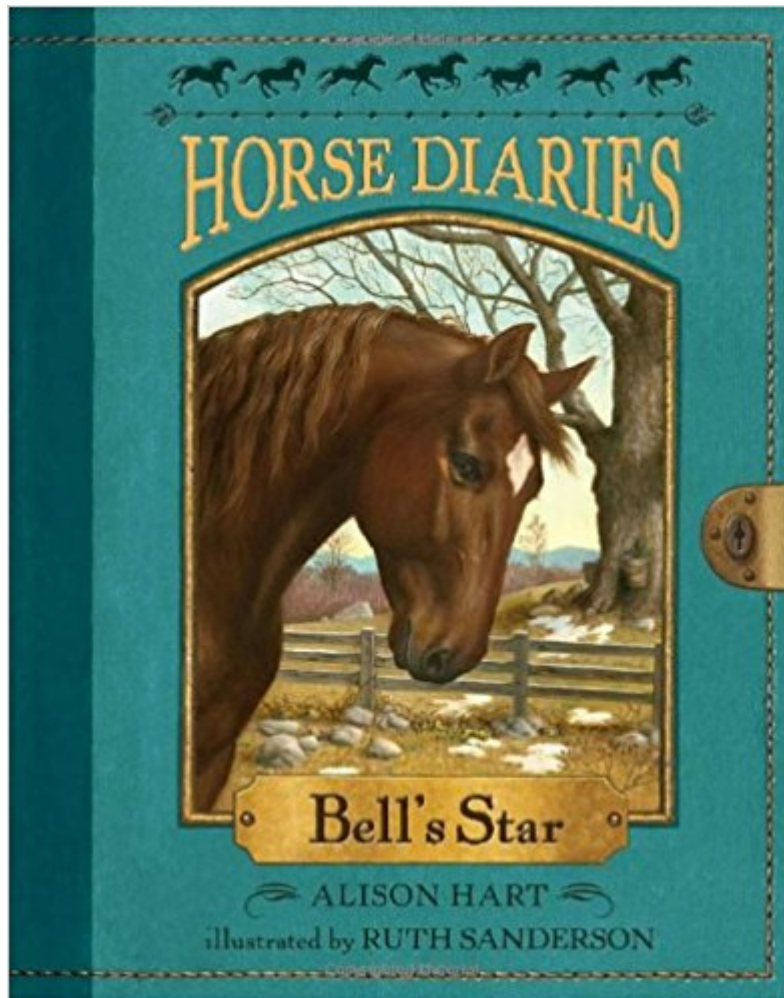




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Horse Diaries #2: Bell's Star



Synopsis

Vermont, 1850s Bell's Star is a brown Morgan colt with a white star and two white stockings. He was bred for hard work, yet he longs to run free with his human friend, Katie, on his back. But when Star helps rescue a runaway slave girl, his ideas about freedom may change forever. Here is Star's story . . . in his own words. With exciting and knowledgeable text and lovely black-and-white art throughout • both by real horse owners • Horse Diaries are the perfect fit for all lovers of horses and history!

Book Information

Lexile Measure: 530L (What's this?)

Series: Horse Diaries (Book 2)

Paperback: 144 pages

Publisher: Random House Books for Young Readers (March 24, 2009)

Language: English

ISBN-10: 0375852042

ISBN-13: 978-0375852046

Product Dimensions: 5.6 x 0.4 x 7.1 inches

Shipping Weight: 4.8 ounces (View shipping rates and policies)

Average Customer Review: 4.8 out of 5 stars 69 customer reviews

Best Sellers Rank: #73,258 in Books (See Top 100 in Books) #102 in Books > Children's Books > Literature & Fiction > Historical Fiction > United States > 1800s #115 in Books > Children's Books > Animals > Horses #308 in Books > Deals in Books

Age Range: 8 - 12 years

Grade Level: 3 - 7

Customer Reviews

Alison Hart has been horse crazy ever since she can remember. A teacher and author, she has written over 20 books for children, most of them about horses. Her novel Shadow Horse was nominated for an Edgar Award. Today, Alison still rides because • you guessed it • she's still horse crazy! She lives in Mt. Sidney, Virginia. Ruth Sanderson has illustrated books for children of all ages, including Summer Pony and Winter Pony. She lives with her family in Ware, Massachusetts, and her favorite hobby is horseback riding.

Vermont, Early Spring 1850 I was born in a rocky paddock on a cloudy night. Light snow fell from the

sky, covering my brown fur with white. My mother's tongue washed over me and warmed my skin. Soon she nudged me, urging me to stand. Rise, she told me. Danger can hide in the dark woods. I scrambled to my feet. My long legs were sturdy, my body stout. I nursed, and my mother's milk gave me strength. I hopped in the snow, trying out my legs. Mother smiled proudly as I trotted and leaped. Soon I grew weary. Mother led me into the shed, and sinking onto a soft pile of hay, I slept. Morning came, and the rising sun broke through the clouds. As soon as it was light, my mother began to teach me. There is so much to learn, she told me. I followed her around the paddock. She touched her nose to all the new things: fence, tree, water trough, hay, mud. Mud I learned quickly. As the snow melted, my tiny hooves sank into the sloppy brown mess. I was scrambling onto a dry stump when a fluttering sound startled me. A bright blue creature landed on the fence. I tensed. Is this danger? I asked my mother. Her muzzle twitched in laughter. No, my son. That is a blue jay. They are pesky and steal my corn, but they are not danger. Jumping off the stump, I whinnied to the blue jay. It flew into the trees. Blue jays have wings, my mother explained. They are free to fly to wherever they want. I peered between the fence rails. I wanted to race after the blue jay to the place called wherever they want. The blue jay had disappeared, but outside the paddock were many more new things to explore! I touched my nose to the railing, but the fence circled my mother and me, penning us in. I checked my back. Did I have wings? All I saw was brown hair. If only I had wings, I thought. I could fly free, too. Suddenly a shriek filled the air. I fled behind my mother. I flicked my fuzzy ears. Danger? Turning, I peeked from beneath her thick black tail. A creature leaped over the top railing, landing with a splash in the mud. It was as colorful and noisy as the blue jay, only bigger! Wings spread wide, it hurtled toward me. Terrified, I turned to run, but my long legs tangled. I fell in a heap. Mud splattered my white star. The giant blue jay plopped on the ground next to me. Its wings wrapped tightly around my neck, and I was trapped! Mother, I neighed. Danger! But my mother's eyes were twinkling. "Papa! Bell had her foal!" the blue jay cried out. "I see, Miss Katie," an even taller blue jay answered. "But, daughter, your joy is scaring him. Let him go so we can see how fine he is." The wings released me. I scrambled to my hooves and rushed to the far side of the paddock. My mother hurried after me and blew into my nostrils. Do not be afraid. Those are humans. The large one is Papa. The small one is Katie. They feed and care for us. In return, we work for them. Work. I did not know that word yet. My mother pushed me forward. My legs splayed, refusing to move. The human called Papa set a wooden bucket in the paddock. "Come, Bell," he called. My mother trotted over. Dipping her head, she ate hungrily. "You have given us a fine fellow, Bell," Papa said, patting her neck. Wide-eyed and trembling, I stared at the

human called Katie. She stood in the middle of the paddock, her eyes as curious as mine. Then she held out one wing. This time she walked quietly to me. Her wings were soft when they stole around my neck. Then her cheek pressed against mine, and my trembling stopped. “He has a white star, just like Bell,” Katie said. “And look, two white legs.” “He’s a fine-looking Morgan horse. Strong like his dam. Handsome like his sire,” Papa said. “Soon he’ll be able to pull the plow and the carriage.” “Papa, may I name him?” Katie asked. He nodded. “I name him Bell’s Star.” “That’s a grand name for such a small foal,” Papa said. “One day he will be grand, I know,” Katie said, scratching my fuzzy mane. “He’ll lead the St. Albans parade like Mr. Jones’s Morgan horse.” “Let’s hope he grows up to be as grand a worker as Bell,” Papa said. “Our farm needs a Morgan that can pull a plow, not lead a parade.” I nuzzled Katie’s arm. I didn’t know grand or parade, but I wanted to show her I no longer thought she was danger. “Oh, Papa,” Katie sighed, her breath tickling my whiskers. “I love him already.” “We’ll give Bell a day of rest,” Papa said. “Then it’s back to work tomorrow. Work. There was that word again. That morning, with Katie’s arms around my neck, I thought nothing more of it. But soon I would know what it meant.

I ordered this set for my 12 year old daughter and she loves them! So do I, because they are well-written and include some lovely drawings to illustrate the stories. The stories include historical information as well, which was one of the reasons I chose them. So many of the horse books and movies written for girls have a heavy emphasis on drama and trauma and are daddy-daughter-dead-mother books, that my daughter and I roll our eyes and joke about the fact (and don’t buy them). After ordering the first book, I bought the entire set - and the dog series too. My daughter can read one of these in a little over an hour, and loves them!

As a teacher my third grade students who were horse lovers really enjoyed these books. Many said they were similar to American Girl series but with horses. They are quick easy reads. I purchased these for my second grade niece for Christmas and the books arrived quickly and were not damaged at all. The price was great! My niece enjoyed the books so much that she read three books in two weeks and her family had to purchase more of the series!

My daughter loves this series of books! She is crazy about horses and particularly likes the fact that these books are told from the horse's perspective! It is sometimes very difficult getting kids to read - I have found books that utilize animals as characters are very engaging for young readers. My daughter also loves that each book has a different author because she feels it gives the reader more variety with the characters especially since each story is told by a horse. Happy reading!

Awesome story my granddaughter loved it! I would highly recommend this series to all horse lovers!

Cute, fun, easy-reading book I enjoyed in 1st grade. Thumbs up!

My 9 year old niece is starting to read this series. I hope she loves it, she loves horses.

This is a great book for horse loving kids. It touches on slaves escaping to freedom, all from a horses point of view. A great introduction to history for little ones. My 5 year old loves listening to this. She can't wait to learn to read so she can read it herself.

enjoyed by an 11 yo.

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