



Riding Lessons: A Novel

By Sara Gruen

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As a world-class equestrian and Olympic contender, Annemarie Zimmer lived for the thrill of flight atop a strong, graceful animal. Then, at eighteen, a tragic accident destroyed her riding career and Harry, the beautiful horse she cherished.

Now, twenty years later, Annemarie is coming home to her dying father's New Hampshire horse farm. Jobless and abandoned, she is bringing her troubled teenage daughter to this place of pain and memory, where ghosts of an unresolved youth still haunt the fields and stables—and where hope lives in the eyes of the handsome, gentle veterinarian Annemarie loved as a girl . . . and in the seductive allure of a trainer with a magic touch.

But everything will change yet again with one glimpse of a white striped gelding startlingly similar to the one Annemarie lost in another lifetime. And an obsession is born that could shatter her fragile world.

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Editorial Review

From Publishers Weekly

Like *The Horse Whisperer*, Gruen's polished debut is a tale of human healing set against the primal world of horses. The Olympic dreams of teenaged equestrian Annemarie Zimmer end when her beloved horse, Harry, injures her and destroys himself in a jumping accident. In the agonizing aftermath, she gives up riding and horses entirely. Two decades later, she returns to her family's horse farm a divorcee, with her troubled teenaged daughter, Eve, in tow. There, her gruff Germanic mother struggles to maintain the farm and care for Annemarie's father, who is stricken with ALS. Although Annemarie decides (disastrously) to manage the farm's business, her attention quickly turns to an old and ostensibly worthless horse with the same rare coloring as Harry. Her long-denied passion for riding reawakens as she tracks the horse's identity and eventually discovers it to be Harry's younger brother. She must heal both horse and herself as she struggles with her father's deterioration, Eve's rebellion and her attraction to both the farm's new trainer and her childhood sweetheart Dan. Impulsive and self-absorbed, Annemarie isn't always likable, but Gruen's portrait of the stoic elder Zimmers is beautifully nuanced, as is her evocation of Eve's adolescent troubles. Amid this realistically complex generational sandwich, the book's appealing horse scenes—depicted with unsentimental affection—help build a moving story of loss, survival and renewal.

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From [Booklist](#)

Starred Review Annemarie, 18, is a world-class equestrienne who is sure to be a contender in the next Olympics. Then, a terrible jumping accident causes the death of her magnificent horse, Highland Harry, as well as severe injuries to Annemarie herself. Damaged as much in spirit as in body, she marries Roger, moves to another state, and gets a degree in English, vowing never to ride again. Twenty years of a more or less emotionally empty life go by until one fateful day when Annemarie loses both her job and her husband. With her defiant 15-year-old daughter in tow, Annemarie returns to her parents' riding school in New Hampshire, where her father is dying from ALS (Lou Gehrig's disease). Suddenly, Annemarie is bombarded with all sorts of emotions and responsibilities, including the rekindling of an old romance and the discovery of a broken-down horse that looks remarkably like Highland Harry. Fans of Nicholas Evans' *The Horse Whisperer* (1995) and Jessica Bird's impressive debut, *Leaping Hearts* (2002), will also enjoy this emotion-packed book, which is so exquisitely written it's hard to believe that it's also a debut. *Shelley Mosley*

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Review

“...so exquisitely written it's hard to believe that it's also a debut.” [starred review]
—*Booklist* (*Booklist*)

“Reed's stellar performance makes Gruen's 2004 debut novel hard to turn off.”
—*Publishers Weekly* (*Publishers Weekly*)

“...a moving story of loss, survival and renewal.”
—*Publisher's Weekly* (*Publisher's Weekly*)

Users Review

From reader reviews:

Agustin Thornsberry:

Nowadays reading books are more than want or need but also turn into a life style. This reading habit give you lot of advantages. Associate programs you got of course the knowledge even the information inside the book this improve your knowledge and information. The information you get based on what kind of guide you read, if you want get more knowledge just go with education books but if you want truly feel happy read one using theme for entertaining including comic or novel. Typically the *Riding Lessons: A Novel* is kind of guide which is giving the reader unforeseen experience.

Anna Wright:

A lot of people always spent all their free time to vacation as well as go to the outside with them household or their friend. Are you aware? Many a lot of people spent that they free time just watching TV, or maybe playing video games all day long. If you would like try to find a new activity that is look different you can read a book. It is really fun in your case. If you enjoy the book which you read you can spent all day every day to reading a publication. The book *Riding Lessons: A Novel* it is quite good to read. There are a lot of people who recommended this book. These were enjoying reading this book. If you did not have enough space to create this book you can buy the particular e-book. You can more easily to read this book from a smart phone. The price is not to cover but this book has high quality.

Raymond McMillion:

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