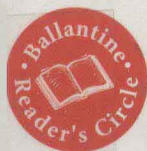
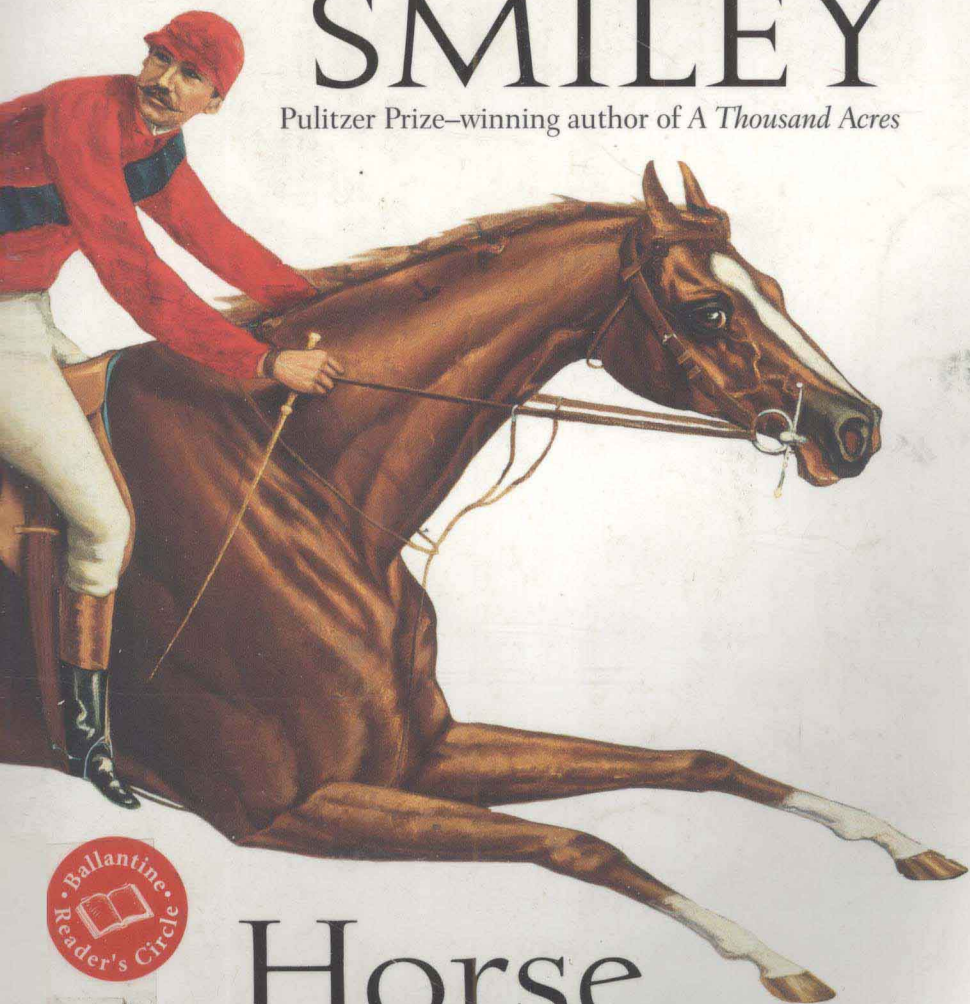


THE NEW YORK TIMES BESTSELLER

JANE SMILEY

Pulitzer Prize-winning author of *A Thousand Acres*



Horse Heaven

"[A] SMART, WARMHEARTED, WINNING BOOK."

—*The New York Times Book Review*

JANE SMILEY

HORSE
HEAVEN

BALLANTINE BOOKS NEW YORK

The gentle reader of this "comic epic poem in prose" is hereby reminded that all locations, characters and events mentioned herein, including those whose names seem familiar, are figments of the author's imaginings, and their characteristics as represented bear no relationship to real life.

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Moo

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**“ONE OF THE MOST PURELY PLEASURABLE
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—salon.com

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—*Kirkus Reviews* (starred review)

To the memory of TERSON (Ger.), by Luciano out of Templeogue, by Prodomo (fifty-two starts, seven wins, eight seconds, and three thirds in France and the United States), this novel is dedicated with love and gratitude.

And to Jack Canning, likewise.

Thank you, especially, to Dr. Gregory L. Ferraro, D.V.M., of Davis, California, and to Jim Squires, of Lexington, Kentucky, for their endless patience, help, and kindness; and to Dave Hofmans, Eddie Gregson, Dr. Mike Fling, Dr. Gary Deter, Roy and Andre Forzani, Benjamin Bycel, Bea and Derek DiGrazia, John Grassi, Nana Faridany, Rick Moss, Ray Berta, Tara Baker, Stefano Cacace, Bob Armstead, and countless others who gave of their time, their expertise, and, best of all, their wit.

In no other department of human knowledge has there been such a universal and persistent habit of misrepresenting the truth of history as in matters relating to the horse.

—JOHN H. WALLACE, *The Horse in America*

I recognized with despair that I was about to be compelled to buy a horse.

—*Some Experiences of an Irish R.M.*, SOMERVILLE AND ROSS

I never heard of a great thing done yet but it was done by a thoroughbred horse.

—English steeplechase jockey DICK CHRISTIAN, 1820s

CAST OF CHARACTERS

New York and Florida (Aqueduct, Belmont, Saratoga, Calder, Gulfstream)

Alexander P. Maybrick: owner, industrialist

Rosalind Maybrick: socialite, connoisseur

Eileen: Rosalind's Jack Russell terrier

Dick Winterson: Al and Rosalind's horse-trainer

Luciano: Dick's horse masseur

Tiffany Morse: checker at Wal-Mart

Ho Ho Ice Chill: Tiffany's boyfriend, rap singer

Dagoberto Gomez: Tiffany's horse-trainer

Herman Newman: toy magnate, racehorse owner

Maryland (Pimlico, Laurel, Delaware Park, the New Jersey and Philadelphia tracks)

Krista Magnelli: breeder, owner of a small studfarm

Pete and Maia Magnelli: Krista's husband and baby daughter

Sam the vet: Krista's equine practitioner

Skippy Hollister: owner, lawyer, Washington powerbroker

Mary Lynn Hollister: Skippy's wife, dragon of good works

Deirdre Donohue: The Hollisters' horse-trainer

George Donohue: Deirdre's cousin, assistant trainer

Ellen: Deirdre's old friend, owner of hunter-jumper stable and riding school

Chicago and New Orleans (Hawthorne, Arlington Park, Sportsman's Park, Louisiana Downs)

William Vance: horse-trainer

California (Santa Anita, Hollywood Park, Del Mar, Golden Gate Fields, Bay Meadows)

Kyle Tompkins: owner of a vast Thoroughbred breeding farm and much else

Jason Clark Kingston: software magnate

CAST OF CHARACTERS

Andrea Melanie Kingston: Jason's wife
Azalea Warren: virgin, racehorse owner, old California money
Joy Gorham: mare manager at Tompkins Ranch
Elizabeth Zada: Joy's friend, author, animal communicator
Plato Theodorakis: Elizabeth's boyfriend, futurologist
Farley Jones: Kyle Tompkins' horse-trainer
Oliver: Farley's assistant trainer

Buddy Crawford: Jason Clark Kingston's horse-trainer
Leon: Buddy's assistant trainer
Deedee: exercise rider for Buddy
Curtis Doheny: Buddy's equine practitioner
Roberto Acevedo: apprentice jockey
Marvelous Martha: exercise rider and legend

Lin Jay "the Pisser" Hwang: small-time owner, former Red Guard
The Round Pebble: the Pisser's mother

Leo: racetrack aficionado, theorist of track life
Jesse: Leo's son, aged nine

Texas

R. T. Favor: horse-trainer and suspicious character
Angel Smith: owner of a small horse-boarding establishment
Horacio Delagarza: Angel's friend

France

Audrey Schmidt: youthful horse enthusiast
Florence Schmidt: Audrey's mother

Everywhere

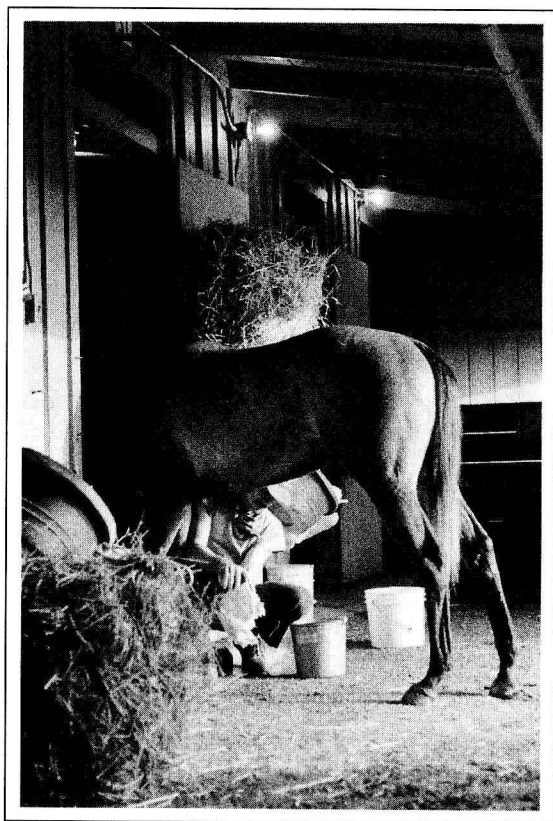
Sir Michael Ordway: horse agent, peer of the realm

Horses

Mr. T.: gray gelding, stakes winner in France, bred in Germany
Justa Bob: brown gelding, bred in California
Residual: chestnut filly, bred in Kentucky
Limitless: bay colt, bred in Maryland
Froncy's Sis: gray or roan filly, bred in California
Epic Steam: dark-bay or brown colt, bred in Kentucky

BOOK ONE

1997



PROLOGUE

WHO THEY ARE

ALL THE JOCKEY CLUB knows about them is parentage, color, markings:

Residual, by *Storm Trumpet*, out of *Baba Yaya*, by *Key to the Mint*, chestnut, born January 23, 1996. White star, three white stockings that end below the knee. Kentucky-bred.

Epic Steam, by *Land of Magic*, out of *Pure Money*, by *Mr. Prospector*, dark-bay or brown colt, February 18, 1996, would be called black if there were any true black Thoroughbreds. He has no white at all anywhere on his body. Kentucky-bred.

Fronney's Sis, by *Mr. Miracles*, out of *My Deelite*, by *Cee's Tizzy*, gray or roan filly, March 21, 1996. Now almost black, but flecked with white hairs, she has a star and a snip between her nostrils, as well as one white sock, but these markings will disappear over the years, enveloped like tide pools by the encroaching sea of white that will spread over her body from her face and her shoulders and her haunches. She has a clockwise whorl on her chest around which the rest of her seems to orbit like a galaxy. Cal-bred.

Bay colt, by *Lake of the Woods*, out of *Wayward*, by *Independence*, May 5, 1996. This is the commonest color in Thoroughbreds. He has a tiny star on his forehead, symmetrical cowlicks on either side of his neck, and a little white triangle on the inside of his right hind fetlock. Maryland-bred.

All their markings are described on their registration papers, and all have numbers and files. Their live births have been noted, their blood has been taken and tested to be sure they descend from whom their owners say they descend, their births have been recorded under the names of their sires in a num-

ber of documents, and published in the *Thoroughbred Times*. Already they are successful, having gotten conceived, gestated, born, nursed, weaned, halter-broken, shod, transported, and taught some basic manners with some misadventure but nothing fatal.

They are all related to one another. Every one of them carries the blood of the Darley Arabian, and Eclipse. You could hardly have a Thoroughbred who did not. Every one of them, too, carries the blood of Stockwell and of Nearco. Three of them carry the blood of Rock Sand. Two descend from the great female progenitor Pocahontas. Two are more American than English, going back to Lexington. The lucky ones carry St. Simon. Hyperion appears here and there, a dot of sunlight in any pedigree. The four great broodmare sires—War Admiral, Princequillo, Mahmoud, Blue Larkspur—appear, too, even though no one around any of these foals is old enough to have actually seen them race.

As Thoroughbreds, Residual, Epic Steam, Fronery's Sis, and the as-yet-unnamed bay colt share some characteristics. They are active and inquisitive. They would rather move than not. Easing into a gallop is as natural to all of them as breathing. When they run, they look ahead, about four strides, and their tails stream out straight behind them. They are born to go forward, nose aligned with neck aligned with back aligned with tail, as a border collie is born to follow the heels of sheep, or a cat is born to toy with a mouse. All are evidently intelligent and inquisitive. They will follow after anything that wanders through the pasture, noses down, investigating. They are exuberant. They are sensitive. They have opinions. They in general have too much of every lively quality rather than too little. On average, they are more closely related to one another than cheetahs.

Nevertheless, even if they were all the same color, you could readily tell them apart. They say of Epic Steam, Well, *he* knows who *he* is! Yeah, he knows he's a son of a bitch, or, rather, the son of a son of a bitch! He's a big burly colt. The farrier doesn't like to trim him and no one else likes to do much with him, either. He's resisted haltering, resisted grooming, resisted worming and shots. He always gets saved for last, even though last is when everyone is tired and irritable. It just puts you in such a bad mood to deal with him that it's bad for the other horses if he goes first, that's the justification. You can't approach him with affection, kindness, gentleness, but, then, neither can you approach him with firmness, dominance, aggression.

He is worth a lot of money: his dam cost her owner \$567,000 (though she has amortized that expenditure with the three of her seven foals who sold as yearlings for two to five hundred thousand dollars). Land of Magic's stud fee was sixty thousand dollars. Epic Steam himself brought \$450,000 at the year-

ling sale in Keeneland last July. Epic Steam is easily offended. He has high standards of behavior with regard to his own person, and every human he has met so far has offended them. Other horses aren't so bad—they have been capable of learning, and so they don't offend him, and he isn't mean with them, only bossy. It's the people who are blind and stubborn. Epic Steam would like to see a person, just one, who can pay attention and meet his standard. Almost two now, he is frequently termed "a monster," sixteen hands, with a great arching neck and ribs that spring away from his lungs and his oversized heart. His haunches are a county of their own; his tail streams like a black banner almost to the ground.

Residual knows who she is, too. She is the one who is always walking around the pasture, stopping, lifting her head, having a look, walking on. She is the one with the meditative air. When they handle her, they've learned from her to wait just a second. The farrier asks her to lift her foot—there's a momentary pause, and then it's clear that she has decided, and she lifts her foot. They say that she is easy to get along with, and so she is. When she runs around with the other fillies, she doesn't barge to the front, but instead hangs back for a second and waits for an opening, then flows into it. She is fifteen hands two inches, well developed and nicely built for two-year-old racing. She has big haunches, a graceful neck, and an attractive head that is short but beautifully molded. She has pretty, mobile ears. Her chestnut coat is richly colored, preternaturally fine. Her right knee turns out, like her sire's. At the Saratoga sale, she brought a disappointing twenty-four thousand dollars.

The bay colt knows who he is, too, and so does his breeder, who simply calls him "Wow." The youngest of the four, he has not left home yet, so every day his handlers see that he has inherited from his grandsire, Independence, a gallop that is easier for him than standing still. His idea of relaxing is galloping around the pasture, speeding up, slowing down, turning, sweeping around a large curve. He works on his stride and pacing every day while others are sleeping, play-fighting each other, eating, except that it isn't work, it is his natural activity, his default option. He gallops in response to every stimulus. He isn't as big or as pretty as some other yearlings, and his conformation isn't perfect, either. He has a long back, slightly swayed, and long hind legs. His neck is skinny. His head is a bit common, until you look at his eyes, soulful, long-lashed. He is pleasant to handle but distracted, half ignoring you, waiting, always, to go back outside. He was too young and undeveloped in the summer to go to a sale, and his owner is thinking of racing him.

Frony's Sis is the only one who isn't sure who she is. Orphaned at a month old, when her dam colicked in the night and died, she was put in with a mini-horse for companionship, and fed milk from a bucket, because she was too old

to go to a nurse mare. The mini-horse was a patient fellow. He stood quietly near her, moved away from the feed bucket when she wanted to eat, grazed almost underneath her, even trotted around companionably while she romped and kicked up and galloped, but he wasn't matter-of-fact about things, the way a mare would be. He didn't nuzzle her much, and he wasn't possessed of that throaty, loving nicker that is a specialty of mares. Most of all, his interest in her wasn't the compelling element of his existence, as a mare's interest in her foal would be. A mare would be pushy and interfering and attentive. A mare would call out and trot over; a mare's body language would be telling the filly what to think and how to behave twenty-four hours a day. But the mini-horse didn't have a mare's body language. Already culture has interfered with nature in the case of Froney's Sis—the twigs of her personality are like the shoots of an espaliered apricot tree; however nice she becomes, she may never know who she is.

Her owner, Mr. Kyle Tompkins, seems to own everything else in central California, too. On a hot, sunny piece of land so vast and featureless that it offers no limits or resistance, Mr. Tompkins grows cattle, apricots, grapes, cotton, wheat, rice, and alfalfa, manufactures cosmetics, runs restaurants, a resort, a horse-training center, a horse-breeding center, a trucking company, a holding company, an asset-management company, an insurance company, and a company that underwrites insurance companies, but he takes a personal interest in the racehorses. Froney's Sis he has named after Bob Froney's sister. Bob Froney is the guy down the road who developed the special formula for Tompkins Perfection Almond and Aloe Skin Revitalizer, Tompkins Perfection Skin Nurturing Kindness Cosmetics' best seller. Bob has recently mentioned to Mr. Tompkins that his sister Dorcas was the first tester of the formula and guided them toward the greaseless product that Bob finally came up with in his kitchen. In a fit of gratitude Mr. Tompkins spent a day trying to decide between "Dorcas," "Bob's Baby Sister," and "Froney's Sis." One year, he named a filly "Chemolita" and a colt "Radiation Baby," because his mother was undergoing chemotherapy. His names are so odd that no one else ever wants them, and the Jockey Club seems always to give him what he wants. He names nearly a hundred foals a year, and races mostly his own stock.

The filly has not been easy to train, and Jack Perkins, who manages the training farm, is thinking of throwing her out in the pasture for another six months. Tompkins Worldwide Thoroughbred Breeding and Racing—Only the Best has plenty of pasture and plenty of water to keep it green.

Everything about them now is speculative, mysterious, potential. On the first of January, when they all turn two simultaneously, who they are, who they will become, how they will be known and remembered, or not, will begin to

take form. In a couple more years, everything will have been revealed—how they raced as two-year-olds, how they raced as three-year-olds, whether they manifested the hidden bonuses in their DNA or the hidden deficits, whether they deserve to reproduce or not, what they made of those who trained them and cared for them and rode them and owned them, and what those trainers, grooms, jockeys, and owners made of them. They are about to enter upon lives as public as any human life, lives as active and maybe as profitable, lives about which they will certainly have opinions, though they will never speak to the press, even off the record.

Jack decides, as he always does, that there's plenty of time.

