



Wild Blood

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After adopting an orphan human boy, the First Herd is finally ready to make the treacherous journey across the mountains to find the Sweet Grass that promises survival. But when their leader, Estrella, is captured by cruel men, it delivers a blow to the very heart of the herd. If the horses turn back, they'll never make it across the mountains before winter. But if they leave Estrella in captivity, the wild-born filly will surely perish.

This conclusion to Kathryn Lasky's *Horses of the Dawn* trilogy will make your heart beat to the rhythm of thundering hooves, leaving you breathless as you join the herd's final fight for freedom.

Wild Blood Details

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From Reader Review Wild Blood for online ebook

Christine says

My rating is more like a 3.5 rather than a 3.

This series had a predictable ending, but it was still enjoyable to read. I love Lasky's voices for her animals. They are very poetic and the worlds she creates are beautiful. Although this story is predictable (and very similar to that horse movie Spirit), it is still unique.

Pros of the story: It is short, so there is no real unnecessary parts. There really is no fluff; everything moves quickly. The illustrations in the story are beautiful, as always. There are many points of view, and some of the narrators are not horses. Some are humans, some are even predators. (If you are a person who gets easily confused by constant point-of-view swapping...well, you may want to sit down for this book.) There is also a good use of Spanish between the horses and humans because that's who took over the New World. And of course, the imagery of the horses is just stunning.

Now for the cons. Since this book in particular is short, things move quickly...which leaves no room for character development or much conflict. When there is a conflict (the climax of the story, in my opinion), it all happens VERY fast. And also, Lasky does a lot of telling rather than showing, which can take a lot out of the story for the reader. It would have been nice for the story to be a little longer so that not everything was so abrupt and predictable.

All in all, great story for children and animal lovers alike. If you are looking for a literary classic, then look elsewhere. It's not a perfect series, but it's enjoyable.

Barbara says

In this triumphant conclusion to the Horses of the New Dawn trilogy, the First Herd is heading toward the mountains and the sweet grass and freedom that will be theirs once they cross the peaks. But El Miedo is determined to find gold and add to his horse herd, and he wants Estrella's band of horses. Through trickery, she and Tijo are captured, and things look quite hopeless. But the horses have the mules of El Miedo and some of the horses on their side as well as the spiritual guidance of Haru and that small horse that leads Estrella on. This fast-paced action story is filled with characters that readers will love and some they will hate, and to their surprise, sometimes even the most selfish of creatures can rise to greatness through self-sacrifice. Those horses has a lot of challenges to face, but they also had a lot of unexpected allies. As they moved over those mountains, I felt as though I were trying to follow in their wake with my heart swelling in pride at how far each of them had come. This book has losses, and when they come, readers will understand the ways of nature, but still mourn the lost ones.

Heather says

I was very disappointed in the finale book of the series. There were so many events I wish the author went more in-depth to. I will never understand when the author go's on and on about long spirits and spirit

weavers and bla bla bla it made no sense. I felt like the same things were repeated over and over and to many times the point of view changed from character to character. And don't even get me started on Angelas death that was so unnecessary and making it look like it was for a good cause was stupid. There was a lot of things I didn't like about this book but it was still ok I guess.

Chelsea says

Pretty meh. I don't have a lot of thoughts really. This book is obviously aimed at a younger audience, so I'm sure they may enjoy it. For me there really was no emotional connection to the story or characters, but the writing is perfectly fine.

Dandelionsteph says

Late in the book, (p.161) there's an unexpected, pointless, and unwelcome description of Tijo having a broader back, with shoulders that have heft and muscle. Estrella (the protagonist) thinks of him as "becoming a man". Estrella also thinks that soon she won't be called a filly but a mare, and the two colts not colts but stallions. In p. 165, there's a description of one of the colts, Sky, being "almost as big as Arriero" (who is described as remarkably big and strong) and seeming "no longer a colt [to Estrella]". Yet, despite this being followed by a remark on how much Sky has grown (emotionally) an expected pointless romantic relationship between the two doesn't follow.

I don't know what to be annoyed more by: that the description exists at all, or that the description isn't followed by a romantic element to justify the scene's inclusion. (if ineptly)

The scene is comparable to one that appears very late in the book "The Dragon Prince" by Vicki Blum. In that scene (if I recall correctly) a romantic relationship between the two dragon main characters was suggested. (It came of the blue because there were no clues of romantic feelings up to that point.) I read that book long ago. It irritated me then, and the scene in Wild Blood irritates me now.

The plot is choppy at parts, and the characterization of several characters is weak. Pego sacrificing himself for the herd by taking two musket blasts is too sudden. It doesn't seem to match with his characterization, leaving me scrambling for a reason why he would do it.

Furthermore, Angela dies in page 177 of a book that's 195 pages long. That's approximately 90.7% of the way through the book. Given the generally short chapters of the book, and how few events happen in the remaining three chapters, it feels like everyone gets over her death too suddenly and her death serves no narrative purpose for the book. At the end, after finally getting to the place of sweet grass, everything feels happy and pseudo-meaningful with spirituality, and there's no mention of the sadness that Angela was never able to finish the journey with them.

P.S. On page 51, the quotation marks at the beginning of the sentence "And what's your name?" are in the wrong direction.

Dawn says

It is Spring - Estrella and the first herd are desperately looking for grazing land so they can fatten up for their long trek over the “Mighties” (Rockie Mtns). Estrella believes their home lies beyond the Rockie Mountains, where the tiny horse used to roam thousands of years ago.

Tijo is traveling with the First Herd as he is no longer a part of his former clan, The Burnt River People.

The First Herd starts out with ten horses, one mule, Yazz, and Tijo.

Pego found a new home among the Burnt River Clan and his new master is the healer who is also the Chief as the previous chief has died.

El Miedo captured the people of the Burnt River Clan along with Pego and turned them into his slaves to help build his great capital city. El Miedo and his men were out hunting buffalo when their gunfire caused them to stampede. Estrella and the first herd were passing through the same plain where the buffalo were grazing and during the stampede, El Miedo, having spotted the First Herd, captured Estrella and Tijo and took them back to his camp where they were held prisoner.

Hope, First Angry’s offspring, approached the First Herd and they became friends. Originally Hope was going to go after the First Herd to avenge his father’s death but Grace, a mason bee, and Haru, in her omo owl spirit lodge, convinced Hope that he is nothing like his father and he gave up on getting revenge on the First Herd.

Haru changed her spirit lodge by moving from the omo owl into the body of Hope so she could better help Estrella and Tijo escape from the Iber’s camp. Estrella and Tijo’s first attempt to escape the Iber’s camp during an animal blessing failed.

To help Estrella and Tijo escape, Hope (and Haru in her spirit lodge) crept into the Iber’s camp unnoticed and went to see both Tijo and Estrella giving them each a piece of fool’s gold to trick El Miedo into thinking they knew where there was gold.

El Miedo and his men went looking for the gold along with Estrella and Tijo expecting them to show him where they found it. During their search for the gold, Abelinda, one of the horses who befriended Estrella while they were imprisoned in the Iber’s camp, created a distraction so Tijo could grab the knife of Abelinda’s rider and free himself and Estrella from the ropes that bound them to Iber’s moving party on their search for gold. When the other horses saw Estrella and Tijo escaping, they joined them bucking the Iber’s off their backs and running off with Estrella and Tijo to their freedom increasing the First Herd’s number to one hundred. During the escape, Pego gave his life to save Estrella and Tijo by jumping in the way of El Miedo’s musket fire. El Miedo had a musket in both hands and was heading for Estrella and Tijo but Pego sacrificed his own life for theirs getting hit with the musket fire.

The horses split up into four groups led by Estrella, Verdad, Abelinda, and Arriero to cross over the Rockies. Splitting up into smaller groups would make it easier to manage and safer as they crossed over the treacherous Rockies.

Angela had gotten a stone stuck in her hoof that Tijo was able to dislodge but not before the stone had caused damage and her hoof worsened the further they went. A storm came up suddenly as the First Herd was crossing a river. Angela lost her footing as she was crossing the river and floated downstream away from the herd. Angela managed to swim ashore only to be eaten by a ravenous grizzly bear who was desperate to find food before hibernating for the winter.

THE ENDING

The horses finally reached their new home, “Valley of the Dawn”.

When they arrived they all saw the tiny horse approaching them with another spirit that resembled a young girl who was called First Girl. The Tiny horse represented the first horses to roam the earth and First Girl represented the humans that had roamed alongside them. Then something miraculous happened and Abelinda foaled giving birth on the soil of their new home to a filly she name Aurora (Rory).

Riley Bauer says

"Wild Blood" is a book about a herd of horses trying to escape from a mustanger group with their human friend, Tijo, after succeeding to escape many times, Estrella and Tijo are captured while trying to cross The Mighties to get to the sweet grass, they tried many times, and almost gave up, but not forever.. Read to find out more.

Yapha says

This final book in the Horses of the Dawn trilogy wraps up the story lines of the first two. It is somewhat confusing because of the sheer amount of loose ends that needed to be tied up, but fans of the series will want to know what becomes of Estrella, Hold On, and the rest of the First Herd. Grades 4 and up.

Kelsi says

Review to come.

Savannah Rollins says

This is a great book to read that will focus on the harm that humans can do to nature. It can be easier for students to relate to animals when there are adults involved.

Ms. Yingling says

Copy provided by Young Adult Books Central

Estrella is trying very hard to find food for her hungry herd, but is not having very much luck. Even Tijo is looking very thin. She thinks that if she can get the herd across the Mighties, they will be able to escape the evil El Miedo and live in peace. Haru is still helping the group, but the spirit lodge she is inhabiting (in an owl) is becoming weak. Haru tells Estrella that the herd should be split in order to get across the mountains,

but Estrella is loathe to do this. Little Coyote, now called Hope, befriends a bee and gets some insight into the antics of El Miedo, and later becomes the new spirit lodge for Haru. When Estrella and many of her herd are caught by the Ibers and enslaved, they are very worried that their adventures in the new land have come to a horrible end, but after the mules have a riot and El Miedo is tricked with some gold nuggets, the group escapes. They make their way across the Mighties, but things do not go smoothly. Angela, who hoof is lame, gets washed away in the river and killed by a bear. The horses grieve, but once they make it through the mountain passes, they come into a sacred land. Abelinda has a foal, and a girl appears to be a companion to Tijo.

This is the third book in this series after *The Escape* and *Star Rise*, and wraps up the story of Estrella's journey to the New World during the time of the Spanish Conquistadors nicely. I can't think of any other books that include Ibers and Chitzens! Since there is not much written about this time period, so the inclusion of a map is helpful. I would have liked to see some notes in the back about El Camino Real and what El Miedo is trying to accomplish, since it's clear that the author did her research.

Horse books are a middle grade staple, and it's hard to find enough books for children who go on a genre spree. Both Marguerite Henry's books and Jane Smiley's *Horses of Oak Valley Ranch* series offer lots of horse details from a human perspective, but Lasky gives us some early US history from a unique equine perspective.

Readers who are fans of Hunter's *The Warriors* series or Lasky's own *Guardians of Ga'Hoole* series and like to read books about animal interactions within the hierarchy of groups, or who like the movie *Spirit: Stallion of the Cimarron*, will find this adventure in the ancient North American west to be both exciting and informative.

Like *The Warrior* books, I didn't care for this very much. Too many characters, too many weird magical things happening, and, you know, the whole talking animals thing. I had to take notes to keep everything straight. The covers are great, though!
