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The horse whisperer / De paardenfluisteraar door Nicholas Evans

Anne

Summary

The story is about Grace Maclean, a girl who loves horse riding. She lives with her parents in Chatham. When she goes out for a ride with her friend Judith on their horses they get involved in a terrible accident. They run into a truck with their horses. Judith and Gulliver, her horse, got killed. Grace lost her leg and Pilgrim, her horse is physically and mentally in a bad shape. It's a miracle that they both got through.



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After a time of rehabilitation Grace's mother Annie Maclean is looking for something that can cure her daughter's horse, cause it seems like Pilgrim is another horse entirely now. Grace goes back to school but she's very unhappy and she can't accept her handicap. Annie finds an article in the library that tells her something about 'horse whisperers' and it tells her that these people can talk to animals and help them with their fears. Annie contacts a man called Tom Booker, who's a horse whisperer. Tom Booker lives at a ranch in Montana. Annie asks him to come over to look to Pilgrim and to see what he can do. When Tom goes to Pilgrim and is sees in what bad shape he is, he goes away angry. Then Annie got the feeling that the only way for her daughter and the whole family to heal is that Pilgrim must get better. So she decides to travel with Grace and Pilgrim (without Robert, Grace's father) across two states to go to Montana and see Tom Booker.

Annie and Grace stayed in a village near the ranch of the Booker family. Tom Booker finally agreed to help Pilgrim and he is working with Pilgrim to teach him to be a horse again. Grace has to be present with all these sessions. In all that time on the ranch something happening between Tom and Annie. Also the relationship between Annie and Grace is getting better than before.

Grace goes back to New York with Robert for a new prosthesis because it was damaged. At the same time the Booker family (except for Tom) has planned a trip to Disney Land. During that week Annie and Tom had an affair. When everyone got back they gave a party. At that party Grace found out that there was more between Tom and her mother. The morning after that Grace was so angry that she took out Pilgrim and went for a ride with him. When Annie woke up, she got worried. They found out that Pilgrim was missing and Tom and Frank(Toms' brother) went after her. Finally they found her surrounded by wild horses. The leader of the wild horses wanted to fight Pilgrim. Tom walked towards them and got Pilgrim and Grace away of the horse. But instead of leaving Tom stands still. Then he moved towards the stallion and the stallion staggered and the hooves of the animal landed on the head of Tom. He was dead. To Grace it seemed like he wanted to die.

The story goes on a year later. Annie and Robert got divorced and Annie has a son that looks pretty the same as Tom Booker...

Difficult analysis

Explanation of the title

The horse whisperer is a man who heals horses and understands them. In this story that is Tom Booker, he's the one who heals Pilgrim.

Genre

Novel, a drama story

Theme

The message of the book is something like 'when you do it because you love someone, there's a way'. That's how I see it. In almost every person in the book the message returns. For example, Annie goes to Montana with Grace, because she wants her to be happy again. So she wants it because she loves Grace. And finally the relation between them works out well again.

Main characters

Grace Maclean: she thinks it's her fault that Judith and Gulliver (Judith's horse) are dead and she blames herself for all the problems she and her parents got into. Because of Tom the relationship between her and her mother has improved. They start talking again.

Annie Maclean: Grace's mother, she feels guilty because after Grace she couldn't have children any more. She had four miscarriages and she blamed herself for this. After the accident she blames herself for what has happened to Grace. This comes between her and Grace and their relationship is far from good. She feels attracted to Tom, but she doesn't feel guilty about it. It's Tom who brings her and Grace back together

Tom Booker: he's a silent man and doesn't say what he thinks very much. He knows everything about horses and he uses that knowledge to heal Pilgrim. He thinks of other people first, but when he meets Annie he feels something he hasn't felt before. But at first he doesn't give in because she married. At the end of the book they both decide to think of themselves first and then the others.

Time

The time between the accident and the death of Tom Booker takes about a year. The accident happens in the winter and Tom dies at the end of the summer. There's flash forward that takes place a year after Tom Bookers' death.

Point of view

There is an omniscient person. You know the thoughts of all the main characters.

Setting

New York: where Annie lives (she lives there on Monday, Thursday, Wednesday, Tuesday and Friday, because she works in New York).

Montana: where the ranch of the Bookers is.

Chatham: a village where Grace and her father live. Annie lives there in the weekend.

Personal response

I loved the story. I really liked it because in the past I liked horses very much too. During the reading, I had the feeling that I really understood the thoughts of Tom Booker and the horses. I felt a connection with Annie too (not because the name..), because I have a bit the same strategy of thinking like her. I could also feel the feelings of Grace, it was very recognisable. The writer described every detail very well, at the end of the book you know everything about the most important persons. You know everything about the past of Annie and Robert, for example.

Portfolio assignment 49

The characters in the book/story/play often react to each other or behave in an completely different way how you would have behaved or reacted. Describe what you would have done and why.

I think I would react a lot different then Grace did while her 'come-back' in the 'normal' world. My friends would never let me down. Maybe that's because I'm older than Grace and the friendships I have right now, will be for live (not all of them, but a view). In the situation of Grace that doesn't happen. So my reaction and returning will be a lot different. I hope I won't blame myself like Grace did, but I cannot say for sure.

I would never come up with the idea of Annie; going to Montana. I think I would have let Pilgrim die in the first place. But if I had the choice to go to Montana by car with my daughter and her horse, I would go. I'm always in for adventure and I think I would think the same as Annie did and the way how she decided to go. And I would give myself over to the feeling of falling in love too, even when I was married. You got to be straight to yourself, even when the truth is painful. When you don't, you can look yourself straight in the eyes. I'm not sure if I would tell my husband, maybe when it was getting real serious. Not at the time I was at the ranch, that's too painful for everyone who's involved. But when I would get pregnant by a lover else than my husband, than I would tell immediately. You can't live in a lie.

If I was Tom Booker, I don't know if I would get myself into the situation with Annie.

I think that I would be too much at myself, but I can also imagine that I would, because when you fall in love after such a long time, I don't think you can't go against it. From experience I know that love is making you blind and when you're in love, you can do stupid things.