



Half Broke Horses: A True-Life Novel

By Jeannette Walls

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Half Broke Horses: A True-Life Novel By Jeannette Walls

"Those old cows knew trouble was coming before we did."

So begins the story of Lily Casey Smith, Jeannette Walls's no-nonsense, resourceful, and spectacularly compelling grandmother. By age six, Lily was helping her father break horses. At fifteen, she left home to teach in a frontier town—riding five hundred miles on her pony, alone, to get to her job. She learned to drive a car and fly a plane. And, with her husband, Jim, she ran a vast ranch in Arizona. She raised two children, one of whom is Jeannette's memorable mother, Rosemary Smith Walls, unforgettably portrayed in *The Glass Castle*.

Lily survived tornadoes, droughts, floods, the Great Depression, and the most heartbreaking personal tragedy. She bristled at prejudice of all kinds—against women, Native Americans, and anyone else who didn't fit the mold. Rosemary Smith Walls always told Jeannette that she was like her grandmother, and in this true-life novel, Jeannette Walls channels that kindred spirit. *Half Broke Horses* is Laura Ingalls Wilder for adults, as riveting and dramatic as Isak Dinesen's *Out of Africa* or Beryl Markham's *West with the Night*. Destined to become a classic, it will transfix readers everywhere.

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Half Broke Horses: A True-Life Novel By Jeannette Walls Bibliography

- Sales Rank: #10376 in Books
- Brand: Scribner
- Published on: 2010-09-07
- Released on: 2010-09-07
- Original language: English
- Number of items: 1
- Dimensions: 8.00" h x .60" w x 5.25" l, .55 pounds
- Binding: Paperback
- 272 pages

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Editorial Review

From Publishers Weekly

For the first 10 years of her life, Lily Casey Smith, the narrator of this true-life novel by her granddaughter, Walls, lived in a dirt dugout in west Texas. Walls, whose megaselling memoir, *The Glass Castle*, recalled her own upbringing, writes in what she recalls as Lily's plainspoken voice, whose recital provides plenty of drama and suspense as she ricochets from one challenge to another. Having been educated in fits and starts because of her parents' penury, Lily becomes a teacher at age 15 in a remote frontier town she reaches after a solo 28-day ride. Marriage to a bigamist almost saps her spirit, but later she weds a rancher with whom she shares two children and a strain of plucky resilience. (They sell bootleg liquor during Prohibition, hiding the bottles under a baby's crib.) Lily is a spirited heroine, fiercely outspoken against hypocrisy and prejudice, a rodeo rider and fearless breaker of horses, and a ruthless poker player. Assailed by flash floods, tornados and droughts, Lily never gets far from hardscrabble drudgery in several states—New Mexico, Arizona, Illinois—but hers is one of those heartwarming stories about indomitable women that will always find an audience. (Oct.)

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From [Bookmarks Magazine](#)

Originally conceived as a biography based on family interviews and historical research, Walls found herself filling in too many blanks for *Half Broke Horses* to remain a work of nonfiction, so she assumed Smith's indomitable voice and set out to write a novelistic recreation of Smith's unconventional life. Most critics were captivated by Smith's earthy, straightforward style, despite the steady stream of repetitive axioms intermingled with her antics. Only the *Washington Post* seemed thoroughly disappointed, lamenting that "this book is no *Glass Castle*." Though Smith, "a gumption-packin' ranch gal whose pluck never quits" (*New York Times*), may not rise to the intensity of Walls's troubled, nomadic parents, *Half Broke Horses* nevertheless tells the heartwarming story of an irrepressible woman who carved her own destiny.

Review

"Jeannette Walls . . . once again proves that the combination of gifted storyteller with great stories is both rare and intoxicating."--*The Cleveland Plain Dealer*

"[An] eloquent tribute to a pragmatic heroine . . . A powerhouse—fast-moving, fearless and impossible to forget."—Michelle Green, *People*

[Jeannette Walls is] the third generation of a line of indomitable women whose paths she has inscribed on the permanent record, enriching the common legend of our American past."—Liesl Schillinger, *New York Times Book Review* (cover review)

Users Review

From reader reviews:

Terry Tyrrell:

Information is provisions for anyone to get better life, information nowadays can get by anyone at everywhere. The information can be a know-how or any news even a concern. What people must be consider if those information which is within the former life are difficult to be find than now could be taking seriously

which one is suitable to believe or which one the resource are convinced. If you have the unstable resource then you understand it as your main information you will see huge disadvantage for you. All of those possibilities will not happen with you if you take Half Broke Horses: A True-Life Novel as your daily resource information.

Susan Williams:

Often the book Half Broke Horses: A True-Life Novel will bring someone to the new experience of reading the book. The author style to spell out the idea is very unique. In case you try to find new book to study, this book very appropriate to you. The book Half Broke Horses: A True-Life Novel is much recommended to you to see. You can also get the e-book from official web site, so you can quicker to read the book.

Michael Watkins:

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