

HORSE TALES
FROM
Heaven

REBECCA E. ONDOV



HARVEST HOUSE PUBLISHERS

EUGENE, OREGON

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Published in association with the Books & Such Literary Agency, 52 Mission Circle, Suite 122, PMB 170, Santa Rosa, CA 95409-5370, www.booksandsuch.biz.

Cover by Left Coast Design, Portland, Oregon

Cover photo © HuntImages / iStockphoto; backcover author photo by Jessica McCollam.

HORSE TALES FROM HEAVEN

Copyright © 2010 by Blazing Ink, Inc.

Published by Harvest House Publishers

Eugene, Oregon 97402

www.harvesthousepublishers.com

Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data

Ondov, Rebecca E.

Horse tales from heaven / Rebecca E. Ondov.

p. cm.

ISBN 978-0-7369-2758-1 (pbk.)

1. Horsemen and horsewomen—Prayers and devotions. I. Title.

BV4596.A54053 2010

242'.68—dc22

2009028939

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Printed in the United States of America

10 11 12 13 14 15 16 17 18 / DP-NI / 10 9 8 7 6 5 4 3 2 1

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A Note from Rebecca

Now I saw heaven opened, and behold, a white horse. And He who sat on him was called Faithful and True, and in righteousness He judges and makes war. His eyes were like a flame of fire, and on His head were many crowns. He had a name written that no one knew except Himself. He was clothed with a robe dipped in blood, and His name is called The Word of God. And the armies in heaven, clothed in fine linen, white and clean, followed Him on white horses (Revelation 19:11-14 NKJV).



The thought of God on a white horse *leading a heavenly army on white horses* thrills me. Someday I want to ride with them. Horses take my breath away. They are my passion. So it's natural that out of my love affair with horses I've written this collection of tales based on my experiences, most of them occurring during the 15 years I worked in the Bob Marshall Wilderness Complex in Montana. I hope you will be encouraged, entertained, and discover more about God's amazing love, grace, and provision.

Born Under Barbed Wire

*We should behave like God's very own children,
adopted into the bosom of his family,
and calling to him "Father, Father."*

ROMANS 8:15 TLB



I yawned and stretched as I slid open my second-story window. The whistle of a chickadee drifted through the still, cool air. Spring was unfolding her leaves. Next to the bubbling creek that wound through the pasture, ferns pushed aside dirt, announcing the birth of another season in the Rocky Mountains. Dawn light danced over two mares nibbling new shoots of green grass, their colts nursing at their sides.

I wiped the sleepies from my eyes. Then I squinted and frowned when I caught sight of Star, my sorrel mare, lying by the barbed-wire fence. Leaning on her front knees, she propped up her head. Her eyes were closed. Her bottom lip drooped. She looked exhausted. I leaned forward, my hands on the windowsill. Behind her on the cold, hard ground lay a large gray blob. I pressed my nose against the screen. *Oh my gosh! It's a foal, and it's still in its placental sac. And it's rolled under the fence!*

I ran downstairs, grabbed a jacket, and hustled out the back door. The door slammed as I moved toward the pasture. Star flinched. She lunged to her feet and turned around to smell the blob. Her baby was wiggling inside the sac that was halfway under the fence. The foal's head was on the far side.

My heart pounded. I'd always wanted to watch a foal be born, and this was the closest I'd come. I took a deep breath of crisp air. *Okay, Rebecca. Calm down so Star stays calm.* Casually, I strolled through the dew-drenched grass. Each tortuous step seemed to be in slow motion. I watched the blob. *Is the foal okay?* Holding my breath in anticipation, I gently ran my fingers along Star's warm coat. She nudged her foal's hind legs, issuing low nickers. I could see inside the sac. The foal struggled, grunted, and propped itself on its front knees. Its head weaved and butted the sac. It looked like a little kid with a sheet over its head. I giggled.

I slid through the fence just as the foal's sorrel head popped through. The sac folded around its shoulders like a robe. The sour and pungent smell of afterbirth gagged me. Holding my breath, I crouched down and wiped slobbery goo out of the foal's nostrils with my red bandana. Its warm breath whispered across my hands. The foal's head wobbled as it focused on me. Then it whinnied. My heart leaped. *Wow, this baby thinks I'm mom!* The barbed-wire fence squeaked as I slid between the strands, back to Star's side. When the foal put its head down, I grabbed its hind legs through the sticky sac and gently pulled it under the fence and uphill, deeper into the pasture. Star followed behind, whickering in low tones. The baby didn't seem to care the least bit about Star. Instead, it fastened its brown eyes on me and batted its long, black eyelashes.

Star licked the baby clean while I paced around it taking inventory: a filly with four heavy-boned legs; black hooves; sorrel-velveteen fur; golden, wispy mane and tail, and fuzzy, teardrop-shaped ears. *Lord, what an awesome miracle.* Star nudged the filly, who pulled her front legs under herself, pushed with her hind legs, grunted into a

wheelbarrow shape, and pushed upward. She collapsed, plowing her nose into the ground.

I chuckled. The filly cocked her head to one side, watching me.

Her next attempt resembled someone trying to use stilts for the first time. She strained as she heaved herself up, straightened her legs one by one, and then propped herself upright. Suddenly one leg buckled, and she crumpled to the ground. For the next 15 minutes the little girl practiced standing...and crashing. Finally, she braced her four legs at wide angles, stood erect, looked at me, and nickered, as if saying, "Look, Mom! I did it."

My heart skipped a beat. *She's calling to me.* Love rose inside of me for this little, sticky, wet, wobbly creature. As I watched her toss her head, I thought, *Lord, does Your heart skip a beat when I speak Your name? Do you think, "Why, it's Rebecca...and she's calling to Me"?*

The filly softly butted me with her nose and wiggled her soft muzzle into my jacket. I gently rubbed the white blaze on her forehead. "Silly girl, whatcha doing?" I asked.

She gummed my jacket, tugged, and sucked. I giggled. *She's trying to nurse on me.*

Looping my arms under her belly to support her, I felt her heart beating softly. I steered her to Star's side and scooted her rear by Star's head. Pushing her side against Star's side, I tried to guide her muzzle toward the udder. But the filly stiffened her neck and stared at me. She didn't want to suckle on Star; she wanted to nurse on "Mom" (me!). I tried coaxing her, but nothing seemed to change her mind.

Lord, this isn't working. Please help, I prayed. The filly batted her long, black eyelashes at me again. Suddenly I had a brilliant idea. I tickled the filly's light-sorrel chin with my index finger. She wiggled her lips and then latched onto my finger. Guiding the filly's head with my other hand, I slowly moved my hand under Star and next to her udder. Then I did a switcheroo. I pulled out my finger and at the same time pushed a teat into the filly's mouth. It worked! She sucked, smacked her lips, and slobbered milk all over her muzzle.

During the next few days the filly gradually lost interest in me as mom, but I've never forgotten how my heart responded to her whinny. And in my mind's eye I see God's eyes twinkle when I talk with Him.

Lord, thank You for showing me that You delight in hearing my voice. Amen.

Westward Ho!

*I know the thoughts that I think toward you, says the LORD...
thoughts of peace and not of evil,
to give you a future and a hope.*

JEREMIAH 29:11



The windshield wipers scraped aside the morning sleet. Miles of red, glowing taillights lined Route 50 leading into Washington, DC. This was part of my daily routine. Each day I woke up, inched through traffic, worked eight hours, sat in more traffic, got home, walked my German shepherd named Kai, and went to bed. I was single and 22 years old. The year before I'd dropped out of college. I often prayed, *God, isn't there more to life than this?*

I grew up in a small Minnesota town but had fled the miles of cornfields by transferring to a college in the DC area. After a year in the city, I didn't know what to do with my life or where I wanted to live.

One weekend Kai and I walked along a leaf-littered trail. The breeze caressed my cheeks and the sun warmed my back. Kai bounded ahead and splashed into the creek. All he wanted was to be with me and to play outdoors. I ached for my life to be that simple. I sat on a boulder,

and Kai padded over with a gift—a rock. I tossed it into the water. He dove after it, expecting adventure. *Adventure—that’s what I need!* I thought. *So why am I living here?*

My dream had always been to work outside, preferably on horseback. I thought of my brother Chuck, who lived in Montana. Peace overwhelmed me when I remembered horses grazing under ponderosa pines on Rocky Mountain slopes. It was almost as if God’s still, small voice was urging me to plunge into a new life.

That evening I phoned Chuck. “I’ll be moving to Montana April first,” I told him. “Can I crash on your floor until I get a job?”

Lord, teach me to listen to and heed Your voice. Amen.