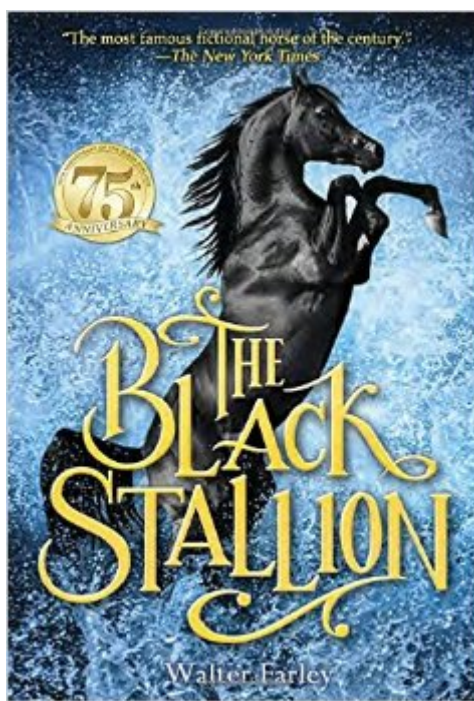


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The Black Stallion



Synopsis

First published in 1941, Walter Farley's best-selling novel for young readers is the triumphant tale of a boy and a wild horse. From Alec Ramsay and the Black's first meeting on an ill-fated ship to their adventures on a desert island and their eventual rescue, this beloved story will hold the rapt attention of readers new and old. This book has been selected as a Common Core State Standards Text Exemplar (Grades 4-5, Stories) in Appendix B.

Book Information

Lexile Measure: 680L (What's this?)

Series: Black Stallion (Book 1)

Paperback: 187 pages

Publisher: Random House; 1 edition (August 20, 1991)

Language: English

ISBN-10: 0679813438

ISBN-13: 978-0679813439

Product Dimensions: 5.2 x 0.5 x 7.6 inches

Shipping Weight: 5.6 ounces (View shipping rates and policies)

Average Customer Review: 4.7 out of 5 stars Â Â See all reviews Â (422 customer reviews)

Best Sellers Rank: #13,246 in Books (See Top 100 in Books) #23 in Â Books > Children's Books > Animals > Horses #284 in Â Books > Children's Books > Classics #856 in Â Books > Children's Books > Action & Adventure

Age Range: 8 - 12 years

Grade Level: 3 - 7

Customer Reviews

As a horse lover from a very young age, this is one of those books that was read to me when I was little, which I later read on my own more than once, and of which I still have fond memories today. The first of Walter Farley's twenty-one books, written while the author was in high school and published in 1941, before he graduated from college, "The Black Stallion" has become a staple in children's literature. It tells the story of Alec Ramsay and his partnership with a remarkable horse, referred to only as the Black. While returning from a trip to India, Alec's ship is wrecked in a storm, leaving he and the Black as the only survivors, washed up on a small, deserted island. For nineteen days they must survive in that desolate place, and in this time a strong bond is formed between the boy and the wild Arab horse. Once Alec and the Black are rescued by a passing ship, the story takes

a different turn. Back in New York, Alec asks a neighbor if he might stable the Black in the old barn on his property. As it turns out, Henry Dailey is a former racehorse trainer, and he immediately recognizes the Black's potential for speed. Thus, man and boy pair up in order to train the spirited horse, hoping to harness his energy and turn him into a competitive runner. At this time the racing world is all abuzz about an upcoming match race between two champion horses, each touted as the best racer in the country, but who have never run against each other. But when the Black shows more talent than Dailey would ever have thought possible, he begins to think that this wild, unpedigreed stallion just might have what it takes to beat them both...The story is a bit far-fetched and idealistic, but it nevertheless makes for one whopping adventure. Farley was an avid horseman and he puts his knowledge to good use here. His descriptions of the proud, fiery Black bring the wild horse magnificently to life before our eyes. The prose is simple and fast-paced, with one event leading rapidly into another, but it still maintains a richness and depth that allows the reader to develop a strong attachment to the main characters. You can really feel the bond between boy and horse, and you can't help but care about them. "The Black Stallion" is an absolute must-read for any young horse lover. The book has a timeless quality to it, and retains every bit of its magic even for modern readers. After penning "The Black Stallion," Farley went on to write twenty more horse stories, most centered around further adventures of Alec, the Black, and the characters that surround them (the exception being "Man O'War," which is an account of that famous racehorse's life). I have read every one of these additional books, some more than once, and would recommend them to anyone that has read and enjoyed this first book. I don't know of a single die-hard horse lover that hasn't read at least the first few books in the series, and many adult equestrians cite Farley's books as being what got them interested in horses to begin with. "The Black Stallion" was also turned into a decent movie starring child actor Kelly Reno in 1979. Fans of the book are advised to check it out, but I strongly recommend against skipping the book in favor of the movie. The movie is good, but it is not entirely true to the original story, and doesn't quite capture the full texture of Farley's creation. The book, as always, is the place to start. It is simply written, and so should be easy for elementary-aged readers to handle. For younger children, the book makes an excellent read-aloud story. It is reasonably short. As an adult reader, I am able to get through it in a couple of hours. One final word of advice: As another reviewer mentioned, if at all possible, try to look for an older copy, with cover art by Pamela Patrick. The art of John Rowe on this new edition's cover just doesn't quite capture the spirit of the original.

Walter Farley started writing the story which became "The Black Stallion" while he was still in high

school. I think I was eight or nine years old when I first read it. I still read the series from time to time, and time has only made me appreciate Farley's fine writing skills all the more. Especially the final chapter about the match race between Sun Raider, Cyclone, and the Black - I can actually HEAR the track announcer's "It's the mystery horse!" in my mind. Mr. Farley had the unique ability to express emotions through the written word - it still gives me tingles. Only one beef I have - why, oh why, did they decide to re-do the illustrations? I still have my dogeared Scholastic Books paperback with the original illustrations. The original illustrator made the Black truly look like "the wildest of all wild creatures". This book should be in every child's library!

This is the most thrilling book in the world! Alec, The Black, and Henry are out on an adventure... once again!! Alec is baffled by three colts that arrive for sale from Spain. They look so much like his horse, that Alec is sure they have the same sire. But that wonderful stallion died years ago in Arabia. Or did he? In search of the answer Alec and the Black begin a dangerous journey. In Spain they meet the colts' eccentric owner, Angel Gonzalez, who takes them to a remote mountain stronghold of an Arab sheik. The sheik insists he's seen the Black's sire running free, in the mountains. And he wants Alec and the Black to catch him. Yet Alec is suspicious. He thinks the whole story is nothing more than an elaborate plot to lure him and his horse to this desolate place - but why?? You have to have read the first book in the series to know who Tabari is and if you don't then, you wouldn't get the whole book (especially the end!).

I left a comment for the other review, but I feel so strongly that his one-star rating could possibly affect someone's decision to buy this book that I had to post a review of my own. The Black Stallion is a WONDERFUL book, in fact, my all-time favorite childhood book, even over the old classic, Black Beauty (which is way too depressing for children, in my opinion). For a very young child, begin with Big Black Horse --- also by Walter Farley and when the kids are old enough, buy The Black Stallion. The only caveat I have for parents is: get ready for the "I want a black stallion of my own!!" refrain once they've read these books. I don't know what became of my original books, but I re-ordered them as an adult and have them sitting proudly on the shelves in my library. That's the impact the books will have on your children! And buy the movie for them, too, while you're at it.

Don't know how many readers are aware of the fact that Pam in this book (and a short snippet in the following book) is based on Walter Farley's own daughter, Pam Farley, who loved horses... she passed away in a car accident at the age of 20 in 1968 in Europe. Mr. Farley stated several times

that this book "The Black Stallion & The Girl" was meant as a memorial of her free spirit and love of horses. That being said, I do not think it is the best of the series. For one thing, I think that Mr. Farley had lost his 'spark' some time before that - and the early death of his beloved daughter didn't help much. The book has not aged well either - Pam comes across as a '60's hippie girl. Henry becomes an intolerant old geezer, and Alec begins to question his parents' values (why he would do that when they have given him a free rein all this time...well...). I do admit that it was nice to read about Alec falling in love but all those scenes seemed so contrived to me...It's still better than the followup that was released 12 years later "The Black Stallion Legend" which is just DEPRESSING.

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