

*There's a Beetle in
My Bucket*

*and other challenges facing an
orphaned horse*

by
Heather Rosselle Irwin



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PCJunior is an imprint of **Paws and Claws Publishing, LLC.**

1589 Skeet Club Road, Suite 102 #175

High Point, NC 27265

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ISBN # 978-1-946198-17-4

Printed in the United States

Acknowledgements

Much love and thanks go out to my sweet husband Hugh. He has supported me in every way along this journey. He knows how much I love to write and to share my animal stories with people.

He's patient and knows how many irons I have in the fire at times. It's during these overwhelming times that he brings me back to earth and makes me feel human again.

If I need it (and he seems to know whenever I do), his advice is endless. He definitely knows of my love for animals, and his is just as strong. Our family currently consists of two dogs, four cats, four horses, and one miniature donkey. If we could have more, we definitely would! My grandmother, Zella (aka 'Nanny'), always said, "Where there is love, there is room."

Speaking of Nanny, she taught me the importance of how to treat people with kindness and love. She taught me many lessons, without her even realizing it. I watched her interact with family members and friends as a young girl, and I wanted to be just like her when I grew up. She was a beautiful woman inside and out. She was one of the kindest women I've ever met. I was so blessed to have her in my life.

To the sweet angel in my life, my stepmother Linda. I was never thrilled about that title. She's really the "mother of my heart."

Over 30 years ago, she started filling my life with love and encouragement in many ways. I've never known anyone like her and probably never will again.

A very special thank you to Linda for her continued interest in my writing and in this book in particular. I'm thankful that she read the story and that her excitement and enthusiasm helped keep me on track.

To my father Donald who encouraged me to follow my heart and to do what made me happy in this life. He wanted me to go to college, even though I was apprehensive. He said to at least try it and that if I didn't want to continue, I could do something else.

He always encouraged me to try different things. And then he followed up by saying that if I ended up selling pencils on the street, that was okay, as long as it made me happy. When he said that to me as a child, I didn't know exactly what he meant. But as I progressed through my life, his words of wisdom made much more sense. "Do what makes you happy?"

To this day, I thank him for my willingness to take chances, even if those efforts made me uncomfortable at times.

To my mother Virginia, who brought me into this world where I was able to grow up and to make many choices in my life. Not all of those choices were good ones, but she always supported me in a loving manner, no matter what.

Thank you to her for her sense of humor and for the laughter we've shared along the way.

She always wanted what was best for me and guided me toward those things. She still does to this day. For all of these things, I say a heartfelt thank you to her.

To my older and only brother Curtis, who was my sidekick in our adventures as we looked for little animals and creatures in the creeks and throughout the woods behind our house.

We're siblings and friends. We all need friends now and then. He was always there for me when we were growing up and is to this day.

We both also share a love of animals.

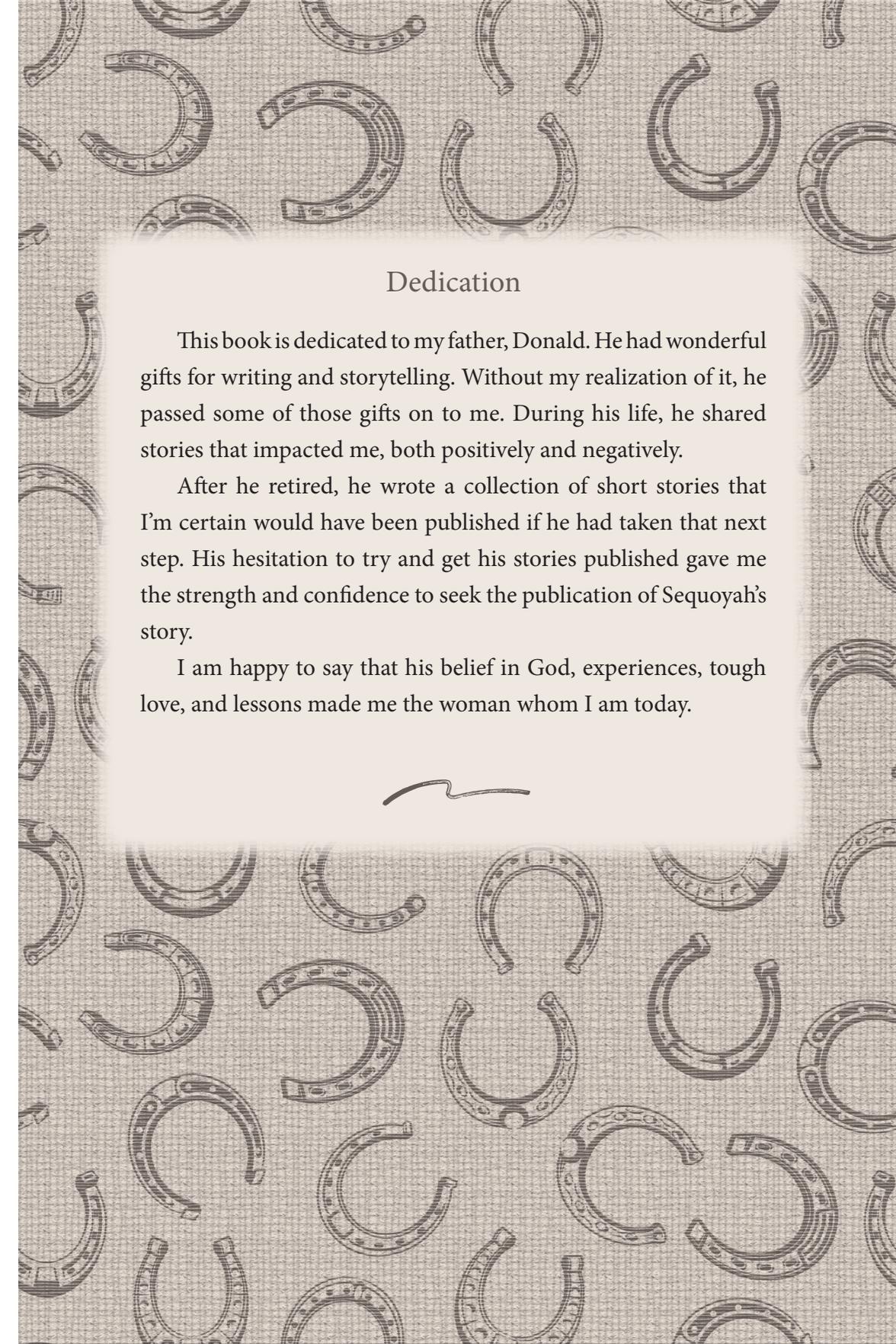
He has an incredible sense of humor, which is always welcomed in our world today. Thank you for making me laugh, Brother, and for your support all along the way.

To my aunt Patty, who was involved in my life quite a bit while I was a young girl. I was able to spend a lot of time with her during the summer months and during most Christmas celebrations. She gave me my first horse book for Christmas one year.

I remember how excited I was and that the book had a lot of beautiful pictures, which was important at my young age.

Spending time with her was special and formed the bond we have today.

To my grandmother June and grandfather John. They had a very old typewriter that they kept on the floor in the foyer closet. They must have thought it was much too heavy to put anywhere up high. I was about five years old when I first discovered it back in the dark corner of the closet. Immediately I dragged it across the floor toward the light and started to tap away on it. After that, every visit with them included some time sitting on the floor with that old typewriter, writing notes, letters, and stories about simple things. Thank you to the two of them from their writer-in-the-making!

The background of the page is a repeating pattern of horseshoes. Each horseshoe is rendered in a simple, line-art style with some internal shading to suggest texture. They are scattered across the page, some facing up, some facing down, and some at various angles. The background has a subtle, woven fabric-like texture.

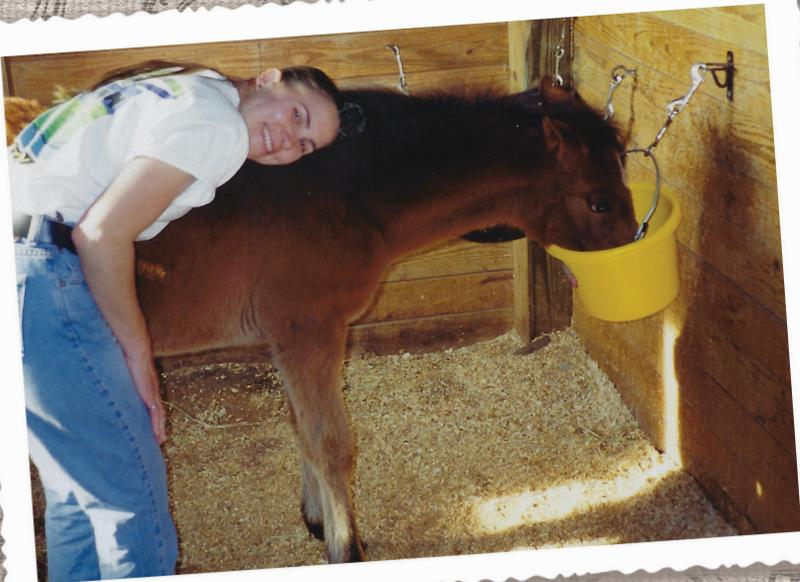
Dedication

This book is dedicated to my father, Donald. He had wonderful gifts for writing and storytelling. Without my realization of it, he passed some of those gifts on to me. During his life, he shared stories that impacted me, both positively and negatively.

After he retired, he wrote a collection of short stories that I'm certain would have been published if he had taken that next step. His hesitation to try and get his stories published gave me the strength and confidence to seek the publication of Sequoyah's story.

I am happy to say that his belief in God, experiences, tough love, and lessons made me the woman whom I am today.





Prologue

I was a horse. A very different horse. I didn't realize this for quite some time, because I never met my real mother. I had difficulties knowing how I was supposed to act and how to behave as a horse. I was scared of a lot of things because I didn't have a horse to teach me what was normal and what was not.

In fact, I went through a lot of obstacles and encountered many problems that a normal horse would not usually experience.



I remember one time when I was eating by myself for the first time. I was so proud, and my adoptive human mommy was proud of me too! She watched me approach my little yellow feed bucket proudly on my own. I put my nose in the bucket and suddenly jumped back about ten feet. I made the loudest, scariest sound either one of us has ever heard. There was a shiny black thing in my bucket, and I was scared beyond belief. My mommy looked into that bucket and saw that it was a big black beetle moving around in my feed. Apparently it had fallen in there by mistake and couldn't get out. Mommy pulled the beetle out with her hand and showed me that it wasn't anything to be afraid of at all. She let me see it up close, and she even let me smell it. Only then did I realize that it wasn't scary. I had overreacted.

That was only one of many things I had to learn as a baby orphaned horse. I know I would have learned that eventually with my real herd of horses, but I was so happy to have learned about it from my human mommy.

I was going to experience many things like that in the future as I grew up as an orphan. I think I was ready for my life. I had a lot of support from my human mommy. But my life was still going to be filled with ups and downs along the way. However I was ready!



All You Need
is Love
...and a Horse.

~Author Unknown



Chapter One

My life started in a cold, white field all by myself. I looked around and all that I saw were a lot of leafless tall trees and white fluffy stuff everywhere I could see. Later I was told that the white stuff was *snow* and that it always covers the ground during a certain time of the year.

Apparently the snow had fallen on my first day here on earth. I didn't mind too much because I was happy to see the sunshine and the little birds and other animals romping around near me. Even though I was cold and had very little hair to keep me warm, I was happy to be here and lucky to be alive!

I found out later that my chances for survival weren't very good. I will tell you more about that later in my story.

I had so many questions. My first one was, *Where was I?*

Where was everyone else that looked like me? I felt kind of alone in this big field covered with snow.



I was really cold, but I didn't particularly know why. I was a bit wet and needed drying off, but no one was around to help me with that either. I looked around and waited. I even took a little nap when I could.

You never knew what the future held, I thought to myself as I waited and napped. I had to get my rest while I could. I felt as if I had been through a lot that day, but I didn't really know what it was that had happened. I saw a bigger version of me walking around, but it never came over to say hello.

The brightness in the sky started to turn a little bit gray and the air around me felt different. I was still cold and had become hungry, but other things were happening.

All of a sudden, I heard noises that got louder by the minute. I looked all around to see what might be making those noises. I was scared but also a bit curious. *What was this thing, and why was it coming closer to me? Was it going to hurt me?* It surely didn't look like me and didn't smell like me. *But why didn't it, and what in the world was it?*

I just lay there and didn't move, hoping it wouldn't notice me and would keep moving. A few moments later, I found myself being picked up off the white cold stuff and being carried into a dry metal box on wheels. Later I found out that this was called a *trailer* and was used to move things like me safely around from place to place.



"Wow," I said to myself, "I think I'm in for a really big adventure!"

