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Summer Circuit (Show Circuit Series -- Book 1)



Synopsis

It's the summer before college. Hannah Waer is on her own at the seven-week summer horse show circuit in Vermont. Her father wants her to learn independence and responsibility so she has to take care of her own horse—which might not be a problem if she'd ever picked out a stall, or prepared a horse for the ring. It also doesn't help that her horse won't jump. When Hannah crashes (literally) into gorgeous and accomplished grand prix rider, Chris Kern, on her first day at the show, she's certain her life is over. In fact, it's just beginning. The summer becomes one Hannah will never forget—a time of first love, of hard choices, and of learning that life is what you make of it.

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Customer Reviews

I first read Whitney's Perfect Distance quite a while ago and loved her true to life depiction of the a circuit coupled with her eloquent prose. She writes well, develops meaningful characters, and keeps the horse scenes accurate. I enjoyed that first book so much, I was quite pleased when Blue

Ribbons came out not long ago. I devoured that book as well. Then, not even expecting her to have yet another book out so soon, I found this one! It, like the other two, is a fascinating look at the A circuit horseshow world. What really amazes me about Whitney's books is they are all such different angles. So often one finds an author stuck in a rut with the same main character under a different name, the same basic plot, and the same clichéd descriptions. Whitney finds a fresh take on the horse world with each of her books, making me love each one as a unique story. And she never skimps on the horse details! Warning for this one, though, there are somewhat vivid sex scenes. Not harlequin bodice-ripping romance, but definitely not appropriate for tweens or younger horse enthusiasts! I would give this a 15+ rating.

18 year old Hannah's wealthy, self-made father doesn't pay much attention to her, but when he does, his gaze is intimidating and fearsome. Hannah likes horses and had shown an older leased horse, so during a business conversation, he's persuaded to buy a young warmblood - too much horse and too green, truly, for Hannah. Hannah's trainer gives her hardly any guidance (mostly she yells) and Hannah is a little frightened and knows she's overhyped. But her dad wants her to learn self-reliance, so he agrees she can go do the summer horse show circuit in Vermont as a last horse fling before college - as long as she does it on her own. No groom, no help. Just her, the horse, and the trainer who yells that she can't do anything right. I loved Kim Ablon Whitney's earlier horse books, "The Perfect Distance" and "Blue Ribbons," and this is another top-notch bit of horse literature. The horse show setting is accurate and realistic, showing the author's true knowledge of the scene. The relationships with the horses are spot-on - not anthropomorphized, but real horses doing real things that are both wonderful and exasperating and sometimes a bit dangerous. The main characters are richly drawn, and the side characters are real people too, neatly depicted and not left as props. The action is real, derived from the characters, and nuanced - believable and none of that "girl loves horse and now they win blue ribbon after blue ribbon against all odds" that is pervasive in a lot of horse fiction. There are good days and there are bad days, and the good days aren't necessarily about winning a particular prize. The friendships made and lost are what makes this novel sing. I especially enjoy horse fiction and read a lot of it; this is one of the best I've read. However, I don't think you'd have to be a horse person to enjoy the novel - it's a good story and will stand up in any company. There is sex and drinking; the book is appropriate for older readers, high school and up. (Drinking to excess is presented in a negative light.) The novel exits at a natural ending point - the end of the summer show circuit - but it doesn't feel like the end of Hannah's story. I certainly can't wait to find out what happens next, and I hope there's a sequel in process.

One of the many things I love about Kim Ablon Whitney, besides her first horse novel *The Perfect Distance*, is her horse knowledge. She showed on the A circuit, and now she's a USEF judge, so those horse facts you want equestrian fiction to always get right? Kim Ablon Whitney always delivers. *Summer Circuit* is about Hannah Waer, a privileged girl in her last summer before college. She's riding the summer circuit, a prestigious and intense seven-week horse show in Vermont, without a groom or any help whatsoever because her multimillionaire father has insisted she figure it all out on her own. Hannah, sadly, is totally clueless. When she nearly runs her horse right into grand prix rider Chris Kern on her first day, it's pretty obvious that Hannah needs all the help she can get. Fortunately for Hannah, Chris is intrigued. He offers to coach her in secret morning lessons, and eventually Hannah begins jumping over jumps in the show ring instead of bulldozing straight through them. As Hannah begins to improve, her fangirl crush on Chris begins to morph into something real. She's sure that Chris couldn't possibly feel the same way, but what if he did? *Summer Circuit* is a gutsy little romance novel through and through. It does walk a thin line between young adult and new adult, so there is mature content that readers should be aware of before delving in with both feet. These scenes do feel in place with the theme, and in my opinion are watered down just enough for the young adult set. Where the novel shines is in inserting the reader into Kim's show circuit world, where everything is always richly described and the horse knowledge is, as always, top notch. If there's a sequel, I'll be picking it up.

I thought the Arabian horse world was wild until starting to read novels about the hunter/jumper and saddle seat circuits. Kim Ablon Whitney may be the most literate of the authors of these young adult-themed novels. Her plots are full of gritty real life in the adolescent-turningadult world and she relates the sadness of the "hook-up culture" without slipping into sleaze or porn. Good read for horsey adults and older teens. Parents might want to review these books with their kids and engage them in realistic conversation about real life and values for living. Horses really can help girls mature and develop life skills, but only with involved, nurturing parents.

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