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## 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:**

**Eric McDonald:**

Now a day those who Living in the era wherever everything reachable by talk with the internet and the resources within it can be true or not call for people to be aware of each information they get. How people have to be smart in receiving any information nowadays? Of course the answer is reading a book. Looking at

a book can help folks out of this uncertainty Information especially this Half Broke Horses: A True-Life Novel book because book offers you rich information and knowledge. Of course the info in this book hundred per cent guarantees there is no doubt in it as you know.

**Joseph Williams:**

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**Lorraine Joyner:**

Are you kind of busy person, only have 10 as well as 15 minute in your morning to upgrading your mind skill or thinking skill even analytical thinking? Then you are receiving problem with the book than can satisfy your short space of time to read it because this all time you only find book that need more time to be study. Half Broke Horses: A True-Life Novel can be your answer because it can be read by a person who have those short free time problems.

**Luther Jensen:**

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