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Winter's Gift



Synopsis

It may be Christmastime but on a small, forlorn farm the holiday season is best forgotten, along with painful memories of loved ones lost. Mother Nature has other plans, however, and a chance snowstorm brings together two unlikely hearts, one human and one beast, yet both yearning for comfort, companionship, and that most elusive gift of all, hope. This lustrous jewel of a story, quietly told and perfectly complemented by soft, evocative paintings, reminds even the most cynical of readers that the heart indeed can recover and go on. Jane Monroe Donovan's parents encouraged her to follow her heart and it led to her love of sketching and painting. Her affection for animals is reflected in much of her subject matter. Jane makes her home in Pinckney, Michigan, with her husband Bruce and their two sons, Ryan and Joey. Other members of their family include their two dogs, Belle and Grizzly, a Siamese cat named Maylee, and their two horses, Ameera and Cherokee Rose. In addition to Winter's Gift, Jane has also illustrated three other titles for Sleeping Bear Press: My Teacher Likes to Say; My Momma Likes to Say; and Sunny Numbers: A Florida Counting Book.

Book Information

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Language: English

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Average Customer Review: 4.7 out of 5 stars 62 customer reviews

Best Sellers Rank: #267,346 in Books (See Top 100 in Books) #170 in Children's Books > Education & Reference > History > United States > 1800s #181 in Children's Books > Education & Reference > History > Military & Wars #473 in Children's Books > Animals > Horses

Age Range: 4 - 10 years

Grade Level: Preschool - 4

Customer Reviews

"An unlikely pair find themselves spending Christmas Eve together -- and sharing a miracle the next

day.....Donovan's painted pictures of what must be an idyllic New England farm blanketed by the calm of a fresh snow are a compelling part of the story." -- Daily Times Chronicle (December 2004) (Daily Times Chronicle (Woburn Ed.) 20041223)"The hushed storytelling is graceful, the wintry scenes exactly right." -- Gainesville Sun (December 2004) (Gainesville Sun)"A good lap time read aloud. The author's paintings of north woods snow scenes are realistic enough to make you shiver." --Las Vegas Optic (December 2004) (Las Vegas Optic)

Jane Monroe Donovan's parents encouraged her to follow her heart and it led to her love of sketching and painting. Her affection for animals is reflected in much of her subject matter. Jane makes her home in Pinckney, Michigan, with her husband Bruce and their two sons, Ryan and Joey. Other members of their family include their two dogs, Belle and Grizzly, a Siamese cat named Maylee, and their two horses, Ameera and Cherokee Rose. In addition to *Winter's Gift*, Jane has also illustrated three other titles for Sleeping Bear Press: *My Teacher Likes to Say*; *My Momma Likes to Say*; and *Sunny Numbers: A Florida Counting Book*.

A child in our kindergarten classroom selected this book to read, and it is a beauty. The story opens on Christmas Eve, but we read it in snowy January and it didn't seem out of place at all. The book speaks to loneliness and loss of hope -- and of providential gifts. It definitely stirred up empathy in our children for the plight of the little old man and the wandering mare. The pictures are the kind you want to linger over for a while to fully appreciate all the details. This book reminds me of *Owl Moon*--it casts a spell over you and, for a few minutes, you feel as if you really are out in the woods on a cold, dark, winter night.

The illustrations are beautiful. Beautiful drawings and colors. But the story is a bit implausible. It is unlikely that an elderly man not working with large animals would be able to lift a horse lying in the snow on its side using only his scarf. That the horse is wild and not domestic or familiar to him would be difficult to manage it outside or in the barn. And then for him to fall asleep in the barn would likely chill him even to his own death (which is kind of where I thought it was going) But that aside, the thread of the star on the tree and the foal's marking, the story about helping a mother to be have a baby at Christmas time and what the man receives from his kindness is heartwarming. Helping another and the joy it creates in our lives.A gentle tale of kindness and connection together with the exquisite drawings make this a lovely book for all ages.

The illustrations created such a lovely wintery mood to the whole story. It was a treat to share with all my Great Grandchildren. That was my husband, now gone, in that book. He loved horses and we lived then on a large farm with lots of trees. We had foaled out many mares in our time. Some with the howling winds and swirling snows of a Michigan winter making our cozy warm barn seem even more protected. The smell of fresh straw and the warmth the animals created made it a special place on those cold winter nights. Winter's Gift brought all those memories back. It is a very special book.

Nice pics but not what I expected.

How lovely to read a simply told and beautifully illustrated children's book. There is nothing commercial about this book, nothing planned by the PR people to make it fancy and salable as often happens in the large publishing houses. It is left alone, and it's natural and it's so refreshing to read something so pure. An old man lives alone on the edge of the woods and is a widower. A wild mare gets lost from its herd. It is almost Christmastime, very cold and snowy, with a dismal outlook for both mare and man. The illustrations are very striking, the text is well crafted, simple and the words are well chosen. What a perfect Christmas gift for any child. Above all, it is a message of hope.

It's a charming (if well-used) story idea, and the illustrations are very pretty. They are in the style of the great Wesley Dennis, although the colors lack the richness Dennis could put into even the most monochromatic tones. But, wow, is this book SHORT. It's literally only a dozen pages or so, and that includes credits and title page. This should never have been issued in HC. It deserves maybe a nice 9x12 ppk edition, at most. And even then, best picked up used. And I used the words "story idea" deliberately. This really isn't a story; it's an episode, e.g.; like a one-act play. You're left feeling a little cheated, because it wouldn't have taken much work to expand this a bit into a sweet Hallmark-style Xmas story.

"Winter's Gift", written and illustrated by Jane Monroe Donovan, starts off with a small town under a blanket of snow on Christmas Eve and an old man getting ready for his first Christmas alone since the death of his wife. He doesn't expect much, but fate has something in store for him... This short story is perfectly suited for young children. The text is short and easy to read while the softly done illustrations really make the story. "Winter's Gift" is highly recommended for those with children or

grandchildren old enough to appreciate Christmas as the annual small miracle that it is.

the writing is awesome and for once, i have managed to find a book, that feels good and leaves the reader with a feeling that, just maybe, something might be good somewhere in this world. would recommend for anyone.

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