



Beeble's Story

Jill Cawsey

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Beeble's Story is a sweet animal tale narrated by a sentimental and beloved horse.

Jill Cawsey's *Beeble's Story* is a love letter to equine culture and to the relationships developed between horses and humans.

Beeble and Praze are twin Arab Geldings living in the Australian countryside. From their birth, they feel a strong connection to one another. They are fortunate to be able to stay together after they become old enough to be sold. Finding their forever human, Jill, brings the brothers much education and many adventures. The loss of friends, coupled with medical emergencies, threaten the joy of their lives, but Jill and the brothers know that they will always be there for each other.

Spanning the horses' lifetimes, the book is written from Beeble's thoughtful, caring point of view; it was inspired by a series of letters that Cawsey wrote to a friend. Excerpts from these letters are included, resulting in insights into how Beeble's voice was developed. The horse's thought process is endearing—and naive, at times. When Beeble refers to eating many of Jill's plants as helping her prune her garden, it pokes fun at human expectations.

Cawsey is present as a character in the novel, alongside Beeble's twin and several other animals and humans that the twins meet over their lifetimes. Even when their appearances are brief, the supporting cast is imbued with distinctive traits; each horse has their own attitude and role within the group. Some are playful and mischievous; others become leaders to be listened to. Many stories, like the death of one horse and her partner's tendency to visit her grave site, emphasize the intelligence and emotional sensitivity of horses.

Most of the novel takes place in Australia. Its lush and intricate valleys, rivers, and bushland, alongside landmarks like the Victorian Alps, are depicted as Beeble and Praze backpack through the land with a riders' club and groups that specialize in mountain riding. The dangers of these trails are imparted as they navigate high and narrow paths, recalling a time when Beeble went "overboard" into the bramble below, leaving both horse and rider with scratches and bruises.

Realistic descriptions of horse activities and riding styles are woven into Beeble's narrative—sometimes becoming too technical and specific to understand without previous background knowledge. Pictures are included between chapters, showing equipment and competitions; they help to flesh the information out.

Beeble's stories are told in chronological order; there's no central plot, so they function like vignettes shared to highlight humorous and difficult times. A major conflict is hinted at in earlier chapters, but the incident is not described in full. In the charming self-referential final chapter, Beeble expresses his feelings about the book itself.

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DELIA STANLEY (February 28, 2020)

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