

Behind the Scenes: The Racehorse

Nikki Tate

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As early as the 1600s, horse owners in England and Ireland raced each other across open country using a distant church as a goal post. This tradition that became known as the steeplechase, is one of many facts explained in this book about the racehorse.

Beginning with a compact history of horse and human interaction from ancient times to today, the book introduces readers to basic industry language; for example the definitions of trot, canter, gallop, and the differences between a quarter horse race and steeplechase. Other chapters explore horse breeding, training, and care. Life at the race track is detailed through descriptions of the roles of the jockeys, grooms, trainers, veterinarians, and paddock judges. Significant exploration of the race world includes the racing business, track maintenance, horse safety (head gear, saddles, equine swimming pools, etc.), race day nuts and bolts, horse retirement, and even the abuse and neglect of horses.

Canadian Nikki Tate is the author of more than twelve books for children, including the StableMates horse series, The Estorian Chronicles series, Tarragon Island series, and *Jo's Triumph*, a historical novel set in the Pony Express territory. A horse owner herself, Nikki has been riding since before she began school, and shares her love for horses and the equine sport through her work.

Each chapter of *Behind the Scenes* provides solid information and high quality colored photos depicting horses and the racing world. Brightly colored sidebars supplement with historical facts, terminology, definitions, and trivia. It's too bad that while the book provides a through look at the racehorse world, it lacks reference resources and a list of online resources for readers who want to know more.

ANGELA BLACK (February 15, 2008)

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