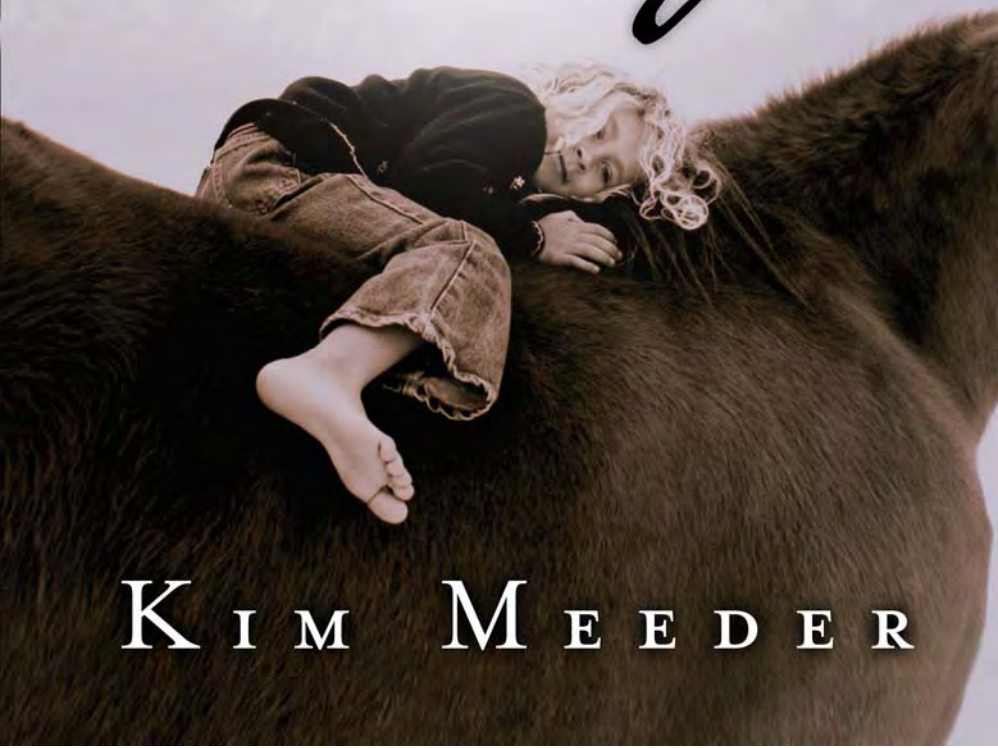


STORIES FROM THE RANCH
OF RESCUED DREAMS



Hope Rising



KIM MEEDER

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“I love good stories, and these are among the very best. Kim Meeder writes with a mesmerizing, wonderfully refreshing beauty. If your soul needs a fresh touch, reading this book is like opening a door and welcoming hope inside.”

ALICE GRAY,
BESTSELLING COMPILER OF STORIES FOR THE HEART

“Wonderful...Exhilarating...Inspirational.... Kim Meeder captures that special bond between humans and horses, telling us why it’s the little things that make each day worth living.”

BEN WESTLUND,
OREGON STATE REPRESENTATIVE

“*Hope Rising* details the amazing accounts from a special ranch that I have been privileged to support. These memorable stories will touch you deeply.”

BEV CLARNO,
OREGON STATE SENATOR

*Hope
Rising*

K I M M E E D E R



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*This book is dedicated to Beth Everest,
my precious little grandma who bought my first horse for me.
Mimi! Look what you started!*



KIM MEEDER

2004 Recipient of the

Jacqueline Kennedy Onassis Award for Public Service

In 1972, Jacqueline Kennedy Onassis, U.S. Senator Robert Taft Jr., and Sam Beard founded the American Institute for Public Service, a 501c3 public foundation to establish a Nobel Prize for public and community service -- The Jefferson Awards.

The Jefferson Awards are presented on two levels: national and local. National award recipients represent a "Who's Who" of outstanding Americans. On the local level, Jefferson Award recipients are ordinary people who do extraordinary things without expectation of recognition or reward.

Kim Meeder was honored at the Jefferson Awards National Celebration of Service to America in Washington, D.C. on June 29, 2004. She was one of four regional recipients of the Jefferson Award and one of five national recipients to receive the Jacqueline Kennedy Onassis Award for greatest public service benefiting the local community. Soon after, she received a Red Cross Local Heroes Award which was read before Congress. Crystal Peaks Youth Ranch has since been blessed with visitors from around the world who not only seek healing for themselves, but also wish to give of themselves for the sake of helping others.

THE PLACE WHERE HOPE RISES

Sometimes it is only through devastation that we find the truth. Hardship can be like a savage cleansing fire. All the things we think of as necessary to our survival are soon revealed as nothing more than the dross of complacent luxury, consumed by the fire as it burns down to the true metal of the soul. Hardship uncovers the only thing we truly need to survive—hope.

Within every heart there exists a special place, a place where the hopes and dreams of the soul soar, unchained by logical or physical entrapments. For some, visiting this unique place is a frivolous waste of time, a mental blowing of dandelion spores.

For others this place becomes the mountain meadow within their soul, the sweeping expanse of wildflowers and fragrant grasses, the streams of pure glacial water, where the spirit runs free.

It is a place where the impossible flourishes, where dreams survive the inferno of reality to become the miraculous wonders that draw us forward—it is the place where hope rises.

* All of the stories in *Hope Rising* are true. Some of the names have been changed to protect the privacy of the people involved.

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My Gratitude for Hope Shared

How can one thank every grain of sand on the beach or every twinkling star in the heavens? All the tender souls who have graced this work, have, in their own unique way, added richness to my life. I am intensely grateful for each one.

I am thankful for...

My husband, Troy

Your constant love and support have made this ministry possible. Without you my heart, my soul, and my life would be incomplete.

Ami Johnston

Your dedication to this project has been as unwavering as the mountain skyline. Without you I would have nothing but a binder full of handwritten pages.

Judy Gordon and Margaret Sharpe

Your miraculous efforts have guided this book through the exhausting editing process. Without both of you I would have no mirror.

Sue Morgan

You are one of my broadest shoulders. Without you my heart would be missing the joy of sharing the high wilderness places.

My Lord

Above all, my gratitude goes to You and Your sacrifice of love made for me, so that I could live. Without You, I would have no love, no light, no breath...no hope.

TO MY RANCH KIDS

You're my handful of flowers,
My skippin' rocks on the creek,
My melted ice cream,
Sweet kisses on my cheek.

You're my shining light,
My little twinkling star,
The bounce in my step,
My last cookie in the jar.

You're the miracle of life,
You're the joy of first birth;
And all because of you
I'm the richest girl on earth.

Kim Meeder

hope
rising
from
stone



Angels in Horsehair



ADAM WAS SO SMALL for his age. It was the first thing I noticed when his caseworker introduced us. His eyes, shadowed with sadness, were too large for his little face. He was drawn into himself, as if he were trying to fit his diminutive frame into an even smaller space. It was clear that this child had known more terror in his handful of years than most knew in a lifetime.

The pair had traveled to the ranch unannounced with the hope of simply petting the soft muzzles of my “angels in horsehair.” Even though the ranch was alive with children, Adam stood apart, completely alone—a tiny brown-eyed lamb lost in his own skin.

I smiled at him. He immediately looked to the ground in retreat. My heart staggered under the weight of his loneliness. I prayed that God would meet this child in this place in a special way.

I knelt down and quietly tried to engage Adam in a simple conversation. I asked him if he had ever ridden a horse before. He stared at the ground, somber as an ancient sage, and silently shook his head. “Would you like to?” I asked. His little head snapped up, and he looked me directly in the eyes with more than a little disbelief. I smiled into his questioning face. “We have a pony for

you," I told him. "A very special pony who would very much like to meet you."

"*Really?*" he asked, with more emotion than I'm sure anyone had seen in a while. He looked at his caseworker and then back at me. I told him where the halters were and pointed back behind the arena to where the golden pony, Hobbs, lived. Adam flashed us a little grin and took off at a run.

From a distance, in that moment he must have looked like every other child at the ranch. But from my view, I was horrified! His grin revealed a mouth full of broken teeth. He ran on ahead of us. I could feel my neck prickle before I turned to his counselor and quietly asked, "Is that what I think it is?"

It took her a long moment to answer. When she did, her voice was choked by the grip of anger and compassion. "It's so much worse than you could imagine," she finally stated. "A father is supposed to love, cherish, and protect his son. Not only has Adam's 'dad' broken most of his son's teeth with his fists, but before he went to prison, he would get drunk and make his son run around the yard while he shot at him with a rifle!"

We walked on in silence. Both of us watched Adam enter the pony's paddock and begin stroking his face. "It's a miracle he's still alive," she finally said.

Together, Adam and I led the pony back to the hitching post and went through the grooming and tacking process. Often I placed my hands over his to guide them. I held Hobbs's hooves and Adam cleaned them. I lifted the saddle into place, and he cinched up the girth. Then it was time to put on the bridle. I showed the little boy where his hands and fingers should be, how to hold his

arms, and where he should stand. Then I placed his hands so that they gripped the bridle in the right way, and gently moved him toward the pony's left shoulder. It was up to him now. Silently I stepped back and watched.

Adam stood quietly for a moment, as if taking in all that he had just learned. And suddenly, Hobbs did something I have never seen any horse do before or since. As the child stood by the pony's shoulder, Hobbs reached around with his head and neck and pressed Adam into his body. The pony held him so tightly in the curve of his neck that he could not raise his arms.

For long moments the pony stayed that way, encircling Adam's tiny body with his neck. He couldn't move anything except his eyes. They rolled back to look at me. I could clearly see that Adam was afraid.

What was Hobbs doing? I could think of only one thing to say. The words all came out in a rush. "Oh, my gosh! I think that this pony is giving you a hug!"

Adam's huge, startled eyes moved in pinball fashion as he tried to process what was happening.

"I have never seen him do that to anyone else," I added. "You must be very special."

Adam's face began to relax with my reassurance. He appeared to accept what I'd said. Slowly he wriggled his right arm out and began to hug the pony back. For a brief moment, this battered child was allowed to be nothing more than a little boy who was loved by a pony. Adam's head slowly dropped until it rested against Hobbs's neck. Like a whispered prayer, more to himself than to anyone else, he began saying over and over, "He likes me...he likes me...he likes me."

It was several minutes before Hobbs relaxed his grip on the child. Adam, seemingly so overwhelmed that anything on this earth would choose to love him, clung tightly to the pony with both arms, pressing his face into Hobbs's golden body.

Moments passed and the boy's hug melted into long strokes on both sides of the pony's neck. The stony tomb that had once imprisoned Adam's heart began to crumble under newfound love. Finally, he looked up and smiled. It was a radiant, jagged grin, so dazzling it was like trying to look at the sun. With his arms still around the pony, he turned and looked up at me. "He likes me!" he said again. But this time he said it out loud, with a convincing sparkle in his eyes.

I glanced toward heaven with a wink and a smile and whispered, "Thank You."

Read more about Kim Meeder's other books

