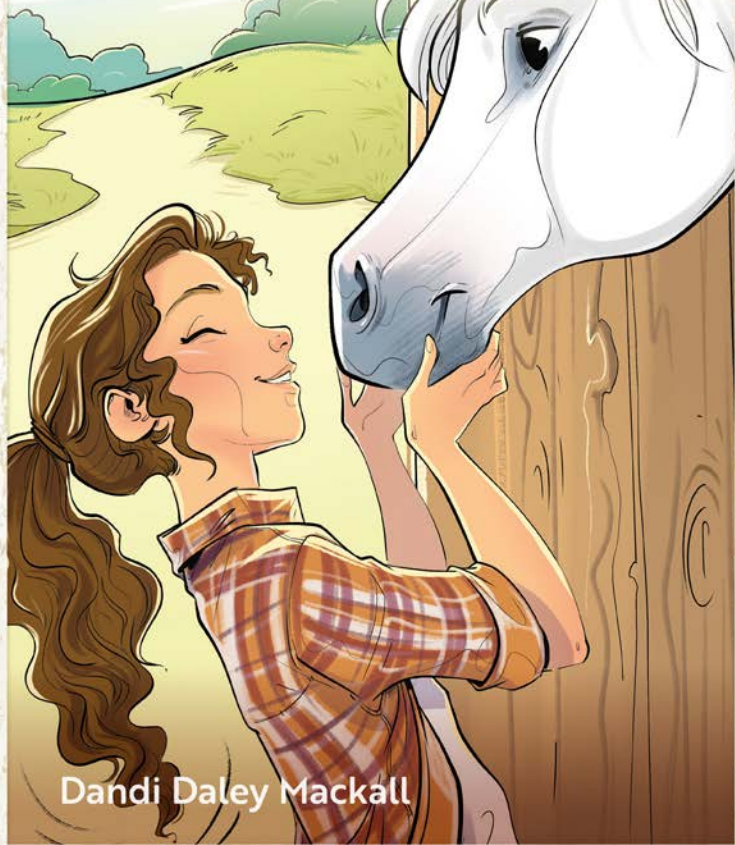


Winnie the horse gentler

Devotional 2

30 More New Stories
for Horse-Loving Readers



Dandi Daley Mackall



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Author's Note



It's such an honor to write another book as if I'm Winnie the Horse Gentler working life out with God . . . and horses—the way I guess I've done my whole life. Much like Winnie, I grew up with horses as my best friends. I admit there are many pieces of me and my horses in the Winnie books.

The first novel about Winnie the Horse Gentler, *Wild Thing*, released in 2002, was followed by seven other Winnie novels. I'm thankful for the great letters and emails Winnie and I continue to receive from readers.

Over the years, new generations of readers have befriended Winnie. So I let Winnie make appearances in *Starlight Animal Rescue*, and I added a new series, *Winnie: The Early Years*. Now I've had the joy of writing two story-devotionals with thirty new horse stories in each. The books are as horsey as the other Winnie books but also encourage readers to reflect and to journal. I'd love to hear from you at dandibooks.com, where you can meet some of my horses; or email me at dandi@dandibooks.com.

You don't need to know anything about Winnie to read this book, but here's a peek into her world.

Love,
Dandi

Who's Who in Winnie's World

Winnie—Winifred Willis (Winnie) is in eighth grade. She grew up on a ranch in Wyoming, where her mom taught her how to gentle horses rather than break them. After her mom died, Winnie's dad moved his two daughters all over the US, finally landing in Ashland, Ohio. People bring Winnie their problem horses, and she gentles them with kindness. Winnie is great with horses—not so much with humans, especially certain classmates. But from day to day, she discovers she can apply her horse knowledge to people. School cliques aren't that different from Mustang herds, after all.

Nickers—Winnie's white Arabian had earned the name Wild Thing when the Spidells gave up on her and wanted her out of Spidell's Stable-Mart. They had tried to break the mare with *no* gentleness, just frustrating punishment. Winnie ended up with Wild Thing and helped her become Nickers instead, which is a soft sound from a horse, the sweetest music on earth.

Lizzy—Elizabeth Priscilla Willis (Lizzy) is a year younger than her sister, Winnie. She's taller than Winnie, maybe more mature, and has a solid and fun relationship with God. She's not crazy about horses but loves lizards.

Jack Willis—Winnie's dad used to be the boss in a Wyoming insurance company. When his wife died,

he quit because he couldn't stay where sad memories lurked. Moving with his daughters from state to state, he worked at odd jobs wherever he could. Knowing Winnie needed horses, he rented the last farmhouse at the edge of Ashland, Ohio, which came with an old barn and an overgrown pasture. Now he pursues his passion of inventing things, like the Backwards Bike.

Catman—Calvin Coolidge (Catman) is a throwback to hippies, with expressions like “Far out!,” “Groovy,” and “Cool, man.” He could be a cat whisperer because cats follow him everywhere. Catman’s parents are “far out,” entering contests for a living and decorating year-round with lawn ornaments. Catman is probably Winnie’s best friend.

Barker—Eddy Barker (Barker) loves dogs and knows all about them, training dogs for his family and friends, as well as training police dogs and service dogs. The Barkers are a wonderful African American family, including Granny B. and Barker’s great-granny, “Ma Barker,” who seems out of it until she reveals her wisdom. Each of Barker’s five brothers has his own dog, trained by Eddy.

M—Nobody knows what the M stands for, with the possible exception of Catman, M’s best buddy. M doesn’t say much, but he communicates, sometimes by eating sandwiches in the shape of his message. He always wears black . . . until someone comes up with a darker color. Catman and M help Winnie whenever she needs them.

Hawk—Victoria Hawkins (Hawk) is a Native American classmate who loves birds, owns an Appaloosa named Towaco, and has to split her time between parents, now that they're divorced. Formerly best friend to Summer Spidell, Hawk began as Winnie's un-friend but has become her best on-and-off female friend.

Pat—Pat Haven owns Pat's Pets, the town pet store. She oversees the online Pet Helpline run by Winnie, Catman, Barker, and sometimes Hawk. People (kids too) email with animal problems. Winnie answers horse questions, Catman gets cat problems, Barker takes dog questions, and they call in Hawk for an occasional bird problem.

Summer and the Spidells—Summer Spidell comes from money. She only rides horses from her dad's stable, Stable-Mart, so she can win trophies in horse shows. A classmate of Winnie's, Summer is often her enemy.

Parts of Each Devotion

Each devotional begins with a verse that expresses the main idea of the story. As Winnie comes to understand the verse (or fails to), she discovers how the Treasure Verse applies to her on a deeper, more personal level.

Here are some other features you'll see regularly in each devotional:

Winnie's Story—Winnie the Horse Gentler understands horses better than she understands people—especially classmates—which means Winnie has to untangle human relationships in the same way she listens to and gentles horses. In each story, God helps her in her spiritual journey and understanding.

Journal Entry—Within each story, Winnie writes to God, sometimes griping, sometimes thanking, sometimes asking for much-needed help. Journaling to God helps her slow her raging thoughts and emotions so she can be open and honest with Jesus.

Lassoing the Truth—This section helps make the connection between Winnie's story and your life. Watching Winnie grow through Scripture in each story can help you in your own faith journey as you apply the truth to your own life.

Whoa!—This is your opportunity to journal to God as Winnie does, getting real with Jesus. You can take your time writing how you feel, what's on your mind—anything. Pour out your heart and ask for help, or thank your heavenly Father for caring.

Prayer—Each devotional includes a prayer you can build on. Talk to God and pray about whatever is on your mind and heart.

Giddyup!—This verse activity is an opportunity to act on what you've learned and to remember God's Word forever.

Psalms 119:162 says, "I rejoice in your word like one who discovers a great treasure." Long ago, Winnie's mom made her a Treasure Box, filled with Scripture verses written on colored index cards. She told Winnie that the treasures, the verses, would encourage her and remind her of God's love wherever life took her.

You can make your own treasure cards. It's easy! You only need three things:

1. A pack of colored index cards with five colors.
(You could also use colored construction paper or sticky notes, or you could use white cards or paper, color coding them with crayons or colored pencils.)
Assign one card color for each category based on the emotions they address. For example:

GREEN = HAPPY/JOYFUL

RED = ANGRY

BLUE = SAD

YELLOW = CONFUSED

PURPLE = SCARED/ANXIOUS

2. Something to write with (a pen, pencil, fine marker, etc.).
3. A special place to keep the cards. You could use a shoebox, gift box, recipe box, or file box. If you're

stuck on getting a box, you can punch the top left corner of the cards and add a key ring or tie them together by color.

At the end of each devotional, the Giddyup! section will show you how to make and fill your box of treasures. By the end of the book, you'll have a box full of treasure cards to keep with you wherever you go.





Why Me?

*I hold you by your right hand—I, the LORD your God.
And I say to you, “Don’t be afraid. I am here to help you.”*

Isaiah 41:13

My horse, *Nickers*, is the best listener in Ohio, which explains why I’m in the barn at sunrise talking to her. “No, thank you.’ That’s what I should’ve said when Mrs. Brody asked me to help their horse. But no. I had to say, ‘Sure. Okay.’ Now what am I going to do? We need the money. Plus, I’m trying to build my reputation as a horse gentler.”

I press my cheek to my white Arabian’s neck and breathe in *horse*. “What if I disappoint the most famous client I’ve ever had, *Nickers*? Matt Brody is a world champion, and his Quarter Horse won Best Barrel Horse last year. How am *I* supposed to help a champion? I’m not my mom. She could gentle any horse because they wanted to please her.”

Light pours through slats in the barn. "The Brodys will be here soon!"

I race back to my room and pull out my Treasure Box. My mom left me a metal box filled with index cards in different colors. She'd written a Bible verse on each card and arranged them by color for emotions she knew I'd have my whole life: Green—**Happy or Joyful**; Red—**Angry**; Blue—**Sad**; Yellow—**Confused**; Purple—**Scared or Anxious**. I brought the box with me when Dad made us leave our Willis Wyoming Ranch, and I kept it through all the *I* states he moved my little sister, Lizzy, and me through: Idaho, Iowa, Indiana, and Illinois.

Since we've settled in Ashland, Ohio, I've been trying to read a Treasure Verse every day. Only right now I don't know what color card to pick. I'm angry with myself for saying yes to the Brodys. I'm sad because I don't think I can fix a champion horse. I'm so confused I can't even pick a verse. I settle on a purple card:

I hold you by your right hand, Winnie—I, the LORD your God. And I say to you, "Winnie the Horse Gentler, don't be afraid. I am here to help you."

Isaiah 41:13

I love when Mom puts my name into the real verse.
I've started writing in my journal because it slows down
my out-of-control thoughts.

Dear God,

I know it's true that you hold me by my right
hand, because you said so. I'm nervous about
working with this champion horse and these
champion people. So would you please hold my
hand and then use your other hand to help me
with the Brodys?

Love, Winnie

I sit on the oak stump in our yard to wait. Usually,
I don't notice that our lawn looks like a junkyard, but I
do now. Car fenders, pipes, engines, seats, dented doors,
and an old washing machine litter the ground like body
parts instead of invention resources. Dad left his insurance
business in Wyoming, and now he's an odd-job-man-plus-
inventor in Ohio.

After a minute, Lizzy comes out of the house, her hair
shinier than a horse's flaxen tail in a streak of sunlight. My
little sis's freckle-free face is a head higher than my freckled
one. Her favorite lizard, Larry, a blue-bellied fence lizard,
crawls from her shoulder to her neck. She waves a County
Fair program with Matt Brody and "Matt's champion,
Champion" on the front. "Shops in Ashland are handing
them out. Pat has a giant poster in Pat's Pets. That's the
horse you have to fix, right?"

"Yes, Lizzy. Only I don't even know what's wrong with him."

Lizzy finger-pets her lizard. "Well, I think you're about to find out." She nods to the dust clouds stirred up in our lane. A black horse trailer with "Brody Family Barrel Racers" on the side appears. My stomach rears, then bucks.

Lizzy squeezes my hand, and it reminds me that God is holding my right hand. Larry jumps down and does his crazy walk into the weeds. "Larry!" Lizzy chases after him, muttering words that I know are prayers for Larry and me.

Matt Brody steps out of the trailer, looking exactly like his picture. If he were a horse, he'd be a muscular Quarter Horse. I recognize his parents from *Horse Magazine*. Mrs. Brody would be a Welsh pony, short as me.

Mr. Brody, slightly bowlegged, shuffles up and tips his cowboy hat. He holds out his hand, and I stumble trying to shake it. "Is Winnie Willis home?" he asks. I open my mouth. Nothing comes out. He clears his throat. "The one who gentles horses, fixes their troubles without meanness?"

"I'm Winnie. I get that a lot. People don't expect a kid."

Note to self: *Did I mention that I should have said, "No thanks"?*

Matt's mother joins his dad. "Grant's mother didn't say you were younger than Matt. She just said Winnie worked wonders with their barrel racer."

"Eager Star was one of my first horse clients in Ashland." At least now I know why they came here.

Dad strolls out of the house, and I'm so grateful I almost run into his arms. "Dad, these are the Brodys. They

wanted me to help their barrel racer but didn't know I was young."

"Oh, barrel racing! That sounds like fun." Dad slips on his wrist what looks like a fat bracelet but is almost an unlosable-TV-remote invention.

"What's that on your wrist, Mr. Willis?" Mr. Brody walks over to see, and then so does his wife.

That leaves Matt . . . and me.

To be continued . . .



Lassoing the Truth

In the story, Winnie is anxious about training a famous horse for a famous family. When she reads her Treasure Verse, she tries to imagine God holding her hand. But her anxious thoughts return when her clients arrive. Like Winnie, do you ever feel anxious or nervous around people you consider big deals—people who seem more popular or successful than you are? Remember that you walk every step with the biggest deal, the God of the universe, the Creator of everything. He loves you, delights in you, and wants to hold your hand. Put your confidence in Jesus, and hold tight to God's hand.

Whoa! 

Is there anything you're facing now that you don't think you can pull off? Do you get anxious or nervous around certain people? Journal how you feel during those times of stress. How could it help to "hold God's hand"? What would that look like?

Father, thank you for the amazing truth that you hold my hand and want to help me! Please remind me of that when I'm scared or anxious.

Giddyup! 

Write today's Treasure Verse on a purple card, putting your name in place of Winnie's. If you need help, flip back to pages xiv and xv for ideas on making a Treasure Box. Here's today's verse:

I hold you by your right hand, _____
I, the LORD your God.
And I say to you, _____,
"Don't be afraid. I am here to help you."
Isaiah 41:13