



The Unicorn in the Barn

Jacqueline K. Ogburn, Rebecca Green (Illustrations)

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For years people have claimed to see a mysterious white deer in the woods around Chinaberry Creek. It always gets away.

One evening, Eric Harper thinks he spots it. But a deer doesn't have a coat that shimmers like a pearl. And a deer certainly isn't born with an ivory horn curling from its forehead.

When Eric discovers the unicorn is hurt and being taken care of by the vet next door and her daughter, Allegra, his life is transformed.

A tender tale of love, loss, and the connections we make, *The Unicorn in the Barn* shows us that sometimes ordinary life takes extraordinary turns.

The Unicorn in the Barn Details

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Author : Jacqueline K. Ogburn , Rebecca Green (Illustrations)

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From Reader Review The Unicorn in the Barn for online ebook

Li'l Owl says

Harper's woods around Chinaberry Creek have belonged to Eric's family for as long as he can remember. His grandma lived in the farmhouse next door until she couldn't live at home anymore and had to move to a nursing home.

Now strangers live there.

Eric goes with his father and older brother to see his grandma every Sunday but it's not the same as when he could visit her at the farmhouse every day and he misses her so very much.

For years, people in Chinaberry have claimed that they've seen a white deer in the woods but no one has ever caught it.

One evening while in his tree house, he thinks he sees it.

It came closer to the tree house, moving slowly. My eyes had adjusted to the moonlight.

It wasn't a deer.

White and glowing, with slender legs and a long curved neck, at first I thought it was a pony. Then it raised its head and I knew. Ponies don't have coats that shimmer like a pearl. And there's never been a pony born with an ivory horn curling from the center of its forehead.

It was a unicorn.

It was the most beautiful thing I've ever seen.

What he notices next is that the unicorn is hurt. Following it, he discovers that it's gone into his grandma's old barn and a lady is there, too. When the lady catches him peaking through the window she invites him in. She tells him that her name is Dr. Brancusi, that she's a veterinarian, and she and her daughter, Allegra, are the new owners of the farm which is now a new veterinary hospital. She begins examining the unicorn's hoof, finding that the unicorn is a female and she has an infection in her hoof that will need care. She asks Eric if he can hold the unicorn's head while Allegra helps her treat the injury. Allegra is none too happy about this but her mom has decided to trust Eric with their secret. He does such a good job helping with the unicorn that Dr. Brancusi gives him a job looking after the unicorn and helping out at clinic. Eric and Allegra name the unicorn Moonpearl and he loves looking after her. But Eric still misses his grandma and wants more than anything for her to get well and move back home. When Eric and Allegra discover that Moonpearl's hair has magical healing powers they secretly use the hair on his grandma in the hopes of making her well again. But will it work?

The Unicorn in the Barn is a creative, magical, emotional story about friendship, trust, hope, love and loss that's beautifully written with characters who are both endearing and full of life. I loved every minute. I highly recommend it no matter how old you are.

Ms. Kelly says

This is a very sweet and gentle read for younger fans not ready for the intensity of Harry Potter level fantasy, or for older fans looking for something soft to soothe their jaded aches.

Something I heard an ex-boyfriends father say many years ago came back to me when I read this book:
People are meant to be used, but never abused.

By that, he meant that people have talents which you should use. You allow them to use. But you don't ever take advantage of them. The main characters learn this lesson in a very subtle way.

Overall, the word I have for this book is *sweet* so I said it multiple times. And that, is that.

Recommended for ages 7+

Karissa says

My 10 yr old son got this in one of this OwlCrate Jr and refused to read it because it looked too childish. This does end up looking like more of a kids book than a book aimed at middle grade readers. The print is very large and there are pictures throughout. I however don't mind larger print :-) so I went ahead and read the book. This ends up being a cute and touching story about a boy who is dealing with his gma's decline when he stumbles across something amazing in the barn that a veterinarian has purchased from his gma.

I really enjoyed the idea of a veterinarian that takes care of mythical beasts in her small town barn. I loved how Eric finds his place in life by helping to care for these amazing creatures. This is a deliberately paced story that has a very simple plot and simple language but it's a good book for what it is.

Much of the story is focused around Eric's family dynamics. The whole family is struggling with the decline of Eric's gma. Eric's gma held the family together after Eric's mother left (for somewhat ambiguous reasons). Now it's Eric, his teenage brother, and his dad holding things together. None of these guys are very emotionally demonstrative and Eric is struggling with how to move on now that his gma isn't there but is in a nursing home struggling with her health.

When Eric starts spending a lot of time with the neighboring vet and her daughter, Allegra, the two families end up helping to support each other.

The drawings throughout are really well done and I enjoyed them as well.

Overall this was a cute story, that is touching and heartfelt. I enjoyed it. However I do agree with my son, this is definitely intended for a younger audience. Although the main character in the book is 11 years old, the story is very simple both in the language structure used and the plot developed. I would recommend for younger middle grade readers or even younger children.

Steph says

I love so much about this sweet little chapter book.

Just a few gripes:

My biggest issue with the story is that Eric's brother seems to be written as an inconsistent character. A kind soul who loves his Grandma and spending his days cooking, or a bad boy who taunts his brother and whose friends like to use guns?

I also didn't fall in love with Eric himself. I felt like he always had his own agenda and didn't respect authority all that much.

That all being said...

The unicorn? The magic? The grandma? Allegra? The doctor and her huge heart? I love them all.

Lorilin says

I read this one with my second grader. We both enjoyed it, but I think I liked it more than he did. He enjoyed the magical elements of the story, and that there were a lot of animals ("like Charlotte's Web," he said). But he thought some parts were sad (they were), and sometimes he wished the story moved a little faster.

I actually thought the pace of the story was perfect. And I appreciated how the book dealt with some more serious topics like aging, death, birth, and finding contentment and connection after loss--but still had an uplifting ending. The friendship between Eric and Allegra was very sweet, too, and one of my favorite things about the book.

Overall, I think this is a solid book for a younger reader. It's interesting, thoughtful, and optimistic.

Ronny says

t'was very good :)

Danielle says

This was such a sweet story. ??

Mischenko says

Read my interview with the author and my full review @ <https://readrantrockandroll.com/2017/...>

Have you ever seen a Unicorn? Eric has, and now his life may be changed forever.

Eric's grandmother isn't well and has been put into a nursing home. Her house is now being occupied by someone new, a girl named Allegra, and her mother, a veterinarian. One day, Eric stumbles upon Allegra pounding in a "No Trespassing" sign on the tree where his treehouse resides: his favorite place to be. They don't seem to like each other, but Eric doesn't know yet that Allegra may not be as awful as she seems.

As Eric spends more time around the woods and farmhouse, he begins to discover magical creatures, including a white and glowing animal he first thinks is a pony. Soon, he realizes this beautiful pony-like animal is a unicorn: the most beautiful thing he's ever seen. He soon observes that she's living in the old barn near the farmhouse which has been converted into a vet practice by Allegra's mother. The unicorn was meant to remain a secret, but Eric is inquisitive and must find out everything he can about this magnificent creature.

We absolutely loved all the magical creatures in the book, especially Moonpearl, the majestic unicorn. The talking animals reminded us of another favorite children's story-*Charlotte's Web*. The human characters are memorable and even though it's an imaginary story, it felt real. The relationship between Eric and his grandmother is heartwarming and we admired how Eric and Allegra's friendship developed over time.

There were a few events in the book that we needed to stop and discuss that dealt with loss and mourning and not everything unfolded the way we wanted it to. Overall, this story was beautiful and something I would've loved reading as a child. We fell in love with all of the illustrations and found ourselves wanting more. My kids did enjoy it and I'm happy to have it as part of our home library.

My rating on this book is 5*****

Age Range: 10 - 12 years

Grade Level: 5 - 7

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Miranda Paris says

There's a definite audience for this book. Interesting approach, very calm and a nice read.

Hafsa Sabira says

Probably a great book for the 3rd graders.

Ms. Yingling says

E ARC from Edelweiss Above the Treeline

Eric Harper is irritated when he sees a "No Trespassing" sign on his treehouse. He knows that his father had to sell his grandmother's house and some of their land to pay for her nursing home, but the treehouse is still his. He meets the new occupant of the house, Allegra Brancusi, who is living there with her mother, who is running a veterinary practice there. He also sees a shimmering white horse that appears to be hurt... but it turns out to be a real, live unicorn. Very matter-of-factly, Dr. Brancusi explains to Eric that she has a number of magical creatures under her care, and since it's hard to find people she can trust to work with the animals, she asks Eric to come and work for her. This job consists mainly of scooping unicorn poop, but Eric feels

better just being around Moonpearl. Things are somewhat difficult at home. His mother died when he was young, his older brother is busy being a teenager, his father is very gruff and seems overburdened, and Eric misses his grandmother. He visits her once a week, but it's not the same as having her nearby. After his grandmother picks a few unicorn hairs off of his jacket, Eric notices that her arthritic hand seems improved. He knows that Moonpearl's magic can heal people, but since the unicorn is pregnant with twins, Dr. Brancusi doesn't want to take any chances with her health. As the fall turns to winter, Eric must deal with his grandmother's declining health, and he and Allegra become friends while tending to the animals.

Strengths: This was delightful! I would have adored this when I was in upper elementary school. There is a pregnant unicorn, for heaven's sake! And a talking Cheshire cat! Eric's relationship with his grandmother was very sweet, and while this was sad, it wasn't hand-wringingly soppy. I liked how Allegra, Dr. Brancusi and Eric all worked together to help Moonpearl, and I thought the twist at the end of the story was a nice touch. I almost didn't read this one because it looked twee, but it ended up being a book I can easily hand to any of my students who want magical realism.

Weaknesses: I wanted Moonpearl to heal Eric's grandmother as much as he did, but even in fantasy books, that's not necessarily what happens.

What I really think: I think this begs for a party. Who knew there was a unicorn-themed food trend?

Rachel Libke says

This was the sweetest, most beautiful book I've read in a long time <3

Christina says

I was lucky enough to hear the author speak at a bookstore recently and have her sign a copy I bought there.

I adore magical creatures, so how could I not love Moonpearl, the beautiful unicorn? And the illustrations by Rebecca Green are fanastic.

This was such a sweet story with very touching moments. I may not be a kid anymore, but my grandma is in a nursing home. Those parts about the visits were very realistic.

Jenny says

This book completely surprised me. I read it in one sitting, and it is one the cutest damn books I've ever read! This is perfect for grade school kids, or us older kids who want some nostalgia from their own childhoods.

Anyone here a fan of *Charlotte's Web*? This book had that same feeling, and a lot of the same kind of messages. While a very unique and fun story on its own, I kept thinking of my joy of reading about Charlotte, Fern and Wilbur for the first time as I was reading this story. *Charlotte's Web* is one of my favorite childhood books ever. And I really hope this book makes it into the hands of many, many school-age kids so they can have a similar experience to what I did.

I can't recommend this one enough. Read it!

Paula says

My last summer read of 2018 was a sweet realistic fantasy that warmed my heart. Eric's Family has to sell off part of their farm after his grandmother had a stroke and moved to a nursing home. The woman who bought it is a Veterinarian, and her daughter helps her take care of the animals. But Eric soon realizes it's not just traditional animals in their care, but magical creatures, including a unicorn pregnant with twins. Since Eric knows their secret, they hire him to helping out. But as his grandmother's health continues to decline Eric wonders if the magical healing powers of the unicorn could save her. Lots of twists and turns and emotional events make this story hard to put down. An MSBA nominee for 2018-19.
