



## WONDER AND BEAUTY

### My Journey from Heartbreak to Healing through the Wonder of Horses

by Charla Miller

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A reflective account of finding purpose in pain and recovering from a special kind of heartache.

In this debut memoir, Miller begins her story four years after the traumatic experience of losing her only son after a very tiring legal custody battle. She says that she was forced to rediscover her identity and begin her life anew, so she underwent a variety of therapies as she worked to overcome feelings of loss, guilt, and fear. Despite its subtitle, the book covers the topic of equine therapy in just a few pages; in this section, Miller details a few therapeutic experiences she had with horses, as well as general lessons of inspiration she gleaned from their loving natures and simple lifestyles. The remainder of the book discusses her other methods of healing, such as reading and viewing inspiring books and films, reaching out to her son via her blog, traveling to New Mexico for a personal retreat and support group, and participating in yoga. She also says that she listened to the spirit within her that told her to never give up, as well as to what she interpreted as “messages, dreams, and whispers of thoughts” from her son. Miller’s tone throughout this memoir is sincere, and the text flows easily as she coherently expresses her ideas. The uniqueness of her ordeal of “parental alienation” gives this book a slight edge over other personal-healing memoirs, although avid readers of the genre may find little that’s new or different here. Also, Miller doesn’t provide many concrete details about the custody battle itself; although they might have been difficult to include, due to their personal nature, they might have shed significant light on her situation, built trust with readers, and added depth and clarity to her accounts of healing. That said, this story could inspire other readers to undergo necessary work toward recovery.

A typical memoir of personal healing that addresses an atypical kind of trauma.