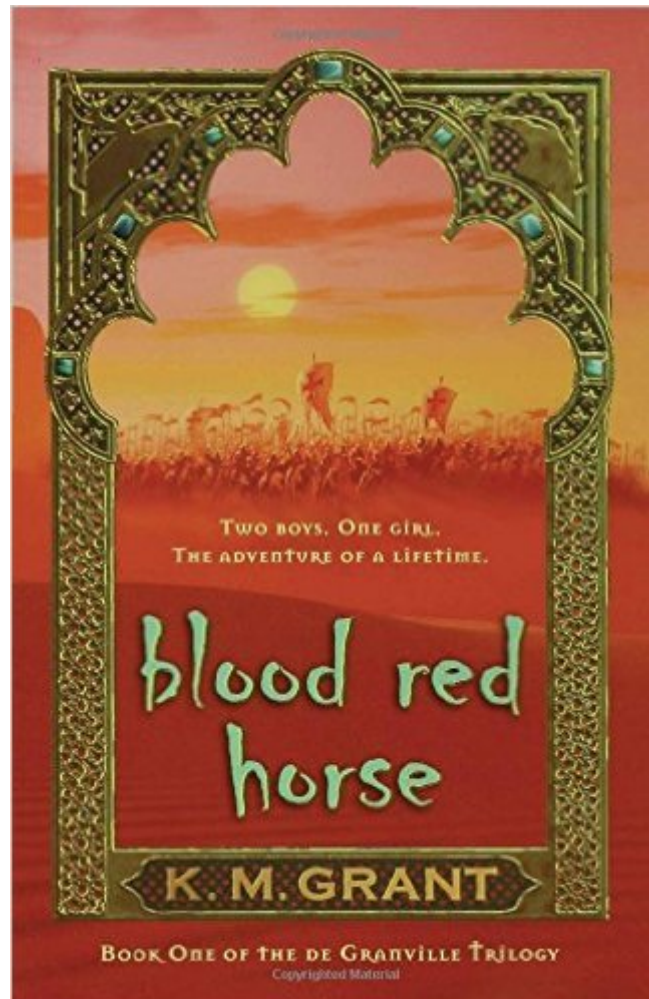


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Blood Red Horse (The DeGranville Triliogy)



Synopsis

You need three things to become a brave and noble knight: A warhorse. A fair maiden. A just cause. Will has a horse-a small chestnut stallion with a white blaze in his brow. Ellie is a fair maiden, but she's supposed to marry Will's older brother, Gavin. And as for the cause, King Richard is calling for a Crusade. The Knights of England must go to the Holy Land to fight. Will and Gavin will go. Blood will be shed. Lives will be taken. But through it all, two things will be constant-Ellie, and a blood-red horse called Hosanna. . . .

Book Information

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Average Customer Review: 4.1 out of 5 starsÂ Â See all reviewsÂ (47 customer reviews)

Best Sellers Rank: #112,395 in Books (See Top 100 in Books) #51 inÂ Books > Teens > Historical Fiction > Medieval #102 inÂ Books > Teens > Historical Fiction > Europe #1735 inÂ Books > Teens > Literature & Fiction > Action & Adventure

Customer Reviews

I was excited about this book initially, but unfortunately such great potential was never truly realized. The story and action were mainly glossed over, saving the most time and attention for displaying the static perfection of Will and his horse, Hosanna. Will is, at very best, a very boring male Mary Sue, who makes the right decisions and serves as the story's moral focus through the horrible climate of the Crusades. His horse is essentially an equine version of him, and while they go through their trials and tribulations, rest assured that they do it with a little too much dignity and divine favor. There was so little character growth for Will that he never grabbed my attention, as how could he? Perfection is never interesting. After a while, I couldn't help favoring Gavin, the flawed older brother, Will's foil. Mostly, Gavin is a collection of dishonorable mistakes and human reaction to war, but in this book it's displayed in a way that is less than desirable. You're supposed to love Will, but Gavin

showed the sparks of personality, and it would be expected given that almost every major plot point affected him, whereas Will kept skipping along, perfect as ever, totally annoying, praising his horse like he's second only to God. Then there's Kamil, the Muslim version of Will. Sure, his attitude is blood thirsty through most of the novel, but with a little trial and error Kamil turns out to rival Will's squeaky clean boredom by the end. A weird historical novel, probably a little too politically correct (A Christian knight randomly asking a Muslim enemy where Mecca is in order to pray for the life of a horse in the middle of a battlefield? Is this at all likely?), and very two dimensional.

I had been looking forward to this book - despite reading about it in one of the most scathing newspaper reviews I've ever read. I'm glad that I did read it, because I have come to the conclusion that the reviewer was most unfair. It suggested that this book was written as some kind of comment on parallel wars being fought in recent times. Knowing the timescales involved in writing and publishing, I knew this was impossible - but I was curious to see what kind of slant the author had put on the history of the Crusades. I was pleasantly surprised to find that the view presented was impartial and balanced. We learn about this historical event from both sides: from King Richard and his men as well as the Sultan and his Saracen army. The story is well written and has a definite sense of period - yet without resorting to 'olde worlde' dialogue that would swiftly weary the reader. The three main characters: Will, Gavin and Ellie, are well drawn and have real depth. The reader follows their growth from children to young adults. As they age it becomes ever clearer that there is a romantic triangle of sorts here - Ellie is clearly attached to Will, yet must marry Gavin the oldest. How their emotional stories progress (whilst together and far apart) really holds the story together. Despite its merits, I felt the story had a few flaws that kept it from being a truly perfect children's novel. It seemed to have a very slow start; on a number of occasions whilst reading the first few chapters I was half-tempted to abandon the book, as it seemed rather pedestrian and dull. I also found the earlier segments about the Sultan and his son distracted me from the story of the three main protagonists, and felt tempted to skip them.

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