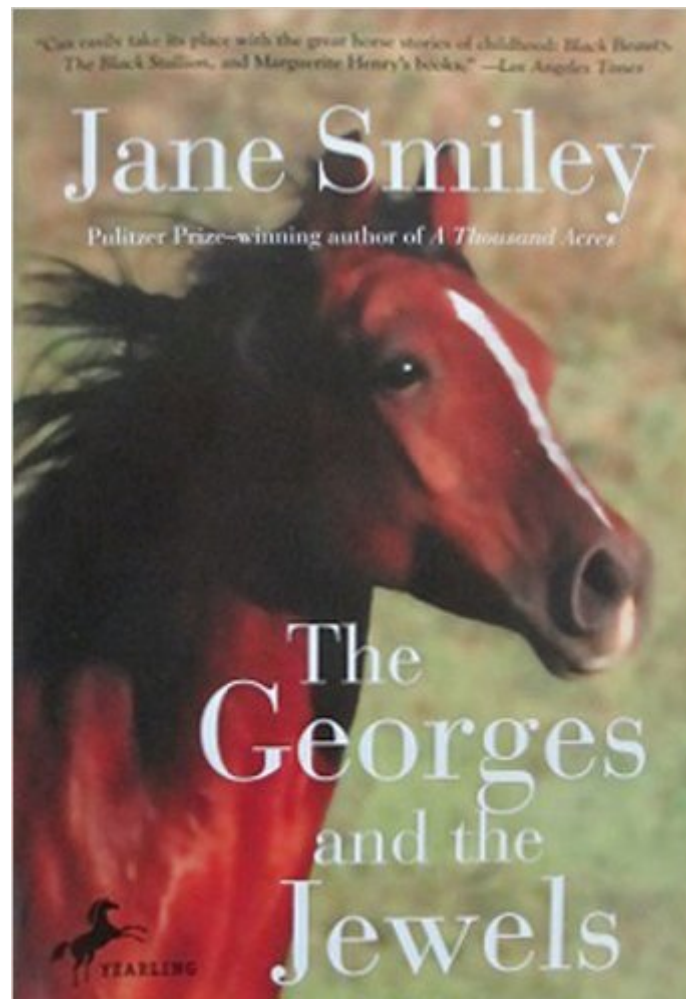


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# The Georges And The Jewels: Book One Of The Horses Of Oak Valley Ranch



## Synopsis

A Pulitzer Prize winner makes her debut for young readers. Abby Lovitt has been riding horses for as long as she can remember, but Daddy hasn't let her name a single one. He calls all their geldings George and their mares Jewel and warns her not to get attached. The horses are there on the ranch to be sold, plain and simple. But with all the stress at school (the Big Four "Linda, Mary A., Mary N., Joan" have turned against her) and home (nothing feels right with her brother, Danny, gone), Abby can't help but seek comfort in the Georges and the Jewels, who greet her every day with soft nickers. Except for one: the horse who won't meet her gaze, the horse who bucks her off, the horse Daddy insists she ride and train. Abby knows not to cross her father, but she knows, too, that she can't get back on Ornerly George. And suddenly the horses seem like no refuge at all. From Pulitzer Prize winner Jane Smiley comes an emotionally charged and action-filled novel for young readers, set in the vibrant landscape of 1960s California horse country.

## Book Information

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Average Customer Review: 4.3 out of 5 stars See all reviews (47 customer reviews)

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## Customer Reviews

This wonderful novel takes place in the 1960s, when the main character, Abby Lovitt, is in the seventh grade. She lives with her strict but loving parents on their small California horse ranch. The family business consists of buying horses at low prices, getting them healthy and handsome, training them so well that they can claim "a little girl can ride him," and then selling them for a profit. They never keep a horse longer than necessary, as it means money wasted on food. Abby's father came up with a rule that they name all the male horses George and all the female horses Jewel, so as not to get attached to them. Abby isn't thrilled with this, and sometimes secretly names the

horses something special. Abby has been helping to train the horses for a long time, and even more so since her older brother, Danny, got kicked out of the house after a huge fight with their dad. She loves this responsibility, and is quite a talented rider and trainer. Rarely does she encounter a problem that she can't handle --- until she meets Ornerly George. Ornerly George and Abby can't seem to communicate, and most of the time he ends up bucking her off, despite her excellent riding skills. The only thing the two can agree on is that he will do what he wants and she will let him. She is so upset with him that she dares to stand up to her father and refuses to get on the horse. But then one day an unusual stranger named Jem Jarrow stops by to look at Ornerly George. He begins teaching Abby another way to communicate with horses, a method that Ornerly George understands. This new communication even opens up new possibilities between Abby and her father. THE GEORGES AND THE JEWELS is Pulitzer Prize winner Jane Smiley's first novel for young readers.

This book was so perfectly right for me, that I originally felt I couldn't judge it objectively. So, first I gave it to my daughter who is just starting to ride. And, then I gave it to my mother who was never bitten by the horse bug. We all absolutely loved it. It is a wonderful book that while just right for a nine year old, has the ability to appeal to children and adults alike. I would recommend it to people of any age and with varying degrees of interest in horses. It is that good. It is the story of a 7th grade girl named Abby growing up in 1960's California horse country. She helps her father train horses so that he can claim, "Kid's Horse for Sale." There are several great story lines that come together in this fast read to make us truly feel for Abby. A central theme is Abby's evolving relationship with a particularly difficult horse, that continues to throw her off. Through the course of the book we see various adults interact with the horse with mixed success, and eventually are able to witness a coming around thanks to a horse whisperer. The horse training details are simultaneously specific, graphic and enlightening. Most of all, it is particularly nice to witness it through the frank eyes of a young girl. At the same time, Abby is growing up in a born-again Christian household where she is faced with the challenges of having her family's beliefs conflict with the things she is learning at school as well as the estrangement of her brother. This element of the book is important to the development of Abby's character, but is not overly described and is consistently presented without judgment. I wondered if Violet would ask questions about this religious component, but she didn't.

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