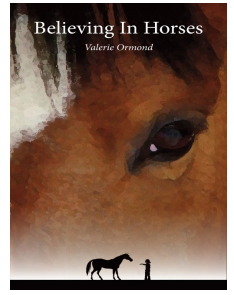


# Believing In Horses

## DISCUSSION SUGGESTIONS

### Chapter One



1. Why might moving to a new place be stressful for anyone, but particularly, Sadie?
2. Have you ever moved to a different state? (Circle)      Yes      No
3. What is your opinion of the philosophical belief that “learning never ends?”
4. Why was the “chauffeur arrangement” ideal for both Austin and Sadie? Describe their relationship.
5. Judge the author’s word choices describing “Austin’s ‘guard dog’ aura.”
6. Describe your “first impressions” of Rachel. Be sure to include text support in your response.
7. The author uses the literary technique of *foreshadowing* in this expositional chapter, especially at the end. Record your predictions and relate them to **any** evidence the author provides.
8. ➡ Construct a Thinking Map to illustrate the setting, characters, etc. revealed in the first five pages of the novel.



READING ROUND-UP: Select *at least one response* you wish to share with your group. Please continue an ongoing dialogue about your predictions for upcoming action in the text during your literary discussions.

### Chapters 2 - 4

1. Interpret the simile “cool as a cucumber.”
2. Compose a sentence changing the simile into a metaphor.
3. List the meanings behind the statement on page 17, “There’s a whole lot more to horses than the riding.”
4. Draw and complete a Pros and Cons T-Chart regarding Sadie’s Decision-Making Process about the Marlboro Horse Ranch.
5. Evaluate Sadie’s beliefs that her parents had been right about exploring her options. Evaluate the statement.
6. Develop criteria for *your* “perfect” animal. Describe your relationship with this partner.
7. To Sadie, horses are huggable creatures. Would you ever hug a horse? (Circle) Yes/No    Have you? Yes/No
8. Elaborate on your feelings about horses (love, fear, ambivalence?).
9. Why was Sadie disturbed during her Internet auction searches? Would you be disturbed?
10. ➡ Using text support, and a separate piece of paper, describe your first impressions of Grandma Collins.
11. Analyze the metaphor “... she had the real woolen thread.”
12. List Grandma Collins’ simple horseback riding rules. Circle your favorite.
13. What does Sadie mean when she says “Grandma wasn’t exactly playing hard to get as the buyer”?

14. Now that Sadie has her horse, Lucky, can you recall what she had done to earn this reward?
15. In your judgment, is this a fair reward? What would you ask for as a reward? Why?
16. Explain why “hatched a plan” is a metaphor.
17. Imagine what Sadie’s email address could signify.
18. Design and explain another moniker for Sadie.
19. Grandma says Lucky is “more like 16 hands high.” Convert that number to an estimate in feet.
20. Sadie brings up the concept of *gratitude* frequently. List a few of the things for which **she** is grateful. Then complete a “Gratitude Journal” listing things for which **you** are grateful *today*.
21. Can you infer what Sadie means when she thinks, “Please don’t eat the flowers and the trees?”
22. Many breeds and types of horses have already been mentioned in the book. Complete a list OR begin the “Breed Brood” Activity Sheet and utilize the note-taking device throughout the reading.
23. Once again, the author concludes the chapter on page 40 with a hint of foreshadowing. Record your predictions.



READING ROUND-UP: Select *at least four* responses you wish to share during your literary discussion.

As a group, compile a list of questions similar to those that Sadie might have emailed to Mrs. Groen. Include an introduction that exemplifies Sadie’s positive character traits as well. **Discussion Detectives:** The “kernel” for the book’s idea is revealed in Chapter Four. As a group, try to “pop” this breakthrough!

## 🌀 Chapters 5 & 6 🌀

1. ➡ Sketch a Thinking Map to sequence the steps Sadie takes to give Lucky the “grooming of a lifetime” on a separate piece of paper. Consider asking someone to help you.
2. Locate and explain the simile the author uses about Lucky’s coat on page 43.
3. Sadie “carefully moved her hand down Lucky’s front leg...” Defend her action.
4. Where is a horse’s blind spot?
5. Sadie is a problem solver. Distinguish what kind of character traits a solution finder would need.
6. Circle ONE of the above character traits with which YOU are still making progress and “Troubleshoot.”
7. ➡ Use another sheet of paper to compose an interior monologue *for Lucky* as he goes through the groundwork in the indoor arena. Remember to keep the entire writing from the horse’s perspective.
8. What conclusions can you draw from Sadie’s tearful, “...he may never see me ride him” outburst?
9. Evaluate Jessi’s experience as a horse instructor. Be sure to address *trust* and *respect*.
10. Apply a personal connection to the remark, “He may forget all about this lesson tomorrow, if he wants to.”
11. Critique Sadie’s decision to ignore her *gut feelings* and say, “Sure” to Jimmy on page 51.
12. In your opinion, what is the one key sentence that is in the “falling action” of Chapter 5? Explain.

13. Propose a theory as to why Austin was willing to be “dragged to the barn” by Sadie.

14. React to Austin’s question, “Time for me to go now?”



READING ROUND-UP: Select *a couple of responses* you wish to share. Include in your Literary Circle an analysis of the relationship between Sadie and her brother and the group’s reaction to the “sign” revealed in this pinnacle chapter.

## 🌀 Chapters 7 - 9 🌀

1. Compare the “patience, consistency, trust and respect” of a rider and horse to that of teacher and student and/or child and parent.
2. Why do you believe Dad was choking back tears on page 60?
3. Examine Sadie’s protective act of both her own and Dad’s emotions?
4. Casey and Jimmy approach Mr. Navarro’s deployment differently with Sadie. Which is better and why?
5. On page 65 Sadie warns Lucky about the auctions. Record your reactions/conclusions?
6. Where and when does the gruff voice tells Sadie the next auction will be?
7. 📖 Summarize “The Encounter” on a separate piece of paper.
8. The doctor mentions “a good sense of purpose.” What is yours?
9. Brainstorm a list of possible interview questions Sadie could pose to Mrs. Heritage.
10. 📖 Devise and complete a Thinking Map detailing all of the work related to the horse rescue operation described in Chapter 8. Use a separate piece of paper.
11. Relate an incident when you felt like the metaphor the author uses on page 80 about Sadie’s heart.
12. Do you think Sadie’s mother knows of Lucky’s markings? Why or why not?
13. Sadie transforms herself into “Sadie the Horse Saver.” What would *your* “Hero” name be and why?
14. 📖 Sadie admires Mel. Write a persuasive paragraph on a separate piece of paper about a person you would nominate for being a “Hometown Hero.” Consider sharing your writing with your nominee.
15. Did the presentation of a gift for Mrs. Heritage surprise you? Why or why not? Elaborate on what this gesture tells you about the Navarros. Predict what you think the small gift might have been in your response.



READING ROUND-UP: Select *three responses* you wish to share. In Chapter 9 Sadie offers a “cooperative solution.” So, in cooperative groups assess Sadie’s presentation.

## 🌀 Chapters 10 & 11 🌀

1. The author confides to the reader that Sadie does her best thinking while riding at the barn. How about you?
2. Give your opinion of the author’s literary decision to create Lucky’s ability to Speed Dial.

3. Identify which genre this novel is for Mrs. Hawkins. Circle all that apply:  
 a) Nonfiction      b) Fiction      c) Narrative      d) Expository      e) None of These
4. Elaborate upon which “Point of View” this tale is told.
5. Justify the gentleman’s metaphor that horses are athletes.
6. 📖 The Mystery Filly and Mrs. Hawkins are introduced in this section. Once again the author entices her audience with just enough details in hopes that they will come to care about characters and envision their thoughts and emotions. On a separate sheet of paper solve the “Mystery Feelings” you believe Mrs. Hawkins felt after her research adventure with Sadie.
7. Ms. Clarke gives Sadie the nickname of “Moxie.” Reconstruct names for at least three other characters and defend your choices. Finally, supply a nickname for yourself as well!
8. Sadie regrets sounding so kid-like. She seems to be constantly self-actualizing. Characterize this trait and provide examples from the book and your own observations.
9. What was your reaction to Sadie’s offer of Grandma Collins’s hair clip?
10. Predict the result of the “Deal” and whether Mrs. Clarke will eventually wear the gift.
11. Draw a cartoon to illustrate Sadie’s “easel.” Be sure to include a speech bubble or caption.
12. In Chapter Eleven *persistence* is a theme. Compare this text and the tale of Hercules.



READING ROUND-UP: Select *three responses* you wish to share. Chapter 11 concludes, “Halfway there....” Now that **you** are about halfway finished enjoying the novel, judge the *Author’s Craft*, thus far, during your literary discussion group.

## 🌀Chapter 12 & 13 🌀

1. Have you ever been in a classroom like Mr. Edwards? Explain/Describe.
2. Design your “ideal” classroom.
3. Develop ideas to include in the delegate’s draft reflecting how Sadie’s mission might affect the Maryland horse industry. (p. 113)
4. Do you believe Mr. Edwards’ patriotic sincerity on page 113? Why or why not?
5. In what manner does Mr. Edwards command respect from his students?
6. Formulate how you think Mr. Edwards supports his students including Sadie?
7. Did you have any prior knowledge of the unwanted horse problem before reading this book? If so, how?
8. Sadie knows Mr. Edwards is going out of his way for her cause. Reflect on what this says about his character.
9. Explain the horse *pun* on page 117 after the “enthusiastic outburst.”
10. “Horse around” and create your own horse pun.
11. Tell why *calling* the MHC on a Friday afternoon might be the most advantageous choice.
12. 📖 Outline the events that transpired during the meeting with Delegate Bragg on a separate paper.

13. In your view, is Sadie “pushing” the pair of ponies on the delegate?

14. Why would Mr. Edwards cherish Ms. Bragg’s gift?



READING ROUND-UP: Select *three responses* you wish to share. Discuss/Develop a criteria list for an “outstanding” citizen.

## 🌀 Chapters 14 - 16 🌀

1. Examine why Mrs. McGlade might stir jealousy in Sadie.

2. React to Austin’s appearing “on cue” on page 129.

3. Page 130 notes “...but that doesn’t mean they don’t have a purpose in life.” What do you believe is the author’s rationale behind the word choice of **don’t**, instead of **can’t**, for example, in this statement?

4. Can you surmise what the qualifications of a “great” companion horse may be?

5. On page 132 “Sadie had to shrug it off...” Relate a personal connection with this coping technique.

6. Compare/Contrast yourself to Sadie’s lack of interest in being “the center of attention.”

7. Predict how the characters’ “luck was indeed about to change” at the end of Chapter 14.

8. 🗨️ Write a dialogue between you and one of the characters in the book reacting to the words: “The last home was found.”

9. Sadie is a continual learner, but what learning does she refer to at the end of Chapter 15?

10. Using context clues and prior knowledge describe what “equitation skills” might include.

11. Excitement surrounds Sadie and yet she feels a twinge of loneliness. Can you imagine why?

12. Indicate on a **plot diagram** where the events of Chapter 16 would be located.



READING ROUND-UP: Select *three responses* you wish to share. As a group, compile a list of objectives (The 5 W’s, etc.) similar to those that the family would have drafted for “OPERATION RESCUE WATCH.” Talk about the various *gifts* Sadie appreciates and the diverse ways in which they have come to her.

## 🌀 Chapters 17 - 19 🌀

1. Explain the literary technique does the author use to immediately set the tone for Chapter 17?

2. How are the branches personified on page 153? Compose your own phrases using personification.

3. Identify the tone and cite examples found in the first half of the Chapter; “Trouble Calls.”

4. Pinpoint the climactic event in Chapter 17 that the author foreshadowed for the reader. Explain the reference(s), too.

5. On page 160 Sadie realizes she had a “tone” and apologizes to her mother. Interpret her next action(s).

6. Elaborate upon the metaphor, “He was the calm in the storm.”

7. What is Mom’s explanation of EEI?

8. Decide whether you *would* or *would not* be insulted by someone “looking for holes” in your plan(s)?

9. Describe a time when you, like Sadie, were reminded, “that simple words can have a lasting effect.”
10. What does Sergeant Lucero mean when he says he knows where Sadie gets *some* her courage?
11. Retell how the students at Willis Elementary School support Sadie’s and her cause.



READING ROUND-UP: Select *three responses* you wish to share. As a group, compile a list of objectives (Who, What, When, etc.) similar to those that the family would have drafted for “OPERATION RESCUE WATCH.”

## ❧ Chapters 20 - 22 ❧

1. Communication is a recurring theme in this novel. What is Austin communicating when he rolls his eyes and what *type* of communication is it? List other examples of this type of communication found in the novel.
2. Express your feelings as a reader when Sadie discovered Mrs. Hawkins and Mr. Edwards saving the seats at the auction. How about Mr. Edwards’ gift?
3. Conclude why horses at auctions might be drugged.
4. Was your “hairclip prediction” correct? Have your perceptions changed from then to the end of the auction?
5. React to Sadie’s extreme emotion on page 194.
6. Describe your own emotions when Goliath was sold. And on page 195?
7. The author reveals something that nauseates Sadie about the auctions. What is it?
8. You were asked earlier if you would you ever hug a horse. Would you hug Goliath, now? (Circle) Explain.
9. Can you infer why Vixen was led, not ridden?
10. Explain the analogy, “So, this was a Triple Crown win.”
11. “Grandma Collins loved suspense.” Based on that, do you believe she would love this book? Do you?
12. If the author is once again using foreshadowing, predict what might happen to the squadron in Afghanistan?
13. Explore the idea of symbolism when Lucky “played with the phone with his nose.”
14. 🗨️ At the end of the book Sadie takes time to reflect. Record some of your reflections as the reader on a separate piece of paper.
15. 🗨️ Have you learned more about beliefs and horses after reading this novel? What did you learn about Maryland? Finally, did you learn more about yourself? Put your thoughtful response on another sheet of paper.



READING ROUND-UP: Select *at least three responses* that you wish to share. As a group, discuss each reader’s reflections. Finally, make predictions about what Sadie’s life might entail in the future.

