



## The Rocking Horse

*Gloria Zachgo*

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## **The Rocking Horse** Gloria Zachgo

Can a family that has been savagely ripped apart find healing and redemption? Are the mysteries hidden in the human heart destined to reveal themselves? The Rocking Horse, Gloria Zachgo's spellbinding suspense novel, charts the harrowing emotional journey of one family that is torn asunder, then magically drawn together again. Jenny Preston has been missing for twenty-two years after being taken at the age of two on the very night her mother Amanda, Aunt Ruth, and Uncle Don were brutally and senselessly murdered. While Jenny's grandparents learn to cope with the tragedies, the sheriff, Will Barclay, must grapple with his own guilt and secrets involving the murders. The crime, which rocked the small town of Shady Creek, Kansas, has never been solved. More than two decades later, a woman who calls herself Julie Hendricks is led by a childhood toy to Shady Creek, where she finds refuge from an abusive husband. Living on her own for the first time in her life, she starts to regain her self esteem and make new friends. Her life is then turned upside down again when she discovers she may be the child that was abducted from this very town so many years ago. With the encouragement of her new friends, and a very special someone, she returns to Chicago to learn the truth of her childhood history from her father. After a gripping turn of events, Julie returns to Shady Creek to wrestle with the emotional complexities of her new life and how her past life is starting to catch up with her. An unexpected hero comes to Julie's aid. A story of family, home, and the grave consequences of actions, The Rocking Horse explores the aftermath of the most unimaginable heartache: the disappearance of a child. Fast-paced and full of intrigue, this riveting read mines the depths of the human heart on its road to recovery.

## **The Rocking Horse Details**

Date : Published August 18th 2011 by Createspace Independent Publishing Platform

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Author : Gloria Zachgo

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## From Reader Review The Rocking Horse for online ebook

### Candace says

Gloria Zachgo's novel, *The Rocking Horse*, is a wonderful story that I enjoyed from the first page until the last. On the day I started the book, my husband and I decided to head to the gym. I LOVE gym time. Not because of the great work out, or the sweating, or knowing I can come home and eat a cookie guilt free. No, I love going to the gym because Exercise Time equals Candace's Reading Time. With a book in hand I can literally walk an entire evening. I perch myself on a treadmill, raise the incline, and read away. This particular evening was no different from the others: I placed my novel in the treadmill book/magazine holder, started some soft music on my iPod to drown out the background noise, and started to walk.

I had no idea that *The Rocking Horse* would captivate me to the point where I had to finish it the same evening I first opened it up. Zachgo's *The Rocking Horse* is a wonderful mystery that has a little bit of romance and multiple thrills mixed in. The novel begins twenty-two years in the past, in the small town of Shady Creek, Kansas. The close knit community is shocked to learn that three of their loved citizens were brutally murdered with no suspect in sight. The mystery of the fateful night deepens when it comes to light that a two year old little girl, Jenny, was kidnapped from the murder scene. Two decades pass and the town has yet to forget that heinous night. The hope is still alive that little Jenny is safe somewhere.

Fast forward to present day where Zachgo introduces her readers to Jennifer, a young woman who finds herself running from an abusive husband in Chicago. In her suitcase she carries a new identity, cash, clothing, and a toy rocking horse that she has had since she was a child. Staring at a map, trying to decide where to start her new life, Jennifer's rocking horse suddenly loses its button eye which falls right onto the city of Shady Creek. Taking it as an omen, Jennifer, or Julie according to her new identity, heads to Kansas. What Shady Creek has in store for Jennifer will leave her life greatly altered.

Gloria Zachgo's, *The Rocking Horse*, is a truly wonderful story. It is well written, has a great plot, believable characters, and a mystery that will keep you guessing until the end. I believe my favorite character is Barbara, the mother of the murdered young lady and grandmother of missing Jenny. Barbara lived through her own personal Hell and was still able to grow from the experience and live her life to the fullest. The close bond that Barbara and Julie formed was a joy to read.

I absolutely recommend *The Rocking Horse* to all fiction lovers. It has the perfect combination of suspense, sadness, romance, and true friendships. Get ready to have your heart strings pulled, and good luck putting the book down for the evening! Hat's off to Mrs. Zachgo for weaving a story that will stay with me for days to come.

I received a copy of 'The Rocking Horse' from Gloria Zachgo for the purpose of review.

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### Gloria Zachgo says

I am the author of this book. I am anxious to hear other opinions. Enjoy.

### **Lynda Kelly says**

This was a great first novel. It doesn't purport to be anything other than a terrific little story and it doesn't disappoint. I really enjoyed it. The only fault was with the editing/proofreading process and that woefully cost it 5 stars. If I were the author and I'd paid fortunes for the service I'd ask for a bloody refund.

All the way through there were apostrophe errors, most noticeably with parent's used instead of parents'. Yet at times it was correct so all the wrong ones, of which there were too many, were overlooked. The odd words missed out in sentences and lost fullstops, commas and speechmarks peppered throughout too. So disappointing. Dining was spelt as dinning three times that I saw. So with all these corrections made it would be a massive improvement.

The story was pretty predictable in places but then that didn't ruin it for me in the least. We all need happy endings (at least in part) from time to time. I doubt it will be a huge bestseller but there were certainly as many errors I found in a recent bestseller so no shame in that, I guess. I certainly hope to read more by her.

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### **Ron Zachgo says**

Julie Hendricks, a young woman from an affluent area in Chicago finds her life going into in a downward spiral. She plans and executes her escape, only to discover her life is even more confusing than originally thought. She is comforted by a child-hood toy that influenced the choice of a small Kansas town as her hideout, but it also provides the clue that she may actually have ties to the community. The story explains the steps that lead her to the answer. Who is Julie Hendricks? She has always felt something was missing in her life but is now content to learn the answers and start over.

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### **Katie says**

The Rocking Horse is a great book with a unique plot line. I was hooked after the first chapter or two, and the suspense made me want to finish immediately.

Gloria Zachgo captures that "small town feel" in her novel, and her characters have a soul and personality that's hard to come by in adult fiction.

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### **E says**

Twenty-two years ago, in Shady Creek, Kansas, three people are found murdered. Two year old Jenny Preston is found alive. She is the daughter of Amanda Preston who was one of the victims. Jenny is later taken from the crime scene to the home of the town sheriff and is abducted. Neither crime was solved. So opens Gloria Zachgo's novel, The Rocking Horse.

Fast forward 22 years and Julie Hendricks who is running from an abusive husband arrives in Shady Creek. Everyone she meets is shocked by her striking resemblance to the murdered Amanda. She quickly makes a life for herself that includes a job and friends. However, she is not who she claims to be. Her name is actually Jen Sanders and because she fears her husband she has bought a new identity. A cherished

childhood toy accompanies her to Shady Creek - a most unusual wooden rocking horse. She needs to decide her future and surprisingly, it is her past that will play the largest role.

The novel provides a sweeping examination of the lives of the people connected to that awful night 22 years ago. Shocking secrets are exposed with devastating results. The author's mastery as a story teller keeps the reader enthralled. She skillfully developed the characters and provides powerful descriptions of their emotions.

I found the book to be exciting and easy to read.

I received this book for free from LibraryThing Member Giveaways and I give this review willingly.

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### **Tricia says**

I thoroughly enjoyed "The Rocking Horse". The storyline, with its twists and turns, kept me wanting more. I was on the edge of my seat from beginning to end. Gloria created a wonderful setting with lovable (and some not so loveable) characters. Gloria nailed the down-to-earth small town people who love cooking, nature, and each other. The author weaved many elements together in this book: friendship, loyalty, compassion, hate, evil, betrayal, and forgiveness. With suspense, romance, supernatural events and genuine good versus evil, I highly recommend this book. I even fell in love with the dog!

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### **Carol says**

Very predictable - ending seemed like it wrapped everything a little too conveniently but still an entertaining read.

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### **Katie Robinson says**

From the very beginning of the story I was sucked in.

It starts off with a mother and a daughter going to visit the girls Aunt. Tragedy strikes. I do have to say after reading what happened in the home and the following event I was a little caught off guard. I know its a book but it was kind of unbelievable, but do not let that stop you from continuing on! I read the book in a day, I couldn't put it down. It is a wonderful story with the right amount of drama.

I will be reading more of Gloria Zachgo, that is for sure.

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### **Melodie says**

The Rocking Horse is one of the books that for me is a comfortable read. Immediately interesting, characters that are easy to like and dislike according to their roles in the story, and a plot that moves along.

I enjoyed the touch of magic with the rocking horse HoHo throughout the book. And while there are those that might feel the story wrapped up a bit too tidily, I thought it ended very well.

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## Valentina says

This was an interesting book to read. It's what I would call a literary mystery, meaning that there's not as much action as you'd expect from a mystery novel, instead dealing much more with character development than anything else.

The beginning is handled very nicely. There is a quick, tense pace to the writing that suits the story well. It really leads the reader onward with its smooth flow. Then the plot slows down. Not enough to make it a bother to read, but more than it should. The plot gets a bit bogged down with minutia, when it would have fared better with a bare-bones telling. However, it does pick up again a few chapters before the book ends, once again building up momentum.

The characters are what's handled the best, I think. They are well written, and fleshed out. Jenny/Julie is the weaker of the bunch, interestingly enough since she is the protagonist, but since there are so many supporting characters that were interesting to read about, this is not such a huge drawback.

This as a fun book to read, and even though it has its faults, like pretty much every book out there, I can easily recommend it to mystery lovers.

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## Trish Arrowsmith says

I read this book in about 4 hours. The story captures your attention right away and doesn't let go, although it does slow down a bit in the middle. The story is somewhat predictable but even with knowing what's going to happen it's good enough that it still holds your interest. The characterization was okay but I felt as though we only got to know the characters on the outside and not the inside. If you're looking for an in-depth, intellectual read, this probably isn't the book for you but if you're looking for a light, easy read, this is definately it!

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## Joannine says

I loved it the story was predictable but very very good.

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## Terry says

"The Rocking Horse" by the extremely talented Gloria Zachgo, is one of the best books I've read in quite some time.

If I didn't know that this was the author's first novel, I'd think I was reading a novel off of one of the top bestseller lists. This book certainly deserves a top spot in the rankings.

The story is enthralling and deliciously addictive. Once you start reading, you can't put it down. You won't want to put it down. Real life and it's duties become mere annoyances while reading this novel. I've stayed up too late, and functioned with too little sleep ever since I started it. However, it was worth every moment.

Ms. Zachgo doesn't mess around. She's a natural born storyteller, with a smooth, clear voice and an 'ear'

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finely tuned for suspense. Very 'real' characters to like, love and hate.

While reading, you feel as if you are a part of this small town; they become your family and friends. Ms. Zachgo even managed to make me care about the murderer, which was no small feat.

I highly recommend this book to everyone. No matter your favorite genre, you can't miss with this book or this author.

I'm eager for more Ms. Zachgo. Please write more soon!

\*Disclosure of Material Connection: I received this book free from the author for review purposes. (Thank you Gloria Zachgo for the opportunity to read your wonderful book). I was not required to write a positive review. The opinions I have expressed are my own. I am disclosing this in accordance with the Federal Trade Commission's 16 CFR, Part 255: "Guides Concerning the Use of Endorsements and Testimonials in Advertising."

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## Dan Porter says

*The Rocking Horse* has me confused. More accurately, my reaction to *The Rocking Horse* has me confused. When I read a mystery or thriller, I want to be surprised and kept off-balance as the narrative unfolds. If I can see the next plot twist coming pages or chapters ahead, I generally get bored with the story and start wishing the end would come quicker. So, here's my confusion. Despite the fact that I could foresee pretty much everything that was going to happen in the story, I couldn't put the book down. Finding out when and how something was going to happen became more imperative to me than knowing that it was going to happen.

The story opens with the brutal murders of three adults and the kidnapping of a two-year-old girl; crimes that are the basis for the remainder of the story. We then find Julie Hendricks moving into a rental house in Shady Creek, Kansas twenty- two years later. She's changed her identity and sought out the last place she thinks her abusive husband would look for her when she fled Chicago. Julie settles into her new home, a new job, and creating a new life with new friends, but she comes to realize she'll have to deal with her past life before she can be truly at home in the new. In trying to do so, she discovers that her past life contains more than she ever dreamed it could.

Zachgo's writing invites you in, gets you comfortable, and then takes you on a ride that's sometimes as smooth as the Kansas plains and at others is like a hundred-mile-per-hour joyride through the hills around Shady Creek. Her characters are well-developed. Some you want to join on the front porch for coffee and conversation, some you want to beat severely with a tire iron, and a couple you're just not sure what to do with. Her settings are also well-created. You can smell breakfast cooking in the kitchen where Julie works as a cook, as well as the dirt and flowers of her landlord's garden. You'll also feel the oppressive heat of a Kansas summer and the cool breeze that Julie experiences at critical times in her journey of renewal.

I think my earlier confusion stems from having incorrectly categorized the book. While it has mystery/thriller aspects, those are merely the framework for the real story. *The Rocking Horse* is actually a story of people dealing with loss, family, personal accountability, and starting over. Those are things we all experience, and things we can't turn away from when others deal with them. That's why this book is so compelling, and why everyone should read it.

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