



Readers' Favorite®

Book Reviews and Award Contest

Book Review Mini-Critique



Below you will find ratings (scale of 1-5) with general descriptions for the major parts of your book followed by your Readers' Favorite review. Although this is just a Mini-Critique, we hope it will give you an insight into how readers may view the different components of your book.

These are the opinions of your reviewer, and although they are not a literary professional, they are an avid reader of books just like yours.

Title: The Heart of a Champion
Subtitle: Book Two in the Amateur Dreams Series
Author: Alexis Minnich
Genre: Fiction - Sports



Appearance: The appearance of a book can make a significant impact on the experience of a reader, whose enjoyment is often enhanced by an enticing cover, an intriguing table of contents, interesting chapter headings, and when possible, eye-catching illustrations.

5

Plot: The characters of a book should be well defined with strengths and flaws, and while they do not have to be likable, the reader does have to be able to form a connection with them. The tone should be consistent, the theme should be clear, and the plot should be original or told from a unique perspective. For informative books -- those without plot and characters--this rating refers primarily to your concept and how well you presented it.

5

Development:	Development refers to how effectively you told your story or discussed your topic. The dialogue should be realistic, the descriptions should be vivid, and the material should be concise and coherent. Organization is also a key factor, especially for informative books -- those without plot and characters. The order in which you tell your story or explain your topic and how smoothly it flows can have a huge impact on the reader's understanding and enjoyment of the material.
5	
Formatting:	Formatting is the single most overlooked area by authors. The way in which you describe scenes, display dialogue, and shift point of view can make or break your story. In addition, excessive grammatical errors and typos can give your book an amateurish feel and even put off readers completely.
5	
Marketability:	Marketability refers to how effectively you wrote your book for your target audience. Authors may include content that is above or below the understanding of their target reader, or include concepts, opinions or language that can accidentally confuse or alienate some readers. Although by its nature this rating is very subjective, a very low rating here and poor reviews may indicate an issue with your book in this area.
5	
Overall Opinion:	The overall starred rating takes into account all these elements and describes the overall reading experience of your reviewer. This is the official Readers' Favorite review rating for your book.
5	

Review:

Reviewed by Jamie Michele for Readers' Favorite

The Heart of a Champion by Alexis Minnich follows Lou, an equestrian, as she manages her riding career at Schuster Stables. She works closely with her primary horse, Jack, building skills over several years and competing in local shows while balancing personal life, family, and barn responsibilities. When Jack develops a serious neurological condition, Lou shifts focus from jumping to dressage, overseeing his care, health setbacks, and eventual end-of-life decision. After his loss, she grieves while maintaining routines and supporting her niece Zoey's riding. Lou then searches for a new horse, Riley, carefully evaluating trials, veterinary exams, and compatibility. Once Riley arrives at the barn, Lou trains him in jumping and dressage, gradually regaining confidence and preparing for competitions while applying lessons from her past partnership with Jack.

Alexis Minnich's The Heart of a Champion is the second book in the Amateur Dreams series, but it reads perfectly well as a standalone. I love horses but have very little experience with them, and Minnich enables readers to be armchair equestrians alongside the wonderfully likeable protagonist. From Lou's blue-ribbon performance with Whiskey Lullaby to Jack's careful training and eventual promotion, Minnich beautifully depicts the joys of horsemanship, teamwork, and determination. The details are spectacular, with barn life, competitions, training sessions, and the dogged attention required in horse selection all presented. There is a devastating loss here, but Minnich is respectful and sympathetic in the approach to it, and it is by no stretch of the imagination used sensationally as a plot device. Overall, this is a quietly inspiring, uplifting, and loving look at the equestrian world, and a true delight for animal lovers.