



Backstretch Baby

Bev Pettersen

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She can accept his past...but can he?

Private investigator Rick Talbot shuns polite society, preferring to keep horrific memories at bay by hunting the most hardened of criminals. Tracking down stolen bridles at a California racetrack is a mind-numbing assignment that's way beneath his pay grade. Besides, he isn't burned out and he doesn't need a working vacation—no matter what his employer thinks.

Rookie trainer, Eve Lewis, has enough struggles coping with her boss's antagonistic wife and a track community that resents outsiders. Theft and sabotage have made riding impossible, and so far, none of her horses have even made it to the starting gate. The last thing she needs is a badass investigator reporting on all her problems and threatening her ability to provide for her young son.

But Rick is tough, smart and drop-dead gorgeous and seems like the best man to help when the sabotage reveals more sinister undertones. In fact, as their attraction builds, she begins to believe he's the perfect man in every way. However, when hostilities turn deadly, Rick must conquer old demons or risk losing Eve forever. Wounded as he is, can he ever be anything more than a paid protector?

OTHER BOOKS BY BEV PETTERSEN:

Jockeys and Jewels

Color My Horse

Fillies and Females

Thoroughbreds and Trailer Trash

Studs and Stilettos

Horses and Heroin

Backstretch Baby

A Scandalous Husband

A Pony For Christmas (novella)

Backstretch Baby Details

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From Reader Review Backstretch Baby for online ebook

Marilyn says

Good

the story that shows how one young works so hard to help her friends and her self to keep there careers .

Kerry says

A solid romantic suspense, like all of Pettersen's works. I loved Eve, and it was refreshing to see a character who spoke her mind and didn't shy away from hard or uncomfortable conversations. I liked Rick as well, and I really sympathized with his struggles. The author did a good job of depicting the impact that his past had on him.

My only complaint was that I wanted a bit more between the last chapter and the epilogue. Overall a great read, and I'm excited for her next book!

Margaret McGovern says

Awesome 5 star contemporary western romantic suspense book. I have had the pleasure of reading a few of Ms Pettersen's books in the past. Therefore, I wasn't to see this book chosen by the International Digital Awards. Eve has worked hard for years as a jockey after injuries she has decided to be a trainer. She isn't as confident as she was in the past and she wants to be able to care for her young son. Rick was a former cop and now PI. He was sent by his boss after suffering from anxiety attacks especially when children are near by to investigate problems at Eves track. There is swift attractjon but also increasing problems. The characters, situations and track life are realistic which helps maintains the readers interest. I look forward to reading more books by this author in the future.

Lorena Helpers says

Wow was this ever a fun story

I almost had to read the end when I got 3/4 of the way through. I just almost couldn't stand the suspense. This was so good to read. Being a wounded warrior was too real. One could feel his emotions and just wanted to hug him and reassure him that he would be O.K. But he had to work it through himself. Great writing job.

May says

One of the best yet - LOVED this book - utterly perfect. Great, well developed characters and a plot that had

me guessing until the end. Plus gorgeous and believeable romance - I'd give it more stars if I could!

Beth says

I enjoyed the character development, story line, and writers style. I would recommend this story and author.

Rebecca says

Always seem to enjoy this author's work.

Anna says

I love Bev Pettersen's horsey take on romantic suspense. This one wasn't my favorite, but I probably would have rounded up to 5 stars if it was by any other author. (My standards are just so high for Pettersen!) I enjoyed the story, but didn't quite buy how devoted the single mom main character was supposed to be to her son...despite being absent from so much of his life. Beside that nitpick, though, both hero and heroine were intriguing and the mystery was very interesting. I'm looking forward to Pettersen's next book!

Virginia Anderson says

Review of *Backstretch Baby*

Eve, a young single mom whose promising career as a jockey has been cut short by injuries, struggles to prove herself when she's sent as an assistant trainer to a second-rate track with a small barnful of horses who must win if she's to keep her job. The mysterious theft of the barn's bridles, which threatens her ability to get her charges ready for their races, sets off a series of events that look as if they're designed to make her fail. Enter Rick, an investigator sent by her solicitous brother-in-law, who owns her best horse and who, worrisomely, may be making a bid to gain custody of Eve's young son. Because this is a romance, it goes without saying that Eve is initially wary of tough, dangerous Rick, but soon comes to believe that he's the answer to her dreams.

I must start out by confessing that I don't read widely in the romance genre. I chose this book because I was curious, as an author of horse-racing mysteries, to know what kinds of horse tales were attracting readers. Finding that YA stories tended to dominate reading lists, I put out a query for "adult horse stories" on some Goodreads groups, and Pettersen's novels turned up.

I realize that "romance" covers a lot of ground and that my definitions may not jibe with that of many other readers. Goodness knows I've avidly read *Pride and Prejudice* and *Jane Eyre*, the prototypical romances. I actually wrote two for NAL's short-lived Rapture line under the name Megan Ashe (they're still out there in Amazon's third-party-vendor universe). And the book I'm now updating to begin sending on the rounds contains most, but not all, of the characteristics I ascribe to "genre romance."

Backstretch Baby clearly fits all of my definitional characteristics, and that close fit did affect my reading. I tended to skim all the "tingling flesh" paragraphs (a little goes a long way for me); it worried me how often Eve let herself be thankful she had a guy around to keep everyone safe; it worried me how the male

protagonist, typically rather inscrutable and unsettling at the beginning, is so thoroughly domesticated at the end. I suspect that some of these components only obtain for certain subcategories of romance; after all, Elizabeth Bennet did not expect much protection from Mr. Darcy, nor Catherine from Heathcliff. But if you like these elements and read for them, this pleasant book will provide them, though how well in comparison to others in the genre, I'm not qualified to judge.

What didn't bother me was being able to project pretty much the general shape of the story (I even knew precisely what was going to have to happen at the end for all the issues to be resolved). Compelling stories tend to share certain features: start out bad, get worse, look as if they're going to get better, then get really terrible, then come full circle, so that the protagonist gets what she's earned. The particulars of this archetypal pattern (thinly described here, I know) are what make each story succeed beyond its structure. But if the structure's missing, the particulars are meaningless.

Fortunately, *Backstretch Baby* is pretty well structured. Eve has problems galore to solve and watching them get solved is enjoyable. Rick greases the skids a bit too much for my taste, but as much as Eve has to contend with, she deserves at least one piece of luck (Rick) in her life.

The best feature of this book is its authentic depiction of backstretch life on a racetrack. Pettersen clearly knows this life and fleshes it out through a cast of recognizable characters: flighty, unmarried young Ashley trying to grow up enough to accept the baby she's carrying; worn-down groom Miguel making the most of a life that could dump him out with the trash the day his aged body fails him; above all, the immigrant women trying to raise children while surviving menial jobs in a strange country. Pettersen presents these people and their hard lives with a deep empathy that enriches the story considerably. I spent time on the racetrack researching my books, but I learned something about that community from *Backstretch Baby*.

If you're a romance fan, add a star to my rating. Even if you're not, I think you'll find this book a quick, pleasant read.

Nicole Laverdure says

A fun read to enjoy!

Backstretch Baby, is another great read from Bev Pettersen! Horse lovers will like this story because it's set in the horse racing world, with several charming characters, like Rick Talbot, the private investigator and Eve Lewis, the young horse trainer.

Both their worlds will collide, because Rick is asked to investigate a robbery where Eve works! At first, she doesn't trust him, but as time goes by, sparks flare to start a beautiful relationship between Rick, Eve and her son Joey. And in all stories, you always find a mean character like Liam!

Will Rick be able to protect her? Will love be in the air for those two?

I recommend Backstretch Baby to everyone, but especially to readers who love horses.

Wendy says

I am finding that the more I read of Bev Pettersen's books, the more I love them. They are a refreshing break from all of the MMA, SEAL, and sports hero romances that are flooding the market right now. I do wish she didn't use the GD word a couple of times in this book but other than that cursing was non-existent as were explicit, graphic sex scenes that are so common now. The characters were really well developed, the writing was spot on, and her knowledge of horses and racing was exemplary. The plot had excellent twists and turns so it was fun figuring out the "whodunit" of the book, too. I completely enjoyed reading this book and look forward to reading many more by Ms. Pettersen.

Fragmentage says

I really enjoy Bev's stories. True, they always follow the same pattern - gorgeous independent woman falls for swoonworthy guy with a tough history - but she writes them well and I always appreciate to learn a bit more about the US horse industry along the way.

Tammy Kenney says

This book brought back characters from at least 3 of her other books - Horses and Heroin, A Scandalous Husband, and Jockeys and Jewels. To someone that hasn't read her books I would recommend reading Horses and Heroin before reading this one.

The story kept my interest and I loved all the characters. Tizzy was my favorite horse in this book. I liked Rick and Eve together. I found the ending a bit rushed and it left a few unanswered questions I would have liked to have seen tied up but overall another good read.

I've enjoyed all of this author's books that I've read. I'd recommend them to anyone that enjoyed reading about horses, mysteries & romance.

Linda Moore says

Great racing book

Good book of romance and racing! Great knowledge of races and backside. The mystery was also spot on. Good reading

Reader Views says

BACKSTRETCH BABY

Bev Pettersen
Westerhall Books (2015)
ISBN 9781987835052
Reviewed by Sheri Hoyte for Reader Views (02/16)

In “Backstretch Baby” by Bev Pettersen, we meet Rick Talbot, a private investigator whose skills at hunting down hardened criminals are unsurpassable. Yet, the pressure of being deep undercover takes its toll after a while, and when Rick’s boss suggests he takes some time off, Rick threatens to quit. He soon finds himself on a low-key assignment, well below his competency level, tracking down stolen bridles at Riverview Racetrack in California, and he has a feeling it’s going to be a long month.

Eve Lewis is a rookie trainer, trying to prove herself around the tight knit track that is reluctant of outsiders. Eve has a lot on her plate, juggling her responsibilities on the track with her staff, and trying to stay under the radar of her boss’s adversarial wife, all driven by the need to be an able provider for her young son. The recent theft of the horse bridles and her car battery, along with other forms of sabotage have made Eve’s job even more challenging, if not near impossible. She hasn’t been able to train the horses and the boss is pushing to win the upcoming races. The absolute last thing Eve needs right now is a private investigator hanging around and getting in her way, but when the foul play accelerates, Eve and Rick must work together before things take a fatal turn.

I was excited for the opportunity to read the latest romantic mystery by Bev Pettersen, as I’ve enjoyed all of her work thus far, and “Backstretch Baby” did not disappoint. Pettersen is a natural storyteller – she knows how to keep her readers engaged with just the right amount of romance, mystery, and intrigue. The strong personalities of both Eve and Rick make for entertaining reading as they measure each other up, sometimes trying to fight off the feelings for one another, and sometimes not even bothering to try. The plot moves along at the pace of a cozy mystery; once curled up with this book, there is no chance of putting it down until it’s finished.

I highly recommend “Backstretch Baby” by Bev Pettersen to romance and light mystery enthusiasts. The story is sure to please her already strong fan base and will more than likely cause that fan base to multiply. Great story!
