

HOLIDAY HOUSE | EDUCATOR'S GUIDE



The Blind Colt by Glen Rounds

“I love this book!”—Jerry Spinelli, Newbery Medal Winner

HC: 9780823443536 • Ages 7–10

About the Book

Can a young blind horse survive in the Badlands of Montana? Find out in this beautiful new edition of a classic American tale.

Now celebrating its 80th anniversary with a beautifully redesigned new edition featuring lots of extras, *The Blind Colt* is a timeless tale of survival and friendship. This classic volume now features an appreciation by Matt Myers, a piece from author Glen Rounds on his inspiration for the story, and facts and resources about wild mustangs today.

In the Badlands, where the ground is soft but the slopes are steep and the vegetation is scarce, it can be difficult for a wild horse to survive. Even more so if that horse is blind. But this young colt has his strong mare of a mother looking out for him, and his other senses help him smell the friendly prairie dogs, feel for rough terrain, and hear whenever wolves draw near—sometimes well before anyone else in his herd.

This model of children's literature in the tradition of *The Black Stallion* and *Misty of Chincoteague* comes from one of America's master storytellers. Glen Rounds grew up in the Dakota Badlands and drew from details of his own life on a ranch to depict one little colt's struggle to make it through the winter.

Discussion Questions

- Uncle Torwal and Whitey live on a ranch in Montano. Describe their relationship. What is a foreman? Why does Uncle Torwal call Whitey his “sawed-off” foreman?
- What is range stock? Discuss animal life on the range. How is their life different from the animals that are kept on Uncle Torwal’s ranch? What are the dangers that the range animals face? Describe their survival instincts. What is the role of the leader of a band of horses?



HolidayHouse.com



@HolidayHouseBks

- Discuss how the mare cares for her newborn. Explain how the mare senses something is wrong with her colt. How does the mare react when Uncle Torwal and Whitey approach the colt? Explain what Uncle Torwal means when he says, “She’s a wolf all right” (p. 9).
- How does Uncle Torwal know that something is wrong with the colt? Why does Uncle Torwal say that he may have to shoot him? What is Whitey’s reaction? Whitey is riding the range and finds that the blind colt is trapped. Why is he glad that Uncle Torwal isn’t with him when he frees the blind colt?
- Discuss how the range changes with the seasons. How do the animals adjust to the seasons? Which season is the most difficult for them? The blind colt has to adapt in ways the other animals don’t. How does he learn to sense danger? Explain how he becomes “range-wise.”
- How does the blind colt become separated from the band of horses? Describe the events that led up to Whitey finding the colt. Explain how strays normally behave when they wander into home pasture. How is the blind colt’s behavior different?
- Uncle Torwal was adamant the first time Whitey proposed training the colt. Now that the colt has wandered to the ranch, Whitey hides him in a back corral and attempt to train him. Describe Whitey’s training technique. Training a wild horse takes patience. How is Whitey patient?
- Discuss how Uncle Torwal discovers Whitey and the blind colt. What does the term horse trade mean? How does Whitey horse trade with Uncle Torwal to keep the colt? Explain Uncle Torwal’s reaction when he witnesses what Whitey has accomplished with the colt.
- What is a “Sunday Horse”? Explain how the blind colt is a perfect Sunday Horse for Whitey.
- Read “Glen Rounds: An Appreciation” at the beginning of the book. Then explain the following statement: “Wild danger always comes with wild fun.” How does the danger on the range keep the reader in anticipation about what will happen next?

Guide prepared by Pat Scales, retired school librarian and independent consultant, Greenville, South Carolina.

About the Creator

Glen Rounds (1906–2002) was born in a sod house in South Dakota and traveled by covered wagon to the Montana Badlands, where he lived on the kind of ranch depicted in *The Blind Colt*. As a young man, Rounds studied at the Art Students League in New York City, becoming friends with Jackson Pollock, with whom he spent a summer traveling the countryside. Later, with his gift for storytelling, Rounds published his first book, *Ol’ Paul*, a collection of tall tales influenced by the stories of Paul Bunyan. Rounds continued to write and draw for sixty years, even learning to draw left-handed when arthritis crippled his right arm. Some of his best known books are *Cowboys*, *Three Billy Goats Gruff*, and *Sod Houses on the Great Plains*.

4.2021

