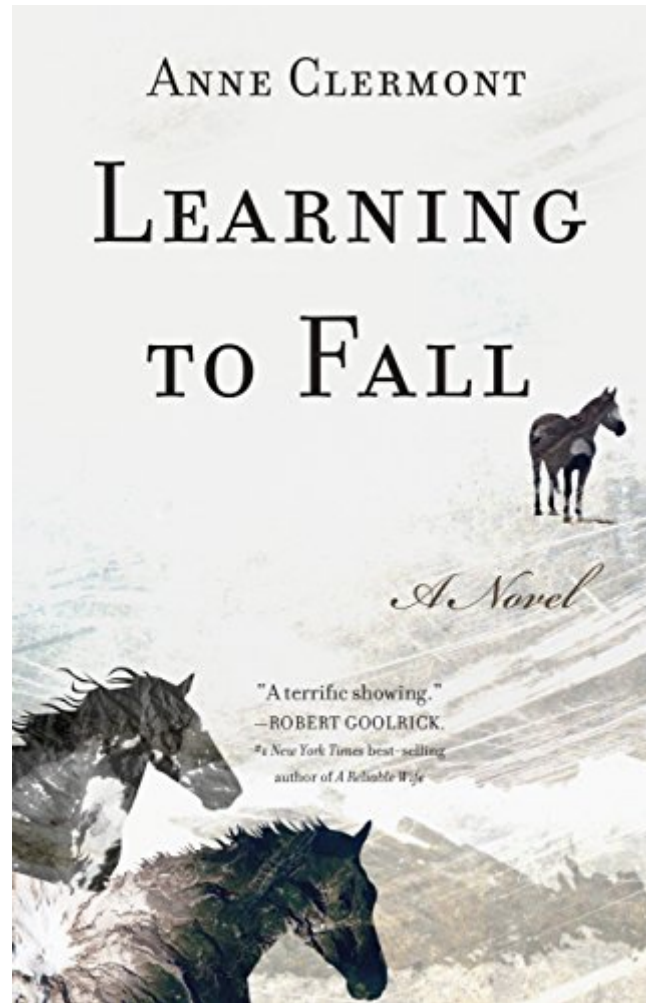




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Learning To Fall: A Novel



Synopsis

Brynn honors her passion for horses by studying at the toughest veterinary program in the country. Months from graduating, tragedy strikes—tragedy for which she can't help but feel responsible. Brynn feels suffocated by the weight of her father's legacy and his dusty hopes for horse show jumping success. When Brynn's frenetic efforts to dig the family business out of debt fail, she's down to one desperate hope. Enter Jason Lander, who understands what it's like to walk away from the ring. The onetime champion agrees to train Brynn, and her horse Jett, for an all-or-nothing run at the prestigious Million Dollar Gold Cup. But going all the way means doing it his way, which has Brynn questioning her decisions, her loyalties, and her growing feelings for Jason—complicating her relationship with her lover. Set in Northern California against a stunning backdrop of coastal hills and valleys, *Learning to Fall* is about discovering how to let go—and how to hang on with your heart. Fans of *Seabiscuit* and *The Horse Whisperer* will love this beautifully written debut; one they're bound to add to their shelf of favorites.

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Customer Reviews

A good friend of mine recommended this book. Never mind that I don't have a clue about horses, have been on a horse exactly one time in my life, don't pay attention to Olympic equestrian events, and know about the Kentucky Derby only when it makes the mainstream news. She knows, however, that I enjoy a good read even if it's about something I know little to nothing about so when she recommended it I had to read it. And enjoy it I did. The protagonist Brynn, a competitive rider in equestrian jumping, is in veterinary school and destined to a successful future in the profession. The family business is of housing and caring for horses and training the young owner-riders. The strong-willed father runs the business, while the practical mother is the one most proud of her being in veterinary school. A sudden turn of events, and Brynn finds herself suddenly reprioritizing life goals, both immediate and for the near future. And that's when her journey commences in search of closure and success with allies and enemies along the way. The setting is northern California, a place I've lived most of my life in even if I no longer reside there. The familiarity added a little more delight in reading the novel. For those like me with no familiarity in show jumping technical jargon, no need to worry. The terms are explained when needed. After all, this is not a novel about show jumping. It's about a journey that happens to have show jumping in the backdrop. For those with even a bit more familiarity than me in horses and equestrian events, the novel will be doubly pleasurable. After all, the author is an expert of sorts, having run a 75-horse equestrian center with her husband according to her website. I recommend the book. Enjoy it.

Learning To Fall was a pleasant surprise – so frequently equine fiction (especially from first time authors) is sub par, and this was a good read. Main character Brynne Seymour is in her last year of vet school and recovering emotionally from the loss of her father in an accident when she finds out that he left tons of debt and their horse training facility about to be foreclosed on. Of course she decides to save the property by taking over the training business and getting the property out of debt. When this doesn't turn out to work as well as she'd hoped, she decides her only choice is to compete in, and WIN, the Spruce Meadows Million Dollar Gold Cup. First the good: The horse parts are very well done. The author is a horse professional so this is not a surprise. The description of the horse trailer accident was particularly horrific – bringing to mind the accident scene from The Horse Whisperer. As a horse owner, it was a very scary intense scene and I literally had to put the book down and read another book at that point before I continued, in order to relieve the anxiety. The horse show scenes are true to life – the barns, the grooms,

the gossip and catfights, ponies bucking kids off, competitive moms, trainers wooing other trainers' clients, etc. The entire book was very readable and held my attention throughout and the story was entertaining. Now the bad: The plot was very similar to *Riding Lessons* by Sara Gruen. A daughter returns to parents' barn after loss of father, tries to take over training business to help because finances are shaky, has wealthy boarder/training client with multiple horses leave with no notice. The hints and foreshadowing in the book made upcoming events obvious to me, but apparently not to main character Brynne, who is shocked when her clients leave, shocked when the Enemy Trainer steals clients, shocked when her cheating lying boyfriend cheats and lies to her. Brynn, pay attention, sheesh! Most of the characters were rather one dimensional, and the ones who were more developed still seemed to act in ways that didn't always make sense (Corinne setting things up for Brynn to ride Seraphim comes to mind). Overall though, I really enjoyed the book. I was able to get lost in the story, it was exciting and suspenseful, and the equine parts were exceptionally well done!

What a lovely book this was to read. I am not a horse person, so I wasn't sure how deeply I'd get drawn into the plot, but Clermont's skill lies in creating a very human, gripping story with appeal for all. I am, however, a yoga and mindfulness meditation type, and I loved the element of this that found its way into the story. The Northern California setting was gorgeously rendered, and the characters were fully actualized. The excitement, pageantry (and the partying!) of the competitive world of show jumping seemed utterly real and fascinating to me. This was a tough book to put down; I kept promising myself, "only one more chapter, and then I'll really stop," and kept reading long past that point, eager to find out how everything would work out. The conclusion was very satisfying, although I wanted more, more of this story. I'm crossing my fingers that there will be a follow up down the road.

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