



When Sophie Met Darcy Day

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A heartwarming collection of stories from a woman who brings together disadvantaged children and abandoned racehorses, with remarkable results.

Thirteen-year-old Sophie hadn't uttered a word to anyone for over two years when she got out of her parents car at a remote farm in Devon. Her parents were beside themselves with worry, and at the end of their tether, but try as they might, nothing seemed to make a difference. They'd heard about a place called Greatwood through friends - where owners Helen and Michael Yeadon looked after retired racehorses - and decided to take Sophie along for a visit.

Helen asked Sophie to help her change the dressings on the infected cuts on the legs of Darcy Day, one of their more troubled horses, and it was instantly clear that these two had some kind of special connection. Darcy Day would normally back away from people, but this time she lowered her head and stepped forward, to let Sophie stroke her nose. It was the start of an incredible relationship that would transform both horse and child, and it gave Michael and Helen an idea.

They registered as a charity, moved to bigger premises, and began inviting children with a wide range of learning disabilities to volunteer to help with the animals. The results were amazing - traumatised horses and anxious or disturbed children bonded with each other, and every week little miracles were happening before their eyes.

Boys with diagnoses such as Asperger's Syndrome or Attention-Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder, or those who'd been excluded from school for unruly behaviour, flourished through the discipline of working on the farm. Girls made timid and anxious by abusive backgrounds or school bullies came out of the shells. In this book are twenty of the most incredible tales of children who were given back their futures by the unique and extraordinary institution of Greatwood.

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