

***Eclipsed by Shadow***

John Royce

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Reviewed by Wendy Cleveland for Reader Views (5/08)

“Eclipsed by Shadow” centers around a teenager named Meagan Roberts who is a young equestrian. The story starts out in the present-day of the summer solstice, June 21, 2001, when a very unique horse is born. Meagan felt that a horse should name itself, so her foal became “Promise.” Everyone around town seemed to be interested in this special palomino, especially her neighbor Eleanor Bridgestone. Ms. Bridgestone tells Meagan the tales of “The Great Horse” throughout history and seems to think that her horse is the next in line, but of the dark variety. “The Great Traveler, with mysterious powers to bring darkness to the world. Of course, we wouldn’t be sure unless the Great Horse was actually ridden.” Meagan doesn’t understand this because her horse is light in color, but is about to become “Eclipsed by Shadow” as her light winter coat sheds to reveal solid black. Some crooked horse trainers get wind of this discovery and try to steal Promise. This invokes Meagan to protect her. She gets on her horse’s back and tries to jump a fence to get away. When she does, Promise sprouts wings and turns into “The Great Horse.” She flies Meagan back in time for her to see the way horses were used for work, war, sport, spectacle and even food.

Meagan’s adventure in this first book in a three book series goes from 20,000 B.C. (where the cavemen used horses for food) to 100 A.D. Rome (where horses were used for sport in Chariot fights), and 1240 Crusades (where horses were blindfolded and used in Jousting matches). In each time travel, Meagan uses her 21<sup>st</sup> century equine insight to try and help people understand the beauty and sole purpose of horses.

“Eclipsed by Shadow” was a magical horse story that is suitable for both teenagers and adults alike. The equine and world history aspects were fascinating and well-researched by the author. Some facts that I did not know were that horses existed back in 20,000 B.C. or when stirrups, saddles, and horseshoes were discovered. The ending left me breathless wanting to find out what time period Promise was taking Meagan to next.