

# PEACHTREE EDUCATOR'S GUIDE

GRADES  
3 - 7



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## *Snow Foeal*

BY SUSANNA BAILEY

### ABOUT THE BOOK

**A beautiful and heart-wrenching middle grade debut, this title is a memorable story, full of love, healing, friendship, and hope.**

When eleven-year-old Addie goes to stay with a foster family on a remote Exmoor farm in the midst of a very cold winter, she is full of hurt, anger, and a deep mistrust of everyone around her. But when she rescues a tiny wild foal from the moorland snow, Addie discovers that perhaps she's not so alone after all.

As adventure and unexpected friendship blossom, Addie is determined that both of them will know what it is to be home again soon . . .

### DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- What is the central conflict of the story?
- Why is Addie being removed from her home? She is taken to Oaktree Farm to live with foster parents Ruth and Sam. Addie doesn't think that Ruth looks like a foster mother. What does a foster mother look like to Addie? What do Ruth and Sam do to make their foster children feel welcome? How do they know when to give the children time to adjust?
- Explain why Addie doesn't want to put her things on the shelf in the bedroom she shares with Sunni. Sunni's most prized possession is a sequined elephant that her mum gave her. What is Addie's most prized possession? Why does she carry it around in her pocket?
- Discuss why she decides to show the shell to Jude. Later in the book, she throws the shell to the floor and it shatters. Debate whether this is a fit of anger or hopelessness. At the end of the novel, Sunni goes to the beach and brings Addie a new shell. How is this a turning point for the girls?
- Describe Gabe. How is he patient with the foster children? Gabe says the tiny wild foal is more lost than Addie. In what ways is Addie lost?
- Explain what Gabe means when he tells Addie, "Resistance is futile" (p. 43). How often is Addie literally and figuratively rescued? How do Ruth, Sam, Jude, and even Sunni rescue Addie? How do things get better for her once she is rescued?
- Describe the first time Addie meets the foal. How does she recognize fear in the foal's behavior? Compare and contrast her own fears with those of the foal. Discuss how the foal responds to Addie. Debate whether the foal senses that Addie is as lost as he is. What is a horse whisperer? How does Addie become a pony whisperer?
- What is Addie's reaction when she learns that Gabe is adopted? Explain the following simile: "Gabe? Adopted? Gabe, who was as much a part of things here as the smell of wood smoke and the big, wide sky" (p. 75). Discuss the meaning of Gabe's red hat. How is it his prized possession? How are Ruth and Sam the only parents Gabe has ever known? Describe the love and trust between Gabe and his parents.
- Addie feels that the foal needs to go back to his mam, but Gabe explains the pony rules. Discuss Addie's outburst: "You can't keep him away from his family just because of some stupid people and their stupid rules" (p. 90). Explain what Gabe means by, "Don't shoot the messenger" (p. 90).

- Debate whether Addie sees a comparison between the rules that keep the foal from his mam and the rules that keep her away from her mam.
- Jude is mute when Addie first meets him. Ruth explains that Jude can speak, but he just isn't ready to talk to them. How does Addie get Jude to speak? Addie takes Jude to see the foal. Discuss Jude's response to the pony.
- Jude shows Addie the tree with the carving that reads, "Jude and Thomas Their Place" (p. 99). Explain the significance of the carving. How does this help Addie understand Jude? Addie asks Jude to promise not to tell anyone of their plan to take the foal to the moor. Why does Jude say he doesn't do promises?
- Addie slips out into the night and takes the foal to the moor. Why does she feel guilty for her actions? Explain why she feels she is breaking Ruth and Sam's trust. Discuss whether her guilty feelings mean that she doesn't want to disappoint Ruth and Sam. Sunni comes to find Addie. Discuss the exchange between the girls when they see one another. Explain Sunni's tears.
- At the end of the novel, Jude is adopted, the foal returns to Oaktree Farm, Sam finds a home for the foal where Addie can go and visit, and Addie and Sunni have become friends. What else happens to give Addie hope? At the beginning of the novel, Addie says she would never want her picture on the fridge. Debate whether her view has changed by the end of the novel.

## ABOUT THE AUTHOR



**Susanna Bailey** divides her time between writing, freelance social work, and lecturing in creative writing at Bath Spa University, England, where she also studied. She wrote *Snow Foal* during her time at the same university, where she studied with and drew much inspiration from Hans Christian Andersen Award-winning author David Almond. *Snow Foal*, her debut novel, was shortlisted for the Joan Aiken Future Classics Prize.