



The Perfect Horse: The Daring U.S. Mission to Rescue the Priceless Stallions Kidnapped by the Nazis

Elizabeth Letts

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NEW YORK TIMES BESTSELLER • From the author of *The Eighty-Dollar Champion*, the remarkable story of the heroic rescue of priceless horses in the closing days of World War II

In the chaotic last days of the war a small troop of battle-weary American soldiers captures a German spy and makes an astonishing find—his briefcase is empty but for photos of beautiful white horses that have been stolen and kept on a secret farm behind enemy lines. Hitler has stockpiled the world's finest purebreds in order to breed the perfect military machine—an equine master race. But with the starving Russian army closing in, the animals are in imminent danger of being slaughtered for food.

With only hours to spare, one of the Army's last great cavalymen, American colonel Hank Reed, makes a bold decision—with General George Patton's blessing—to mount a covert rescue operation. Racing against time, Reed's small but determined force of soldiers, aided by several turncoat Germans, steals across enemy lines in a last-ditch effort to save the horses.

Pulling together this multistranded story, Elizabeth Letts introduces us to an unforgettable cast of characters: Alois Podhajsky, director of the famed Spanish Riding School of Vienna, a former Olympic medalist who is forced to flee the bomb-ravaged Austrian capital with his entire stable in tow; Gustav Rau, Hitler's imperious chief of horse breeding, a proponent of eugenics who dreams of genetically engineering the perfect warhorse for Germany; and Tom Stewart, a senator's son who makes a daring moonlight ride on a white stallion to secure the farm's surrender.

A compelling account for animal lovers and World War II buffs alike, *The Perfect Horse* tells for the first time the full story of these events. Elizabeth Letts's exhilarating tale of behind-enemy-lines adventure, courage, and sacrifice brings to life one of the most inspiring chapters in the annals of human valor.

Praise for *The Perfect Horse*

“Winningly readable . . . Letts captures both the personalities and the stakes of this daring mission with such a sharp ear for drama that the whole second half of the book reads like a WWII thriller dreamed up by Alan Furst or Len Deighton. . . . The right director could make a Hollywood classic out of this fairy tale.”—*The Christian Science Monitor*

“Letts, a lifelong equestrienne, eloquently brings together the many facets of this unlikely, poignant story underscoring the love and respect of man for horses. . . . The author's elegant narrative conveys how the love for these amazing creatures transcends national animosities.”—*Kirkus Reviews*

“*The Perfect Horse* is an enthralling and moving story that I could not put down. This is a riveting and unique perspective on World War II. History buffs and horse lovers will enjoy this amazing tale.”—**Molly Gupstill Manning, author of *When Books Went to War***

“Passionately told and dazzling in scope, *The Perfect Horse* charges headlong into an unforgettable tale of World War II, when good men were given a final mission—to save beloved horses—at an hour when no one wanted to die. In Elizabeth Letts, the saga of World War II’s white stallions has found its perfect guardian.”—**Adam Makos, author of *A Higher Call***

“Elizabeth Letts’s beautiful prose, woven together with meticulous research, takes you for a ride that will keep you on the edge of your seat until the end.”—**Robin Hutton, author of *Sgt. Reckless***

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