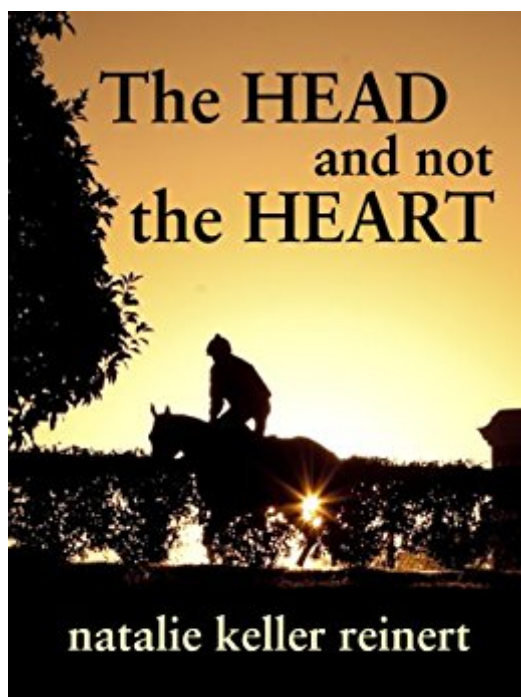


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# The Head And Not The Heart (Alex And Alexander Book 1)



## Synopsis

"This is one of those books that stays with you, long after youâ™ve turned the last page." "This book is great fun, a solid story, and something you could, maybe, use to explain an obsession of your own." "This book really is one that speaks directly to the heart and soul of someone who feels so passionate about the thoroughbred horse." "She knows these settings and she doesnâ™t miss a detail. You can almost taste the grime of a side street in Brooklyn, and you can exactly picture what the old Claremont Riding Academy looked like." - Andrea Galbraith, Eventing-a-Go-Go

For anyone who ever doubted their life's work... for anyone who ever looked up and suddenly wondered if they were doing the right thing... The Head and Not The Heart explores just what makes passionate people tick. Horses have always been Alex's obsession. Their presence has defined her life: all her choices, from her love-life to her career, have been made with horses as her priority. But the horse business isn't for the sentimental, and it's growing harder for her to tamp down her emotions and think about the horses with her head and not her heart. Alex's life looks pretty wonderful to the casual observer. She's in a committed relationship with a master racehorse trainer. Surrounded by hundreds of horses in the green hills of Ocala, Florida, it's a dream life for any equestrian. But suddenly she's tired of hitting the ground when a flighty racehorse decides to spook, tired of fending off biting and kicking foals, tired of 2 AM calls for veterinary emergencies. And Alex is starting to wonder if she's made the right choices in life. When their racing stable suffers a loss, she and Alexander slowly begin to fall apart. A chance find of a long-lost horse sends Alex alone to New York City, and she wonders if this is the sign she's been waiting for. Is it time to leave it all behind and start fresh? Running from the lush pastures of Florida horse country to the icy streets of Brooklyn, Alex experiments with being a different sort of person, as if horses had never mattered to her, and finds herself lost in the company of strangers. Dealing with love, loss, and obsession -- all the components of a life with horses -- "The Head and Not The Heart" brings the world of racehorses and the people who love them to life. \*In keeping with its racetrack theme, this book contains strong language.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

Natalie gets it 100% right on both the emotions and the details when it comes to horses and horse racing. The story is absolutely perfect. I felt the emotions right along with Alex as she struggled to decide if her life in Ocala, Fla. with horses is what she really should be doing. I've grown up around horses and do believe even those who have not will understand and fall in love with this story. It shows you the real deal the struggles of the world of horse racing. The details are spot on. The writing is so well done.

Although I own an OTTB and am not directly involved in racehorses, this book spoke to me. I became the main character. Her emotions toward the hard, cold horse industry were the same as mine. I was moved. The Head and Not the Heart is the real thing. It draws us in, then pushes us away...and the big-eyed, lovely beasts beckon for us to return, knowing that we will be hurt again someday. Natalie's extensive experience in the horse world is translated into a beautifully written and accurate portrayal of REAL LIFE with horses. I must have more, because this is my life, too. I utterly enjoyed every word of this book.

For any serious horse person who reads The Head and Not the Heart, it is clear that author Natalie Keller Reinert has walked the walk. Having worked with horses for a living and slunk back to my computer for a sitting-down-inside job, I had many of the same thoughts Alex did. You love the horses, but the work is exhausting. Horses are big, strong animals, and they hurt you without even trying. Yet, it is very rewarding to work with them, especially if you've loved them your whole life!! did

find myself getting a little tired of Alex's whining (I get it! It's cold and you're tired.), but we get past it just in time before it gets really old. The fact is, the story rings very true, and Alex and the other characters are very believable. It even made me reflect on my own life, which is always the mark of a good book, in my opinion. I think any horse lover would enjoy this book...perhaps anyone who has a tough job they do because of their passion would appreciate it.

An elegantly-written, spare, and delicate novel about the internal conflicts of a woman who has grown up around horses. This novel challenges many of the conventional clichés of how a racetrack novel is <sup>TM</sup> supposed to evolve. Usually the plot revolves around a single horse and the challenges he must undergo to become a champion. In this novel, the central protagonist falls in love with several horses. Some break her heart, others nearly break her skull, some elicit her pity. The focus is on the relationships of the people who work with horses more so than winning a specific competition. Throughout there is a palpable sense of Alex's <sup>TM</sup> angst as a horse professional. Just as she encounters many different types of horses, she also encounters several different career paths and alternative lives she contemplates slipping into. Reinert skillfully weaves her narrative to show both insiders' <sup>TM</sup> and outsiders' <sup>TM</sup> perspectives of the industry. This is an unusually soul-searching book that offers a truly balanced perspective of the racing world, a world that is often only presented in black and white.

I was SOOO impressed by this book! I'll read ANY horse book anywhere anytime because that's who I am, and some are certainly better than others. THIS book was one of those that are better than others! Well researched, cleverly written and edited, full of descriptive detail and interesting, believable characters both human and equine. I'm not a fan of the horse racing industry because they do all seem to operate with the head and not with the heart-- I had an off the track Thoroughbred rescue horse who was 4 years old with injuries that made him forever unridable as one of zillions of examples of how the racing industry thinks with the head and not with the heart-- But even though I'm not a Thoroughbred racing fan, this book is a winner-

Natalie Reinert gets what puzzles so many people "outside" of the horse world. Why, with all of the heartbreak and tears and struggles that it entails, would anyone, ever, in a million years, make that place their home and their life's work? In this novella, she tells the story of Alex, a woman who is beginning to wonder whether or not the blood, sweat, and concussions are really what she wants to be doing forever. This is not \*just\* a book for those in the horse world though, Alex's questions

about the future, about what it means to "choose" to do something that might seem a bit mad to others, about the sacrifices people make during their lives, are questions that will resonate with a number of readers. Of course, the fact that the horse-stuff is spot on is a huge bonus! Seriously, this book is great fun, a solid story, and something you could, maybe, use to explain an obsession of your own.

Natalie Keller Reinert writes a wonderful debut novella, exploring this question: Can (or should) a person who loves horses make a living with these animals, who have such an amazing capacity to break our hearts? Natalie knows Thoroughbreds, and knows the world of racing first hand. Lucky for us, she can write about it all in a way that familiarizes the reader without boring you to tears. Quite the opposite, in fact, where Alex (our narrator) goes, we want to go. I couldn't get enough of her environments, the people in them, and of course the horses. A wonderful debut novella! Also, everyone should do themselves a favor and check out Natalie's blog [...], all about TBs on and off the track.

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