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## REVIEWS...REVIEWS...REVIEWS...

## GOLDEN ARROW

— Reviewed by Joan Shaddox Isom

**GOLDEN ARROW** by Bessie Holland Heck is a novel for young people that has something for everyone in a story of beautiful horses; motorcycles; and a picturesque farm in the Ozark Mountains tended by a delightful set of grandparents who dispense hot biscuits, ham, and corn-on-the-cob seasoned with a little positive advice on human relations.

Randy Colson, a "city boy" from Tulsa, Oklahoma, is the protagonist in this story. His dream of owning his own motorcycle is delayed somewhat when his father refuses to buy him a cycle as his friends' fathers have done, but insists on Randy making his own money for the purchase. Randy goes to his grandparents' farm in Arkansas to work for the summer and make the money for the beautiful machine he dreams of owning.

Once there, Randy falls in love with Goldy, the palomino mare, who is carrying a foal sired by a valuable stud, Straight Arrow. Randy's struggle begins as he is torn between his love for cycles and his attraction to the horse and farm life.

The apparent "heavy" in this story, a fifteen year-old boy named Terry Marlow, owns his own cycle and boasts of his free and easy lifestyle. Being from the city, he is awkward around animals and frightens Goldy almost to the point of losing her colt. Randy thinks this is done out of malice; and he begins to resent Terry, who has come between him and his friend, Junior Wisenheimer, the son of Grandpa's hired hand.

All summer long, Randy chops cotton, hoes corn, and works in the hay.

Unaccustomed to hard physical labor, he is tempted to abandon his plan until his body becomes hardened to the labor from sun-up to sun-down. The real "heavies," two horse thieves with their eyes on Goldy, appear near the end of the story and try to steal the mare just on the one night Randy is left alone on the farm. Of course, Randy and Bullet, the plucky dog, come through to save Goldy by putting up such a scrap they frighten the thieves away.

By the end of the book, Randy has resolved his conflict, deciding his love for horses is stronger than his attraction to cycles. He is afraid to tell his parents, who have hinted that he changes his mind too much and flits from one thing to another; but with Grandpa urging on dreams of partnership in a palomino ranch right there on the property, Randy confesses that his real dream is to raise beautiful horses, starting with Goldy's new colt, Golden Arrow, born the night of the attempted theft.

His parents are relieved, for they have wanted Randy to make this decision all along. Junior approaches to explain that Terry isn't as tough as he sounds, but is actually a lonely boy who needs some friends. Randy is willing to forget Terry's past behavior and start anew.

The story moves along smoothly with just enough action to keep the reader turning the pages. Mrs. Heck, Tulsa author, has handled the conflicts of different generations, varied lifestyles and pressures of growing up, with skill, and in a straightforward but non-preachy manner.

**GOLDEN ARROW** is illustrated with five black and white drawings by Charles Robinson of Morristown, New Jersey. ■