

# A “Flinty” Romance

Forgiveness, faith, healing — and horses — are stars of this new book.

“Descending from two thousand feet in a private Cessna, Gilbert McCray stared at the terrain below. From this vantage point, the white flinty rocks embedded in the hills of his father’s ranch stood out even more than he remembered ... the plane angled down and as it turned, Gil whispered under his breath. Below him, racing across the prairie, was a red-haired vision on a gray horse, her long hair dancing in the wind like the mane and tail of the creature she rode.”

Deborah Vogts’ first book, “Snow Melts in Spring,” takes its readers to one of the most beautiful places in the heartland of America, the Kansas Flint Hills. Deborah, who has long been fascinated with the Flint Hills, tells the story of an old rancher, John McCray, who has lost his wife and oldest son, and befriends a young red-haired veterinarian, Mattie Evans.

Running from his past and a guilty conscience, John’s youngest son, Gil McCray, gives up a career in rodeo and becomes the starting quarterback for the San Francisco 49ers. Gil suffers a heartbreaking end to his NFL career. Then his American Quarter Horse, Dusty, whom he raised and trained, is hit by a drunk driver, killing one of the

teens in the car.

Amid this turmoil, Gil comes home for a visit. When he arrives on the ranch, he is accosted first thing by Dr. Evans, who does not recognize him.

The rest of the story unfolds as Gil and John wrestle with forgiving one another after years of pent-up anger and confusion. Forgiveness, faith and healing are all themes brought to life within the pages of this Christian fiction book.

“The best part about writing this book was being able to live in the Flint Hills through the characters,” says Deborah, a native of Kansas, but not of the Flint Hills.

“There is just something about the Flint Hills, there is this mystique about them almost. You just feel God’s presence there. Still, when I go through them, I’m drawn there. I just want to be there,” Deborah says. Those feelings are reflected through Mattie Evans in the book.

It was not hard for Deborah to write about two of her passions, the Flint Hills and horses. Deborah lives in Erie, Kansas, with her husband, Christopher, and two of her three daughters, Maggie, 18, and Abigail, 12, on a small farm where they raise and train Quarter Horses. Deborah gives the Quarter Horses credit for their intelligence and their ability to work cattle, an important trait on a ranch.

“We have been blessed with some amazing horses that have had some very strong minds,” she says.

Deborah grew up around horses and was always grateful for the freedom just to go out and ride.

“There is just a wonderful feeling being on the back of a horse and having that experience with the wind in your hair and the galloping underneath you,” she says.

Those experiences inspire her work as a writer. She encourages aspiring authors to read what they like and then write that kind of book, or in other words, write what they know.

“Snow Melts in the Spring” is the first in the four-part Seasons of the Tallgrass series. Each book will focus on a character who was introduced in the first book. Future characters having a starring role throughout the series include Natalie Adams, the hometown Miss Rodeo America contestant; Clara Lambert, local café owner; and Clive Roberts, a horse trainer.

“The books stand alone, but you’ll see the same characters throughout all of the books. It’s fun,” Deborah says.

“Snow Melts in Spring” hit bookstores in July. We found it at [www.amazon.com](http://www.amazon.com) for \$8.61.

— BY BRITANIA CASSIDAY



TREASURED IMAGES

