

Girl Warrior Media Kit

Author: Carmen Peone

Genre: Young Adult

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Blurb:

Charnaye Toulou has her sights pinned on winning the World Famous Suicide horse race during the Omak Stampede. The purse will help ease a financial burden of her paraplegic father, worn out mother, and ill grandfather. But more than that, she wants the respect earned from becoming “King of the Hill.” This race has been a long time rite of passage for male Natives. Charnaye is up for the challenge to prove females too can be awarded a warrior status as times are changing.

But when bully Hagan Hurst chokes her and causes her self-esteem to plummet, she hooks up with her Okanogan relatives and a horse that can take her the distance. Anonymous threatening letters find her and they all point to Hagan. Her father and mother become overly protective, but she meets a woman who has ran the race, jumpstarting her confidence. The day after Charnaye graduates from high school, she jumps in with cousin and trainer Craig Stuart and heads for her relative’s Omak ranch. And so do the letters.

Charnaye begins the rigorous training it takes to become “King of the Hill”, or in her case, “Queen”, and tries to figure out who is behind the threatening letters. She combats fear and anxiety, fighting to fulfill this rite of passage.

Excerpt:

We turn left, travel down Dewberry Avenue, and pass houses. Some are empty, some have elders waving at us from the shade of their porches. We make our way to the dirt lot. I dismount, walk through the gate, and head straight to the hill’s lip. A tribal park’s boat is in the water to the right as is a Jet Ski. They circle in the water like ravens spiraling down for a dead carcass.

A handful of men on horses standby in the river to the left. Spectators behind them wade in the water. Family and friends of the jockeys line the dike. I shift my weight and dirt rolls down the hill. A photographer points his lens up the hill from near the pine tree straight across. A hot sun beats down from an azure sky. *Breathe.* I wipe sweat from my brow, pray, and rub Rooster’s neck, thanking him for the journey he’s about to take me on. For a single moment I’m

calm. Until another jockey comes to the edge. Ripples of fear from my toes work their way to my belly, swirl around, and lodge in my throat.

“Easy as a sunset mixed with Carlos Nakai’s flute music and caramel fudge ice cream,” Benton whispers, leaning in to my ear from behind.

Shivers dance down my back. I rub my arms. I give him a small smile.

Officials call for the next person. Since there is a first time horse who needs the support of a veteran, that jockey and horse, Benton and I, and Billy Beck file into a group. Tone will follow us by himself. There is no start gun, so we just line up like we did at Omak Lake and trust everything will be fair. I rein Rooster into a spot.

A jockey waiting for his turn spits at me, “You shouldn’t be here.”

Another agrees. And another. I circle Rooster and keep to myself. Benton watches from a few feet away.

Billy Beck tells them to shut their mouths or he’ll do it for them. “She’s earned her right to be here.”

I nod, a small smile forming on my mouth. He nods back. I scratch him off my list of potential offenders. My legs feel Rooster’s muscles contracting. He paws the ground. Other horses rear, side step, or dance in place while the jockey holds them back. Even though it’s not their turn, the horses seem to know the drill.

“I’ll be coming after you,” one guy says. “Eventually.”

The others laugh and give me cat-calls.

“If you can catch me,” I say, without looking at him. I talk to Rooster in a soothing tone, one hand on the rein, the other on a hunk of mane.

Bio:

Carmen Peone is a LAURA Award-Winning author who lives on the Colville Confederated Indian Reservation with tribal member husband, Joe, gleaning cultural knowledge from family

and friends. She had worked with the late tribal elder, Marguerite Ensminger, for three years learning the Arrow Lakes-Sinyekst- Language and various cultural traditions and legends. She enjoys her horses and competing in Mountain Trail Competitions. With a degree in psychology, the thought of writing never entered her mind, until she married her husband and they moved to the reservation after college. She came to love the people and their heritage and wanted to create a legacy for her family.

Links to Social Media:

Website and blog: <http://carmenpeone.com/>

Carmen Peone's Western Tales: <https://www.facebook.com/groups/1241226489345567/>

Goodreads: <https://www.goodreads.com/book/show/40511768-girl-warrior>

Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/CarmenEPeone/>

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About me: <http://carmenpeone.com/about/>

Amazon Author Page: http://www.amazon.com/Carmen-Peone/e/B00A92O4R4/ref=sr_ntt_srch_lnk_1?qid=1451363711&sr=8-1

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BookBub: <https://www.bookbub.com/books/girl-warrior-by-carmen-peone>

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Reviews:

Charnaye Toulou has a goal. She wants to win the World Famous Suicide Horse Race and show everyone that girls can be as brave as boys. Despite threats and warnings, she pursues her dream with single-mindedness. Her grit makes her a hero and a role model for both the girls in her tribe and for young readers. I love this character, who doesn't let bullying or self-doubt stop her in her quest to succeed. This story is an excellent book for grandmothers or aunts to give to a junior high or high school girl who might be searching for their own answers. Carmen Peone writes about tribal customs with a keen eye to detail. I learned a lot, reading this story, and I love the message it conveys. I also loved the ledger art and had to google it to find out more about this intriguing art form that Charnaye introduced me to. I look forward to more of Carmen's stories

about contemporary Native American girls and the challenges they face. Anne Schroeder, author of *Marie Inez*.

This coming of age story is about a girl who has just graduated from high school and who competes in the World Famous Suicide Race at the Omak Stampede in eastern Washington State. Populated with characters who love and support Charnaye and those who wish her ill, she struggles with everything from her Native America family's poverty, through her grandfather's and father's ill health - and keeping the secret she holds from everyone. That she burns to become the queen of the hill, winner of the prize that has been an all-male bastion since its inception in 1935.

After reading and becoming a fan of Carmen Peone's excellent YA novels, I knew she was an insightful and talented author. This is the novel she was born to write! An expansion of her 2017 LAURA Award-winning short story from Women Writing the West, *Queen of the Hill*, this story is truly gripping. Carmen Peone lives on the Colville Reservation and is a marvelous horsewoman, setting her up as the perfect author for this story.

Linda Jacobs

Author of the award-winning Yellowstone Series of Novels

Tags:

Native American, contemporary fiction, young adult fiction, horses, horse racing, Washington Tribe, Colville Tribes, Sinixt, Lakes, action and adventure, rite of passage, World Famous Suicide Horse Race