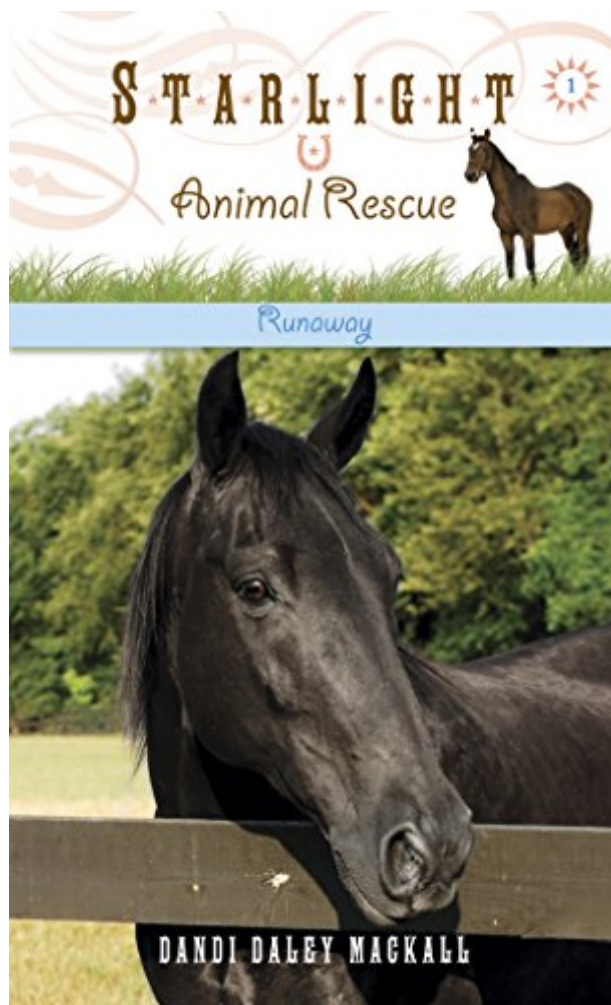


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# Runaway (Starlight Animal Rescue Book 1)



## Synopsis

A new series by Dandi Daley Mackall, author of the best-selling Winnie the Horse Gentler series! I've run away seven times—never once to anything, just away from. Maybe that's why they call me a “runaway,” and not a “run-to.” Meet 16-year-old Dakota Brown. She used to love all things “horse” until she lost everything, including hope. The minute she sets foot on her foster parents' farm—Starlight Animal Rescue—she plans her escape. But can an “impossible” horse named Blackfire and this quirky collection of animal lovers be the home she's always dreamed of? Starlight Animal Rescue: Where problem horses are trained and loved, where abandoned dogs become heroes, where stray cats become loyal companions. And where people with nowhere to fit in find a place to belong.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

Title: Runaway: 1 (Starlight Animal Rescue) Author: Dandi Daley Mackall Publisher: Tyndale

Kids ISBN: 978-1-4143-1268-2 [I can't help smiling to myself.](#)

Maybe that's why Blackfire and I have understood each other from the beginning. Running away is something I've always understood," Dakota ponders in Dandi Daley Mackall's first book in her Starlight Animal Rescue series, "Runaway." Targeted toward young pre-teen and teenagers who enjoy horses and rescuing animals, this eBook contains two hundred and seventeen pages. With no profanity, sexual scenes, or extreme violence, the novel is about finding hope and love through animals and God. Written in 2008, it includes eighteen easy-to-read chapters, ending with tips on finding the perfect pet and the author's biography. In this tome, Dakota Brown is not happy but pretends to be wherever she lives. Going to her eighth foster home, she knows what to say and how to act the part of an almost sixteen year old girl shuffled around. By keeping quirky lists of various topics, she is already devising a plan to run away the minute she sets foot on the next family's farm in Nice, Illinois. Yet the Coolidges seem different than her usual caregivers. Not only in charge of other foster children with health and psychological issues, the parents run an animal rescue shelter that includes horses, dogs, and cats. With the children's help, the entire family participates in guiding beaten, abused, and abandoned animals back to health, finding them new owners. When Dakota meets the frightened, unfriendly horse she calls Blackfire, she feels a kindred spirit that urges her to stop running away. Still convinced this family is a carbon copy of other foster homes, she continues to make plans with a former foster friend to escape on her upcoming birthday. Determined to learn how to drive a truck for her getaway, the young girl faces the family dynamics head on as she starts bonding with the black horse. Emotions and decisions consume her as she feels God's presence in her life, getting her attention. Written in first person with wit, sarcasm, and feeling, Mackall hits home on the teenager's angst and tender heart toward an animal she wants but, like her, cannot always understand. As the first of the series based on the rescue animal shelter, young readers will enjoy plenty of future stories. Thanks to Tyndale Kids for furnishing this book no charge on Facebook without any requirement to review it.

This is a wonderful beginning to the Starlight Animal Rescue series. The main character, Dakota, is 16 years old but I think both tweens and teens would enjoy this book. I was surprised but glad that the author portrayed a youth in foster care as her main character. Having worked with this group of youth before, I totally connected with Dakota's attitude of just wanting to run away, putting on a game face until she could leave, and trying not to get too attached to anyone. Other readers might think she's hard to like but I really felt for her since she had no sense of permanency. Just like the

author's other books, the supporting cast of characters are unique and funny, especially the foster parents (I wish there were a lot more foster parents like them!). Since I don't know much about horses, I always feel like I learn so much about horses and their behavior whenever I read Ms. Mackall's books. For those who read the Winnie the Horse Gentler series, you'll be happy to know these two series are connected. The foster family, the Coolidges, are related to Winnie's friend Catman Coolidge. Also, the kids email Winnie and Catman for advice about horses and cats. There were some pretty humorous moments and pretty touching ones, too. I really loved the Bible verse that finally spoke to Dakota about how much the Father loves us that He calls us His children because that is what we are! How it must speak to a child who longs for a father's love and a real family! On a side note, there is a helpful section at the end of the book on "tips for finding your perfect pet." I enjoyed this book and would recommend it to any tween/teen.

Dakota Brown is a foster kid who's been in the system long enough to have a sob story for any setting. She makes lists to feel in control and has almost mastered the art of avoiding attachment. She plans her escape before she ever arrives at her next home. Until Dakota is assigned to Starlight Animal Rescue and the family that runs it. There she finds herself stranded in the country with two other foster kids, dogs, cats, and horses. She had no problem keeping disconnected from the people, it was the horse that captured her heart. Dakota instantly connects with a horse dubbed Black Devil. The connection runs so deep that she renames the horse Blackfire and sneaks out to train the whenever she can. I initially ordered this book for my daughter, but when I found myself bored one day and the book sitting lonely on her shelf I couldn't help myself. It was hard to put down. I enjoyed the different personalities of the characters and the interesting peak into the world of the horse. I will definitely be encouraging my daughter to pick this one next time she is looking for something to read.

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