

## HALF BROKE HORSES

1. Assuming the voice and life experiences of her grandmother Lily, Jeannette Wallis tells tales of lives and events of years long before her birth. As a result, she calls her book a work of fiction, a “true-life novel.” What aspects of this book read as most true-to-life? What aspects of this book read as most fictitious?
2. Again and again, Lily loses or leaves a job or other situation because of her commitment to her own principles and to the rights of others. How do you feel about moral dedication: do you admire her commitment, or do you question her refusal to compromise? In your own life, what are your firm principles and values? When have you ever been asked to or tempted to or needed to compromise them?
3. Lily and Jim; Lily and Rosemary; Lily and Helen: how does Lily’s personality compare/contrast with each of the significant people in her life? What are some of the qualities in Lily that are accentuated by her relationship with these people significant in her life?
4. “Do the best you can.... That’s all anyone can do,” Lily tells Rosemary, as they battle the floods that assault the ranch. Later, Jim asserts, “We did a good job—good as we could.” In what circumstances does this philosophy serve Lily and Jim well? What are some of the other philosophies that fortify them in times of trouble?
5. “The last thing we need around here is another half-broke horse,” replies Lily when Rosemary asks to adopt one of the wild horses as her own. In what ways are Rosemary and the other children “half-broke horses” themselves? How well do you think this phrase works as title for this book? What other phrase from the book might serve as an even better title?