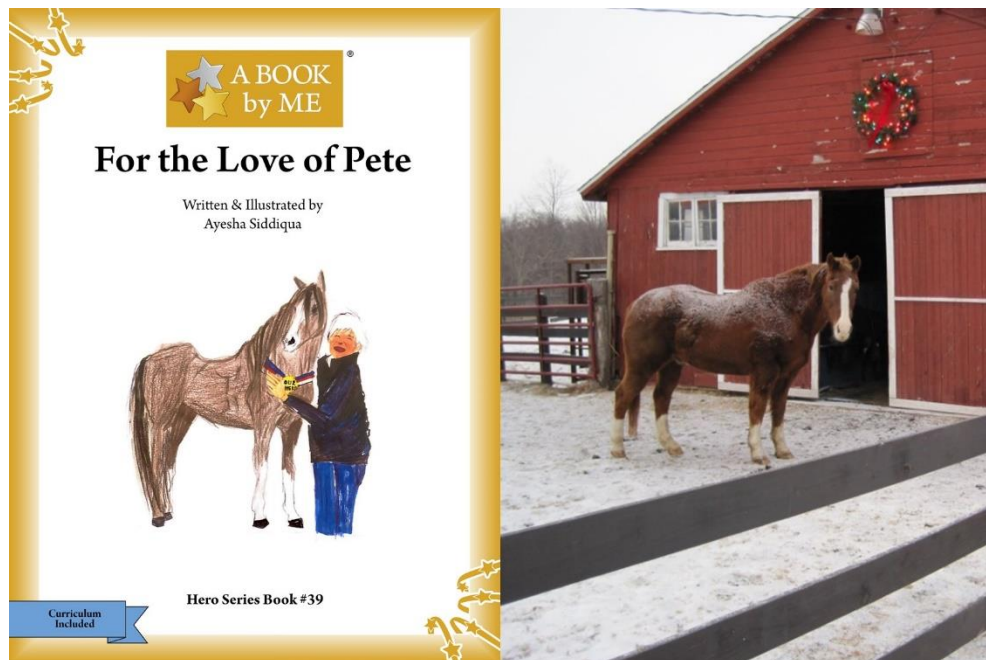


## *For the Love of Pete* Readers Theater

Based on the book by Ayesha Siddiqua

This title found in Victims to Victors book set  
at [understandingworks.org](http://understandingworks.org)



#determination

Pete the horse was for sale. He was older and had a swayed back so it appeared he was ready to be put out to pasture. But Karen Angotti saw the promise in him as a therapy horse for Rainbow Riders Therapeutic Horseback Riding Center. Pete proved her right and became a hero to the children with special needs who came there to learn how to ride horses. Pete may not have looked perfect but he had a big heart and he became the backbone of the riding program.

Cast:

[Narrator 1](#)

[Narrator 2](#)

[Pete-A horse \(formerly Continental Scamp\)](#)

[Karen-Founder of Rainbow Riders](#)

Special Riders:

[Kaylee](#)

[Wyatt](#)

[Danny](#)

[Brodie](#)



Author Ayesha Siddiqua

**Scene 1**  
**Farm in Central Illinois**

**Narrator 1:** This is a story about a therapy horse who became a hero to many children. The story begins in 2005. Little did this horse know that his life was about to change dramatically, and much for the better.

**Narrator 2:** On a lovely summer day a horse stands quietly in the barnyard of a family in central Illinois. This animal is for sale. He's an older horse, 22 years old, and his back sags a little. His name is "Continental Scamp."

**Continental Scamp (Pete):** I overheard someone say yesterday that I was for sale. Moments ago, I saw a car drive up and a woman wearing cowboy boots got out of the car, along with another lady. My owner welcomed her, calling her "Karen." I heard the owner tell Karen that my registered name was "Continental Scamp." Then I heard my owner tell Karen that I was for sale...price...\$1,000! I gave a whinny...that's a lot of money, I thought.

**Narrator 1:** Karen did all the things a buyer does: checked out Continental Scamp's feet and walked around petting him. Continental Scamp just stood real still.

**Continental Scamp (Pete):** Karen hopped onto my back and asked her friend to lead me around. While I walked, Karen laid down on my back. Yep, she even turned around backwards (no one had ever done that before, but I didn't object) and then she tossed a ball back and forth with one of the farm hands. I just kept walking! Karen's friend looked at Karen and said, "He is perfect! Just the horse you need!" I was thrilled! But, I wasn't sure what I was perfect for!

**Narrator 2:** When Karen did all these strange behaviors while riding, she wanted to make sure this horse was gentle enough for all kinds of children. Rainbow Riders Therapeutic Horseback Riding Center was to be Continental Scamp's new home. Once there Continental Scamp was re-named "Pete," which was an easier name for a child to say.

Scene 2

Barnyard in Monmouth, Illinois

**Pete:** When I moved to Rainbow Riders in 2005, my first horse friend was Carmella. After training with Karen and volunteers for several days, my first rider was a girl named Kaylee. She was five years old and a little antsy, and she didn't look at me or anyone in the eye. But, the volunteers leading me and walking at my sides helped her a lot. Kaylee didn't talk, not one word. She had autism. After three riding lessons Kaylee said her first word, "HAT"! When she dismounted, she touched her helmet and said "HAT" again! We were happy and so excited. That day, I felt I had a best friend. I even felt that I was her hero. And, that was just the start of all the wonderful people I would meet over the years.

**Karen:** Pete turned out to be the kind of horse every therapeutic riding program dreams of. I saw to it that every rider in their first lessons rode Pete. He was what we call "bomb proof." We could trust him to not spook at anything, and he loved the riders and the attention they gave to him. He got kissed a lot! Some riders came for lessons in wheel chairs, and some were afraid of lots of things; all of them had special needs. They all became Pete's friends. His sway back, steady walk and bumpy trot helped provide riders with important experiences that helped them learn how to do or say things they could not learn elsewhere.

**Danny:** When I came to Rainbow Riders I didn't trust anybody. Seriously! That's no wonder, because my classmates in Junior High teased and bullied me. The first time I arrived, I was asked to walk out into the pasture and pick out a horse I would like to work with. My lessons would consist of doing things with the horse without riding him. Only one horse stood still and looked at me. He was a brown horse with a white face and four white socks. I walked closer to him, started rubbing his neck, and he turned his head and nuzzled my shoulder. I told the instructor, "This is the horse for me"! She told me that his name was Pete. After spending twelve lesson hours with Pete, learning to groom him, clean his feet, and walk him in the arena and out in the pasture, a very special thing happened.

**Karen:** Danny was leading Pete in the arena. I called out to Danny, “Danny, please halt your horse. OK, now drop the lead rope and walk on”.

**Danny:** So, I did. And you know what happened! Pete followed me!

**Pete:** I liked Danny, and I trusted him. I wanted to be his friend, so I followed him. I saw Danny’s eyes open wide in wonder and a big smile came to his face. At that moment, I knew I had made a new friend! It was a powerful moment when I realized that my love could help this program help kids overcome the obstacles in their lives.

**Karen:** That same day, Danny wrote in his lesson journal: “I wish I could take Pete to school with me. Then nobody would bully me!”

**Pete:** One day a 3-year-old child was brought out to ride me. He had so many troubles. I heard someone say he just didn’t fit into a “diagnosis box,” whatever that meant. I could tell he had really weak muscles, he couldn’t hear, and he had a tube attached to his stomach which they called a feeding tube. The parents had been told he would probably never be able to walk. When the instructor put him on my back I saw the parent’s eyes widen. I’m sure they were really worried.

**Wyatt:** Over the years I came every summer for lessons. My family loved Pete, the instructors and the volunteers as much as I did. We were all overwhelmed with joy when one day, years later, **I walked alone** to the arena, mounted Pete and sat alone on his back. With reins in my hands, I rode him all by myself. I no longer had a feeding tube and had hearing aids to help me hear. I was so proud of myself, I couldn’t help but smile. I guess the tears in the eyes of my folks and staff were tears of joy! Pete nuzzled me when I dismounted. I gave him a great big hug!



**Pete**: My best horse friend Carmella and I often ate and sometimes slept in the red barn which had been built by Karen's dad many years before. Her dad had passed away, and I believed he had become a star high in the sky. Every night, I thought I could feel his eyes watching me from the sky. He seemed to be proudly looking over the Rainbow Riders program. I could feel him, and it encouraged my heart to help his daughter Karen and the Rainbow Riders program she had created. Carmella and I would talk about him after our busy, yet happy work days with the riders and staff.

Like Karen's dad, I would become a star, too, one day. I would watch over my young friends as they grew more confident and achieved new goals with pride. I realized that the doubts and fears I had about being useless because of my sway back were a waste of time. I had such happy memories of me and my friends working and playing together!

**Narrator 1**: Pete passed away in February of 2011. Karen was very sad and knew how very much the riders would miss him, especially Brodie! Brodie had Down's syndrome and had difficulty speaking. But, while riding Pete, he would always talk to into his ear and then caress him. It was almost as though Pete could understand Brodie's words. After his lesson, Brodie would always give Pete a kiss bye bye.

**Narrator 2**: Before lessons began that next summer, Karen called Brodie's mom to tell her Pete was in "horsie heaven," and asked her to please help prepare Brodie before his first summer lesson at Rainbow Riders. Brodie's mom expressed her sympathies and assured me she would do her best.

**Karen**: When Brodie came for his first lesson that summer, the horse Champ was standing ready for Brodie to mount. Brodie said, "Where's Pete"? I said, "Oh, Brodie, Pete is in horsie heaven... this is Champ. He's a nice horse. Pete went away, he's in horsie heaven." The next week was a repeat of the week before. The third week, Brodie got on Champ and told Champ to "walk on." The horse leader started walking Champ into the arena, at which point Brodie shouted out "stop!" The leader halted Champ, Brodie put down his reins, put his hand to his ear as if holding a phone and said, "Hi Pete! Yep, it's me, Brodie. Yeah. Ok. Bye Pete." And, that was it. From then on, Brodie rode Champ without mentioning Pete.

**Narrator 2**: No one on earth knows what was discussed in that phone call between Brodie and Pete in horsie heaven. But all present watched with tears in their eyes.

**Narrator 1**: Pete was a favorite and a hero to kids who had issues that some folks cannot imagine. Pete may not have looked perfect himself, but he had a big heart and became the backbone of the therapeutic riding program. So, even today, somewhere over the rainbow way up high, from a land you hear of in lullabies, Karen's dad and Pete twinkle as stars with pride looking down over Rainbow Riders, who are still growing strong.