

ELLE

**June 2015
STEPDOG**

By Mireya Navarro

(FICTION)
**THE ELLE'S
LETTRES 2015
READERS' PRIZE**

Fifteen ELLE readers choose their favorite among three promising new books—this month, true tales about the complicated, at times crucial bonds between humans and animals

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NO BETTER FRIEND
ROBERT WEINTRAUB
(LITTLE, BROWN)

We may have a best-seller on our hands with this carefully reported saga about British POW Frank Williams and his canine companion, a pointer named Judy. Together they survived three years of grueling, abusive imprisonment by Japanese forces during World War II. The narrative of their survival thoroughly won over both readers who ordinarily shun animal stories and those who generally prefer to avoid reading books about war.



②

**LAST CHANCE
MUSTANG**
MITCHELL BORNSTEIN
(ST. MARTIN'S)

Samson is a wild mustang whose botched domestication has rendered him unpredictable, violent, and dangerous. But lawyer and horse whisperer Bornstein acquires him and undertakes his gradual, painstaking rehabilitation. While peppered with extensive polemical passages about the plight of Samson's peers across America's wilderness that might not be to everyone's taste, this deeply felt portrayal of the bond between man and horse has universal appeal.



③

STEPDOG
MIREYA NAVARRO
(PUTNAM)

When Pulitzer Prize-winning reporter Navarro became a stepmother, she didn't anticipate having to reckon with her new family's mutt, Eddie, who hilariously (in retrospect at least) nearly managed to destroy her marriage. His possessive and passive-aggressive antics play more as counterpoint than central theme to the author's exploration of how stepfamilies come to realign and deepen their ties over time—but the beast also serves as an apt metaphor for the process.

—Ben Dickinson

