

TITLE: *Ride of Passage*
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GENRE: Coming-of-age
ESTIMATED BUDGET: \$2-4 Million

LOGLINE: A thirteen-year-old girl goes on a forbidden horseback riding adventure. If caught, there will be hell to pay but sometimes you just have to break the rules.

Stand by Me meets *The Secret Life of Bees*

Set on the prairie of northwestern Oklahoma in 1969, *Ride of Passage* follows the forbidden horseback riding adventure of Axelle Erickson with her two best friends, Kelly and newcomer Benita. If caught, there will be hell to pay but the fun they will have outweighs the risk. She needs an escape from her circumstances. Axelle has been blamed for her brother's motorcycle accident in which he loses his foot. Shunned by her family and the community, she has known nothing but chores and homework. She longs to go riding with her pals like she used to. When her parents go out of town, she seizes the opportunity.

Being a curious sort, Axelle also wants to see where the hermit lived who died and was eaten by his dogs. Another ruse for the trip is to find out if the Widow Johnson is really a witch and practices voodoo. If so, is she responsible for the dead chickens in the community? On their adventure, the girls are chased by dogs, play in the creek, have a picnic, go noodlin', are confronted by a rattlesnake, and nearly trampled in a stampede. At every stop, they are pestered by two bullies.

On the way home, they are caught in a thunderstorm and must take refuge in the witch's barn. Instead of being evil as the gossips say, she is kind. When the girls go to sleep, exhausted, she allows them shelter and warmth in her barn and cooks them breakfast the next morning. Benita discovers that the woman is colored. The girls learn that her name is Aliyah and that she has been a victim of the bullies and the gossip of the community. This act of kindness begins a lifetime friendship between Aliyah and Axelle.

What started as a small riding adventure became life changing for Axelle. Through grit and the strength of friendship, she traverses the obstacles and travails of the journey and takes her first steps into womanhood.