

Phar lap: heart of a nation and secretariat



**ASSIGN
BUSTER**

Connected Text Study Movies PHAR LAP: HEART OF A NATION and SECRETARIAT I have chosen to compare two movies that are both based on true stories on famous horse racing legends Phar Lap and Secretariat. This study itself is not set to compare the two horses themselves because they are both champions in their own right but is to connect the movie versions of their stories. Both of these inspiring movies have many of the same key aspects however each text has its own particular style, plot and structure.

The movie Phar Lap written by famous Australian playwright David Williamson starts its story at the end showing the last moments ending in Phar Lap's death, the film then flashes back to the beginning of Phar Lap's story when he was purchased on impulse by trainer Harry Telford. The movie shows that even though Harry is going through a time of financial hardship, he believes that this horse has what it takes to become a champion and backs everything he has to follow this dream. Harry quotes " That horse is going to be a champion - can't anyone understand that?

He's going to be a champion! " Just like Phar Lap the movie Secretariat that is based on the book written by journalists William Nack and movie script written by Mike Rich is also about believing, it is based on the true story of a house wife Penny Chenery and a horse who overcomes incredible odds to rise to victory. The movie starts when Penny is left to dissolve her family's failing estate and she discovers a dream of hope when by chance and the toss of a coin she inherits a new foal that is born on her father's farm.

Both movies not only gives us insight into human dreams and struggles , but both authors show us how people are strengthened and both focus on how

people become stronger by the challenges they face. Phar Lap loses his first races but Harry Telford's faith in the horse is unshakable and thanks to the love and help of the stableboy Tommy Woodcock who seems to connect and understand Phar Lap, he suddenly starts to win his races. It soon becomes clear that this heroic horse simply isn't going to lose. In the film the jockey declares " If anything catches us today, mate, it'll have to have wings" reassuring us that he is unstoppable.

The crowd would gather with growing excitement just to see this incredible horse run. After all horse racing is about the glamour, the excitement, the money and the thunder of the hooves which is expressed well in both movies. In the movie Secretariat deals with other issues which were seen to be a male dominated sport. Penny boldly deals with these issues on her own terms and proves to be successful. She shows to her family and herself that it is important to stand up for yourself and follow your goals and not to let others push you around.

Penny quotes " This is about life being ahead of you and you run at it! Because you never know how far you can run unless you run. " I just love this quote because it means to me that in life if you believe you just have to try because if you don't you will never know if you could have achieved. The horse Secretariat follows with success winning its races always coming from behind. The scenes of close ups of flying hooves, mud, dirt and bobbing horse heads bring a level of excitement with the will to win.

The story continues with the triumph of a series of events that results in Secretariat becoming the first U. S. Triple Crown champion in 25 years and

also setting records that still stand today. Behind the glamour of horse racing also lies a ruthless industry motivated by profit and some of the film Phar Lap brings certain concerns within the racing world that causes trouble for Phar Lap. It is stated that Phar Lap was becoming too much of a champion and was winning too many races. " If something's good that's O. K. But if something's too good, that upsets the entire system. When Phar Lap wins several top races his status results in heavy losses for the professional gamblers. Just after winning an important race in Mexico, Phar Lap mysteriously gets sick, collapses and dies and although the film doesn't really stay it, it is assumed that Phar lap was murdered because of gambling interest. This scene is very emotional and this just brings a tear to my eye. Phar Lap was also known as " Big Red" and this connection was latter given as a nickname to Secretariat after the racing community wouldn't allow this name as a racing name and had to come up with something fancy.

Both of these famous legends are considered the greatest horses of all time. Although both movies are about racing horses the text suggest that it's not just about the horses but how humans can connect with the animals. It wasn't just about the money but about the 4 legged athletes that ran their hearts out to bring them to victory. The heart of these stories is just like the text, it's not just about the actual winning but it's in the effort, in giving it all you've got. I enjoyed both of these movies particularly because they are about following your dreams.