

[PDF] Whirlwind

Alison Hart - pdf download free book



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Description:

About the Author A Virginia author of more than twenty-four novels for children and teens, Alison Hart is an avid horse rider who loves a good mystery. She has been reading and writing about animals since she was a girl. Her novel *Shadow Horse*, the prequel to *Whirlwind*, was nominated for an Edgar Award. To find out more about Alison, her horses, and her books, visit her Web site at www.alisonhartbooks.com.

Excerpt. © Reprinted by permission. All rights reserved. "Ow! That hurt!" Jasmine Schuler scolded the huge chestnut horse she was grooming. Shadow pricked his ears gleefully. Quickly Jas curled her fingers into pretend teeth. When Shadow swung around to nip her again, she "bit" him on

the side of his mouth.

Throwing up his head, the gelding stared at her in surprise.

Jas stifled a laugh. Shadow was special, because she'd helped rescue him from a killer auction. He'd had an untreated thyroid condition and had been in bad shape. Now that the horse was healthy, he'd turned into a brat who needed to learn proper manners.

Shadow inspected his feed tub, licking it for leftover grain instead of trying to bite her again. "That's better," Jas praised.

When Shadow had arrived at Second Chance Farm, an animal rescue facility, Jas had turned him out with Jinx, a quiet quarter horse. Jinx used flattened ears and his teeth to put the bigger gelding in his place. Jas was trying to do the same, and it was starting to work.

As a reward for good behavior, she massaged the crest of his neck. Horse massage. Jas had been riding from the time she could walk. Yet, since living at the rescue farm, her foster home, she'd learned so many new things about animals.

While Jas brushed Shadow's springy mane, she thought about how her life had changed. Less than two months ago, she'd been living at High Meadows, a premier horse farm. Her grandfather, Karl, was the resident caretaker. She had worked there, too, grooming and riding the farm's top-rated show horses. Then the owner, Hugh Robicheaux, had accused Grandfather of killing Jas's favorite horse, a beautiful chestnut Thoroughbred named Whirlwind. Grandfather had been so distraught that he'd had a stroke. He'd gone to the hospital, then a nursing home. Jas had been so angry she'd attacked Hugh. She'd ended up in court, then in foster care.

Foster care. Jas yanked at a tangle in Shadow's mane. When she'd first arrived at Second Chance Farm, she'd been miserable. Now she loved it here. But soon her grandfather was getting out of the nursing home. Foster care would end. Originally, her social worker had arranged for Jas and Grandfather to live in an apartment, which meant that Jas wouldn't be able to take care of Shadow. Miss Hahn, her foster mom, had arranged for the big horse to be adopted. Even now, Jas's heart twisted at the thought of losing Shadow. And not just because she'd lost so much already. She loved the giant goof of a horse.

But at the last minute, Miss Hahn had decided against adopting out Shadow. She had asked Jas and Grandfather to live with her at the farm. Jas would continue caring for Shadow and the other animals, and Grandfather would work as a caretaker. It was a second chance for both of them.

Jas hugged Shadow, her arms barely reaching around his huge neck. "You're still mine to love," she told him. So why am I not totally happy?

Whirlwind. Jas slid the worn photo from the back pocket of her jeans. The mare's head was high, her ears pricked for the camera. A tricolored ribbon hung from her bridle. Jas sat in the saddle, posing for the camera, too. Her expression was triumphant, sparkling. The picture had been taken last May after they'd won a championship at Devon.

Now the mare was gone.

A chorus of honking and clucking announced the arrival of Miss Hahn. Jas stuck the photo back in her pocket. She peered from the stall just as her foster mother strode into the barn, her stiff leg

swinging. Trotting after her was an entourage of animals: geese, cats, and chickens. Jas had nicknamed them "the underfoot gang," because they always got in the way. Old Sam, a German shepherd, and Rose, the farm's potbellied pig, had been patiently waiting for Jas outside Shadow's stall. But when they spotted Miss Hahn, they rushed toward her, tails wagging furiously.

"They're like paparazzi stampeding a celebrity," Jas said to her foster mother. "All you need is a red carpet and evening gown instead of a dirt floor and overalls." Her light mood faded when she saw the solemn look on Miss Hahn's face.

"Officer Lacey from Animal Control called. We have an emergency," Miss Hahn said. "The trailer's hitched and ready. Chase isn't here yet, and I'd like some help. You still have time before lockdown. How about it?"

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