

JUMPING TO CONCLUSIONS

I urged Viking into a canter as we entered the arena, excited to get the round started. The jumps were set at 1.3 meters, a personal best for us. It seemed like yesterday Viking was being licked by his mother.

We approached the first jump ready for takeoff.

“Good Boy,” I patted Viking’s neck. He was loving every minute of it – he knew he owned my heart.

The rest of the round was picture perfect. The last fence was in my sight, all we had to do was clear the rail and be under the time allowed.

One, I looked at the fence.

Two, I counted my strides.

Three, perfect takeoff. YAY, over – and about to win – when ...

NO! A dog barked. Viking spooked.

Down, down, down – I hit the ground. Pitch black.

All around me I heard sirens wailing. Everything was foggy. I could make out a shadow sitting beside me. Squinting, I see who it is.

“Dad,” I whispered.

“Oh, goodness, I..... worried. Hang..... there..... will.....OK.” I could barely hear him.

I tried to concentrate, but it was too much for me. I drifted off again.

Hearing murmuring around me, I slowly lifted my head and looked around. I was in a hospital bed! I could make out the blurry figures of mum, dad, and a stranger – was that a doctor? I rolled over on my side wincing in pain. I was extremely nervous to see what had happened to me. Would I still be able to ride?

Suddenly, a horrible thought came into my head and a shout came out of my mouth, surprising everyone, including myself.

“Is Viking, OK?!”

I was panicking – my whole body was shaking – was he OK? The pinto pony I had loved all my life could break my heart.