

Amber's Challenge

Prologue

I don't understand why Amber has started to ignore me. When I first arrived, she loved me! I think it's because I let her down, but I couldn't help it; my back hurt and when we tried to jump higher I just couldn't bear it. Having a rest and trying something new – cross country – helped and I thought that we were becoming a better team. Amber felt like she was starting to trust me more and more. I know I made a mistake at the water jump in our last competition, but it was an accident. Now Amber seems to not want me. What can I do?

I thought we *loved* galloping in the fields but we don't do that now; she doesn't seem to want to ride me at all anymore. The first time we went riding together, I was so excited about being out in the open, I bolted. I couldn't help it. It just felt so good to be free. It was such a long time since I'd been able to run like that, it was like something took over me. I just couldn't stop. I felt alive for the first time in a long time. But now I feel bad. Is that why Amber doesn't like me? Did I frighten her so much, I've ruined any chance of her ever loving me like she loves Honey and Pearl?

I thought I was settling in here, but maybe Amber doesn't want me after all. Maybe I'm just not right for her. Maybe she's not right for me. Her nerves infect me sometimes and make me do things I shouldn't. I just want to do the right thing for her. If only she could be more confident, maybe I would know what to do. But I like that she's kind and gentle. She doesn't pull me about like some of my riders have and she's never rough in any way.

I hope that I get another chance to make her like me again. I need to try and be quieter and steadier like the Fell ponies she loves, but I don't know if I can. It's just not me. And although I have my lovely new saddle and my back doesn't hurt as much as it used to, I still keep expecting it to. I still get anxious about it and it makes me fidget, although I know it makes Amber scared.

What's going to happen? I wish I could see into the future and know that it will all work out. But I can't. I will just have to hope. Hope is all I have.

Molly