

# Trusting Molly

## Prologue

I didn't like it when I came to live where I am now, with only one other pony for company. I've always been used to being part of a herd. I was born on the fells and grew up roaming wild with my mother and the other mares and foals. We saw little of humans. Until the day they came for us. I must've been about four years old when the humans came and rounded me, and the others around my age, into boxes on wheels and took us away from the fells and our family. Although I was grown up and my mother had a new foal, I still cried for her that day. But she couldn't help me. She was left behind and I never saw her again.

The place we were taken to was terrifying. It smelled of fear and sweat. Metal clanged, hooves clattered and loud voices mingled into a cacophony that disorientated me. Panic seized me and all I wanted was to escape back to the silence of the fells. But in no time I was led into a small pen and chased around it, an inescapable amplified voice following every step I took. A hammer banged and I was taken out of the pen and into another box on wheels. Alone for the first time, I shook all the way to my new home. It was time to start a new life

My new owner was kind. She handled me gently and spoke quietly. Patiently, she introduced me to a bridle and then to a saddle and eventually she started to ride me. But on those rides, I discovered the world was filled with threats that frightened me and made me constantly nervous and jumpy. She never lost her temper but I don't think she was happy with me.

After that, I went to a place where there were lots of other ponies – many of them Fells like me, but none from my herd. I never saw any of them ever again. At the new place, I didn't have one rider, but many. Some scared me with their nerves. I could feel their trembling hands on the reins, conducting their fear right into me like electricity. Others scared me with their

roughness. Their jabs and pulls and kicks made me flinch and shy. Then they'd shout and startle me.

The anxiety made me sweat. But at least I wasn't alone. We were always ridden in groups and the company of the other ponies meant I could relax a little. They made me feel protected and safe.

But then I came here, with just one other pony for company – Pearl. It was daunting at first without the security of the other ponies. Without them, everything was frightening again and I want back to being nervy and jumpy. I was unhappy and just wanted to return to the other place. It was nearby. I'd often catch the smell of my friends on the breeze and yearn to be with them. To be part of the herd.

But then I was introduced to jumping. It wasn't like anything I'd ever done before. It was exciting! It was just me and the rider, but somehow that didn't matter. When I jump, I can focus and shut everything else out. Now I'm being taken to competitions and I can feel how much my rider, Amber, enjoys it. Sometimes she's nervous, which unsettles me a bit, but we give each other confidence. It's a nice feeling.

At first, the noise and atmosphere at shows was alarming and reminded me of the horrible place from the past. But the feeling from the ponies was different. They weren't afraid. They were excited. They were enjoying themselves. It was infectious!

I'd love to continue going to shows but Amber has a new pony now; an experienced competition pony, so I doubt she'll want me anymore. I'll always be here though, ready to step in if needed. I might not *be* the best, but I always give my best. I think Amber understands that. Although I'm a pony and she's a person, it's like we're the same mind. We make a good team.

*Honey*