

"ZIMBIE"

By

Surina Nel

22 Moregrove St
Westering,
Port Elizabeth
South Africa
6025

Phone: +27 73 200 3385
Email: surinanel1978@gmail.com

FADE IN:

EXT. RIDING SCHOOL - EARLY MORNING

Legs, neatly booted in black leather boots walks past, the boots perfectly camouflaged against the dark legs. Bright purple trimmings on white boots on gray legs moves in sync with the black legs.

Dust rises where the hooves touch and lifts off the ground, the riders chat indistinctly as they ride past. In the background a little white foal is seen, running back and forth, like a kid in a candy store.

The little, white foal, ZIMBIE, stops for a while. A smile plays on his lips, exposing two big front teeth. He looks around, his eyes scanning through the hordes of horses, then runs further, to continue his search.

He reaches a well set, gray, Welsh Pony mare, with big apple bums and legs that seems a little too short. ZIMBIE'S MOM looks from her feeding bin and smiles at Zimbie, lovingly.

Zimbie stretches his little neck to see better, his mane is playing in the slight breeze. A blue eye becomes apparent as he turns to look at more on coming horses.

ZIMBIE

(Frustrated)

Where is he?

Zimbie's mom looks up from her blue feeding bin. She chases a fly from her shoulder, her white head in sharp contrast with her bushy gray mane.

ZIMBIE'S MOM

(Curious)

Who are you looking for, Zimbie?

Melodramatic, Zimbie rolls his eyes at his mother's ignorance. His southern accent quite noticeable

ZIMBIE

Cesar, Ma.

Confusion is written across her face as she looks at Zimbie.

ZIMBIE'S MOM

(Confused)

Ceasar? Who is Ceasar?

At whit's end, Zimbie shakes his head slowly, ears drooping. He takes a calming breath before he speaks.

ZIMBIE

Ceasar Ma... Everyone knows who Ceasar is, he is the coolest dude EVER.

Not giving his mom chance to answer, he runs to the top corner of the paddock. Scanning through the bottom opening of the white, painted, wooden fence, hoping to see Ceasar.

Looking to his left he sees nothing. When he looks to the right, his view is obscured by something big. Gasping, he slowly looks up, wide-eyed, to see what it is.

Stepping back to get a better view, he trips and lands on his behind in a cloud of dust. While the dust settles, CEASAR, a handsome, big, bay Irish Draught stallion extends his head over the fence.

CEASAR

(Humorous concern)

All OK there, Laddy?

Zimbie shakes his head. He takes in the blue ear covers, the diamond studded brow band, the white blaze running down the length of the handsome face.

Admiration fills his eyes when he recognizes Ceasar and shrieks in excitement, while stomping his little hooves on the ground.

ZIMBIE

(Excited)

It's you...It's really you.

CEASAR

(Boasting)

Aye, the one and only, Laddy. Obviously you have heard about me.

Zimbie nods. Star struck.

ZIMBIE

Yeah, of course I have... You are my
hero...

Zimbie gets up on his lanky legs, stepping around, looking
at Ceasar with admiration.

ZIMBIE (CONT'D)

When I grow up, I want to be just like
you.

CEASAR

Splendid Laddy, splendid. Better get
practicing then, it is a lot of hard work.

Ceasar looks down at Zimbie, his little pointy ears focused
on Ceasar.

CEASAR (CONT'D)

Looks like you'll have to learn to use
those legs properly first, can't jump if
you can't walk.

Ceasar's rider gathers the reins.

CEASAR (CONT'D)

Well Lad, I got to go. Take care of
yourself. I'll be seeing you around.

Big-eyed Zimbie nods, the only response, as he battles to
find the right words.

CEASAR (CONT'D)

And Laddy...Don't forget to believe in
yourself.

Zimbie struggles to his feet, his eyes glued to Ceasar, a
big smile runs across his face, his big front teeth glint in
the sun.

Ceasar winks at Zimbie as he trots off when his rider guides
him in the direction of the warm-up arena.

Zimbie opens and closes his mouth like a gaping fish for air, wanting to say something, but then thinking the better of it when Ceasar trots off. He shouts after Ceasar.

ZIMBIE

(Confused)

Wait! What do you mean?

Ceasar trots on, unable to hear the tiny voice through the bustle of the horses and sounds.

Eager to share the experience, Zimbie runs back to his mom, who is peacefully eating from her feeding bin, her tail, swishing at the pestering flies.

He trips over his lanky legs, tumbles head over heels. He comes to a stop in a cloud of dust.

He gets up on his lanky legs and shakes his body. A dust cloud arises from him; two sneezes follow in succession.

ZIMBIE'S MOM

Bless you Zimbie.

ZIMBIE

(Chuckles)

Thanks Ma.

Zimbie prances around his mom

ZIMBIE

(Excited)

I saw Ceasar, he spoke to me. He said if I practice I can be like him.

Mom looks at Zimbie. Her left eyebrow lifts in doubt, exposing her blue eye.

ZIMBIE'S MOM

Did he now?

Zimbie looks as more horses walk past the paddock.

ZIMBIE

(Excitedly admiring)

They are SO cool. When I grow up, I want
to be just like them, a show horse.

Zimbie's mom shakes her head in dismay before she correcting
Zimbie.

ZIMBIE'S MOM

(Patiently)

You'll never be a horse Zimbie, to be
horse you need to be 14 hands high. We are
welsh ponies; we don't grow that tall. You
will be lucky if you grow to 12 hands
high.

She takes another bite of food and chews slowly before she
speaks.

ZIMBIE'S MOM

You can be a show pony though.

Zimbie nods his head, contemplating.

ZIMBIE

(curious)

Do they like jumping, Ma?

ZIMBIE'S MOM

(wisely)

Some of them do, Zimbie, but most of them
do it, just because their riders expect
them to.

ZIMBIE

(As an after-thought)

They look happy.

ZIMBIE'S MOM

(Sincere)

Things aren't always as it seems Zimbie.
You always have to remember that.

Zimbie watches the horses walking past, he looks at the riders on their backs, dressed in white jodhpurs and black jackets with shiny buttons.

ZIMBIE

(Excited)

Holy horses, look how shiny those buttons are.

ZIMBIE'S MOM

(Sternly)

ZIMBIE! Your language.

Zimbie drops his head, he looks guilty.

ZIMBIE

I am sorry, Ma.

Zimbie's Mom smiles tenderly and looks at Zimbie. Unable to contain his excitement, he takes off and races along the fence to the top corner of the paddock. He stops, whinnies and runs back to his mother, again.

ZIMBIE

I'm going to watch the show.

Zimbie takes two quick bites of alfalfa, the fluffy little tail swishing, he chews and swallows quickly, then he runs to the other side of the paddock again, to watch the horses jump the beautifully decorated course.

A big chestnut horse, smartly dressed in a brown saddle, white numnah, a bridle with decorated brow band and ear cover starts his round.

He clears the first three jumps effortless. At the triple bar, at number four, he drops his feet too quick and tips the pole, which bounces, but stays in the cup. He clears the round after six more clear jumps.

A gray mare, with purple trimmings on her bridle, saddle and boots is jumping next. She clears the first five jumps easily. At number six, on the spread, the mare refuses, spooked by the decorations on either side of the jump.

EDNA, a 13-year-old girl with brown hair in a plait hanging down her back, clings onto the saddle to prevent a fall. She recovers quickly, turns the mare around and pats her neck gently.

EDNA

Come on girl. You can do this.

They try the spread again, but the mare refuses a second time. Edna pats her horse's neck. She looks determined.

EDNA (CONT'D)

(Pleading)

Come on girl. Do this for me.

She pats the horse's neck. She asks her to jump. The gray mare jumps. She drops her hind legs too quick and touches the back pole. It tumbles to the ground. They clear the rest of the round.

Zimbie watches the classy riders and their horses motionless.

INSERT DAYDREAM

Zimbie sees himself as a show jumper, taking on jump after jump with precision and determination, jumping a beautiful clear round. The crowd CHEERS loudly. The BELL to the next round brings him back to the present.

END DAYDREAM

The next round starts. Ceasar sails effortlessly over all the jumps and jumps a faultless clear round.

Zimbie takes the time to run to his mom. He runs as fast as he can, while trying to buck. Running too fast, bumps into Mom's butt. Her head flies up in shock. Eyes wide open.

ZIMBIE'S MOM

(Scolding)

Zimbie!

ZIMBIE

(Chuckles)

Sorry Ma, I was practicing. I couldn't stop. Did you see Ceasar jump? Did you?

ZIMBIE'S MOM

(Smiling patiently)

I did.

A voice over the loudspeaker calls the horses for the jump-off.

ZIMBIE'S MOM (CONT'D)

The jump-off is about to start.

ZIMBIE

Can't miss THAT.

Zimbie runs off, bucking like a bronco. He reaches his look out spot. Over-excited, he finds it hard to stand still, but forces himself, determined not to miss a single moment.

In the arena the jump-off starts. A chestnut mare with a white blaze, mane plated in neat little balls is going first. Her rider looks confident.

The bell sounds. They start their round. She clears her first two jumps beautifully. They turn short behind the triple bar. They come in at too much of an angle for the next. The mare runs out.

They canter in a small circle, regain composure quick, goes for and clears the last two jumps in good time.

Emotions of excitement plays on Zimbie's face as he watches the horses jump one at a time. He dashes left and right, "helping" the horses into turns and over jumps, uttering words of encouragement as they go.

VOICE OVER LOUDSPEAKER

Jane and Ceasar, please enter the arena.

Zimbie stretches his neck in anticipation. He is determined not to miss a second of this round.

Ceasar starts at the sound of the bell. Starting off in a gallop, he goes as fast as possible, but slow enough to avoid a run out. Careful not to touch any poles, he clears his jumps one after another.

They race across the finish with the winning time. The rider throws her arms around his neck. She laughs and cries together with praising her amazing horse for a perfect performance.

ZIMBIE

I hope that one day, my rider will love me like that, and that we'll sail over the jumps, just like Ceasar did.

Zimbie continues watching. A wealth of emotions plays across his face.

EXT. RIDING SCHOOL - DAY

Riders circle INSTRUCTOR SHERRY, a shortish lady of about forty, who stands in the middle of the rectangular arena.

SUPER: 6 YEARS LATER

She wears a white cap over her shoulder-length blond hair.

All seven riders sit perfectly upright, heels pushed down, both hands on the reins. They eagerly await instructions, wanting to impress her.

INSTRUCTOR SHERRY

OK when I tell you to, you all turn left.
Do you understand?

The young riders nod in agreement.

INSTRUCTOR SHERRY (CONT'D)

I said, do you understand?

RIDERS

Yes, Ma'am.

INSTRUCTOR SHERRY

All at the same time. One, two, three,
turn...

The bit in Zimbie's mouth hurts him as the little girl yanks on the reins to get Zimbie to go left. He throws his muzzle in the air.

ZIMBIE

OW! That hurts.

Zimbie takes a few steps back, trying to release the pressure in his mouth. His rider smacks him in his flank with her crop, causing him to lunge forward.

The speed of it happening causes the little girl to lose her balance and fall.

A confused Zimbie looks at the girl who gets up and dusts herself off. She comes towards him. Zimbie looks around flustered.

ZIMBIE

I need to get out of here.

She lunges forward to grab the reins, Zimbie yanks them out of her reach, swerves to the right and runs to the stables.

In the tack room, PHILLIP, a kindhearted, quiet boy, hears a galloping horse. Upon exiting, he sees Zimbie standing at the stables. Zimbie looks completely bewildered.

He soothingly talks to Zimbie while inching closer, until he is able to reach the reins. He takes a hold of them and while talking calmly to Zimbie he leads him back to the arena.

EXT. FARMYARD - DAY

JAMES(9) chats to Prince non-stop, as he systematically works his way around, brushing the old Clydesdale. His hand comes to a stop as it reaches the ribs, showing painstakingly. He runs his hand across the ribs, his fingers falling away in the sinking hollows between the ribs.

JAMES

You are getting thin. I will ask Dad
to have a look at you.

The old horse's head hangs low. His face is now mostly
covered in gray.

JAMES (CONT'D)

Do you remember when you came here? I was
only four.

James continues to brush Prince's mane.

JAMES (CONT'D)

Mom didn't want me around you. She was
scared that you will hurt me, but I knew
we would be best friends.

Prince shakes his head in affirmation. The movement not so
fast as what it used to be.

PRINCE (V.O)

I loved you from the first day. I was too
old they said, he should be put down, but
you got to me before Dad could. You saved
me.

James finishes up and hugs Prince.

JAMES

Come boy. Let me feed you.

James puts Prince in the stable. He disappears into the feed
room and exits with a bucket of oats in one hand and a
quarter bale of alfalfa under the other. He feeds Prince and
ensures he has water, before he runs to the house.

EXT. RIDING SCHOOL - DAY

MONTAGE

- Phillip rises up and down in a rising trot. He guides
Zimbie across the trotting poles, lying on the ground,
spaced out evenly. Zimbie refuses to go across.

Phillip turns Zimbie around and guides him back to trotting poles, this time on a walk. Cautiously Zimbie walks across, not knowing what to expect.

Phillip praises Zimbie exuberantly. He trots around the area and guides Zimbie across the poles again, on a trot this time. Zimbie stumbles, but corrects himself. They go across for a third time. Zimbie goes across flawless, not touching a pole.

PHILLIP

(Complementary)

Well done boy. You did so good.

- On a slow canter FIONA, freckled faced with long, auburn hair caught in two ponytails, takes Zimbie in for a jump, at the last minute Zimbie refuse to jump and swerves out to the left. Fiona just avoids falling by clinging to the saddle. She corrects herself, then she takes Zimbie for another jump.

Zimbie jumps them successfully. Fiona elaborately praises him for jumping.

- JEN, a lanky long-legged girl, takes Zimbie successfully over a series of jumps. Zimbie jumps them perfectly. Jen throws herself forward, leaning against Zimbie's neck, hugging him tightly.

JEN

You such a good boy.

Zimbie looks at Jen a smile on his face.

ZIMBIE (V.O)

This is exactly what I have been dreaming of.

- Zimbie jumps four jumps successfully. The double bar on the fifth jump, intimidates him and he swerves out. BENNY, tries his best to hang on, but it is futile and he meets the ground in a cloud of dust. Benny gets back up, he takes Zimbie over the jumps again, using his crop unnecessarily.

INSTRUCTOR SHERRY

Hey Benny, lighten up on that crop. Keep your legs on him.

Benny nods, though Zimbie can still feel that Benny is not at ease.

ZIMBIE (V.O)

Why is he scared of me?

- Early morning. Vehicles with horse-boxes arrives at the stables.

Groups of riders gather, excitedly chatting about the day's competition. Horses is taken out of stables and loaded into horse-boxes.

Zimbie is left behind. He stands on his hind legs, trying to see over the stable door. He neighs longingly.

ZIMBIE

(Neighing)

WAIT! I want to go with.

No one comes for him. Continuously he neighs, but no one comes for him. Slowly he turns to his food.

- Jen, eating an ice-cream, is leading Zimbie.

ZIMBIE (V.O)

Hmm...

Zimbie licks his lips.

ZIMBIE (V.O)

that ice-cream looks so nice. If only I can...

Zimbie tries to steal the ice-cream but Jen turns away taking it out of his reach. Talking to a little girl, her attention diverted, Zimbie takes his chance and steals the ice-cream before Jen can respond.

- Jen canters in a circle with Zimbie. Stops turns and canters again. She takes him over jumps. He does very well. She praises him. Hugging him, while still in a gallop.

- Phillip takes Zimbie over a series of jumps. Zimbie jumps all of them without any problem. Phillip praises Zimbie, both looking pleased.

- It's bustling with horses and people between the stables and the arena. Stable doors open and closes as horses is taken out to compete.

Zimbie excitedly awaits his turn. With every door opening, his ears pick, with every horse leaving and coming back the realization that they not coming for him. The bolt of his door opens. The door swings open.

ZIMBIE (V.O)

(Excited)

At last, I thought you forgot about me.

Jen puts a halter on Zimbie.

JEN

Come, I'll take you to the paddock. Bet you dying to get out of here.

ZIMBIE (V.O)

(Shocked, disappointed)

Wait! But that means... I won't be competing today.

Disappointed Zimbie follows Jen to the paddock. When released, he walks off, listless.

- Competition day. Zimbie watches the jumping like before. Unlike when he was a foal, he doesn't look excited. He turns to his food.

- Zimbie trots listless in the circle. He trips over trotting poles; Instructor Sherry instructs Jen to take Zimbie one side. Jen rides Zimbie to the top end of the arena. She stops, gets off to chat to Zimbie.

JEN

What's the matter boy? You not happy?
Where's your spunk gone. Let me see it. I dare you.

They do a couple more circles to the left and some to the right. Jen praises Zimbie a lot. After some minutes, they rejoin the group, Zimbie a little happier.

- Zimbie trots over the trotting poles. He jumps the jumps easily. ABIGAIL, red curls crawling out from under her riding hat, looks pleased.

END MONTAGE

EXT. STABLES ON FARM - DAY

JAMES(9) sits back, leaning with his back against the old brown horse, lying down in the shade of the big apple tree. PADDY, the big gray Irish wolfhound lies next to him, his big head on James's lap.

The book, BLACK BEAUTY, the biography of a horse, rests on Paddy's head, as James turns the page and continues reading. The book is well handled.

JAMES

(Reading)

One day, while our cab and many others were waiting outside one of the parks where music was playing, a shabby old cab drove up beside ours.

James changes the book from his right to left hand, he adjusts his legs, and shifts back a little. His right hand finds Paddy's head, his fingers finding and playing with Paddy's big woolly ears.

JAMES (CONT'D)

(Reading)

The horse was an old worn-out chestnut, with an ill-kept coat,

The skin on Prince's ribs move, as he tries to shoo away a fly. He twitches his tail, trying to get rid of the pest.

JAMES (CONT'D)

(Reading)

and bones that showed painly through it, the knees knuckled over, and the fore-legs were very unsteady.

Prince stirs behind James, adjusting his position. His ribs showing painly, his once shiny coat, was now dull with old

age. Enhanced by the position he is lying in, his hipbone is showing pertinently.

JAMES (CONT'D)

(Reading)

I had been eating some hay, and the wind
rolled a little lock of it that way,

Prince twitches his ears, then points them towards James again. Listening to the tale James is reading from the old book. He stirs a little again, getting more comfortable.

JAMES (CONT'D)

... and the poor creature put out her long
thin neck and picked it up, and then
turned and looked about for more.

Paddy turns flat on his side. Wags his tail four halfhearted beats. His mouth opens and the tongue comes out.

James changes the book back to the right hand, he turns to the left and looks at Prince.

JAMES (CONT'D)

Am I hurting you? Should I move?

James slightly adjusts his position. He turns more sideways, his back now more against Prince's hind legs, taking the pressure of the ribs showing through the skin.

JAMES (CONT'D)

Better?

A sigh escapes the lips of the old horse. His eye is closed half way, relaxed, sleepy, at peace.

James strokes Prince's shoulder lovingly. His hand stops on the bone showing under the skin, then moves, stroking across the bone, investigating.

James strokes Prince a last time before he turns back to the book.

JAMES (CONT'D)

(Reading)

There was a hopeless look in the dull eye

A tear drop lingers in the half open eyes of Prince. He blinks.

JAMES (CONT'D)

that I could not help noticing, and then, as I was thinking where I had seen that horse before, she looked full at me and said, "Black Beauty, is that you?"

Prince turns his head to James. Gray hair replaced the once brown hair. His eyes, which were only half open, opens in curiosity. Paddy turns his head, looking at James, anxious.

JAMES (CONT'D)

(Reading)

It was Ginger!

Paddy wags his tail.

JAMES (CONT'D)

but how changed! The beautifully arched and glossy neck was now straight, and lank, and fallen in;

James looks up, straight-forward, in thought, and then looks at Prince's fallen-in neck. He lifts his hand a strokes Prince's neck. His hand follows the dents where Prince's neck is now fallen in.

Realization sets in. With a lump in the throat, he continues--

JAMES (CONT'D)

(Reading)

the clean straight legs and delicate fetlocks were swelled; the joints were grown out of shape with hard work;

Prince's legs are tucked in under him. The fetlocks still perfect, gray hair showing everywhere. Prince is not wearing irons.

JAMES (CONT'D)

(Reading)

the face, that was once so full of spirit
and life, was now full of suffering,

Prince listens with eyes half closed. It is difficult to distinguish between the blaze he had and the grays now covering his face. A tiredness took over the spirit of his younger days.

JAMES (CONT'D)

(Reading)

and I could tell by the heaving of her
sides, and her frequent cough, how bad her
breath was.

Another sigh escapes from the lips of the old horse.

INT. HOUSE - DAY

Gina stares out of the kitchen window, while DAD sits at the table, waiting for the coffee to brew. Gina watches James, outside under the apple tree, reading to Prince and Paddy.

GINA

He loves that horse so much.

DAD scratches his cheek. A frown plays between his brown eyes, partly covered by his dark blond fringe.

DAD

It concerns me. Prince is living on
borrowed time. He has been laying down a
lot lately.

Gina looks at Dad, a worried look on her face.

GINA

How long?

Gina proceeds to pour Dad some coffee. She adds sugar and milk and stirs it.

DAD

Two weeks, maybe three. He battles to get up in the mornings too. It won't be long.

Gina puts a cup of coffee in front of Dad. Dad looks into her eyes.

DAD (CONT'D)

Thanks dear.

Gina smiles in acknowledgment and turns back to the window.

GINA

We should talk to him. Prepare him for what's to come.

Dad nods in agreement.

DAD

You are right. I will talk to him.

Dad sips on his coffee, as Gina turns back to the window. Her one hand is playing with her black hair, lost in thought.

INT. ABIGAIL'S HOUSE KITCHEN - MORNING

ABIGAIL'S MOTHER places a plate with an egg, sunny side up, bacon and a slice of toast on the luxurious marble counter.

ABIGAIL(6) takes a seat on the chair. She looks neat in her white shirt, white jodhpurs and black riding boots. Her frizzy, red hair is tamed into a plat and tucked into a hairnet.

Helmet, black jacket and red crop, lies on a table close by, where Abigail dumped them as she walked into the kitchen.

It is obvious that money is no object.

ABIGAIL'S MOTHER

(Surly)

You ready for today Abby?

Abigail nods.

ABIGAIL

Yes, Mother.

ABIGAIL'S MOTHER

(Patronizing)

You better win today. You can't let that Phillip kid beat you. I'll never live down the shame.

ABIGAIL

I'll try Mom.

ABIGAIL'S MOTHER

(With dismay)

Try. You'll try. I spend thousands on riding lessons and you'll try.

Rebellious, Abigail looks at her mother, and mockingly mouths a repeat of the words at her mother's back.

ABIGAIL'S MOTHER

Come eat your breakfast, we need to go. You need to practice when we get there.

ABIGAIL

(Complaisant)

Yes Mother.

Abigail eats the eggs and toast, grabs the bacon strips between her fingers. Ready for today's competition.

EXT. ARENA - DAY

People and horses moves to and from the arena and stables. In the warm-up arena horses takes turns jumping.

A voice over the microphone calls out the next class to prepare. Zimbie is extremely excited. He seems nervous.

ZIMBIE (V.O)

I think I'm going to be sick.

He whinnies. Jen standing close by, holding his reins, rubs his forehead.

JEN

You nervous?

Zimbie snorts while shaking his head.

JEN (CONT'D)

You'll be fine. Just do your best.

The bell rings, Chance, a handsome chestnut with a white blaze and a front white foot, and his rider starts his round. They fly over the first two jumps. The jumps are not too high, only reaching to just above Chance's knees.

Jen opens the gate and Zimbie and Abigail enters the arena.

Chance jumps the parallel. He drops his hind legs early and tips the hind pole of the jump. It tumbles to the ground. They finish the rest of the round clear.

The bell rings. Abigail gathers her reigns, she pushes Zimbie to a canter and circles twice before jumping the first jump in the allotted thirty seconds.

The jumps are much higher for the eleven hands high Zimbie than the fourteen hand high Chance.

They jump the first jump flawlessly. The crowd cheers. They sail over the second and third. Jen shouts instructions from the side of the arena.

At the triple bar, Zimbie jumps the first of the three jumps. He bounces and takes off early for the second. Abigail, unprepared for this, stays behind. She hangs onto the reigns to keep from falling.

Zimbie yanks his head up. His front legs touch the top pole sending it to the ground. He can't get his steps in and barges through the parallel on the last jump of the triple bar.

Zimbie clears the next three jumps easy. Abigail turns Zimbie short trying to save some time. She approaches the parallel at an angle. He runs out. Abigail loses her temper and smacks him with the crop.

ABIGAIL

Oh come on, you stupid horse.

Zimbie is confused by this. Flustered he tries to follow her command but lost his nerve and runs out again at attempt of jump eight. Abigail hits Zimbie again and tries again.

ABIGAIL (CONT'D)

Oh come on, Zimbie. JUMP!

Zimbie runs out again. The bell rings three times, announcing disqualification. She turns Zimbie back to the first easier jump, takes him over as is allowed, then leaves the arena.

Tears are streaming down her cheeks as she rides back to the stables.

ABIGAIL (CONT'D)

Why did you run out?

Agitated she kicks Zimbie in the ribs to walk faster.

ABIGAIL (CONT'D)

Do you have any idea what you have done?

Abigail kicks Zimbie in the ribs again.

ABIGAIL (CONT'D)

You caused us to loose. Now my mom won't love me, and it's all your fault.

Zimbie feels that Abigail is upset with him. He too is disappointed. He was hoping to be as good as Ceasar, hoping that she'll throw her arms around his neck. Praising him.

At the stables. Abigail gets off and leads Zimbie inside. Tucking hard on the reins, hurting him once again. He yanks his head up, but then follows to release the pressure of the bridle. Abigail loosens the girth to take the saddle off.

ABIGAIL (CONT'D)

I don't even know why they keep ponies like you in the school.

She puts the saddle on the bottom half of the closed door. The red crop falls to the ground. Abigail picks it up. She

looks at Zimbie. A dark glint enters her eyes. Slowly she lifts the crop and smacks Zimbie on the neck.

ABIGAIL

(cont'd)

You were supposed to jump.

Another SMACK.

ABIGAIL (CONT'D)

We were supposed to win.

Another SMACK.

Zimbie is trapped. He is scared. He doesn't understand this behavior. He doesn't know how to react. All he can do is retreat to a corner. AFRAID. CONFUSED.

ABIGAIL (CONT'D)

But you wouldn't jump. Would you?

Another SMACK.

ABIGAIL (CONT'D)

It was supposed to be easy.

Another SMACK.

ABIGAIL (CONT'D)

All you had to do was JUMP!

She LIFTS the crop for another smack. It is caught by Jen. She opens the door still holding the end of the crop. She is much taller than the six-year-old girl and towers over her. She takes the crop from Abigail.

JEN

(Stern, angry)

That's enough Abby.

ABIGAIL

I was just...

JEN

(Aggravated)

You should go. Don't let me see you close to Zimbie again. Ever.

ABIGAIL starts crying.

ABIGAIL

I'm sorry. (sob) I was just soo angry about losing.

Big tears make their way across her freckled face.

ABIGAIL

Now... Now my mom won't love me. I didn't win or even get a place.

Jen can't help but feel sorry for the little crying girl.

JEN

Abby I understand, but it doesn't justify what you did. Look at him. Look how terrified he is. Abuse can NEVER be excused.

Abigail nods her head. Tears still streaming down her cheeks. Her red hair a mess.

ABIGAIL

I guess I won't be riding anymore.

Jen shakes her head.

JEN

No Abby, you won't. Zimbie is in no condition to be ridden further today.

Abigail nods. Her shoulders shaking.

ABIGAIL

I understand. I'm really sorry Jen.

Jen nods, then turns her attention to Zimbie. He cowers in the corner of the stable. She moves to him slowly. He cringes, petrified.

JEN

(Coaxing)

Shhhh. It's OK boy. It's me. I won't hurt you.

Zimbie seems to relax just a little. He wants to believe her. His mouth open, his eyes scared, ears pulled back.

JEN (CONT'D)

Shhhh...Shhhh...Come on boy. Come to me.

Zimbie re-adjust his stand. He cowers a little less. His face still shows fear, still not trusting.

Jen moves a little closer to Zimbie. This time he stands his ground. He doesn't cower away from her.

JEN (CONT'D)

What do you say about you and me going for a walk? We'll go see the horses jump.

ZIMBIE

(Whinnies)

Yes, please, anywhere but here will be good.

JEN

Come on what you do say, hmm? Shall we go?

Zimbie shakes his head up and down. Insecure, he gives a step closer to Jen. Jen takes a hold of the reigns and slowly takes of the bridle. She replaces it with a halter and opens the door.

Zimbie is hesitant, but follows her. He looks at the birds flying over them.

He looks at the hustle and bustle around him. It all takes his attention off what happened minutes earlier.

Jen walks to where instructor Sherry is next to the arena. She watches her riders compete. She is smiling satisfied, the kids are doing really well.

JEN (CONT'D)

Mom? Can I talk to you?

Instructor Sherry nods. Keeping her eyes on the rider in the arena.

JEN (CONT'D)

Mom I was on way to the tack room when I saw Abigail in the stables.

Sherry nods showing she is listening. She keeps her eyes on the rider.

JEN (CONT'D)

She was... She was hitting Zimbie with her crop.

Sherry looks at Jen.

INSTRUCTOR SHERRY

What do you mean she hit Zimbie?

JEN

She was in the stables. She hit him with her crop, telling him it's his fault for losing and jumping a bad round.

INSTRUCTOR SHERRY

(Shocked)

She did what?

JEN

She hit Zimbie.

INSTRUCTOR SHERRY

With her crop?

Jen nods. Sherry is visibly upset. Anger creeps into her eyes.

JEN

I spoke to her. She feels very bad. Said that she was angry. Said her mom won't

love her now. I told her that it is no reason for what she did.

INSTRUCTOR SHERRY

You did well. Thanks Jen, I'll take it further.

Sherry looks at Zimbie.

INSTRUCTOR SHERRY (CONT'D)

How is he doing?

JEN

He's OK now. He was petrified when I walked into the stables. He was cowering in the corner. He wouldn't let me touch him.

Jen touches Zimbie, who is standing close to her. She plays with the mane between his little pointy ears. He nibbles on the hem of her shirt.

Together they watch the competition. Jen's arm hanging loosely across Zimbie's neck. A little girl with red hair nears Zimbie. She looks at him and then at the horses jumping.

RED HAIREd GIRL

Can I touch him?

JEN

Sure.

She looks at Zimbie and walks closer to touch him. She reaches her hand out to touch his head. Zimbie lashes out and bites her.

Jen reacts fast. Reprimanding Zimbie.

JEN (CONT'D)

Zimbie! NO!

She turns to the little girl.

JEN

I'm sorry. Are you OK?

The little girl nods. Luckily Zimbie didn't do much damage. He barely touched her.

RED HAIREG GIRL

(shocked)

Yeah I'm good. I'll see you around.

Wide eyed the little girl walks off. Jen turns to Zimbie.

JEN

What was that? Since when do you bite?

Zimbie looks at her with big eyes. He whinnies, then shakes his head. Together, they continue to watch the jumping.

Phillip nears them. Used to the lovable little Zimbie he walks by close to his hind quarters and lightly slaps his bum. Zimbie immediately reacts by kicking.

JEN

Are you OK Phillip? Did you get hurt?

PHILLIP

No, I'm ok. He missed. Since when does he kick? He's never done that before.

JEN

I know. He had a bad experience. Must be that.

PHILLIP

What happened?

Jen just shakes her head. Phillip looks at her questioningly.

JEN

Let's just say his trust was broken.

Phillip nods. He turns to Zimbie. Takes his face between his hands and speaks to Zimbie gently.

PHILLIP

What happened boy?

Zimbie just looks a Phillip with big eyes. His mane up in all directions between his little prickly ears. Phillip places a kiss on Zimbie forehead. He straightens up.

PHILLIP

Well I better go. I'm must go get Choice ready. We up on the next item.

JEN

Good luck. I'll be watching.

Jen turns to Zimbie.

JEN

I think I should take you to the stables before you hurt someone.

She starts walking Zimbie to the stables. Zimbie following her. When they get to the stable Jen enters. Zimbie stops in his tracks.

INSERT FLASHBACK

Zimbie sees the little red haired girl with the crop blocking his way to get out. She has a crop in her hand. She grins evilly.

END FLASHBACK

Jen turns to Zimbie. She tucks on the lead reign softly.

JEN

Come on boy. It's OK. You safe now.

Zimbie refuses. He digs his heels in. Jen tugs on the reigns again. A stubborn expression creeps all over his face. He looks to his left, then to his right.

He sees no way out. He plonks his butt down on the ground.

He sits down, cheekily refusing to go into the stable.

Jen laughs at this gesture. She walks up to him. She throws her arms around his neck and gives him a hug. First Zimbie is confused. Then he smiles and tucks her in under his chin.

JEN (CONT'D)

(Giggling)

Okay. Okay you win. I will put you I the paddock. How's that?

Zimbie nods approvingly. They walk to the paddock. Zimbie trotting behind her. Jen giggling at his silly antics.

INT. STABLES ON FARM - DAY

Cattle are grazing in the field. Birds are singing in the big old apple tree outside the paddocks in front of the stables. The perfect day. Inside the stable dust particles are lazily riding the sun.

The light falls on James, the small figure kneeling over the old brown horse, lying on his side, his head pulled backwards. James, looking much younger than his 9 years old, is crying his heart out.

JAMES

(crying)

Wake up, Prince(sob)Please wake up.

(more sobbing)

He shakes his hands forwards and backwards as he is trying to wake the horse. Trying to get any reaction out of the old dying horse.

A sigh escapes the old horse's lips. His eyes close and he exhales a last breath.

James cries uncontrollably. His face pushed against the body of the old horse. The big Irish wolfhound, Paddy, sitting motionless in the corner, howls a sad, emotion-filled howl.

Paddy lies down and crawls closer. He licks the face of the old horse. When he gets no reaction lays his big head on the horse's neck. He looks at James, big-eyed. James keeps trying to wake the old horse, refusing to accept the inevitable.

JAMES

(Sobbing)

Prince, get up. Please.

The horse's old face stays motionless.

A shadow falls across James and the big old horse. The silhouette of his father etched against the sunlight outside. This is unnoticed by James. The big figure steps out of the light and kneels down next to James. Dad puts his hand on and squeezes James' shoulder.

DAD

James?

The sobs stop for a while, as James looks at dad. Relief washes over his face. Excitement, followed by desperation.

JAMES

(Desperately)

Dad... Dad, you have to wake him up Dad.
Please. You have to. Please.

James looks at Dad. Desperate.

JAMES (CONT'D)

(Begging)

You're a vet. Help him... PLEASE Dad.

DAD

James, he is gone. There is nothing I can do.

JAMES

No Dad, he's just sleeping. You have to wake him up.

Desperately, James tries to wake the old horse again. Dad pulls James up and into a hug. He folds his arms around James. One big hand holds James's head against his chest, the other rubs James's back, comforting him. After a short silence he speaks.

DAD

James, I wish I could. We spoke about this. You knew this was coming.

James cries against Dad's chest.

JAMES

(Sobbing)

No Dad! It can't be.

Dad places his cheek on James's head.

DAD

I'm sorry my son, but it was his time. He was very old.

JAMES

But I love him Dad.

DAD

I know you do James. He loved you too. I think that is why he held on this long, he didn't want to leave you.

James looks at Prince. He breaks free from Dad's comforting arms and kneels down beside the old horse. Tears are streaming down his face, he lays his head onto the lifeless body of the old horse.

JAMES

(Sobbing)

I'm going to miss him.

INT. RIDING SCHOOL STABLES - DAY

Petrified, Zimbie cringes at the back corner of his stable when Fiona enters. Desperately he looks for a way out. Fiona takes a step closer, bridle in hand.

ZIMBIE (V.O)

(Bewildered)

No! No! Not again!

He dashes past Fiona, knocking her to the ground. He gives her a quick look, feeling sorry for her, but scared out of his wits.

EXT. RIDING SCHOOL - DAY

Benny leads Zimbie out of the stables. Frustrated he chews on his bit.

As Benny reaches under Zimbie to get to the girth, Zimbie bites Benny on his buttocks. In a fright Benny gets up to quick, he bumps his head on Zimbie's stomach.

Zimbie gets a fright, he retreats. The saddle falls to the ground. The sudden movement next to Zimbie makes him jump to the one side, pulling Benny, still hanging on the reins with.

Zimbie rears. Benny lets go of the reins. Zimbie runs off, the reins dangling around his front legs. Hopeless Benny stares at Zimbie, making his getaway.

EXT. RIDING ARENA - DAY

Phillip trots with Zimbie circling the arena. His hands are light on Zimbie's mouth as he is doing a rising trot. He cuts a figure of eight through the arena and circles in the opposite direction.

His legs, pushes Zimbie's sides softly, asking for a canter. Zimbie keeps trotting listless. Phillip gives the canter signal again, clicking his tongue at the same time.

Still listless Zimbie continues to trot. Again Phillip squeezes Zimbie's side, clicking his tongue, but adds the crop lightly to Zimbie's flank.

Zimbie takes off, pulls his head between his front legs. Phillip, knowing that Zimbie is going to buck now, fights to get Zimbie's head up, but it is futile.

Zimbie bucks, as soon as he touches ground he bucks again. Phillip manages to stay on for three consecutive bucks. He starts to lose his balance and after the fifth buck he lands on the ground. Zimbie takes off, running to the safety of the stables.

EXT. RIDING SCHOOL - DAY

SUZIE unbolts the door to Zimbie's stable. Slowly she opens the door, just a little. She looks inside, careful.

The door slams close the same time Zimbie's back feet touch the door. Suzie braced for the kick, manages to keep the door shut and bolts it again.

SUZIE

No way I'm riding you.

Suzie finds instructor Sherry, telling her big eyed of Zimbie's new antics.

INSTRUCTOR SHERRY

I'll take him out. You can ride Chance today.

Suzie, riding Chance, walks past Zimbie's stable. Slowly the stables run empty as the horses and riders disperse to the arena for today's lesson.

EXT. RIDING SCHOOL - DAY

EDNA

(Firm)

No way, I refuse, I will not ride him.
He's gone nuts. I'm sure he's got mad-cow-disease.

RIDER2 nods in agreement.

BENNY

(Jokingly)

Yeah, he's like a rabbit mule.

Everyone, but Jen, laughs.

JEN

It's not funny you guys. He's just scared.
He's been through a lot.

Horses get saddled and disappear to the riding arena with their riders.

Instructor Sherry takes Zimbie from his stable and leads him to the paddock. Listless he enters and walks straight to the blue feeding bin.

INT. IN VEHICLE - DAY

James watch the trees as they go by. The sky is painted blue, decorated with puffs of white clouds. Swallows circles across the sky. Today is his tenth birthday, yet he looks barely six years old.

He leans with his head against the window. He is looking at the trees, eyes wide open and shiny, a sadness lingering on the corner of the thin lips. Involuntary his mind wanders back to happier times when Prince was still with him. Times when he was happy.

INSERT: FLASHBACK

Bareback on a steady walk, James rides Prince back from the river. A mud smear across his freckled cheek, a blotch coloring his blonde hair brown. Prince too covered to above his knees in the sticky brown mud. James talks non-stop as they near the house.

Grass swaying gently around them, Prince lying down, his nose resting on the ground. James leaning against him, his hand on Paddy's head, reading to the sleeping dog and the lazy horse.

Balancing, precariously on his toes, James reaches as far as his little arms will allow, picking the juiciest apples from the tree. Paddy chewing on an apple core, Prince patiently waiting for James.

END FLASHBACK

Mom's voice calls him back to reality.

GINA

James.

James looks at mom. He doesn't speak, though the question in his eyes mirrors the unspoken question.

GINA (CONT'D)

James, I'm speaking to you.

JAMES

Hmm?

GINA

You know it's been eight months.

JAMES

Eight months, one week and 3 days.

GINA

James, I'm worried about you. You have...changed.

JAMES

I'm fine, Mom.

Mom puts her hand on James's shoulder tenderly.

GINA

Sweetie, I don't want you to be fine. I want you to be good. I want you to be happy.

Mom brings the car to a stop.

GINA (CONT'D)

We are here.

James looks up. He looks around him slowly. He sees a couple of kids riding in a circle, he sees the arena with practice jumps and trotting poles set up. Realization, mixed with anger slowly creeps across his face.

JAMES

(Angry)

What are we doing here?

GINA

(Calming)

James. It's your birthday. We, your Dad and I, we thought it is time to get you a new horse.

JAMES

(Defensive)

I don't want a new horse. I never want another horse, ever again. It hurts too much.

James falls into his mother's arms. All the fight has left his little body. His shoulders shake as he sobs, face safely tucked into her motherly embrace.

GINA

I know you miss him sweetie. We do too, but we miss you too. Let's just have a look. You don't have to make a decision today.

Gina circles James' face with her hands. Slowly her thumbs wipe the tears from his eyes. She smiles.

GINA (CONT'D)

(Encouraging)

What do you say? Can we just have a look?

James nods. He pulls away from mom. Wipes his eyes dry with the back of his hand.

JAMES

I guess.

Instructor Sherry approaches them. She is wearing the characteristic dark green, jodhpurs, riding boots and t-shirt. A big smile on her face.

INSTRUCTOR SHERRY

You must be James.

James nods. Teary smudges still across his freckled face.

INSTRUCTOR SHERRY (CONT'D)

Why the big tears?

James shakes his head making it very clear that he is not willing to talk about this. Sherry understands and turns her attention to Gina.

INSTRUCTOR SHERRY (CONT'D)

Welcome. I'm Sherry. You must be Gina. I have them all in the arena waiting for you.

GINA

Thank you Sherry. I appreciate you fitting us into your schedule.

Instructor Sherry looks at James again.

INSTRUCTOR SHERRY

Are you ready young man?

Despondent, James nods.

JAMES

I guess so.

They walk to the arena. A couple of riders are lazing around on horses. Walking past a paddock, James notices the white pony eating from a blue feeding bin. Their eyes connect. James comes to a halt, looks at Zimbie. A smile slowly crawls across his lips and lights a sparkle in his eye.

Zimbie picks his head up. Since the day of the competition, he has barely been ridden. Scared after the incident with Abigail, he took to biting and kicking, causing him to be unsuitable as a riding school pony.

GINA

Are you coming James?

JAMES

Yes Mom, I'm coming.

James breaks the gaze between Zimbie and him. He follows his mom and Sherry. He keeps looking at the white pony. Every

time he looks at Zimbie, Zimbie looks away, pretending to be not interested at all.

INSTRUCTOR SHERRY

James this is Torga. He is ten years old like you. Would you like to try him?

James nods. He gets onto the roan pony. Instructor Sherry adjusts his stirrups. James picks up the reins neatly. He softly squeezes his legs on Torga's sides.

Torga transitions to a trot immediately. James turns him to the left and to the right. He pushes him to a canter. He goes in for a small jump and clears it easily. James returns with Torga. A little spark of the old James has returned to his eyes. James dismounts and hands the reins to a girl waiting.

INSTRUCTOR SHERRY (CONT'D)

So, what do you think? Isn't he lovely.

JAMES

He is alright.

Sherry looks at Gina. Mom lightly picks her shoulders up. Her hands in a I-don't-know motion at Sherry's questioning stare.

Sherry motions to Suzie to bring Houdini closer. Suzie leads a buckskin gelding of approximately 12 hands high closer.

INSTRUCTOR SHERRY

This one is called Houdini. He's an escape artist. He's a little older but still a good ride.

James throws another glance at Zimbie. Frustrated by getting caught, Zimbie pretends to be eating, his butt towards James. He steals another glance through his legs to see if James is watching. This brings a smile to James's face.

Mom looks over her shoulder to see what James is smiling at. All she sees is a pony eating with swishing tail facing them. She shakes her head and turns her attention back to Sherry.

INSTRUCTOR SHERRY

Want to try him out?

James nods, takes the reins and mounts. He puts his feet into the stirrups which are just the right length. He picks up the reins and walks off.

James takes Houdini past the paddock where Zimbie is in. Zimbie watches every movement. James watches Zimbie out the corner of his eye. When Zimbie is within hearing distance, James talks to him.

JAMES

Hey boy.

Zimbie turns his butt to James again. Intent on showing no interest in this kid. He doesn't like kids anymore. Annoyed he sticks his head into the blue feeding bin,

James laughs. He pushes Houdini on a canter and puts him through his paces. He returns to his mother and Instructor Sherry, waiting on him anxiously.

He gets off Houdini and hands the reins back to Suzie.

JAMES

Thank you.

Suzie nods and leads Houdini away.

GINA

Well? Do you like him?

James looks at mom then at instructor Sherry.

JAMES

I want him.

Mom smiles.

GINA

That's great sweetie. I'm glad you like him.

James shakes his head.

JAMES

(Pointing at Zimbie)

No. HIM

GINA

Honey?

James looks at Sherry.

JAMES

Can I have him?

Sherry looks flustered. She's not exactly sure what happened here.

JAMES (CONT'D)

Can I?

INSTRUCTOR SHERRY

Well... Hmm... He's not exactly friendly. He doesn't like kids. He hasn't been ridden in a long time. He doesn't jump either.

JAMES

It doesn't matter. I want him.

GINA

Sweetie. Why not some choose one of these beautiful ponies?

JAMES

'cause I want him.

Mom looks at instructor Sherry. She's flabbergasted. She has no idea what to do. She looks at James. He is waiting anxiously on the answer.

GINA

Honey you heard what Sherry said. He is not friendly. He doesn't even like kids.

James stomps his foot on the ground. He arms slaps against his sides. Stiff. His eyes shining. Tears laying shallow behind his eyes.

JAMES

(Livid)

Then I don't want a horse.

GINA

(Sternly)

James! Let's talk about this.

Tears starts running again. He hasn't felt a connection to any horse since Price died. He never wanted to again, until now.

JAMES

Why did you even bring me here then? Why bring me here if I can't choose? I like him...he likes me.

GINA

Sweetie, he's not even looking at you.

James sees the hopelessness of the situation. He will never convince his mom.

JAMES

I'll be waiting in the car.

He storms off. He is running, blinded by tears. He falls on the car's hood. Crying on his arms.

He sobs on his arms, crossed on top the hood of the car. A hand gently strokes his back. A calm voice speaks to him.

JEN

Hey. What's the matter?

A teary face looks up. His blue eyes are incredibly big and sad. Sobbing he tells her.

JAMES

Prince, he was my best friend, but he was old. We did everything together. (sob) He has gone to heaven (sob) Mom brought me to get a new pony (sob) but... But they don't want me to have the one I like. (sob)

Jen pulls him up.

JEN

Why don't you show me which one you like?

James' eyes lit up just a little. He nods.

JAMES

You mean that?

JEN

Of course I do.

James runs off, Jen following him to the paddock, where Zimbie is still eating from the blue feeding bin. Excited James points to Zimbie.

JAMES

That's the one that I like.

Jen places both her hands on the wooden fence in front of her, biting down on her lip, in thought, before she speaks.

JEN

I love him too you know, but Zimbie... He doesn't like kids. He bites and kicks, he won't jump either. Not after...

James looks at Jen, waiting.

JAMES

Not after?

Jen tells James about the day of the competition.

JEN

It was a competition. His rider messed up and they had a terrible round. Later I found them in the stables. She was beating him with her crop.

James nods.

JAMES

I understand, but we... Him and me...We have a connection.

Jen looks at James curiously.

JEN

Why do you say you have a connection?

JAMES

Look.

James calls to Zimbie. Zimbie pricks his ears. Looks at the boy next to Jen. He gets an annoyed expression on his face. He rolls his eyes, snorts and turn his bum towards them.

Jen laughs at this behavior. James chuckles too. Jen puts her arm across James's shoulder.

JEN

You know what, let's go talk to my mom, see what she says.

Together they walk to car where Gina and Sherry is discussing what to do. Gina sees James approach with Jen and rushes closer.

GINA

James, are you OK?

James nods. He looks over his shoulder at Jen. She nudges him forward. Standing behind him, in full support.

JAMES

Yes Mom, I'm fine. I just really want that pony. We have a connection.

GINA

(At whit's end)

James, we...

Jen steps forward.

JEN

Excuse me Ma'am, but it's true. I know Zimbie better than anyone. They do have a connection, I saw it.

She looks at Gina, eyes pleading.

JEN (CONT'D)

Zimbie is a good pony. He has a good heart. It's just... He is scared. He is just protecting himself. He likes James.

Sherry looks at Jen curiously.

INSTRUCTOR SHERRY

He likes James? Are you sure Jen?

JEN

Yes Mom. I saw it. You know how much I love Zimbie.

(MORE)

JEN (CONT'D)

I know him better than anyone else. He needs James and I think James needs him.

Sherry turns to Gina.

INSTRUCTOR SHERRY

It is up to you then. Jen is telling the truth. She knows Zimbie better than anyone else and I do believe her.

Three pairs of eyes settles on Gina, anxiously waiting on her decision. James is the first to break the silence, with hands clamped together, begging.

JAMES

Please Mom. Please

Gina looks at the trio. All eyes anxiously waiting on her. She inhales as if she wants to say something, then exhales thinking the better of it. A smile crosses her face.

GINA

If that's what it takes to get my little boy back.

James can't believe his ears. A big smile crosses his freckly face. His blue eyes shiny with delight.

JAMES

You mean that Mom?

Mom nods, a smile on her face. Sherry takes a glance at Jen. She knows more than anyone how much Jen loves Zimbie. She sees a mixture of sadness and excitement in Jen's eyes.

INSTRUCTOR SHERRY

Are you sure you are okay with that Jen?

Jen nods, not trusting her voice. She knows she is doing the best thing for Zimbie. Inside her heart is breaking.

GINA

Thank you so much Jen, Sherry. It means so much to us. We will be in contact.

INSTRUCTOR SHERRY

Happy birthday James. Hope Zimbie will bring you lots of joy and happiness

James smiles. For the first time in a long, long time the smile reaches his eyes.

JAMES

Thank you Ma'am, I know he will.

EXT. FARMYARD- THREE DAYS LATER

A vehicle pulling a horsebox drives up the road, slowly. Dust bellowing up from behind the wheels.

The trees on the either side of the road gently sways in the breeze. Birds passes over in the cloudless blue sky.

James runs to the front door. He opens the door and shouts down the passage.

JAMES

(Excited)

MOM! Mom, they're here. Come quick.

Inside the house Gina smiles. She rinses her hands under the tap and dries them on her apron. A smile crosses her face. It's the most excited she has seen James since Prince died.

JAMES (CONT'D)

MOM! Are you coming?

GINA

I'm coming, James.

James runs to the gate and opens the latch. He opens the gate just enough to slip through.

He slips through, places his one foot on the bottom of the gate. With the other foot he gives two pushes before lifting it onto the gate and riding it till it can't go any further.

Paddy, the big gray Irish wolfhound, barks excitedly as he runs with James. Paddy is so big that James can barely see over his back.

James watches as the vehicle and the horsebox goes past. He closes the gate again in the same way he opened it, by riding it. His fringe blowing in the wind.

He runs, following the vehicle and the horsebox. The big, barking Paddy on his heels, jumping and barking as they run to where Sherry and Jen is exiting the vehicle.

They get to vehicle. James puts his hand on Paddy's head. Paddy calms down.

JAMES

Shhhh boy. You are going to scare him.

Paddy stops barking, yet his tail never stops wagging.

Jen and Instructor Sherry exits the vehicle. Jen looks at Paddy.

JEN

He is so cute, what is his name?

James nods with a big smile on his face. His blue eyes sparkles with excitement.

JAMES

(Fake Irish accent)

Paddy, 'cause he's Irish.

He turns to Paddy.

JAMES (CONT'D)

Paddy say hello.

Paddy lifts his left front leg in a greeting. Jennifer laughs and shakes his paw.

JEN

How do you do, Paddy.

Paddy barks and licks Jen across the face. The comical smile on his face with his tongue hanging out is priceless.

James laughs at Paddy, so does Jen. Sherry comes around. Paddy looks at her, still with the silly expression on his face. Sherry can't do anything by share in the laughter.

INSTRUCTOR SHERRY

Quite a dog you have there James. You can almost ride him.

James laughs. Then looks up at the opening above the ramp.

JAMES

Can we take him out now?

Gina is just in time to hear the last part of the question.

GINA

Wait now James. Let's greet properly first.

James pulls an annoyed face.

JAMES

But Mom...

They all laugh. Except James. He runs to the front door of the horsebox and opens it. Curiously Zimbie looks at the door. He sees James's smiling face. Annoyance washes over Zimbie face.

ZIMBIE (V.O)

You again?

He rolls his eyes and turns his head away.

JAMES

Hey boy. Welcome home.

Zimbie snorts.

Jen's head appears, towering above James's in the door. She softly talks to Zimbie.

JEN

Are you ready to get out of here?

Zimbie pricks his ears, he lifts his head.

JEN (CONT'D)

That's my boy.

Jen gets into the horsebox and unties Zimbie's halter.

JEN (CONT'D)

Come, let's take you out.

At the back of the horsebox, Sherry releases the covered chain that keeps the horses from backing out.

INSTRUCTOR SHERRY

You ready Jen?

JEN

Let's go.

Slowly they back Zimbie out of the trailer. The feet on the ramp looks insecure.

They take small uncertain steps, until the hind feet finds the solid ground. Shortly after, the front feet touch the ground.

Zimbie takes the time to look around. He turns his head to right. He sees a big white house with trees in pots on the porch. The garden is filled with beautiful flowers and surrounded by big, green trees.

To the left he sees the stables. Consisting of only four stables. Each has a little paddock in front. A little strip of colorful flowers surrounding the paddocks.

In front of the paddocks, a huge apple tree, branches hanging low under the weight of the apples.

He looks past the horse box to his left and into a big, pink tongue, hanging out of Paddy's open smiling mouth. His eyes stretches open in shock. He yanks his head up and turns it away.

He looks back, slowly this time. The tongue is still there. Paddy's tail doesn't stop wagging as he sits on the ground. It carves a heart shape in the dirt as it goes from side to side.

Behind the heart, Zimbie sees bare feet. He looks up the two lanky legs. Up past the black shorts and striped shirt and into James's face.

Determined not to make contact he drops his head and finds himself looking into the pink tongue again. Jen comes to the rescue after a short giggle.

JEN (CONT'D)

This is your new home boy. James will take good care of you. I promise

Zimbie looks at Jen. The only person he trusts and she is leaving him. His eyes drop, he looks sad. Jen sees this and goes down on her knees.

She takes his face between her hands and puts her forehead against Zimbie's.

JEN (CONT'D)

Don't be sad boy. James will never hurt you. He's not like her. He needs your help. He needs you.

A tear runs over Jen's cheek and splatters into the dust, the same time as a tear drop from Zimbie falls into the dust. Without breaking contact Jen continues.

JEN (CONT'D)

I love you Zimbie. I only want the best for you. That is why I brought you here. I'm not leaving you. I'll always be in your heart... and you in mine.

Jen gets up. She hands the lead rein to James. He looks up at her and smiles. Spontaneously he hugs her. He digs his face into her, while her arms folds over him.

JAMES

(Muffled)

Thank you Jen.

Jen nods, then breaks the embrace.

JEN

(Feigned cheerful)

Why don't we take Zimbie to his stable?

James nods. Jen and James walks off with Zimbie in tow. Leaving the two adults behind. Gina wipes a tear of her cheek, while Sherry swallows with difficulty at the lump in her throat.

GINA

Thank you Sherry. I know it couldn't have been easy.

INSTRUCTOR SHERRY

You have to thank Jen. Zimbie is hers, was hers. It was her decision to make.

GINA

Would you like something to drink?

Sherry looks at the two kids, the pony and the dog, that's almost as big as the pony. She smiles.

INSTRUCTOR SHERRY

That be nice, thank you. It will give the kids some time to get Zimbie settled.

They walk to the house and climbing the steps together.

At the stables, James opens the gate and leads Zimbie into the little paddock. Jen waits outside. She leans her one arm on the white wooden fence, the other hand finds Paddy's head.

Paddy sits next to her. The ever wagging tail, wagging nonstop. A little dust cloud rising around his tail.

James turns Zimbie around and closes the gate behind him. He walks to the stable and opens the bottom door. He tries to lead Zimbie inside but Zimbie refuses. He tries again, but again Zimbie refuses to enter.

James stops and turns around. The palm of his hand, rubs Zimbie's forehead softly.

JAMES

Don't worry. We have plenty of time to work on that.

Gina's voice comes floating on the air. Undisturbed a butterfly darts from one flower to another.

MOM

(Calling)

JEN, JAMES, I've got cool drinks for you.

James takes the halter of Zimbie. He strokes Zimbie's head and all along the neck. At the base of the neck he pats him twice, lightly.

JAMES

That's a good boy.

And in a terminator impersonation-

JAMES (CONT'D)

I'll be back.

James walks out the gate. He makes sure to close the gate properly and runs off with Jen and Paddy. Leaving Zimbie all by himself.

ZIMBIE

(Neighing)

JEN, don't leave!

Zimbie calls out to Jen, but Jen keeps running towards the house with James and Paddy in tow.

A big mostly ginger, tortoiseshell cat with a black blotch, covering half his face, jumps up on the wooden fence. He licks his big front paw and rubs it slowly across his face. Only when he is sure that he has Zimbie's attention he speaks.

RED

(Italian accent)

Hey kid. Haven't seen you around. You new?

Zimbie looks at the cat with the strange accent and nods.

RED (CONT'D)

You got a name?

Zimbie looks at the cat. It is the first time he has ever seen a cat this big.

ZIMBIE

Zimbie... I won't be staying. Jen...She will take me home. She won't leave me here.

The big cat bends over to lick the base of his tail. He loses his balance and falls off landing between the flowers.

He spits a flower out his mouth and jumps back up the pole and with as much dignity as he can muster, he continues.

RED

The little boss, he is a good kid.

The big cat produces a claw and starts to clean it, to a shine.

RED (CONT'D)

You hurt the little boss kid~

Dramatically he pulls the shiny claw across his neck.

RED (CONT'D)

You get what I'm saying kid?

Zimbie swallows on the dry lump in his throat. He looks at the house and neighs again. Hoping that Jen will hear him and take him home.

The door opens and everyone comes out. They walk to the car. Zimbie neighs again.

ZIMBIE

(Neighing)

JEN!

The big cat gets up and walks from the corner post, across the wood beam to the next post.

He misses a step, and almost falls again. Upon reaching the next post, he continues undisturbed.

RED

Capiche?

Jen looks up at Zimbie, waves and blows him a kiss. He neighs again. Begging her to take him home with her.

Sherry and Jen get in the red pick-up and slowly the vehicle starts moving. Jen's hand waves till Zimbie can no longer see it. Zimbie neighs again and again.

ZIMBIE

(Neighing)

JEN! COME BACK! JEN! PLEASE!

Zimbie sees figures approaching. The little boy and his ever present dog. They walk towards the stables. The dog trotting next to James as Zimbie used to do with Jen.

James gets into the paddock leaving the dog sitting outside. His tongue hanging out the side of his mouth. A big smile on his face. The tail wagging.

James makes sure that Zimbie has some fresh water. He goes into the feed room next door and minutes later piece of alfalfa comes flying out the door.

James comes out, picks up the alfalfa and enters Zimbie's stable with it. He comes out empty handed and walks to Zimbie.

Zimbie pulls his ears back in dismay. His mouth is pulled back, ready to bite. His whole demeanor tells James to stay away. Paddy growls at Zimbie at the same time the ginger cat jumps up on the post. James talks to Zimbie in a soothing voice.

JAMES

It's alright boy. I understand if you're not ready. I don't know if I am ready either.

James gives a couple of steps, his back facing towards Zimbie. He stops, his head drops, then he speaks.

JAMES (CONT'D)

I had a horse you know. Prince. I loved him so much. He died. I don't want to forget about him.

James looks back at Zimbie.

JAMES

We'll just take our time.

Zimbie snorts and drops his head. He looks very annoyed. He nods his head, up and down in small movements, in agreement with James.

JAMES

Your food is in your stable. And you have fresh water out here. I hope you sleep well.

James walks off. The dog and cat in tow. Zimbie is left by himself while the orange sky turns to a black starlit sky.

EXT. STABLES ON THE FARM - EARLY MORNING

Somewhere in the distance a cow bellows. The rays of the sun fall through the leafs of the apple tree. Zimbie stirs, then opens his eyes. He pulls his ears backwards at the sound of soft giggles.

JAMES

(Giggling)

Paddy you got to keep quiet. You are going to wake him up.

Zimbie turns his head to catch a glimpse of James and Paddy. He notices the hay bales under the apple tree. He is certain it wasn't there the previous day. He looks up onto the hay bales.

He sees James on tippy-toes hanging onto the branch of the apple tree while pointing to Paddy which ones to pick.

JAMES (CONT'D)

Get that one there.

Paddy picks and gives a little bark every time he picks one. James looks at Zimbie. He pushes his finger across his mouth showing Paddy to be quiet. Then nudges with his head in the direction of Zimbie.

JAMES (CONT'D)

Be quiet, Paddy, you'll wake him.

Paddy smiles, nods his head. This makes Zimbie smile but he quickly suppresses it.

James notices Zimbie looking at them, but doesn't react to it. He takes the apples and puts it in Zimbie's paddock. Paddy and James runs off to the kitchen for breakfast.

Zimbie looks at the pile of apples. He looks back to the house to see if anyone is looking. Only when certain he is not being watched, he gets up and smells at the apples.

His mouth waters. He didn't eat the previous night, but these apples smell delicious. He looks back at the house to make sure no one is watching and then takes a bite. In the kitchen, James does a victory dance.

JAMES (CONT'D)

Oh yeah. He took it.

He stops the dance as a confused mom enters the room to investigate the noise.

JAMES

He ate them. He ate the apples Paddy and I
picked.

Gina smiles, it's been so long since she has seen this side
of James.

GINA

That's just wonderful James. Now come eat
your breakfast. You'll be late for school.

JAMES

Yes, Mom.

EXT. FARMYARD - DAY

Zimbie looks up when Paddy's high pitched bark and James's
giggles reach him. Curious he stares in the direction the
sound is coming from.

James sprays the water into Paddy's mouth in short bursts.
Paddy barks excitedly, anticipating the next burst.

Zimbie smiles.

EXT. STABLES ON THE FARM - DAY

James, covered in alfalfa comes out the feeding room. He
enters Zimbie's paddock and feeds him. He cleans and fills
his water bowl.

James starts splashing water at Zimbie. Zimbie duck to avoid
the water coming at him. James splashes again.

Quickly it becomes like a game of dodge ball. Zimbie ducks
and dives to avoid the water. He finds himself smiling,
enjoying the interaction with James.

EXT FARMYARD - DAY

JAMES

Score!

Paddy barks. James runs, kicking the football. Paddy runs
next to him. Face close to the ball, trying to steal it from
James's kicking feet.

The game turns towards the stables. James laughs, Paddy barks. Zimbie watches in interest.

The balls come rolling into his paddock. Zimbie follows the ball and pushes it with his muzzle. He rolls it back out the paddock.

JAMES (CONT'D)

You want to play, do you?

James opens the paddock gate. He turns his attention back to the game. He takes off kicking the ball, with Paddy following trying to get the ball.

Slowly Zimbie comes out of his paddock. First on a walk then on a trot, he follows James and Paddy, keen to get in on the game.

EXT. FARMYARD - DAY

A sucker point arrow hits Paddy in the side. He yelps, sways and falls to the ground.

James, dressed in a feathery head band, painted face and barefoot, does a victory dance.

A war cry escapes his lips. He takes his stick horse and rides off. Zimbie watches the game with interest.

Paddy comes back to life. Cowboy hat skew on his head. Zimbie neighs, trying to get James's attention. James looks at Zimbie. A twinkle in his eye.

JAMES

Paddy come here boy.

Paddy runs over. James takes the hat off Paddy's head. He opens the gate to Zimbie's paddock. He puts the hat on Zimbie's ears.

JAMES

You can be the cowboy. Paddy can be an Indian with me.

Paddy and James runs off to hide. Zimbie exits the paddock, uncertain what to do. He puts his muzzle to the ground and catch the smell of Paddy and James. He follows the smell, till he finds them hidden in the garden.

James jumps up and shoots Zimbie on the side, he turns around in a small circle, then sways away like an injured cowboy.

James and Paddy dances a silly victory dance, war cries coming from the celebrating pair.

EXT. STABLES ON THE FARM - DAY

James puts the halter on Zimbie. He leads him out the paddock to the side of the stables. Opens the tap and hoses Zimbie down.

Bubbles floats in the air. Paddy tries to catch them, a smudge of bubbles in across his left ear. James laughs.

JAMES

You'll have to jump higher if you want to catch them.

Zimbie is covered in bubbles, as is James, who is washing him.

James hoses the bubbles off and dries Zimbie. He turns Zimbie loose to dry.

Zimbie trots away, nose to the ground. He stops, sniffs the ground and starts to dig with his hoof. James realize what's happening. He runs towards Zimbie.

JAMES (CONT'D)

Zimbie don't you dare.

ZIMBIE (V.O)

Dare what? This?

He digs again. James runs towards Zimbie and chases him. Immediately Zimbie turns that into a game.

He dashes to the left, sprints for a while. He stops, smells the ground, starts digging.

JAMES

Zimbie! No!

James rushes closer.

ZIMBIE

(Whinnies teasingly)

What you going to do?

James reaches Zimbie just in time to prevent him from rolling in the dirt.

Silly, Zimbie runs to the other side again. Immediately the leg starts digging.

JAMES

Zimbie! You just had a bath.

Zimbie kneels down, slowly lies on his side, then starts to roll. James pulls his hands through his hair.

JAMES (CONT'D)

I can't believe you just did that!

Zimbie gets up. A mischievous smile on his face.

ZIMBIE (V.O)

I was just horsing around. You can brush me now. I'll be clean as a whistle.

James clips the lead on Zimbie's halter and leads him to the shade of the apple tree. Systematically he starts to brush Zimbie.

EXT. FARMYARD - DAY

Zimbie pricks his ears when he hears the school bus. The school bus is a good thing. It brings James home.

The door opens. Shortly after James comes running up the path. His school bag shakes on his back, Paddy running alongside him jumping and barking at the same time. Zimbie smiles.

ZIMBIE

(Neighing)

JAMES!

James stops in his tracks. A smile cuts across his face. He turns back to the house.

JAMES

(Calling)

MOM!

He storms the door which opens just as he reaches is causing him to knock mom completely of her feet.

MOM

(Sternly)

JAMES MICHAEL.

James gets up laughing.

JAMES

(Laughing)

I'm sorry Mom.

He continues in the same breath.

JAMES (CONT'D)

Did you see what he did?

Mom can't help the smile cutting across her face.

GINA

Who Zimbie? No, what did he do?

JAMES

Mom he neighed at me. When I came down the road. He was happy to see me.

James takes mom and swirls her around in a dance of happiness.

JAMES (CONT'D)

He really did. He called for me.

James stops the silly dance. Looks up at mom.

JAMES (CONT'D)

He called me. I got to go.

Leaving Mom, still flustered as to what just happened, James storms into the house. Next moment he dashes past mom like a colored whirlwind, the faithful Paddy following him closely. Gina smiles.

GINA

(Doubtful)

I don't know about that James. He's been here for weeks now and still you haven't been able to ride him.

Close to the stables James slows down. He doesn't want to scare Zimbie. Near the apple tree he turns his attention to Paddy ignoring Zimbie completely.

JAMES

Let's get some apples Paddy, I'm starving.

Paddy barks and jumps on the hay bales while James climbs up on the other side. James picks apples.

Little later, James and Paddy sits on the hay bales, a big pile of apples between them. With their backs turned to Zimbie they start munching on the apples noisily.

Zimbie waits in anticipation. His mouth watering to have some of the juicy apples. He throws a glance at the big ginger cat sitting on a corner pole, carefully cleaning his shiny claws one by one. Zimbie tramps around.

James smiles but still ignores him completely. Finally Zimbie can't handle it any longer and neighs. The smile on James's face spreads from ear to ear.

He looks over his shoulder at Zimbie. He holds the apple up and asks as a matter of fact.

JAMES (CONT'D)

What? Do you also want an apple?

Zimbie nods his head up and down. He whinnies again. James smiles, takes an apple, turns around and gets off the bales. He walks over to Zimbie.

Zimbie looks at Red cleaning his claws. He looks at the faithful Paddy, that is almost as big as he is. He looks at James coming closer with the apple.

James reaches the fence and Zimbie pulls his head inside. He shakes his head up and down. James looks at the gate.

JAMES (CONT'D)

(Questioningly)

You want me to come in?

Zimbie nods his head. James looks at Paddy uncertain. Paddy barks and excited high pitched bark. Red meows from the corner post.

PADDY

(Barking high-pitched)

He has turned Red, he's one of us now.

RED

(Meowing)

Good job kid. Welcome to the family.

James opens the gate and enters. Zimbie comes to him. His ears pricked forward. His face friendly. He fondles around James, looking for his hand, this makes James laugh out loud.

JAMES

That's a good boy Zimbie. See I told you,
I'm harmless.

Zimbie fondle James's pockets for more apples. James laughs.

JAMES (CONT'D)

(Giggles)

Alright. Alright. Here.

James gives Zimbie another apple. Zimbie gulps it up quickly. He drops his head between James's legs and picks James of the ground.

James laughs. He finds his feet and straightens up.

JAMES (CONT'D)

What are you up to?

Zimbie drops his head again walks till his head is between James's legs and picks him up again. James hangs on this time. Zimbie picks his head up and James slides onto his back.

INT. INSIDE THE HOUSE - DAY

Gina looks through the window when James laughter rides in on the breeze lifting the curtains. She sees James lying on Zimbie, his head facing Zimbie's tail.

She smiles and slowly turns away to tend to the pie she is busy making.

EXT. STABLES ON THE FARM - DAY

Outside James sits upright on Zimbie, then turns around to face the right way. He rubs Zimbie's neck in praise, knowing the pat might set him back.

Paddy sits outside the paddock. He barks an excited high-pitched bark. Red gives Zimbie a satisfied look and jumps of the corner post. He walks away with his tail in the air.

JAMES

Are you asking me to ride you?

Zimbie nods, his mouth and nose going forward and backward, forward and backward. James laughs. He lays forward slowly, careful not to give Zimbie a fright.

JAMES (CONT'D)

Let me get your bridle and saddle.

He slides of Zimbie and goes to the tack room. He pauses in front of a bridle hanging on a hook. The name plate above it reads "PRINCE". Dust covers the bridle.

INSERT BACK FLASHES

Flashes of him putting it on Prince flashes through his mind. He smiles. He loved Prince so much. Lost in thought he stands in the tack room.

EXT INSERT

Zimbie's neighs, coming from outside, brings him back to reality. He takes Zimbie's new bridle, hanging next to Prince's, of the hook, grabs the saddle and walks around to Zimbie's paddock.

Barely ten minutes later James leads Zimbie out of the paddock and mounts from the left side. He walks him past the house down the road to the gate. He opens the gate without getting off.

JAMES

You good?

Zimbie answer with a short snort. He starts prancing around, eager to do more than just this walk.

JAMES (CONT'D)

You want to run, don't you? Let's go then.

He pushes Zimbie onto a canter. Paddy runs alongside Zimbie and James. James's face is the picture of happiness.

EXT. FARM - SOME WEEKS LATER - DAY

Grass sways in the gentle breeze. A hawk glides through the blue cloudless sky. Gracious. He lets out a screech.

Thunderous hooves bursts through the silence of the swaying grass. Zimbie bursts through the grass at a full gallop, going as fast as he can with James stuck on his back.

Paddy follows a small distance behind, also at full speed, stretching his long legs to keep up.

At the top of the grassy hill James brings Zimbie to a halt. The pony obeys immediately. They stop for a while to take in the breathtaking view.

Themselves making a lovely picture. The boy, his horse and his dog, surrounded by field of grass gently swaying in the wind.

A flustered rat scurries through the grass, across the footpath. He stops a moment to catch his breath. He looks around frantically to see if the big old rattle snake is still following him.

The sound of thunder bursting through the grass scares the rat and he disappear between the grass into a hole. The big old rattle snake stops on the footpath. He can smell the rat he has been following, paused here. He whisks his back tongue in and out, smelling the air for a hint of what happened to the rat. He has a glint in his tiny black eye.

He looks flustered when he hears the thundering hooves. He tries to get out the way, but before he manages the raging beast of Zimbie is on top of him.

Instinct makes him lash out to protect himself and he sinks his fangs deep into Zimbie's muzzle.

Zimbie feels the sting and flinches. He immediately starts to slow down. James feeling that something is wrong looks back, just too late to see the tail of the big rattler disappear in the grass.

James brings Zimbie to an immediate halt. He jumps off and walks around Zimbie.

JAMES

What's wrong?

James looks at Zimbie's legs and feet trying to see if he got a stone stuck in his irons. He picks the left front foot up then the left hind, right hind leg. He picks up the right front. He sees nothing.

He takes the time to shut Paddy, who is barking frantically, up. He turns to Zimbie.

He starts leading Zimbie but Zimbie limps slightly in the front leg on the right side. While going down to see what the matter is he scolds Paddy, who is still barking.

JAMES (CONT'D)

Paddy! Quiet!

He rubs his hand over Zimbie again, then he sees it. On the right side of Zimbie's muzzle. Two trickles of blood.

JAMES

(Urgent)

Paddy. Come here boy.

Paddy runs over to James calling him.

JAMES

Paddy you going to have to get help. A snake has bitten Zimbie.

James takes Paddy's head between his hands. He presses his forehead against Paddy's.

JAMES (CONT'D)

Go call Mom. Go!

Paddy looks at James. He barks, wags his tail.

JAMES (CONT'D)

(Urgent)

Go boy. Go get Mom.

Paddy takes off, running as fast as he can.

James turns to Zimbie. He stands with his head hanging down. The poison is starting to take effect.

James takes Zimbie's saddle off. Tears are welling up in his eyes. He throws his arms around Zimbie's neck. He pushes his face in Zimbie's neck.

JAMES

Hang on Zimbie. Paddy has gone to get help.

Zimbie's head gets heavier on James's shoulder.

JAMES

(Becoming anxious)

Please Zimbie, you got to hang on. Paddy will bring help.

James strokes either sides of Zimbie's face. Zimbie's eyes is only half open. Zimbie shifts his legs. This movement sends James into a frenzy again.

JAMES

(Anxious)

Come on Zimbie. You have to be strong. We still have so much to do.

Zimbie shifts his legs again. He sways a little and then lies down. James looks up and around. Looking to see if help is coming yet. He sees nothing but grass.

JAMES

(starting to sob)

Come on boy, you can't lie down. You have to fight. You have to. I need you Zimbie.

Zimbie goes from lying upright to lying flat on his side. His face in the dusty footpath. Little dust clouds forms where he exhales through his nose.

James can't bear to see Zimbie with his head in the sand like that and with a struggle he shifts in under Zimbie. Zimbie's head on his legs. Incoherent, he talks to Zimbie nonstop.

Paddy runs onto the yard. He runs straight to the kitchen where he knows he'll find Mom.

PADDY

(Barking)

HELP! You have to come. James is in trouble.

GINA

(Concerned)

What's the matter Paddy where's James?

Paddy runs to Mom and bites onto her apron. He pulls her towards the door.

GINA

(hurried)

OK, OK. I'm coming. Where's James? Show me.

Paddy runs to dad's pick-up. He barks nonstop. He nudges mom to get in. He runs to the gate. He barks yet again. Gina, understanding what he wants, starts the pick-up. She honks the horn, long and desperately. Dad comes running.

DAD

What's wrong?

GINA

(Frantic)

It's James. Paddy came to call me. He's waiting at the gate. Something's wrong.

Dad runs to the gate while mom backs up the pickup. At the gate she moves over and lets dad drive.

DAD

Come on Paddy, show us where James is.

PADDY

(Barking)

Follow me.

Paddy runs, as fast as he can. He leads them to James and Zimbie. Dad follows Paddy, driving dangerously fast. Paddy comes to a sudden halt. The pick-up skids to a standstill and Gina and Dad exists together.

James sits with his legs straights, Zimbie's head resting on them. He is crying while incoherently talking to Zimbie.

Mom falls on her knees next to James. She takes his face between her hands.

GINA

James? Are you OK?

JAMES

(Incoherent)

And fishing at the lake. You can't leave
me...

GINA

JAMES!!

James looks at mom. Slowly his eyes focus on mom.

JAMES

Mom? Mom!

He throws his arms around mom.

JAMES

Don't let him die Mom, please.

MOM

What happened James?

Dad is on his knees. He goes around Zimbie and sees the bite
marks.

DAD

Rattlesnake got him. See here.

Dad points to the two trickles of blood on Zimbie's swollen
face.

James only realizes now that his dad is there. His dad the
country vet. His face lights up.

JAMES

Dad you can save him. You have to.

DAD

I'll try my best, James, but it is a very
serious bite.

Dad gets up, suddenly hurried.

DAD (CONT'D)

(Barking orders)

Gina, there's a piece of hose on the back of the truck. Please pass it to me.

Mom gets the hose. While dad is cutting it a little shorter he barks more orders at mom.

DAD (CONT'D)

Go to my office, get some anti-venom and a syringe. Also bring something for shade, he can't lie here in the sun.

Mom takes off in the pick-up leaving a trail of dust following her.

Dad goes down on his knees in front of Zimbie, who's breathing has become shallow and labored. Having trouble breathing through the swollen nose.

Dad takes the hose and wipes it down. He explains to James what he is doing as he goes.

DAD

(explaining)

James, Zimbie is very sick. He has a hard time breathing, mainly because of the swelling.

He starts inserting the hose into Zimbie nostril.

DAD

I'm inserting this into Zimbie's nose. It will help him to breath. He won't like it. I'm going to need you to hold his head steady. Can you do that?

James nods. He leans over Zimbie, holding the head in his arms. Dad inserts the hose slowly. Inch by inch. When only about 4 inches of the tube is left dad stops. He puts his ear at the end of the pipe.

He adjusts the pipe a little and listens again. A little smile plays on the corners of his mouth.

DAD (CONT'D)

You hear that James? His breathing is slightly better.

JAMES

Will he be OK dad?

DAD

I don't know James. He had a nasty bite. He is small too.

James starts crying.

JAMES

I can't lose him, Daddy.

DAD

We won't give up James. I will do my best. I promise you.

James nods. Big tear drops falling on Zimbie's face. He strokes Zimbie's face gently. Over the closed eyes, over the cheeks and down his neck.

They hear a vehicle approaching. Moments later Gina brings the pick-up to a standstill.

Gina jumps out, a little container in the one hand. She rushes over to dad. Her eyes questioningly.

Dad straightens up. Taking the parcel from her hands, he responds by a negative shake of the head. Tears wells up in Gina's eyes. She lifts her hand to her mouth to suppress the sob threatening to escape.

James looks at Gina. Excited to share with her the news that Zimbie is breathing better, but he sees her reaction.

JAMES

Mom what's wrong. Why are you crying, Mom?

Gina comes to James and kneels down.

GINA

Oh James. I'm just worried. Worried about you and Zimbie.

Gina gets up. She takes a big beach umbrella off the pickup. The metal stand gets put up behind Zimbie's back.

She takes a rubber mallet to dig it deeper into the soil. She bends and picks up the umbrella she puts it in the stand and pitches it. The big multi-color umbrella immediately throws a lovely shadow over James.

Paddy, laying with his head tucked in between Zimbie and James whines. He looks at James with big brown eyes. James looks at him. James's hand finds comfort on Paddy's head.

JAMES

You did good Paddy.

Paddy wags his tail. The mouth opens and the tongue comes out.

Dad draws up the anti-venom. He kneels down opposite of James. He takes the syringe and administer the anti-venom. Dad has done all that he can.

He pats Zimbie shoulder.

DAD

It's up to you now boy. I've done what I can.

James looks at Dad.

JAMES

(Desperately)

You said you won't stop. That you'll do your best to save him.

DAD

I did James. I did what I could. It's up to Zimbie now.

James starts crying.

He holds Zimbie's head in his arms. Crying he pleads while big tear drops falls on Zimbie's face.

JAMES

You hear that boy? It is all up to you know. You have to get through this. You have to fight.

Gina moves closer to Dad who puts his arm across her sobbing shoulders. She dabs at her eye with a tissue. Dad too has a worried look on his face.

The sky is turning red on the west. Gina walks to James and put her hand on his shoulder.

GINA

James, it's time to go. It'll be dark soon.

James shakes his head.

JAMES

I'm not leaving him. He needs me.

GINA

James you...

Dad touches mom's shoulder.

DAD

I'll stay with him. You go home.

James looks at Dad, thankful for understanding.

JAMES

Thanks Dad. For everything.

Dad nods and swallow at the lump in his throat.

The darkness falls over the small figure still sitting motionless with his legs under Zimbie's head. Paddy paces up and down, like an officer in the army. Dad stirs in a small fire.

MONTAGE

- James sits by Dad next to the fire, staring not seeing into the fire. Somber, lost in thought.

- James sleeps next to Zimbie. He turns on his side, his arm going across Zimbie, he moves closer to Zimbie.
- Dad looks over Zimbie, he checks the breathing at the tube, looks into Zimbie's eye. James kneels down next to him.
- Gina gives James hugs, forces him to eat. Hands him a cool drink, makes him change his clothes.
- James shifts with effort in and out from under Zimbie's head. Careful not to be an inconvenience to Zimbie.

EXT. ZIMBIE'S DREAM - 3 DAYS LATER

It's blurry around the edges of Zimbie vision. He sees Ceasar jump over a high upright. Thick fog swallows him as he lands on the other side.

The red sky is scary and evil looking. Zimbie is terrified. The fog turns red. It twists and twirls.

The twirls changes into Abigail's red hair. Her eyes glow an evil red. An evil laugh escapes her lips. Crop in hand, she comes at Zimbie She lifts it to hit him. He cowers.

Before it hits him, it turns into a snake coming at Zimbie with an open mouth. Fangs shining. As the snake strikes at Zimbie the fog rises between them.

The fog takes the shape of James. Zimbie neighs to warn James, but James disappear in twirls of fog.

Zimbie's eyes flutters. His legs moving like his is running. His eyes open and he lift his head in concern. He needs to find James. James's arms wraps around Zimbie's head.

JAMES

(Soothing)

Shhhh. Calm down. I'm here.

Zimbie goes limp again. His head down on James's legs. His eyes closed again.

JAMES (CONT'D)

There we go. Take it easy.

James strokes Zimbie's face. His neck.

JAMES (CONT'D)

Rest. You have to get better.

His hand doesn't stop moving.

JAMES (CONT'D)

How do you feel about show jumping? I always wanted to do that, but Prince was too old.

The pick-up pulls up. Gina emerges from the vehicle. Mom carries a basket with some food and drink.

GINA

How's things looking here?

JAMES

He has been very restless. He woke about 10 minutes ago in fear. He picked his head up. He looked scared.

Zimbie open his eyes again. First not seeing anything. Then James comes in focus.

JAMES

Hey lazy bones. Decided to wake up?

Dad opens Zimbie lips and looks at the color of his gums. He looks at James.

DAD

I'm going to pull the tube. Can you hold him down for me?

James nods and wraps himself around Zimbie. Dad pulls the tube out. Zimbie resist the feel of the tube moving inside his nose.

JAMES

Whoa boy. It's almost done. Just a little bit more.

Dad puts the tube aside and brings his hand to Zimbie nose. He smiles as he feels Zimbie's warm breath on his hand.

Dad looks up at Gina. He winks at her with a smile.

DAD

Seems James chose a little fighter.

A big happy smile crosses over Gina's face. Her blue eyes sparkling.

GINA

That's wonderful.

Gina kneels next to James with the basket.

GINA (CONT'D)

Come James, eat something.

JAMES

Thanks Mom.

He takes an apple, but looks at Dad first.

JAMES

Dad, will he be OK?

James takes a big bite of the apple, he starts chewing. Zimbie's pricks ears, his eyes open. He turns his muzzle towards James. Tries to take the apple from James's hand. James laughs and feeds the apple to Zimbie.

JAMES

Hungry then?

DAD

I think that answers your question.

James nods.

Dad takes a halter of the pick-up and puts it on Zimbie.

DAD (CONT'D)

We need to get him up James.

James wiggles out from under Zimbie. His legs tired from the weight of Zimbie's head.

JAMES

(Giggles)

Oh man. I've got needles and pins.

He goes on his knees at Zimbie's withers. He nods at Dad. Dad pulls on the lead rein.

JAMES (CONT'D)

Come boy, get up.

James pushes Zimbie at the withers. With one big effort, Zimbie gets up. James goes to him. Falls on his knees in front of him and hugs him. Happy tears streaming down his face.

JAMES

(Relieved)

You did it, Boy. You're going be OK.

Zimbie hugs James back.

Gina picks on a tear stuck in the corner of her eye. She smiles.

Dad rubs Paddy's head. The big dog sits next to him. Mouth open in a smile. The tongue hanging off to the side.

James rises from the hug. He stands next to Zimbie. His arm hanging loosely across Zimbie neck.

DAD

James, Zimbie needs to get home. Think you can walk him?

James nods. He walks to Dad and gives him a big hug.

JAMES

Thank you Dad, for saving him.

Gina smiles. Dad smiles and nods.

DAD

He did most of the work himself. I think it's because he loves you so much.

James looks up at Dad. A big smile spreads across his face.

JAMES

You really think so Dad?

DAD

I know so it James. Come you need to get going.

Dad walks to the pick-up. Gina gets in. Dad opens the back and calls Paddy. Paddy barks and sits down stubbornly. Dad laughs. He closes the flap again.

DAD (CONT'D)

OK Paddy, have it your way.

Dad gets in and starts the vehicle. He leans across Gina.

DAD (CONT'D)

We'll see you at home.

The pick-up pulls away.

The trio starts walking. Paddy leading, clearing the way of any danger. James talking away, telling Zimbie about all the adventures they'll still have. Zimbie following. They disappear into the distance.

EXT. FARMYARD - DAY

MONTAGE

- Zimbie stands under the apple tree. Holding a basket, Paddy stands on top of the hay bales. James, precariously balanced on Zimbie's back, picks apples and puts them in the basket.

- Grass fields surrounds the tree on top of the hill. Laughter fills the air as Paddy, Zimbie and James roll down the hill, through the swaying grass. They end up next to each other, lying on their backs, looking at the clouds.

- James stands knee high in the lake. He is without a shirt, splashing water. A splash returns, knocking him off his feet, as Zimbie rears and falls in the water, causing

the big splash. Paddy is barking excitedly from the edge of the water.

- Paddy lying sleeping. James leaning against Zimbie lying down in the grass. He is reading a book, BLACK BEAUTY.

- Zimbie and Paddy standing on the side, keeping watch as James sneaks in to steal an apple pie Mom baked and put on the window sill to cool. All giggling mischievous.

- James covers Zimbie in a brand new horse blanket, protecting him from the cold and the snow that comes with winter.

END MONTAGE

EXT. FARM - DAY

James takes the blanket off Zimbie and folds it up, to put it away.

SUPER: SPRING

Zimbie tries to keep up with the chestnut mare in front of him. Both galloping at full speed. Jen and James have smiles across their faces.

They get to a lake. Horses and riders goes into the water for a swim. A flock of geese flies across in a V-shape.

After cooling down at the lake they walk the horses through a wooded area. Sun falls through the thick canopy of leaves.

A mountain lion lifts his head. A cruel smile spreads across his face. An ugly scar cuts through his left, blinded eye.

He gets up, stretches out lazily. A beastly laugh escapes his lips.

MOUNTAIN LION

Looks like lunch is served.

He moves from one branch to another. He searches for and finds the perfect place for an ambush. A steep rock face on the left. On the right, a deep ravine.

The kids near the overhanging tree. The mountain lion waits till the perfect moment.

MOUNTAIN LION

Three, two, one... Surprise.

He jumps and lands inches in front of Jen and the chestnut mare. He snarls. The mare rears. Jen tries to hang on. The mare loses her balance and gives a couple of steps back.

Jen's grip on the mane slips, she falls over the edge of the ravine. The chestnut mare runs off. James reaches out to her.

JAMES

JEEEEEEEN!!!

The mountain lion focuses on Zimbie and James. He gives a step closer. James is frozen. Another step. The mountain lion drops his head, he lowers the front of his body, preparing to pounce.

The mountain lion pounces. In midair he is hit by a big gray blur. He has no idea what happened. He hits the ground, the big dog on top of him, fighting tooth and nail.

The big cat and the dog rolls on the ground. Teeth, tails and claws appearing from the blur.

Paddy falls to the one side. He gets back on his legs quick. He attacks again.

The mountain lion comes rolling from the blur. He looks around nervous. Paddy attacks again.

The mountain lion pins Paddy to the ground, against the cliff. He lifts his big paw, sharp nails showing. He flinches as a stone hit him in the side.

JAMES

Hey! Get away from him.

The mountain lion releases his grip for a second. Paddy takes the opportunity to bite his front leg.

They roll on the ground. The fight is intense. Closer to the edge of the ravine. Closer.

They tumble over the edge of the ravine towards the river. The mountain lion hits the water, seconds later Paddy can

be seen falling into the water. For a second time James cries out in anguish.

JAMES

Paddy NOOOOOO!!!

James looks over the edge of the rock face. Jen sits on a ledge, holding her leg. Blood is seeping through a gash on her shin. The mountain lion and the dog falls in the river below.

JAMES

Jen, are you OK?

Jen looks up. She nods.

JEN

My leg hurts. I think it's broken.

JAMES

Jen I'm going to get help. I'll be quick.

Jen nods and shifts to get more comfortable. James turns to Zimbie.

JAMES

Zimbie we need to get home quick. Jen needs help. We going to take the short cut. I'm going to need you to be very brave now. You understand?

Zimbie looks at James with big eyes. He snorts and shakes his head. The pair takes off galloping. James leans forward his face close to Zimbie's ears.

They follow the road. James and Zimbie leans into the corners as they follow the winding road. James sees a tree fallen across the path.

JAMES

Zimbie you got to jump. You can do this.

Zimbie looks at James as if he has gone mad.

INSERT BACKFLASH

Cesar looks at Zimbie before he trots away

CEASAR

Remember to believe in yourself.

END BACK FLASH

He looks back at the road with determination. He can't let James down. They near the fallen tree. Zimbie takes his last step and sails over the log.

JAMES

WHOOOHOOOO!

James praises Zimbie, without reducing speed

JAMES

Good boy.

They race on. They veer off the road and cuts across the field. A ditch comes into view. James doesn't have to encourage Zimbie.

Zimbie stretches his steps. They fly over the ditch. James smiles as he looks back at the ditch they just came over.

He turns his attention back to the road in front of them. The house appears. Only the rock wall with gate that keeps them from getting help.

James tries to pull Zimbie to a stop. Zimbie refuses he pulls the reins from James's hands and aims for the wall. James sits upright, arms stretched wide open. He leans forward as they land. They race to the house.

EXT. RIDING SCHOOL STABLES - DAY

James is in the stable.

SUPER: ONE MONTH LATER

His hand doesn't stop moving as he works his way around Zimbie, brushing him to a shine.

JAMES

You up for this Zimbie?

ZIMBIE

OH YEAH, I was born for this.

Zimbie whinnies. James kneels in front of Zimbie. He takes Zimbie's face between his hands and looks Zimbie in the eyes. Zimbie looks back at James.

JAMES

I'm a bit nervous Zimbie, but I trust you.
I know you... We can do it.

James hugs and continues to saddle Zimbie.

EXT. RIDING ARENA - DAY

James and Zimbie enter the practice arena to practice a couple of jumps before competing. A boy on a chestnut gelding approach them.

PHILLIP

Hey Zimbie. It's good to see you, Boy.

He looks at James and extends a hand.

PHILLIP (CONT'D)

I'm Phillip, I use to ride Zimbie
before... You know... Before he changed.

JAMES

Hi Phillip, it's nice to meet you. I'm
James.

PHILLIP

How is he now?

Love and pride spreads over James's face.

JAMES

He is awesome.

James pats Zimbie on the neck.

JAMES (CONT'D)

He's my best friend.

Zimbie whinnies and nods his head. Both James and Phillip laughs.

PHILLIP

Looks like he agrees with you.

Phillip gathers his reins to continue practicing.

PHILLIP

Good luck to you both.

JAMES

Thanks. Same to you and...

PHILLIP

Chance.

Phillip rides off. James gathers his reins and starts a rising trotting around the arena. On the second lap a big bay gelding falls in next to them.

Zimbie eyes stretches. It's Ceasar. He looks uncharacteristically nervous today.

A little girl with red hair and a freckled face, wearing a green jacket and cream jodhpurs looks down on James and Zimbie.

ABIGAIL

Are you going to jump...him?

JAMES

Yes.

ABIGAIL

(Antagonistic)

I jumped him before.

James just nods. He can see that Zimbie is uncomfortable.

ABIGAIL

He was useless, he can't jump to save his life. He made me loose. Now I have Ceasar. He is a champion jumper.

James looks at Ceasar. He is a beautiful horse, but he seems nervous.

JAMES

I have to go.

James turns Zimbie away towards the upright for practice.

JAMES (CONT'D)

It was her, wasn't it?

Zimbie snorts.

JAMES

Ceasar looks nervous. Think she is doing it to him to?

Zimbie snorts again.

They go in for the jump and clears it easily. They canter around to the right, leading with the right leg. James purposely brings Zimbie in at an angle. Zimbie clears it easy.

James steers Zimbie to the gate to wait their turn. Waiting next to the fence they watch the horses doing their rounds.

First up is a gray mare. She comes into the first upright beautifully and sails over it. The doing a great speed. They clear all the jumps till the seventh.

The mare tips a pole on the back of a parallel and send it to the ground. They easily clear the triple bar and finish at a good time with only a four-point penalty.

The next horse to enter is the chestnut gelding Chance. They go in for the first jump. Clears it easily. They confidently go over jump two, three and four.

At the double bar at number five they have a slight misjudging of steps, but recovers quickly. They do the pirouette at number six at an extreme angle but manages without touching a pole.

The parallel at number seven is no challenge. The triple bar at number eight is more challenging but also clear. They sail over nine and ten leaving them with a clear round and the time to beat.

The black gelding up next easily manages a clear round putting him with Chance in the jump off.

Zimbie and James enters the gate. They canter two small circles when their bell goes and they go in for the first jump.

Next to the jump on the other side of the fence Jen sits in a wheelchair, the whole of her leg in a cast. She is cheering wildly at James and Zimbie.

JAMES

(Whispers in Zimbie's ear)

Let's do this. For Jen. We have to rescue her, just like that day.

Determination spreads over Zimbie's face. The arena changes into grassland, the jumps into ditches and logs. They take on the challenges on by one. Over the log, they turn short to avoid the mountain lion. Over the ditches.

Before they know it they fly over the rock wall taking them home.

Cheers coming from the crowds brings them back to reality. James praises Zimbie enthusiastically. They have done a perfect clear round and now has the time to beat.

Gina laughs as Dad picks her up and SPINS around with her in his arms. Jen goes crazy in the wheelchair. She nearly falls over. Regains her composure and continues to celebrate.

James and Zimbie leaves the arena to wait for the jump off. Soon as they out James jumps off Zimbie and gives him a big hug.

JAMES (CONT'D)

You did it boy. You are the best.

Zimbie hugs James back. A tear of happiness blinking in the corner of his eye.

The mention of Ceasar's name over the loud speaker makes him look up. James gets up goes stand next to the fence to watch Ceasar.

Zimbie walks closer to James and nudges his muzzle under James's arm, till James opens his arm enough for Zimbie to fit his head. Standing like that, arm over Zimbie they watch the next round.

Abigail and Ceasar enters. They canter their small circles waiting for the bell to go. When it goes they approach their first jump, clearing it easy.

Jumps two, three and four is no challenge. Ceasar's excellent schooling gets them through the double bar at number five.

At the pirouette at number six, Ceasar tips a pole, it stays put. Abigail uses her crop, unnecessary, before jump number seven which they clear.

They come in too fast for the triple bar on number eight. Their strides completely out. Again Ceasar's experience saves them. They make it clear over jump nine and ten to end up with a clear round.

They leave the course. No words of praise for Ceasar that saved the round. He walks, head hanging, a sad expression on his face.

Over the loudspeaker they call the horses out for the jump off. Phillip and Chance, James and Zimbie, Storm and Suzie, Abigail and Ceasar. They all line up at the gate.

VOICE OVER LOUDSPEAKER

Riders your jump off will be as follows.
You'll do only jumps one, three, five and
ten. Good luck out there.

The riders lines up. The black gelding goes first. They clear jump one easy, goes past jump two between the fence and the jump. They take a wide turn to jump three, which they clear.

They gallop down the arena, turns behind jump four and clears the double bar at jump five. They rush to turn behind jump six, turn between jumps two and seven and comes in for jump ten. They sail over it for a beautiful clear round.

Phillip and Chance takes their turn. They clear the first upright. Pass between the fence and jump two to line up for three. They clear three. Behind jump four they turn and clear the double bar at jump five.

They turn behind jump six. Unlike the black gelding they pass between jump three and seven for a tight turn into jump ten. They clear jump ten as the new leaders.

Zimbie and James is next. Before entering the arena, James leans forward.

JAMES

Zimbie we can't beat them on speed. We going to have to cut corners. Let's do this.

They canter their circle and the bell goes. They jump and clears jump one, cutting between jump two and seven they approach three at an angle. They audience audibly holds their breath.

Zimbie jumps and they clear jump three easily. They go down the arena, takes their turn in front of jump four and clears the double bar at five. James turns Zimbie, still being in the air.

They narrowly miss jump three when taking a very tight turn between jump three and ten. He keeps the small circle and line up for jump ten. They fly across and race to the finish line.

The crowd cheer. James falls onto Zimbie's neck. Tears of joy and happiness streaming down his face. A big smile spread across his face. He pats Zimbie on either sides of his neck

JAMES (CONT'D)

Well done boy. You did it.

Zimbie turns his head to look at James. A smile on his face. He looks happy.

ZIMBIE

(Neighing)

We did it.

Outside the gate James dismount.

VOICE OVER LOUDSPEAKER

Our next contestant is Abigail riding Ceasar.

Abigail and Ceasar canters in a circle. The bell goes and they start.

They easily do the first jump. They try to cut between jump two and seven but Abigail sees they not going to make it. She swerves to the right to pass through between the fence and jump two.

Flustered, Ceasar, not knowing what is expected of him, jumps number two. The bell sounds twice announcing a disqualification. Abigail walks her horse of the course.

ABIGAIL

You are supposed to be the best, and look what you did.

She looks at Zimbie and James and the people supporting him.

ABIGAIL

You let a stupid pony beat you. He can't even jump.

At the gate, her mom waits. Hands in her sides. Obvious that she is not happy with Abigail's performance. Abigail reaches her.

ABIGAIL'S MOM

What on earth were you thinking? Can you even think?

Tears wells up in Abigail's eyes.

ABIGAIL

I'm sorry Mom, I've tried

ABIGAIL'S MOM

You tried. Well obviously you didn't try hard enough. That... That pony beat you.

Abigail drops her head, her shoulders sags.

ABIGAIL

I'm sorry Mom.

Her mom nods.

ABIGAIL'S MOM

Get him to the stables. We need to go.

Abigail nods. She starts walking Ceasar to the stables. When she passes Zimbie and James she stops for a moment.

ABIGAIL

How did you make him jump like that?

JAMES

I didn't make him do anything. He jumps because he wants to. I go along, because I trust him. We're just having fun.

ABIGAIL

What if you lose?

JAMES

Then we still had fun. It's not about winning. It's about friendship and trust.

ABIGAIL'S MOM(OS)

(Impatient)

ABIGAIL!!

ABIGAIL (RELUCTANTLY)

I guess I should go.

Abigail gathers her reins and moves off to the stables. A sad expression on her face.

VOICE OVER LOUDSPEAKER

Can the following riders to come to the judges?

Abigail and Ceasar

Phillip and Chance

James and Zimbie

Suzie and Storm

Abigail's head flies up. She brings Ceasar to a halt. Turns him around. All the called out riders and their horses enter the arena and walk over to the judges.

VOICE OVER LOUDSPEAKER

In fourth place today have Abigail and Ceasar. Congratulations you two.

One of the judges walks forward. She shakes Abigail's hand and pins a green, white and black rosette to Ceasar's brow band. Abigail smiles.

VOICE OVER LOUDSPEAKER

In the third place we have Suzie and Storm. Congratulations.

Suzie nudges Storm to take a couple of steps forward to meet the judges. The same lady steps forward and pins a bright orange and brown rosette to Storm's brow-band. She shakes Suzie's hand and speaks a couple of words to her.

VOICE OVER LOUDSPEAKER (CONT'D)

In second place with the time of forty-four seconds we have Phillip and Chance.

The crowd cheer as Phillip nudges Chance forward. They meet up with the lady judge that already stepped forward. She pins a big red and white rosette to Chance's brow-band.

VOICE OVER LOUDSPEAKER (CONT'D)

In first place, we have new comers James and Zimbie, with a new course record of thirty-nine point six seconds.

The crowd goes wild. They cheer loudly. Dad puts his arm across Mom's shoulders.

DAD

Seems like James was right all the time. He saw something in that horse none of us did.

Mom just nods. Not taking her eyes off James who is at the judges now, getting a big blue and white rosette pinned to Zimbie's brow-band. She talks to James who nods.

VOICE OVER LOUDSPEAKER

Congratulations to all our riders.

The riders start to disperse. At the gate James dismounts Zimbie. He takes the saddle off.

JAMES

I think it's enough of this old thing for today.

He turns to Zimbie.

JAMES

You did so well today. Thank you.

Zimbie whinnies. James plonks a kiss on Zimbie's cheek.

JAMES

Come, let's get you home. You need the rest.

He picks up the saddle and carries it to where Gina, Dad, Jen and instructor Sherry is waiting. Dad takes the saddle from James. He puts it on the side of the pick-up and pats Paddy sitting on the back.

Mom grabs James in a hug.

GINA

James, I'm so proud of you.

JAMES

It wasn't all me, Mom. This little guy did most of the work.

James put his hand between Zimbie's ears and shakes it in his mane.

Dad comes from the back grabs James and swirls him around. James laughs.

DAD

You two were amazing.

JAMES

(Chuckles)

Thank you Dad.

Paddy jumps of the pick-up to share in the happiness. He gives Zimbie a sappy kiss with his big wet tongue. The silly smile ever present on his face.

Jen moves in with her wheelchair. One leg straight. She stops in front of Zimbie. She takes his face between her hands.

JEN

I always knew you could do it. When you have the heart, your size doesn't matter.

Zimbie snorts and nestles his muzzle in Jen's lap. Almost knocking her over. She laughs, so does James.

JEN

Congratulations James. You were brilliant.

James smiles.

JAMES

You know I told him to imagine it was the day we rescued you.

Jen smiles.

JEN

He is a real little hero.

Abigail walks by, in her arms, she carries her saddle. The reins hooked on her arm. Ceasar follows her meekly.

James looks at her. He smiles.

JAMES

Abby wait!

Abigail stops. Uncertain what to expect.

In the distance, behind the horsebox Abigail's mom walks closer. She looks upset. She stops when she sees Abigail waiting on James, lowering the saddle to the ground.

James fiddles with Zimbie's bridle and runs to Abigail.

JAMES (CONT'D)

I want you to have this.

James hands her the big blue and white rosette.

ABIGAIL

(Dumbstruck)

Why? I don't understand.

JAMES

I don't need it. I have it...

James taps on his heart.

JAMES (CONT'D)

here.

Abigail takes the rosette from James's hands. She smiles.

ABIGAIL

Thank you. Thank you for showing me how it
is supposed to be.

James nods. He looks at Ceasar and walks closer. Softly he
rubs Ceasar's face.

JAMES

You have a great horse. Take care of him
and he will take care of you.

Abigail unhooks the reins from her arms and hands them to
James.

ABIGAIL

(Motions to Zimbie)

May I?

James looks at Zimbie. He nods. The little red haired girl
approaches Zimbie slowly. She goes down on her haunches. She
takes Zimbie's bridle and turns his face towards her.

ABIGAIL

(Regretful)

Zimbie I am so sorry for what I have done to you and also to Ceasar. I... I didn't know better. Can you forgive me?

Zimbie breaks free from Abigail's grip. He puts his head over her shoulder and yanks her into a hug. Abigail chuckles as she regains her balance and gets up.

ABIGAIL

I guess it's forgiven. Thank you Zimbie.

Gina looks at Dad and smiles. He smiles back at her. She is so unbelievably proud of what is happening here. She starts to move forward, but Dad grabs her hand and holds her back.

Abigail takes the reins back from James. She hands him the rosette back.

ABIGAIL

You should keep this. You deserve it, not me.

Before she picks up the saddle, she turns to Ceasar.

ABIGAIL

Ceasar, I am so sorry for treating you the way I did. Can you forgive me?

Ceasar pricks his ears. Unfamiliar with this kind tone in her voice.

ABIGAIL

Think we can be friends, like James and Zimbie?

CEASAR

I'd like that.

He looks at Zimbie.

CEASAR

Thank you Zimbie for showing my girl the right way. I always knew you were special.

Cesar whinnies. He likes the new tone in Abigail's voice.

Abigail hugs him, her face pushed against his neck. Cesar drops his head and hugs her back.

After what seems an eternity Abigail lifts her head and looks at the group.

ABIGAIL

Thank you.

She picks up the saddle and walks off.

ABIGAIL (CONT'D)

Come boy, let's get you taken care off.

Cesar follows her, willingly this time.

Only now Dad let Gina's hand go. She kneels down to look James in the eye.

GINA

James, my dear James. It was a wonderful what you just did. I am so proud of you.

She puts her hands on his shoulders.

GINA (CONT'D)

You know when you chose Zimbie, I... We (looking at dad) thought you made a mistake, but we were wrong. You couldn't have chosen a better pony.

Mom hugs James. His head on her shoulder, a smile on his face. He picks his head up and looks over mom's shoulder to Zimbie, who has walked across to them. He places a kiss on James's forehead.

Paddy jumps in from the side. Determined not to miss out anything. He gives James sloppy kisses. Gina and Zimbie also gets some. They all start laughing.

Behind the horsebox, Abigail's mom gives Abigail a hug, then bends down to pick up the saddle from the ground and carries it for Abigail.

FADE TO BLACK:

THE END