

Jenavi B.

## Shooting for the Stars

“Everyone, curfew, 8:00 PM”

I grab my bag and say to myself, “It’s time.”

I slowly tip-toed down the hall into a room staring at the keys. Just to make sure, I do a little here and there and look to see if my location is right and see where the 7:50 train will be arriving on the computer.

“Whoosh.” I grab the keys and head toward the gates and open them. Then, I see a flashlight. I’ve got to go. I put on my coat that is bright red.

“Goodbye, orphanage.” The orphanage was fine, but I wanted to be at my best and see what I can do. I run and run as my hair blows in the wind. I grab onto the back of the train and there is no turning back.

I, then, make sure that I have everything and head to the back of the train.

Apples. When I see the door, I hide behind the crates and slowly fall asleep as I closed my eyes.

The bright light of the sun shines on the shoes in my bag. I see the riding academy as the conductor shouts, “London,” and a few other things.

“London, I’m finally where I belong. I pick the lock of the door from the back and jump out of train. I looked around and reached into my bag and I pulled out a postcard.

A long time ago (14 years ago), I was left in front of the orphanage. In the basket I was in, was a bag that said, “Ride,” a picture of the riding academy on a postcard that said the location and there were also riders’ boots. When I turned 14, the orphanage owners told me. I knew I loved horses but then, I knew I was born to ride. The red coat was like the blanket I was wrapped in.

So, then I ran until I got to the building like the one that I saw in the picture on the postcard. Someone opened the huge door and I slipped in. My dream had been to ride. I looked down the hall there were a few rooms and then I saw a barn. So, I put on my boots that were in my bag that I can now fit into, they were a little torn, but I liked them anyway. There was this horse. It was beautiful, so I went over to pet it and it liked me.

“Young girl, have you enrolled here because I am the instructor and I never met your parents.” She seemed nice and I told her my story.

“I’m Isabella,” I say.

“I’m Mrs. Courtney. You can stay with me and we can get you enrolled here tomorrow.”

“Really?” I say. I flung my arms around her and we went home.

At Mrs. Courtney’s home, I couldn’t stop thinking about where I would stay after a while and then I said to Mrs. Courtney, “After all of this where will I stay?”

“We can figure something out.” I wondered what she meant. I felt like she wasn’t telling me something. After that I didn’t want to ask again. I was just going to try to stop thinking about it.

Mrs. Courtney had been like the mom I never had. We trained and trained for months. I got a riding outfit, but I kept my boots. I already met friends and enemies. My horse was the one I met when I came here. No one had a connection with her like me.

Mrs. Courtney told us that we will be doing a competition. A few months later we were all about to ride for the Junior Nationals. I was so amazed when our team won first place. Then came individual awards. First, Jade went, then Tom, then Caroline, then Brady, and after Lana was me. Lana, my enemy. Lana didn’t miss one jump and she was ahead of everyone. When Lana finished, she came over to me and said, “You can’t do this. I’m going to win first and lead Junior Nationals. Your shoes are as bad as your riding.”

I sit down looking at my shoes. Am I good? Should I be the one who gets first place? “Next up, Isabella. Hello, Isabella.” I heard the judges, but I couldn’t do it.

Mrs. Courtney stood up and told the judges, “Just a moment, I’ll go get her. She went behind the barn and said to me, “Don’t let her get to you and show them all why you came here. “To ride!” I say. I stand up and Lana gives me a look, but I don’t care. I show them why I came here. After my run, the judges say, “Lana and Isabella will do a timed race because they have tied!”

I was ready for this. Lana got 23.7 seconds. Then, it was my turn. Everything at first was easy until the two barrels connected to the hay bales. “Come on, girl, you can do this,” I tell Sapphire. We made it. “21.63 seconds,” the judges say, “Isabella is the winner.”

I couldn’t believe it, my hard work paid off. A few months later, I was behind the barn about to lead London in the Nationals. Before I went on, Lana came up to me. “You deserve this. I’m sorry. I hope we can be friends in the future.”

I smile. “Me, too.” Then, she steps to the side and Mrs. Courtney handed me some papers. “I want to adopt you. You can stay with me to be a rider!” I was amazed and I said, “Yes” and gave her a hug. Then, I knew what she meant at her house. Maybe she knew I could do this all along.

“Now, go ride,” Mrs. Courtney says.

“OK,” I say.

I’m finally shooting for the stars.