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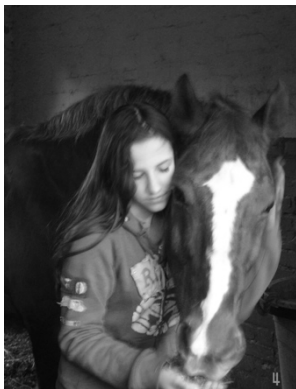
Published by: Young At Heart Publications

Email: [footprintsonourland@mweb.co.za](mailto:footprintsonourland@mweb.co.za)

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## *About the Author*



*Jessica Young is a thirteen year old, horse crazy, homeschooled girl from the Western Province in South Africa. She's loved horses since she was two when she had her first ride on a pony called Popcorn. Now Jessica lives in Cape Town with her parents, three siblings, three dogs, four chickens and two goldfish. She spends all her time playing, reading, writing, working, mountain biking, horse riding or doing her school work.*

Visit her website [www.learn-about-horses.com](http://www.learn-about-horses.com)

## Chapter Two

Ace was dreaming. She was in the paddock at the ranch, standing next to a small horse, clipping a lunge rein to its halter. She clipped on the rein then backed up, calling the horse to come to her.

Suddenly everything went wrong.

The horse reared and began to gallop around the paddock, dragging Ace behind it.

The horse swung violently around the left hand corner of the paddock. Ace let go of the rope and flew into one of the fence posts.

Darkness.

Ace woke up with a start. Her heart was pounding so hard she was sure that Jamie and her father would be able to hear it from their rooms.

Ace felt her head. She couldn't feel any lumps or bumps from colliding with a wooden fence post.

She checked her arms. No scratches or bruises were to be seen, so it must have been a dream.

Ace glanced at her bedside clock. It was 6:07 am, a bit too early for somebody who usually awoke at 7:30 or later.

Ace lay back against her horse patterned pillows, trying to decide whether to get up now or try to go back to sleep.

She chose the first option.

Quietly, so not to disturb her sleeping father and brother, Ace climbed out of bed, crept up to her chest of drawers, pulled out a pair of jeans, a brown hooded jersey, a green long-sleeve top and a pair of white socks and her cowgirl boots. Then Ace tip-toed out to the bathroom to get changed.

Once dressed Ace carefully inched her way to the stairs that led down to the first storey of her house.

Ace climbed down the stairs and when she reached the bottom, walked slowly to the front door and opened it.

It was still mostly dark outside for the sun hadn't risen yet because it was winter.

Ace carefully closed the door and then raced around to the back of the house and to the stables where the horses were sleeping.

But on her way there, Ace stopped by the paddock fence to gaze into it where Wild Thing stood resting.

Because no one could catch him, Wild Thing had to sleep in the paddock at night even in the winter.

But the little horse managed okay because; being a Namibian Wild Horse, he was used to dealing with the desert's freezing night temperature.

As Ace climbed up on to the middle beam on the fence it let out a loud, startling squeak.

Immediately, Wild Thing's Arabian-like head flew up. His whole body tensed as he swung around to see what had awoken him.

When he saw Ace he backed up a few steps and then, keeping a wary eye on her, he began to yank up grass from the paddock's ground.

Deciding that it was better to leave the nervous gelding alone Ace went to say "hi" to the chickens instead.

As she neared the chicken coop Ace heard the distinct call of a chicken who'd just laid an egg.

"Puck-puck-puck-puck-puck-per-cuck!"

Ace raced to the coop and peered inside.

Sam, her favorite chicken stood over an egg, head extended, calling loudly to the whole world that she'd laid her very first egg.

"Oh good pretty girl Sam!" Ace exclaimed. "You've laid your first egg."

Sam looked quite smug as she nestled down on top of the brownish white egg and folded her wings to her side.

Ace opened the door into the coop and looked about for some grain to entice the four hens off their nests.

She couldn't find any. But then she caught sight of several big snails sleeping on the wooden frame of the coop.

Ace plucked off every single one of the snails and dropped them onto the ground.

The chickens hopped up from their nests and trotted over to the snails and began to devour them.

Ace quickly strode over to the four nests and picked up all the eggs and put them in her pockets of her hooded jersey.

Then carefully backing up out of the coop she closed the door and began to walk back up to the house.

On her way she counted the eggs.

*One, two, three, four, eggs.* Ace counted mentally. *One from Coco, one from Frosty, one from Golden and one from Sam.*

Ace reached the front door of the house and walked inside. As she opened the door the appetizing smell of bacon and banana flapjacks wafted through the air.

Ace hurried over to the kitchen counter where she carefully laid down the eight eggs and then crept up behind her brother, who was so absorbed in his cooking that he hadn't seen her come in.

She crept up behind him just as he was about to flip the flapjack in the air.

"Good morning Jamie!" Ace said loudly.

The spatula dropped from Jamie's hand and with it, the flapjack went as well as he jumped and spun around.

"Ryleigh Foster!" He accused her, still shaking. "You nearly made me jump out of my skin!"

"Nearly?" Ace said laughing hysterically. "You *did* jump out of your skin! Oh the look on your face! It was priceless!"

"Priceless indeed!" Jamie snorted. "You made me drop the spatula and the flapjack. Now they are dirty so I'll have to make another one."

"Oh Jamie, don't be such a grouch. If you look at it how I did then you'll see that it was actually very funny!"

"Okay," her brother said, picking up the spatula from the kitchen floor and placing it in the sink.

Then he scooped up the flapjack and dropped it in the bin.

"I won't be a grouch, but I promise you that I'll get you back!" he said raising his eyebrows.

"Oh, I don't know about that . . ." Ace replied. "I think that I'm a bit too alert for you to surprise me!"

"Cheeky!" Jamie said flicking a dish towel at her. "For that you won't get any flapjacks!"

"Even if I get down on my knees and beg for them?" Ace asked on her knees, pretending to tremble.

"Stop it! You're making me laugh and it's giving me a stitch!" Jamie begged as he held his sides.

Now Ace was laughing too. When they finally stopped Jamie said, "Okay, you can have one, if you wash off the spatula."

Grinning, Ace walked over to the sink and after turning on the water began to rinse off the wooden cooking implement.

When she was done, she handed it to Jamie and then sat down at the table to wait for her breakfast to be served.

## *Wild Fire*

*The tale of and abused gelding,  
And the girl who whispers him back,*

It's awhile after Ace Foster's beloved stallion Zambia escaped from her sheep ranch in Namibia and now after a failed attempt to train the untamable Wild Thing she has ended up badly injured.

So after she's recovered, Ace starts trying to find out more about the aloof and scared young gelding.

But what she finds out is not what she expected and gives her a whole new insight into Wild Thing's history.

However, Wild Thing lacks the trust and relationship that Ace had with Zambia and so she is finding it very difficult to get through to him.

But then just as things start going smoothly, Wild Thing escapes and disappears into Namibia's vast landscape.

Will Ace find Wild Thing and if she does, can she whisper him back and prove that he is a winner after all he's been through?