

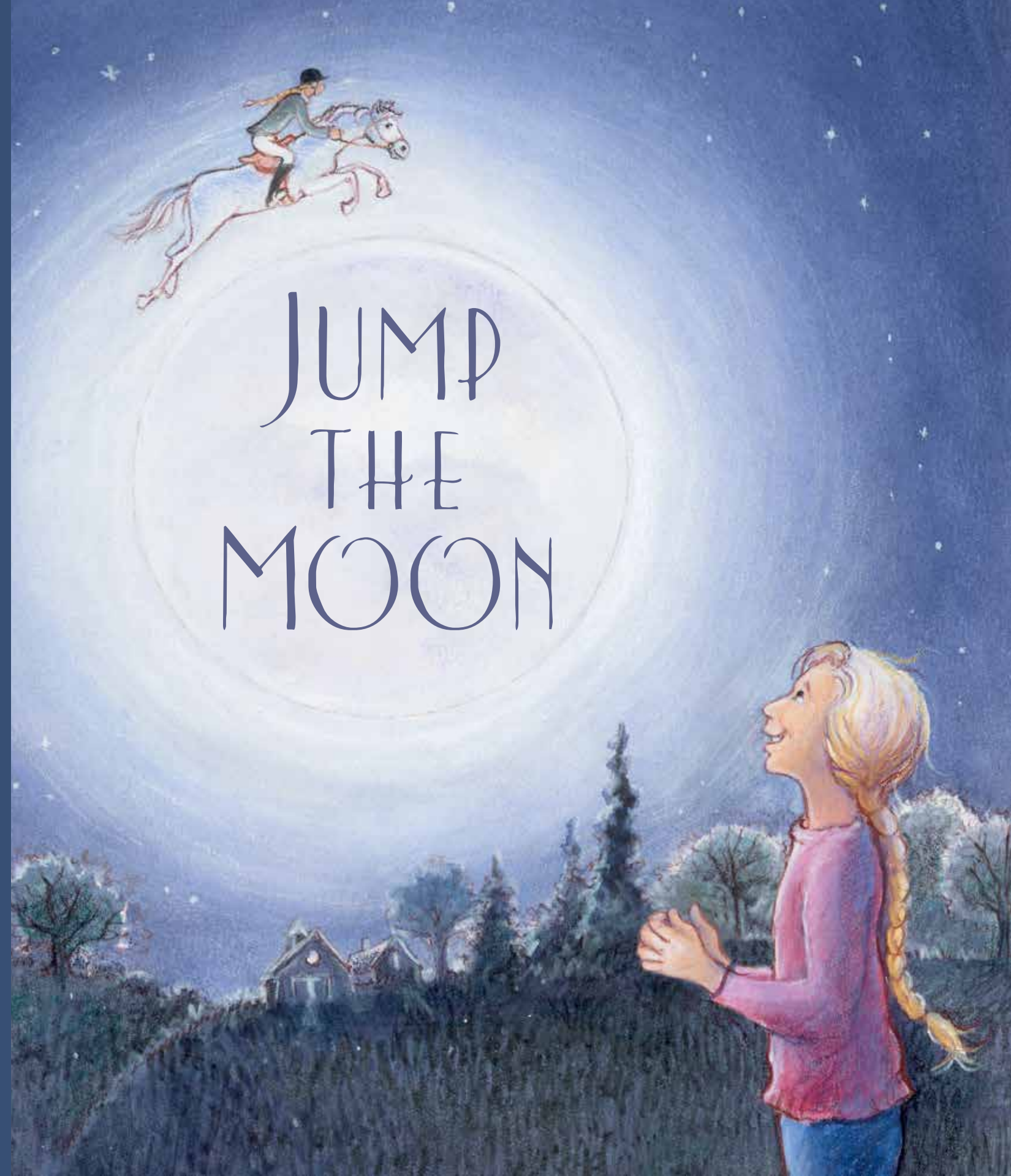
JUMP THE MOON

BY KATHY SIMMERS

ILLUSTRATIONS BY MARJORIE VAN HEERDEN



JUMP THE MOON





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To my daughter, Denise, and her pony, Me Too.

—K.S.

To my sister, Renée, who loves horses too.

—M.v.H.

BY KATHY SIMMERS
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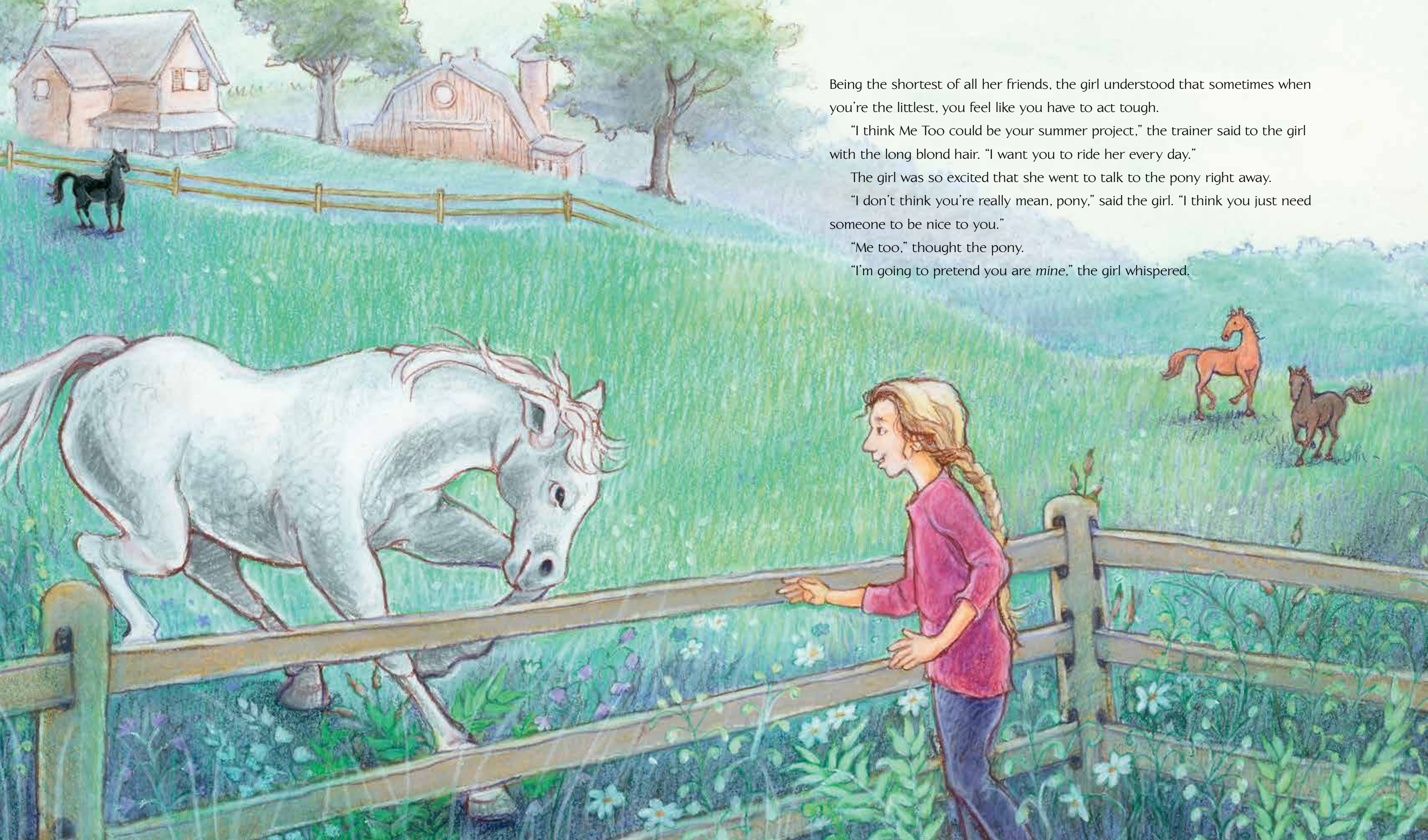


THERE ONCE WAS A GIRL WITH LONG BLOND HAIR who had always dreamed of having a pony that she could love forever. But she'd never had a pony of her own. She worked long days at a barn, just so she could ride ponies. She thought ponies were perfect, even when they weren't.

One day a scruffy gray pony was brought to the barn for training.

"This is Me Too," said the trainer. "Be careful around her. She'll kick anyone who comes up behind her."

Everyone at the barn was afraid of the pony—everyone except the girl with the long blond hair.



Being the shortest of all her friends, the girl understood that sometimes when you're the littlest, you feel like you have to act tough.

"I think Me Too could be your summer project," the trainer said to the girl with the long blond hair. "I want you to ride her every day."

The girl was so excited that she went to talk to the pony right away.

"I don't think you're really mean, pony," said the girl. "I think you just need someone to be nice to you."

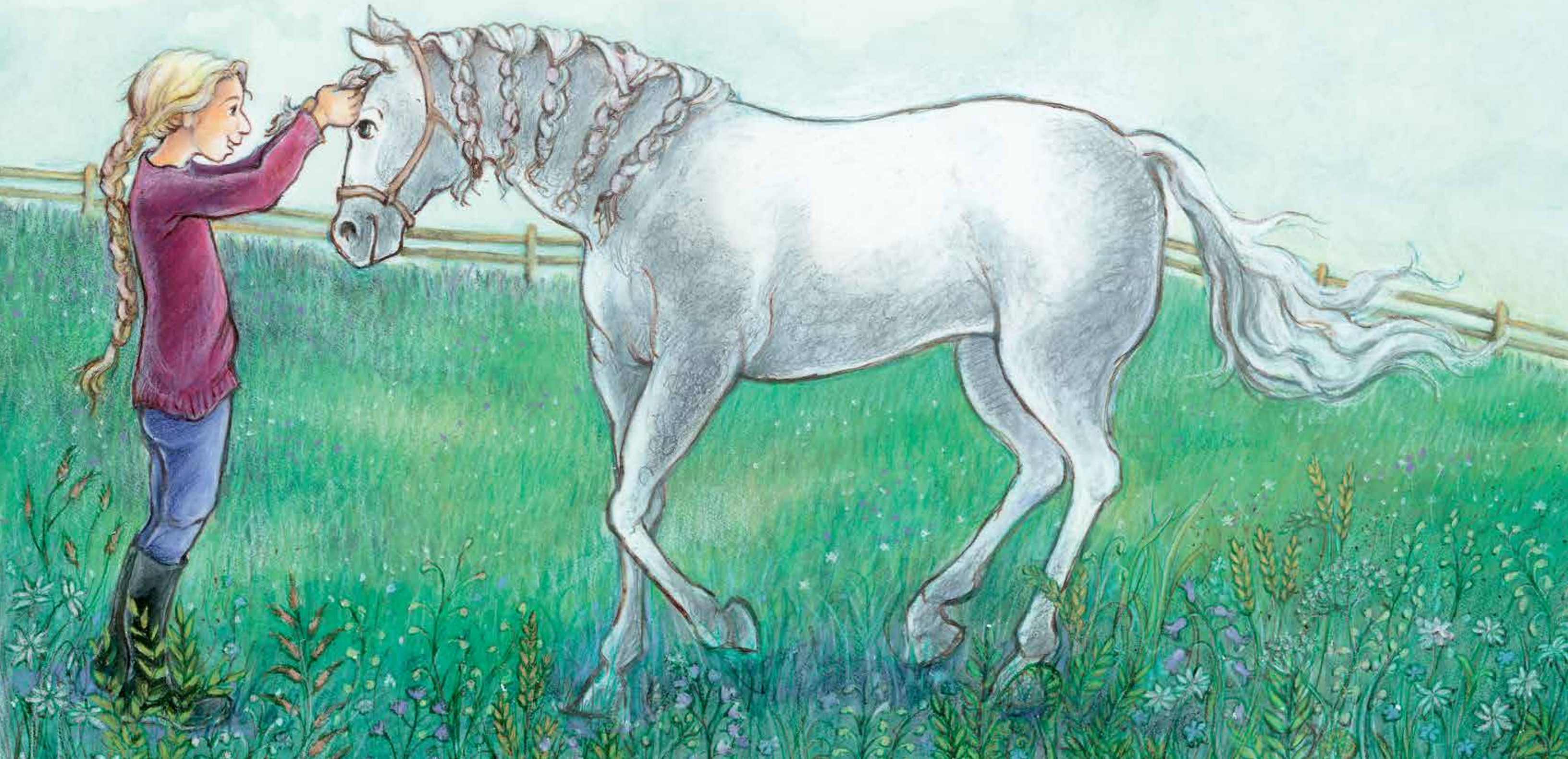
"Me too," thought the pony.

"I'm going to pretend you are *mine*," the girl whispered.

The next day when the girl went to take the pony out of the stall, Me Too pinned back her ears, showed her teeth, and tossed her head.

The girl just patted her and whispered, "I love you, pony."

The girl with the long blond hair took special care of Me Too. She even braided her mane and combed her tail. The pony tried to look mean, but the girl just patted her and said, "I love you, pony."





They went for rides every day.

At first the pony would pin her ears and swish her tail. The girl just patted her and said, "I love you, pony."

Me Too had never trusted people, but there was something different about the girl with the long blond hair. The pony started looking forward to seeing the girl.

After one long ride, the girl said, "I'm hungry. I'd like some cookies."

"Me too," thought the pony.

"I have some special pony cookies just for you!" said the girl.

Nobody had ever shared cookies with the pony before.

The pony started to love the girl with the long blond hair.



The girl and the pony loved going for rides. They especially loved it when they jumped.

“You’re a little jumping pony,” said the girl. “I feel like we could jump the moon!”

“Me too!” thought the pony.





They went to horse shows, and Me Too didn't look scruffy anymore. Everyone was surprised when they won every class—everyone except the girl with the long blond hair.

"I knew we could do it! I'm so proud of us!" said the girl.

"Me too," thought the pony.

When they were done for the day, they would sit in the hay and eat cookies.

"I love you, pony. I wish we could be together forever."

"Me too," thought the pony.

When summer was over, Me Too had to go back to her old home.

"I'm going to miss you," said the girl with the long blond hair.

"Me too," thought the pony.

"Don't worry, Me Too. I'll see you next summer."



But that didn't happen.

The pony was sold again and again. She moved from home to home, but wherever she lived, nobody made her feel special. Nobody gave her cookies, and nobody ever loved her like the girl with the long blond hair. The pony was lonely and sad. She missed the girl more and more each day.

Then she started to dream about the girl with the long blond hair.

Every night.

