

CHAPTER TWELVE



1 Six months later, Mary floated in the emerald tidal pool in complete peace
2 and bliss. She opened one eye to peek at Papa. He'd gotten a healthy tan
3 from the last few months near the sea. Papa's new wife, Charlotte, unfolded
4 her fingers to offer him the perfect sand dollar she'd plucked from the white
5 sands as quiet waves lapped the shore.

6 The surf sparkled in the morning sun. A snort drifted down the beach
7 carried by the ocean breeze. Mary's heart smiled with recognition. Evelyn
8 rode Illusion's best buddy, Treasure, bareback in chest-deep water. Illusion
9 swam along beside him with powerful, steady strokes. Her baby legs stood
10 straight and strong. When Evelyn turned and brought the foal out of the
11 deep water, the little horse squealed and bucked.

12 "Her happy dance," cried Mary. "Want to see mine?" She squirmed out of
13 the lounge chair in the tidal pool. Scooping arches of emerald water in the
14 air, she celebrated the new strength in her legs.

15 Papa watched her with a smile in his heart. From a beach bag, he drew
16 out a small wooden bay horse—perfectly restored, just like the precious
17 miracle before him. He extended it to her.

18 "You had her all along." Mary kissed his cheek. "Thank you." Mary
19 clutched it to her chest. "I love you, Papa." Dancing delicately on the white
20 sands of glory, Mary sang her song—off key, on the top of her lungs.