

## ENTHUSIASTIC PRAISE FOR BLACKJACK!

"*Blackjack* is a quick, entertaining read. Feld's knowledge of the equine is apparent on each page; detailed descriptions of the movements and responses of the horses bring the reader right into the world of these splendid animals. This book will keep horse lovers reading well beyond lights out."

— *ForeWord Magazine*

"Mrs. Feld has a true gift in capturing the imagination and engaging the reader. It isn't always easy to find a set of books that will be read willingly by pre-teens! Kudos to Mrs. Feld on her delightful *Morgan Horse* series."

— Jenefer Igarashi, Senior Editor,  
*The Old Schoolhouse Magazine*

"Ellen Feld has a knack for writing for young readers, and the first book in her *Morgan Horse* series, *Blackjack*, is sure to entertain horse-loving kids. Young riders will understand the bond that Heather Richardson has with her much-loved Morgan, *Blackjack*, and will be rooting for her as she tries to rescue the jet-black stallion from an abusive trainer. Feld's entertaining *Morgan Horse* series is a perfect way to encourage young riders to become enthusiastic young readers!"

— Lesley Ward, Editor,  
*Young Rider Magazine*

"*Blackjack* is packed with information about the care and training of horses. The reader will experience the thrill of competition in the ring as Heather and *Blackjack* participate in shows. The story is well-constructed with an exciting plot and interesting characters. Anyone who loves horses will love this series."

— *Catholic Library Journal*

"A wonderful story about the special bond between a girl and her horse. There is something in this book for everyone who likes horses."

— Brian Sosby, Editor,  
*Equestrian Magazine*

"Feld takes the reader through a whirlwind of emotions in *Blackjack*. Her accurate and detailed descriptions of basic horsemanship and stable management make the *Morgan Horse* series books not only fun adventure stories, but educational as well."

— Susan Dudasik,  
*Just Horses Magazine*

"Younger girls will be inspired...adult girls will remember back to when just being near a horse was all you needed to make your day."

— Katherine Walcott,  
*Eventing USA*

"It is nice to read a junior novel that focuses on a teenager and a Morgan Horse. Ellen Feld has written a warm and rewarding horse story. This book would make a great present for a young rider and reader."

— *Horsemen's Yankee Pedlar*

"*Blackjack* is a fast-reading, enchanting story about a girl and a Morgan Horse. The book will greatly appeal to readers as there is plenty of horse action, starting in the first chapter. Author Ellen Feld has written a lovely story about the exceptional love between a girl and a beautiful, majestic horse."

— Anthony Locorini, Editor,  
*TriState Horse*

"*Blackjack* is a delightful book that will pull the heartstrings of any horse lover—it belongs in your Morgan library."

— *The American Morgan Horse Association*

"I loved reading *Blackjack*! In addition to this being perfect reading (and a great gift idea) for all young, horse-crazy girls, horse enthusiasts of all ages will enjoy the story too! It is definitely suggested reading for all our students to enjoy!"

— Chris Cassenti,  
trainer of World Champion Morgan Horses and riders,  
Chrislar Morgan Horse Farm

"Ellen Feld's first book, *Blackjack*, does a delightful job of capturing the adoration of an intelligent young girl for horses, especially for a brilliant Morgan stallion. In a winning style, with clear, correct information about the horses she knows well, Feld chronicles the story of Heather Richardson as she befriends a Morgan Horse breeder and evolves into a capable show rider, maturing in her skills and her emotions throughout. Tested by the illness of her horseowning friend and the sale of his horses, Feld draws her lead character through an emotional roller coaster, during which the young heroine must prove level headed in order to achieve her goals. An excellent book for any young horse lover, *Blackjack* manages to be both engaging and provide insight into the complex world of modern horse breeding and showing."

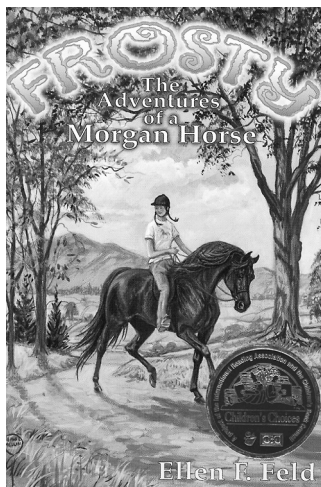
— Nancy Ambrosiano,  
Freelance writer and co-author of  
*Complete Plans for Building Horse Barns Big and Small*



# **BLACKJACK:**

Dreaming of a Morgan Horse

**ALSO BY ELLEN F. FELD**



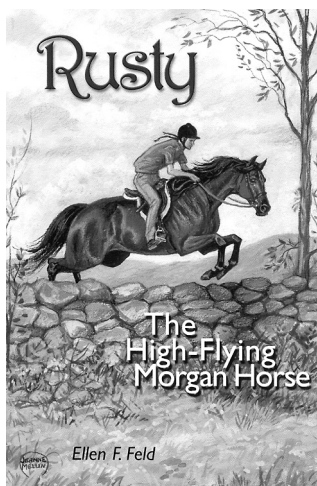
***Frosty: The Adventures of  
a Morgan Horse***

ISBN 978-0-9709002-7-2

*An International Reading  
Association—Children's Book Council  
"Children's Choices" Selection*

"...a thoroughly delightful novel for young readers about a girl and her relationship with powerful and noble animals...*Frosty* is a story to be cherished by horse lovers of all ages."

—*Midwest Book Review*

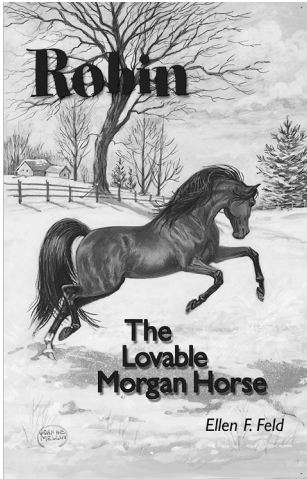


***Rusty: The High-Flying  
Morgan Horse***

ISBN 0-9709002-4-4

"Our Family Testers found the book to have such amazing descriptive details that no one wanted to put it down. That's a huge achievement in today's world of wonderful books. We feel the author has incredible talent and love for horses . . . we can't wait for her next one!"

—Jodie Lynn, CEO,  
*Parent To Parent* and  
founder of  
[AddingWisdomAward.com](http://AddingWisdomAward.com)



## ***Robin: The Lovable Morgan Horse***

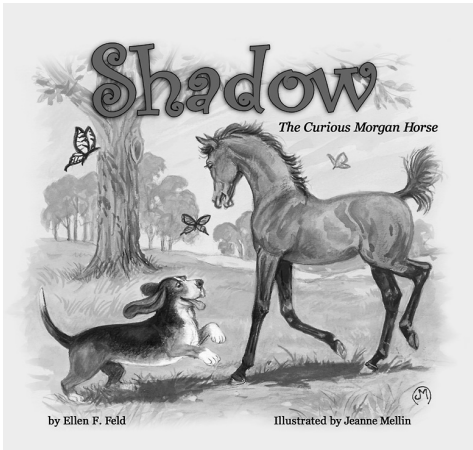
ISBN: 0-9709002-5-2

"Feld uses plenty of conflict on many levels, a string of obstacles, and the characters' solutions to craft a very interesting story with a quick pace. We rated this book five hearts."

—Bob Spear,  
*Heartland Reviews*

## ***Shadow: The Curious Morgan Horse***

ISBN 978-0-9709002-6-5



"Young horse lovers will enjoy reading about the adventures of Shadow, an inquisitive foal, as she investigates the exciting and strange world outside her field. Ellen F. Feld knows how to write for young riders, and her latest book, *Shadow: The Curious Morgan Horse*, is sure to please!"

— *Young Rider Magazine*



# **BLACKJACK:**

Dreaming of a Morgan Horse

**Ellen F. Feld**

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*To Dad*

*for always putting up  
with my horse endeavors,  
no matter how silly,  
with a smile on his face.*

## **ACKNOWLEDGMENTS**

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## THE ALARM

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She knew she had to hurry. It would be light in just a few hours and then somebody might see her. The air was crisp, stars were everywhere and a full moon filled the sky. There were no streetlights on this road and without the moonlight she'd be lost.

There was something coming at her; she squinted her eyes to see better. Headlights! Hurry, hide. She quickly jumped down into a ditch at the side of the road. There was no time to look and see what evil night creatures might be hiding there. Yuck. There was something wet and slimy under her. It felt like a giant slug or maybe it was a night crawler, those big slippery worms which often came out after rainstorms. She put her head down and covered it with her hands. As the car approached, the wheels made crunching sounds as they rolled over the gravel in the road. Slowly peering up over the ditch, she saw the car pass. Once it was gone, the only sound was that of crickets, chirping loudly. "Gee, I never knew crickets made so much noise," she whispered to herself. Getting up, she climbed up from the ditch, spit grass and dirt out of her mouth and rubbed her shirt and

jeans with her hands. On her shirt were the slimy remnants of whatever it was that had jumped aboard. She wiped her hands along the dew-laden grass and continued the journey.

The road curved slowly and once it eventually straightened out again, a house became visible. Finally! Off in the distance a dog barked. Hopefully it was very far away. She turned her attention to the house. It was huge, about four times the size of her parents' home. There appeared to be three floors, and the exterior was all brick except for the wooden shingles that were painted white. What was it like to live in such an enormous house? With everything you could possibly want? What—come on now, you're wasting precious time, gotta keep going, hurry up, hurry up.

Moving on, she wandered across the wet grass towards the barn. Like the house, the barn was huge. She had heard it had 40 stalls and after seeing the outside, there was no doubt that it easily had that many, maybe even more. It was made of beautiful wood, probably cedar. None of that inexpensive aluminum siding here; this barn was built by people who had a lot of money and wanted the world to know. High above the main door the name "Three Forks Farm" was proudly displayed in brightly painted red letters. At the end of the word "Farm" a silhouette of a magnificent black horse pranced. The door itself was actually made of two sliding sections, large enough to

allow easy passage of a horse and cart. She approached and cautiously tried to open one side. It slid about an inch and stopped. She tried the other side. It too, slid about an inch and stopped. It must have been locked from the inside. How would she get in? Please hurry, hurry and find a way in; you're losing time.

Maybe there was a way in through the back. She began to walk around to the right of the barn, and as she got close to the corner she noticed that there was another section of the barn that had not been visible before. No, wait a minute, that wasn't another section of the barn, it was an indoor arena which was attached to the side of the barn. It too, was huge. Everything at this place seemed to be. All of a sudden a dog began barking. Oh no, hurry, hurry.

At the edge of the arena she found a door. She grasped the doorknob but was afraid to try and open it. Most big barns like this had fancy security systems installed to keep away people like her. The last thing she wanted to do was set off such a device. But with no other way to get in she decided to try and open it. Surprisingly, the doorknob turned and clicked, and the door opened. Her eyes grew wide, like a young child surprised by a new puppy.

Once inside she was immediately met with the sweet smell of fresh cut hay. Unable to see in the dark building, she pulled a small flashlight from

her pocket and quickly scanned the arena with the light it provided. This was a gorgeous building, with paneled walls and a very high ceiling. She turned towards the barn and as she did so, the corner of her right eye caught a glimpse of something or someone. As it flashed brightly, she tried to scream but no sounds came out of her mouth. Turning and running at the same time, she managed to trip over her own feet, and tumbled to the ground in what would have been described as a belly flop if anyone had been around to see it. But there was no one, for as she got up, terrified, looking in the direction of the evil ghoul, she realized that the side of the arena was covered with mirrors. The “someone” she had seen was her own image and the flashlight’s reflection had created the flash. Boy, did she feel foolish.

Once again brushing dirt off her shirt and jeans, she looked around to get her bearings. There was a wall between the arena and barn, which had a large sliding door, but unlike the outside doors, this one was wide open. She quickly passed through it.

Entering the barn she heard the sounds of several horses munching hay, and every once in a while a horse would sneeze. There was a faint light coming from the ceiling. Perhaps a groom did barn checks late at night and needed a light kept on. This light, along with her flashlight, allowed her to see pretty well. Looking down the aisle, she saw stalls, lots of them. With such a big barn, how was

she ever going to find Blackjack? She walked over to the first stall and was able to easily look inside since the doors only went halfway up, but she couldn't see a thing. As she raised her arm so that her flashlight could give her a hint of what lay inside, something lunged at her. She jerked her body backwards just in time to avoid the extremely sharp teeth of a very unpleasant horse. Just as quickly as it had appeared, the horse disappeared. The girl took a cautious step forward and the horse lunged at her again. This time, though, the horse kept its head outside the stall, ears flat back, showing its teeth.

This was not going to work. How would she ever find her horse and get him out of here before daylight? Suddenly, an idea popped into her head. She could whistle to him. It always worked in the pasture. He'd be out with the other horses, far off in the distance. So far in fact that she was unable to make out which horse was hers. She would call out with her special whistle and Blackjack would immediately pick up his head, prick his ears forward and listen. He would never respond until she whistled a second time. Then he'd loudly whinny and come galloping through the field towards her. His eagerness almost always got the other horses excited too and they'd follow him through the pasture to the barn. Once at the barn (it was built inside the pasture), Blackjack would go zooming past her, do a sliding stop just in time to avoid hitting the fence and then turn and rear at the same

time. As his feet hit the ground after rearing, his wild stallion routine would end and he'd become the big baby he truly was.

There was no way she would ever find her horse in time by searching each stall so she decided to give the whistle a try. She whistled. No one answered. She tried again, this time a little louder. Immediately, there was a loud, deep, whinny. It was coming from the far end of the barn. She turned towards the whinny and started walking and then running. The horse whinnied again. She quickly reached the stall and found Blackjack sticking his head out, trying to reach her too. As she approached him, she dropped her flashlight, oblivious to it now that her beloved horse was found. Flinging her arms up and wrapping them around his big, black neck, his full Morgan mane covered her face and hid the tears that streamed down from her eyes. "I found you, I found you," she kept whispering softly to him. Blackjack turned his head so that he could see her. His jet black coat glistened, even in this limited light, and the half moon star on his forehead was a welcome sight. He nuzzled her gently. She smiled slightly and kissed him on the nose. "I've got to get you out of here."

Quick, quick, she had to hurry. She found a halter and lead rope hanging on the outside of his stall door, grabbed them and returned to her horse. She reached up to Blackjack's head and slid the halter on. Normally, he would play nip at the halter but



he seemed to sense the urgency and behaved perfectly. Together the horse and the girl left the stall. As she led Blackjack down the aisle, the other horses started to whinny, perhaps expecting to be fed. They got louder and louder until it seemed likely the owners in the great big house could hear. She had to get out of here quickly.

She led Blackjack towards the main entrance, where the big sliding doors were. She tried to slide one of them open, but just like the first time when she was trying to get in, it moved an inch or so and then stopped. The lock on the floor was keeping the door from opening. Without thinking she bent down and unlatched it. Instantly, a loud, blaring alarm went off. "Oh no, we're caught! It's the alarm, the alarm, the alarm . . ."

"Come on Heather, wake up, you're going to be late for school! Can't you hear your alarm???"