



## **Just Jack - Adele Broadbent**

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Although Jack is small-built for a 14-year-old he doesn't mind too much. He loves working with farm horses and dreams of becoming a jockey. Being short and lightweight is an advantage. However, life in the 1930s is tough and Jack must work hard.

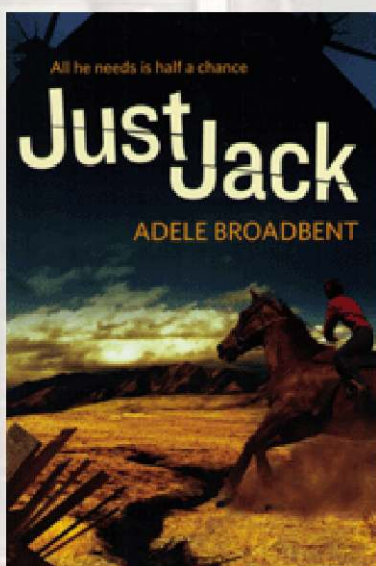
He becomes an apprentice to a Hastings racehorse trainer, a rough man who treats Jack like a stable boy. Kenny, another apprentice, undermines Jack at every opportunity. Jack is determined to prove himself and works each day from 5am till dusk. Only Mrs Davis, the owner of the boarding house, shows him kindness. There's a mystery about her and his gruff boss that puzzles Jack.

Fortunately, Jack finds a better position in a Napier stables. He's not pleased to discover Kenny has also been hired by the stables and he continues to torment Jack. His life becomes complicated and his future uncertain.

The author brings to life the social restrictions and work ethic of the 1930s. The characters deal with their troubles in the stoic way of the times. Their speech and behaviour show the quiet courage of people who accept the 'hard knocks' and cope as best they can.

Readers get a realistic sense of Jack's work with the horses, their personalities, training, and daily care. Just Jack was inspired by the author's grandfather who was an apprentice jockey in the 1930s. An absorbing read.

**Reviewed by children's book author, Jean Bennett.**



**Promoting the enjoyment of children's literature.**