

Red Admiral the Racehorse

PIPPA'S PONY TALES

Red Admiral the Racehorse



PIPPA FUNNELL

Illustrated by Jennifer Miles

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For my mother,
Jenny Nolan

Hello Everyone,

The idea for my stories grew while I was out on long rides and driving to various competitions. I found my imagination full of characters and storylines. So Tilly and her horsehair bracelets, based around a simple bracelet that was made out of the tail hairs of a wonderful horse I once rode, were created.

I wrote the series to help us all understand the responsibilities we have when involved with horses and ponies, whether looking after them, riding them or even dreaming about them – building those partnerships based on trust and mutual respect.

I love the saying 'If you want to have a good friend, you need to be a good friend'. This is how we should all be to both horses and humans!

More than anything, I want you to realise how wonderfully special our four legged friends are. I have been so very lucky and privileged to have had many, many great moments with them. They are absolutely my whole life and it's thanks to them these stories about Tilly following her passions came into being.

I hope you enjoy them –



One

Tilly Redbrow was mad about horses. Her favourite way to spend time was at Silver Shoe Farm. In fact, it was like a second home to her. Ever since Tilly helped rescue a mysterious horse called Magic Spirit, she had been a regular visitor.

As often as she could, Tilly would be there, helping Angela, who ran the stables.

Over the months, Tilly had learned how to groom and muck out. She'd made new



friends called Cally and Mia, and helped them to care for Rosie – the pretty strawberry roan pony they shared. But what Tilly liked most of all, was spending time with Magic Spirit. She had a special friendship with him. Tilly was the person Magic Spirit trusted most, and although he'd been underweight and unhappy when he'd arrived at the stables, he was growing stronger and healthier by the week. One day he was going to be a fabulous horse.

Tilly loved looking after the horses, but she was really looking forward to learning how to ride. Every time she saw riders getting ready in the yard, saddling up and heading out for a forest hack, or going to the indoor school for lessons, she longed to be doing the same.

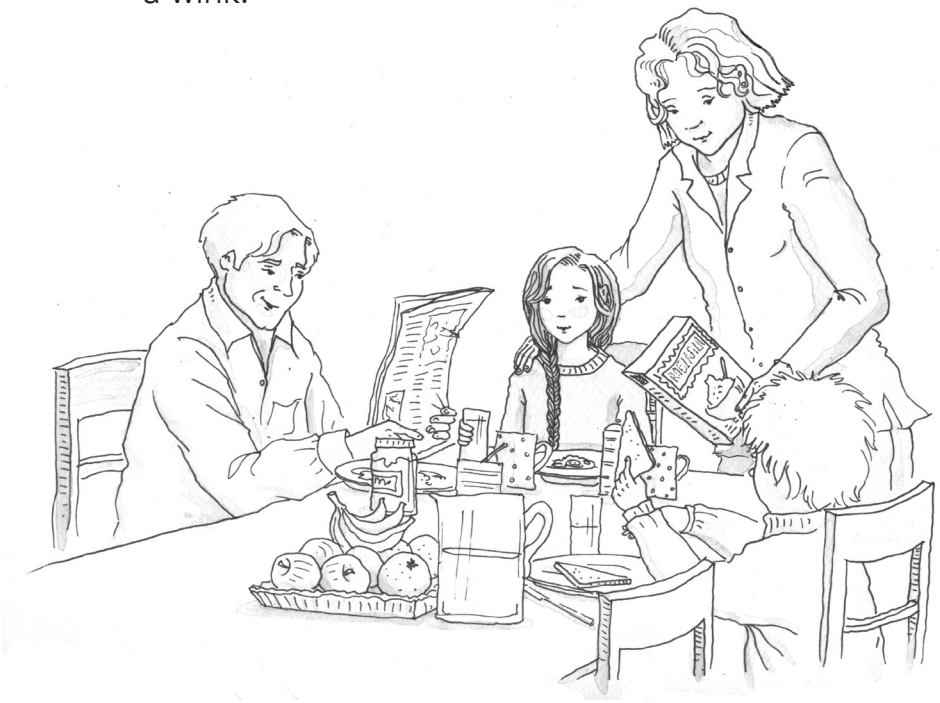
The chance of a ride was all she could think about as she sat down for breakfast. It was Saturday, so the whole family were at the table, chatting and taking their time.

'Good morning, dreamy,' said Tilly's mum,

passing her the cereal. Tilly always chose muesli with chopped banana, followed by a big glass of orange juice.

Mr Redbrow looked up from his newspaper and smiled.

'Morning, Tiger Lil'. The weather's going to be lovely today. What about a fishing trip to the river with me and Adam?' he asked, with a wink.



Adam was Tilly's younger brother. He was busy flicking bits of toast across the table. He was annoying in the way that little brothers sometimes can be.

Tilly started twiddling her horsehair bracelet. Fishing! All she wanted to do was spend the day with the horses. It was the first hot day in May, and she knew the stable yard would be buzzing with activity. Adam grinned at her and poked out his tongue.

'But I guess you'll be going to Silver Shoe Farm,' her dad continued, as if he was reading her mind. 'Adam and I will have to go fishing on our own. You know, some parents complain that their children sit around doing nothing at the weekend! Not you though, eh, Tilly? You're always doing something – as long as it involves horses!'

Tilly caught her dad's eye.

Despite what he said, she knew that he was happy for her, and proud of her hard work. He understood what horses meant to her.

'Oh, look,' said Tilly's mum, studying the date at the top of the newspaper. 'It's nearly the end of the month. Not long till your birthday, Tilly. Perhaps you'll want a sleepover? Have you thought about what you want for a present yet?'

Tilly had a huge list in her mind: another year's subscription to *Pony* magazine, a pair of navy riding tights, a copy of the *Pony Ranch!* game for her PC, a grooming kit, a riding helmet, a pair of gold earrings in the shape of horseshoes, a quilted night rug for Magic Spirit, riding gloves and a raspberry-coloured gilet…



She shut her eyes and reeled off the list. Then she decided to go for the big one.



'Riding lessons – at Silver Shoe. It would be extra great if you could get me those, please!'

'Hmm, we'll have to see about that,' said her mum, exchanging glances with Mr Redbrow.

Underneath the table, Tilly had her fingers crossed.

Just then, her phone buzzed. She pulled it out of her pocket and checked the message. She knew straightaway that it would be either Mia or Cally.



PERFECT DAY. IF YOU ARE NOT AT THE FARM BY 10AM THEN YOU ARE A LOSER! LOVE MIA XXX

Tilly laughed.

'Dad,' she said, as she swallowed a mouthful of muesli. 'If you're taking Adam fishing soon,

then please can you give me a lift to the farm on your way?'

'Whatever you say, Tiger Lil'.'

'Thanks, Dad!'

