PIPPA'S PONY TALES

Goliath the Rescue Horse



PIPPA FUNNELL
OLYMPIC MEDALLIST

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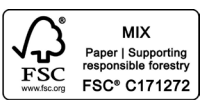
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One

On Monday morning, Tilly Redbrow couldn't wait to get to school, but it wasn't school she was excited about. It was work experience week. Tilly had arranged to spend time at the World Horse Welfare head office. For a horse and pony fanatic like her, it was the perfect opportunity.

World Horse Welfare was a charity dedicated to giving abused and neglected horses a second chance in life. When Tilly heard about work placement week she knew she wanted to go and work for them.



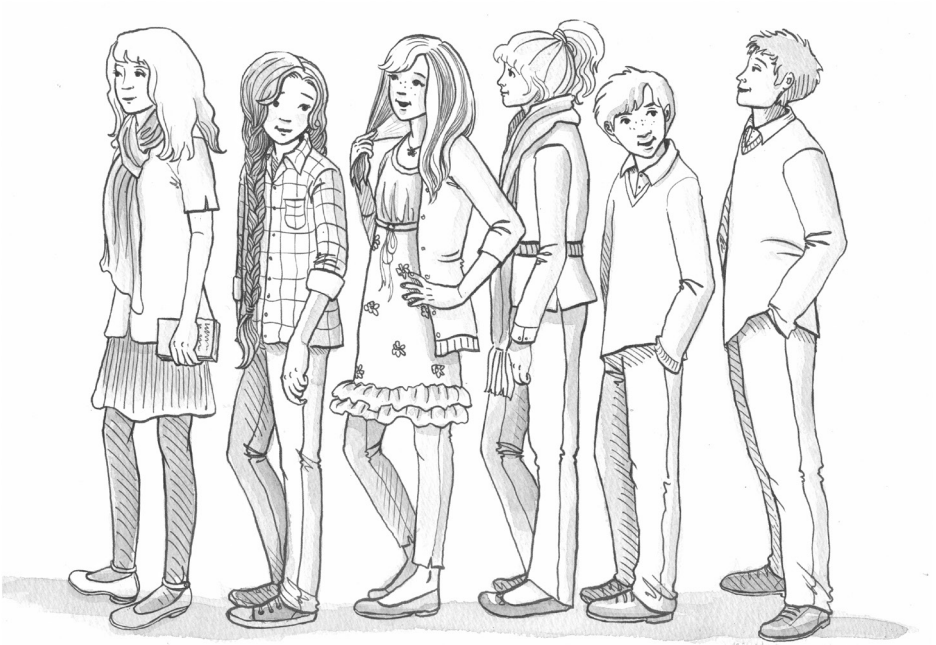
She'd sent an email asking if it was possible and they'd said 'yes'. Tilly had been looking forward to it for weeks. It was so exciting to think that it was finally happening.

Her own horse, Magic Spirit, was a rescue horse and Tilly knew that Magic was among the lucky ones. With her help, he'd been saved from the roadside. He was now healthy and strong, with a glossy grey coat and large, trusting eyes. Angela thought he had the potential to be a champion. But it nearly hadn't worked out that way. Magic's life might have been different if Tilly and Angela hadn't stepped in. It was too awful to imagine.

'Tilly?'

It was her friend, Becky. They were queuing outside the school hall, waiting for a talk from their teachers about all the things they should and shouldn't do during a work placement.

'Earth to Planet Pony! Stop daydreaming, Tilly. Time to go in,' said Becky. 'I've got a



feeling this is going to be the best week of my life. Do you think my hair looks silly?' She was busy straightening her neon hair extensions. Work placement was non-uniform, so Becky was taking full advantage of that.

'It's fun,' said Tilly. 'It makes you stand out.'

'Well, that's the effect I wanted. I mean, who knows? Maybe this is where I'll get discovered! Oh, I'm so nervous!'

Becky was going to work at the local radio station in North Cosford. She'd always dreamed of being a pop star. She'd never understood Tilly's fascination with horses, but that didn't matter. They'd been friends for ages.

They filed into the hall and found their seats. There was a hum of chatter in the air. Everyone was excited.

'Attention, please!' said Mr Colebrook, the deputy head.

Eventually the hall went quiet.

'Now, I know you're all very keen to get going to your various "jobs", but there are a few things we want to remind you about before you go. First, let's talk about manners…'

Tilly quickly lost concentration. She wasn't worried about learning how to be polite, she always tried to be anyway.

And she wasn't nervous like Becky. She just wanted to get started. She wondered if she'd get to take part in an actual horse rescue mission. She hoped so.

When the talk was finally over, the pupils were grouped into minibuses, which would drop them off at their placements. Today they were getting a lift, but for the rest of the week they had to find their own way. For Tilly, this was going to be a challenge – it was quite a long way. She didn't mind getting up early though. She was used to it.

'Tilly Redbrow,' said Miss Leonard. 'You're on bus number 4. You're going a long way out of town. World Horse Welfare. That sounds interesting.'

Tilly smiled.

'I used to love riding when I was younger,' said Miss Leonard. 'I hope you have a good time.'

'Thanks,' said Tilly.

And she wasn't nervous like Becky. She just wanted to get started. She wondered if she'd get to take part in an actual horse rescue mission. She hoped so.

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'Thanks,' said Tilly.

When everyone was aboard the bus, it set off through the streets of North Cosford. A couple of pupils went to different shops on the high street. One was taken to the large garden centre on the edge of town. Another went to a care home. And the last two were taken to the local sports hall and the cottage hospital. Only Tilly was left.

The bus carried on, winding through country lanes until it finally arrived at a wide entrance to a long driveway. Tilly looked out of the window and recognised the logo straightaway – a blue and white horse's head in a circle, and big, bold green and blue lettering, which read: 'World Horse Welfare'. Her stomach fluttered with excitement as the minibus made its way down the long drive bordered by post and rail paddocks full of horses and ponies.