PIPPA'S PONY TALES

Buttons the Naughty Pony



PIPPA FUNNELL
OLYMPIC MEDALLIST

This is a Zephyr book, first published in the UK by Head of Zeus,
part of Bloomsbury Plc

Text © Pippa Funnell, 2024

Illustrations © Jennifer Miles, 2024

The moral right of Pippa Funnell to be identified as the author and of Jennifer Miles to be identified as the illustrator of this work have been asserted in accordance with the Copyright, Designs and Patents Act of 1988.

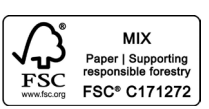
All rights reserved. No part of this publication may be reproduced, stored in a retrieval system, or transmitted in any form or by any means, electronic, mechanical, photocopying, recording, or otherwise, without the prior permission of both the copyright owner and the above publisher of this book.

9 8 7 6 5 4 3 2 1

A CIP catalogue record for this book is available from the British Library.

ISBN (PB): 9781804543238
ISBN (E): 9781804543214

Designed by Nicky Borowiec



Printed and bound in Great Britain by
CPI Group (UK) Ltd, Croydon CR0 4YY

Head of Zeus Ltd
5–8 Hardwick Street
London EC1R 4RG



WWW.HEADOFZEUS.COM



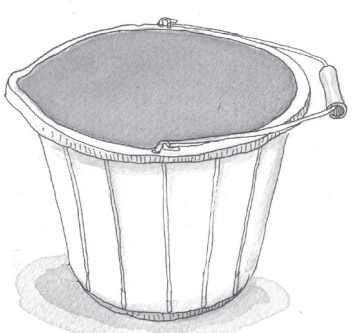
One

Tilly Redbrow was busy cleaning tack at Silver Shoe Farm. She'd been scrubbing and polishing in the tack room all morning. It was early summer and outside the sun was shining, but she didn't let that put her off. Magic Spirit's saddle looked as good as new. Tilly smiled to herself, admired her efforts and breathed in the scent of saddle soap – one of her favourite smells. It was just as well, because Angela insisted that all the bridles and saddles used every day were properly cleaned and looked after. The better tack was cared for, the longer it would last.

When she had finished, Tilly tipped the soapy water down the sink, put the saddle soap and cloth into a bucket, and put everything into the cupboard where it belonged. She hung up the clean head collar, bridle and girth, and put the saddle on its rack.

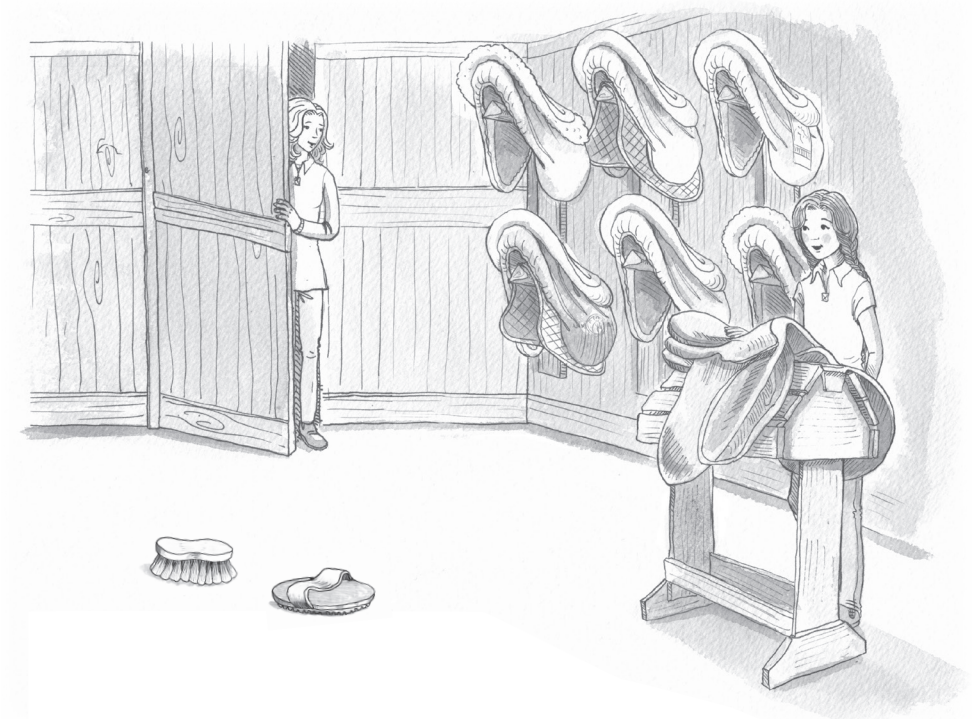
Just then Angela, Silver Shoe's owner, popped her head around the door.

'Hi, Tilly. I've been looking for you. We've got a new arrival coming this afternoon – a little pony called Buttons. His owners have warned that he can be quite cheeky. You were so useful when it came to getting Cynthia and Parkview Pickle settled, I thought you could give me a hand today.'



'Definitely,' said Tilly, feeling pleased. 'What do you want me to do?'

'It would be great if



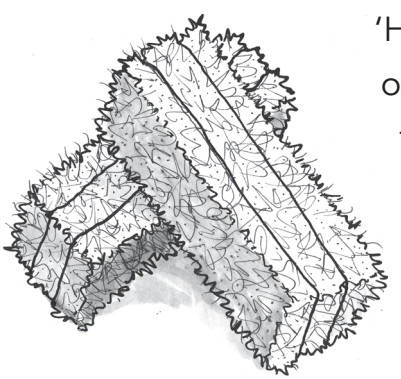
you could be here when he arrives. Watch how Buttons responds to the way his owners handle him. It's a lady and her son. The boy is about your age. His name's Tim. Could you show him around and introduce him to everyone, and generally make him feel welcome?'

'Sure,' said Tilly. 'Tim and Buttons. I'll remember that.'

'Thanks. I knew I could count on you.'

As Angela walked away, Tilly wondered about the new arrivals. Was it a problem pony or problem owners? She knew that sometimes a horse's behaviour was due to the way it was treated. She was intrigued. She couldn't wait to meet them.

The trailer arrived just after lunch. Tilly and Angela were busy weeding the flower tubs as their guests arrived.



'Hello!' they called, pulling up.

'Hi, I'm Angela. We spoke on the phone. Welcome to Silver Shoe. How was your journey?'

'Fine, thanks. Although I'm not sure

what Buttons will be like when we get him out,' said Tim's mum.

She was small with a blonde ponytail. Tim looked just like her, with tufty fair hair and freckles. They both had tanned skin, which suggested they spent a lot of time outdoors.

'Hi,' said Tim. He smiled at Tilly. She smiled back.

'This is Tilly,' said Angela. 'She's going to show you around.'

'Nice to meet you.'

'We'll get unloaded,' said Tim's mum. She raised an eyebrow. 'Tim, you'd better give me a hand.'

Tim went in through the jockey door of the trailer, while his mum lowered the ramp. There was quiet for a moment as they disappeared inside. Tilly watched with anticipation. She heard a shuffling of hooves and lots of encouraging talk, but saw no sign of Buttons.

Tilly and Angela crept closer. Eventually

Buttons appeared, led by Tim's mum. He was a cheeky little Welsh section B with a sweet face, but he was hesitant about coming out of the trailer. He didn't seem to want to move. He kept tossing his head and stamping his front hoof.

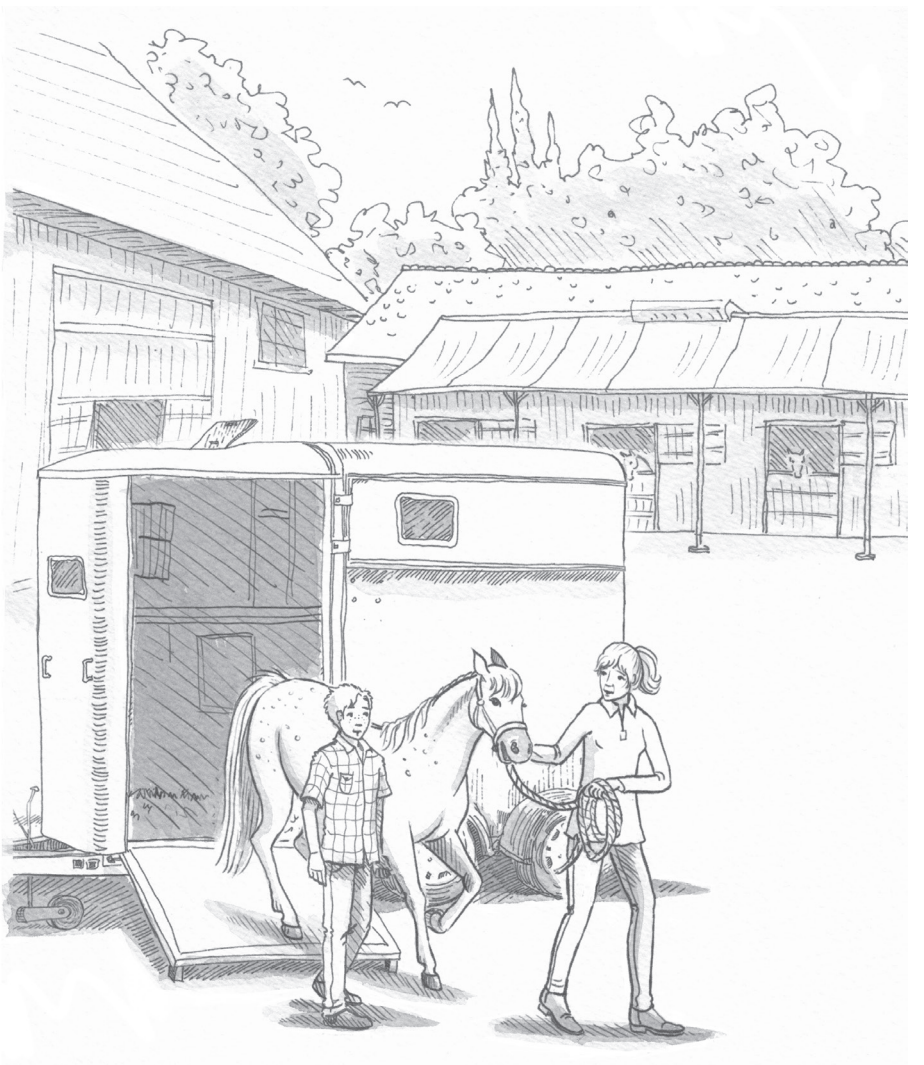
Tilly thought Tim and his mum seemed confident around Buttons, so it couldn't be their nerves that were affecting him. Maybe he didn't like the trailer?

'Has he travelled much before?' asked Angela, when Buttons was finally standing in the yard.

She came forward and stroked his nose. He had bright eyes and a dark grey tail and mane to complement his dappled grey coat. He seemed calmer now he was off the ramp.

'A few times, I think,' replied Tim's mum. 'But we don't know a great deal about his past. We inherited him from the farmer whose farm we bought. He didn't tell us much about him

except that he was well-trained, but hasn't done anything for a while. He's just lived in a field with an old donkey that has recently passed away.'



'How sad. It must be tragic losing your best buddy,' said Tilly as she stroked Buttons.

'Tim's always wanted his own horse or pony,' added his mum. 'So it worked out perfectly for us to take Buttons off the farmer's hands, along with the land. It felt like a dream come true, didn't it?'



Tilly smiled. That had always been one of her dreams too.

Tim rolled his eyes and muttered under his breath. 'I wish.'

His mum frowned. 'As you know, it hasn't been quite as smooth as we'd hoped, which is why we're here. Buttons is a lovely pony, and he and Tim seem to have bonded.



Unfortunately, neither of us has been able to do much with him. When we try to catch him he makes a game of it. If we attempt to tack him up he tosses his head and makes it tricky.'

'I haven't managed to ride him once,' said Tim.

'We're baffled by it. Tim's had a horse on loan at another stables for a few years. We stopped doing that when we got Buttons, but it's been a bit of a nightmare, to be honest! I'm hoping it's because he hasn't done anything for some time and that's why he's got a bit unruly.'

Angela shook her head. 'It sounds frustrating for you, but let's see what we can do. Tilly, why don't you take Buttons over to his stable and see if you and Tim can get him settled while I make a cup of tea for his mum?'



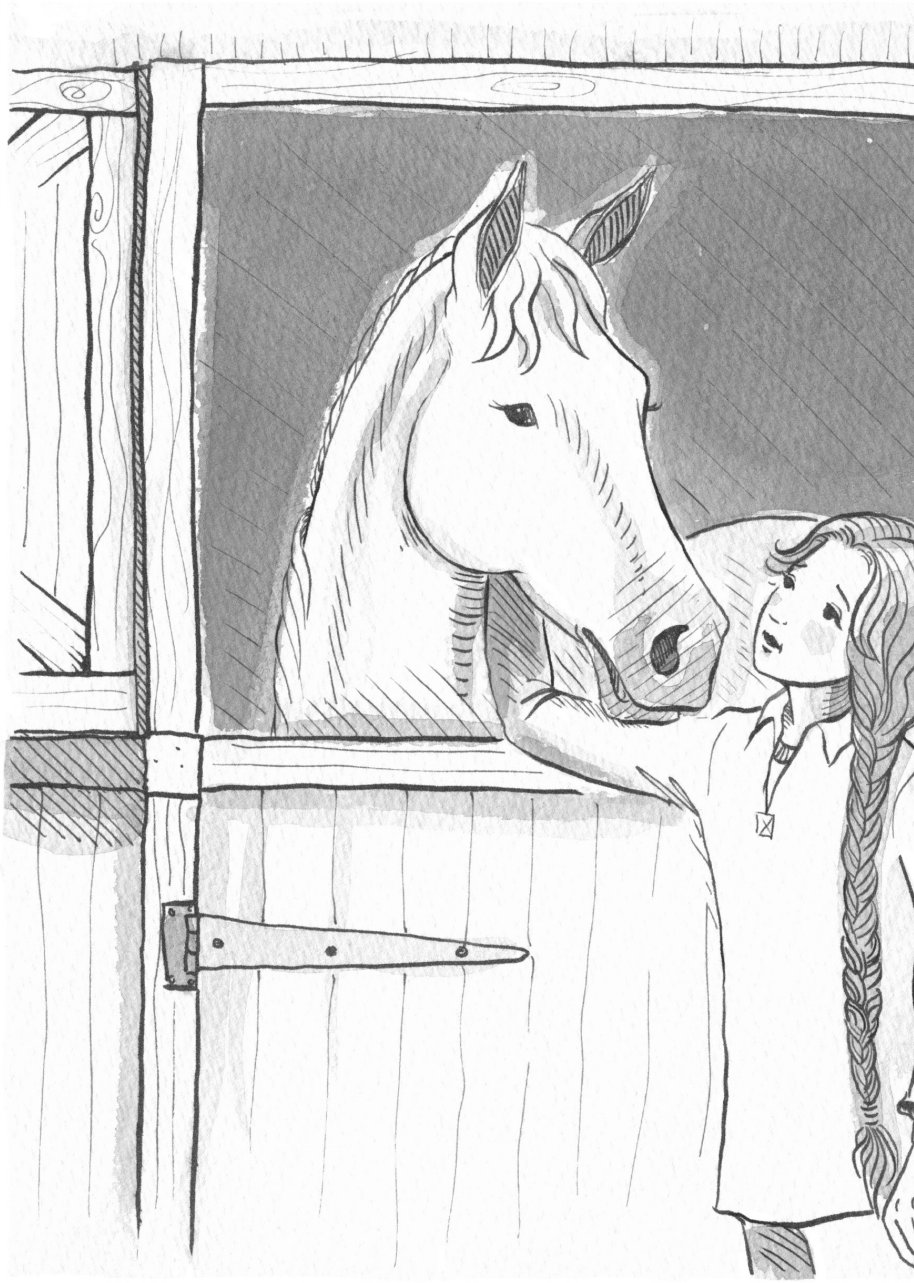
Tilly watched with interest as Tim led Buttons towards the stable block. He was calm and gave Buttons lots of attention – *almost too much*, Tilly thought. Every step of the way he made encouraging noises, but nothing really helped to keep Buttons moving forward. It got to a point where Tim was pulling on the lead rope. Buttons had other ideas. He had a mind of his own and was not keen to follow Tim.

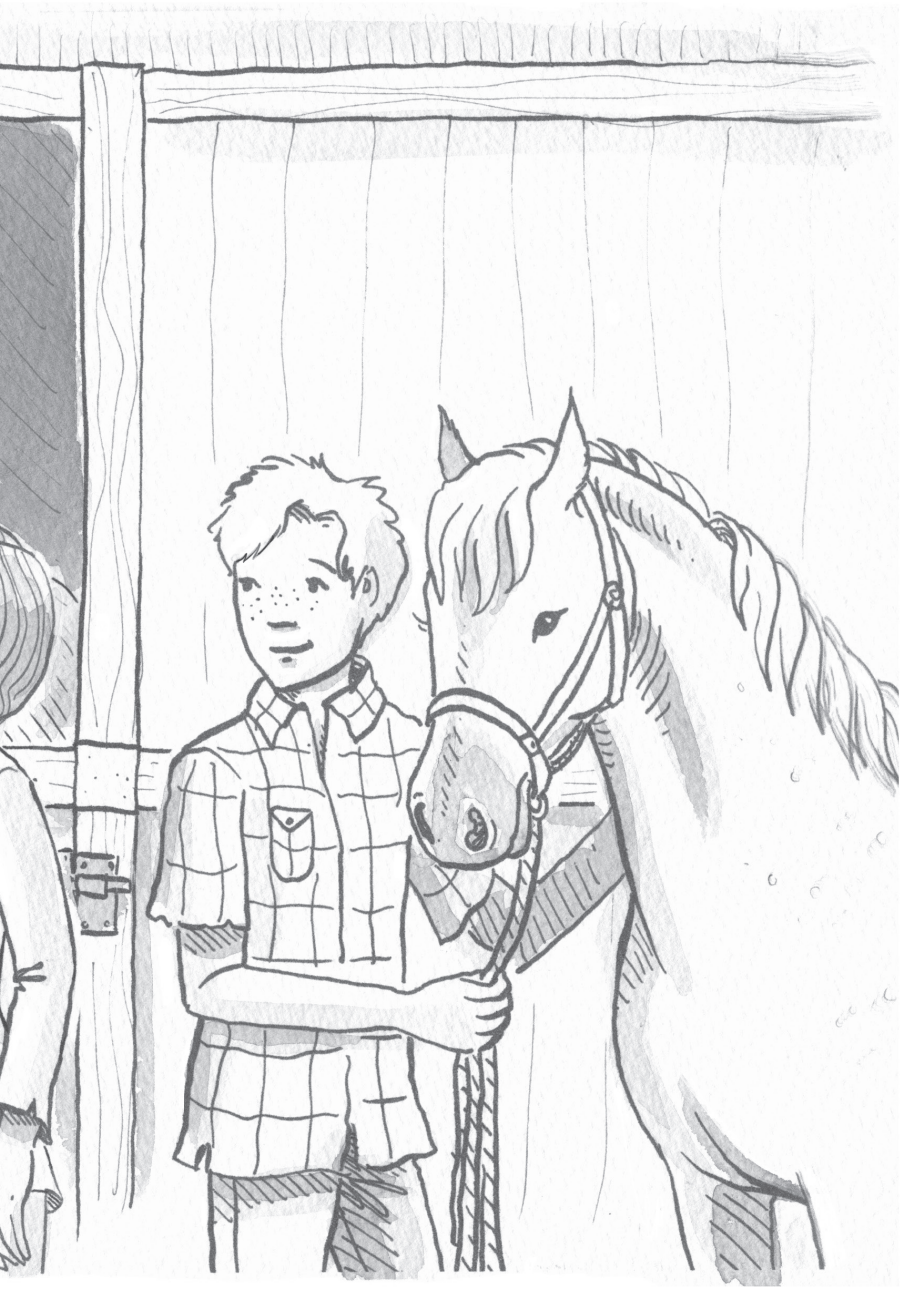
Tilly walked behind, also encouraging Buttons, but obviously not so close that she put herself in any danger. After all, she didn't know this pony and she'd always been told to keep a safe distance from horses' hind legs.

Step by step, they walked across the yard. As they passed Magic's stable, Tilly reached up to pat him.

'This is Magic Spirit,' she said. 'He's my horse.'

Magic leaned over the stable door and gently nudged her cheek. She stroked his





neck and kissed his nose.

'He's beautiful,' said Tim. 'It's obvious you two get on well. Do you do a lot of riding?'

'As much as possible,' said Tilly. 'There are some great hacks round here. And recently we've done a lot of work on our jumping. We're getting better, improving slowly, aren't we, Magic?'

Magic nickered and pricked his ears. He rested his head on Tilly's shoulder.

'That makes me jealous,' said Tim. 'I'm desperate to start riding again. I wish Buttons would let me. I love him, but I've never met such a difficult pony!'

'He can't be that bad,' said Tilly.

Tim shook his head. 'You'll see. What's it like here, anyway?'

'At Silver Shoe? Oh, it's the best place in the world! Everyone's really friendly. Angela and Duncan – he's the head-boy – take good care of all the horses. Actually, Magic was a rescue

horse abandoned at the side of a road in a terrible state. For some reason, I was the only person who could get near him initially. Then Angela picked him up and brought him to Silver Shoe and he's been here ever since.'

'Do you know a lot about horses?'

'A bit,' said Tilly, with a shrug.

'She's being too modest,' said a voice behind them. It was Tilly's friend, Mia. 'She's amazing with horses. Are you and Magic ready to go out, Tilly?'

'Hi, Mia. Meet Tim. And this is Buttons. I'll be ready in a bit – as soon as I've helped Tim get Buttons into his stable.'

'Sweet pony!' said Mia, as she stroked Buttons on the nose.

'That's what everyone says,' Tim muttered. 'Don't be fooled.'