

Praise for
Lydia Marmalade's Christmas Adventure

‘Will have you laughing through
Christmas and beyond ...’

Sara Pascoe

‘*Lydia Marmalade's Christmas Adventure*
is magical festive fun with the perfect balance
of heart and humour.’

Anna James

‘Written with a genuine sense of fun –
and funny – giddy adventure, this is a great
Christmassy choice for young and young-at-heart
humans and their sausage dogs.’

Matt Haig

Praise for
Lydia Marmalade and the Christmas Wish

‘Deliciously funny ... a perfect play
on Austen for young readers.’

Lauren Child

‘Jolly but emotionally perceptive ... full of wit and
larger-than-life characters.’

Daily Mail

‘Christmas magic – a book only Caryl Phillips could write
with such beauty and relatability!’

Giovanna Fletcher

‘I loved this book! A gorgeous, warm, festive yarn,
funny and also so full of heart. Not to mention a
dachshund called Colin. This feels like one of those
books you’ll want to read every Christmas.’

Nadia Shireen, author of *Grimwood*

‘A funny, magical adventure ... with lots of lively
illustrations by cartoonist Ma Pe, this is a warm,
sparklingly funny festive story, full of Christmas
cheer and perfect reading for a winter’s day.’

The Week Junior

Lydia Marmalade's
CHRISTMAS
ADVENTURE



Lydia Marmalade's
**CHRISTMAS
ADVENTURE**

Cariad Lloyd

Illustrated by Patri de Pedro



STARBOARD

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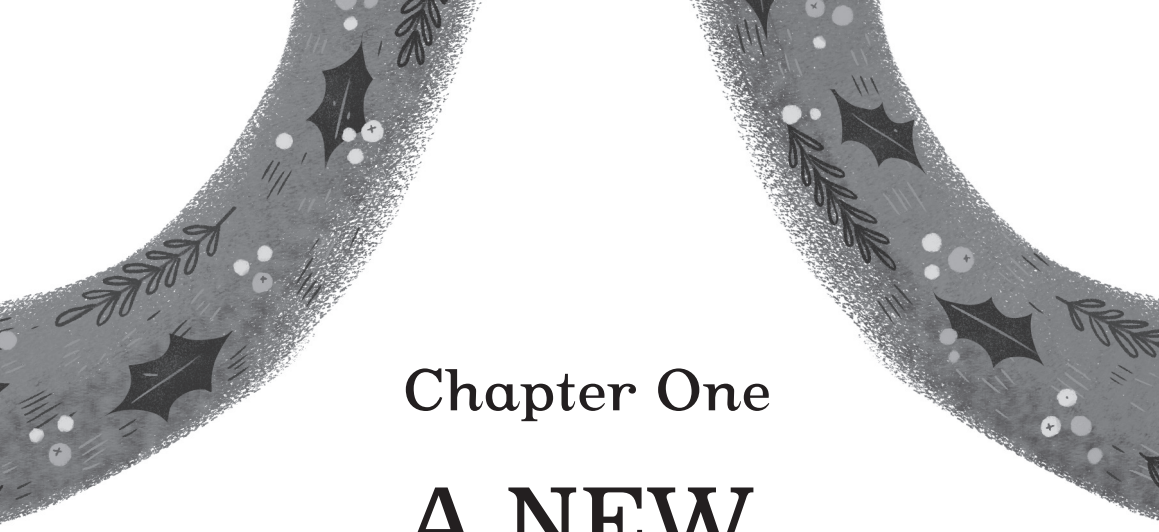
**For my loves (again) W and B.
And to all the obstinate, headstrong
girls out there – never change.**

*‘It is very right that you SHOULD
go to town; I would have every young woman of
your condition in life acquainted with the manners
and amusements of London.’*

Mrs Dashwood,
Sense and Sensibility, Jane Austen

*‘I cannot see that London has any great advantage
over the country, for my part, except the shops and
public places. The country is a vast deal pleasanter,
is it not, Mr.Bingley?’*

Elizabeth Bennett,
Pride and Prejudice, Jane Austen



Chapter One

A NEW ADVENTURE

December, 1813

Lydia had never seen anything like it. She had never **smelt** anything like it. It was so strong – like a rotting bin had met a farmyard, then hadn't had a wash for a very, very long time. And the **noise!** Shouting, hollering, carriage wheels turning, horses clip-clopping, and the people – so many people! Her own carriage gave a terrifying lurch as it avoided a huge hole in the road, and Lydia let out a **scream**

and tried to hold on to her bonnet and Colin at the same time. Her heart still **thudding**, she stared at the people who were passing. There were simply so many of them! Crowding into the shops, buying chestnuts from an open fire, pushing and shoving to go – where, she wondered? Where were they all going? The carriage swerved again, this time to avoid the throngs of folk criss-crossing the road, making their way through the crowded city. Colin gave a **yip** to himself as they bumped along the dirt road.

Colin was Lydia's best friend. He was a sausage dog, but he didn't really see himself as a sausage dog, more as an unrecognised gentleman, so Lydia, to avoid any upset on his part, simply referred to him as her best friend. After all, he was as good and kind as any human she had ever met. He was doing his best to cling on to her now, as they rounded the sharp corners and **hurled** down tight side streets. Lydia wrapped him up in her mother's old shawl,

plopping him down on her lap so he could see out the window better.

‘Sixpence for oranges! Sixpence for oranges! Get your citrus goods here!’

Lydia stared at the man on the pavement selling the brightly coloured fruit as they passed him. How could someone be that loud? It was like he was **bellowing** directly into her ear and yet he was actually quite far away from them! As they drove further along, she could hear fine music coming from inside one of the buildings. She caught the tune as they turned a corner and then before she could have a chance to remember it, a sweet whiff of sugar hit her nose – there was a toffee-apple seller, surrounded by excited children, all dressed in ripped and dirty clothing, **laughing** and **screeching** to try and encourage him to give away the sugar-covered fruit for free. Lydia saw a girl of about her age slowing her pace as she also noticed the seller. The man she was with – Lydia assumed it was her father – grabbed her

and shouted at her for being too slow. She could still hear him berating her as they drove away.

They rode past more shops, more people, more shouting, the city rolling out in front of them. As they went through a city gate, a woman ran right in front of the carriage.

'Lawks-a-mercy! Watch where you going, you whirligig!' she screeched at Lydia's driver.

Lydia stared at the woman (who marched off shouting far worse things) and thought of Lady Partridge, and what she would say about such behaviour. Colin gave the woman a **woof** out of the window for good measure.

Lydia rubbed his chest and tried to get him to settle on her lap, but he kept bobbing his head up to catch a new smell or a different noise. She clutched on to her shawl and tried to think brave thoughts, but none would come to her. Her head spun – she had never seen anything like this before in her life.

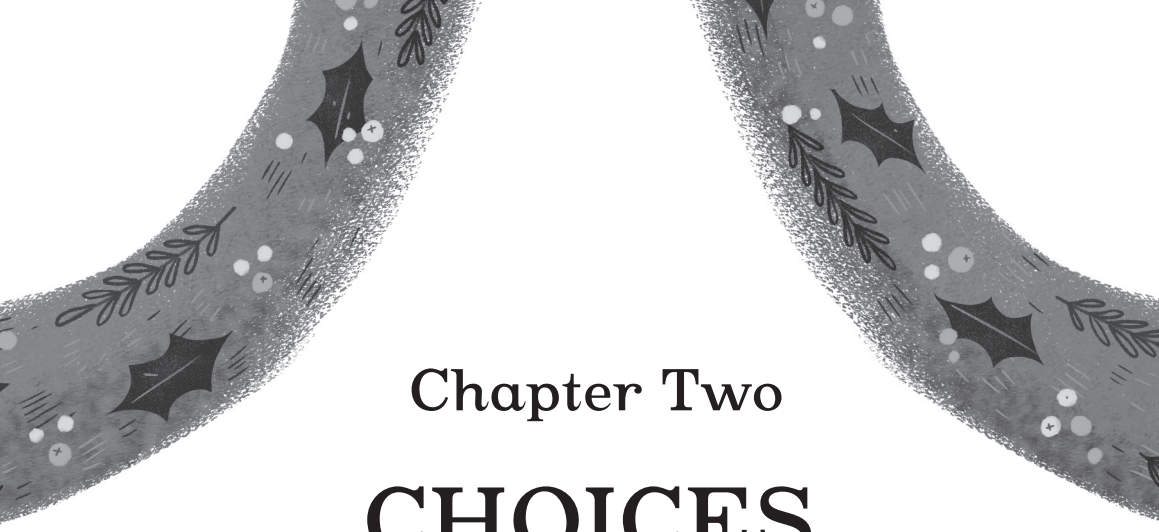
The **noisiest, busiest, smelliest, loudest** place she had ever seen. For Lydia Marmalade was in **London**.

You may know London – perhaps you live there, or you’ve been there or you’ve even seen pictures of Big Ben or the London Eye – but this London, the one Lydia was arriving in right now, is an old London. Big Ben hadn’t even been built yet! And if you’d asked someone to direct you to a giant wheel that lifts you up high into the sky so you can see the whole of the city, they would have **laughed** in your face (and then probably run away from you, thinking you had eaten too many walnuts). Because Lydia Marmalade was arriving in London just before Christmas, in **1813**. In olden times.

Lydia didn’t know it was *olden times*; she thought

it was just *times*, in the same way you don't know you're living in your time exactly – you get up, have breakfast, use the internet and get on a bus and eat strawberries in December (if you want to, although they never taste as nice as summer ones). It doesn't feel like a historical time, it's simply where you are. That's how Lydia felt; she didn't think she was old-fashioned, or historical. She was herself, like you right now. Lydia's London was as **busy** and **noisy** as it is today, but without any cars or trains or phones or scooters or slime ... but it did have **adventures** and **fun** and **magic**.

Because magic, like London, has been around for a very long time. And Lydia Marmalade didn't know anything about London in 1813, but she did know about **magic** ...



Chapter Two

CHOICES

Lydia had never been to a city at all until now. Not even a slightly busy high street, let alone riding into the capital – London. Before she found herself in the biggest and noisiest city in the world (at that time), she had been living in the very quiet countryside, in the grand Manor House, Peppomberley. She had moved the year before, in **1812**, and she'd experienced a strange and **magical** start to her new life there.

She had left her small village of Hopperton just after

her mother died in the autumn and Lady Partridge (who owned Peppomberley) had agreed to take her in (Colin too, although she hadn't actually agreed to that until much later ...). On that first December night that Lydia had arrived, she had made a **wish** to the stars. Lydia had no idea that as she spoke, a winter fire sprite was passing, who heard her wish and had made it come true! Bel, that very fiery fire sprite, had eventually become a good friend (after many magical mishaps) but, as the snow had melted, Bel had to go deep into the woods and Lydia had not seen her since the cold February had thawed into the warmer and damper March.

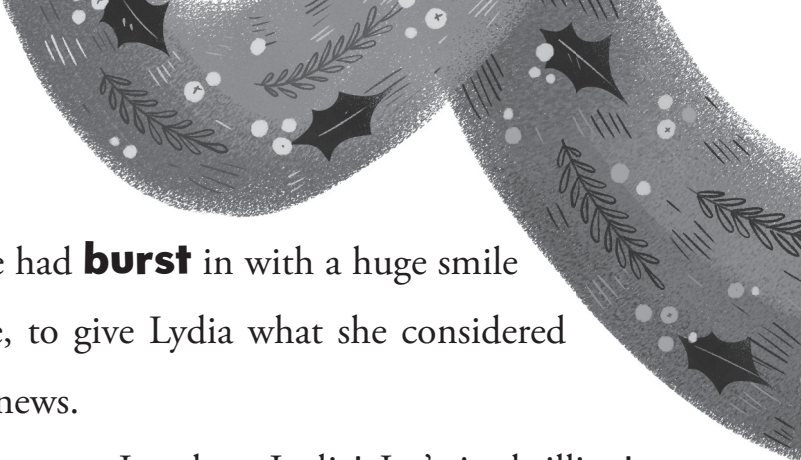
Since then, she had been happy: running through daisy fields, climbing trees and playing with her other good friend, Bertie, the stable boy (who could always be relied on for some shenanigans), and behaving herself, as much as she was able to (for Lydia Marmalade was not very good at doing what adults

told her to do). But, as the summer burnt towards crisp leaves and cool breezes, Lydia wondered what her future held. She had been so worried about being kicked out of Peppomberley for not being a proper lady, she hadn't really thought what would happen after Lady Partridge agreed she could stay. Peppomberley was a **beautiful** place to be, but it never felt quite like it belonged to her, even more so now Bel had disappeared.

Sitting in her carriage, riding into London, Lydia realised she had lived nearly a whole year of life at Peppomberley and yet how much had changed in those few weeks before she had to leave...

November had been bitterly cold, as the mornings had darkened and the nights had drawn in. Despite this, Lydia had been looking forward to Christmas, a chance to be

at Peppomberley and finally enjoy its grandness without worrying about being kicked out of it at any moment. Harriet, the cook, had been arranging how many mince pies she would need to bake to last them until Christmas day itself, and the evergreens had already been strung up in the grand hallway, which smelt of festivities and excitement. One bright, crisp morning, Lydia had been sitting in the lavish peacock-blue drawing room, gazing outside at the kingfishers darting into the lake, watching them fly off to their branches, going wherever they pleased, when Marianne entered the room. She was a most true friend, who last Christmas had married Lady Partridge's son Edmund (and was now, officially, the new Lady Partridge). Marianne was older than Lydia, and since her wedding to Edmund, she had become closer to her, like the sister she had never had. Lydia was eternally grateful that the world had given her such kindness after her mum had died, a time when she had truly needed good friends.



Marianne had **burst** in with a huge smile on her face, to give Lydia what she considered wonderful news.

‘We’re to go to London, Lydia! Isn’t it thrilling! Edmund has decided we should spend the winter season and Christmas there, for he has much business to attend to. Old Lady Partridge will stay at Peppomberley, and I have insisted you come with me as my companion!’

Lydia felt a jolt in her stomach. Colin sat up and cocked his head at her; he could tell she was nervous.

‘But I thought we were to all stay here for Christmas ...’

‘Yes, but now Edmund must go and I thought how lonely I would be – and then I realised: why, if Lydia comes with me, I shall have fine company and never feel sad at all!’

Marianne **clapped** her hands together and hugged Lydia.

‘Isn’t this such a Christmas treat, Lydia!’

Lydia smiled but inside she sensed she wasn’t being offered a choice. She knew Marianne meant well; she was so kind she never meant to do anything that would hurt anyone. In fact, last year she had saved Lydia more times from Big T Trouble than she could ever possibly thank her for. But the news of a trip to London did not fill Lydia with excitement. She had only been at this new house a year, and now she would have to leave and start again. And, just like when she had to leave her home the first time, no one had actually asked Lydia what she would like to do. Even though Lydia had discovered last year she was a real member of the Partridge family (Old Lady Partridge was in fact a cousin of her mother’s), she was not nearly as rich as any of them, and she had become a ward of the household, so no one would ever expect her to be consulted on anything. (A ward is just an old-fashioned word for a child who had

been agreed to be looked after by people who aren't their parents.) She did so long to one day make some decisions of her own. She had a very small hope that maybe she would actually make good ones.

Lydia gave a **startled** jump as Edmund bustled into the drawing room, looking flustered. He had been terribly occupied the last few weeks and of course, Lydia now understood why. He gave her a cursory nod and she knew she was expected to leave. She thanked Marianne, scooped up Colin and was walking away down the corridor, when her curiosity got the better of her. She crept back to the door and lingered, so she could listen. She had a feeling it would be about her, and sadly, she wasn't wrong.

'It makes no sense to bring her, Marianne!' Edmund sounded exasperated. 'Lydia will not be accepted in London, even if she is with you.'

'Edmund! Of course she will, she is most charming and clever—'

‘My dear, I wish all of society was as kind as you. It won’t be long before people learn who her father was, that he was poor, that he was not a gentleman, that she is not set to inherit anything from the Partridge estate. She will be rejected by any wise society before New Year, no matter how charming she is. You know how fond I am of her, but it is a cruelty to take her to a society that will not appreciate any of her unusual charms.’

‘But we cannot leave her here! If we help her to make good connections, one day she might—’

‘It is foolish to give her this hope.’ Edmund sighed. ‘I can deny you none of your wishes. If you insist, she shall come with us. But if she causes chaos, or displays any of her normal Lydia behaviours, she will be sent back. A simple, countryside girl is what she is, Marianne, and that’s where she should stay.’

‘We could change her path!’

‘I very much doubt that is possible for someone



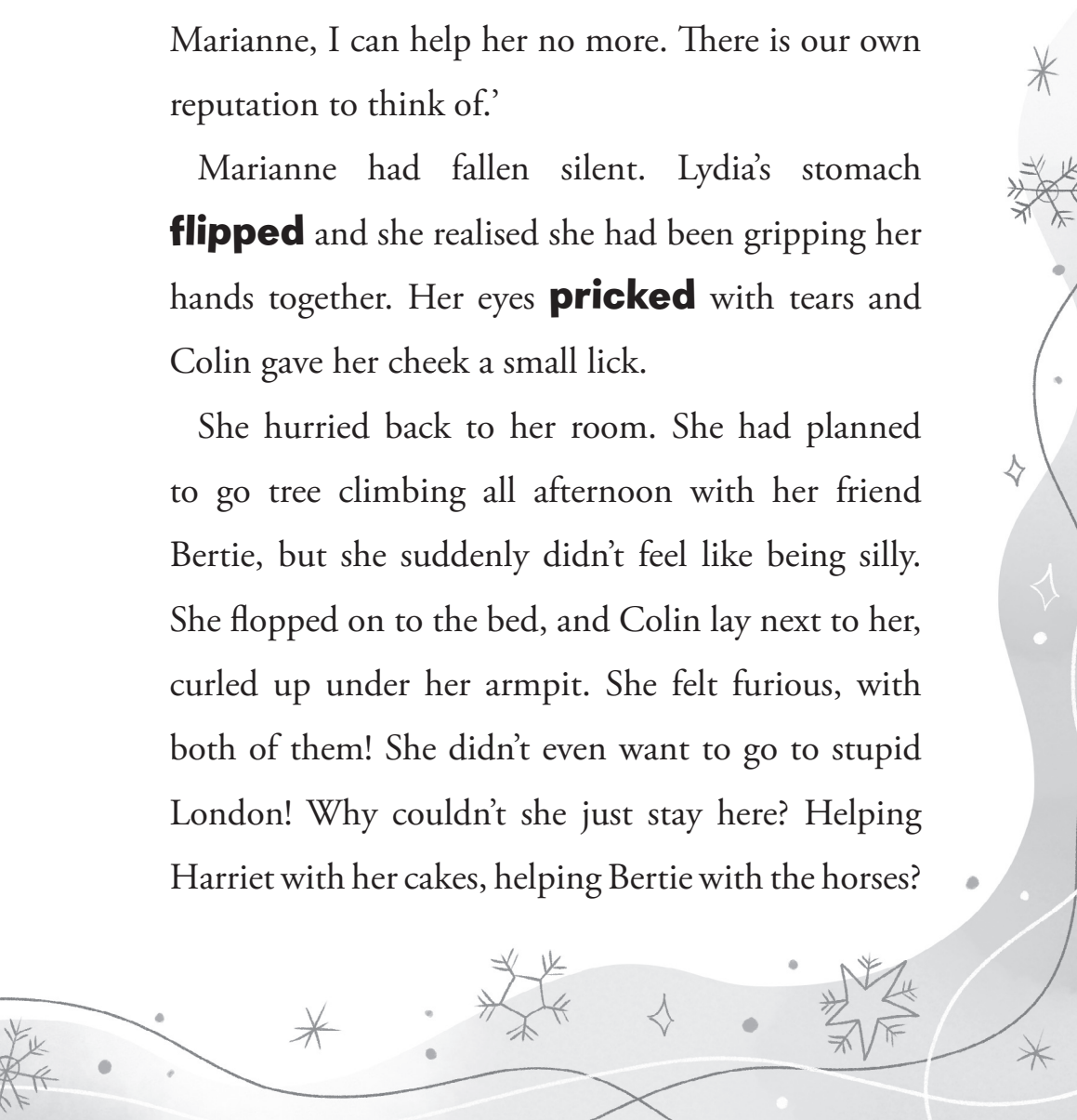
like Lydia. I know it is your good heart that makes you want to try.'

'Well—'

'She will have until Christmas to make sure she behaves as is expected of my ward, and after that, Marianne, I can help her no more. There is our own reputation to think of.'

Marianne had fallen silent. Lydia's stomach **flipped** and she realised she had been gripping her hands together. Her eyes **pricked** with tears and Colin gave her cheek a small lick.

She hurried back to her room. She had planned to go tree climbing all afternoon with her friend Bertie, but she suddenly didn't feel like being silly. She flopped on to the bed, and Colin lay next to her, curled up under her armpit. She felt furious, with both of them! She didn't even want to go to stupid London! Why couldn't she just stay here? Helping Harriet with her cakes, helping Bertie with the horses?



But what worried her more was for how long would she be sent to this strange city? It would start with the season and then – where would they send her next? Her future was being decided and no one had asked her what she wanted it to look like. Lydia knew that the brief months of freedom she had enjoyed were now ending. And there was very little she could do about it.

Lydia rolled over, grabbed her pillow and let out a muffled **scream**. Being a child was simply **SO** annoying. I'm sure you've heard your parents say a thousand times – do what you're told, don't argue back, they say, you're too young, or it's for the best!! Even in the olden times it was the same. Children could have a real job at only nine years old, but they still weren't allowed to decide on what they wanted to do with the wages that they had earned! She felt how all children have always felt when no one listens to them, a deep hard feeling – it wasn't **fair**.

Lydia remembered she'd folded her mother's shawl under her pillow, so she pulled it close to her face and smelt it. It didn't really smell of her mother any more, but just brushing it against her face calmed Lydia down. She had **plopped** Colin on to her lap.

'I hope they like dogs in London, Collywobble. Because it seems that's where we're going next.'

Colin gave a yip of agreement.

'I just hope they like Lydia Marmalades too ...'

