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opening extract from

Red Admiral (Tilly's Pony Tails No. 2)

written by

Pippa Funnell

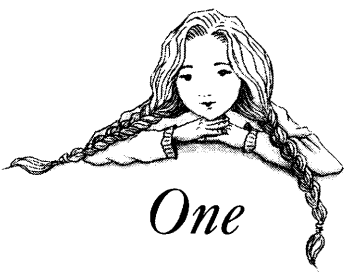
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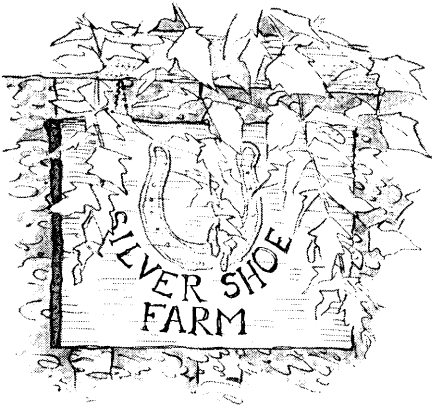
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One

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 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.



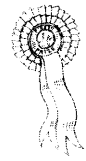
Tilly loved helping to care for the horses, but what she was really looking forward to was learning how to ride. Every time she saw people getting ready in the yard, saddling up and heading out on some

of the forest hacks, 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, twiddling the horsehair bracelet she'd worn all her life. 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.

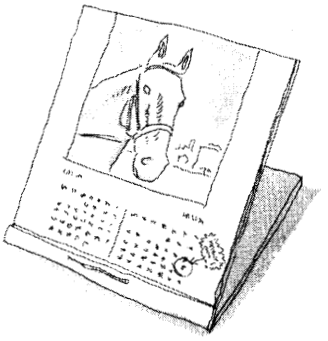
Adam was Tilly's younger brother. He was busy flicking bits of toast across the table. He was annoying in the way that little brothers sometimes can be.

All Tilly wanted to do was spend the day with the horses. It was the first hot day in May, and she knew the stable yard was going to be buzzing with activity. Adam just 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!"

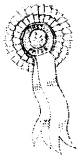
Tilly caught her dad's eye. Despite what he said, she knew that really he was happy for her, and proud of her hard work. He understood what horses meant to her.

"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 canary yellow jodhpurs, a copy of *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 the farm. It would be extra great if you could get me those!"

"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 from either Mia or Cally.

PERFECT DAY. IF U R NOT AT THE FARM BY 10AM THEN U R 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 can you give me a lift to Silver Shoe Farm on your way?"

"Whatever you say, Tiger Lil'."

"Thanks, Dad!"