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Opening extract from

Tilly's Pony Tails: Stripy the Zebra Foal

Written by

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TILLY'S PONY TAILS

Stripy the Zebra Foal

Pippa Funnell began riding when she was very young – on a pony lent to her by a friend of her mother's.

An Olympic champion, she became the first and (so far) only person to win eventing's greatest prize, the Rolex Grand Slam in 2003, riding Primmore's Pride. She has had countless other successes in her career, most recently winning the Bramham International Horse Trials on Redesigned in June 2010. She's also delighted to have been a member of the British team at the 2010 World Equestrian Games held in Kentucky. Pippa is proud to be a trustee of World Horse Welfare. Visit their website at www.worldhorsewelfare.org.

Tilly's Pony Tails mark her brilliant debut in children's fiction. She lives in Surrey with her husband, William Funnell, a top class show jumper.

Look out for the other books in the
Tilly's Pony Tails *series*

Magic Spirit
Red Admiral
Rosie
Samson
Lucky Chance
Solo
Pride and Joy
Neptune
Parkview Pickle
Nimrod
Moonshadow
Autumn Glory
Goliath
Buttons
Rusty
Royal Flame

TILLY'S PONY TAILS

Stripy the Zebra Foal



PIPPA FUNNELL

Illustrated by Jennifer Miles

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For Caz and Julie, two of my special friends who joined us on Safari





One

The leaves and branches glistened with frost. Tilly Redbrow could hardly feel her fingers and toes, despite the warm silk boot liners and fleecy gloves she was wearing, but she didn't mind. She always enjoyed winter rides along the forest tracks near Silver Shoe Farm.

Tilly nudged her horse, Magic Spirit, with both heels

'Come on, boy!' she said. 'Let's pick up the pace!'

Immediately Magic moved into a canter. It felt amazing. The trees passed by in a blur and the track disappeared behind them.

When Tilly sensed Magic was tiring, she asked him to slow and then come to a halt. She waited for her brother, Brook, and his stunning black thoroughbred, Solo, to catch up.



'Wow!' said Brook. 'You went for it then! Does Magic have a secret dream to be a racehorse, do you think?'

Tilly laughed.

'Maybe.'

Suddenly she felt her phone buzz from inside her waterproof riding jacket. Unfortunately, she had so many layers on, she couldn't get to it in time.

'Never mind. I'm sure it was just my mum wanting to know what time I need a lift home. I should probably get Magic back to the stables.'

'Okay,' said Brook. 'I've got to go and do some studying anyway. More exams! I wish I could be on holiday right now. I've had enough of school-work.'

'A holiday somewhere hot?' Tilly said, as she breathed warmth onto her finger tips.

'If only,' said Brook. 'Remember how it feels in the summer, to go riding wearing just a t-shirt? All these bulky clothes get in the way.'

Just then, Tilly's phone buzzed again. She managed to get one glove off and undo her zip, but she didn't get to it before it stopped. 'Missed call' read the screen. The number wasn't one she recognised.

'Oh,' she said. 'It's not my mum, after all.'

'Well, whoever it is, they obviously want to talk to you,' said Brook.

Tilly shrugged.

She was about to put the phone away when it began to ring again.This time she answered it.

'Hello?'

'Hi. Is this Tilly Redbrow's phone?'

It was a friendly voice, a young woman.

'Er, yes.'

'I'm calling from *Pony* magazine.'

Tilly gasped and glanced at Brook. She couldn't think what the call was about, but if it was something to do with *Pony* magazine it had to be good.

'A few months ago,' said the woman, 'you sent us a picture of your beautiful



horse, Magic Spirit. It was for our horse safari competition.'

'I remember,' said Tilly, her eyes getting wider.

'Well, I'm really pleased to tell you . . . '

Tilly held her breath.

'What? What is it?'

'You've won!'

'Really?'

'Yes! Congratulations, Tilly! Magic Spirit's photograph was the one drawn out of thousands of entries. You're going on safari. How do you feel?'

‘I – I – I don’t believe it! It’s brilliant!’

Tilly could hardly speak. She waved at Brook and gave a thumbs-up sign. Brook smiled back, but she could tell he had no idea why she was so excited.

‘Well, I’ll let the good news sink in,’ the woman continued, ‘then I’ll call back later with the details. I’m sure you already know that the trip is for three people. You’ll have to take an adult, of course, but you can bring a friend too.’

Tilly didn’t need to think about who that would be. As she said goodbye, she knew instantly.

‘Who was that then?’ Brook asked. ‘What’s made you so happy?’

‘That holiday . . .’ said Tilly. It was hard to get the words out. ‘The sunny one we were just talking about, away from all your exam stress . . .’

‘Yes?’

‘Pack your suitcase! We’re going!’

‘Huh?’

‘I’ve just won a horse safari trip to

Africa! Thanks to *Pony* magazine – and a photograph of Magic Spirit! Do you remember the one I entered ages ago?’

‘Wow!’ said Brook. ‘Thanks! That’s amazing! And congratulations! I’ve always wanted to go on safari. It’s a good job you finally got to answer your phone!’

They both laughed, then Tilly leaned forward and gave Magic a hug. She stroked his neck and whispered in his ear.

‘Well done, boy. Because of you, or at least, because of a photo of you, I’ve won a holiday.’



Soothed by Tilly’s affectionate touch, Magic gave a nicker.

‘I always thought I was lucky to have you in my life. Now, this proves it! I can’t wait to tell everyone at Silver Shoe.’



‘Come on,’ said Brook. ‘Let’s go.’

Tilly and Brook turned their horses around. They trotted back to the end of the track, then walked up the lane, towards the gates of Silver Shoe Farm. Tilly smiled the whole way.



Two

When they arrived at the yard, Tilly and Brook found their friend, Mia. She was grooming her horse, Autumn Glory. They told her about the trip.

‘Huh! I’m so jealous!’ said Mia. ‘I’ll be stuck here in freezing Britain. But, seriously, I’m pleased for you guys. Just don’t get eaten by lions!’

‘Lions? I hadn’t thought about that,’ said Brook.

‘Of course,’ said Tilly. ‘We’re bound