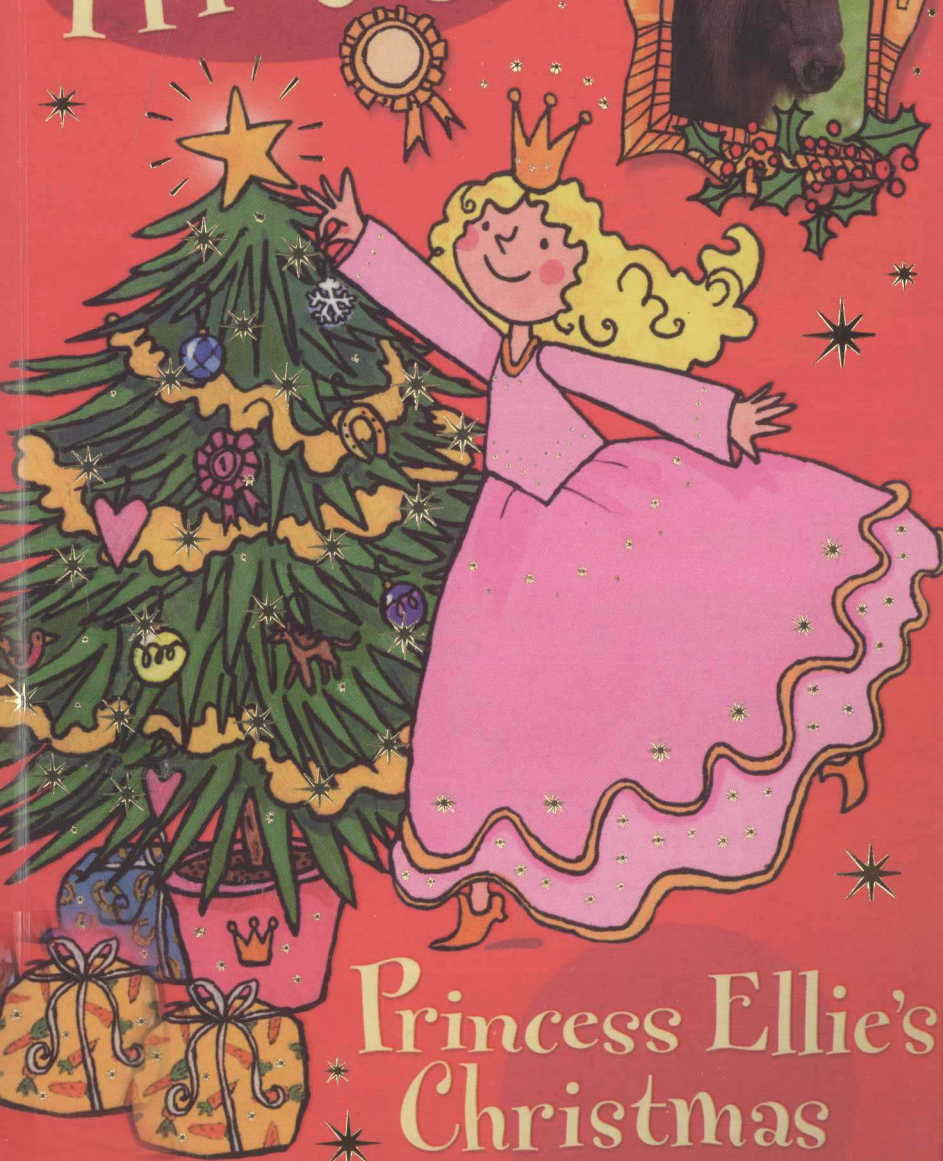


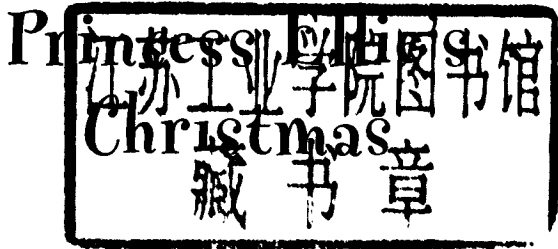
The Pony-Mad Princess



Princess Ellie's Christmas

Diana Kimpton

The Pony Mad Princess



Ellie jumped into bed, but found it difficult to go to sleep. She always did on Christmas Eve. Usually that was because she was excited, but this year was different. This year she was worrying too. Her plan was so important. What would she do if it didn't work?

Look out for more sparkly adventures of
The Pony-Mad Princess!



Princess Ellie to the Rescue

Princess Ellie's Secret

A Puzzle for Princess Ellie

Princess Ellie's Starlight Adventure

Princess Ellie and the Moonlight Mystery

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Princess Ellie Saves the Day

Princess Ellie's Summer Holiday

The Pony-Mad Princess

Princess Ellie's Christmas



Diana Kimpton

Illustrated by Lizzie Finlay



*In memory of my mum,
who always made Christmas special – LF*



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Chapter 1



"Ouch," said Princess Ellie, as she stabbed herself with the needle. She sucked her sore finger and stared pleadingly at her governess. "Please can I stop sewing now? I want to go to the stables."

"You always do," replied Miss Stringle. "But your ponies will have to wait. You need to finish your mother's present."



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It's Christmas Eve tomorrow."

Ellie didn't need reminding. She'd been looking forward to Christmas for weeks. She felt as if she'd been sewing for almost as long. But it was better than lessons, especially as she could do it in the ruby sitting room instead of the classroom.

She leaned back in the red velvet



armchair and looked at her work. The cross-stitched crown looked lopsided.

"Are you sure Mum wants an embroidered handkerchief?" she asked. "I could have ordered her

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something much nicer from the catalogue." She knew there was no point in suggesting she bought something in a shop. Princesses don't go shopping, even at Christmas.

"I've told you before!" declared Miss Stringle. "The Queen can buy anything she wants whenever she wants it. So buying her a present isn't special. It's much better to *make* her one."

"I always used to make my mother's presents when I was a girl," said Great Aunt Edwina, who was sitting nearby on a red velvet settee. "Christmas has always been my favourite time of the year."

"It's mine too," said Ellie, as she started to sew again. "I want this to be the best Christmas ever. That's why I want it to snow."



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"It would be wonderful if it did," said the old lady, clapping her hands together in delight. "There has never been a white Christmas at the palace for as long as I can remember."

"Of course there hasn't," said Miss Stringle. "Please remember your geography lessons, Princess Aurelia. We never have snow here."

"We might this year," argued Ellie. "Kate's gran told me to make a wish when I stirred her Christmas pudding mixture. So I wished for snow on Christmas Day – just like there is on all the cards."

Miss Stringle shook her head and sighed. "I'm afraid no amount of wishing will make it

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snow. No matter what the palace cook believes, there is nothing in a Christmas pudding that can change the weather."

Ellie didn't want to believe her. Surely a wish could work sometimes. She glanced hopefully out of the window. But the sky was clear and blue. There were no clouds in sight.

Great Aunt Edwina didn't seem to notice Ellie's disappointment. She was busy remembering past Christmases. "We always had beautiful decorations when I was a girl."

"We still do," said Ellie, pointing proudly at the Christmas tree in the corner. It was her own special tree and she had decorated it herself. Its branches dripped with silver icicles, golden horseshoes and tiny glass ponies. Sparkly gold tinsel twisted in



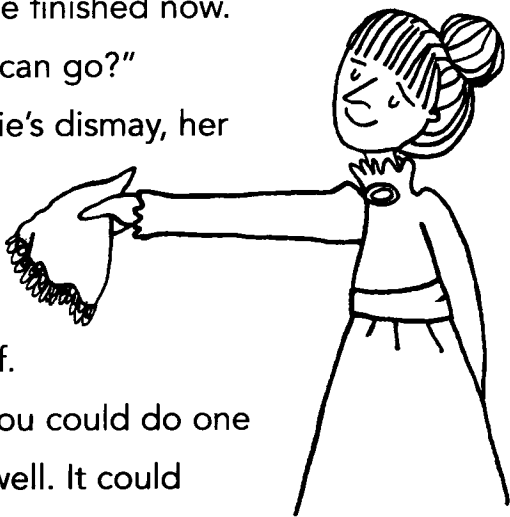
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between them, glinting in the sunlight from the window.

The old lady glanced at the tree. Then she went back to her memories. "We always had wonderful presents when I was a girl."

"That hasn't changed either," said Ellie. "There are heaps of presents under the tree in the ballroom." She sewed the last stitch on the handkerchief and handed it to Miss Stringle. "I've finished now. Please say I can go?"

But to Ellie's dismay, her governess produced another handkerchief. "I thought you could do one for Kate as well. It could



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have a horseshoe instead of a crown."

Ellie stared at her in horror. "Kate's my best friend so I want to give her something she'll be really, really pleased with. And that isn't a hankie – she only uses paper tissues." Just then, she spotted the postman's van through the window and added, "Anyway, I've already ordered her the perfect present. That must be it arriving now."

She raced out of the room and reached the front door at the same time as the postman. Higginbottom, the butler, took the bulging sack from him and tipped the contents onto a table. There were masses of cards, several boring-looking brown envelopes and two parcels.

"Which one's mine?" squealed Ellie, hopping up and down with excitement.



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"Neither of them," said Higginbottom.
"They're both for His Majesty."

"You must be wrong," cried Ellie. "Kate's present is supposed to come today." She picked up the sack and turned it inside out. But there was no sign of the missing parcel. "What am I going to do?" she groaned.

"Don't panic!" said Higginbottom.
"There's another delivery tomorrow morning. That's the last one before Christmas."

His words made Ellie feel slightly better. Tomorrow was Christmas Eve, so if the parcel arrived then she would be able to give Kate the perfect present. But if it didn't come, she'd have nothing to give her at all.



Chapter 2



Ellie burst out laughing when she arrived at the stables and found Meg, the palace groom, wearing a pair of red felt antlers. "I'm just getting in the Christmas mood," Meg explained.

"Look at me!" cried Kate, as she came out of Angel's stable. "Meg's got us some too." The antlers sticking out of her long,

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straight hair waggled about as she walked.

"Here are yours," said Meg, holding out an identical pair attached to a hairband.

"Thanks," said Ellie. "They're great." She took off her everyday crown and put on the antlers. Then she tried to balance the crown back in its usual place. But it wouldn't fit. The antlers took up so much space that

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there wasn't room for the crown as well.

"Bother," said Ellie.

"Could you leave your crown off just this once?" said Meg.

Ellie shook her head. "I'll get into trouble if I'm caught. I'm only allowed to take it off when I put on my riding hat or my tiara." Wearing a crown all the time was one of the annoying parts of being a princess. The best part was having five ponies of her own.

"I've got an idea," laughed Kate. She ran over and took the crown. Then she stuffed it on Ellie's head with one antler poking through the middle of it.



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Ellie ran into the tack room and stared at herself in the mirror. "That looks really silly," she giggled, as she pulled off the crown. Reluctantly, she took off the antlers and put them on the table. Then she put on her riding hat and said, "Let's go for a ride."

"Can I take Rainbow?" asked Kate. Although Angel was Kate's pony, she was only a foal and much too young to be ridden.

"Of course you can," said Ellie. She knew immediately which pony she wanted to ride. Shadow the Shetland was too small for her and she'd ridden Moonbeam yesterday. Starlight was Angel's mum and needed to stay at home with her foal. So it was obviously Sundance's turn.

