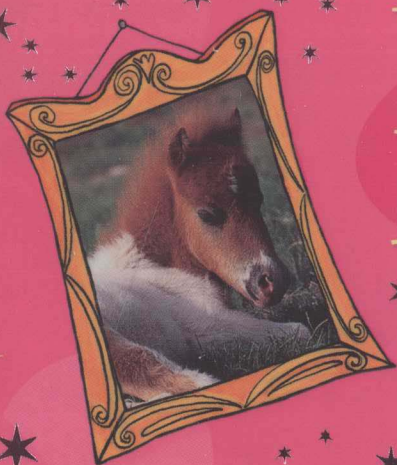


# The Pony-Mad Princess



## Princess Ellie's Secret Treasure Hunt



Diana Kimpton



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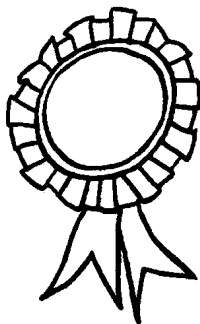
# The Pony-Mad Princess

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# The Pony Mad Princess



## Princess Ellie's Secret Treasure Hunt

*The paper wasn't blank. There was old-fashioned writing on it that was hard to read. There were squiggly lines too and drawings of trees. Ellie's hands shook with excitement as she unrolled the last part of the scroll. The writing at the top was in capital letters. They spelled out a single word.*

*"Treasure!" cried Ellie, Kate and John together.*

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# The Pony-Mad Princess

## Princess Ellie's Secret Treasure Hunt



Diana Kimpton

Illustrated by Lizzie Finlay



# *For Alice and Thomas*

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# Chapter 1



"Can I stop now?" asked Princess Ellie.

"Certainly not," replied Miss Stringle.

"Your holiday does not begin until your lessons are over, and there is still half an hour to go."

"But John will be here soon," pleaded Ellie.

"No, he won't," said her teacher, firmly.



## The Pony-Mad Princess

"Prince John is not due to arrive for another hour. Now please get on with your work. Princesses should not argue."

Ellie sighed. She was tired of her history lesson. She was tired of studying in the palace library, and she was tired of its rows of old books stored in ancient bookcases. She longed to be out in the sunshine with her ponies. Perhaps Miss Stringle would change her mind once she'd finished the worksheet.

The long list of questions was all about princesses from the past. She'd been working on them all afternoon. Thank goodness there were only three left.

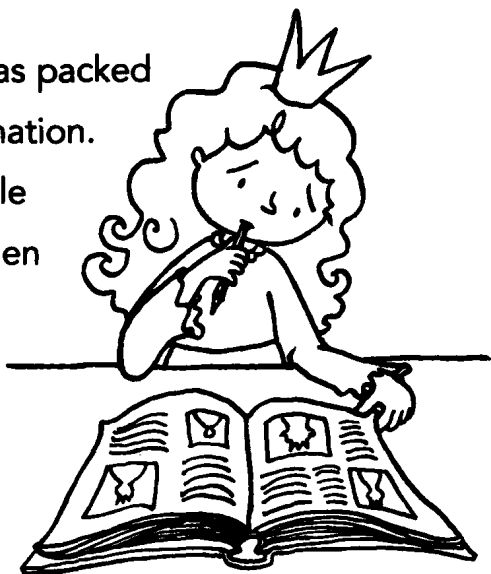
She chewed the end of her pencil as she turned the gold-edged pages of *The Complete Guide to the Royal Family*.



## Princess Ellie's Secret Treasure Hunt

The huge book was packed with boring information.

It said when people were born and when they died, but it never mentioned whether they liked ponies as much as Ellie did.



She quickly discovered that Princess Marissa's older brother was called James and that Princess Andromeda had married King Proctor the Proud of Protavia. It took her much longer to work out that Princess Traviata was her great-great-great-great-aunt.

She wrote down the last answer and waved her paper in the air. "I've finished," she declared. "Can I stop now?"

## The Pony-Mad Princess

“Not quite yet,” replied her teacher. She pointed at the books spread out in front of Ellie. “I want you to put those back in their right places while I mark your work. Then I can see if you’ve remembered what I taught you about how the library is organized.”

Ellie groaned. She hadn’t listened to Miss Stringle droning on and on about the library. She’d been far too busy daydreaming about her five beautiful ponies. Now she had no idea where the books belonged.

She stacked them on top of each other, picked them up and set off round the room. As she walked, she looked at the shelves carefully, searching for spaces that might give her a clue.

The first gap she spotted was high above



## Princess Ellie's Secret Treasure Hunt

her head. As she stood on tiptoe to push a book into it, the rest of the pile wobbled.



She tried to steady it, and she almost succeeded. But one book slid off. It tumbled

## The Pony-Mad Princess

to the ground, slid across the shiny wooden floor and vanished under a bookcase.

Luckily, Miss Stringle didn't notice. She was still busy with her marking. So Ellie dumped the other books on a table. Then she lay down and looked under the nearest set of shelves.

The book was right at the back, resting against the wall. She reached out to grab it and felt something long and soft brush against her fingers.

Ellie pulled her hand away in surprise. Then she peered under the bookcase again and spotted a piece of red ribbon dangling from the back of the bottom shelf. "I wonder how long that's been there," she thought. The maids would never have noticed it while they were sweeping.



## Princess Ellie's Secret Treasure Hunt

This was much more interesting than her lesson. She forgot about the book for a moment and pulled gently on the ribbon. It didn't move. She pulled again a bit harder. This time it shifted a little and then got stuck.

Ellie gave it a short, sharp tug and the ribbon finally pulled free. As it slid out of its hiding place, she saw for the first time that it was tied round a tightly rolled scroll of paper.

"Princess Aurelia!" shouted Miss Stringle. "Get up at once. Princesses do not grovel on the floor."

"I'm sorry," said Ellie, wishing her teacher wouldn't use her real name. "I was just fetching a book I dropped." She decided not to mention the scroll. That was her secret, and she wasn't ready to share it yet.

## Chapter 2



Ellie grabbed hold of the book with one hand and the scroll with the other. Then she stood up very carefully, turning to face Miss Stringle at the same time. She held the book in front of her to attract her teacher's attention and kept the paper hidden safely behind her back. If Miss Stringle didn't know it existed, she couldn't

## Princess Ellie's Secret Treasure Hunt

take it away or make Ellie write about it.

Keeping her eyes fixed on her teacher, Ellie stepped sideways towards the table. Miss Stringle watched her curiously. "Why are you moving in such a peculiar way?" she asked.





## The Pony-Mad Princess

Ellie's mind raced, searching for a remotely believable reply. But before she could think of one, there was a loud knock on the library door. Miss Stringle looked round to see who was there, and Ellie quickly slid the scroll up inside her sleeve without being spotted. She would have to wait until later to discover what was written on it.

Higginbottom, the butler, stepped into the library and gave a low bow. "I'm sorry to interrupt," he said, "but Prince John of Andirovia has arrived earlier than expected. He's waiting for Princess Aurelia to welcome him."

Ellie gave a whoop of delight. Although she e-mailed John all the time, she hadn't seen him since the royal visit to his parents' palace. "Can I stop now?" she asked for the

