

The Pony-Mad Princess



Princess
Ellie
and the
Palace
Plot

The Pony Mad Princess

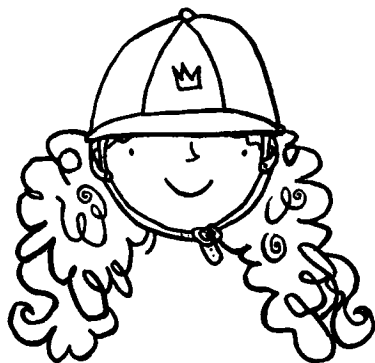


Princess 学院图书馆 and the Palace Plot 藏书草

Kate looked thoughtful. "Maybe Lord Leo doesn't really know anything about horses. That would explain why he hooted at Angel yesterday and frightened her."

"But that would mean he's making it all up," said Ellie. "And if he's lying about the horses, maybe he's lying about other things as well..."

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

A Surprise for Princess Ellie

Princess Ellie's Holiday Adventure

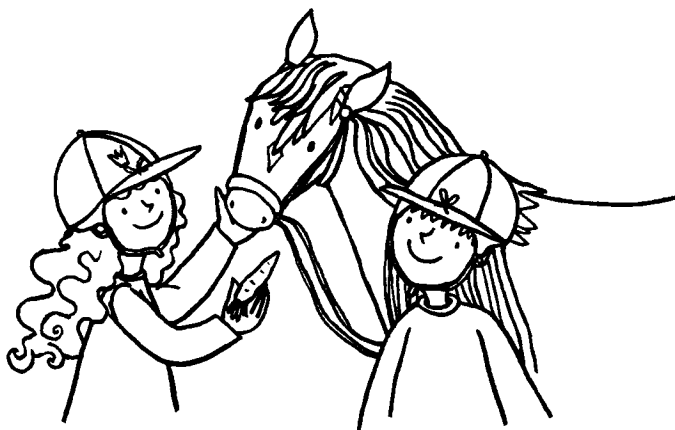
Coming soon...

Princess Ellie's Christmas

Princess Ellie Saves the Day

The Pony-Mad Princess

Princess Ellie
and the Palace Plot

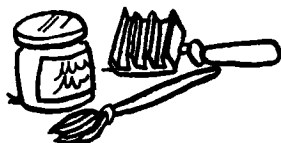


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For Graham



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Chapter 1



"Come on, Angel," said Princess Ellie, patting the skewbald foal's brown and white neck. Angel's tiny hooves crunched on the gravel as she walked up the palace drive. Ellie was on one side of the foal and her best friend, Kate, was on the other.

Kate grinned. "She's getting good at being led." She held up the lead rope to



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show how slack it was. "Look! She's not pulling at all."

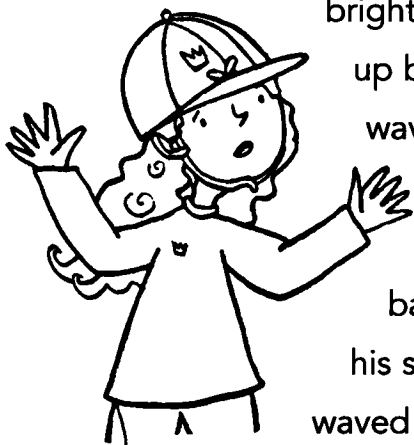
"We could try going faster," suggested Ellie. "But that's up to you. She's your pony."

Kate made a clicking noise with her tongue and started to run. Angel pricked up her ears, arched her neck and broke into a trot.

Suddenly, Ellie heard the sound of an engine. She looked round quickly and saw a

bright red sports car racing up behind them. She waved at it to slow down.

To her annoyance, the driver just waved back. He didn't adjust his speed at all. Ellie waved again, more urgently



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this time. Surely he could see Angel was only a foal. She wasn't used to traffic.

But the driver still took no notice. He gave a long, loud blast on the car's horn. Then he roared past, waving cheerfully. The wheels of the red car sent up a shower of gravel.

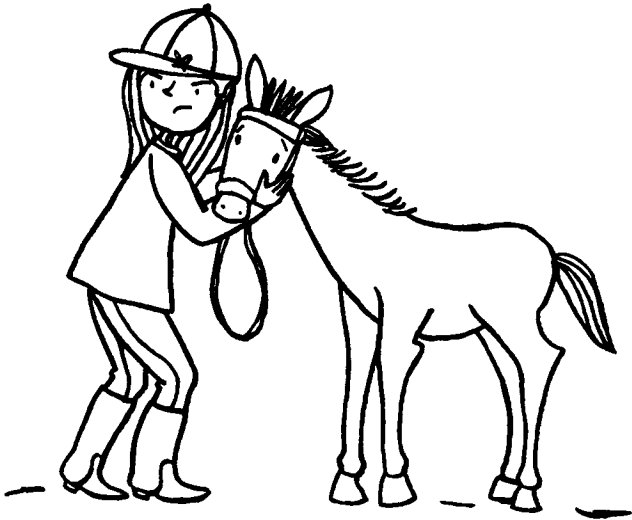
The combination of the noise, the speed and the stinging stones was too much for Angel. She jumped away from the bright red monster and nearly knocked Kate over. Then she threw herself backwards, pulling hard on the rope and trying to break free.

Ellie lunged forward and grabbed hold of Angel's headcollar. "Steady, girl," she said in a soothing voice. "It's gone now."

"There's nothing to be frightened of," added Kate, gently stroking the foal's face.



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Angel relaxed a little. She stopped trying to pull away, but she was obviously still scared. She was breathing fast, and her neck was damp with sweat.

There was no sign of the car now. It had sped away towards the palace and disappeared round a bend. Ellie glowered after it. "Silly fool! I wonder who he is."

Kate looked thoughtful. "The guards at



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the gate let him in so he must be visiting someone at the palace.”

“That’s true,” replied Ellie. “But he obviously doesn’t know anything about horses or he wouldn’t have frightened Angel.”

Kate turned the foal towards the stables. “Let’s get out of the way quickly before he comes back.”

Meg, the palace groom, was sweeping the yard when they arrived. She stopped as soon as she saw them and asked, “How did Angel’s lesson go?” Then she listened with concern as Ellie and Kate described what had happened. “Thank goodness she wasn’t hurt,” she said, when they had finished.

“She could have been if she’d run away,” said Kate. “She was really scared.”

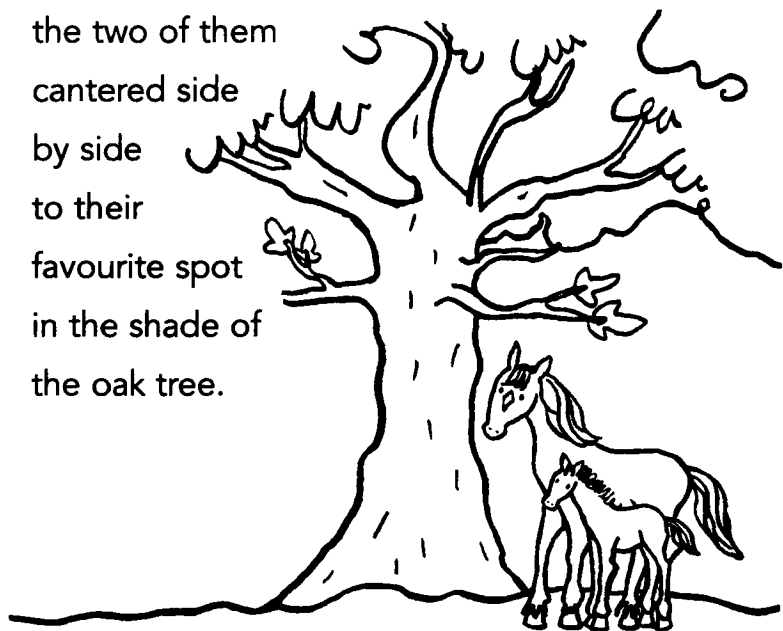


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"But she's calmed down now," said Ellie.
"Shall we turn her out in the field with
Starlight?"

"That's a good idea," said Meg. "She'll
be pleased to be back with her mum."

Starlight whinnied a welcome and trotted
to the gate to meet her daughter. As soon
as Kate had unfastened Angel's headcollar,
the two of them
cantered side
by side
to their
favourite spot
in the shade of
the oak tree.



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Starlight was the largest of Ellie's five ponies but Angel's spindly legs were so long that she could easily keep up with her mother.

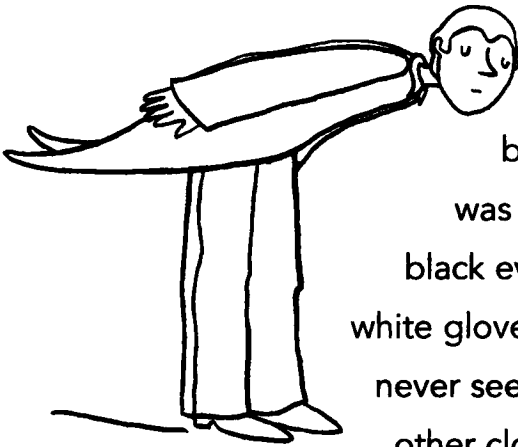
The other four ponies were standing on the far side of the field, swishing their tails gently to keep the flies away. Shadow, the greedy Shetland, was the only one eating the grass. His best friend, Sundance, dozed beside him while Moonbeam and Rainbow stood side by side, watching Angel.

Suddenly a polite cough made Ellie jump and a deep voice said, "Excuse me, Princess Aurelia."

She spun round and saw Higginbottom, the butler, standing behind her. She'd been so busy watching the ponies that she hadn't heard his footsteps on the grass.



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Higginbottom gave a deep bow. As usual he was wearing his black evening suit and white gloves. She had never seen him in any other clothes and she

had never managed to persuade him to call her Ellie. Like everyone else at the palace, he insisted on calling her by her real name.

He straightened up and announced, "The King and Queen would like you to join them for tea in the parlour as soon as possible. The new royal designer has arrived and they want you to meet him."

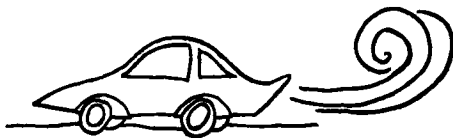
"Bother," said Ellie. "Why now?" she thought. She hated having to miss time at

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the stables. "I was going to clean Starlight's saddle before supper."

"Never mind," said Kate. "It can wait until tomorrow. And the royal designer might be interesting. I wonder what he's going to design?"

"No one's told me yet," replied Ellie. She suddenly felt very keen to find out. But as she ran back to the palace, she remembered the horrid driver of the red sports car. "I hope he's not the designer," she thought. She'd already seen enough of that man for one day.



Chapter 2



Ellie ran indoors and nearly bumped into her governess, Miss Stringle.

"Where are you going in such a rush?" she asked.

"To the parlour," explained Ellie. "Mum and Dad said I've got to go there straight away. The new designer's arrived."

Miss Stringle was unimpressed. "That is



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no reason to run. There is always time for a princess to walk in a dignified manner." She paused and wrinkled her nose in disgust.

"And there's always time to change out of your riding clothes."

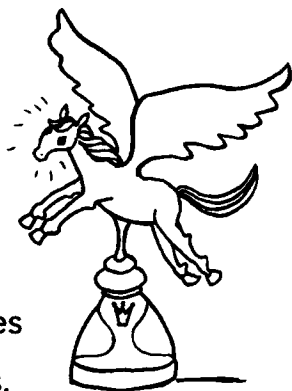


Ellie sighed. No one else in the palace seemed to like the smell of horse as much as she did. She walked sedately up the spiral staircase to her room until she was out of Miss Stringle's sight. Then she ran up the remaining steps, two at a time.

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Inside her very pink bedroom, she pulled off her stable clothes and wiped the dirt off her face with a wet flannel. Then she put on a frilly, pink dress, swapped her everyday crown for a tiara and hurried down to the parlour.

Despite her rush, she couldn't resist stopping at a small table beside the double doors. Standing in the middle of it was her favourite ornament – a beautiful statue of a flying horse made from pure gold. Its glittering wings were encrusted with diamonds and its eyes were clear, blue sapphires.



She gazed at it for a moment. Then she forced herself to turn away. Her parents were

