

# Bonnie & Sam

## The Circus Pony



Alison Lester *and*  
Roland Harvey

  
ALLEN & UNWIN

# The Perfect Pony

The girls had ridden all the horses and ponies of Currawong Creek at some time. Now they made a list, to work out which one would be the best for trick riding.

Drover, Sam's dad's horse, was their favourite. They double-dinked everywhere on her when she wasn't doing police work, but she was too big.

'Let's face it,' said Sam, 'we're going to fall off a lot, so the less distance we have to fall, the better.'



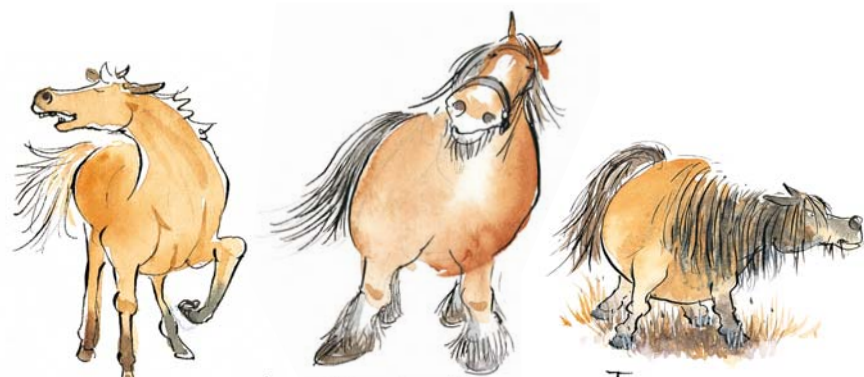
Too tall



Too nervous



Too ugly!



Too moody

Way too big

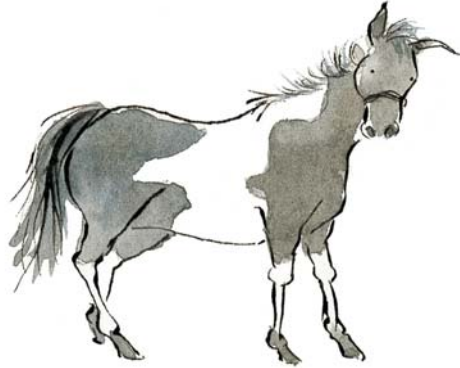
Too grumpy

Tarzan was too grumpy. Bonnie's first pony Bella was too small. Her paddock mate Whale was way too big. Horrie the racehorse was too nervous. 'And too skinny,' said Sam. 'It would hurt your feet to stand on his bony back.'

Chocolate Charme the dressage horse was a bit tall, and anyway Cheryl Smythe-Tyght only let the girls ride Chocko under her strict supervision.

Blondie the palomino was moody and unpredictable, and Tex the Appaloosa was just too ugly.

That left Tricky. Bonnie and Sam looked at each other. Tricky would be perfect.



‘What about Michael?’ said Sam. ‘He might say no, just to be a meanie.’

But – surprise, surprise – at school on Monday, Michael said yes.

‘Tell me again what you’re going to do,’ he said, swinging back on his chair with his arms crossed.

Sam took a deep breath. Sometimes Michael was so smug she wanted to punch him in the head.

Bon explained again about the Talent Night, and the trick riding.



‘Sure, you can use him.’ Michael smiled at the girls as though he was the Pope. ‘But you and my stupid horse won’t stand a chance. I’m going to win the Talent Night again with my violin, just like I did last year.’

# Learning the Craft

‘Tricky’s back is nearly as flat as Pedro’s,’ Bon said as they double-dinked along Currawong Creek, looking for a sandy flat to practise on.

‘Mmmn.’ Sam couldn’t forget Michael’s smirk when they told him their plan. ‘I hope he doesn’t buck you off.’

But Tricky was perfect. With Bonnie on his back he trotted in a circle, keeping an even rhythm and avoiding any small dips in the sand.



‘It’s as though he wants to make it easy for you,’ Sam called from the centre of the circle.

‘That’s what it feels like.’ Bonnie balanced carefully, arms held wide, and smiled into the evening sun. ‘He’s loving it.’

After a little while, Sam unclipped the long rein from Tricky’s headstall and let the pony trot freely. He continued his perfect circles. Bonnie began to experiment, first bending backwards until her hands were resting on Tricky’s rump, then kicking up to hold a handstand for a few seconds, then somersaulting onto the ground behind him.

‘Woo hoo!’ Sam ran over to help her friend up. ‘You’re a natural, Bon.’

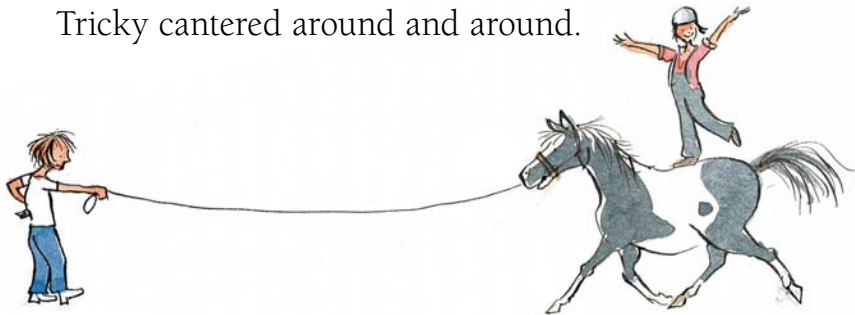




Every afternoon  
after school,  
Bonnie and Sam  
took Tricky down

to Currawong Creek and practised their trick riding. Bonnie was the star now, and she loved it. Usually Sam was the best at riding.

Bonnie quickly learned how to use the pony's rhythm to vault on and off his back while he trotted, and she could catch a beach ball Sam threw to her at the same time. She taught Sam how to swing up too. They developed that into an act where Bonnie climbed onto Sam's shoulders and stood, arms outstretched, as Tricky cantered around and around.



By Friday afternoon they had perfected enough tricks for a ten-minute performance, the maximum time allowed at the Talent Night. They had paid the fifteen-dollar fee and filled in the entry form. They were ready for Saturday night!

Sam sat on a log and watched Bonnie stand on her hands as Tricky trotted past the creek. Evening shadows made stripes across the clearing, flashing light and dark across Tricky's back. Pants ran behind him, yipping in time to his trot.

We're going to win this, Sam thought, imagining herself dressed in the ringmaster costume from the dress-up box, and Bonnie in her tutu. Perhaps Pants could be part of the show too, with a ruffle around her collar.

