

Bonnie + Sam

Racing the Tide



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ALLEN & UNWIN

Holidays!

Now that Sam was back from the city, the holidays could begin. It was a delicious feeling having all of January just for fun, and to make it even better, the girls had horses to ride too.

Sam's father was the local policeman and he always let the girls ride his mare, Drover, when he didn't need her for police work. The girls shared a secret about Drover and loved double-dinking on her, but having a horse each was even better.

Janice and Bob, who ran the newsagency, were going away for a weeks holiday and had asked Bonnie and Sam to take care of their horses. The girls loved Blondie and Tex and had spent the last weeks of school planning their horsey holiday. Of all the horses in Currawong Creek, Blondie and Tex were two of their favourites. Blondie was a beautiful palomino quarter horse, who could sometimes be moody.



Tex was an appaloosa with a pink nose. He had the sweetest nature a horse could have. Nothing shocked Tex.

'Who do you want to ride?' Sam asked, looking at the map of Wild Dog Hills.

'I don't mind.' Bonnie traced Currawong Creek with her finger. 'Let's see how it works out. Where will we go first?'

'I'm sorry to spoil your plans, girls.' Woo looked embarrassed. 'I forgot to tell you, Bonnie. Violet and Woody asked if you'd help them with shearing next week and I said you would. I didn't know you and Sam had plans.'

'How could you, Mum?' Bonnie rolled her eyes. 'We always have plans!'

If she and Sam didn't have Blondie and Tex for the week, Bonnie would have loved the thought of helping out Aunty Vi and Uncle Woody. Their farm, Banksia Ridge, was right on the coast, and the bush and beach were full of surprises.

Bonnie's dad, Chester, had two older sisters: Aunty Birdy, who knew everything about horses, and Aunty Violet, who knew everything about sheep. They both thought Bonnie was the best thing since sliced bread.

'Maybe Sam can go with you. You two would have a fabulous time,' said Woo.

'I've promised Janice and Bob, though,' said Bonnie. 'Can't we go and help them *after* we look after Blondie and Tex? That way we can do both things.'

'No.' Woo shook her head. 'They have to shear next week. The shearing team is booked in. They go to the same farms at the same time every year.'

'Why do they have to do it now?' Bon was like a dog with a bone when she argued. 'Why organise it for the middle of the holidays?'

'It actually makes sense, Bonnie. The lambs have all been sold, so they don't have to put them through the yards. And it's getting hot. It's the perfect time for the ewes to have their woolly coats removed. There's nothing more to say. I promised them you'd help and that's what you're going to do.'



Making plans

‘We’ve got two days to ride before you have to go.’ Sam was trying to cheer Bonnie up as they waited for Janice at the newsagency. Bonnie was flipping through a copy of *Horse Deals*. She loved looking at all the beautiful horses for sale.

‘Look at this pinto that’s been stolen.’ Bonnie opened the page for Sam to see. ‘He looks like a black and white version of Bella.’

‘Hi girls!’ Janice came from the back of the shop with a stack of newspapers. ‘How are my horse-sitters this morning?’ Janice was dressed like a cowgirl, as usual, with sequined horse shoes on her shirt and a big silver belt-buckle.

‘It’s not good, Janice. Bon has to go and help her aunty and uncle with the shearing the day after tomorrow. I’ll still be able to look after Blondie and Tex, but we were really looking forward to riding up in the mountains together.’

‘Where’s their farm?’ Janice turned to get another pile of papers. She was always on the move. If you wanted to talk to her you had to go with her.

‘Out on the coast,’ Bonnie called after her. ‘Out at Whale Bay.’

Bonnie and Sam pushed past the photocopier and the card rack to the kitchen at the back of the shop.



‘Whale Bay is only about thirty kilometres away,’ Janice said over a cup of tea. ‘You could ride out.’ Bonnie and Sam stared in stunned silence at Janice’s good idea.

‘You should both go and help with shearing and take Blondie and Tex with you. They’d love it, though Tex doesn’t like getting his feet wet. He hates water.’ She turned to go. ‘Maybe you can persuade him to go for a swim.’

The farrier came the next day to put new shoes on Blondie and Tex for the ride out to Banksia Ridge. The girls loved Clint and he never minded their questions. ‘See how I’m bending the tip of the nail a little bit?’ Half under Tex, Clint held up the hammer and nail so the girls could see. ‘A little bend like this makes sure the nail angles out, not in, where it would hurt. The nails are bevelled anyway, but I like to do an extra bit, just to be sure.’

The paddock behind Janice and Bob’s news-agency was like a suntrap. Blondie dozed as she waited for her turn and Tex was half asleep too.



Clint’s little dog, Cactus, and Sam’s dog, Smartie Pants, hung around Clint as closely as the girls. The dogs made happy growling sounds as they chewed on hoof clippings.

Clint gently put Tex’s hoof down and stood up and stretched his back. ‘Whale Bay, hey?’ He took his tools across to Blondie and reached down for her hoof. ‘They reckon there’s some serious abalone poaching going on out there.’