

# Bonnie & Sam

The Shadow Brumby

Chapter 3: Drover



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# Drover

Sam sat on the back porch and watched her dad's new horse, Drover, pacing up and down the fence.

'Why's she so unhappy, Pants?'

The little dog whined softly, as if to say,  
*She's unhappy because she hates being locked up.*

Drover's head was turned towards the hills.  
You could tell she wanted to be there.

Sam called out, 'Drover! Dro-ver!' but the silver-grey mare didn't even look her way.

Pants rubbed against Sam's leg and made her special snuffly noises that meant, *Look at me! I want to be here.*

Sam scratched her wiry coat. 'I know you're happy. But Drover just wants to run away.'



The reason Drover hated being locked in a small paddock was that she had spent all her life on the open road. She was a drover's horse. Sam's dad had a mate called Smithy who caught Drover as a two-year-old brumby and broke her in. She grew up to be quick, clever and calm. Smithy loved her. But one night he camped near a railway line and Drover was nearly hit by a train. She wasn't hurt, but, after that night, every time she heard or saw a train, she bolted.

'She runs like the devil's after her,' Smithy explained when he brought Drover to Currawong Creek. 'I can't use her any more because I often work near a train line.'

Sam's heart did a little somersault. Maybe he was going to give the horse to her!

'But you could use her, Bill. There's no train line here. She'd be perfect for your police work. And her hard little hooves never need shoes.'

Sam's face dropped and Smithy guessed what she had been hoping.

'I'm sorry, Sam. I know you'd love your own horse, but this one's not for you. She's definitely not a kid's horse.'





Drover turned out to be an excellent police horse. Bill could catch her any time, day or night, and she'd do whatever he asked.

It didn't bother Bill that she was unfriendly and restless in her paddock. He just wanted a horse that did the job, and Drover did.

Together, Bill and Drover herded Wally Webster's sheep back into their paddock when they wandered through the town in the middle of the night. They did it so quietly that Mrs Green never knew what had eaten her roses and gladioli.

When Tom Morgan's bad-tempered bull went rampaging through town, Bill and Drover stopped him. Bill cracked his whip and Drover ducked away from the bull's fearsome horns. Together they forced the brute back to his yard.

And when Mrs Kowalski's kitten got stuck up a tree, Drover stood steady while Bill fetched her down.

'She's the best horse I've ever owned,' Bill said to Sam. 'I've had her for three weeks now and she hasn't put a foot wrong.'



But Drover wasn't a great horse for Bonnie and Sam.

One Saturday afternoon when Bill was away, they decided to ride her. The girls were used to all the Currawong Creek horses liking them. Not Drover. When she bucked Sam off, they thought Sam's jump-up had frightened her. But when Bonnie slid gently on from a stump, the same thing happened. A swish of mane, a stamp of hooves, and Bonnie was on the ground. The girls both tried until they were sore and sick of it.

'And look.' Bonnie went to hug Drover, but the mare pulled away. 'She doesn't even like us touching her.'

Sam pulled off her helmet and rubbed a grass stain on it. 'Smithy said she wasn't a kid's horse. Maybe she's only been ridden by a grown-up, and we seem a bit weird.'



'Maybe a kid did something mean and gave her that moon-shaped scar under her mane.'

Bonnie rolled up her trouser leg to inspect her own scar. 'Oh well, I guess it's like people. Not everyone wants to be your friend.'

