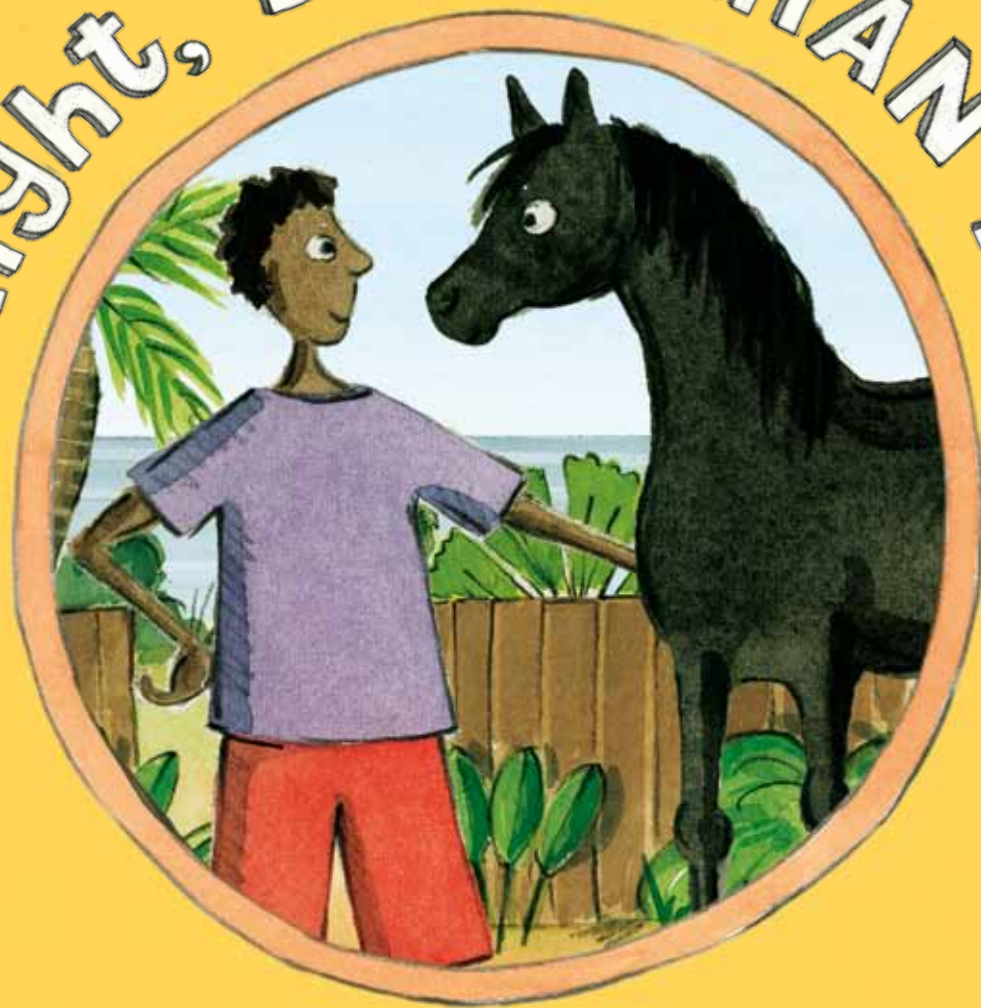


Midnight, BWGCOLMAN Pride



BOOK 4

Illustrated by Tamsin Ainslie

MIDNIGHT, BWGCOLMAN PRIDE

Story inspired by Rae-Jon Bunting



Rae-Jon has spent most of her life as a farmer, livestock dealer, horse breeder and trainer. Now retired, she works harder than ever as a voluntary educator and animal welfare crusader in Indigenous communities. She regularly visits the Palm Island Aboriginal community where she teaches children how to look after their animals and assists the community generally in animal welfare and management. Rae-Jon's original story was the inspiration for this book.

Foreword by Matt (Matty) Bowen
North Queensland Cowboys and Australian rugby league player



G'day kids.

I really liked reading about a kid growing up in an Aboriginal community, as I did, and having horses and all sorts of other animals around. When I was growing up I loved horse riding and having dogs to play with, just like some of the kids in this book.

It's good that the book tells you about the rules of how to look after your animals. Did you know that there are simple rules to follow when you ride a horse or if you own a dog?

As you read this book, you will meet an old fella, Elder Stan, and he will explain some of these rules. All they really mean is—if you ride a horse or if you have an animal, then you have to look after it properly.

It's a bit like me playing football. It wouldn't be a game if there were no rules for me and the North Queensland Cowboys to follow and guide us. So, I want you to follow the rules and look after your horses, dogs and other animals.

I hope you enjoy this book as much as I did.




Elder Stan explains some NEW WORDS

When you say the word **BWGCOLMAN** it sounds like **BWIKALMAN** or **BOOKALMAN**.


What does it mean?

When people were brought to Palm Island many years ago they came from more than 40 different tribes, from all parts of Queensland. Because of this the 'old people' created the word **Bwgcolman**. It means 'many tribes'.

When you see my hat  above a word turn to pages 34 to 36 where I will explain what the word means.




Midnight, BWGCOLMAN PRIDE

The horse stood in his yard chewing on lucerne ^{} **hay**, seen only as a shadow cast from the light of the camp fire.

Elder Stan and Bryce talked long into the night. Bryce was busy by day. He worked his horse very early; washed, fed and watered him; and then had a shower before starting his rounds.

There wasn't much work on the tiny island but he didn't want to leave if he could help it. He kept up all of his jobs for the relatives, and still put money into his jar every week.

He didn't get to save as much as before. After he paid for horse feed, ^{} **wormer** and Midnight's vet bills there wasn't much left. That was okay, he thought. Midnight was his mate. A brother spirit.



Stan and Bryce spoke of Midnight's future, his training and what a horse like Midnight might be taught to do. It was a big decision for Bryce.



'You could teach him anything,' Elder Stan explained to Bryce.




Caring for a horse takes a lot of
Time, Work and Money.



‘You could  **break him to harness**, and get a  **sulky** to take your Mum shopping and to church on Sundays—just like when I was young,’ he continued.

‘You could get a job  **mustering** and go to the mainland for work. Wouldn’t take much to teach him,’ Stan explained. ‘You might like to put him in shows and ride him, or  **show him at halter.**’

‘You could even take him into  **endurance races** and win big money if you and he are good enough,’ Stan suggested. ‘Endurance would suit you both well.’

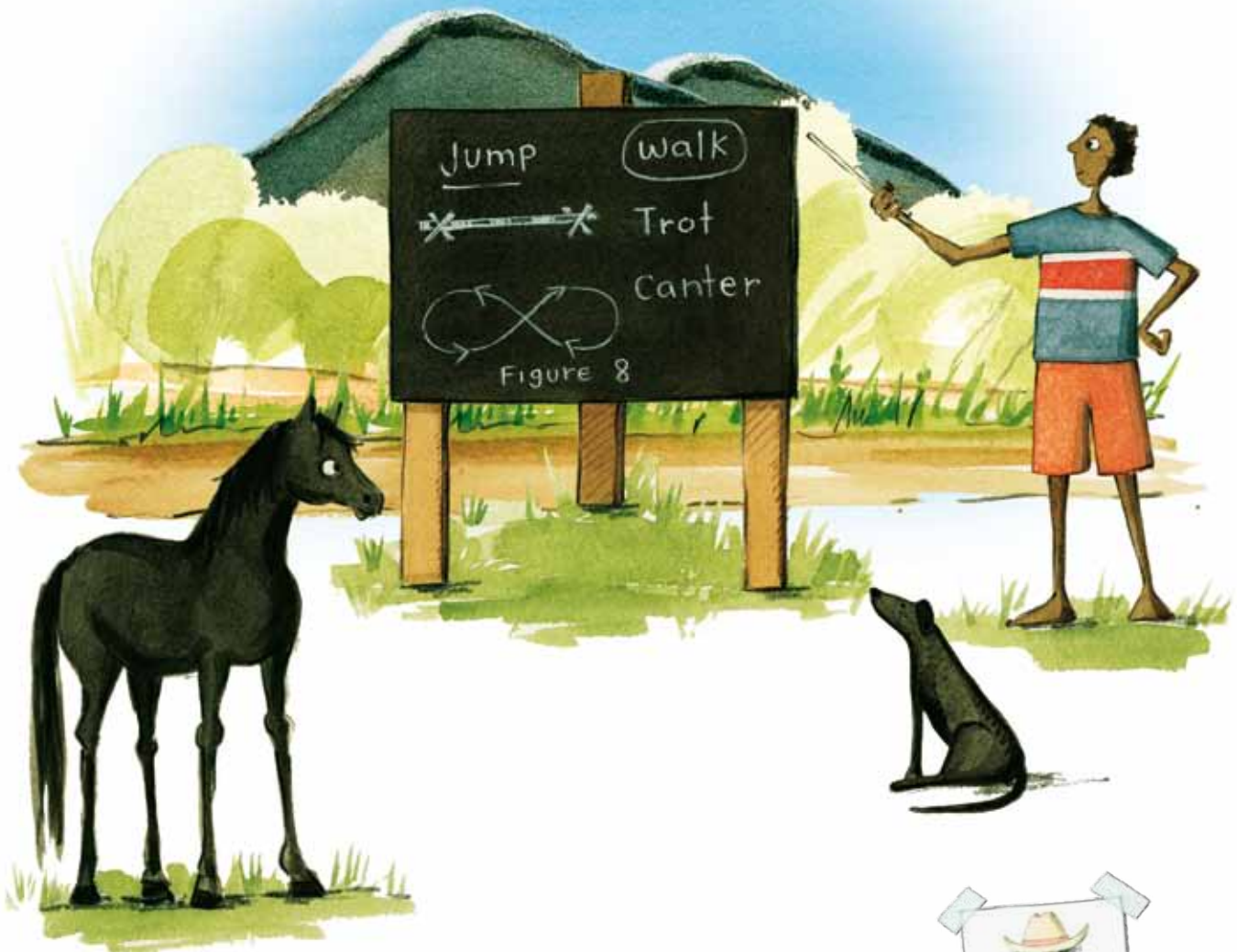
‘I’ll think about that,’ said Bryce. ‘He does jump well already.’

Stan explained that you needed more than that to be good at endurance races.

‘You really have to teach them to jump properly—when you want him to and how you want him to. It’s different from tearing around. It’s not as easy as it sounds and you have to learn more about riding. There are rules and all sorts of



stuff to learn. You have already learned so much and you look after your horse really well. But Bryce,' Stan said, 'it's just the beginning.'



You can TRAIN a good horse to do lots of things.



‘What have you done about Midnight’s mother?’ Elder Stan continued. ‘You own her too don’t you?’

‘Sure I do,’ answered Bryce, bewildered at the question.

‘Well, where is she? What has happened to her?’

‘I dunno,’ said Bryce. ‘In the valley I suppose.’

‘You’re doing the right thing with this horse here. But, boy, you’re not behaving like a horse lover. You should be looking after the mare too if she’s yours. If you don’t want her then get rid of her. Sell her or even give her away.’

‘I want her,’ said Bryce.

‘It’s been over two years since you last saw her,’ scolded Stan.

‘Okay. We will go out and check her in the morning.’

‘*We?*’ growled the elder. ‘Not me boy. She’s your responsibility. I will help all I can, but you have to do the work.’



Responsibility means looking
after ALL of your animals.



The wind blew in from the ocean and it carried a chill. Morning was just breaking when Bryce started out to find his mare.

Bryce looked for hours but, for all of his searching, he couldn't find the mare, or her last foal.

Bryce wanted to go home, but he knew Elder Stan would growl at him. He would have to search further, until he found her.

Bryce searched all that day. Giving up when it got dark, he finally headed for home.

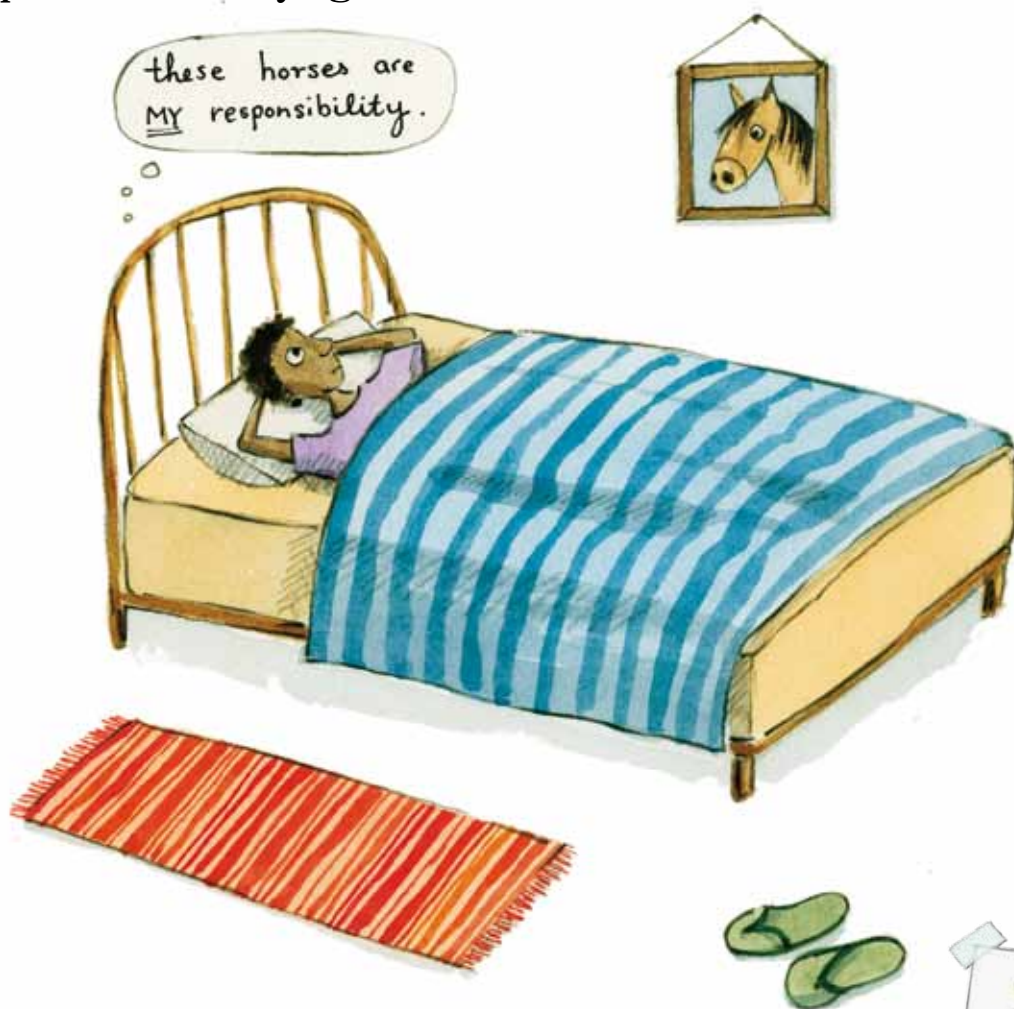
Stan was seated on the front step when Bryce returned. 'How did you go boy?' called the elder.

'Couldn't find her,' said Bryce. 'It got late so I gave up.'

Stan believed that the boy had really learned something. His disappointment showed.

Stan and Bryce barely spoke. As the night wore on, Bryce's shame grew.

Stan made him feel better by saying, 'I'm sure she will turn up tomorrow. Try again then.'



Responsibility means looking after your animals ALL the time.



The next day Bryce set out once again. This time he was not going to fail. No more shame for him.

He travelled fast, straight to the valley. The sun was burning the top of his head. He knew that the horses would all be in the shade now, hiding from the heat of the sun.

‘I’m going to think like a horse,’ Bryce told himself.

The sun sends people and horses loopy, he thought, and he curled up under a shady tree, in full view of the water hole. He slept through the heat and into the afternoon.

The sound of hoof beats woke him and there, to his amazement, were twenty or more horses that had come in to drink. But he couldn’t see his mare in the herd, and felt sad.



Then came a noise behind him. He felt hot breath on his neck. Bryce turned and there she was, looking for the apple and carrot that he used to bring her. She had not forgotten.

That's what Elder Stan taught him, he remembered—horses have great memories. They remember the good things you teach them but they also remember the bad.

Bryce got to his feet slowly so he didn't frighten her. He offered his hand, stroking her lightly on the forehead, before placing the rope he had brought around her neck.

Now he really could have kicked himself for forgetting her apples.



Like humans, horses need Shelter
from the hot Sun and Plenty
to DRINK.



Bryce looked around for her baby. He couldn't see a little foal—only a brown colt that was hanging back and looking at him.

He moved the mare forward and the colt took a step towards them. Bryce could see the colt was scared. It had to be her latest foal. But this was no little one.

Bryce, the mare and this muddy little colt set off for the lowland and home. The whole community watched as the horses came into view. By the time Bryce reached home, it seemed everyone knew that he had found the mare and her foal.

Elder Stan was waiting. He didn't look as happy as Bryce thought he would.

'Now, how are you going to feed this lot?' he asked. Stan didn't wait for an answer. He just shook his head and walked off.



Bryce put the horse in Midnight's yard, filled the water **trough**, and made feeds for all three. Bryce suddenly realised what Stan had meant. He was using Midnight's feed three times as fast. It would cost him a fortune. Oh well. He would just have to work harder.



THREE horses need A LOT
of feed and water.



Music was playing in the community, and the sounds of people having fun filled Bryce's ears. But through the noise came another sound—the sound of horses fighting.

Bryce rushed out to the horse yard to find Midnight biting at the colt. The poor colt had nowhere to hide in the little yard. He was trapped. Bryce took a lead rope and tied Midnight to the tree. He couldn't catch the colt because he was untrained. He would just have to leave the colt and the mare in the yard until morning, and leave his precious Midnight tied to the tree.

Early next morning, Bryce began to build-in the stable he had built for Midnight. He closed in the walls so that Midnight could look out but not get out. Inside he put a big water bucket and food bin.

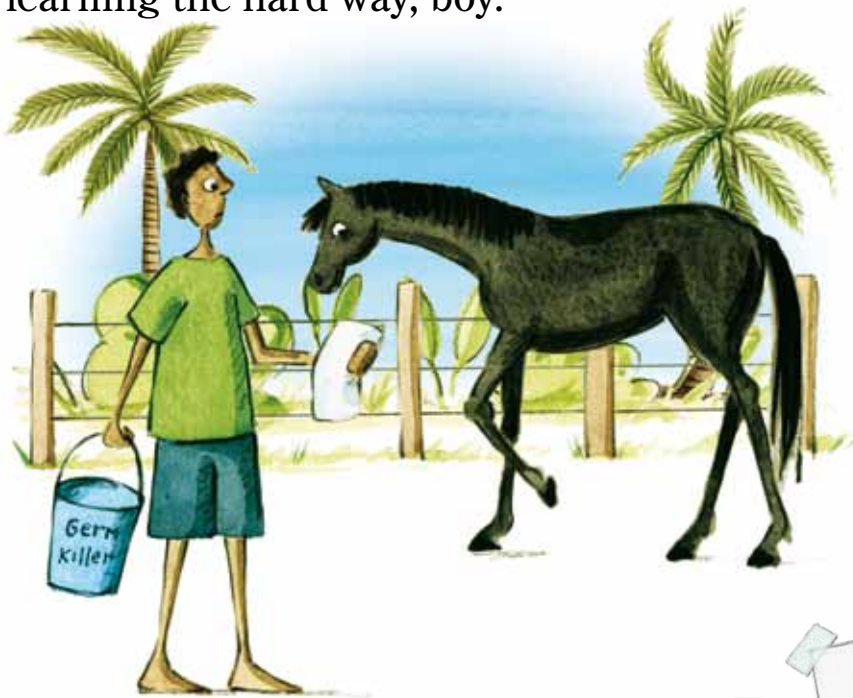
Now that's done, thought Bryce, Midnight can have the stable and the other two can have the yard.

He took Midnight from the tree and led him to his stable. Bryce's heart sank. Midnight was limping.

Midnight had a big cut inside his leg. Bryce hadn't seen it earlier. He bathed it with warm, salty water and put some ointment on it.

As Bryce shut the door behind Midnight, he felt bad. It had taken him all day to make Midnight safe and fix his leg after an accident that should not have happened.

He should have made a separate yard for the mare and foal before he brought them home. All Elder Stan said was, 'You're learning the hard way, boy.'



When our animals are hurt it is our job to make sure they get better.



Bryce got out of bed early the next day, cleaned Midnight's leg and put on some more ointment. He couldn't ride Midnight today. The gelding was still lame.

He gave the mare and colt fresh water and food. Midnight's food was running out fast now. He would have to get more from the mainland.


He stood and looked at the mare. She was fat and in good condition. The foal's condition was okay too, but not as good as his Mum's.

'Hang on a minute,' Bryce muttered. He took another look at the mare. 'She is going to have another foal!' he exclaimed.

Well, there goes a day's work, he thought. He would lose a bit of money but he had to build another yard just for the mare, and it had to be done today.

Bryce was very tired that night and pretty angry with himself. For the first time, he realised that he didn't have

enough money and time to look after all four horses properly. This time he would think it through.

... The cost of feed, gelding, ^{} **registration**, vets and medicine, and the time to build yards, train and care for four horses ... 'NO NO NO!' said Bryce out loud. 'I just can't do it.'

I could sell them, Bryce's thoughts continued. Yes. I will put a notice in the store window.

Bryce had many replies to his ad. Some wanted the horses for nothing. Some wanted Bryce to train the colt just like Midnight. Some even wanted Bryce to build a yard for them.



Bryce was so sad.



Having a Number of horses is
a big RESPONSIBILITY.



Weeks had passed. Midnight's leg had healed and he could be ridden again. Bryce had even started to break in the colt and had put aside some money so the vet could geld him too.

Then the mare had a beautiful little  **filly**. She was black, with a big white  **blaze** down her face and four even, white stockings on her legs right up to the knee. She looked deadly.

Bryce was having a hard time feeding all of them, but he was not going to give away his horses to be neglected and unloved again. His money jar was almost empty and he did not have the time to do all the jobs he once did.

Bryce collected his feed from the barge. A newsletter from the mainland was included. A big full-page colour ad caught his eye. It announced a 100 kilometre endurance ride with a prize of \$2000 to the winner.

He went straight to Elder Stan. 'Can I do it?' asked Bryce. 'Is Midnight good enough?'

‘Well, yes,’ said the elder. ‘But you have to get the horse there, and pay an entry fee ... and they only accept horses that are in top condition.’

It was all a bit scary for Bryce. He had never been off his island before. Not with a horse anyway.

Stan said he would find out the details and see him the next day.



Horses are allowed to RACE only if they are in very good Health.



At nine o'clock, Elder Stan pulled up in front of Bryce's house, tooted the horn and called for him to get in.

'Where are we going?' Bryce asked.

'The councillors want to talk to you, Bryce,' he answered.

Now Bryce was really scared.

They were shown to a big, long table with people seated all around it.

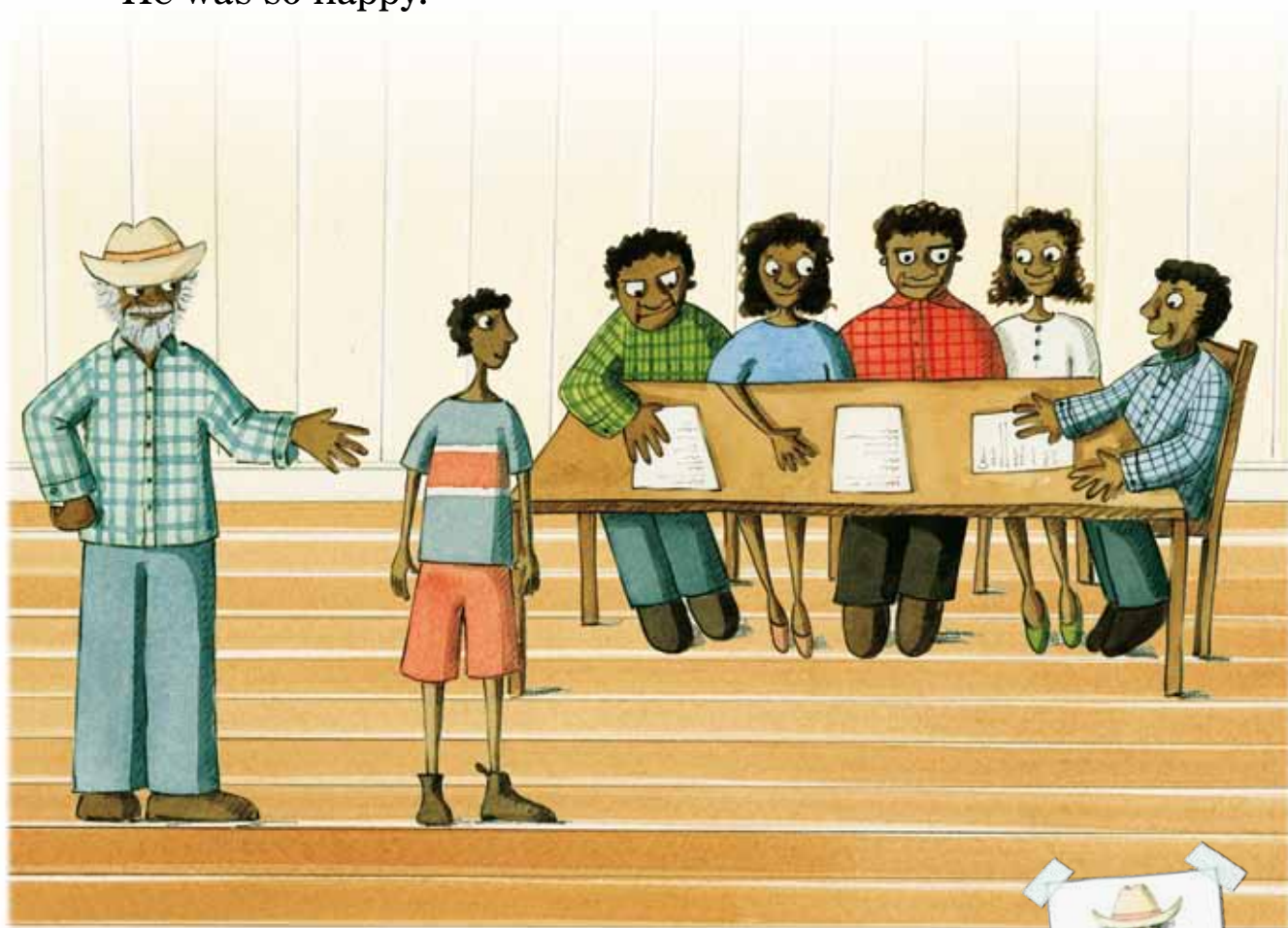
'We have heard about what you have done with your horse,' said the big man at the end of the table. 'Do you think your horse is good enough to win this competition?' the big man asked.

'Yes, I do,' said Bryce, hoping he was right.

'Well,' said the big man. 'We, the council, have decided to sponsor you and your horse but our funds are limited. We will pay for the cost of a truck to get him there, and

for the barge fees. We will pay your entry fee but not your accommodation. You will have to sleep with your horse. Is that okay?’

‘Yes,’ said Bryce, hardly able to disguise his excitement. He was so happy.



The community Respects people who
look after their horses properly.

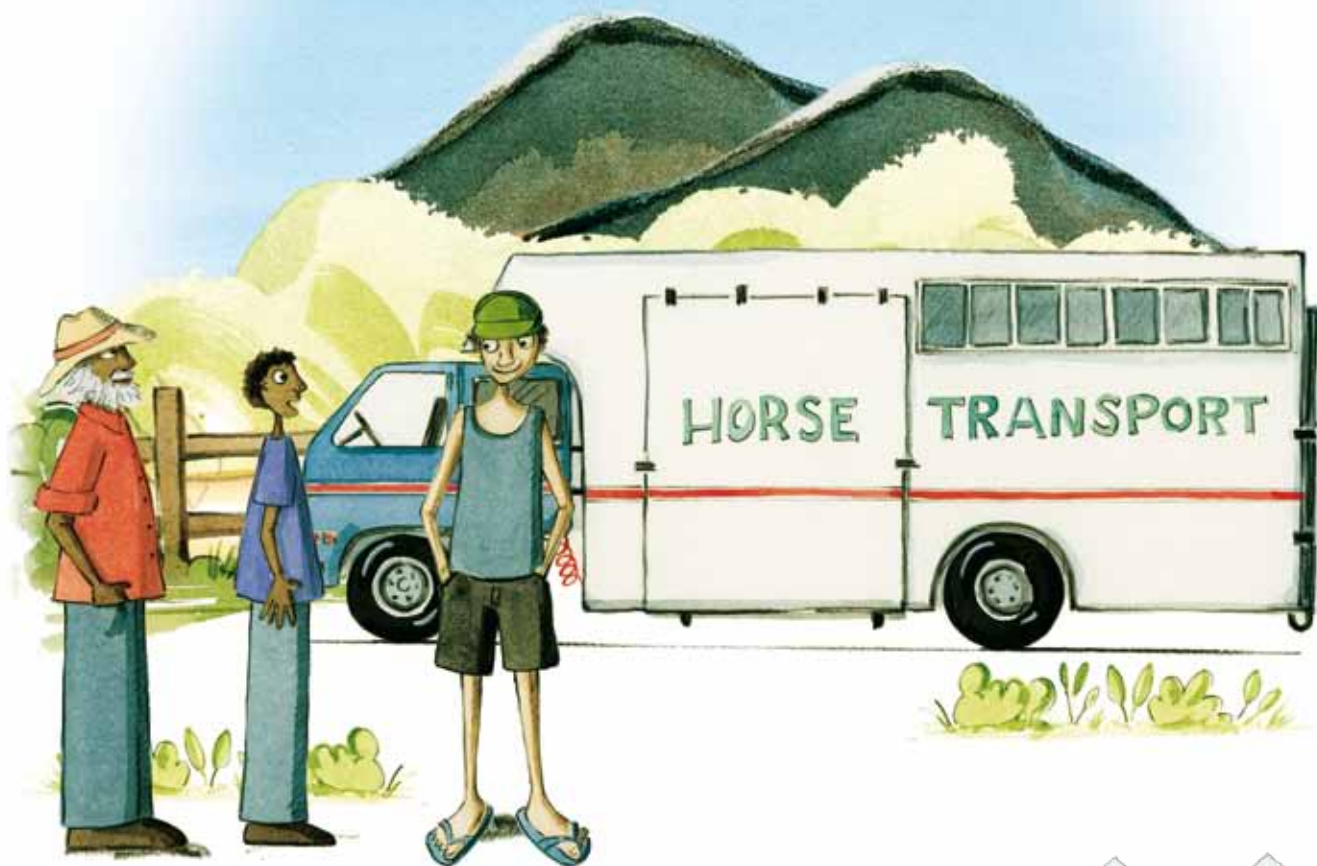


Bryce felt like he'd be waiting forever for the day of the race to come around, but it finally came. A big truck arrived at the barge to collect Bryce, Elder Stan and Midnight.

'Horse transport' was painted in large letters on each side of the truck. As they approached, the back of the large vehicle dropped down to the ground, showing all the partitions inside. One for each horse.

To his amazement, it opened out at each side, too. Bryce had never seen anything like it. In reply to Bryce's keen questions, the truck driver told him that the doors open at the sides because some horses load differently. He said he carried very valuable horses that had to be kept safe.

Wow! Bryce, Midnight and Stan were travelling first class.



Sometimes you are Rewarded for
the hard work you do.



Eventually they arrived at the starting point for the ride. Bryce had never seen so many people. Music was playing. There were people with flags and there were stalls selling everything from hats to hamburgers.

The people wore clothes that looked really strange to Bryce. There were big trucks and horses everywhere. Beautiful horses.

Some looked dressed to go to church or town. They all brushed their horses and cleaned their saddles in readiness. Bryce couldn't see why they were bothering—everything looked great already.

But, after a while, he just did what they did. As he stood brushing Midnight, a man came up and asked where he was from.

‘Where did you get your horse?’ the man continued after Bryce replied. ‘What is his **breeding**?’ So many questions from someone he didn't even know.

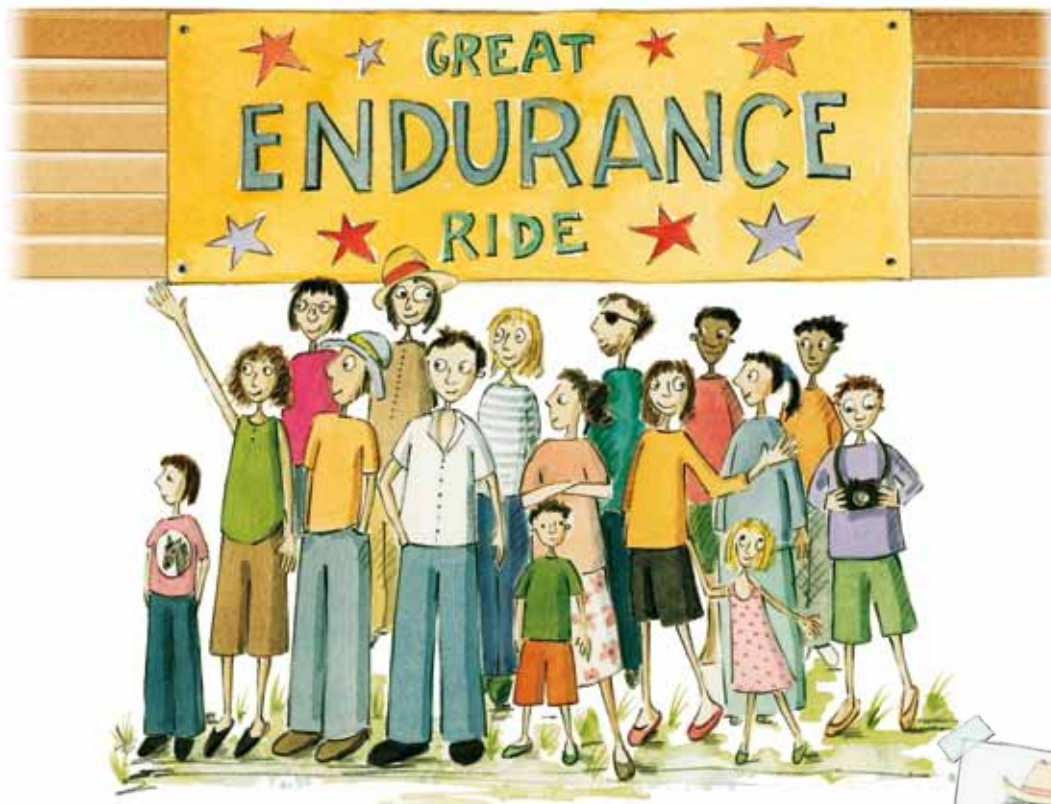


‘Why?’ asked Bryce shyly, still a little scared.

‘I like the look of him,’ said the man. ‘He is a fine horse.

How do you think he will go in the trial?’ he asked Bryce.

‘Good, I think,’ said Bryce. ‘No horse on the island can go as long or as fast as Midnight,’ boasted Bryce.



A beautiful horse is something
to take **PRIDE** in.



‘How much you got on him?’ was the man’s next question.

‘What?’ replied Bryce, not understanding.

‘How much do you want to sell him for?’ said the man.

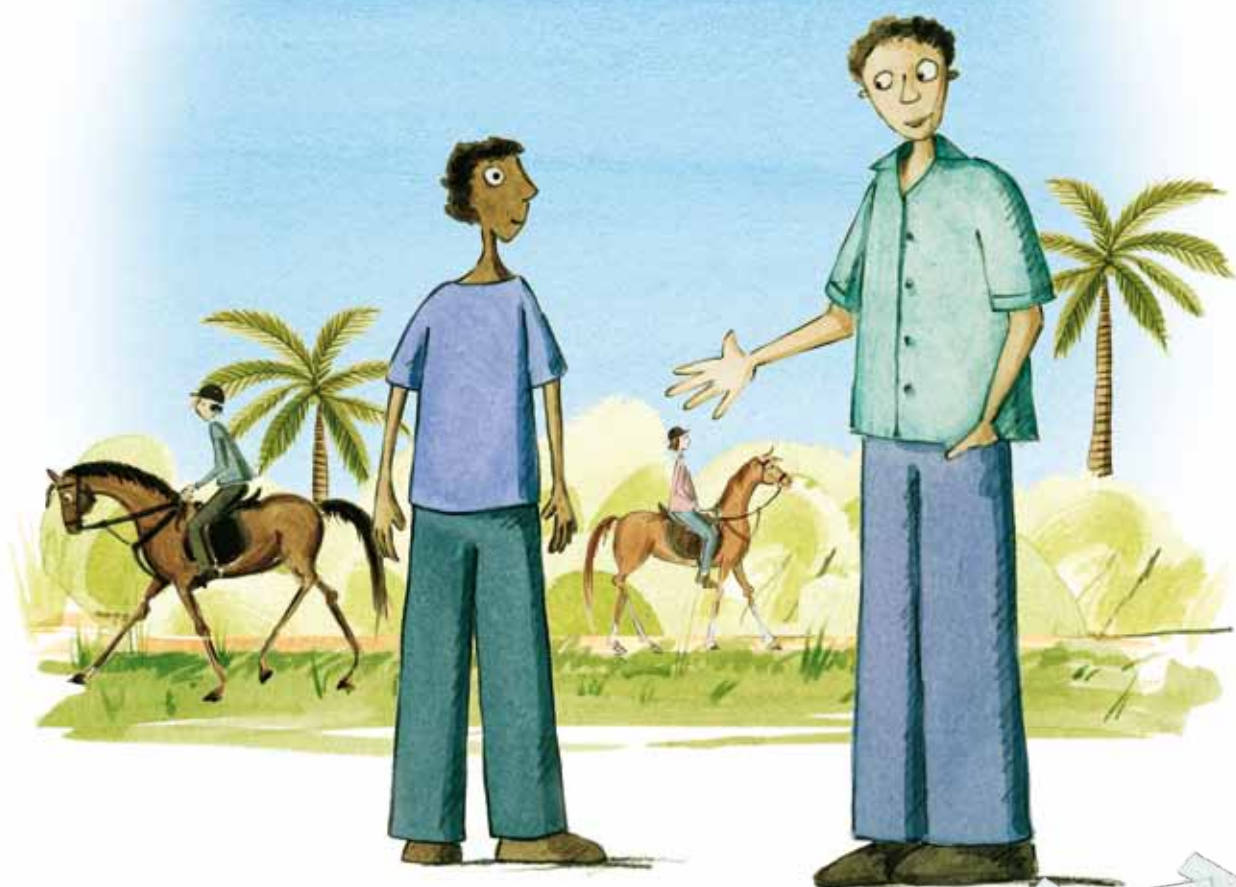
‘Oh! He’s not for sale. He is my brother spirit. My best friend.’

‘That’s a shame,’ the man said. ‘I would have given you good money for him.’

‘How much is he worth?’ asked Bryce.

Bryce’s curiosity turned to shock when the man answered, ‘Thousands of dollars, especially if he won the race.’

Bryce dropped his brush and ran off to find Elder Stan. He told the elder all that had been said to him.



A GOOD HORSE can be worth
THOUSANDS of dollars if it
is well looked after.



An official told them they were late for the vet check. Oh dear! This was all new to Bryce.

‘All horses have to be checked by the vet before the start of the ride,’ the official explained, and so Bryce set off with Midnight to the vet shed.

Midnight passed with flying colours. The vet said he was in excellent condition.

Turning to leave the vet shed, Midnight, Elder Stan and Bryce ran straight into the man who was asking about Midnight earlier. The man introduced himself as Mark Smith, manager of Woonoona Pastoral Company.

He was still interested in Midnight. Bryce repeated that he was not for sale.






When we Love our horses we
want the BEST for them.



‘What about his brother, boy? You’re breaking him in now. He’s very like Midnight,’ Elder Stan reminded Bryce with as much enthusiasm as Bryce was ever likely to see from him.

‘How much?’ Mr Smith asked Stan.

‘I dunno,’ replied the elder. ‘Bryce has been offered a fair bit of money on the island, but it would be good to get his  **blood lines** known ... and get Bryce known too for that matter.’

‘Well, how much?’ Mr Smith asked again.

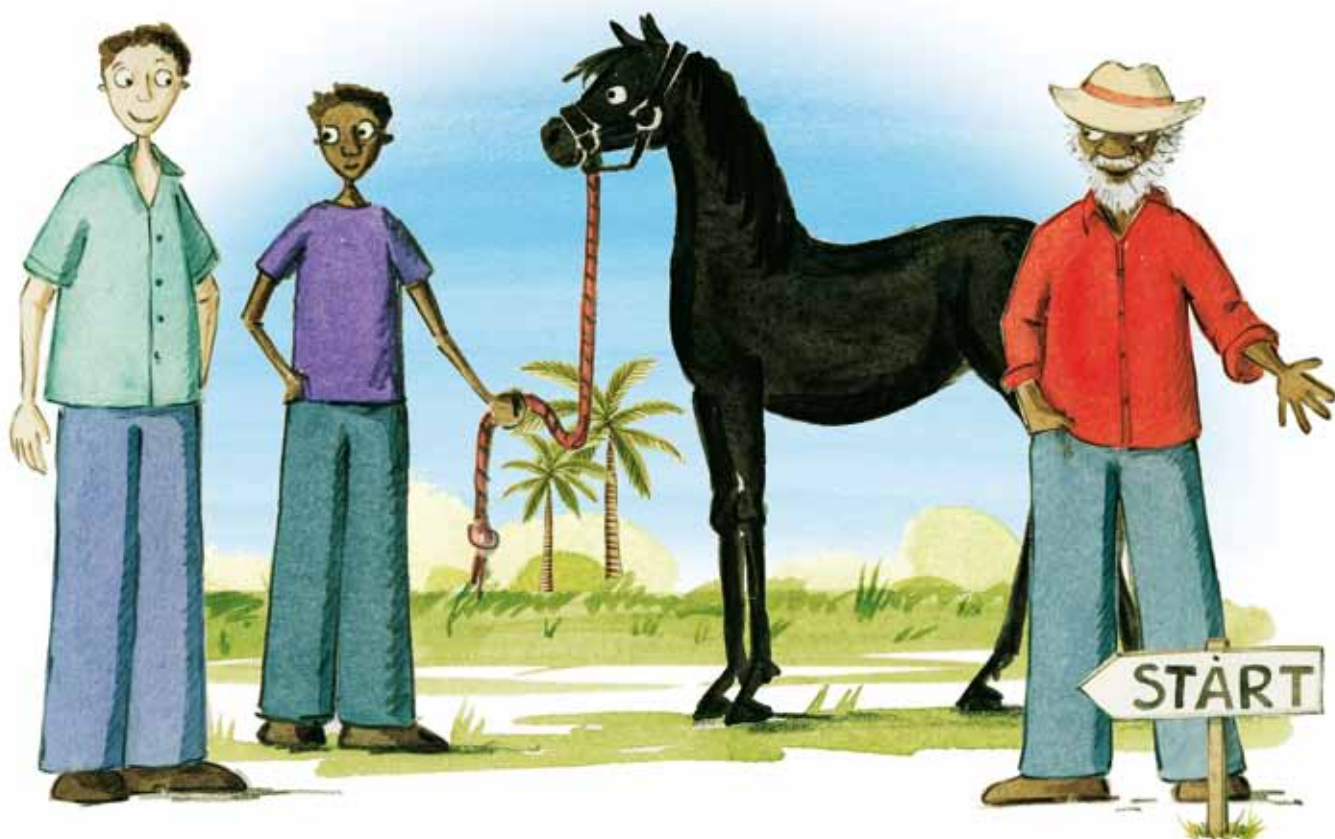
‘I could convince the boy to let him go for, say, five thousand,’ winked Stan. ‘Leave it with me’.

Stan took Bryce by the hand and they walked away. ‘Why did you say that?’ asked Bryce.

‘Can’t be too eager, boy,’ he said. ‘If you sell the colt for that sort of money your money worries for the next year are

over, and the colt will go to a good home. How many ways can you win?’

‘One more,’ said Bryce. ‘I’m going to win this race. I always knew Midnight would be famous.’



It is very SPECIAL to have
a horse in your life.

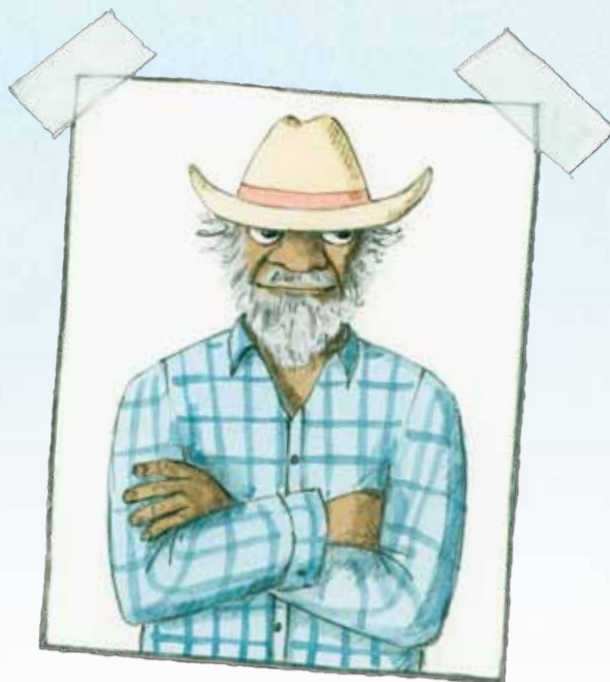
ELDER STAN'S NEW WORDS

Word	Meaning	Page
Hay	Made by drying good grass or other plants. The dried hay is then picked up by machines and packed tightly into bales that are tied up with string. Hay is a good, rich food that is very useful for horses that are kept in yards.	4
Wormer	A medicine that gets rid of nasty worms inside a horse's stomach. A horse should be wormed regularly.	4
Break to harness	This is when we teach a horse to pull a cart. She has to learn because it's not natural for her to do this.	6
Sulky	A horse-drawn carriage with two wheels. Grandma may have gone to church in one many years ago.	6
Mustering	Bringing in cattle (or sheep, or other animals) from small groups into one big group so they can be sold or treated for diseases.	6



ELDER STAN'S NEW WORDS

Word	Meaning	Page
Show at halter	Some horses are led into the show ring instead of being ridden. They wear deadly halters with silver or gold decorations, or shiny stones that are like diamonds and rubies. Others have ribbons and bows.	6
Endurance race	A long race over several days. Horses have to be ridden carefully so they don't get tired or lame.	6
Trough	A long container that holds water for horses to drink. It must be big enough and hold at least 60 litres (that's six bucketfuls), for each horse. That's a lot of water.	15

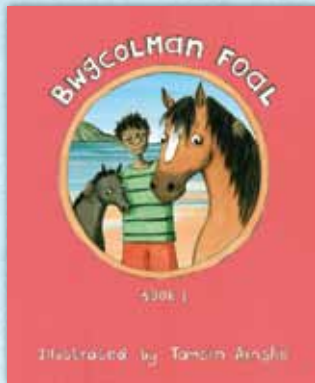


ELDER STAN'S NEW WORDS

Word	Meaning	Page
Registration	The animal's name and its owner's name are written down (recorded in a register by the Council). The register might be in a book or, these days, it might be on a computer. Horses are registered sometimes because they are a particular breed or because they belong somewhere special.	19
Filly	A female horse under two years. A filly should not be ridden as it will damage her bones and joints.	20
Blaze	A wide white mark down most of a horse's face.	20
Breeding	This is a word used about a horse's parents and grandparents. For example, if they were all good horses you could say your horse had 'good breeding'.	26
Blood lines	Like 'breeding', this means 'about a horse's family'. If your horse's father was a fast horse and the father's father was fast, you might say that he came from a 'blood line' of fast horses.	32

BOOK SERIES

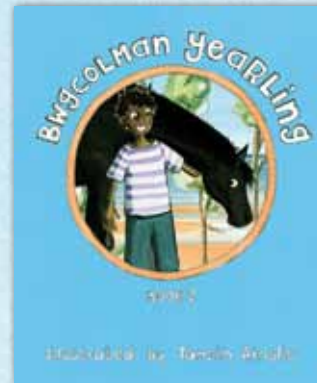
BOOK 1



Bwgcolman Foal

The story of a boy and his horse

BOOK 2



Bwgcolman Yearling

Helping a horse to grow up

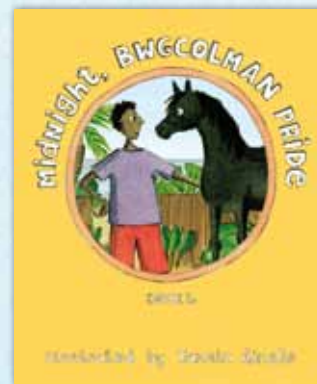
BOOK 3



Bwgcolman Gelding

A grown-up horse to look after

BOOK 4



Midnight, Bwgcolman Pride

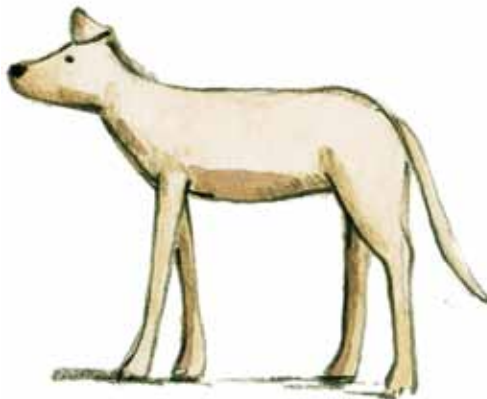
Lots of horse work to be done

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