

# BWGCOLMAN Yearling



BOOK 2

Illustrated by Tamsin Ainslie



# The BWGCOLMAN Yearling

*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.

# BWGCOLMAN Yearling




## 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 **Bwgcorman**. It means 'many tribes'.

When you see my hat  above a word turn to pages 40 to 45 where I will explain what the word means.



I also explain on pages 48 and 49 how easy it is to find a good vet.

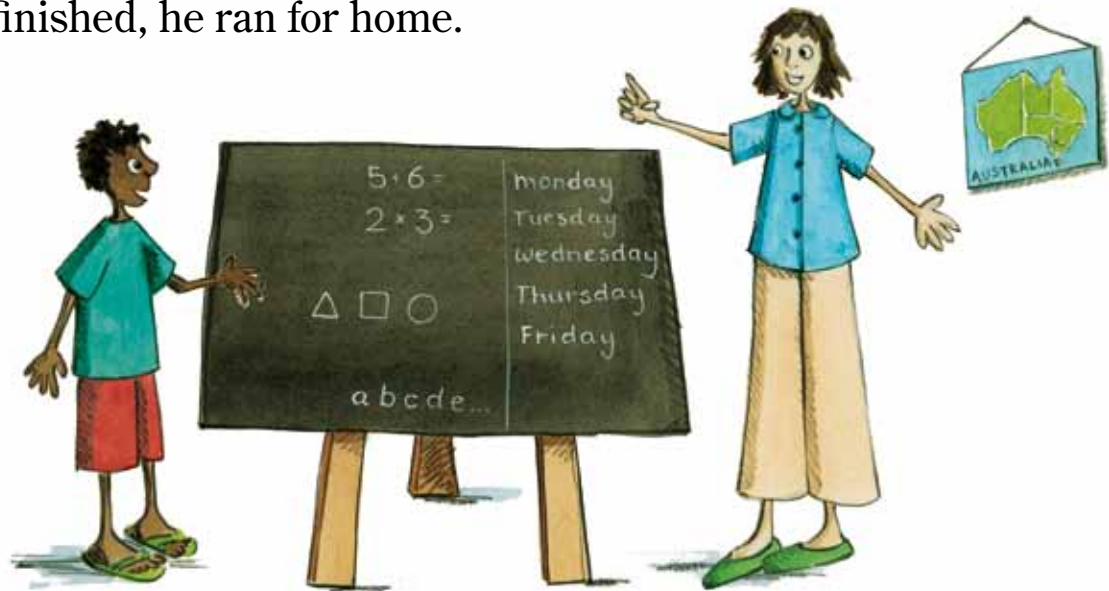
# BWGCOLMAN Yearling

Many months had passed since the birth of the foal and most of the kids had forgotten him.

Not Bryce, though.

Bryce hadn't been around much. He didn't go riding with his friends anymore, and was never seen at his favourite fishing spot on the wharf.

Bryce went to school every day and, as soon as school was finished, he ran for home.



‘Is there anything I can do for you Mum?’ Always the same question.

‘What can I do to make pocket money?’ Bryce would ask.

Well this was quite a turn-up, Bryce’s Mum and Dad thought at first. Now they just wondered what he was doing with all that pocket money.



Looking after a horse takes a lot of TIME and MONEY.



He didn't spend it. Into the jar and into his drawer it went, and there it stayed.

On Friday nights, Bryce went to bed straight after dinner, and was gone by the time the family woke on Saturday morning.





It was still dark outside when Bryce fumbled around in the kitchen this Saturday morning. He made a sandwich, grabbed a handful of biscuits and shoved them into a paper bag. He went to the fridge, took six apples and three carrots, and shoved the whole lot into his backpack.

He had forgotten one thing. Back to his bedroom he went and from under his bed pulled out a small bag, which he also threw into his backpack.

He left the house quietly so that he didn't wake anyone. Every so often, Bryce looked over his shoulder to see if anyone was following him. No one ever had, but he was not chancing it.



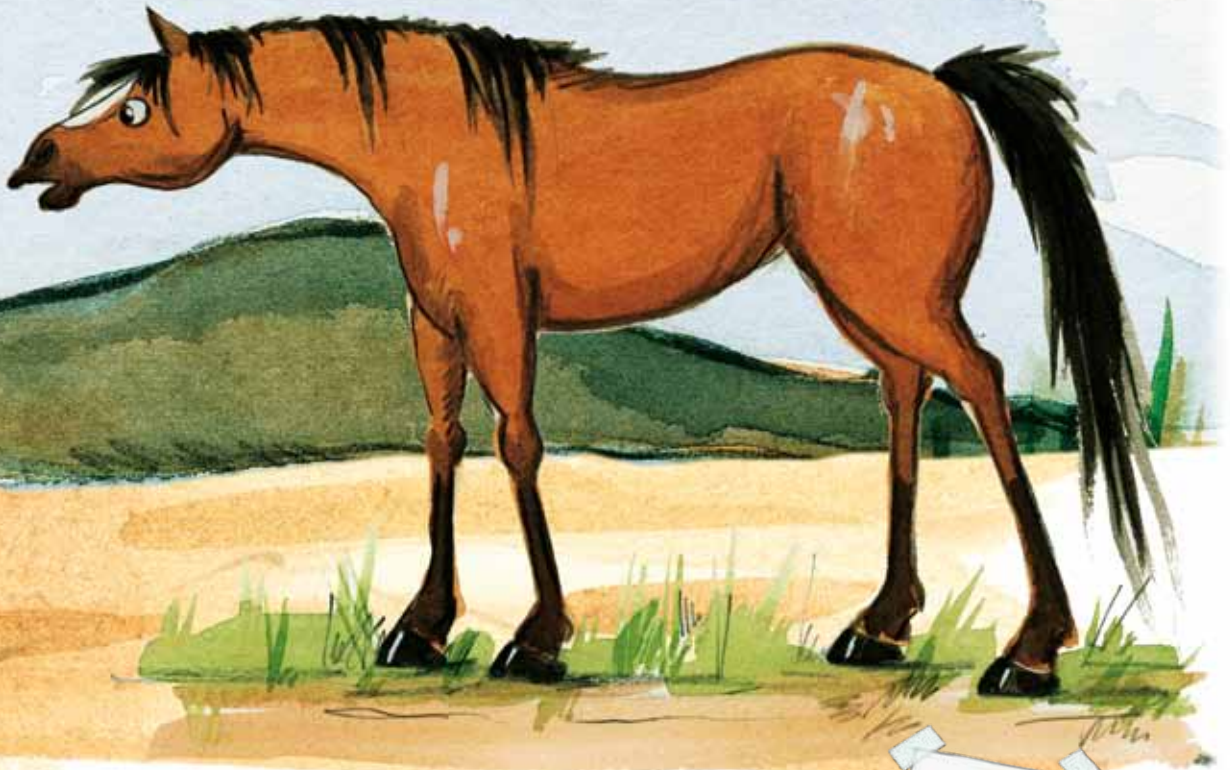
He took every shortcut to get to the top of the mountain, but it still took many hours of hard walking.

Bryce checked once more behind him before heading down into the valley.




Halfway down he heard a rustle in the bushes. His two horses had come to meet him. The mare pushed the centre of his back with her nose and almost pushed him over. She knew that Bryce had apples for her. The colt pushed against him to have his neck scratched.

The three of them walked down to the flat <sup>hat</sup>grazing land at the bottom of the valley.





Horses love your TIME,  
ATTENTION and TREATS.




The mare and her foal  **grazed** quietly, and Bryce sat under a big tree and rested his back against its trunk.

Thinking of lunch, he reached into his backpack and pulled out the sandwich he had made, an apple for the mare and a carrot for the colt.

He rested beside him the bag that he had taken from under his bed, and from it took a brush and a screwdriver to  **groom** the horses.

He ate his sandwich and watched the colt play. The colt had grown almost as big as his mother—he was a  **yearling** now. His legs were long and straight. His eyes were bright and set wide apart, and he was as black as the darkest night.

He was a beautiful horse.

Bryce went over to the horses. Picking up each of their legs in turn, he picked out the stones from under their  **hooves** with his screwdriver.



He brushed them until their coats were shiny and their manes and tails were free of burrs and knots.

When he was finished, Bryce fed them their treats.



Horses need you to GROOM them and LOOK AFTER their HOOVES.



‘I know what I will name you,’ Bryce said as he stood stroking the horse’s neck.

‘I am going to call you Midnight. Do you like the name Midnight?’ he asked the foal.

Just then, a sound broke Bryce’s conversation. It was the sound of <sup>👉</sup>**hoof beats** drumming the ground.



He looked up to see a <sup>hat</sup>**stallion** tearing through the scrub towards them. The horse had his ears pinned back, his mouth wide open and his neck arched. He looked angry, and he was heading straight for Bryce.

Bryce knew he was in real trouble. With only a few paces between them, he turned and ran for the nearest tree. Scrambling up as fast as he could, Bryce climbed until he was well out of the stallion's reach.



The stallion turned and galloped towards the colt. He bit the colt on the **rump** and then on the **wither**. He struck him with his front feet and bit at his legs.

Bryce was more scared than he had ever been. He realised in a rush that Midnight was his mate—his best friend—and he was scared for him.





Seeing the colt in trouble, the mare ran to her foal's defence. She rushed upon the stallion and kicked him hard with her back legs. Once, twice, three times.

The stallion was bleeding from the wounds on his chest. He turned and tripped back through the scrub the way he had come.

From the safety of the tree, Bryce wondered how he could protect Midnight.

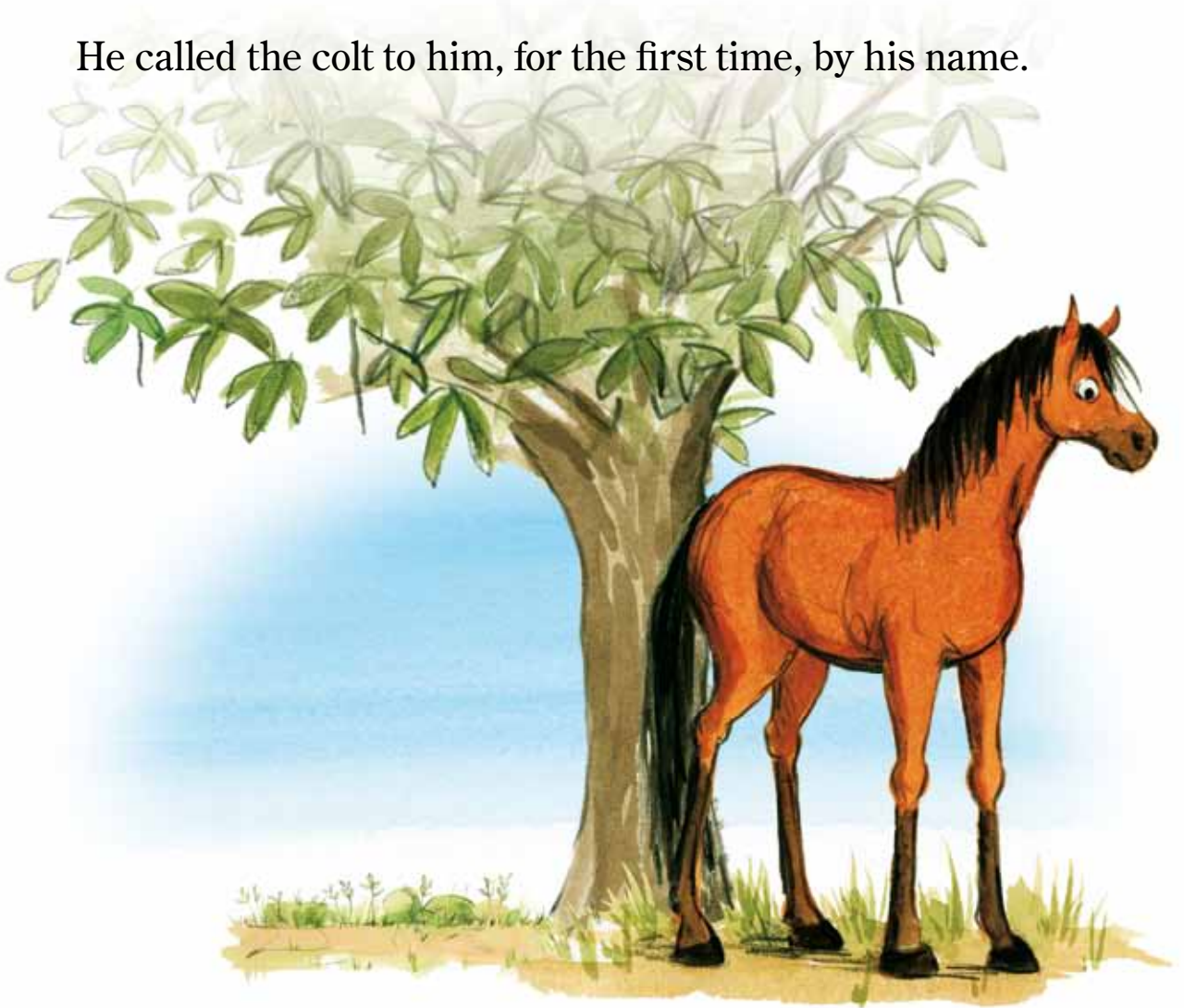


Stallions and colts FIGHT to keep their own TERRITORY and their own MARES.



When he was sure that the stallion had gone, Bryce got out of the tree and went to his bag. He put the brush and screwdriver back in and took out a tube of red cream.

He called the colt to him, for the first time, by his name.



'Midnight, come here.' To his surprise, the colt came over, leaning on Bryce as though he needed comforting.

Bryce opened the tube and put the red cream on all of the colt's wounds.

Bryce promised Midnight that he would protect him. He wasn't sure how yet, but he would know by next weekend when he came to visit again.



Horses need **HELP** from people  
when they have **INJURIES**.



Bryce still went to school each day. He had a problem, but he had a dream too that was even bigger. He still needed to work hard to make money. That was part of reaching his dream, and he wasn't going to give up.

He wanted to buy a big black **saddle** with silver and leather **carvings**, a matching bridle, and some **stirrups**. He dreamed of them often. He imagined the saddle in every tiny detail, along with the matching bridle with silver bit and **brow band**. Midnight would look deadly.

All this day-dreaming wasn't solving his problem. On the way home from school that day, Bryce saw Elder Stan sitting by the wharf. 'That's it,' he whispered to himself.

Stan was a **stockman**. He knew all about horses and he was smart too. He would know what Bryce should do.

Bryce and Stan talked for ages. Bryce told Stan all about Midnight and what had happened. He didn't tell old Stan about his dream. He thought Stan might laugh at him.





‘Well, well,’ said Stan. ‘I can teach you the way of the horse, but you will have to work pretty hard young fella.’

‘I will,’ answered Bryce.

‘Then,’ finished Stan, ‘we will start tomorrow after school.’



Older people who **KNOW** horses  
can **HELP** you **LEARN** how to  
**LOOK AFTER** them.



Bryce met Elder Stan the very next day.

‘Why did the stallion do that to my foal?’ was his first question.

‘Boy, every stallion will do that. He has to get rid of a foal so that he can be with the mare. Your horse being a colt, he will eventually be competition to the older stallion. Better he beat him now. He could even kill your colt. That is the way of the horse.’

‘So how can I keep him safe?’ Bryce asked.

Stan replied, ‘You could put him in a yard strong enough to keep the stallion out and the colt in.’

‘Oh great,’ said Bryce. ‘Then the kids will get him and ride him.’

‘Not for a while yet,’ said Stan. ‘He is not even a year old. He is too young.’

‘Not really,’ Bryce answered. ‘He is almost as big as his mother.’

‘Aye boy, that doesn’t count,’ growled Stan. ‘I tell you he is too young. He has to be at least two years old before you can **break him in.**’

‘Great,’ said Bryce. All thoughts of the black saddle and silver-studded bridle quickly disappeared.



A horse can not be **BROKEN**  
**IN** and **RIDDEN** until it is at  
least **TWO YEARS OLD.**



At least it will give me more time to save, thought Bryce. Bryce really wanted to do it all properly. Now I can buy a red **saddle blanket** to go with the saddle, his thoughts ran. Wow!

‘So what have I got to do first?’ asked Bryce.

‘You have to get him a **halter**, wean him and teach him to **lead**,’ replied Elder Stan.

‘That’s all okay, but I can’t lock him up in a yard,’ said Bryce. ‘The kids will get to him.’

‘Bryce, I will do everything I can to help you but you have to do the right thing too. I’m not wasting my time on a kid who doesn’t listen.’

‘If I took you to my colt, would you promise not to tell anyone where he is?’ asked Bryce.





‘I told you I would help you, boy,’ replied Stan. ‘That means I will keep your secrets too, so long as you are doing the right thing.’

‘Well,’ Stan said. ‘You could always <sup>👒</sup>geld him. That would help over all.’

‘What is that?’ asked Bryce, totally confused.

‘The <sup>👒</sup>vet will fix him up so that he is not interested in mares when he grows up,’ Stan answered. ‘That means he will not fight with other horses over a mare, and he’ll be a safer horse to ride. Speak to the vet when he comes next week. He will be at the vet shed. You go see him.’



Having a man horse GELDED by a VET will keep him SAFER and stop him FIGHTING over mares.



The next Saturday, Bryce met Elder Stan and took him to his valley. Bryce had his backpack filled with all his usual goodies and an extra sandwich for Stan.

Down the path to the valley the two walked, until there they were—the mare and Midnight. They had been waiting for Bryce, and their apple and carrot.



They stood back awhile. It was strange for two humans to come to the valley. Bryce was there, so they thought it must be okay. They walked up to him for their treats.

As Bryce gave the carrot to Midnight, he checked the wounds from last week. They had healed well. Just to be safe, he was going to put some more ointment on after he groomed them and checked their hooves.



When you are GROOMING your horse is a good time to CHECK for INJURIES.



Elder Stan was amazed at the way Bryce cared for and handled the colt, and said so. ‘You have a way with them boy. Now you need a **headstall**—a new strong one—and a **lead rope**, a **collar** and a collar rope. That will cost a lot of money,’ Stan told Bryce.

That puts my dreams of my saddle, bridle and blanket back a bit, Bryce thought to himself.

‘Why do I need all that stuff?’ asked Bryce.



Headstall and Lead Rope



Stirrups

Bit



Stirrup and Stirrup Leather

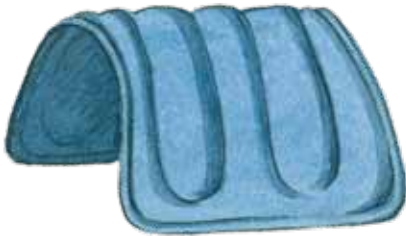




‘It’s okay to be able to handle him like you do, but that only works because he wants the pats and carrots, and knows he can go away when he wants to,’ said Stan. ‘When you want him to walk with you he must. So you have to teach him. For you and Midnight to be safe you need safe gear.’

‘Okay. I’ll get the gear,’ said Bryce. ‘Straight away—as soon as Mum and Dad go to the city.’

‘Your colt is well worth it Bryce. He is a really nice horse and well-grown. To do right by him you must get him gelded.’



Saddle Blanket



Saddle



Bridle

It is important to have the  
**RIGHT GEAR** to work **SAFELY**  
with your horse.



Tony the vet was catching up on his paperwork at the vet shed.

‘Can I speak with you please,’ called Bryce. ‘I have a horse that I’m told should be gelded. What do I have to do?’ Bryce started.

‘Well, how old is he?’ asked the vet.

‘Almost a year,’ said Bryce.

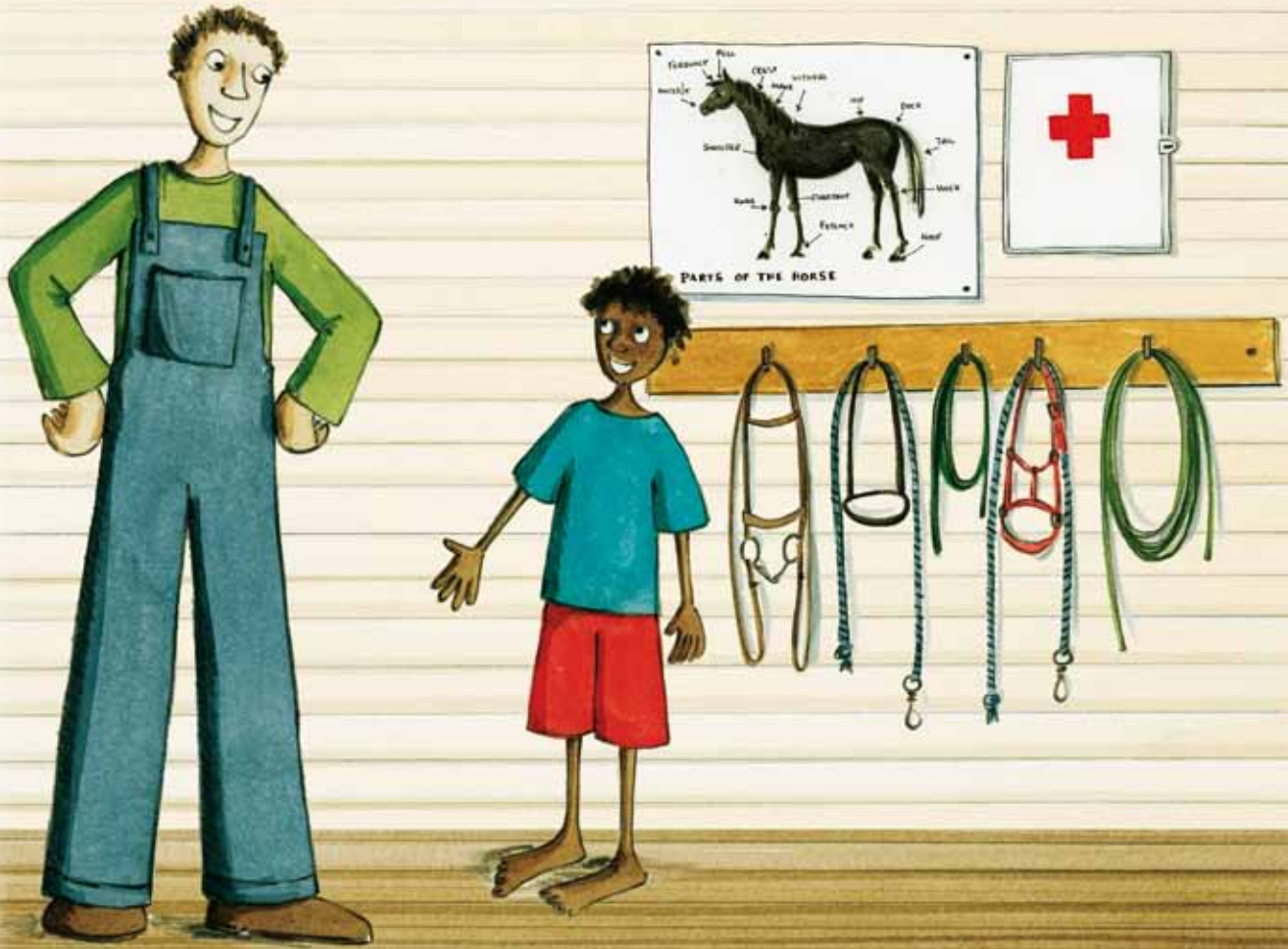
‘That’s a good age,’ Tony explained. ‘All you have to do is bring him, and your money, and I will do it.’

Bryce didn’t want to bring him to the vet shed. It was too close to the community for his liking, and the cost—that was a lot of money. It was almost all Bryce had saved.

‘Couldn’t you do it somewhere else?’ Bryce asked. ‘Like my place?’

‘Sure,’ said Tony.

Bryce thought of all that money and his new saddle and bridle—his dream. ‘Nah, I’ll let it go awhile. He doesn’t need it. Lots of horses here don’t get fixed up.’



Bryce held onto his dream. He went to school every day. His reading was getting so much better and his maths was improving. His money under the bed was growing. Not bad, thought Bryce.

His Mum and Dad were going to town during the week so he wrote a shopping list and asked if they could buy the headstall, collar and ropes from the <sup>hat</sup>saddlery.





His parents agreed. He was so happy. He really shocked his Mum when he handed her fifty dollars.

That was okay, thought Bryce. I still have money in my jar, and Elder Stan said I need the gear so I can teach Midnight properly.

Bryce's parents were staying in the city that weekend so he had to wait, but he would still go and visit Midnight.

He walked down the path into the valley, but this time, no horses welcomed him. There was no sign of them.

He went on down to the flat, but still he couldn't see them.

He put his bag by the tree and walked off to find the horses, calling as he went.

Horses can be HURT when  
you use GAMMON GEAR.



Over the bank and out of sight he heard a soft  **whinny**.  
He ran to look.

There, trapped between two rocks, was his colt. The mare was nowhere to be seen.

Bryce climbed over the bank and onto the rock shelf. He needed something to lead the horse out, if he would follow.

He took off his shirt and put it around the horse's neck, using the sleeves as a lead. He whispered softly to Midnight that he was trying to help him, and quietly coaxed the terrified colt out from between the rocks.

Midnight seemed to trust Bryce and slowly tried to move himself free.

Free of the rocks, Bryce looked for a way to get to high ground. Poor Midnight had skin off everywhere. He limped behind Bryce as they tried to find their way back to the tree.

It took forever, but they finally made it. Bryce reached into the bag for the carrots but, this time, carrots were not enough. He took out his tube of red cream and put it on all the cuts and wounds. Midnight was a lot more settled now, but Bryce could only wonder how all this had happened.



Horses need **HELP** from people when they have **INJURIES**.



A roar came from the bushes. It was the stallion and the mare. Bryce was scared, but he was more afraid for his colt. He waved his shirt over his head and ran at the stallion yelling as loudly as he could.

The stallion took fright. He ran off with the mare following him.





Bryce had had enough. He sat down beside the tree exhausted.

‘What will I do?’ he asked himself.

Bryce decided to take Midnight home. The stallion would be back. He couldn’t leave the colt there and, after all, he was old enough not to need his mother to feed him.

It was a long walk with Midnight. The colt didn’t want to leave the valley that had been his home. It was dark when they got home, so he lit a fire and bedded down with Midnight to make sure he stayed safe.

Bryce woke to find Midnight’s wounds had swollen. Some of them were bleeding again.

He ran next door and asked his neighbour if he would watch Midnight until he returned, promising he wouldn’t be long.

He ran as fast as he could to find Elder Stan and bring him to Midnight.

A STALLION can be DANGEROUS  
to COLTS and to PEOPLE -  
particularly when it is with  
a MARE.



‘Well boy,’ said Elder Stan. ‘I did tell you. That is the way of the horse.’

‘I know,’ said Bryce. ‘But how do I help him now.’

Stan scratched his head. ‘First we will teach him to tie up so that we can treat him properly. Then we will hose down those cuts and bruises. That will help the swelling go down. Then we can put that red cream on him. But mind you do it every day,’ he told Bryce. ‘That should hold him ’til the vet comes.’

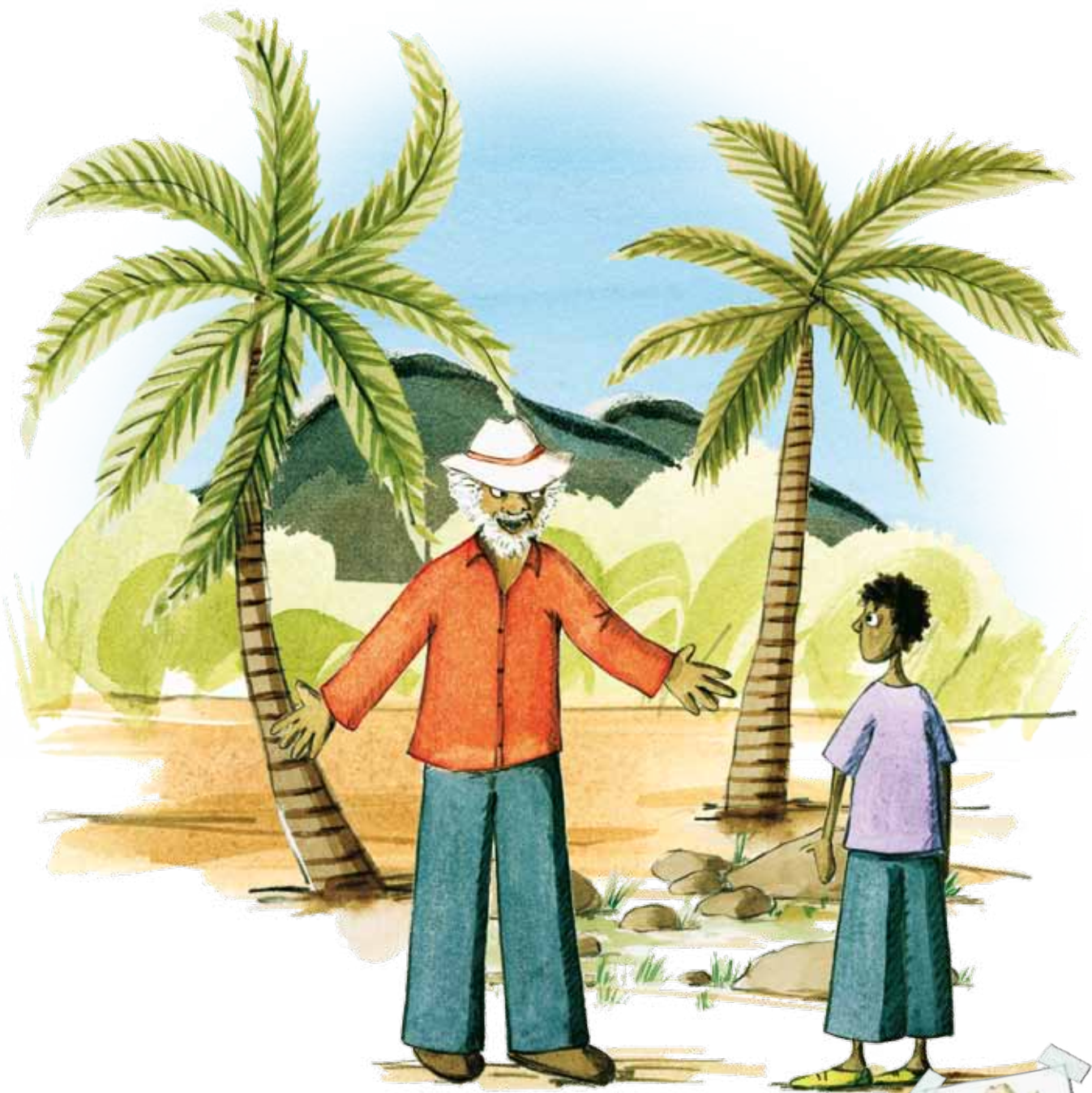
‘You know that a stallion did this to him,’ said Stan. ‘If you want to keep him safe you have to geld him.’

‘But it costs so much,’ answered Bryce.

‘And what is your horse worth to you boy?’ growled Stan.

Bryce felt shamed now. Midnight meant everything to him.

‘Okay,’ said Bryce. ‘If the vet will do it, we will get it done ... and you know how much he means to me.’



COLTS need to be GELDED so they won't be bullied by STALLIONS.



Elder Stan and Bryce taught the colt to lead and tie up. Bryce bathed Midnight's wounds and put cream on them, and fed him the freshest grass and the cleanest water. Bryce slept with the colt every night until the vet came.

His money jar under the bed was emptying, but he had enough to pay the vet. Stan had said Midnight had another year before he could be broken in and ridden, so it wasn't that bad. He could still work to buy his saddle and bridle.

Bryce was so surprised when Tony the vet gelded Midnight. He didn't hurt him at all. Midnight didn't even know the difference. The next day he was running and playing as cheekily as ever. The other horses took no notice of him at all.

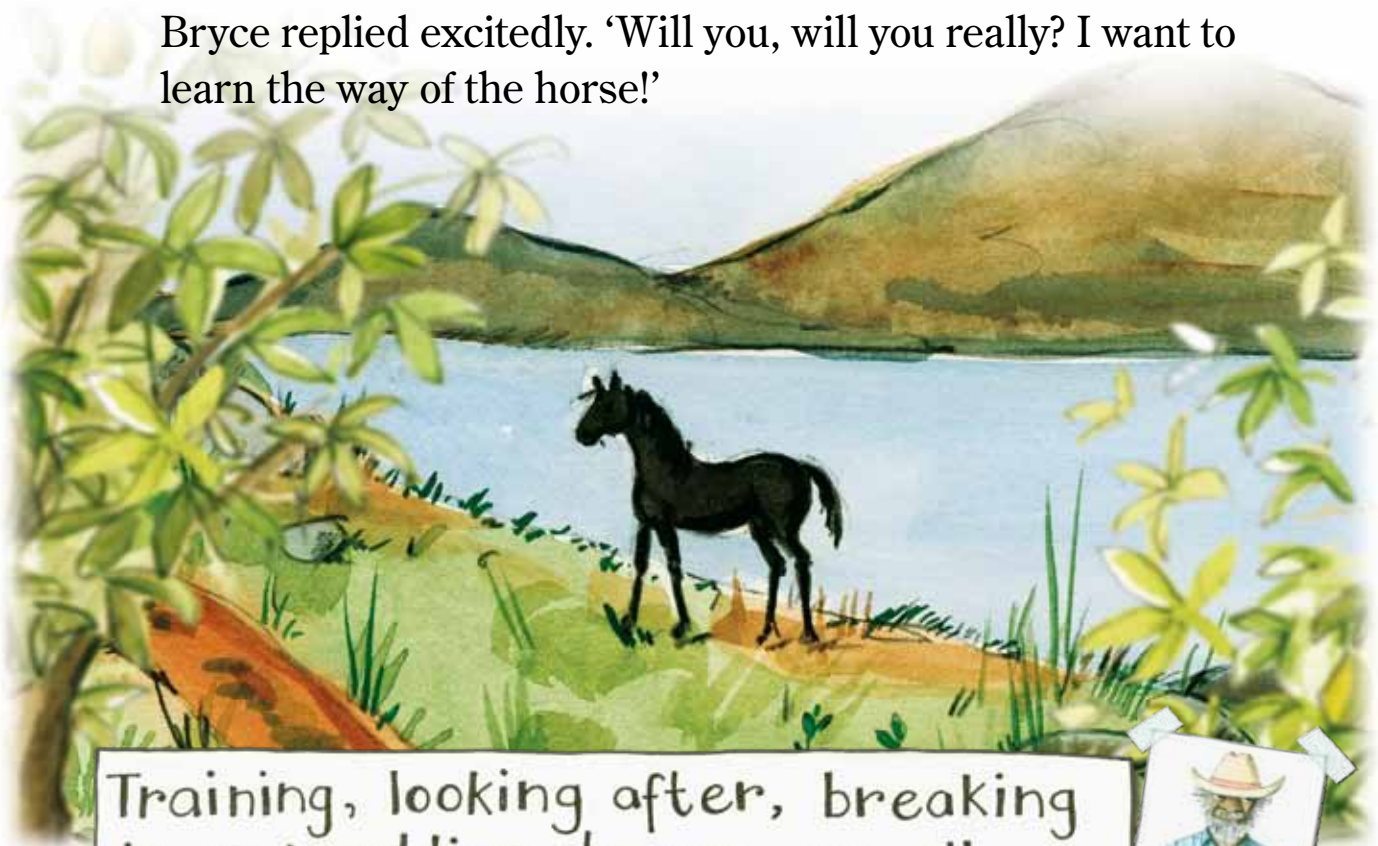
It was time for him to go back to the valley, but this time Bryce would stay the weekend with him just to be sure he was okay.



‘You should have seen him,’ Bryce told Stan. ‘We got to the top of the mountain, and I took his headstall off and let him go. He galloped so fast. He was so happy to be free and to play.’

‘I will visit him every weekend,’ said Stan. ‘When the time is right, I will ask you to help me break him in.’

Bryce replied excitedly. ‘Will you, will you really? I want to learn the way of the horse!’



Training, looking after, breaking in and gelding horses are all **IMPORTANT** parts of **CARING** for a horse.



## ELDER STAN'S NEW WORDS

<b>Word</b>	<b>Meaning</b>	<b>Page</b>
Graze/grazing/ grazed	Eating grass is called grazing. Horses (and cattle) graze. This is a bit different to eating leaves off trees. That is called browsing. Goats (and giraffes) browse.	9 and 10
Groom	Grooming makes your horse look better and feel better. It includes brushing him and pulling the burrs out of his mane and tail. Don't forget to check him all over for cuts and scratches, and dig out any stones that may be stuck under his hooves. You and your horse both have to be shown how to do this safely.	10



# ELDER STAN'S NEW WORDS

<b>Word</b>	<b>Meaning</b>	<b>Page</b>
Yearling	A foal that has grown up but is not an adult horse yet. It may look as big as its mother but its bones are not as strong as an adult horse's bones. That is why you should not ride a yearling. If you do, you will damage its bones and joints.	10
Hoof/hooves	A horse's foot is called a hoof. Two or more feet are called hooves. They are pretty hard but horses' hooves can still be hurt, especially if they are walking or running over stones or sharp sticks. Horses should never be galloped on hard roads because this can hurt their hooves badly. Most working horses have special steel shoes, called horseshoes, nailed to their hooves to protect them.	10



## ELDER STAN'S NEW WORDS

<b>Word</b>	<b>Meaning</b>	<b>Page</b>
Hoof beats	The sound a horse makes with his hooves when he walks or runs.	12
Stallion	A man horse. An adult male. He is often the boss and the leader of a family (mob) of horses. He makes all the babies in that mob. Stallions fight each other and can also attack people.	13
Rump	The big 'meaty' part of a horse's back, behind the saddle area and in front of the tail.	14
Wither	The high and thin part of the back just in front of the saddle area.	14
Saddle	A leather seat that protects the horse's back and keeps the rider safe and comfortable. There are lots of different types of saddles. They all need to be carefully looked after.	18





# ELDER STAN'S NEW WORDS

<b>Word</b>	<b>Meaning</b>	<b>Page</b>
Carvings	Pictures and patterns cut (carved) into a saddle.	18
Stirrups	Stirrups hang from the saddle and help the rider to stay balanced. They also help the horse feel better with the weight on its back. Remember to wear proper boots though—bare feet in stirrups can get you badly hurt.	18
Brow band	The part of the bridle that goes over the horse's brow (above the eyes). Looks pretty deadly with some decorations on it.	18
Stockman	A stockman can be a man or a woman. They ride horses to muster cattle.	18



# ELDER STAN'S NEW WORDS

<b>Word</b>	<b>Meaning</b>	<b>Page</b>
Break in	Taking the 'wildness' out of a horse to make her a pet or a friend, or so she will work for us. The rider has to trust the horse and the horse has to trust that the rider is not going to be cruel to her.	21
Saddle blanket	The lovely soft, thick, blanket that the saddle sits on. It must be washed after every use to get rid of the sweat, sand and burrs. This helps protect the horse's back from sores. The saddle blanket is a very important piece of horse gear and needs to be looked after. You can get them in all colours.	22
Halter, headstall	A strong rope or leather piece that looks like a bridle with no bit. You use a halter when you need to lead a horse or tie him up. A halter is the same thing as a headstall.	22 and 26



## ELDER STAN'S NEW WORDS

<b>Word</b>	<b>Meaning</b>	<b>Page</b>
Lead	A horse has to be taught to lead, which means to walk with you using a halter and lead rope. He must lead so that you walk beside him, near his shoulder. He should not be in front of you and not behind you. Learning to lead is a very important part of a horse's education.	22
Geld, gelding	Also called 'castrate' or 'cut'. This is an operation to 'fix up' a male horse so he can not make babies. When he has been gelded he usually becomes a much safer horse to ride and handle. The operation is often called 'gelding' a horse. The same word is also used to describe the horse afterwards—he has become a 'gelding'.	23



# ELDER STAN'S NEW WORDS

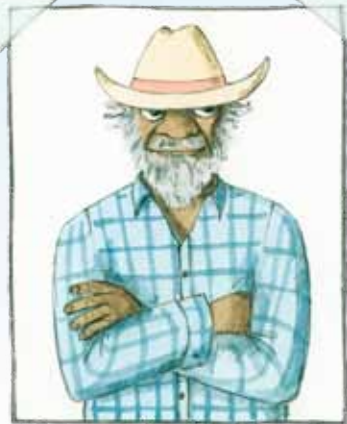
<b>Word</b>	<b>Meaning</b>	<b>Page</b>
Vet	An animal doctor. A man or a woman who has spent many years in school to learn about every type of animal—what medicines they need when they are sick and what type of medicine will stop them getting sick.	23
Lead rope	What we use with a halter. We can't always ride so we must be able to lead our horse kindly. Lead ropes are about two metres long and have a strong clip on the end to hook onto the headstall. Halters and lead ropes come in deadly colours.	26





# ELDER STAN'S NEW WORDS

<b>Word</b>	<b>Meaning</b>	<b>Page</b>
Collar	A collar goes around the horse's neck and makes it safer to tie the horse up and teach it some of its lessons.	26
Saddlery	The word 'saddlery' can mean everything a horse wears when we ride. It can also mean the shop where this type of gear is sold.	30
Whinny	The kind of sound a horse makes when calling to a friend.	32

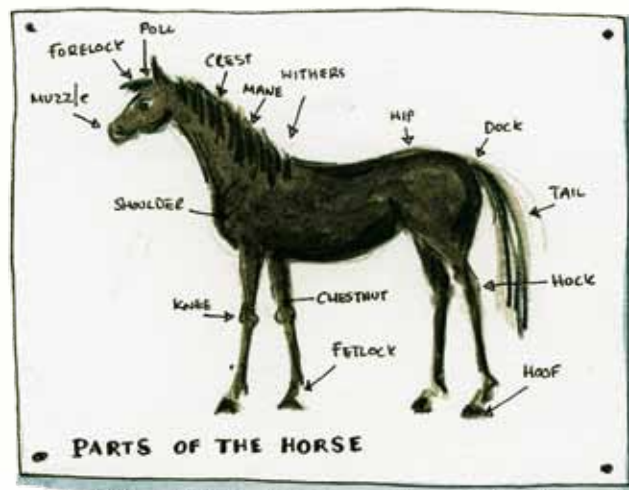


## HOW TO FIND A VET

**Most vets will give you advice over the phone and it's easy to find one to talk to if you follow these steps:**

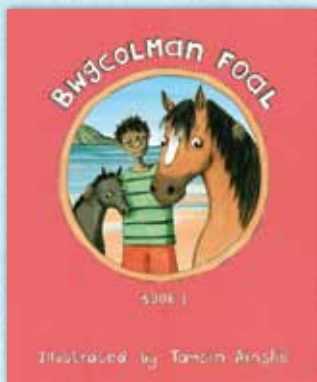
1. Get a phone book and find the Yellow Pages section at the front.
2. Have a look inside and you'll see that the Yellow Pages is arranged alphabetically—it starts at 'A' and goes through to 'Z'.
3. Go to 'V' and look for the heading 'Veterinary Surgeons'—that's the proper name for vets. (You'll also see the word 'Veterinary' along the top of the pages.)
4. Don't be put off when you see a long list of different-sized ads on lots of pages.
5. Look for the part of each ad that tells you the vet's address and then find one that lives close to where you live.

6. Make sure the vet's ad mentions horses if it's a horse you want help for. (Some vets only treat pets like dogs and cats.)
7. Ring the phone number shown in the ad once you find the vet you want to talk to.
8. Tell the person who answers the phone what you are worried about and ask for their advice—this might be the vet's helper but they will get the vet if they need to.
9. Don't worry—you won't have to pay the vet for this but they will need money if they have to send you some medicines or if they have to come and see the animal.



# 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



# SPECIAL THANKS ...

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