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PM

Sophie and her pony, Popcorn, have just joined the Silver Saddles Pony Club. They used to perform in a circus, where Popcorn the Wonder Pony did all sorts of amazing tricks. Now, Popcorn wants to show off his tricks at the pony club! Will they fit in with the other ponies and riders? And can Popcorn win a prize at the annual pony club fun day?



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PM Guided Reading

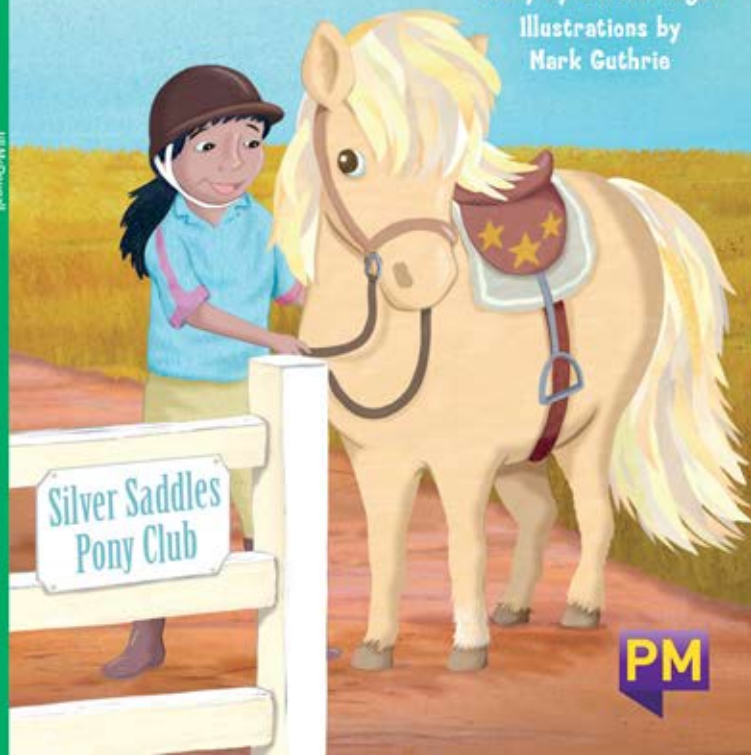
Popcorn the Wonder Pony

Jill McDougall

Popcorn the Wonder Pony

Story by Jill McDougall

Illustrations by
Mark Guthrie



PM

Popcorn really was a star. In fact, Popcorn and I used to do tricks in our family circus. Popcorn was called Popcorn the Wonder Pony.

After Mum and Dad sold the circus, Mum suggested we join the pony club, because Popcorn seemed bored with nothing to do all day. I hoped Popcorn the Wonder Pony would fit in with all the other ponies.

"First, we will walk around the ring," said Mrs Hambone.

Popcorn and I followed the others into the ring. Popcorn seemed excited. He flicked his ears and swished his tail. He thought we were about to perform one of our tricks.



"Everybody walk slowly," ordered Mrs Hambone. "Then, turn around and walk the other way."

Round and around the ring we went with all the other ponies. Then we turned and went the other way.

I leaned forward and stroked Popcorn's neck. "Good boy," I said, trying not to yawn.

I was sure Popcorn was trying not to yawn, too. I knew he would much prefer to be doing tricks. Popcorn loved to hear people cheering and clapping for him.

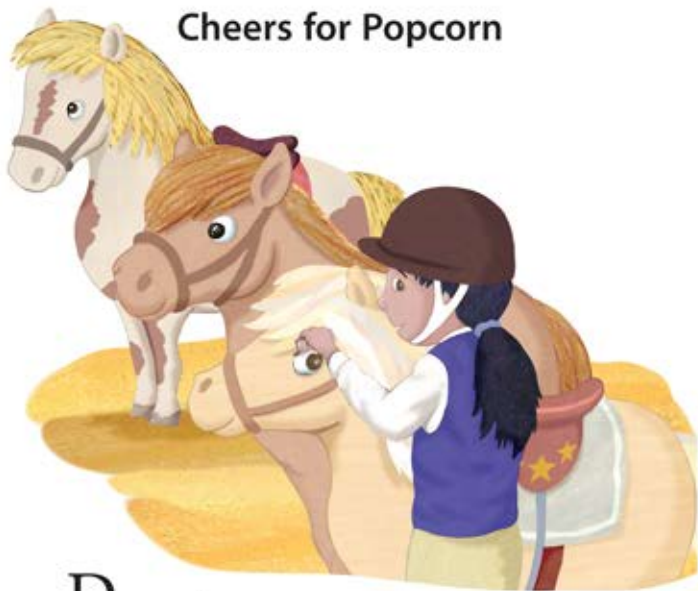
"Now you may trot," called Mrs Hambone.

Popcorn did not win a ribbon for the Best Led Pony. The prize went to a boy with a brown pony that was so quiet it might as well have been asleep.

“Never mind,” I said to Popcorn, flicking dust from his neck. “The next event is the Cleanest Pony. You’ll win that hands down.”



Cheers for Popcorn



Dozens of squeaky
row. Everyone wanted to win the ribbon for the Cleanest Pony. I snuck a comb out of my pocket and combed Popcorn’s tail and mane. I even combed his eyelashes.

Popcorn really did look like the cleanest pony in the Cleanest Pony event.

I was sure we would win a ribbon this time.

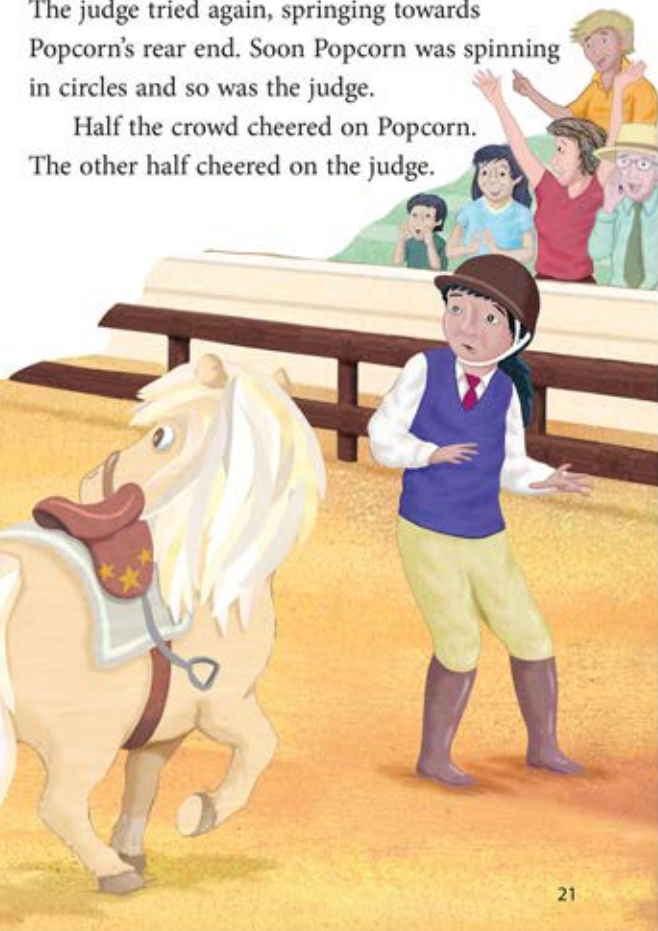
The crowd was silent as the judge walked along the line. All the ponies stood perfectly still, even Popcorn. Coats were inspected for dirt and manes were examined for tangles.

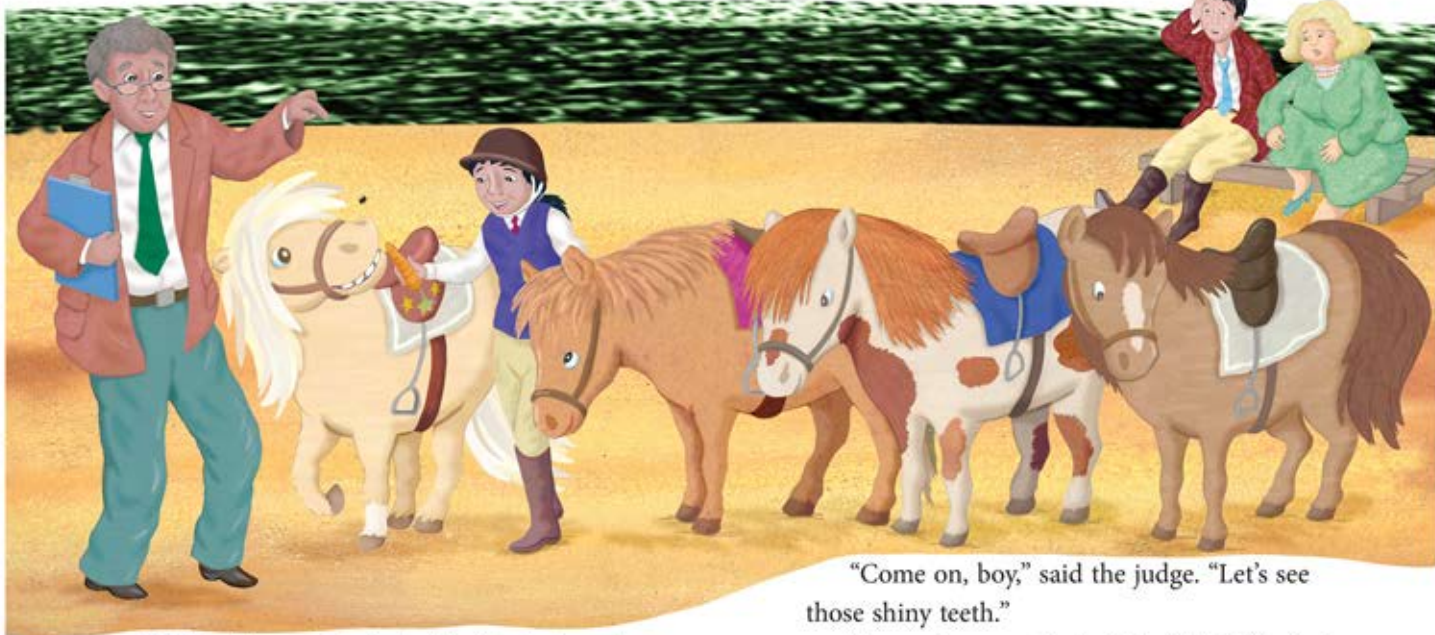
As the judge walked towards us, I gave him my best smile. He looked all over Popcorn's neck and body and then strolled around to look at his tail.



Popcorn didn't like people standing behind him. He whirled around and faced the judge. The judge tried again, springing towards Popcorn's rear end. Soon Popcorn was spinning in circles and so was the judge.

Half the crowd cheered on Popcorn. The other half cheered on the judge.





Mr Grimble was the judge for the last event. The other judges were sitting down with sore feet or pony dribble in their hair. Mr Grimble moved slowly down the line, peering into pony mouths, one by one.

“Open wide,” he said, when he reached Popcorn. Popcorn clamped his teeth shut. He stared at a passing fly.

“Come on, boy,” said the judge. “Let’s see those shiny teeth.”

Popcorn’s eyes rolled wildly. “Wait!” I cried. I took out a carrot from my pocket and waved it under Popcorn’s nose. He loved juicy carrots. He spread his lips into a big pony grin and showed off his teeth.

“What lovely clean teeth!” said Mr Grimble, as Popcorn chomped on the carrot. “I think we’ve found our winner.”

Popcorn trotted towards the judge and bowed his head for the ribbon. Then he pranced about the ring, legs high.

“Well done, Popcorn,” called the riders from the pony club. “What a star!”

“He’s a super star,” I said, with a grin.

