

Pony

The
Sleepover
Club



Passion

Harriet Castor

Pony Passion

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Castor H.

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The hugely popular Sleepover Club series is back. Meet Frankie, Kenny, Fliss, Rosie and Lyndz – five best friends who just want to have fun! When Lyndz falls off her favourite horse at Mrs McAllister's stables, she develops a sudden terror of riding! It will take all the super-powers of the Sleepover Club to get her back on a horse again... As well as a great story this book has tips for fun things to do at your own sleepover party for you and your friends. Grab your hat and get back in the saddle!

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The Sleepover Club

Pony Passion



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HarperCollinsChildren'sBooks

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Neeiiigghhh!

Hey, watch out! That's Kenny, doing her mad pony impression again. She'll use us for jumping practice if we don't get out of the way. Quick – let's sit over here for a sec. I haven't seen you for ages and we've got so much to catch up on!

You remember me, don't you? I'm Lyndz (Lyndsey Marianne Collins to give you the full caboodle) and I'm a member of the coolest club in the whole world—

“Universe!”

OK, Frankie! How come she heard that from half-way across the yard? She must have enormous flappy elephant ears, that maniac!

But she's right, the Sleepover Club is the best club in the entire universe, ever. And when you hear what we've been up to this time... Well, it's a good job I'm the one who gets to tell you about it, cos no one else could give you all the inside goss on this story. There's been more drama round here recently than in a whole series of Hollyoakes, I reckon! Like that moment when—no, wait, I mustn't spoil it. But I think I got the biggest fright of my life. You'll be on the edge of your seat, I promise!

I'd better start at the beginning, hadn't I, or I'll be gabbling on and you won't have a clue what I'm talking about. For a start – you remember the rest of the Sleepover Club, right? There's Kenny, who nearly landed on top of us just now. She's actually Laura McKenzie to the teachers, but don't call her that or she'll jump on you for real! Kenny's wild about football (weird, huh?), but she's a complete laugh, too. And she is the best schemer when it comes to getting back at the M&Ms, our arch-enemies.

Then there's Frankie Thomas. She doesn't really have elephant ears, but she does have a seriously LOUD voice. Frankie's always having barmy ideas, and dressing up in even barmier clothes, given half the chance. Just wait till you hear about her latest outfit...

Next comes Miss Felicity Sidebotham – that's Fliss for short, of course. Look, she's over there chatting to Rosie, probably still going on about those hairdos she's mad about. Rosie looks a bit bored, but she's far too nice to say so – typical Rosie!

Rosie's the fifth member of the Sleepover Club. She's ace – and not as crazy as some of the others, which is a relief, I can tell you. Together we have the most awesome time going to sleepovers at each other's houses. We're always making wicked plans for things to do, even if sometimes they go a bit pear-shaped.

And, boy, did things go super pear-shaped this time – especially for me! It all started a few weeks ago, on a wet Monday morning. The first bell hadn't even gone yet, but we were in our classroom because of the rain. Everyone was sitting on desks and talking, except for Danny McCloud and Mark Pitt, who were having a scrap in the corner (sad or what?).

Suddenly Frankie burst into the room at a million miles an hour, threw her bag down and boinged up on to the desk beside me.

“Guess what?” she said.

“What?” Fliss, Rosie, Kenny and I all said together.

“My gran came to stay this weekend and she brought me the coolest present and it made me have the coolest idea and I am just so COOL you should all just gasp.”

Kenny did it really well. Her hands shot up to her mouth and her eyes stretched wide, as if Madonna had walked in to take the register.

“Well? What is it?” I said. Frankie had started wriggling out of her coat, in no hurry to spill the beans. She’s never happier than when she’s got all our attention. I wouldn’t put it past her to say she’s got a brilliant idea even when she hasn’t, just to keep us hanging on.

“What’s the idea?” said Rosie.

“What’s the present?” said Fliss.

“Quick! Or we have vays of making you talk!” said Kenny, grabbing Frankie’s arm and pushing her sleeve up, pretending she was going to give her a Chinese burn.

Frankie laughed. “It’s, like, a bag of treasure,” she said.

“Treasure?” Kenny’s eyes lit up. “Pirate treasure?”

A really strange picture popped into my head of Frankie’s gran wearing a black eye patch, with a parrot sitting on her shoulder. It made me giggle.

“Pieces of eight?” said Rosie. “And diamonds and – and gold?”

“Not real treasure. Gran’s given up the bank-robbing,” said Frankie with a wink. She’d spotted the M&Ms – that’s Emma Hughes and Emily Berryman, the snidest snottiest girls in our class – loitering near us. They’re so nosy, they’re always listening in to our conversations. When she heard the word ‘bank-robbing’ Emily looked really shocked. It was wicked.

Now Frankie leant forward and said more quietly, “It’s beads, actually. Gran brought me this big bag of them, and they’re amazing. Like jewels. They’re all different colours, and some of them have got glitter under the surface so they’re really sparkly. Some have tiny patterns painted on them too.”

“Wow!” said Fliss.

Kenny groaned. “Yawn, more like,” she said. “I thought it was going to be something exciting, Thomas.” Kenny’s not really into clothes and girlie stuff. She’d wear her Leicester City football top every day if she could.

But Frankie wasn’t put off. “And I’ve had the best idea,” she said. “What if we make bracelets for each other? Special bracelets that only members of the Sleepover Club can wear!”

“Pledges of our undying friendship,” said Fliss grandly.

“Hey, yeah!” said Rosie. “And we could always wear them and never take them off,” Rosie continued. “Oh, except for school.” We’re not allowed to wear jewellery, worse luck.

“All the time except school, then,” I said. “It’s a majorly fab idea, Frankie. Have you brought the beads in? Can we do it today?”

“I didn’t want to risk it with those two lamebrains around,” she said, jerking her thumb in the direction of the M&Ms. “And in any case, I thought I’d save them cos Mum and Dad said I can have a sleepover.”

“Now, that’s more like it!” said Kenny, grinning. “This weekend?”

Frankie shook her head. “Gran’ll still be here and it’ll be too much of a squash, Mum says. How about a week on Saturday? If everyone comes round in the afternoon we could make the bracelets and maybe watch a video, too.”

“Hey, we should watch Hannah Montana – you know, she wears bracelets!” said Fliss. “I could bring my dvds.” Fliss has every Hannah Montana dvd video there’s ever been. I reckon she must know all the episodes off by heart.

“I’m there – guaranteed!” I said.

“Me too!” said Rosie.

“Can my bracelet be pink?” said Fliss eagerly. “Who’s going to make it for me?”

At that moment Mrs Weaver, our teacher, came in. “Settle down, everyone,” she shouted, clapping her hands.

“We can sort that out later,” Frankie said to Fliss, stepping on to my chair and then clambering over on to her desk.

“Francesca Thomas, this is not a mountaineering class!” shouted Mrs Weaver, sounding cross already.

It was a sign of things to come. Weaver had obviously got out of bed on the wrong side that morning, and the slightest bit of cheek from Danny or chattering at the back had her looking all purse-lipped and thundery. Honestly, it’s such a downer when teachers are like that, don’t you think? School is bad enough – they could at least try to make it nicer for us by being in a good mood!

She cheered up a bit after the register, though, when she started telling us about a new project she wanted us to work on in our history lessons.

“Who’s been to Cuddington library recently?” she asked first.

The M&Ms stuck their hands up. They’re such goody-goodies, it’s enough to make you sick.

“And did you notice anything new there, Emma?” said Mrs Weaver.

Emma Hughes looked puzzled. “Er...books?” she said.

Behind me, I heard Kenny snort. “Books?” she muttered. “In a library? Omigosh, how shocking!”

Well, that set me off giggling, and once I start I’m a lost cause, my dad says. I was trying to listen to what Mrs Weaver was saying, concentrating on how unfunny it was.

“I expect they do have some new books, but that’s not what I was thinking of, Emma.”

But all the time I was quaking and shaking, and feeling that if I didn’t let these giggles out I was going to...

“Hic!”

Too late! The hiccups had started. I had to put my head on the desk to try and hide. Behind me I could hear Frankie and Kenny spluttering and snorting. The mad thing was, it hadn’t even been that funny.

“Lyndsey Collins, whatever is the matter?”

Uh-oh. Frankie always says I should be in the Guinness Book of Records for having the loudest, squeakiest hiccups in the world. Not handy when you’re trying to hide.

I lifted my head. “Noth-hic-ing, Mrs Weaver.”

“What have I just been saying?”

“Um, about the, hic, library having something new, and it’s not new, hic, books...” I was so desperate to laugh, my voice had gone all wobbly.

Mrs Weaver was not amused. “Come and sit over here,” she said, pointing to an empty desk right in front of her.

“But Mrs, hic—”

“Now.” There was no arguing with that tone of voice. It made my hiccups disappear in an instant. I got up and shuffled to the front of the class.

Well, that was the cause of the whole disaster. If I’d been sitting in my usual place I wouldn’t have done it. Rosie would have grabbed my arm in the nick of time, or Kenny would’ve tackled me from behind.

At first everything was OK. Mrs Weaver explained about our projects and I just sat there with a cricked neck, staring up her nose.

“Our projects are going to be about Victorian life,” she said, “and the library has an exhibition on at the moment about Leicestershire in Victorian times. We’ll go and have a look at it tomorrow – if you can all behave yourselves.” When she said this she peered down at me. “I want you to get into groups, and each take a different topic for your project. There are six topics, so you may as well stay in the same groups you were in for science yesterday.”

This was way cool. Yesterday the five of us Sleepover Clubbers had been in a group by ourselves, which doesn't always happen. I turned round and grinned at the others. Frankie gave me a big thumbs-up and Kenny winked.

Mrs Weaver grabbed her marker pen and wrote the six topics on the board. Then she stuck pictures cut from newspapers and magazines next to each one. Next to 'Houses and Homes' there was a grand old house with big windows. Next to 'Sports and Pastimes' there was a footballer, with an old-fashioned haircut and funny big shorts. 'Costume' had a lady in a long dress beside it, probably from one of those Sunday night dramas on the telly, and 'Animals' had a really cute-looking dog. Next to 'Schools' there was a man with enormous whiskers holding a book. He looked twice as grumpy as Mrs Weaver on a bad day – scary!

But 'Transport' was what really caught my attention, because next to that there was a beautiful chestnut pony, with a white stripe down its nose. And, in case you didn't know already, I am just crazy about ponies!

"I really want you to use your imagination with these projects," said Mrs Weaver, turning back to us. "As well as doing written work, you could paint a picture, or make a model or a collage. At the end of term each group will give a presentation to the rest of the class. So, right from the beginning, I want you to be thinking up ways to communicate the things you find out.

"But first we have to allocate the topics. Who's going to do..."

She turned round to look at the board. My bum was on the edge of my seat. There's always such a massive scramble when things get shared out, and I'm wicked at shooting my hand up faster than anyone else. I was ready.

Mrs Weaver pointed to the pony. "...Transport?"

"Yes!" I shouted, my hand blasting into the air like a space rocket.

There was a short silence. I could hear the M&Ms sniggering softly and I looked round.

I'd been the fastest to put my hand up, all right. Because I'd been the only one. What's more, Fliss was looking at me like I'd just pulled the head off her Barbie, and Kenny was flapping her hands and shaking her head.

"Excellent," said Mrs Weaver, writing my name down. "Lyndsey's group can do Transport. Now, Sports and Pastimes? Ryan, you were first..."

By now Kenny had flung her hands up in the air and was bashing her head on her desk in despair. Even Rosie was looking at me like I'd made a horrid smell.

Marooned at my front row desk, I felt like the biggest durr-brain on the planet. I knew exactly what I'd done.

"Why, Lyndz? Why??"

"Did your brain turn to gloop?"

The bell had gone and we'd all piled out into the playground for break. It had stopped raining, but there were big puddles everywhere. I felt like a puddle myself. The others were giving me a seriously hard time.

"I messed up," I admitted. "I'm sorry, OK?"

"I wanted to do Costume!" Fliss whispered accusingly. Her eyes were all watery, like she was about to cry.

"You only went and chose THE most boring topic on the list!" wailed Frankie. "What were you thinking of?"

"I – I don't know," I stuttered. "It was that picture, I guess..."

Kenny slapped her forehead. "I might have known it! A picture of a horse and Lyndz loses all control. Not to mention all her brain-power!"

"We could've done loads on horses in Animals," Rosie pointed out.

Kenny groaned, clutching her stomach like she had tummy-ache. "And we could've done stupid horse-racing in Sports..."

Usually with the Sleepover Club, things blow over really quickly. If one of us is feeling a bit cross about something, the others tease them out of it. But not this time. This time it really felt like four against one.

“We know you’re horse-mad, Lyndz,” said Frankie. “But this is ridiculous.”

“And you’ve been spending so much time down at those smelly stables recently,” sniffed Fliss, wrinkling her nose. “You never do anything we want to do.”

“That’s not true!” I said. “I never miss our sleepovers!”

“No, but what about that Saturday when my mum took us to the shopping centre?” said Fliss. It was true. I had missed that.

“And you never came to see Shrek with us!” said Frankie.

“That was years ago!”

“What about when I wanted to build that treehouse?” said Kenny.

“But I would’ve been no use at that,” I said.

“It doesn’t matter. It’s the principle,” said Fliss haughtily. For a moment she sounded just like her mum. “The Sleepover Club should be the most important thing.”

“It is!” I protested.

Fliss shrugged huffily. “Anyone would think you prefer those ponies to your friends!”

“Well, if you’re all going to be so completely mean, then maybe I do!” I shouted, and stomped off across the playground. I could feel my cheeks burning beetroot red, and my eyes were all prickly, like I was about to cry.

What made it a million times worse was that I stomped straight past the M&Ms, who were doing some silly clapping game. They stopped in mid-clap and stood whispering together with horrible smug smiles on their faces.

So I stalked off round the corner where the big school bins are kept. It was pongy there, but at least I was out of sight. I was so cross I pulled three of the gruesomest faces I could think of, which usually makes me feel better.

Not this time. I couldn’t get over how unfair it was. Just this morning we’d been talking about undying friendship and making those bracelets. And now my four best mates in the world had turned on me. All because of some stupid project. Suddenly I was struck by the most terrible thought:

Was this the end of the Sleepover Club?



The next lesson was maths, and it was the longest lesson of my entire life.

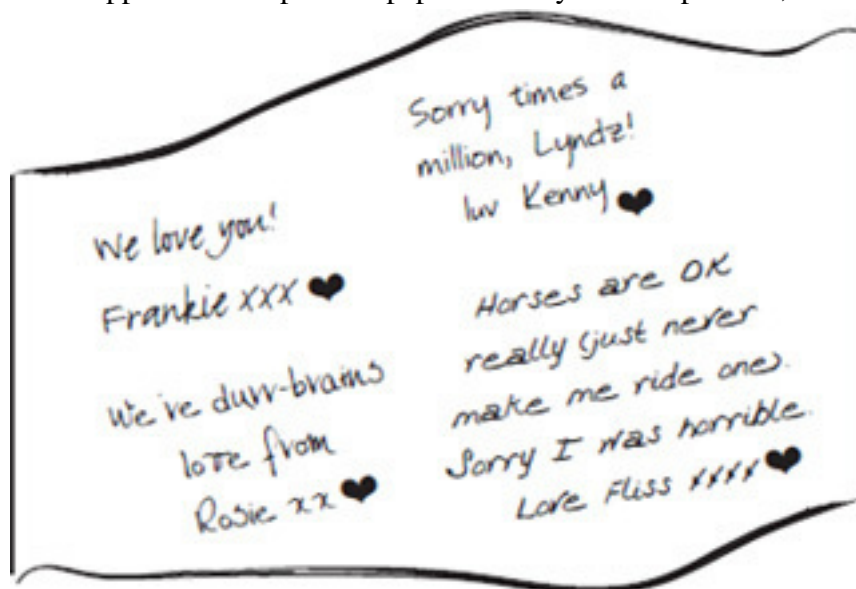
Does that ever happen to you too? Does time seem to whizz by when you're having a laugh and really drag when you're miserable? To me, two weeks of holiday can go five billion times quicker than two weeks of school. What a bummer.

Well, this maths lesson was exactly like that. I thought the clock had broken, its hands were moving so slowly.

I was back at my old desk, next to Rosie and slap bang in front of Frankie and Kenny. Of course I was ignoring them. But ignoring people is such hard work! You have to concentrate on them all the time, to make sure you don't do something normal by mistake, like look at them or ask to borrow a pen.

Mrs Weaver had written up a load of sums on the board. We were supposed to be working quietly on our own, but I could hear rustling and whispering around me, so I knew the rest of the Sleepover Club were doing something. Saying mean things about me probably, I thought.

But then Rosie slipped a folded piece of paper on to my desk. I opened it, and this is what I saw:



I was so relieved, it felt like the sun had just come out inside my head. "Oh, guys!" I said, turning round to them with the biggest grin on my face. "I'm sorry too!"

We tried to have a group hug, but it was tricky because Floss was sitting on the other side of the aisle. And then Mrs Weaver spotted us – "I said no conferring, you girls!" – so we had to turn back to our desks. But I mouthed, "See you at lunch!" and the others all nodded.

It was the best making-up ever. We had a proper hug as soon as the bell went, and then I did high fives with everyone.

“It’s a nightmare falling out,” said Kenny. “Let’s not do it again, all right?”

I nodded, grinning and feeling teary at the same time. “New club resolution.”

“Seconded!” said Rosie.

“Thirded!” yelled Frankie.

“You can’t say thirded,” said Fliss. “But I know what you mean.”

While we were waiting in the lunch queue the M&Ms swanned past with their trays already full. They’re such greedy guts, they always push to the front.

“Untwisted your knickers yet?” asked the Goblin (that’s our name for Emily Berryman) in her weird gruff voice.

“What a shame you’ve got the worst project,” smarmed Emma Hughes. “But then, your presentation’s bound to be pathetic, so it doesn’t really matter, does it?”

“Actually, Transport is the coolest subject,” said Kenny, “and anyone with even half a brain can see that.”

“That’s not what you were saying to Lyndsey at break,” said the Goblin.

“You sneaky little eavesdropper!” gasped Fliss. “You’ve no right listening in to private conversations!”

The Goblin snorted. “Well, what’s the point when they’re as boring as yours?”

And before any of us could reply they sailed off with their noses in the air, like the silly stuck-up idiots that they are.

“Grrr! What would I give to squash those two toad-faces into a big pile of mushy peas!” growled Kenny.

“We’ve got to make sure our project is a squillion times better than theirs,” said Frankie. “At least!”

“We will,” said Rosie firmly, linking arms with me.

Sitting at a different table from the M&Ms, we soon forgot all about them. Kenny kept making farty noises with the ketchup bottle, which made everyone fall about, and Frankie did her impression of Mrs Weaver in a bad mood, which is freakily good. I’d cheered up loads, but there was just one more thing I wanted to say.

“Transport is definitely the coolest subject, of course,” I began sheepishly, not meaning it at all, “but, guys – you’re right that I’ve missed some Sleepover Club things because of the stables. It won’t happen again, I promise.”

“It doesn’t matter,” said Frankie, waggling a chip in the lake of ketchup she’d made on her plate. “We all do other things, like Fliss goes to ballet and Kenny goes to those tedious footie matches. Oof!” Kenny’d grabbed her lunch tray and pretended to boff Frankie over the head with it.

“And anyway,” Fliss said, prodding at her salad with her fork, “we don’t think all those things we said about the stables, honest.”

“Only some of them,” said Kenny, with a wicked grin. “The minute you start stinking of horse poo, Collins, I’m outta here!”

You’re going to think I’m mad, considering what had happened that day, but when I got home from school all I wanted to do was go to the stables. In three weeks’ time there was going to be a gymkhana there – a riding competition with lots of different races and games that you can enter with your pony. I’d played a few gymkhana games before, but I’d never entered a proper competition, so I wanted to do my best.

On my bike I can whizz to the stables in about two minutes, which is dead handy. Today, the moment I got there, I went to see Bramble. She’s a lovely bay – brown with a black mane and tail. Of all the ponies at Mrs McAllister’s stables, she’s my favourite (only don’t tell Alfie and Marvel and the others!).

And when you've had a wobbly day at school, there's nothing like having a pair of kind brown eyes to talk to and a lovely warm furry neck to hug.

"Hey, Bramble," I said, stroking her soft nose to say hello. She nuzzled my hand gently. It seemed like she was pleased to see me.

"Hello, Lyndsey!" called Mrs McAllister, who was walking across the yard. She's my riding teacher, as well as being the owner of the stables.

"Hi, Mrs McAllister," I called back. "Can I do some practice today, for the gymkhana?"

Mrs McA looked at her watch and pursed her lips. "Well... give me about half an hour. Then I'll come and watch you do some jumping on. Bramble's had a fair amount of exercise today, so why don't you just give her a gentle warm-up while you're waiting?"

"Great!" I said. "Thanks, Mrs McAllister."

"Glad to see you're so keen, Lyndsey," she said, heading for her office.

"Well, less than three weeks to go now!" I said.

"Two, you mean!" she called, tapping the poster taped to the office window as she passed. "See you later!" And the office door swung shut behind her.

Two weeks? I frowned, puzzled. But surely the gymkhana was on the 28th? "Wait a sec, Bramble," I whispered, and ran across the yard to have a look at the poster.



My watch just tells the time. It doesn't have a little date window on it, like Fliss's does, so I'm never the person to ask if you want to know the date (unless it's my birthday!). But for once I could remember Mrs Weaver writing it up on the board this morning: Monday 16th.

Well, I bet you've done the maths already, haven't you? Yep, that's right. Dozy here had been reckoning on nearly three weeks to turn herself into Cuddington's answer to Zara Phillips when there were less than two. The gymkhana was a week on Saturday!

That was enough of a shock in itself. But the next moment I felt as if Bramble had leapt across the yard and given me the most almighty kick.

“Oh no!” I groaned out loud. “Frankie’s sleepover!” She’d said a week on Saturday, hadn’t she? And I had promised promised promised (cross-my-heart-and-hope-never-to-set-foot-in-a-stirrup-again) not to miss it. What on earth was I going to do?

Through the window I could see Mrs McAllister, the phone pressed to one ear, looking at me weirdly. I was probably grimacing really gruesomely, worse than the M&Ms with tummy ache. Quickly, I turned round and marched back to Bramble’s stable, to tack her up.

Half an hour later, when Mrs McAllister came out to the field and shouted, “How about some jumping on, then, Lyndsey?” I wasn’t feeling any better. If anything, I think I was feeling worse. My heart was going ker-boom ker-boom in my chest, like it was trying to get out, and I kept thinking how desperately I wanted to enter the gymkhana. I had to find a way. But how could I, after what I’d said to the others? Especially after the barny we’d had about me preferring ponies to my friends!

It was hard to concentrate, but I needed to – jumping on is really tricky. You see, there are some races where, to be quick enough to stand a chance of winning, you have to get off your pony and get back on again while it’s still moving. I’m OK at the flying dismounts (sounds like a circus trick, huh?). It’s the vaulting – that is, the getting back on again – that I have problems with, big time.

“Now try to relax, Lyndsey,” said Mrs McAllister. “And remember: watch Bramble’s stride. You should jump when the front foot that’s nearest to you hits the ground.”

I nodded. I knew this. It was just easier said than done. And I had quite a few bruises from when I’d messed it up last time.

Trying not to be nervous, I urged Bramble into a canter. I ran alongside, gripping her saddle in one hand and the reins in the other, and watching her feet. I was going to have to jump, swinging my legs out over her back end to land in the saddle.

“Come on Bramble,” I whispered breathlessly. “We can do this!”

And then I jumped.

“That was a beauty!” I heard Mrs McAllister call.

I was in the saddle – no bruises. I’d done it!

“Way to go, girl!” I laughed, patting Bramble’s neck.

Well, that put me on such a high I thought I’d show off and go straight into a flying dismount. I swung my body forward and my legs back. But one of my feet got caught in its stirrup. My other leg was already swinging over, and I could feel my weight dragging me out of the saddle. The foot that was stuck was twisting now at a really awkward angle, so I couldn’t get it out.

It must’ve all happened in a nanosecond, but to me it felt like some horrid slow-motion dream. Panicking that my foot wasn’t going to come free, I let go of the reins and was immediately flung out sideways. The ground swung up towards me with a sickening lurch, and then: thwack. Everything stopped dead.



It took me a moment or two to work out what had happened. I just lay there like a sack of potatoes, with my face in the muddy grass.

“Lyndsey! Lyndsey! Are you all right?” I heard Mrs McAllister’s voice right in my ear. She was out of breath; she must’ve shot across the field like an Olympic sprinter.

I groaned and tried to sit up. But when I pushed on my left hand the most horrible pain shot up my arm. “Owww!” I yelped.

“Don’t move yet,” said Mrs McAllister. “Where does it hurt?”

“My arm,” I gasped. “Left... arm.”

Straight away Mrs McAllister sprang into super-efficient emergency gear. First she checked me all over to make sure my arm was the only bit that hurt. Then, ever so gently, she helped me sit up. I was crying by this time, blubbing worse than my little brother Ben (who is the biggest cry-baby in the world, in case you didn’t know). I never knew part of me could hurt that much. I swear, if your arm felt like mine did right then, you’d have been bawling too!

“All right, Lyndsey. We’re going to get you to the hospital,” said Mrs McAllister.

“Where’s Bramble?” I said, turning my head. My eyes were so full of tears, everything was a splodgy blur.

“She’s fine,” said Mrs McAllister. “She’s away by the fence, nosing about in the grass. Think you can stand?”

I nodded, sniffing loudly. I hoped I hadn’t yanked on the reins in my panic and hurt Bramble’s mouth. But I couldn’t worry about Bramble for long. Getting to Mrs McAllister’s Land Rover took all my concentration. My right hand was holding my left arm close to my body to stop it moving, but somehow it still felt as if every step I took gave it a hideous jolt.

Call me crazy, but in the hospital all I could think was: Kenny should be here! Kenny, as you probably know, is dead set on being a doctor when she grows up, like her dad. She just loves all that gruesome medical stuff. If she’d been sitting next to me while I waited in Casualty she would’ve been bouncing up and down in her chair with excitement and trying to guess what hideous diseases everyone else had.

As it was, I was sandwiched between Mrs McAllister on one side of me and Mum on the other. Miranda, Mrs McA’s assistant, had rung my house as soon as we set off for the hospital.

Mum kept saying relieved things like, “Thank goodness you were wearing a hard hat, poppet!”

And Mrs McAllister kept saying apologetic things like, “Believe me, Mrs Collins, I would never let anyone out of the yard without one.”

Mrs McAllister was looking quite shaken, actually. I guess it’s really rare that anyone hurts themselves at the stables.

They’d given me some majorly strong painkillers, so I was feeling a bit better, though still really sore. It took ages to get everything sorted. They did an X-ray (Kenny would’ve been in orbit!), which

showed that my arm was broken. Then, after another long wait, I had my plaster cast made. That felt mega weird.

The cast went from my wrist to just above my elbow, and I was going to have to wear my arm in a sling, the nurse said, to hold it in place. Some slings are quite small, I think, but mine was like an enormous napkin. I felt like an Egyptian mummy!

“How long do I have to wear the cast for?” I asked Mum on the way home.

“Six weeks, the nurse said,” Mum replied. We stopped at some traffic lights and she turned to look at me. “Poor pumpkin. You were very brave.”

Famous last words! For some reason that just made me burst into tears again. It was probably the shock of it all, Mum said later.

When we got home, Dad came bounding out of the house and opened the car door for me. “But – what’s happened to you?” he said, gasping and staring at my plaster cast as if I’d just sprouted an alien growth.

“Daaad! You are such a bad actor!” I shrieked. “Mum was on the phone to you every five minutes when we were in the hospital. I heard her!”

“Oh. Right you are, then,” Dad said, slamming the car door behind me and ruffling my hair in the way that usually really annoys me. Tonight, for some reason, I didn’t mind.

Ben and the baby, Spike, were already in bed, but my older brothers Stuart and Tom piled downstairs when they heard us come in. They’d even made a welcome home banner for me out of a couple of old tea towels stapled together.

Конец ознакомительного фрагмента.

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