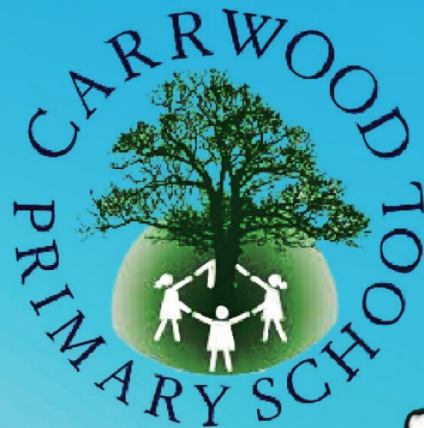


# The Holmewood Horse

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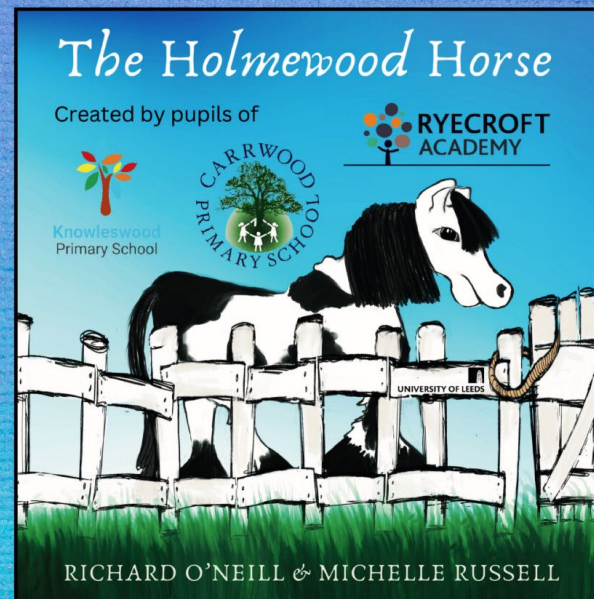


Knowleswood  
Primary School



RICHARD O'NEILL & MICHELLE RUSSELL

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# *The Holmewood Horse*

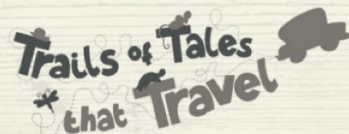
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*Michelle Russell*  
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A bus can take you here & there A book can take you anywhere

The bedraggled horse had wandered from place to place, for days,  
not knowing where it was going.

It was getting weaker by the hour.

All it wanted to do was rest somewhere safe.



- Bedraggled - something very untidy



It had been shooed away, had stones thrown at it, chased and almost run over by a car.

- Shooed - when you make something or someone go away by waving your arms at them and saying 'shoo'

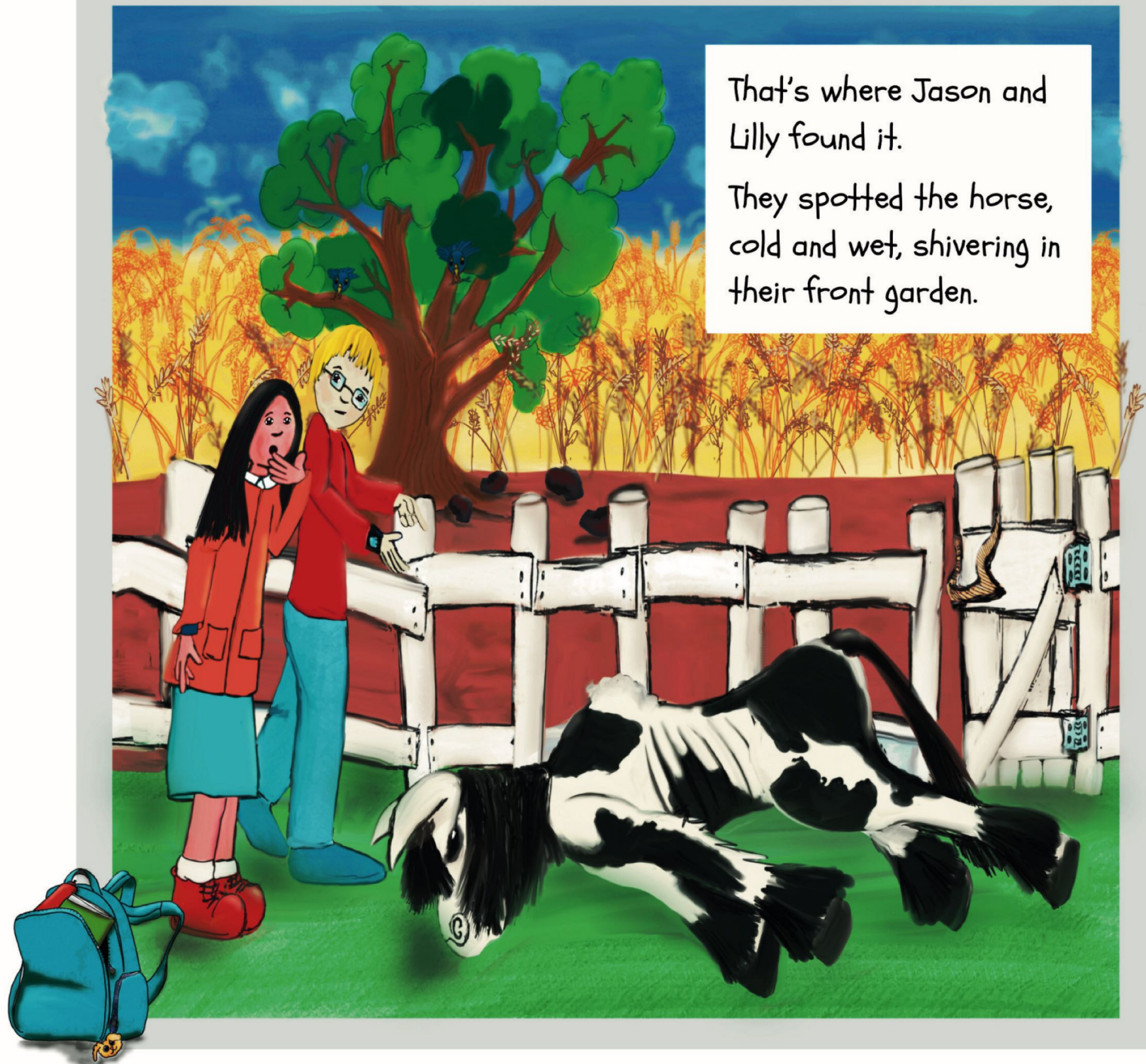


In the early hours of the cold, dark, winter morning it could go no further. Hopeful that the dangers were evaded the horse took one more step and dropped to the ground, falling into an exhausted sleep.

- Evaded - when you escape or avoid something

That's where Jason and Lilly found it.

They spotted the horse, cold and wet, shivering in their front garden.





Seeing that it was in need of urgent help they ran inside to fetch some hot water bottles, a blanket and an old waterproof coat to cover it.

Their Uncle Alex's neighbour, Karl, agreed to help them. This was fortunate as he had many years experience of working with horses.

Between them they managed to get the creature up off the cold, wet, ground and into a dry warm shed.



• Fortunate - lucky



Once the horse was settled Karl knew the ideal person to call. A local vet, he had known for years, came out and gave the animal a full examination.



"She's definitely a horse. A very underfed and tired one, but overall, there's nothing seriously wrong with her," said the vet, pausing for a moment, "although in all of my years in practice, I've never seen a horse quite like her... her head... it looks a bit like ... like a dragon!" she said smiling.

"Maybe, she is part dragon!" uncle Alex said, joining in with the fun.

The vet stopped smiling and said, "Seriously though, I'll have her DNA checked. She could have some kind of problem."

The vet left them with a list of things the horse was required to eat and how it needed to be cared for. There were also clear instructions to continue with something she called TLC.



- Underfed - not given enough food
- DNA - 'Deoxyribonucleic acid' - the chemical information inside your body that makes people who they are
- TLC - 'Tender Loving Care' - when someone is treated in a kind and caring way

Everyone listened attentively as all the data was shared.

"There's something very interesting and puzzling about the horse's DNA. It's mainly horse but there's an unidentified animal in there too," announced the vet.

"Maybe you were right Uncle Alex... about it being part dragon," interrupted Jason.

"Drago-Equina vet speak - we use a lot of latin," she continued.

"Be useful for toasting marshmallows if she was," Uncle Alex quipped.

They all laughed  
and the  
dragon-horse  
snorted  
softly.

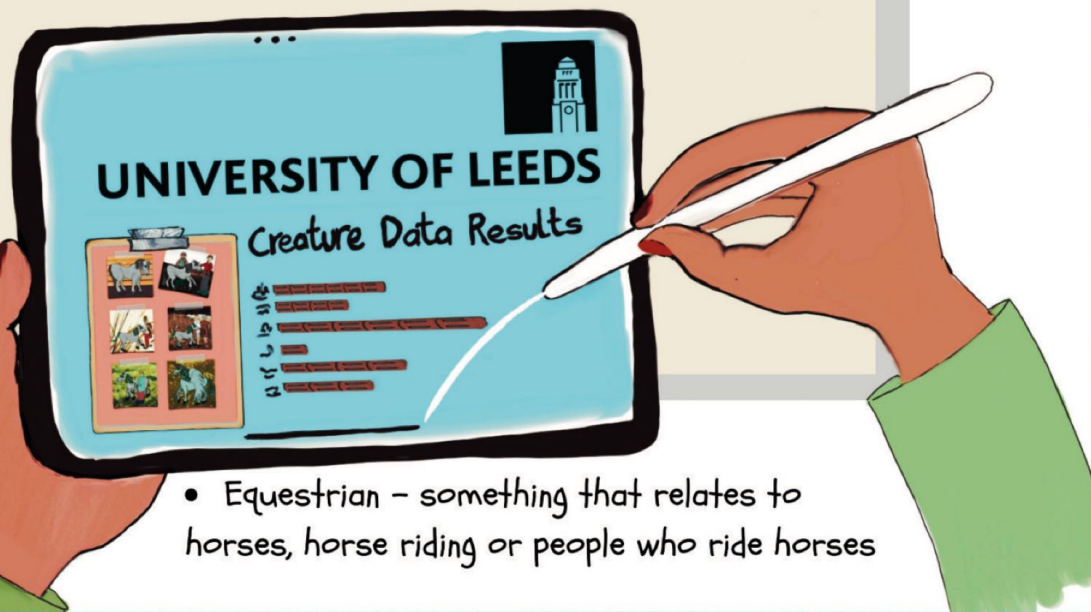


- Attentively - when someone is watching and listening carefully

Uncle Alex, Jason and Lilly also went to visit the local equestrian centre for advice. Again, TLC was recommended. Which they now knew stood for Tender Loving Care.



Meanwhile, having received reports from scientists at the local university, the vet had some interesting news to share.



- Equestrian - something that relates to horses, horse riding or people who ride horses



As Drago got stronger and fitter she loved to go outside for a run. Sometimes both children could be seen sitting together on her back.

Their horse looked odd compared to the other horses, from the shape of its elongated head, to the lumps that stuck out on either side of its body and its pointy tail.

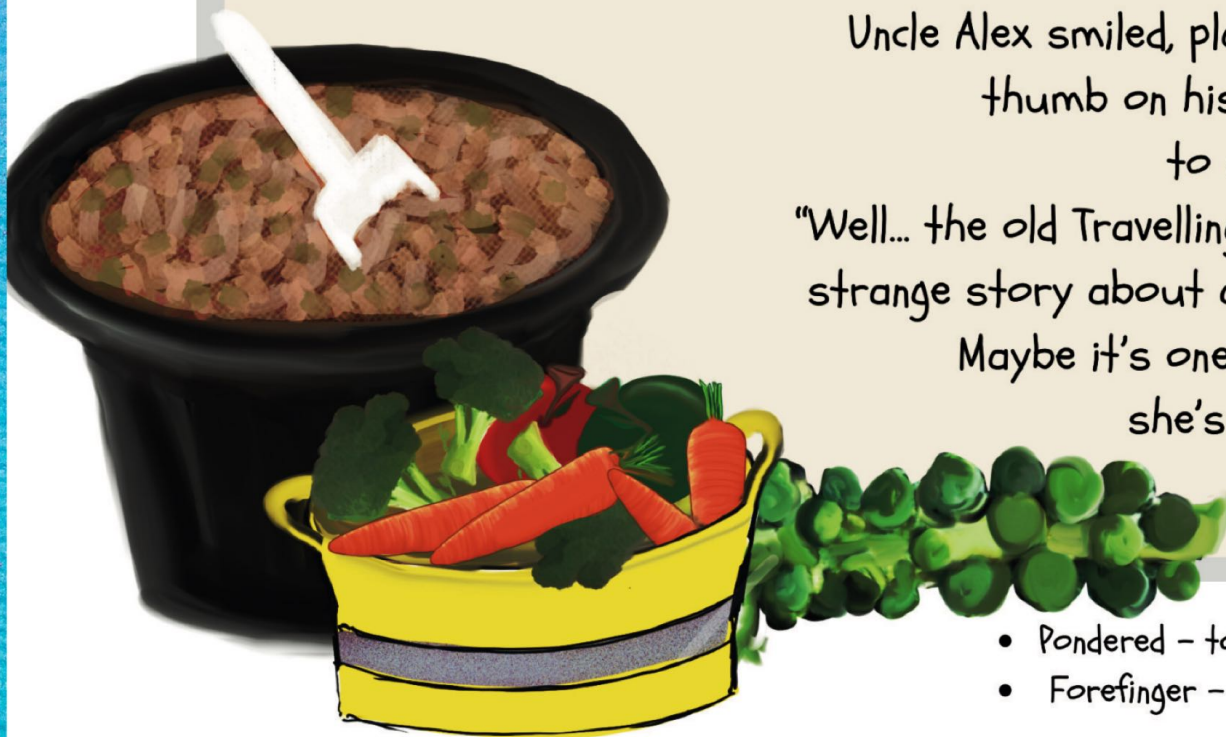
Despite how the dragon-horse looked the local people took it to their hearts and loved it, just as much as the two children.

- Elongated - when something is made longer



The following day, when they were feeding the horse her usual breakfast of vegetables, one of the children pondered, "You don't think she's really got dragon in her? Do you?"

Uncle Alex smiled, placed his forefinger and thumb on his chin, as he proceeded to answer their question. "Well... the old Travelling people used to tell a strange story about a horse, that could fly. Maybe it's one of them, but at least she's finally got her name...  
Drago!"



- Pondered - to think carefully about something
- Forefinger - the finger next to your thumb



One afternoon, while watching Drago grazing in the field, Jason noticed how different she looked compared to the other horses.

Lilly also commented that although the other horses didn't seem to recognise the difference, or if they did, they accepted Drago.

Lilly and Jason, concerned about the lumps getting bigger, asked the vet to check them again.

Are they hurting Drago?

What are they?

I have to confess. I don't know what they are, but I'm sure they aren't causing Drago any pain. I'll keep a check on them and I can request the people in the lab, at the university, to run some more tests.



- Confess - to admit to something you did wrong or are embarrassed about

Returning with the results of the latest tests the vet proceeded to read, "The lumps are just unusual and definitely nothing to worry about. Let me see her move."

The children led her up and down a grassy area of the estate, first walking, then trotting.

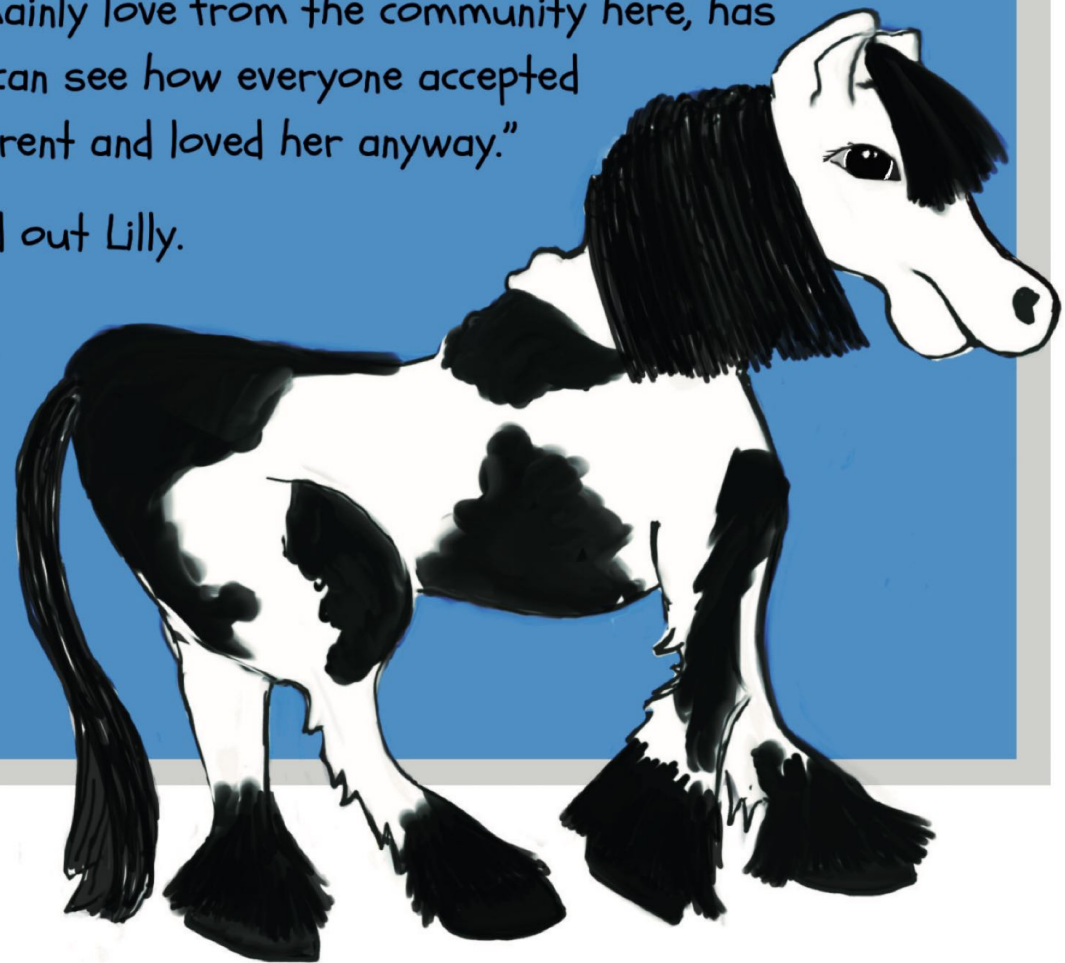
Karl proudly said, "She moves well. Doesn't she?"

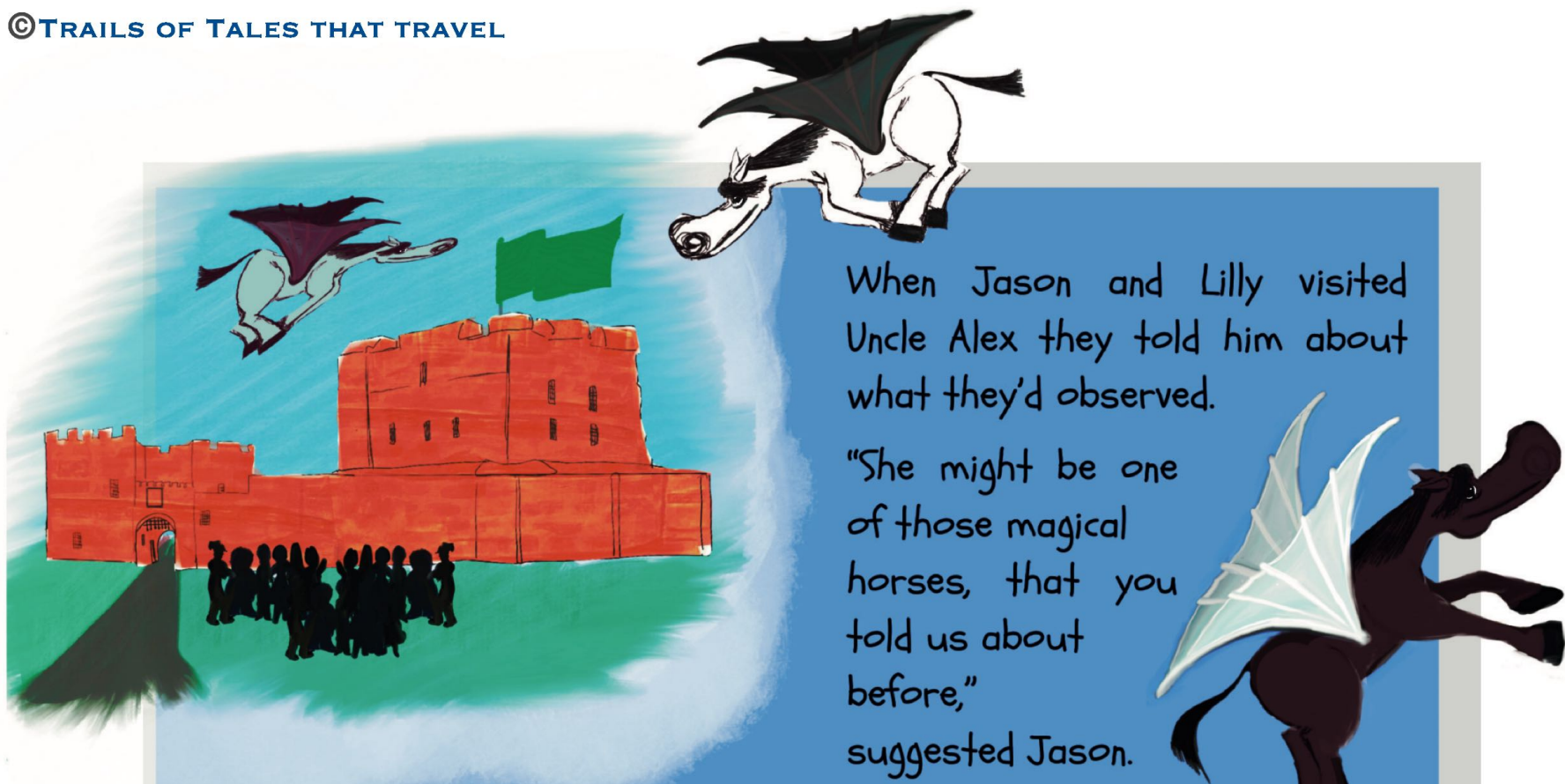
The vet, patting Drago, said, "She certainly does. As far as I'm concerned, she's is as fit, healthy and happy as any animal I've ever treated.

Food, exercise, but mainly love from the community here, has benefited her well. I can see how everyone accepted that Drago was different and loved her anyway."

"Lots of TLC," blurted out Lilly.

"Absolutely," the vet nodded with an enormous smile.





When Jason and Lilly visited Uncle Alex they told him about what they'd observed.

"She might be one of those magical horses, that you told us about before," suggested Jason.

"Don't be silly," said Lilly.

"Is that story true?" Jason asked.

"I'm only telling you what I heard. So, I don't know if it's true or not. It's probably just a myth," Uncle Alex continued, "some of those old storytellers could make you believe anything."



The children, desperate to get Drago pulling a cart so they could go on drives with their friends, were very apprehensive about how she would react.

Would she take to it or would she reject it?

They'd seen horses kick at the carts before and even witnessed them trying to jump out of the shafts.

With care they slowly put the harness on Drago, one piece at a time. They were so gentle, she didn't even flinch. Drago even seemed to like it.

"She might have already been in a cart before, for all we know," Karl suggested, as he gently pulled the two wheeler up to her.

Lilly stroked Drago's head whilst Jason helped Karl fasten up the harness to the cart.

Karl flicked the reins gently, urging Drago forwards. When they were moving properly he beckoned the children to climb onto the cart with him. At first they went at a slow pace, increasing to a steady trot. Which increased to a confident, faster paced run around the field.

Drago then took them out onto the road.

- Shaft - part of the cart that connects to the horse's harness
- Flinch - a quick movement away from something painful, frightening or surprising
- Beckoned - when you call someone over by shouting or waving to them

Karl, amazed by the horse's confidence, commented, "Never known anything like it, seems like she's being doing it forever!"

Jason smiled, "She's a special horse."

Karl nodded in agreement, "She certainly is".



Karl spent a lot of time showing the children how to drive the cart around traffic, how to keep in control and how to make all of their journeys as safe and as enjoyable as possible for all of them.

They loved being out with Drago and took great pride in how people in the neighbourhood would smile and wave when they saw her. Bringing carrots and apples for a tasty treat.



One day they joined a few of the other horse and cart owners for a long drive.

The weather was perfect, not too hot and not too cold, just a nice clear sky and a light breeze.



When they stopped halfway, to water the horses, there was a group of adults standing watching them.

For no reason at all, when they saw Drago, they started laughing and shouting.

What's that  
supposed to be?  
A cow?

No! It's an  
ugly donkey!

Moooo! Hee Haw!  
Ha Ha Ha Ha



Then someone lit a  
firework, which went  
off with a loud bang  
and crackle!

Which spooked Drago,  
so much, that she  
took off, like a rocket,  
down the road



Karl tried to slow her down, but all he and the children could do was to hang onto the reins and the cart as tightly as they could.

They all knew they were heading for the river.

They were building up such a speed that they couldn't jump off the cart, without getting seriously hurt.

Karl, Jason and Lilly all now hanging on for dear life, everything passing in a blur, got closer and closer to the river.

Lilly shouted, "Look!" and pointed at Drago's bulges, which had started to pulsate.

Hardly believing their eyes, distracted from the imminent danger, their gaze unanimously fixed on Drago.

Their eyes widened even more!

They saw a large wing slowly unfold from either side of their speeding horse.

Drago's wings now fully extended, flapped up and down like a bird.

At the same time the cart flew up into the air and glided across the river, landing gently, on the opposite side.

- Imminent - something is happening soon
- Unanimously - when everybody agrees on the same thing



Trotting back towards home, with Drago's wings tucked back into her sides, a stunned silence was broken, with the sound of Drago's hooves as they echoed on the cobbles of the road.

It took a long time before the children and Karl could bring themselves to talk about what had happened.

"That was real! Wasn't it?" Jason asked.

"I'm pretty sure it was," said Karl.

"But how?" said Lilly.

"What are we going to do about it?" said Jason.

"I have absolutely no idea," said Karl scratching his head, "let's take her harness off and get her something to eat and we'll have a think about it."





*The End*

Meanwhile...



Flying horse spotted over ...



The scientists, lab assistants, vet and an expert equestrian collaborated on finding out more about a mysterious new species of horse, which was discovered in West Yorkshire.

The research and results, having so many similarities to the local folklore of the Travelling people, raised more questions.

Could the Travellers' stories be more than just fiction?

*...as if by magic the  
strange-looking horse  
began to transform before  
their eyes...*



When a bedraggled horse turns up in their neighbourhood a girl, a boy, their uncle and his friend start looking after it.

A test, run by the local vet, has interesting results revealing the creature has unusual DNA.

As the horse grows stronger, the children begin to wonder if it really is like the horse in the old fairytale their uncle tells them.

The Holmewood Horse is a magical tale of empathy, inclusion and a community who take a horse to their hearts.

