

THE KIDS' READING ROOM

'Three Horses'

NICOLE BORGENICHT

Churbin, a jet-black stallion, was all alone. He had not eaten in days. During that last week, before they left him alone, a little girl named Sally talked to him and fed him carrots. "Mom says we can't take you. Cindy's parents won't let her have you either, because they almost lost their farm, too." Churbin whinnied softly.

On the last night she said, "We're all going to find a way to survive Churbi," rubbing his forehead, "someone will come along and see you here. I put out fliers." She hugged his long neck.

But now the outline of Churbin's ribs showed through his once-lustrous coat. Was he going to starve?

One star-lit night a "Hello" spilled into the silence. And a beautiful white horse appeared. "Who are you?" Churbin asked.

The pretty white horse lifted her head. A long gleaming horn protruded from her forehead and glittered in the darkness. She was that magical creature, a unicorn.

"You look hungry," she said. There was a portion of oats lying in the food trough. "This is for you, Churbi." Churbin blushed. Churbi was Sally's name for him.

"You will have more soon. Lie back down so that I may curl my horn in your mane — this will make you strong again." Churbin softly whinnied and lay beside the magical unicorn. She curled her horn in his mane. They gazed at the stars and fell into a profound and peaceful sleep.

Deep into the night a voice said, "You are not done, Churbin, wake up and look at me!" Churbin lifted his head to see Pegasus, the winged horse, flying above him in the star-filled, velvet night.

"You have a little food in your tummy. But you are thirsty and need more strength."

Shining Pegasus landed in the corral and dug his hooves into the ground, causing a fountain of wa-



ERIN O'SHEA

ter to spring forth. "Now drink, so that you are ready for my final gift." The drink strengthened Churbin and filled him with gratitude. There was thunder in the distance. A lightning bolt appeared, suspended in the air. Fascinated, Churbin lightly tapped the lightning bolt with his hoof. Just as he did so, Churbin sprang to life. He leapt over the corral into the woods beyond.

"That's got to be Churbin, 'as dark as the night and a long mane' as it was described in the flier!" proclaimed a teenage girl named Marcy. Churbin whinnied.

"How did he find us? I don't see a corral," said her father. "Poor guy looks hungry."

"He's leaving," Marcy exclaimed, running after him.

"He's showing us the way," her father said, "Look, there's the corral. How the heck did he get out?" The corral was locked and empty.

"It's OK, Churbin," her father

took out a carrot from his bag. "You'll like your new home. We even have a white horse for you to play with there."

Churbin ate the carrot. Then he rose up on his hind legs kicking the air joyfully.

"I guess he likes carrots," said her father, putting a shiny red bridle on Churbin. "He could have starved, some people just don't know enough to call animal services. Thank God for the fliers."

"Thank God, for you, Dad," Marcy beamed at her father. "You never gave up looking for him." Churbin kicked up his heels again and looked toward the heavens.

Special thanks to Erin O'Shea for her illustration.

To see more of her work, visit www.erinoshea.com.

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Father's Day is Sunday, June 19.

CREATIVITY CORNER

My Dad

Gracie, 8
Condit Elementary
Claremont

My dad is special and super cool. He taught me how to swim. He walks me to school every day. He's a stay-at-home dad and he gives bear hugs, and he jokes that all we're having for dinner is bugs! He's funny and different; he has cool poufy hair. But most of all, he is always there.

Dad

Colin, 6th grade
Palm Crest Elementary
La Canada

Regaining my sight, sitting on the grass, words hazy to my ears, still wondering what to do.

I remember my dad running toward me. I told him what had happened and he went on with his day. My dad is special to me because he had fun with life. He always made jokes, but was serious when he had work. He was a great dad, determined to be the best. He was always great to share memories with, like the one up above, when I flipped out of the golf cart.

My Grandpa

Elizabeth, 7
Myford Elementary
Irvine

My grandpa is free, no pain, no hospital. He's up in heaven fishing with his family in Alexandria in the cool waters.

I remember your smile, giving us gifts and super-gluing toys that fell apart. I will miss you, but I'm happy that you are free.

For My Daddy

Jake, 8
Westwood Charter Elementary
Los Angeles

Every day I will give you a color to fill your heart. On dark days I will give you bright colors. On bright days I will give you all the colors of the rainbow. I will show you that life is joyful with colors.

Helpful Bee

Royce, 2nd grade
Pacific School
Manhattan Beach

I saw a bee pollinating flowers. It reminded me of my dad. Like a helpful bee my dad does stuff for me. But dad's not black and yellow. He's a great fellow. Sometimes mad, sometimes sad. But mostly helpful.



HAPPY BOY: By Fabian, 10, Worthington Elementary, Inglewood.

How to reach us

Kids, to take part in a feature on these pages, write to Kids' Reading Room, Los Angeles Times, 202 W. 1st St., Los Angeles, CA 90012; or fax to (213) 237-5946; or e-mail kidsreadingroom@latimes.com. Include your first and last name, age, school and the city in which your school is located.

Get published

The Kids' Reading Room encourages submissions for the following features: Book Reviews by Kids, Jokes & Riddles and Creativity Corner.

Submission guidelines

Submissions should be brief and are subject to editing. Drawings should be square or vertical in shape, in color and on unlined paper. Make sure you do all the work yourself.



JOKES & RIDDLES

What do you give a sick bird? Tweet-ment!

Carina, 11
Centralia Elementary
Anaheim

Why didn't the sink trust the empty bottle? He could see right through it!

David, 10
Vista Fundamental
Simi Valley

Kids, send us your funny jokes and puzzling riddles.

