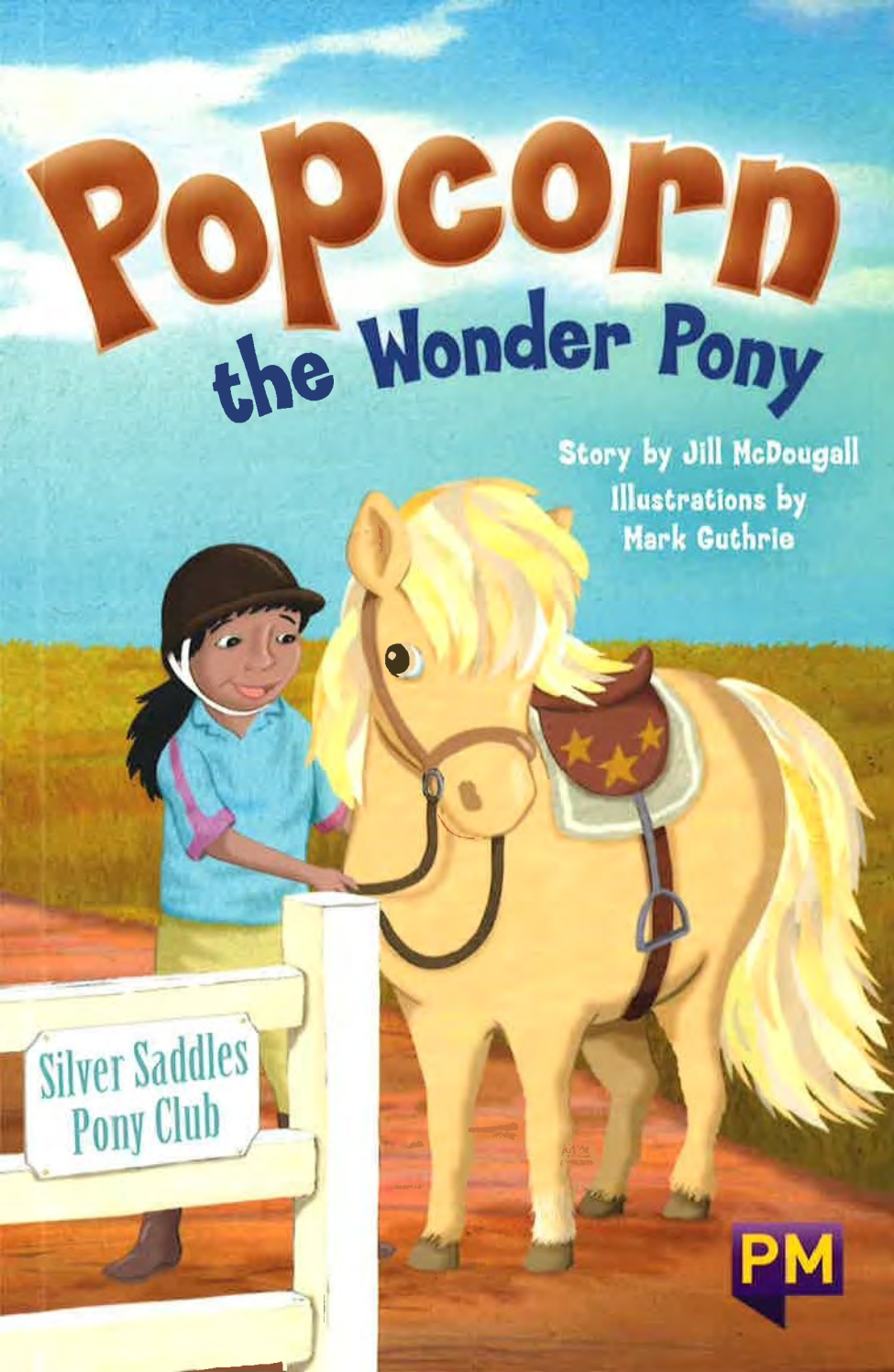
Popcorn the Wonder Pony

Story by Jill McDougall
Illustrations by Mark Guthrie



PM

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Popcorn the Wonder Pony

Level 25
Running Words 1711 **Text Type** Narrative (Imaginative)
Curriculum Area Literacy

Retelling to encourage critical thinking about the content

Ask each student to retell the story in his or her own words.
Record the retelling for further discussion and reflection

Questions to reinforce meaning and stimulate discussion

Literal

1 Why did Sophie join the pony club?
2 What happened to the judge with the frizzy hair and pearls?
3 Why did Mr Grimble decide not to give Popcorn a ribbon for the whitest teeth?

Inferential

4 Why didn't Sophie tell the other children about Popcorn's tricks in the circus?
5 Why was Popcorn called a 'wonder pony' when he was in the circus?
6 Why did Sophie kick off her boots when she performed her tricks?
7 Why did Sophie believe Popcorn would win a ribbon at the gymkhana?
8 What does the expression *dunce of the class* mean?
9 Why did Sophie feel her pony needed to be appreciated?

Applied Knowledge

10 Why is a head judge often appointed at events such as a gymkhana?
11 Why are horses the only animals involved in events at the modern Olympic Games?
12 Why are there laws today about animals performing in circuses?

Vocabulary

Replace the verb 'clasped' in this sentence:
She clasped her riding crop like a ringmaster at a circus.

Links with other PM Guided Reading Books and Cards

Level 26 Book Narrative *Dog Day!*

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Chapter 1

Joining the Pony Club



"Welcome to the Silver Saddles Pony Club!" said Mrs Hambone, the riding teacher. She smiled at me. "You have a lovely pony, Sophie. What's his name?"

"Popcorn," I told her.

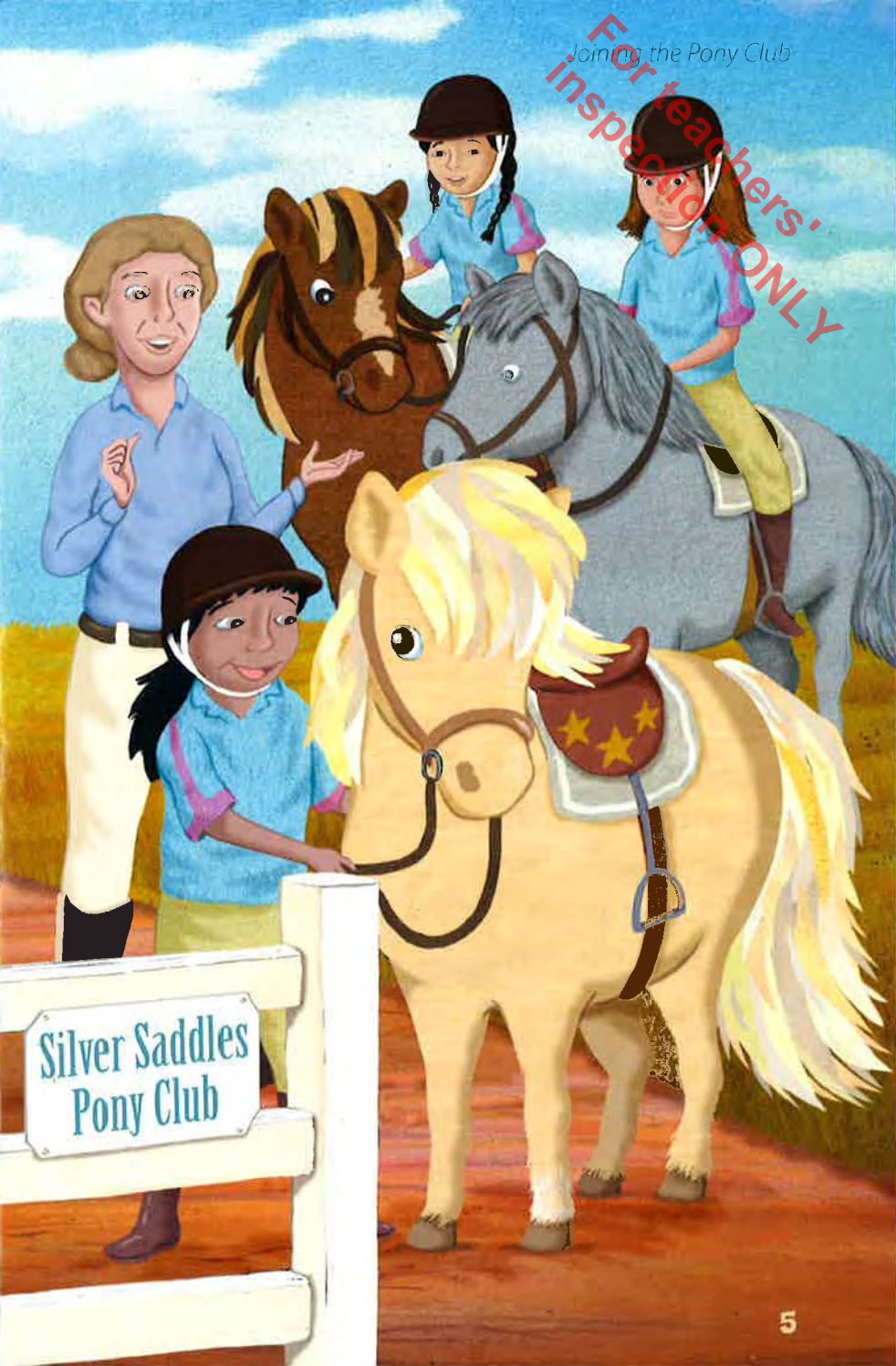
The other girls looked at Popcorn with surprise.

"Why does Popcorn have gold stars on his saddle?" asked a girl on a grey pony.

I stroked Popcorn's sleek neck. "Because Popcorn is a superstar," I told the girl.

Everyone laughed. I could tell that they didn't believe me.

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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.

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"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.



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I loosened the reins and nudged Popcorn's soft belly with my knees. He broke into a trot and we kept going round the circle behind the other ponies. I looked at the other riders. Everyone else seemed to be bored, too.

Suddenly, I had an idea.

"Get ready, boy," I whispered to Popcorn. "We're going to have some fun."



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Chapter 2

Too Many Tricks!



Mrs Hambone stood in the middle of the ring, watching us trot. She clasped her riding crop like a ringmaster at a circus.

Popcorn and I trotted past her. "Do I have to ride sitting down?" I asked.

Mrs Hambone gave me a worried look. "What do you mean, Sophie?"

"I could ride standing up," I said.

Before Mrs Hambone could say anything, I quickly kicked off my riding boots.

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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?



Text Type:
Narrative (Imaginative)

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