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The Three Horses

Mary Graham Bonner

In the barn at the farm there lived three horses: Danny, Fanny, and Prince. Bobbie, the farmer's youngest son, had always loved watching them — and he'd always noticed, without quite knowing why, that he felt happiest when their ears were standing straight up.

That night he fell into bed so tired he barely managed to whisper his usual request to the Dream King. On good evenings he would make an elaborate speech — "Your gracious majesty, would your royal highness do a humble subject the great honor of sending him most noble dreams?" — but tonight all he could manage was "Nice dreams, please."

And so the Dream King sent him the three horses.

They walked into his room and stood in a row at the foot of the bed.



"Hello, Bobbie," they said.

"Hello, Danny. Hello, Fanny. Hello, Prince."

"We've come to tell you something," said Fanny. "Something you've always wanted to know."

Prince stepped forward — as the oldest, it was his honor to speak.

"You've always wondered why we put our ears up when you come into the barn," he said. "Here is the reason: ears up means we're feeling friendly. We're glad to see you. We're at our ease."

Bobbie leaned forward in his dream.

"Ears flat back means the opposite — we're angry, or frightened, and it's best to step carefully. But, Bobbie — we have never put our ears back when you've come around. Not once. We always, always like having you with us."

In the morning, Bobbie went straight to the barn. The three horses turned to look at him, ears up.

"I know your secret," he said.

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