

## The Horse Made of Clay

Somewhere in time, in a land far away, lived a beautiful princess and a horse made of clay.

The princess's name was Ariella the Kind.

She was beautiful and bright and she knew her own mind.

Rojay the horse stood tall, brave and bold; alone in a field grown weedy and old.

Young Ariella would often visit Rojay. She would sing or would talk while she polished his clay. Then

came a day, in her seventeenth year, when her father brought news she did not want to hear. He

came to her room and "Ariella," he said, "I have made the decision that it is time you were wed."

"You have become quite a lady and the time now draws near when you will marry a prince and move far from here." Ariella just stood there, in shock and dismay, and then she ran crying to her horse made of clay.

"Oh Rojay," she cried, her tears catching her voice, "They are planning my life and I don't have a choice."

"I don't want to leave here. I don't want to be queen. I won't marry some prince who's all dusty and mean." Hugging Rojay she lay down and wept and, at last growing tired, she finally slept.

While sleeping she dreamt, as was often her way that she was on an adventure, just her and Rojay.

They sang with Cock Robin and helped the Lady of Shoe. They swam with the mermaids and took walks with Poo. She found each new adventure did not tarnish the old but they all wove together like a necklace of gold.

To finish her necklace she had to move on, accept change when it happened, make her choice and be strong. She awoke in the field awash with the moon and knew that her life would change very soon.

As winter ended and spring claimed the land, many princes came calling to ask for her hand. But the King said to each, "It is not mine to give." "Ariella will choose with whom she will live." After quite a long time, from a land very far, came a prince bold and brave who shone like a star.

He was strong. He was kind. He was honest and fair. They both fell in love right then and right there

On the eve of her wedding, with dawn not far away, Ariella went to the field to visit Rojay

She stroked his strong neck, wet with her tears, and spoke to her companion of so many years

"Rojay you have been both champion and friend. You have protected and comforted me time and

again." "Now I must leave you and it makes my heart break but life must go forward with each choice

that we make." "I've met a prince whom I love full and true. I had to, of course, he reminds me of you."

"Our people will join, our lands become one. Thank you Rojay for this prize we have won."

"I love you Rojay and I always will". She turned then to go but instead stood quite still.

For the light of the moon shone down on Rojay, and with its white glow, it softened his clay.

Then with a sound, like the softest of sighs, Rojay turned his head and looked into her eyes.

The prince and the princess were married that day and when they left for his kingdom, so did Rojay.