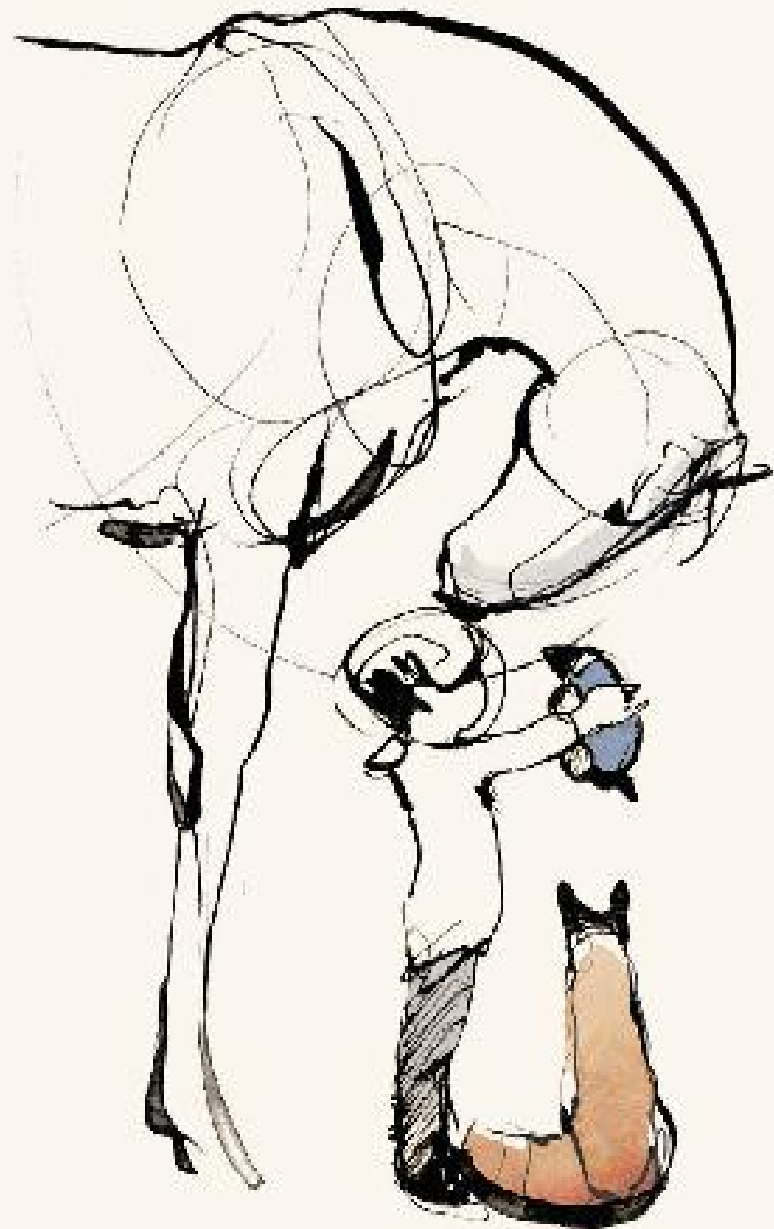


The Boy, the mole,  
the fox and the Horse



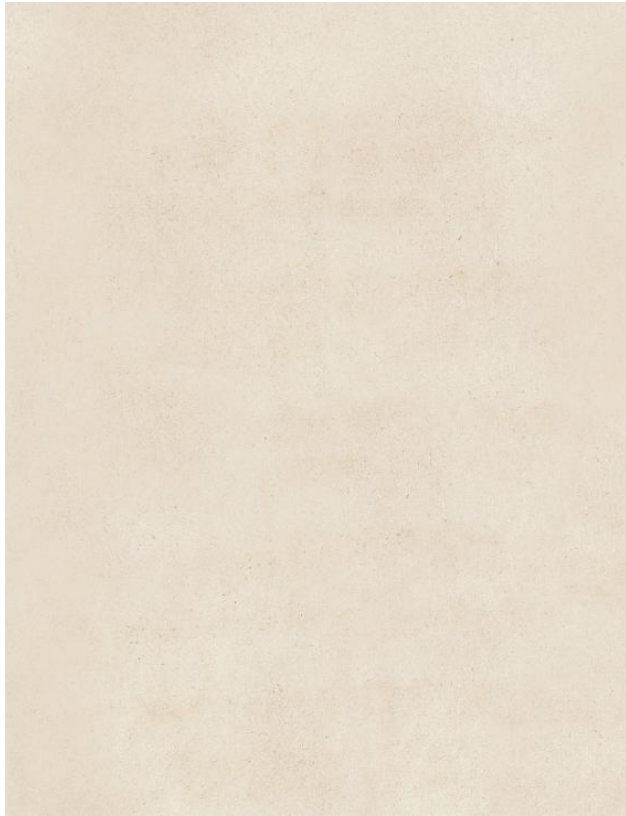
Charlie Mackesy

**Lively and in strict time**  
Munter und straff. (♩ = 120)

2.

The musical score consists of four systems of piano music. Each system features a treble and bass clef staff. The music is written in a lively, rhythmic style. The illustrations are integrated into the score, with horses and riders appearing to move across the musical staves. The horses are depicted in various poses, some galloping and some standing. The riders are shown in simple, sketchy forms. The overall style is that of a historical manuscript or a whimsical musical score.





The Boy,  
the mole,  
the fox  
and the horse.

This book is dedicated  
to my lovely kind mum,  
and my wonderful dog  
Dill.



THE BOY, THE MOLE, THE FOX AND THE HORSE

Charlie Mackery



Hello



You started at the beginning, which is impressive. I usually start in the middle, and never read introductions. It's surprising that I've made a book because I'm not good at reading them. The truth is I need pictures, they are like islands, places to get to in a sea of words.



This book is for everyone, whether you are eighty or eight - I feel like I'm both sometimes. I'd like it to be one you can dip into anywhere, anytime. Start in the middle, if you like. Scribble on it, crease the corners and leave it well thumbed.



The drawings are mainly of a boy, a mole, a fox and a horse. I'll tell you a little bit about them - although I'm sure you'll see things here that I don't, so I'll be quick.



The boy is lonely when the mole first surfaces. They spend time together gazing into the wild. I think the wild is a bit like life - frightening sometimes but beautiful.

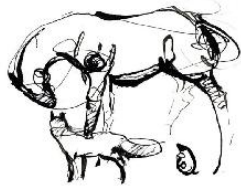
In their wanderings they meet the fox. It's never going to be easy meeting a fox if you're a mole.

The boy is full of questions, the mole is greedy for cake, the fox is mainly silent and wary because he's been hurt by life.



The horse is the biggest thing they have ever encountered, and also the gentlest.

They are all different, like us, and each has their own weaknesses. I can see myself in all four of them, perhaps you can too.



Their adventures happen in Springtime where one moment snow is falling and the sun shines the next, which is also a little bit like life - it can turn on a sixpence.

I hope this book encourages you, perhaps, to live courageously with more kindness for yourself and for others. And to ask for help when you need it - which is always a brave thing to do.

When I was making the book I often wondered, who on earth am I to be doing this? But as the horse says:

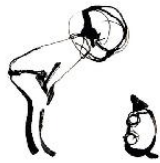


"The truth is everyone is winging it."

So I say spread your wings and follow your dreams - this book is one of mine. I hope you enjoy it and much love to you.

Thankyou. Charlie X





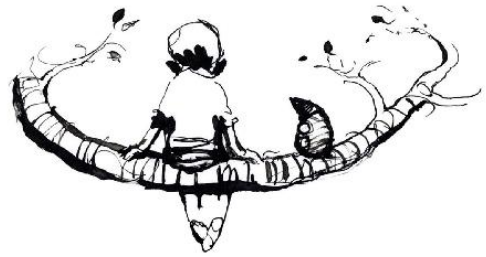
"I'm so small," said  
the mole.



"Yes," said  
the boy.  
"but you  
make a huge  
difference."



"What do you want to be  
when you grow up?"



"Kind" said the boy



"What do you think  
success is?" asked the boy



"To love," said the  
mole

"Well hello"



"Do you have a favourite saying?" asked the boy.

"Yes" said the mole.

"What is it?"

"If at first you don't succeed, have some cake."

"I see, does it work?"

"Every time."



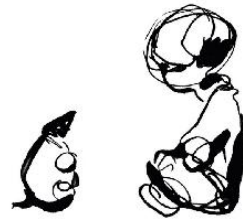
"I got you a delicious  
cake," said the mole.  
"Did you?"  
"Yes"  
"Where is it?"  
"I ate it," said the mole.  
"Oh!"  
"But I got you another."  
"Did you?  
Where is that one?"  
"The same thing seems to  
have happened."

"What do you think is  
the biggest waste of time?"



"Comparing yourself to others,"  
said the mole.

"I wonder if there is  
a school of unlearning."



"Most of the old moles  
I know wish they had  
listened less to their fears and  
more to their dreams."



"What is that over there?"



"It's the wild," said the mole  
"Don't fear it."



"Imagine how we would be  
if we were less afraid."







"If I wasn't caught in this snare  
I'd kill you," said the fox.

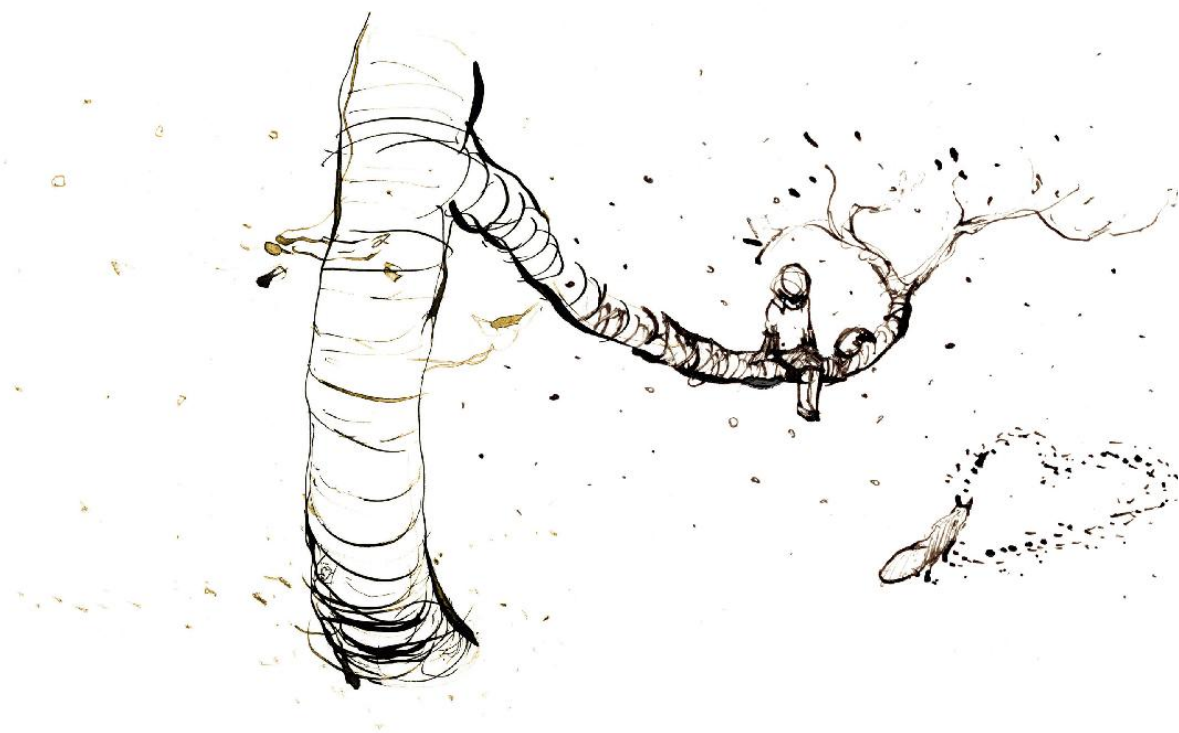


So the mole chewed through  
the wire with his tiny teeth.



"One of our  
greatest freedoms  
is how we  
react to  
things"





"I've learned how to be  
in the present."

"How?" asked the boy

"I find a quiet spot and  
shut my eyes and breathe."



"That's good, and then?"

"Then I focus."

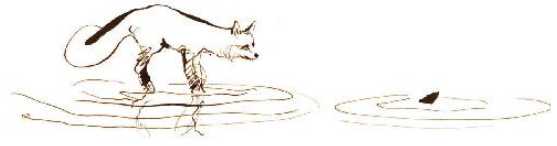
"What do you focus on?"

"Cake," said the mole.

"Isn't it odd. We can  
only see our outsides, but  
nearly everything happens on  
the inside."



"Be careful not  
to fa..."



...le"





"So much beauty we need  
to look after."



"Being kind to yourself is one  
of the greatest kindnesses," said  
the mole.

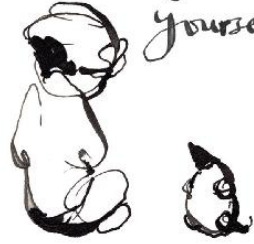




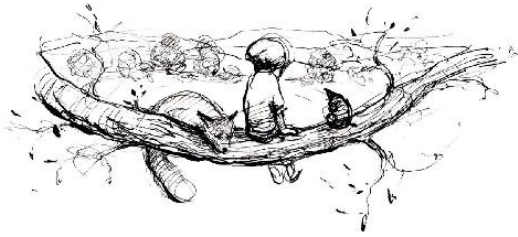
"We often wait for kindness...  
but being kind to yourself can  
start now." said the mole.



"Often the hardest  
person to forgive is  
yourself"



"Sometimes I feel lost,"  
said the boy.

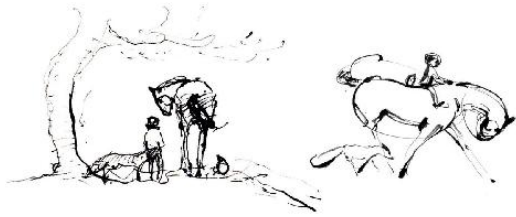


"Me too," said the mole,  
"but we love you, and  
love brings you home."

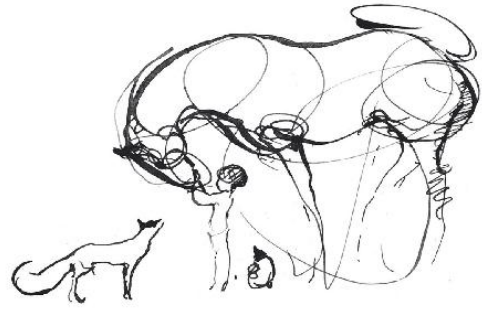
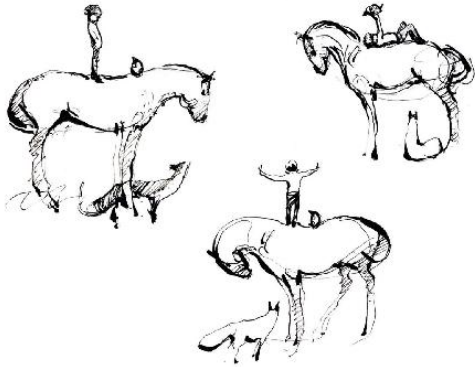


"I think everyone is just  
trying to get home,"  
said the mole.

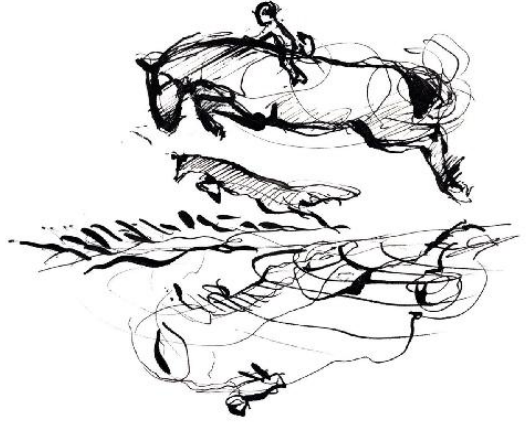
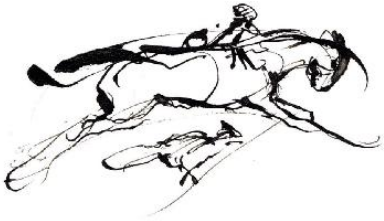
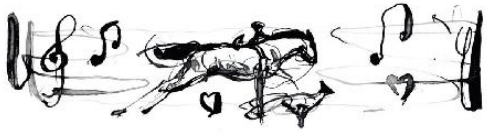


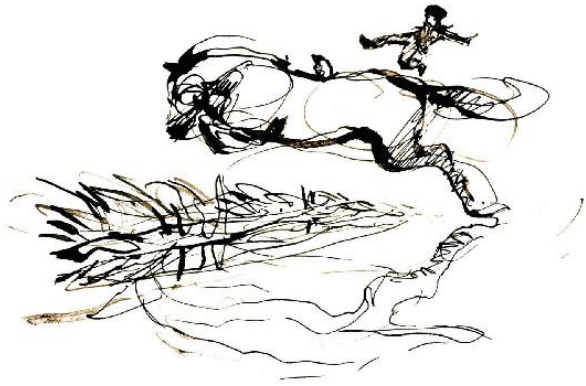


"Doing nothing with friends is never doing nothing, is it?" asked the boy



"No," said the mole.





*"You fell - but I've got you"*



"Everyone is a bit scared,"  
said the horse.

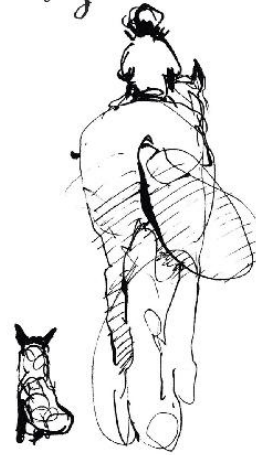


"But we are less scared  
together."

"Tears fall for  
a reason and  
they are  
your  
Strength  
not  
Weakness"



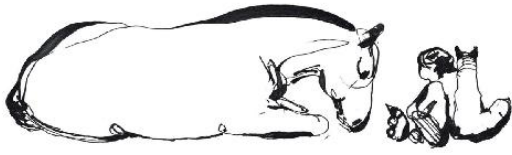
"What is the bravest thing  
you've ever said?" asked  
the boy.



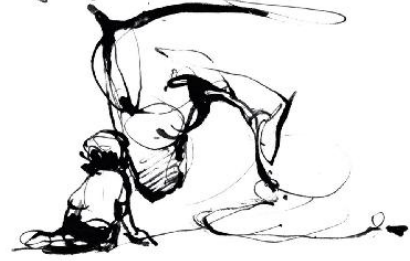
"Help," said the horse.

"When have you been at your strongest?" asked the boy.

"When I have dared to show my weakness."



"Asking for help isn't giving up," said the horse.



"It's refusing to give up!"

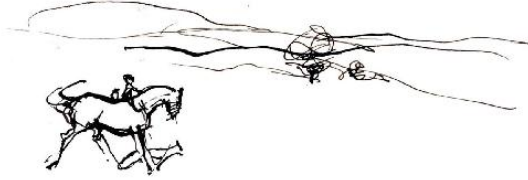
"Sometimes I worry  
You'll all realize  
I'm ordinary," said  
the boy.



"Love doesn't need  
you to be extraordinary."  
said the mole.



"We all need a reason to keep going,"  
said the horse. "What's yours?"



"You three," said the fox.



"Getting home," said the boy.



"Cake," said the mole.

"I've discovered something  
better than cake."

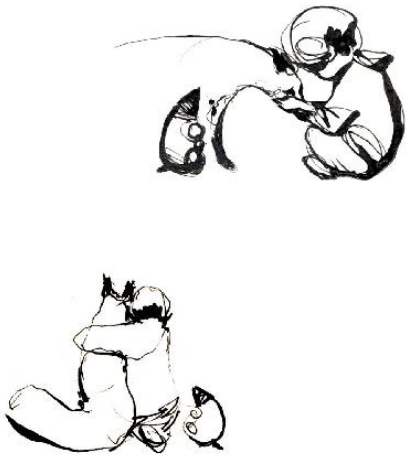
"No you haven't," said the boy.

"I have," replied the mole.

"What is it?"

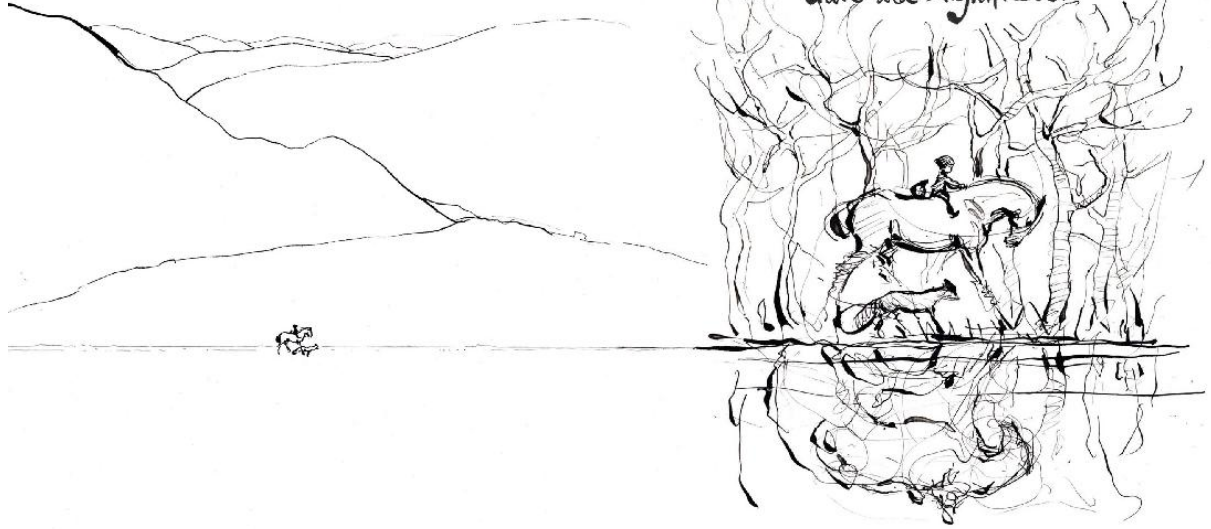
"A hug. It lasts longer."





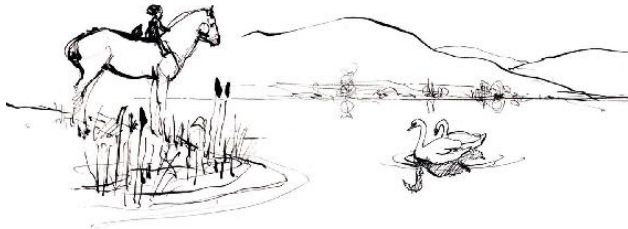
"Nothing beats kindness," said the horse. "It sits quietly beyond all things."

"Sometimes," said the horse.  
"Sometimes what?" asked the boy.  
"Sometimes just getting up  
and carrying on is  
brave and magnificent."





"How do they look so  
together and perfect?"  
asked the boy



"There's a lot of frantic paddling  
going on beneath!"  
said the horse

"The greatest illusion,"  
said the mole,



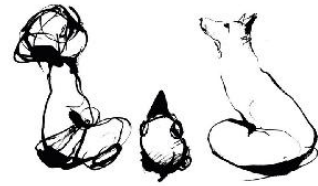
"is that life should be  
perfect."

*My dog walked over the drawing - clearly trying to make the point*

"Is it the moon?" asked  
the boy.



"It's a tea cup stain..."  
said the mole, "and  
where there's tea there's cake!"



Be curious

"Life is difficult -  
but you are loved."



"So you know all about me?"  
asked the boy

"Yes," said the horse.

"And you still love me?"

"We love you all the more."

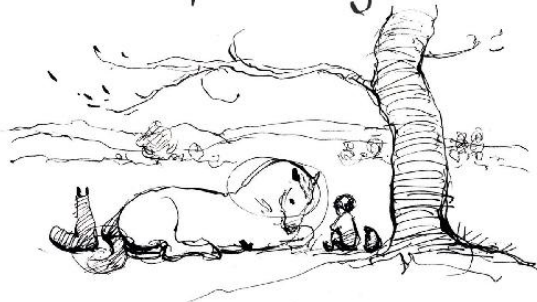


" Sometimes I think  
you believe in me  
more than I do."  
said the boy



"You'll catch up."  
said the horse

"The fox never really speaks,"  
whispered the boy.



"No. And it's lovely he is with us."  
said the horse.

"To be honest, I often feel  
I have nothing interesting to say,"  
said the fox.



"Being honest is always interesting,"  
said the horse.



"There's something I haven't told you,"  
said the horse,  
"What's that?" said the boy  
"I can fly, but I stopped because  
it made other horses jealous."



"Well we love you



whether you can fly or not."



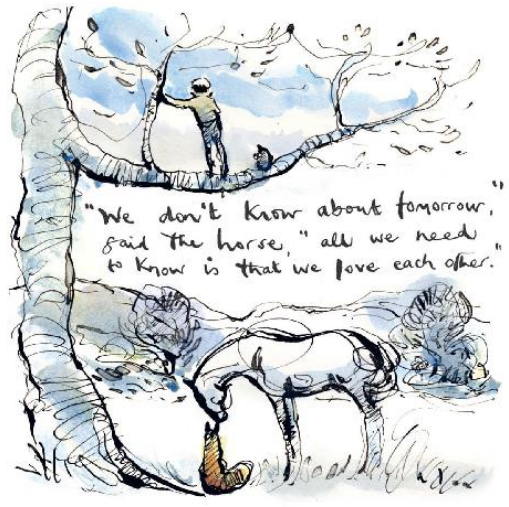








"Is your glass half empty or half full?"  
asked the mole.  
"I think I'm grateful to have a glass,"  
said the boy





"When the dark  
clouds come..."

...keep going."



" When the big things feel out  
of control

... focus on what you love right  
under your nose."



"This storm will pass."

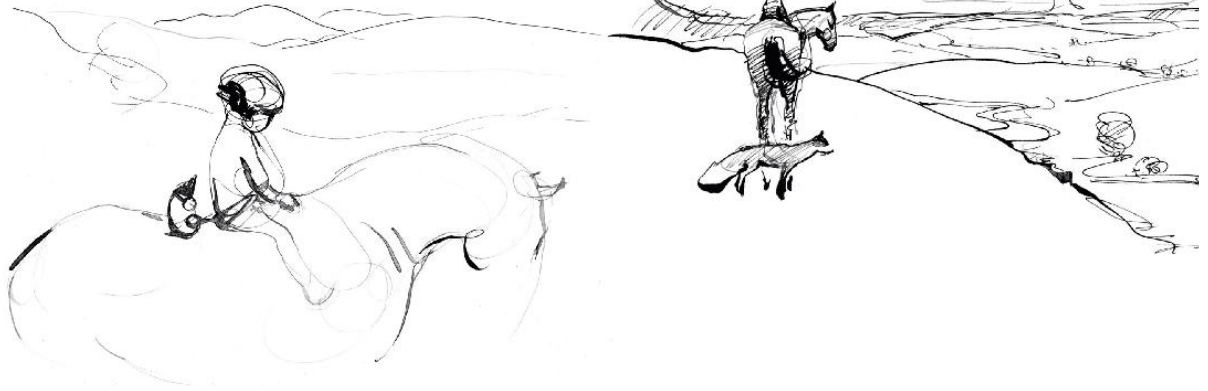


After the Storm



"We have such a long way to go," sighed the boy.

"Yes, but look how far we've come," said the horse.





"Sometimes I want to say  
I love you all," said the  
mole, "but I find it difficult."

"Do you?" said the boy.

"Yes, so I say something like  
I'm glad we are all here."

"OK," said the boy.



"I'm glad we are all here."

"We are so glad you are here too."



"What's your best discovery?" asked the mole.



"That I'm enough as I am," said the boy.

"I've realized why we are here,"  
whispered the boy.  
"for cake?" asked the mole.



"To love," said the boy.  
"And be loved," said the horse.



"What do we do when our hearts hurt?" asked the boy



"We wrap them with friendship,  
Shared tears and time, till they  
wake hopeful and happy again."

"Do you have any other advice?"  
asked the boy



"Don't measure how valuable you  
are by the way you are treated,"  
said the horse

"Always remember you matter,  
You're important and you are loved,  
and you bring to this world

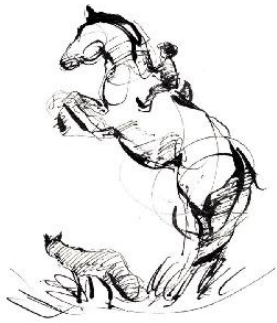


things no one else can."



"Home isn't always  
a place is it?"






~~The end~~  
look how  
far we've  
come





"Sometimes all you hear about  
is the hate,  
but there is  
more love in  
this world than  
you could  
possibly  
imagine!"

This book is about friendship and I  
couldn't have made it without my  
friends. So thank you Matthew, Grace,  
Bear, Phil, Miranda, Amy, Emma, Scarlett,  
Charlie, Richard and Helen to name a few,  
whose conversations and love are so part  
of these pages. x

Thanks to Colin the brilliant  
Irishman who helped sew this book  
together often late into the night. 

Thank you to everyone at Penguin;  
Sail, Joel, Tess, Becky, Lucy, Alice, Rae,  
Beth, Nat, and especially Laura who so kindly  
copied with me and my messy drawings.

And thank you so much to you  
on social media who encouraged me  
with everything.

Thank you Sara, Daisy and Christopher  
for your love and endless cups of tea ☺  
and to my dogs Dill and Barney x o o s  
D



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