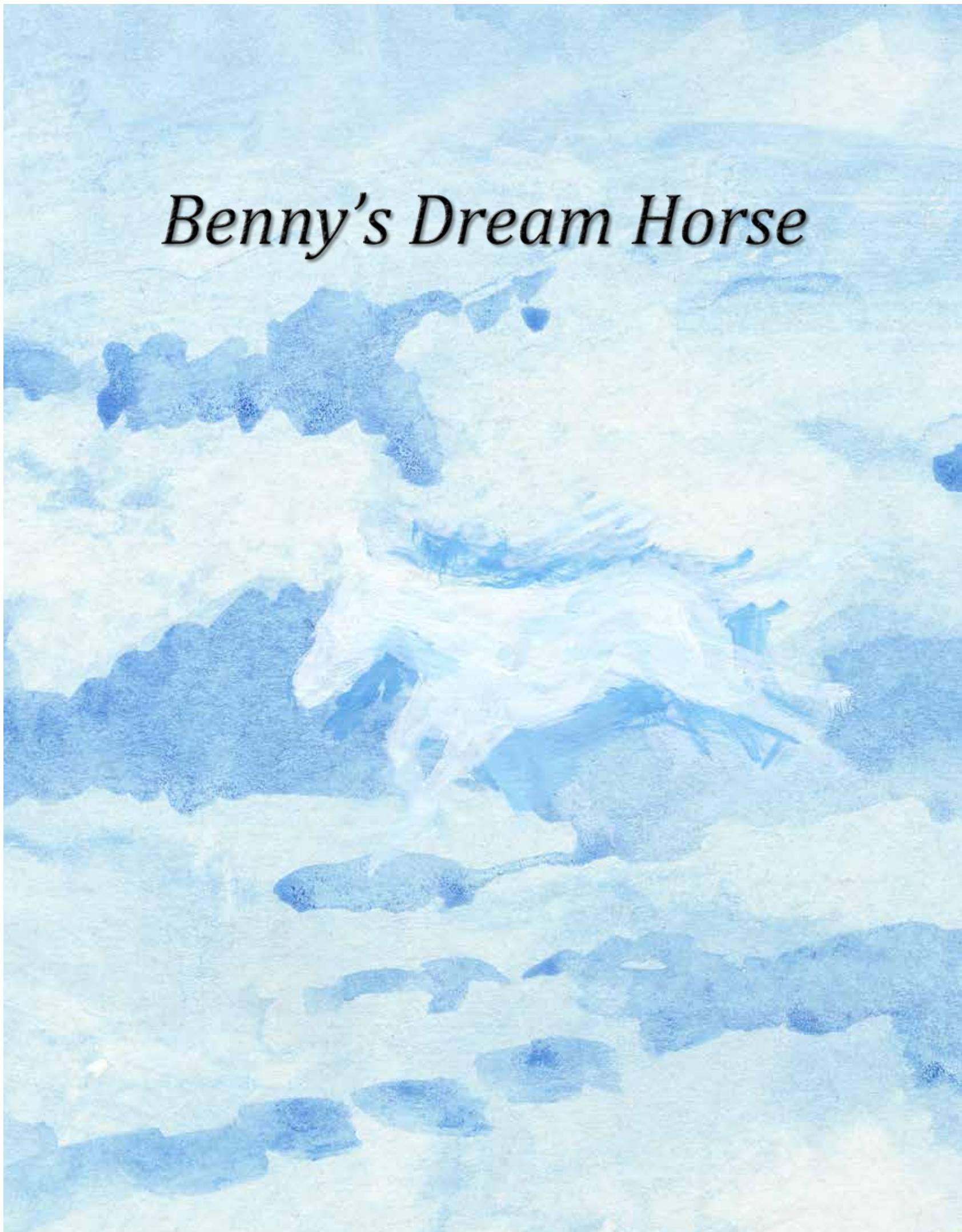


*Benny's Dream Horse*



# *Benny's Dream Horse*

by Harriet Zaidman; based on a story by Ben Zaidman

Art by Tom Andrich

“Faird” is the Yiddish word for “horse,” and “Fairdle” is an affectionate expression of the word. “Bekker” in Yiddish means “baker.”



In memory of my parents, Ben and Nellie, and for their great-grandchildren: Benjamin, Mina, Simone, Georgia, Alice, Avery and Holly. Here's a story for you. — HZ

To Judy — my wife and best friend — TA

Text copyright © 2018 by Harriet Zaidman  
Illustrations copyright © 2018 by Tom Andrich

All rights reserved. No part of this publication may be reproduced or stored in a retrieval system, or transmitted in any form or by any means, electronic, mechanical, recording, or otherwise, without prior written permission of the publisher, Peanut Butter Press. In the case of photocopying or any other reprographic copying, a licence must be obtained from Access Copyright.

Peanut Butter Press  
9-1060 Dakota Street  
Winnipeg, MB R2N 1P2  
www.peanutbutterpress.ca

The text is set in 14 pt Cambria. The artwork was rendered in watercolours and acrylics.

Book design by Jason Doll, Animation Dog.

Printed and bound in Hong Kong by Paramount Printing Company Limited/Book Art Inc., Ontario, Canada.

This book is Smyth sewn casebound.

10 9 8 7 6 5 4 3 2 1

Library and Archives Canada Cataloguing in Publication

Zaidman, Harriet, 1952-, author  
Benny's dream horse / written by Harriet Zaidman  
; based on a story by Ben Zaidman.

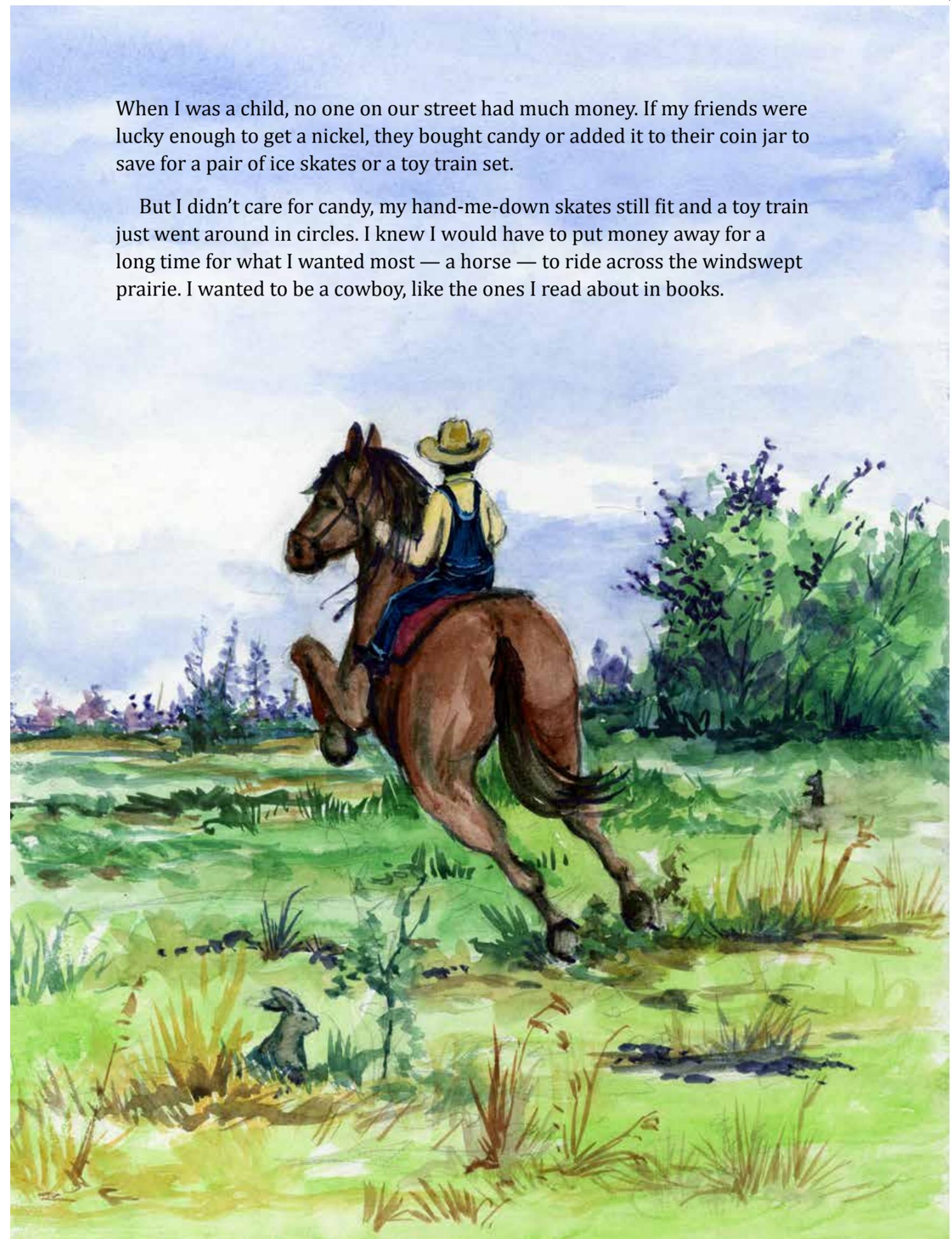
ISBN 978-1-927735-55-8 (hardcover)

I. Andrich, Tom, 1945-, illustrator II. Title.

PS8649.A382B46 2018      jC813'.6      C2017-903953-9

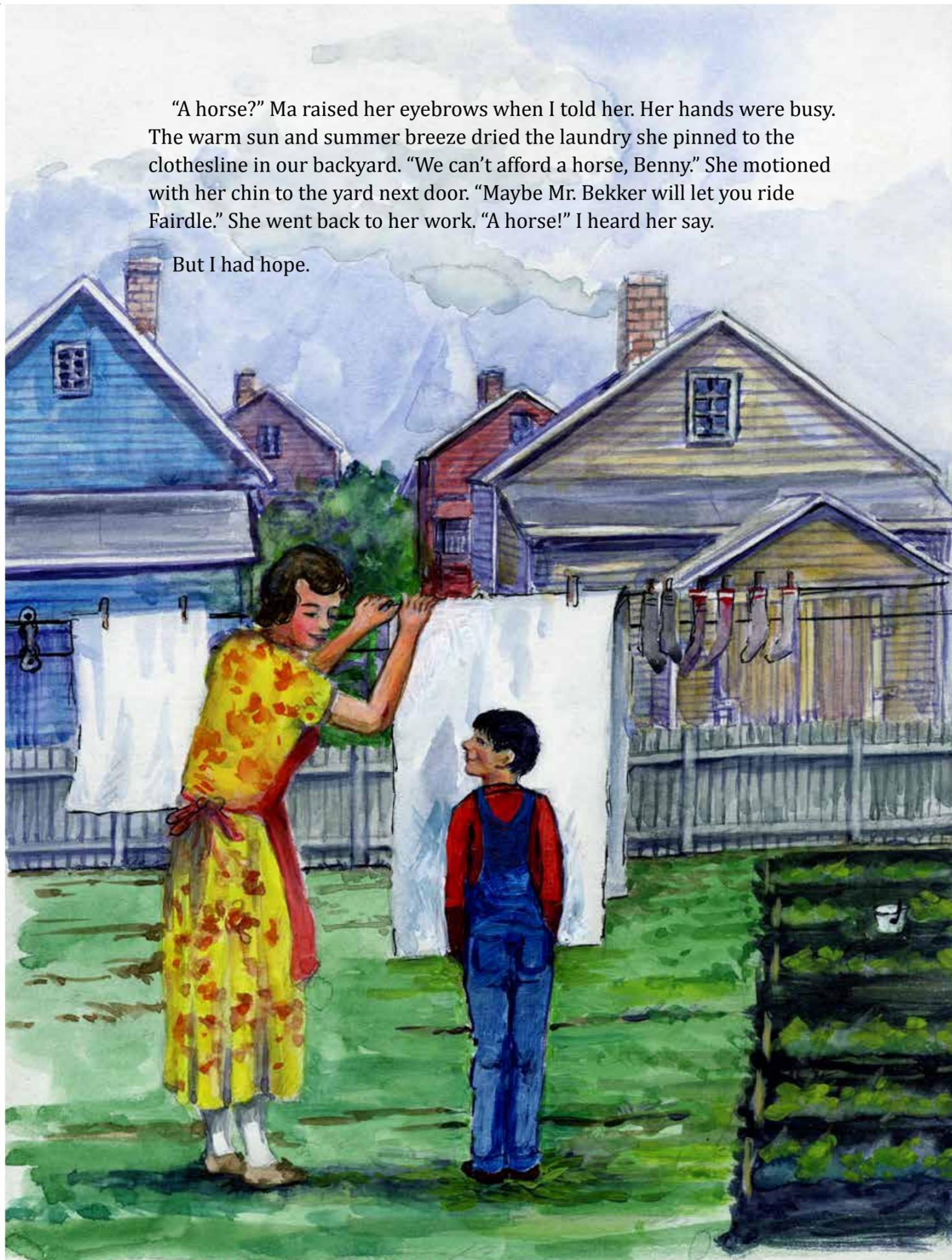
When I was a child, no one on our street had much money. If my friends were lucky enough to get a nickel, they bought candy or added it to their coin jar to save for a pair of ice skates or a toy train set.

But I didn't care for candy, my hand-me-down skates still fit and a toy train just went around in circles. I knew I would have to put money away for a long time for what I wanted most — a horse — to ride across the windswept prairie. I wanted to be a cowboy, like the ones I read about in books.

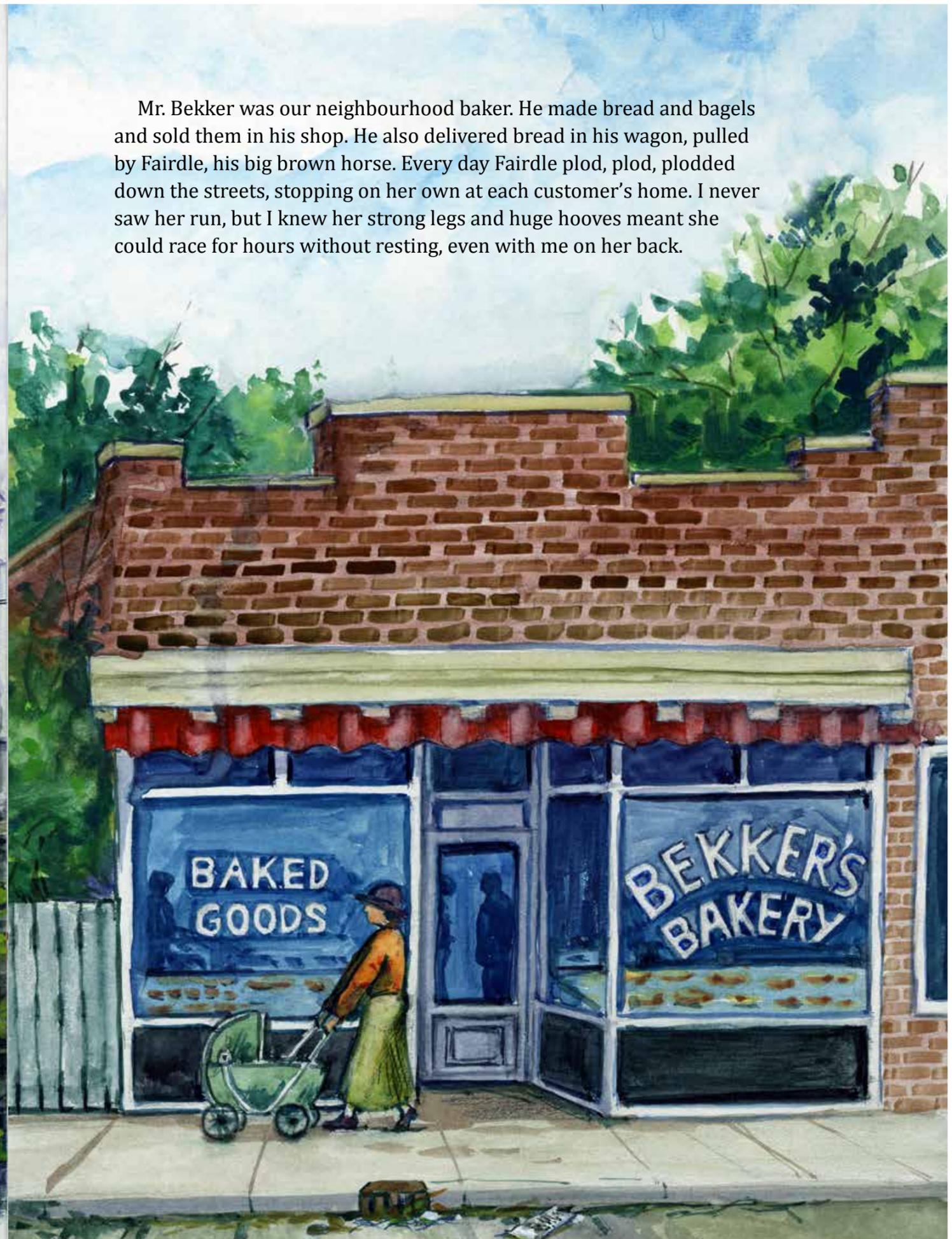


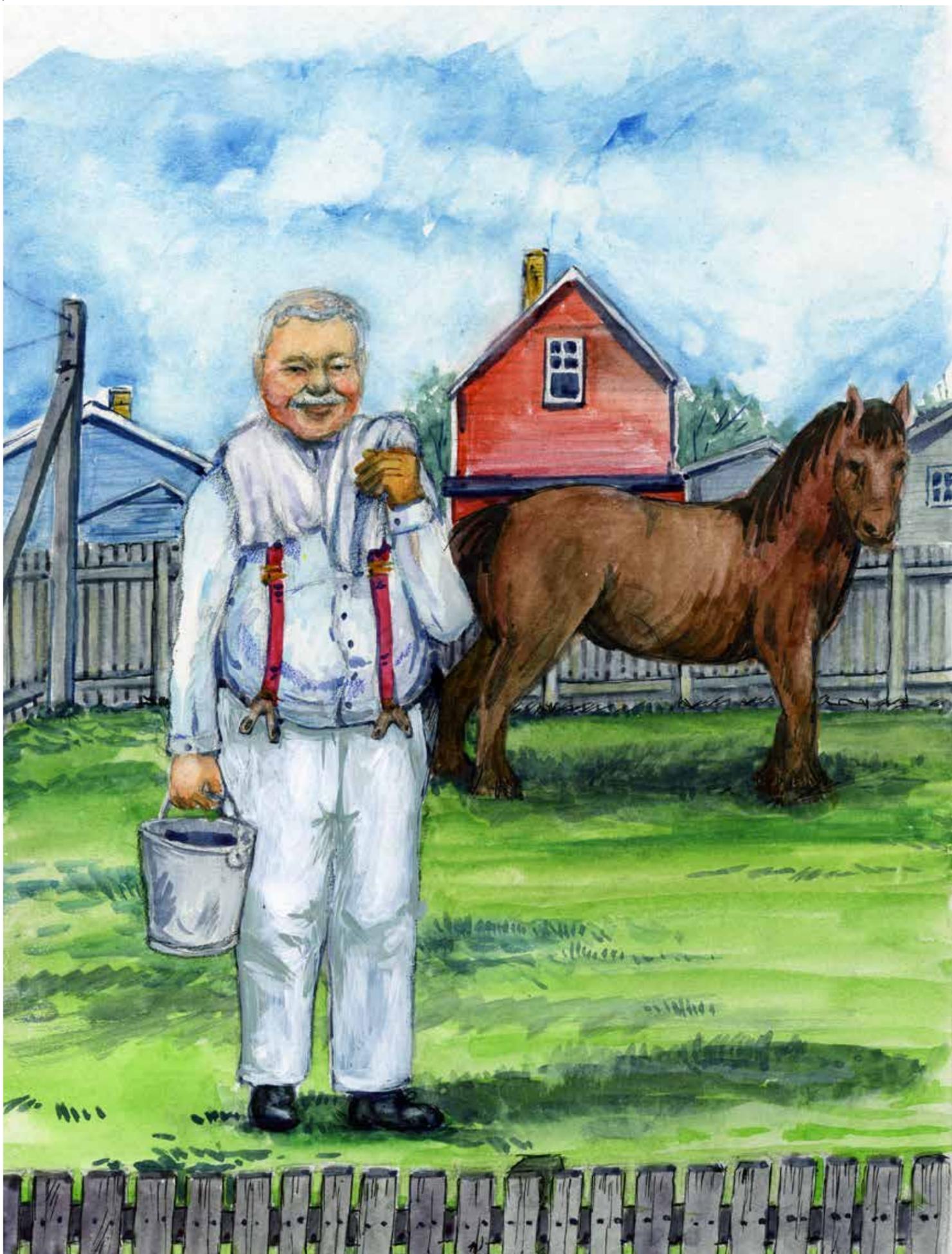
"A horse?" Ma raised her eyebrows when I told her. Her hands were busy. The warm sun and summer breeze dried the laundry she pinned to the clothesline in our backyard. "We can't afford a horse, Benny." She motioned with her chin to the yard next door. "Maybe Mr. Bekker will let you ride Fairdle." She went back to her work. "A horse!" I heard her say.

But I had hope.



Mr. Bekker was our neighbourhood baker. He made bread and bagels and sold them in his shop. He also delivered bread in his wagon, pulled by Fairdle, his big brown horse. Every day Fairdle plod, plod, plodded down the streets, stopping on her own at each customer's home. I never saw her run, but I knew her strong legs and huge hooves meant she could race for hours without resting, even with me on her back.





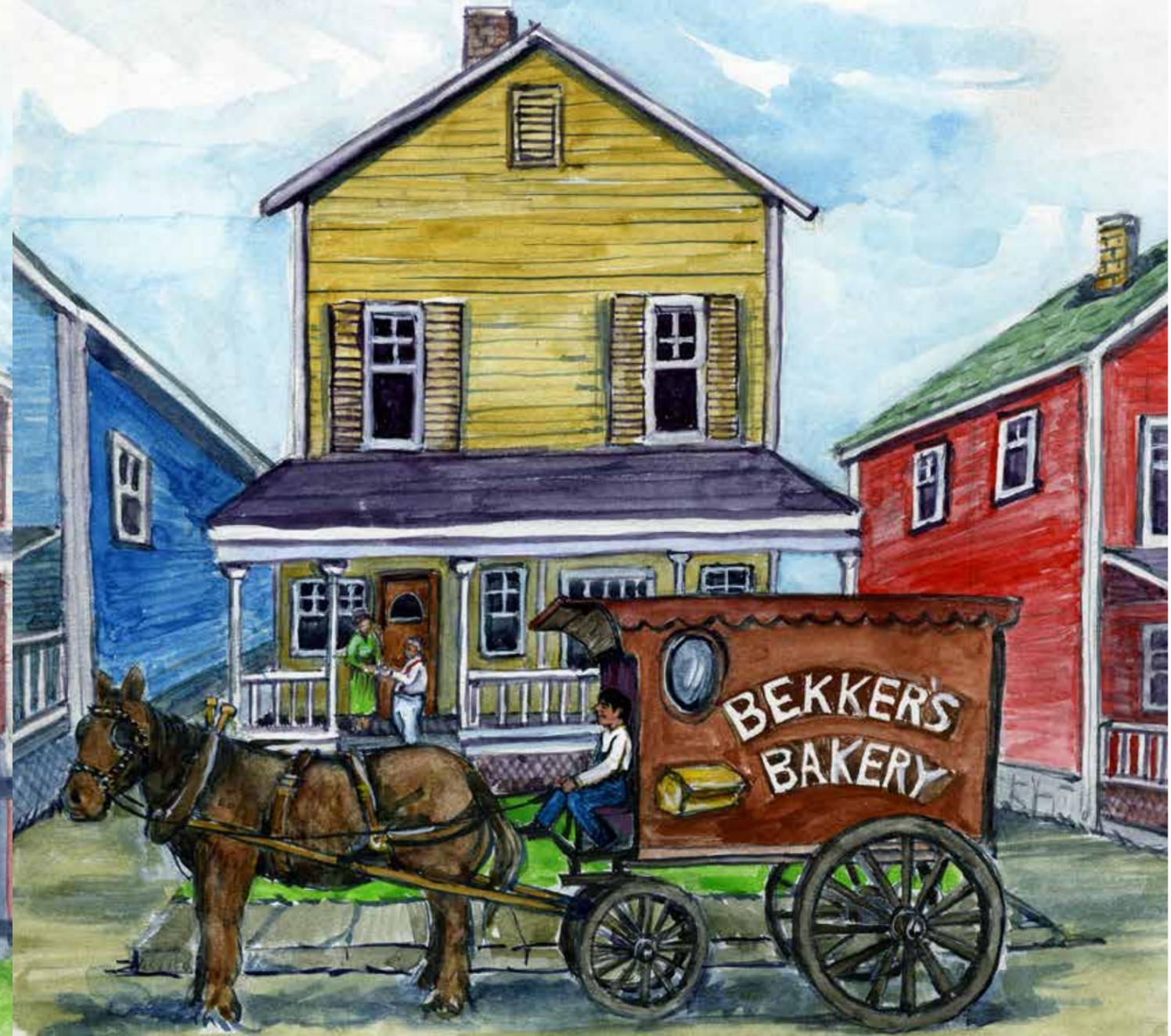
The next Sunday morning, when the bakery was closed, Mr. Bekker appeared in his backyard, carrying a bucket of water for Fairdle. He wore white cotton pants held up by long red suspenders. He rubbed his moustache and freshly shaved face with the towel slung around his shoulders. His cheeks looked smiley pink.

Fairdle nibbled grass on the other side of the yard.

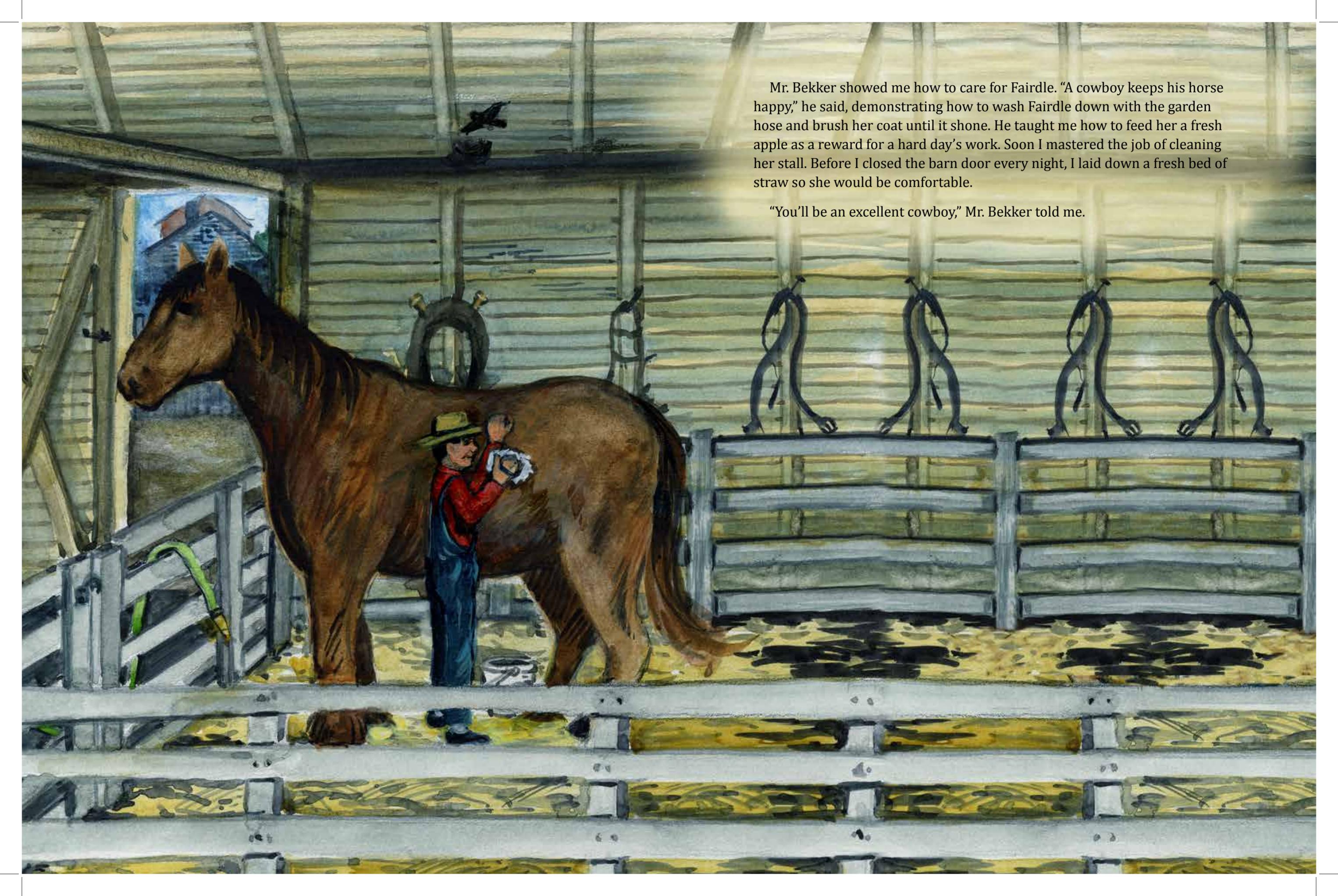
I summoned up the courage to approach the fence and called out, "Mr. Bekker, would you sell Fairdle to me?" I climbed over the fence, pulled from my pocket two nickels I had saved and held them up. "I'll pay you the rest later," I said.

Fairdle shook her mane and whinnied. I knew she could sense my excitement.

“Hmm,” Mr. Bekker said, pulling on his moustache. He tucked my fingers back around the coins and patted my shoulder. “Perhaps you should help me deliver bread and learn how to care for her. Then you can decide if you want to buy Fairdle. You can start tomorrow.”



I was ready before the sun rose the next morning. All through the hot month of July, I sat tall on the seat of the delivery wagon while Fairdle took us on our rounds. Every day I wanted to urge her into a gallop, but Mr. Bekker only used the reins to pull her to a stop when a noisy motorcar or truck whizzed past. The vehicles startled her. She snorted before setting off again on the route she knew so well.

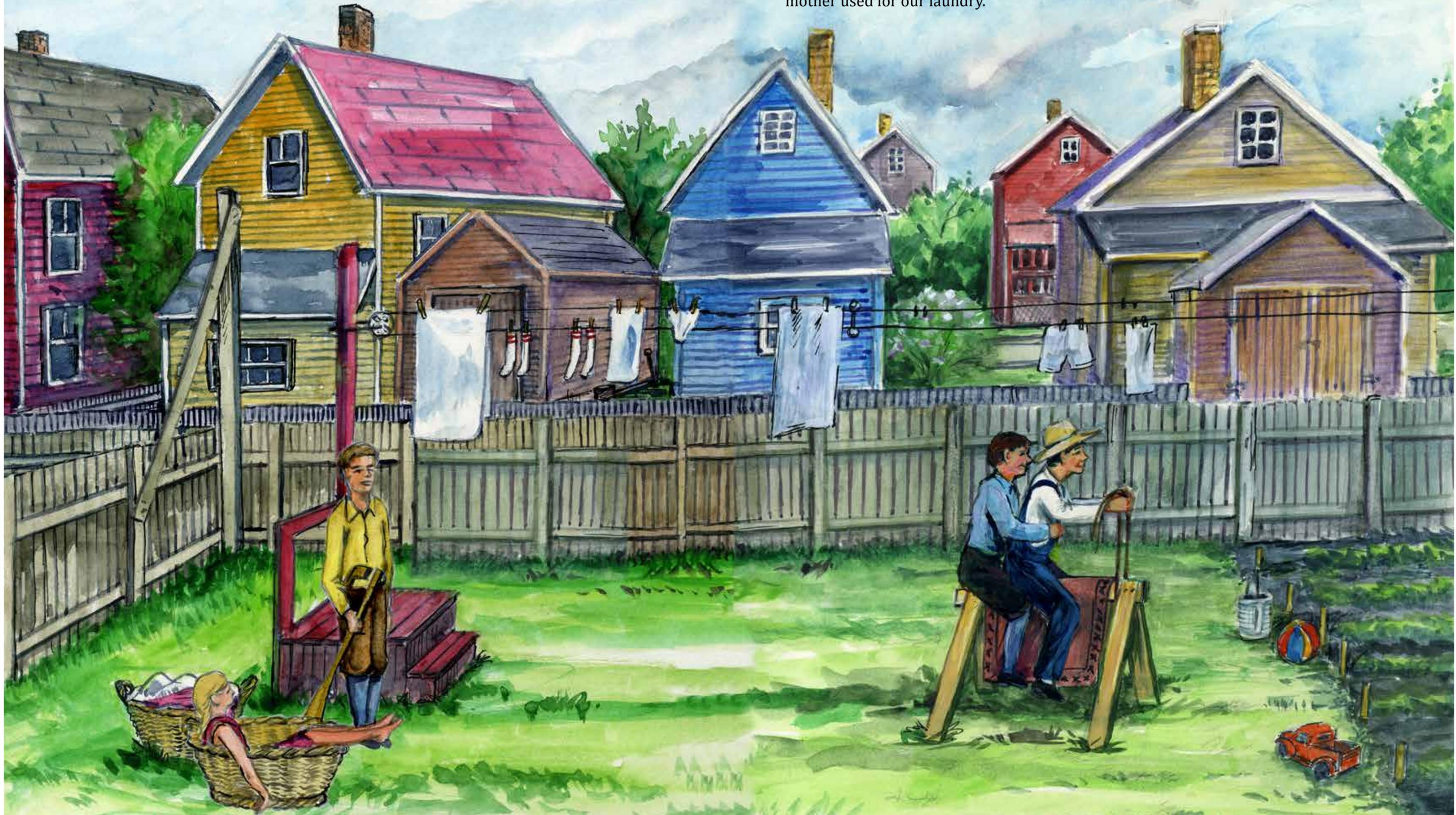


Mr. Bekker showed me how to care for Fairdle. "A cowboy keeps his horse happy," he said, demonstrating how to wash Fairdle down with the garden hose and brush her coat until it shone. He taught me how to feed her a fresh apple as a reward for a hard day's work. Soon I mastered the job of cleaning her stall. Before I closed the barn door every night, I laid down a fresh bed of straw so she would be comfortable.

"You'll be an excellent cowboy," Mr. Bekker told me.

When I wasn't working with Fairdle, I practised for the big day. I covered a sawhorse with an old rug folded like a saddle. I rode on and on, steering my wooden horse with reins made of rope, rounding up cattle on the wide-open plains.

I pretended to be a sheriff, with my sister and my friends playing their roles, too. Our posse chased outlaws who had stolen gold bars and sacks of mail from the Pony Express. We cut the thieves off at the pass, captured them and put them in jail — a basket my mother used for our laundry.



July rolled into August. Fairdle continued to plod the streets, delivering bread. Whenever I begged to take the reins or ride her, Mr. Bekker held up his hand and said, "In good time, Benny. In good time."

Ma was no help. "Fairdle is still Mr. Bekker's horse," she said. "He knows best."

But I couldn't wait. School would be starting soon. When would I become a cowboy?

