Chapter 1
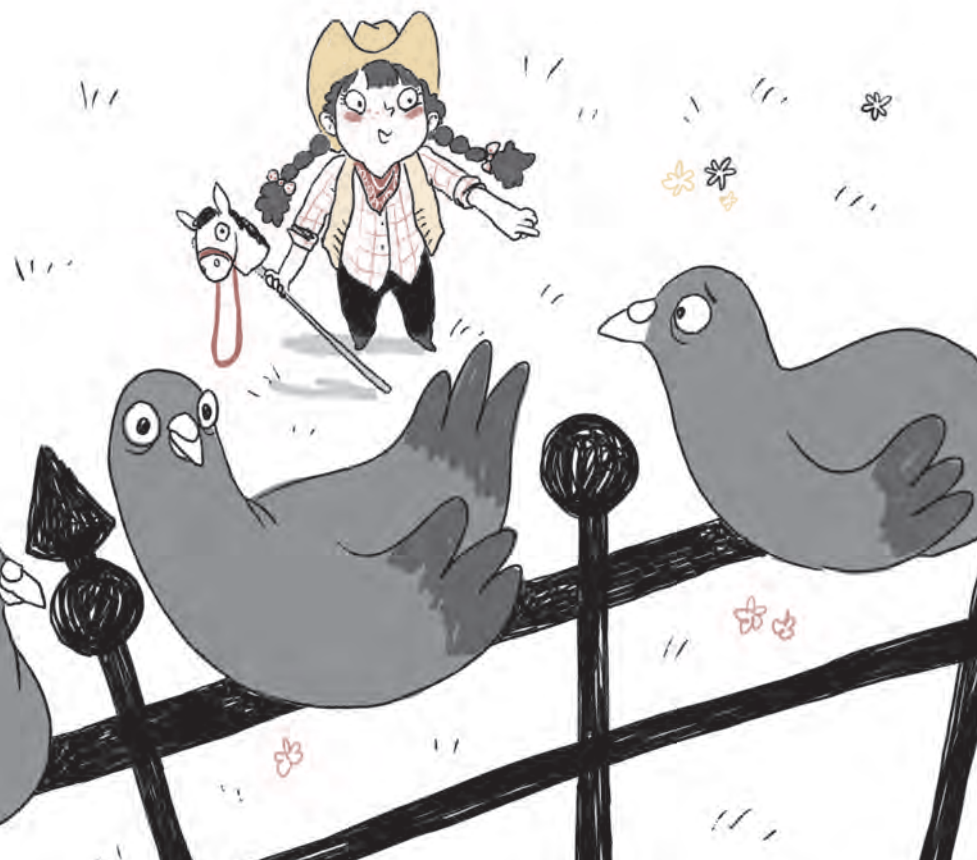
It was an ordinary morning at No. 10, The Crescent. Pug was sunning himself in the front garden while Lady Miranda exercised her faithful steed, Pony.

'Whoa there, boy!' Lady Miranda steadied Pony as she scanned the

horizon. 'Bandits at half past two!' she exclaimed.

Pug didn't know much but that didn't sound good. He took cover.

Pony pawed the ground and shook his mane. The bandits were still a way off, due west of the rose bed, but neither horse nor rider was in the mood for hanging around. Lady Miranda shortened her reins and scooped up her trusty sidekick. Pony was alert and ready. On her command, they charged.

'Yeeee haw!' They galloped towards the bandits. She and Pony were a terrifying sight but the terrain was rocky and, in an unfortunate moment, Pony lost his footing.

'Aaaaargh!'

Horse, rider and passenger came crashing to the earth.

Oooof!

Wendy, Running Footman Will and Running Footman Liam came rushing out of the house. Pug padded over to Lady Miranda, concern showing on his wrinkled face.

'Is everything all right, m'Lady?' asked Wendy, Lady Miranda's housekeeper.

'Wendy, look at Pony,' Lady Miranda replied in anguish. 'I think he's gone . . . lame.'

Pug agreed. It didn't look good.

'Running Footman Will, Running Footman Liam, bring the first-aid kit quickly,' Lady Miranda ordered as Pug comforted Pony. 'We might be able to save him.'

It didn't take them long to bandage Pony (who was a very good patient).

When Lady Miranda gave Pony the all-clear they led him back to his stable for a rest.

'Well, that's a relief,' sighed Wendy. 'All's well that ends well, that's what I say.'

'But this isn't the end,' Lady Miranda protested. 'This is only the beginning. What if the bandits come back to kidnap Pug?'

This was not something that Pug had thought of.

'I need a new horse and I need one now!' Lady Miranda declared, sliding her hand across the brim of her hat. 'Running Footman Will, Running Footman Liam, fetch the sedan chair, we're going horse-trading.'