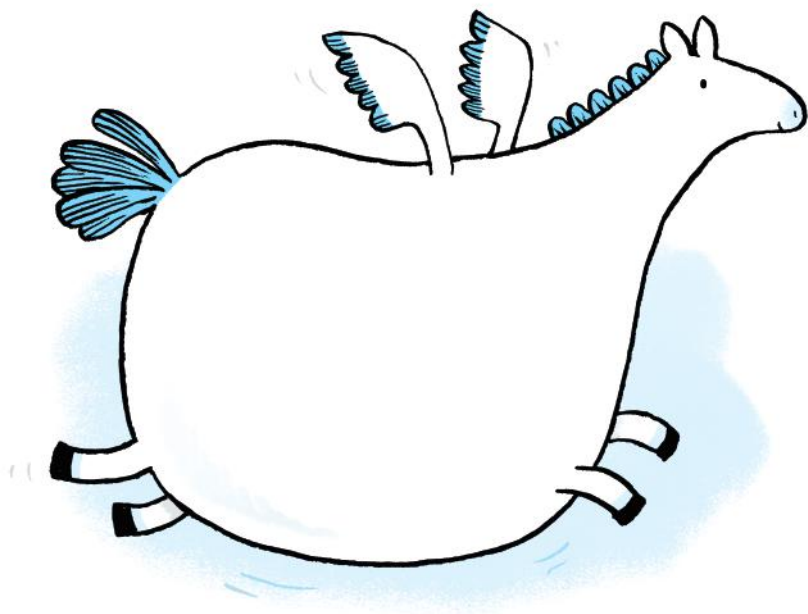


This is Kevin.



Kevin is a flying pony. But he's not just any old flying pony, oh no.

Roly-Poly Flying Ponies are the BEST sort of Flying Ponies.

Kevin lives in a town called Bumbleford. He has a big, raggedy nest on the roof of

the tall building where his friends Max and Daisy live. Kevin's favourite things to do are:

- Flying around with Max and Daisy
- Eating biscuits

Kevin absolutely **LOVES** biscuits. His favourites are custard creams, but he also likes bourbons, pink wafers, chocolate chip cookies, chocolate digestives, jammie dodgers, and bonk-on-the-head biscuits. (Those are the chocolatey marshmallowy ones in the red and silver wrappers, you know the ones.)

Some people say that eating all those biscuits is what made Kevin so roly-poly, but Kevin doesn't mind. He thinks he is just the right shape for a flying pony.



THE BISCUIT BURGLARIES

It was midnight in Bumbleford. Max and Daisy were snoring in their beds, Kevin was snoozing in his nest on the roof, and even the ducks and swans and moorhens on the River Bumble were asleep, with their heads tucked under their wings. But those ducks and swans and moorhens were about to get a rude awakening because—

DANGANANGAN
WANGANAN

WANG WANG WANG ANANG...

—the burglar alarm on the supermarket in Bumbleford High Street suddenly went off, splashing blue light across the shop fronts and filling the midnight air with noise.

Down on the river the swans and moorhens stuck their wings over their ears and grumbled about the racket, and a duck started writing a letter of complaint to the Town Council.



And just as they were starting to get used to the **DANGANANGANANG** noise, it was joined by a second noise, a sort of **WOO-WOO-WOO** that grew louder and louder as the Bumbleford Police Force's fastest patrol car came racing into town to investigate.



The Bumbleford Police Force's fastest patrol car was also its only patrol car, and it wasn't even all that fast, because until very recently there hadn't really been much crime to fight in Bumbleford. In the

past twenty years the Bumbleford Police Force had only dealt with one serious incident, and that was just somebody punching a dustbin. But now all that had changed! For seven nights in a row Bumbleford had been rocked by burglaries, and those beastly burglars were only interested in one thing—BISCUITS! The newsagent, the delicatessen, and all the cafés had been robbed, their shelves of biscuits mysteriously emptied in the night. When the mayor called an emergency meeting to discuss the crisis she had opened the Town Hall biscuit tin to discover that someone had pinched all her gingernuts. All over town, people were putting padlocks on their lunchboxes and burglar alarms on their larders.

No one knew where the Biscuit Bandit would strike next. Bumbleford had become a CITY OF FEAR!

Woo-woo-woo went the patrol car. It screeched to a stop outside the supermarket, and the Bumbleford Police Force got out. There were two of them, and their names were Sergeant Gosh and PC Golightly.



‘This is BRILLIANT!’ shouted PC Golightly, over the jangle of the burglar alarm. ‘It’s so good having some proper crime to fight at last!’

‘There’s nothing brilliant about it, Golightly,’ said Sergeant Gosh, sternly. ‘It’s our job as police officers to keep the people of Bumbleford and their biscuits safe, and we’ve failed in our duty. All these biscuit burglaries and we still have no idea who the villain or villains might be. I must admit, I’m baffled.’

Mrs Oliveira, the manager of the supermarket, came running up with the keys. ‘Careful now,’ said Sergeant Gosh, as she unlocked the door and they all stepped into the shop.

As the lights came on they saw the

shelves of breakfast cereal and baked beans and teabags all looking perfectly normal—but the biscuit aisle was bare!

‘Crumbs!’ said PC Golightly.

‘Wrong, Golightly,’ said Sergeant Gosh, running a finger over the empty shelves. ‘The burglar or burglars didn’t even leave a crumb behind. Every single biscuit—gone!’

‘What, even the fig rolls? I didn’t think anybody liked them.’

‘Even the fig rolls,





PC Golightly. It's just as I feared . . . the Biscuit Bandit has struck again!

'Da-da-DAHHHHHHH!' said PC Golightly, who thought some dramatic music was needed.

'But I don't understand,' said Mrs Oliveira. 'There's no sign of a break-in. The front door was locked, and the back door is locked too. How did the thief get in? How did they get out again with all my biscuits?'

'Well, PC Golightly?' asked Sergeant Gosh. PC Golightly was new to the force, and

he was helping her to develop her detective skills. 'How do you think the thief got in?'

PC Golightly thought hard for a moment. 'If they didn't come in through the doors,' she said, 'they must have come in upstairs somewhere. We could be dealing with a CAT BURGLAR!'

'A cat burglar?' asked Mrs Oliveira.

'That's not an actual cat who does burgling,' said PC Golightly, helpfully.



‘It’s a name that we police officers use for a normal human burglar who’s very clever at climbing up drainpipes and over rooftops. I bet your burglar got in that way.’

They ran upstairs to Mrs Oliveira’s office. Moonlight shone in on them through a big hole in the roof. It was an unusual sort of hole, roughly the size and shape of a very plump pony. The moonlight lit up a lot of little curved marks which someone or something had left all over the carpet.

‘Hoofprints!’ said Mrs Oliveira.

‘I don’t think we’re looking for a cat burglar,’ said Sergeant Gosh. ‘I think we’re looking for a PONY BURGLAR!’

‘Da-da-DAHMMMMHH!’

‘Please stop doing that, PC Golightly.’

