

photographs. Joan Crawford. Bette Davis. Deanna Durbin. Mickey Rooney. Comb. Letters. Thousands of pencils. Elastic bands. My best book. *Emil and the Detectives*. Five pens. (*She smells a little bottle.*) Nice scent. Oh yes! Mustn't forget my new diary. Have you seen it? . . . We're going into hiding. Going into hiding. (*The others, the family, are all busy packing.*) Four days later. It was Thursday the 9th of July. I shall never forget that morning. It was raining. Imagine leaving your house, maybe forever. . . . Goodbye, house. . . . We'll always remember you. . . . Thank you for everything. My brain is at a fairground, on the roller coaster. Up and down. Happy. Sad. Afraid. Excited. My emotions are racing. My imagination spilling over. After all, I am a creative artist. I'm going to be a writer when this war is over. (*She lingers as the others wait.*) Imagine leaving your house, forever. (*Starts to go, but stops.* . . .) Diary! Can't go without my diary. . . . Hello diary. . . . I shall write everything down. Everything. Thoughts. Events. Dreams. . . . I shall confide my secrets. Only to you.

National Velvet

Enid Bagnold

Against all odds 14-year-old Velvet Brown has won the Grand National, disguised as a jockey. Now, after the initial excitement, a film company want her to appear in a film with her prize-winning horse, the Piebald. Velvet is an inspired lover of horses. She is described as 'delicate and spiny . . . feather-weight . . . with short pale hair, large protruding teeth, a sweet smile and a mouth full of metal'. Her trainer, Mi, when looking closely to decide if she could pass as a boy, declared her chest to be 'flat as a pancake'.

Setting: The Brown family's cottage living room.
Time: The Thirties.

VELVET. Wants the horse? Can't have the horse. (*Firmly.*) Piebald on the films! He seems to forget! (*Proudly.*) That THAT'S the horse that won the National. . . . I'll go. It won't be half bad for us all to go and see me doing things on the curtain an' the band playing an' us sitting looking. But the Piebald! He doesn't know, he wouldn't know. He's out there in that field, steady and safe. He believes in me. I wouldn't let him in for a thing he couldn't understand. He's not like a human. He doesn't know how to be funny . . . (*Tears coming now.*) . . . and he SHAN'T LEARN! . . . (*Still sobbing.*) I've read about horses . . . horses that has won . . . an' they write about them nobly as though they were statues . . . Now how can you write about a horse nobly if it goes on the films? . . . I don't mean in the papers . . . not in the papers . . . (*Gulping, pulling herself together.*) Mother lights the fire with those! In books! Big books! Roll-of-Honour Books where they put down the winners