

# 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. Bill 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 and call them the Immortal Manifesto. . . . Now, how can they call him the Immortal Piebald if he goes on the films?! *(Hysterical.)* ME! That's nothing! I'm nothing! If you could see what he did for me!. . . an' when I asked him he burst himself more! ... an' when I asked him again he doubled it! He tried near to death, he did. ... I'd sooner have that horse happy than . . . than go to heaven!