



The wild horse screamed as its feet left the deck of the schooner. Willie Maclean watched as it was winched ashore. His face twisted with pity. The horse had been captured on far-off Sable Island, and now would have to work in the coal mines of Cape Breton, where Willie lived.

Willie loved horses. But now he was late for supper — again. His father would be angry. Willie ran all the way home.

Willie’s mother had died when he was six, but everyone else in his family was sitting around the table — his father, grandmother, big sister Nellie, big brother John, and two little sisters, Maggie and Sara. In the middle of the table was a huge codfish head stuffed with oats and mashed cod livers — Willie’s favourite meal.

“Happy birthday!” everyone shouted. He had forgotten! It was October 12, 1902, and he was eleven years old.

