



ELENI DIKAIYOU

Seven
Wooden Horsies
and other stories

ILLUSTRATED BY
MANOLIS FONETIS



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PUBLISHERS

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SEVEN WOODEN HORSIES AND A REAL ONE

At the entrance of the amusement park, right next to the lollipop man, there stands a little horse with a very long mane; so long it almost touches the ground.

«Come on kiddies! The horse's owner calls. «Come have your picture taken on the pony!» And now and then a few children ask to ride on the pony's back. But most of them, dazzled by the spectacular world inside the park, waste no time at the entrance to look at him closer. And the little horse feels lonely and all too sad.

Inside the park, right across the gate, the carousel's seven wooden little horsies are moving round and round on the sound of a merry music. The real horse feels a pinch of jealousy watching them going round-and-round with their little riders, and then up-and-down like dancers dancing with children on their back.

“Oh! If I could only go there too! If I could only join that circle with the wooden little horses!” sighs the pony and keeps putting his head down, and then down again, covering his eyes with his long mane to hide some tears.

Sarantos the dog, who sleeps in a thrown away cardboard box, looks at the little pony with sympathy. He has never been inside the park either. Nobody wants him there; he is just another stray dog. Sarantos has come to accept his misfortune, but is now thinking of the little horse and wants to help. He can't stand the sadness on his face.

"Hey buddy!" he says and comes closer to the pony. "I've been watching you looking at the wooden horses for days now. Do you want to go inside to be with them too?"

The pony turns his large, golden-brown eyes and looks at Sarantos.

"Yes, I do," he whispers, "but I know it's not possible."

"Who says?"



«Everyone. You're a real horse, you can't go there. That's what they'd say!»

«And you believe whatever anyone says?»

It's Sunday afternoon and the amusement park is packed with people. The man who owns the pony notices Sarantos and gets awfully angry.

«Shoo! Get outta here, you dirty dog! You frighten off the kids!» he yells at him.

But Sarantos is quite used to being shouted at.

«Come on! Don't you really want to go there?» he asks the little pony again.

«I sure do, but can I? Only for a moment maybe? Can I?»

«Yes, you can...if you really want to!»

The little pony bows his head even lower.

«I want to dance at the merry-go-round, but I'm too frightened. My owner will get mad at me if I do what Sarantos says,» the little horse thinks.



The dog sees his long, trembling mane and understands. The pony needs encouragement or he will be discouraged forever, sad and lonely, without ever having tried.

«And why am I here?» wonders Sarantos, and decides to go ahead with what has to be done.

«Together we can do it,» he tells the little horse.

«Really?»

«Yup! Come along!»

The little pony stands there, still undecided.

«Now or never!» Sarantos barks loudly – and with a sudden leap smacks the pony’s muzzle with a smooch. Raising his head, the pony looks like the sleeping princess woken up by the prince’s kiss...

«Get outta there!» yells the man, but the dog is already gone. Through the open gate, he rushes into the park and starts running. Voices and shouts are chasing him, but he can also hear the hasty sound of horseshoes stri-



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