

Extract taken from Chapter Four of *Silverbrook: Yumna and the Golden Horse* by Yasmin Abdel-Magied.

the olives and greens of houses and fields. She swept her gaze up and down, trying to spot any nocturnal creatures, voles or owls or even a tiny pipistrelle. No luck. But then, there was a flash of movement—

Yumna dropped her binoculars in shock.

'Pssst! Sadeeqa!' Yumna tried to catch her friend's attention. 'Sadeeqa, look!'

To their right, only a handful of yards away, stood a golden, glowing creature. It was enormous, with a mane that shone like starlight, and a grace that seemed otherworldly. A horse, but not one like they'd ever seen before. It seemed to glide through the trees, as if untouched by reality. Was it a dream, or a hallucination?

'Can you see it?' Yumna whispered. 'It's beautiful . . .'

Sadeeqa, on the other hand, looked terrified. Yumna suddenly remembered Sadeeqa's deep fear of horses.

'It's not going to hurt us . . .' Yumna whispered, but her voice was drowned out by the horse's snorting, then its loud neigh echoing through the woods. It turned to face the girls, raising its front hoof and kicking at the ground, as if ready to charge.

'Gotta get out of here,' Sadeeqa said, her voice low and tight. Yumna shook her head, wordlessly asking her friend to wait. She turned her attention towards the creature, locking her eyes with its unblinking gaze. Its eyes were

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wild, darting about, foam gathering around its mouth. *It looked frightened.*

'Hey, hey, shhh, it's OK, buddy, it's OK . . .' Yumna edged towards the horse, her soft voice masking her own fear. She didn't have that much experience with horses, but even she could tell this one needed help. What was such a beautiful horse doing outside, alone in the middle of the night? As she closed the distance between them, the horse reared up, neighing loudly, then crashed down with thunderous effect, before galloping towards them.

YIKES!

Yumna squealed, throwing herself to the side. She squeezed her eyes shut as she hit the ground, a sharp rock digging into her side, her backpack thudding loudly as she fell – then opened her eyes just in time to watch the creature soar right over her. She stared, mouth open, as the horse, which seemed to emit light from its body, landed a metre away from her head, then continued to canter away. Her heart galloping, Yumna scrambled to her feet.

'Holy moly . . . can you believe that?!' she said aloud.

There was no reply. Yumna glanced around. Sadeeqa was nowhere to be seen. Once again, Yumna's body was flooded with adrenaline, but this time it was sharper, scarier than before.

'Sadeeqa? Sadeeqa!'

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- How did Sadeeqa react when she saw the horse? Give details from the text.
- The narrator asks, "Was it a dream, or a hallucination?" Why might the author include that question here? What does it tell us about Yumna's state of mind?
- The horse is described as "glowing" and "otherworldly," but its eyes are "wild" and it is "foaming." What does this mixture of images make you feel about the horse – friend, enemy, or something else?
- Why does Yumna decide to edge closer to the horse even though she is scared? What does that show about her character?
- Have you ever felt both excited and frightened at the same time, like Yumna?
- Do you think Yumna made the right choice trying to calm the horse? Why or why not?



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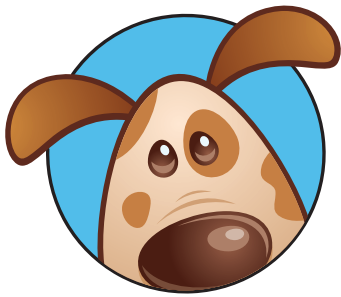


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