

Worry in The Paddock



Frolicking and prancing,
their manes flowing free,
So haughty and majestic,
The horses I can see.

Galloping through the meadow,
They travel so gracefully.
Suddenly they stop moving,
The horses can see me.

Ears attentively forward,
They watch on warily.
Clearly distrusting my presence,
They move on tentatively.

With respect and admiration
I gaze on thoughtfully.
One clearly curious, but nervous mare
Moves protectively.

Distrustfully she nickers,
and watches suspiciously.
She uses her size to shield her foal,
hopeful I will flee.

I marvel at her beauty,
Features formed so perfectly.
The mare keeps an eye on my hopeful face,
But stays away, cautiously.

My fingers ache to touch her
And stroke her muzzle that's velvety.
I stretch my hands towards her face,
But she neighs, dismissively.

Slowly, I wriggle my fingers,
I do not give up so easily.
This time I'm successful in my goal,
The foal slowly steps towards me.

She nudges her tiny baby,
Moves it to where I cannot see.
I understand what she wants to say.
My presence she does not need.

I gather my belongings,
Get ready to take my leave.
I bid adieu, with a yearning glance,
At the horses I can see.

Ben Hall, Gentleman Bushranger



Around the world, history tells the story of men and women who for one reason or another turned to a life of crime. In the USA, these people were called 'outlaws'. In the United Kingdom, they were named 'highway robbers'. In Australia, the unique name 'bushranger' was given to them. A 'bushranger' meant someone who was wanted by the police and lived in the bush.

One bushranger who lived in Australia during the 1800s was a man called Ben Hall. Ben was not your regular type of bushranger who committed crimes to get money, Ben was angry and wanted to embarrass the police. They had burned his house down as punishment for a crime he was not guilty of. With nowhere to live, Ben joined two friends and they became a gang.

One day, Ben and his friends rode into a little town in New South Wales called Canowindra. There they locked the police in their own cells and threw a huge party at the hotel for the people of the town. The party lasted for three days. All the townsfolk expected them to rob the town before leaving. The bushranger wanted to show people that he was not like the police said he was. At the end of the party, he paid the landlord for all the food and drink and even paid the townsfolk for their time! From then on, Ben Hall was known as a 'gentleman bushranger'. This meant that people saw him as someone who did not really want to hurt them.

The story of Ben Hall is only one of many stories about bushrangers. I wonder what he'd be like if he lived today.