

“How would we ever do that?” Lucky asked Pru. “They’re leaving. We’re here now. And we will never see that girl again....So none of this even matters, really.”

“Plus, we aren’t going to have the best circus if we don’t help set up,” Abigail said. “Forget about her, Pru. There’s so much to do!” She shouted out toward the performance area, “We’re coming, Boomerang!”

“But—” Pru glanced over her shoulder. Catalina was gone. With a big sigh, Pru turned her attention to the bustling circus in front of her and said, “I don’t know how, but somehow I have to show that girl she’s wrong about us.”



After the evening show, Pru signed more autographs than she’d ever signed before. Her hand hurt from signing so many.

She had added a trick with Boomerang



that made the audience howl with laughter. Boomerang pushed a ball with his nose and knocked Pru down as if she were a bowling pin. Pru pretended to be mad at the horse, but it was an act. They did the same thing again and again and the audience cracked up every time. She loved the way the audience laughed with her.

“If only Catalina could have seen this crowd!” Pru said to herself as she waved good-bye to the last two boys in her autograph line.

“Come on,” Lucky said to Pru. “Let’s clean up fast, then go celebrate tonight’s great show.”

“I helped the cook make cupcakes in the camp oven,” Abigail said proudly. “Since Boomerang is helping you, I had Chica Linda help me. They’re extra delicious.”

Pru wondered what exactly Chica Linda



had done to help bake. Maybe Chica Linda had culinary skills she didn't know about. Did she wash her hooves before entering the kitchen?

Just before Pru went to organize costumes and props for the next show, two young girls came running up to her with blank paper in their hands.

“Can you sign this for me?” one girl asked. Her pigtails shook as she spoke. When Pru autographed the paper, she gasped. “You're the most famous clown I ever met!”

The other girl thrust her own blank paper into Pru's hand. “Sign this and I'll keep it safe all the way to Miradero.”

Pru began to sign the page, then her hand stalled. She wasn't sure she'd heard right. “Where are you going?” she asked.

“Miradero,” the girl said. “My family is visiting there next. We're on vacation and



people say it's the most beautiful town on the frontier."

Pru looked up at the mountains behind her, towering over the horizon, and thought about the girl's words for a long moment. "You're right," she said at last. There was a tinge of homesickness in her voice. "Miradero is the most beautiful town I've ever seen."

Pru brushed aside the feeling and finished the autograph. "Be sure to get some ice cream and say hi to Mr. Winthrop for us all! He owns the parlor." Pru added with a wink, "He can be a bit of a grump, but he'll give you extra sprinkles if you ask."

The two girls excitedly skipped off, holding their autographs close to their hearts.

Pru stared after them for a long moment, wondering if she should have made other suggestions, or maybe she could have asked



them to talk to her parents for her. It was too late. They were gone. She turned her attention back to her friends.

“So, Abigail,” Pru said, “tell me more about these cupcakes.”

