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Opening extract from  
**Murray the Race Horse**

Written by  
**Gavin Puckett**

Illustrated by  
**Tor Freeman**

Published by  
**Faber & Faber**

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Please print off and read at your leisure.

For Evan  
My best pal and inspiration – G. P.

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# MURRAY

## the Race Horse

**Gavin Puckett**  
Illustrated by Tor Freeman

**ff**

FABER & FABER





## Hello young reader . . . !

Thanks for taking the time,  
In selecting my book of ridiculous rhyme.  
I'm Gavin, (you'll find my full name on  
the cover)

The teller of tales, which you're soon to  
discover.

It's taken me YEARS to unearth these  
strange fables,  
By visiting farmyards and hanging round  
stables

– And this is a series with just a selection,  
of some of the weirdest in my  
collection.

They're all about horses –  
each one of them true,  
And it's such a nice privilege to share  
them with you!

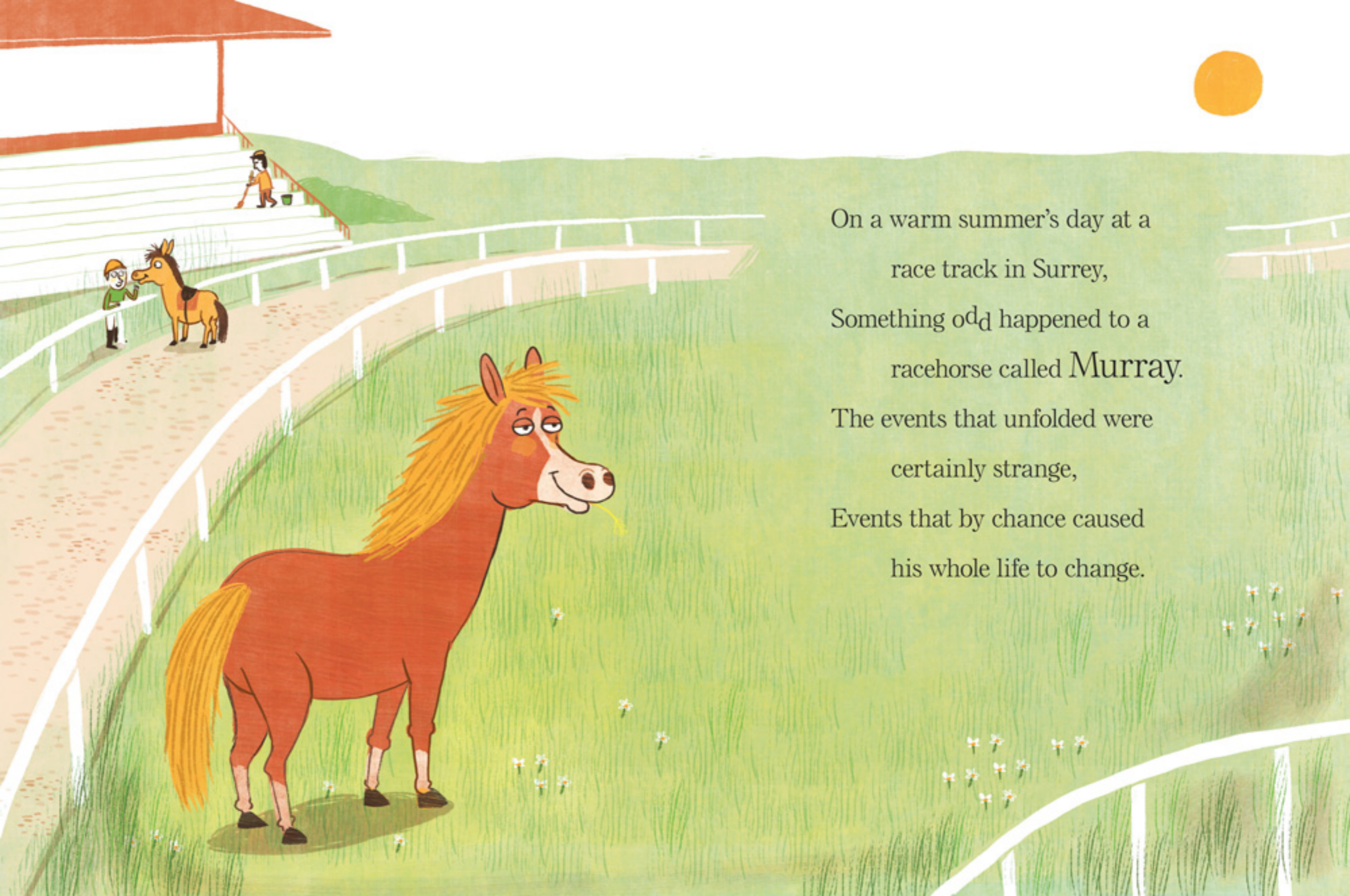
Well, when I say “*True*,” I mean . . .  
that's what I've heard.

(It's hard to believe, since they're all so  
**absurd!**)

So, instead of returning this book to the  
shelf,

Why not read on and decide for yourself?





On a warm summer's day at a  
race track in Surrey,  
Something odd happened to a  
racehorse called Murray.  
The events that unfolded were  
certainly strange,  
Events that by chance caused  
his whole life to change.



Murray decided – as a young foal –

To make championship-racing

his ultimate goal.

He dreamed of *success*,

of riches and  
fame;

Dreamed fans the

world over would cheer  
out his name.



He came from a family of true  
sporting glory,

Where triumph and praise was  
a regular story.

His parents won trophies and  
medals galore

And hoped beyond hope that  
their son would win more.



But despite Murray's plans to  
reach stardom some day,  
There was one major problem  
that stood in his way.

A difficult hurdle he couldn't get past . . .  
**Murray the horse wasn't that fast!**

He trained as often as any horse could,  
But this dutiful racehorse just  
wasn't that good.

His trainer once dubbed him,

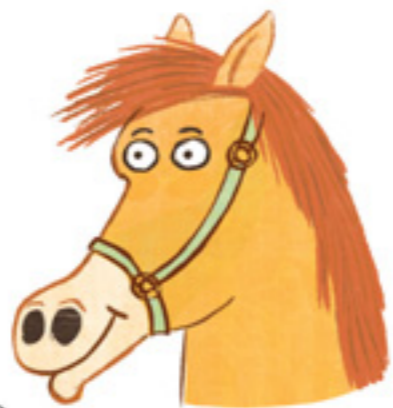
**'A racing disaster!'**

Claiming that **'jockeys could even run  
faster!'**





To make matters worse,  
Murray lived in a stable  
With racehorses FAR more  
athletic and able.



Big Brandy  
Wilson

There was **Big Brandy Wilson**

and his brother

**Ned Plumb,**

Who were cousins

of horseracing

legend **Red Rum.**



Ned Plumb

There was **Bucky the  
stallion** and **Old  
Reggie Clover,**

Each of them champions  
several times over.

But the fastest of all was a

racehorse called **Pete,**

Who was known to his fans

by the name

**'Thunder-Feet'.**



Bucky the Stallion



Old Reggie Clover



"Thunder Feet" Pete





Compared to these marvels, Murray was  
small and had never been trusted by  
jockeys at all.

Instead, he was used as a ground  
steward's horse,

Carting equipment around the racecourse.

When he worked, they all *laughed* if he  
even dared canter,

And they ridiculed him with their teasing  
and banter.