

Title: The Ponkhiraj Horse Visits My House

Author: Alina Manha

Level: Pre-intermediate

Genre: Children's story (Friendship, Magic, Fantasy Creatures, Ponkhiraj).

Adapted & edited with permission by Cherie Brown. Drawing, Antares Adriana Khan Topaz.
Photos provided by Ruh Afza Bobby and Kanita Ridwana.

For a long time, I had to stay at home by myself. At that time, I wasn't able to see my friends, or go to school, or even leave the house. It was a **lonely** time, and I felt a little **sad**.

One morning, I **woke up** and I went to the bathroom to **wash** myself. After I came out of the bathroom, I looked out of the window and there, to my surprise, I saw a **purple**-coloured *Ponkhiraj** horse. She had a beautiful **pink** and black mane and a long pink and black **tail**.

I was so *amazed** to see the beautiful shiny **wings** of the *Ponkhiraj* horse. At first I thought that it was a dream, so I **pinched** myself. But no, I was wide **awake** and the *Ponkhiraj* horse was still there. I realized that it was not a dream and I could not stop looking at it. I **quickly** put on some **clothes** and went outside into the garden to take a closer look.



Statue of the Ponkhiraj horse in Sopnopuri, Dinajpur. Photo provided by Ruh Afza Bobby

“What’s your name?”, I asked the *Ponkhiraj* horse.

“My name is *Kankabati*.” she replied.

“My name is *Alina*.” I said. “I’m so happy to meet you! I haven’t had a visitor for... *ages!*”

I took *Kankabati* into the house and into my bedroom.

“I wonder if she is **hungry**?” I thought to myself.

“Wait here,” I said, “I want to get you something to eat.”

Kankabati looked very happy when I said that.

I went to the **kitchen** to get *Kankabati* some food. I wanted to give her some salty *pithas** that I had made the day before.

She tasted the *pithas*.

“Mmmm, they taste so good,” she said.



Ghurer Shondesh Pitha



Golap Pitha



Patishapta Pitha

Photos provided by Kanita Ridwana

I asked her if she would like to be friends with me.

“Yes! Of course!” she said happily.

“Now, I have something for you.” she said, and she asked me if she could use her *magical** wings to make my dress shiny.

“Sure.” I said.

Kankabati used her magic wings, and waved them over my dress. *Lo and behold**, my dress changed. Suddenly, it was beautiful and shiny! I was so surprised.

“Thank you so much!” I said.

“Do you want to water the plants in the garden with me?” I asked.

“Let’s go!” she said. So off we went back into the garden. We watered every plant, **bush** and tree. Then I cooked some **lunch** for *Kankabati* and myself, and after lunch we took a nap.

After our nap, we woke up and had some light *snacks**, and then we played games and read story books. It was such a **fun afternoon**.

In the evening, we had **dinner** and then we took some *selfies**. We both wanted to remember our special day.



Drawing by Antares Adriana Khan Topaz

After doing all of that we went to sleep. That night, I had the best dreams. Together, in my dreams, *Kankabati* the *Ponkhiraj* horse and I flew high above the clouds. I thought to myself, having a good friend is important, even if your friend is a magical, pink and purple *Ponkhiraj*.

Bengali Words

Ponkhiraj: A kind of flying Pegasus horse, famous in Bangladeshi stories.

Pitha: A kind of Bangladeshi pancake

Glossary

Amazed = very surprised

Magical = something that has a special quality or power. Not found in everyday life.

“*Lo and behold*” = an expression used to show wonder or surprise.

Selfies = photos taken of oneself. One of the people in the photo takes the photo.

Snacks = a small amount of food eaten between meals (e.g. biscuits, potato crisps, a cake, or a piece of fruit)

Learning Activities

Vocabulary

1. Words from the second 1000 high frequency General Service Word List (GSL)

These words are very common in everyday English, so you should learn all of them.

afternoon awake bush clothes cooked dinner fun hungry imagination kitchen lonely
lunch pinched pink purple quickly sad sentence suddenly tail taste thank wash wings
woke (25)

2. **Off list words.** (These are not so common in everyday English, so learn them *after* you know all the words in list one above.)

bathroom

mane

nap

Comprehension Questions

1. **Remembering:** Why was *Alina* so happy to meet the *Ponkhiraj* horse?
2. **Remembering:** What happened first? What happened after that? (Put the events in the correct order.)
 - a. *Alina* saw the *Ponkhiraj* horse
 - b. *Alina* washed herself
 - c. *Alina* put on some clothes
 - d. *Alina* went to the kitchen
 - e. *Alina* had beautiful dreams
 - f. *Alina* asked the *Ponkhiraj* horse to be her friend
3. **Understanding:** Why did the writer 'pinch herself'?
4. **Understanding:** Why did the *Ponkhiraj* horse ask if she could make the writer's dress become shiny?

Critical Thinking Questions (Explain your answers in English)

1. **Analysing:** How is a *Ponkhiraj* horse different from a real friend? How is she the same?

2. **Applying:** If visitors come to your house, how do you make them feel welcome and 'at home'? When you have to spend a long time on your own, what do you do to keep yourself busy and happy?
 3. **Evaluating:** The *Ponkhiraj* horse is not a real horse. She lives only in the imagination of the writer. Do you think it is a good idea to have an imaginary friend? Why / Why not?
 4. **Creating:** If you could be friends with any kind of imaginary magical creature, what would it look like? What special powers would it have? Draw a picture of your imaginary magical friend. Think of some words or sentences to describe your new friend in your picture. Make a border around your picture. Write the words down in the border around your drawing. Tell your classmates about your picture in English. Use the words and sentences that you wrote as you speak, but try not to read them straight from the paper.
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Writer's Profile

Alina Manha is a student at Sir John Wilson School, Dhaka. She started writing in 2015, and has a deep passion for creative writing, especially stories. Her favorite book series are "Harry Potter", "Percy Jackson" and "Nancy Drew." Every year she participates in the creative writing competition held by her school and her work has been published in her school yearbook. Alina also loves music and dancing, and performing in school drama productions. For the past two years, Alina has also been the fastest runner in her age group in her annual school sports competition.
