

The Sand Horse

Once there was an artist who lived in St Ives. He lived with his wife and baby in a house by the sea.

Sometimes the artist worked in his studio, but on fine days in summer he went to the beach and made animals in the sand. He could make dogs and cats and seals and dolphins, but mostly he made horses, because horses, he said, were the most beautiful animals of all.

One morning the artist woke to a brisk blue day with a choppy sea and white crests on the waves.

“Look! White horses!” said his wife. When the sea is rough and the waves have white tops people call them white horses. The artist saw them: far out in the bay, plunging and galloping, tossing spray from their manes.



“Today I shall make a horse,” he said. He went to the beach, put his hat down on the sand, and started work.

First he fetched water from the sea. He splashed some onto the dry sand. He patted and moulded the sand.

The horse began to appear: muscles and hooves, raised head and rippling mane.



The beach filled up with people. They stopped and admired the sand horse. They threw money, and the coins chinked in the artist's hat.

The horse grew. He was a galloping horse, galloping forever on his side.

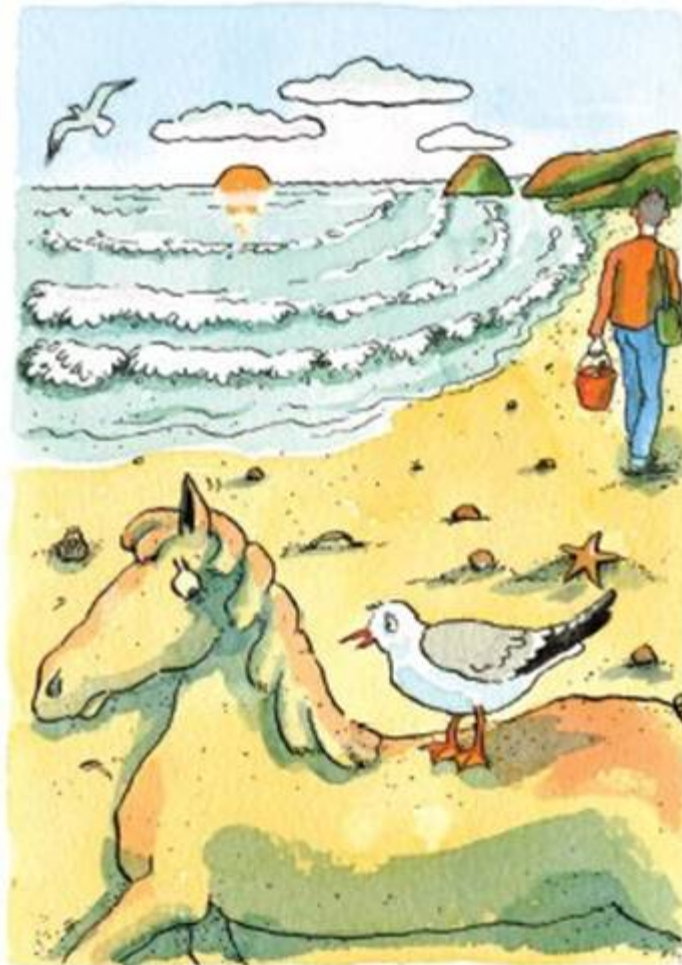
All day the artist worked on his horse, shaping the muscles of his legs and neck, twisting each curl of his mane.

He worked until the sun set and the beach grew cold. Families began leaving. They folded their deck-chairs and shook sand from their clothes. The artist scooped up the coins in his hat and went home.

The sand horse woke up.

He was alive, but he could not move. He opened his one eye, but all he saw was clouds. He listened with his one ear. He heard seagulls. He heard the boom and hiss of the sea. And faintly, in the crash of waves, he heard neighing.

A seagull landed on his back, and walked about, jabbing the air with his sharp beak. "Seagull," said the sand horse, "what's that neighing I hear?" "That's the white horses," said the seagull, "out in the bay." "What are they doing?" "They are prancing and frisking and flicking their tails." "Where are they going?" "Everywhere!" said the seagull. "I want to go with them!" cried the sand horse.



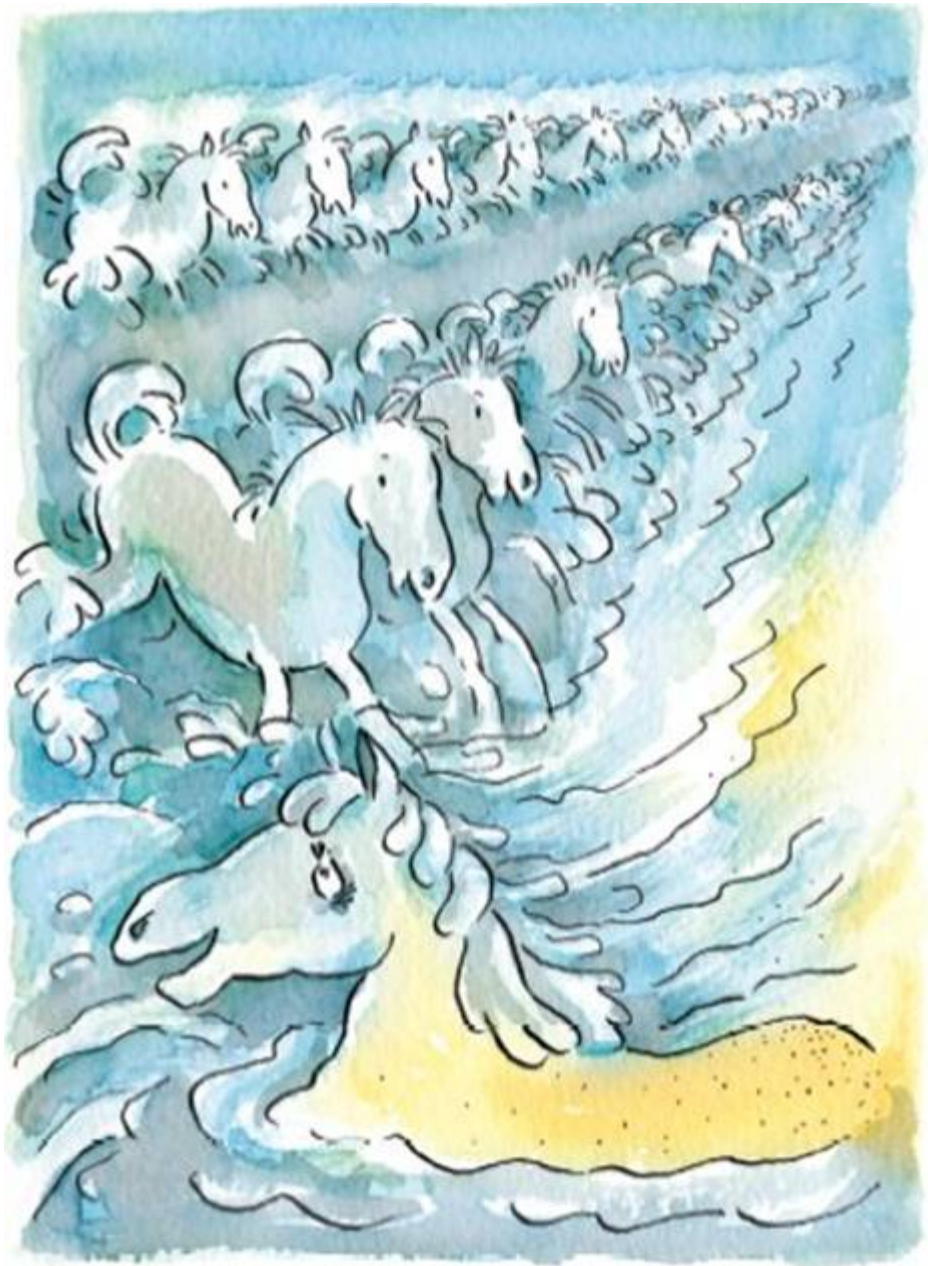
“You!” The seagull wheeled up in the air, laughing, and all his friends joined in. He swooped down again and said, “You! You are only a sand horse. You can’t go with them.”

The sand horse tried to move. He was a galloping horse, but he was fixed in the sand. He could not go with them.

The sky darkened. The seagulls flew away. The boom of the sea was louder.

Much closer now, the sand horse heard the white horses neighing. “Come with us!” they called. The sea crashed on the shore, flinging spray over the sand horse. “Come with us!” The sea crashed again, and the sand horse was soaked with spray. “Come with us!” called the white horses. A wave broke and flooded the sand horse, drenching his head and mane. “I’m coming!” he called. “Wait for me!”

Another wave broke, and the sea ran foaming all around the outline of the sand horse, filling every space. The sea sucked and pulled. It was pulling him down the beach. "I'm coming! I'm coming!" he cried.



A huge wave rolled up the beach. It reared, curled over, and smashed down upon the sand horse, washing away his mane, his head, his legs, and his body. It went hissing back down to the sea, dragging the sand horse with it.

The sand horse felt waves buoying him up. Amongst the waves white horses were prancing. He neighed and tossed his mane.

His hooves struck spray from the sea. "I can move!" he cried, "I can gallop!"

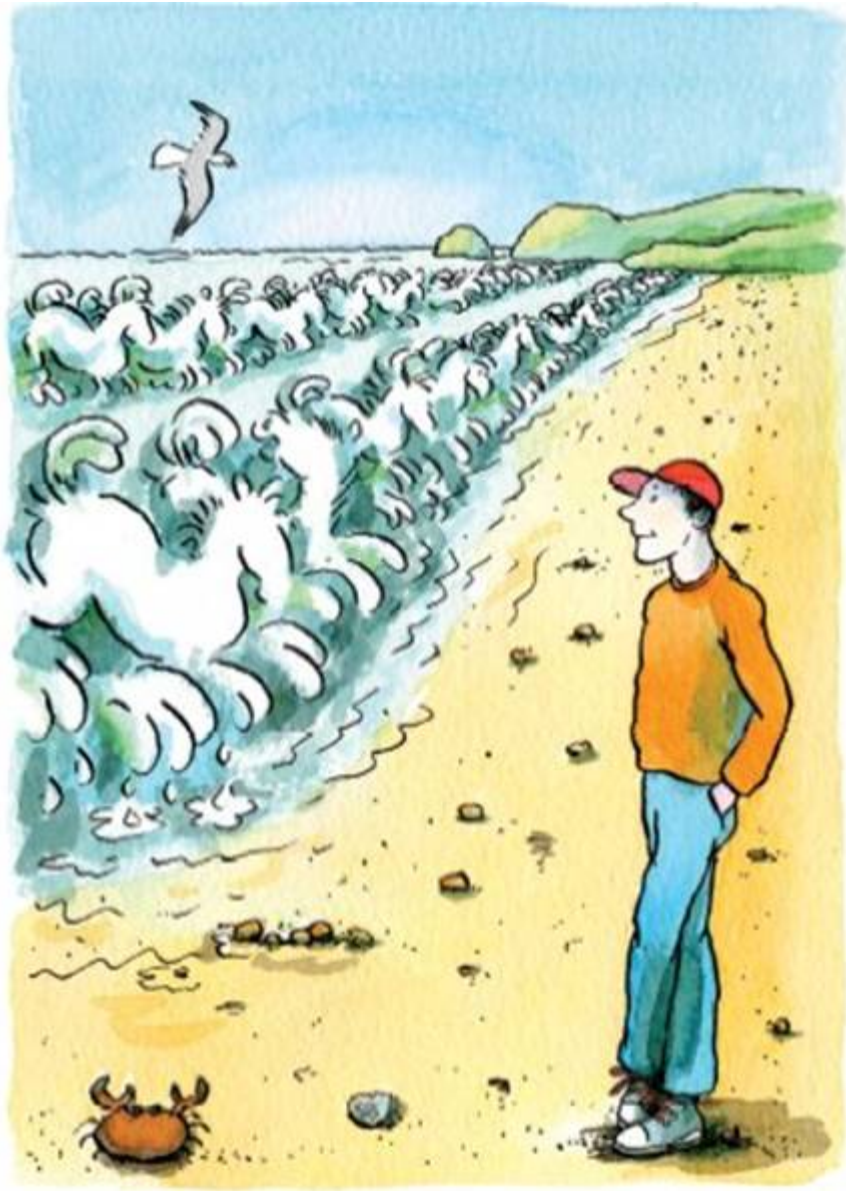
He frisked and galloped. He swished his white tail.

All around him the white horses plunged and jumped the waves.

They galloped away, and the sand horse went with them.

Next morning, when the artist came down to the beach, people looked at the smooth sand and said, "It's a shame. All that work washed away."

But the artist smiled. He knew where his sand horse had gone.



2.

Circle the correct option to complete each sentence below.

(a) This story is about an artist who lived

by a river.

by the sea.

on a hill.

in a city.

1 mark

(b) One day he went down to the beach and started to make a horse out of sand. He worked until

sunrise.

sunset.

midnight.

midday.

1 mark

(c) The artist went home and the sand horse

fell asleep.

moved away.

went home.

woke up.

1 mark

(d) The sand horse could not

listen.

eat.

move.

speak.

1 mark

(e) The sand horse could hear neighing. He found out that it was the white horses

**out in
the bay.**

**on the
beach.**

**in the
sand.**

**up in
the sky.**

1 mark

(f) The sand horse wanted

**to go back
home.**

**to go straight
to sleep.**

**to go with the
white horses.**

**to go to the
artist's house.**

1 mark

2. His wish came true. The next morning the people said that it was a shame that the horse had gone, but the artist just

laughed.

cried.

shouted.

smiled.

1 mark

3. Which animals did the artist make?

Tick **one**.

cats

whales

horses

seals

rabbits

fish

1 mark

4. The artist woke on a *brisk blue* day.

What do these words tell you about the weather on that day?

1 mark

5. Why did the artist decide to make a horse that day?

1 mark

6. Why did people give the artist money?

1 mark

7. Why did the sand horse want to go with the white horses?

1 mark

8. In the text words like *prancing*, *plunging* and *galloping* are used to describe the waves.

What does this tell you about them?

2 marks

9. How did the sand horse finally get into the sea?

1 mark

10. Put the following events in the order that they happen in the story.
The first one has been done for you.

The sand horse wakes up and hears
neighing.

The artist returns to the beach and the sand
horse has gone.

The tide comes in and the sand horse joins
the white horses.

The artist makes a sand horse.

The seagull tells the sand horse about the
white horses.

2 marks

11. At the end of the story, in what ways was the sand horse like the white horses?

1 mark

12. Explain why the artist smiled when he saw that his sand horse had gone.

2 marks

13. *It's a shame.*

In this sentence, the word *shame* is closest in meaning to:

Tick **one**.

well-known

embarrassed

pity

small

1 mark