

The White Horse

By Viola Turchini

It happened yesterday. I was sitting on one of those recycled plastic benches in a park near Rome. It was one of those aimless days spent driving to Rome. We had had lunch at a bakery nearby and now all four of us were sitting there. Mum knitting, dad reading, Ollie looking at a car magazine, and me. I was sitting purposeless, staring into the distance when “thud”. I jumped, startled... an old heavy man fell upon the seat opposite to me. His face was pale, his beard was long and tangled. His eyes were big and black. He stretched his arm into an odd brown satchel. I hadn't noticed it before. He pulled out a book. I couldn't read the cover as his hand was big enough to cover the front page. Suddenly someone shouted. The man looked up. His face turned pale, he was scared, I looked around to see where the shout had come from, but when I turned back, he was gone. I saw a shadow weave through a crowd of people. Suddenly it struck me. He had forgotten his book. I turned around to make sure no one was watching, then I slipped the book into my hands. The cover was faint and worn. It looked like one of those ancient novels you find pictures of in history books. On the cover I could just make out a pale white horse.

That was yesterday, now I am in the car reading my way through another pile of books I bought at the local bookshop yesterday. I haven't read much in the last hour or so because I keep seeing strange things. Or rather, imagining them. The meadows we are passing are full of pale white horses, their dark eyes shimmering in the sun. I try to escape from the horses and so I look into the sky as well, but that's no good, fluffy white cloud horses gallop past, they even turn up in the middle of the road sometimes, and when we get nearer they melt like snow. I want to ask Ollie if he can see them too but everyone else doesn't seem to notice anything. I pull out the ancient book from my bag. It is still the same as before, only paler perhaps. Suddenly a piece of old folded yellow paper falls out onto my lap. It looks about as old as the book itself. Inside in neat swirly writing it reads: “I am time, open me up, change me and use me, then shut me back up”.

Suddenly a light flashed, the car turned dim, then I was in complete darkness. The earth felt like mud underneath my feet. I started sinking, a crack of light opened up, I couldn't help it, I slipped through. I felt dizzy, I could see nothing but black, then suddenly out of the darkness appeared a pale white horse. The horse spoke “This book has been with me for hundreds of years, many have stolen it but I have always got it back. I am now too old to keep such a precious secret, so I am giving you the power to travel through time”, with this the horse flapped its wings and disappeared into nothing. My head hurt, I sat up. I was still in the car, everything was normal. I looked over and saw the note sticking out of the book. I picked it up. A crack of blinding light opened up in front of me. I shoved the note into the book and the crack disappeared. But I had the greatest power, I could travel and uncover the worlds deepest secrets. But not just travelling to different continents, I could travel through time...