**War Horse**

“Please! Don’t take him!” begged Albert, as his best friend was driven away by his cruel father. It was 1914, war had been declared against Germany and Joey was to be taken directly to the frontline.

“He’s always been a pathetic creature,” grumbled Albert’s father. Heartbroken, Joey, who had never known another master, took one last look at Albert as he set off into the dark night. Trembling like the rickety cart on the stony farm track, the fearful young stallion cowered.

Early the next morning, when the sun was rising, Joey was awoken by the sudden creak of the cart door being opened, so he began to quiver once more.

“Get in the stable! We haven’t got all day!” bellowed the stranger. “Stop that shaking. You ain’t seen nothing yet, son. Wait till you’re out there in the thick of it!”

Prizing Joey from the cart, the stranger tugged sharply at his reins and led the horse away.

Horror and fear awaited Joey at his destination. The chilling sound of bombs screaming and the terrifying death rattle of machine guns filled the air. Joey knew that he was in the midst of the theatre of war’s terror and destruction.

With an officer on his back and a sense of rising panic, he steadily approached the frontline, where the war was raging.

Confused, shocked, scared, Joey began to gallop as he had never galloped before, leaping over the countless bodies. Suddenly, there was silence: the noise of war had stopped. Joey slowed to a canter, realising a weight had been lifted from his shoulders even though he couldn’t remember losing the officer. After what seemed like hours, he heard a strange voice calling out to him across the barren wilderness, that was covered in a dense fog.

“What you doing out here, boy?” it muttered breathlessly. “Let’s get you back to camp.”

Returning to the stable, Joey ached all over, but he was relieved to be alive. Closing his weary eyes to sleep, he was startled by the sudden opening of the stable door, which moaned sadley as it swung on it’s hinges. For one terrible moment, Joey feared a return to the horror. He pushed himself into the stable walls with his last ounce of energy. Out of the sunlight, Joey looked up. To his amazement, he saw his beloved Albert smiling down at him. Wiping away tears of joy, Albert beamed.

“I knew I’d find you, boy. I just knew it.”