



The pages especially
for young people who
are just Nuts about
Horses!

Can you write?
Can you draw?

Can you take photographs?

We love to receive stories and pictures from young readers to fill the Horse Nuts pages. Items chosen for print will earn you a special Horse Country gift!

HORSE FACT

“If wishes were horses,
then beggars would ride,” is
an old saying meaning that
if wishes came true, then
even the poorest would have
everything they wanted.

Horse Country believes the following story exemplifies the courage of the human spirit as it surfaces in dire times, but also provides an opportunity to illustrate how quickly a fun and peaceful ride can turn very ugly. We also believe that this account brings to the fore the strong bond and caring that a horse can have for a human. Most of all however it brings home the need for safe riding practices – regardless of the age of horse or rider.

This is a story from one of Horse Country’s young readers, about one incident in particular that changed her life, and the way she sees horses! She lent us her diary of the event, and Contributing Editor Ishbel Moore worked closely with Lorraine before bringing it to this page.

MONDAY FEBRUARY 11, 2008 A day to remember

By Lorraine Eyre

I wanted to go riding so I put my cell phone on the table, got a pair of mitts and a pair of gloves. I put the gloves under the mitts on my hands and got the warmest hat on, my big jacket and my big boots. Then made the mistake of my life as I walked outside - I forgot my cell phone!

When I got to the barn, I grabbed Belle’s bridle and went outside to go get her. Belle is a 7 year-old Morgan/Arab cross, and usually was not hard to catch, but that day it took a good 5 minutes. By the time I got her it was about 5:05 p.m. I was going to bring her into the barn to saddle her, but then I thought that when we rode she would sweat, and then when I took the saddle off her the sweat would freeze then she would get sick. A person knows what to do when we get sick but a horse has no idea, and then the horse is scared.

So I didn’t use a saddle and rode bareback. I used the trough to boot myself up. Then we rode to the bush. When we got there, Belle was uneasy and getting scared. She was jumping up at the time but I’m used to it so I turned her around and started for home. As we got out of the bush I



guess the wind caught a branch that snapped and scared Belle so that she jumped straight up. As I slid down her back, I didn't let go of the reins until I was in the air. I thought that I could stop her and pull her down before I fell off, but that didn't work too well. I was scared.

It all happened so quickly that I had no idea what to do, but when I hit the ground all I wanted was to be home in a warm house with my mom and dad. When I got to the ground I could see Belle coming down on me so I rolled backwards. My left leg was in the air, and my right leg was just coming up, when the most pain I had ever had just ran throughout my body.

It was when Belle got up then I knew what had happened. My right leg was straight with my body just like when you sleep as straight as you could, but my left leg was up right behind my head and when it happened I heard a big "crack" in my leg.

When we did hit the ground, Belle got up quick so that she wasn't lying on me. She ran for home. I could hear another horse's hooves beat the ground so hard and so fast. It was 4 year-old Princess, another Morgan/Arab, racing like lightning towards me.

After about a minute or two I had the whole herd by me - all but four, Belle, Jasmine, Lily and Violet. Belle had run back to the barn and there was no way that she was coming back. Lily, Violet and Jasmine are in another pen so they can't come to see me, but they came as close as their pen would let them.

As I lay on the ground, Belle stood at the barn. Cocker and Bud, the two horses that we were watching for a friend, came over to smell me, but then they started to fight. Princess bit at them, and they kept their distance. Our big horse, Jerry, scared them back

to the barn, and Jane followed Jerry back to the barn too. Ruby and Princess stayed with me.

As I screamed for help, Princess and Ruby walked around me trying to see what was wrong and why I was screaming. Ruby got tired of listening to me, and walked back to the barn where the others were.

Princess did not leave. She's my horse and we have the biggest friendship ever. I'm always by her side when she's scared and when I'm scared she is there for me. Princess thinks that she can fit in with people. She's always with people. When she sees someone walking



Princess

down the road, if she feels like it, she will walk up to the fence and put her head over and give a little snort.

Princess kept sniffing me. After about five minutes she went to eat some grass but made sure that she could still see me. I stood up, but it was very hard to bend my left leg at the hip. I

tried to walk, but as soon as I put weight on my left leg I fell down. When I hit the ground, Princess came running to me. She started to sniff me again, trying to see what was wrong.

I tried to roll, but it hurt way too much to put my weight on my left side, so I lay there in pain. I looked at the sun and tried to guess what the time was - about 5:30 p.m. I knew that I had to get home. It was getting late and I was hungry and cold.

I started to crawl home, using my hand like crutches. I would pull myself forward, about 3 inches each time, then I would put my right knee on the ground to hold me as I put my hands out again to pull my body forward. My left leg just slid in the snow because at the time I couldn't bend it.

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Princess followed me. When the other horses saw me, they all came over. After about 20 minutes my arms were killing me, and I was at the last stage of being cold. I was getting very warm and I wanted to sleep.

I stopped crawling but Princess nudged me to keep going. By the time I was half-way to the barn I was so tired, I lay down in the snow and closed my eyes. Princess grabbed my jacket with her mouth and picked me up, put me down on my hands and knees, and hit me with her head. I had no choice, so I kept moving.

When I got to the barn, I had made the goal that I had set in the bush line, but Princess wanted me home safe in my house. She pushed me with her head. When we got to the fence, I went under it. I wanted to sleep. But when I looked at Princess it was like she was saying, "You came this far, for what?" So I had to keep going, for myself, but more for Princess just to show her how much help she really had been.

This was not the first time Princess had looked after me. A while back, I was riding her bareback, while my friend Renee rode her horse with a saddle. We were running when something jumped out of the bush and then back. I didn't get a chance to see it because Princess turned suddenly and I hit the ground, head first then my back. Renee's horse tried to take off for home, but Princess waited with me. I slowly got the air back in my lungs and walked up to Princess. I tried to get on, but couldn't - not even when I had her stand in the ditch. I asked her to put her neck down, and I leaned over it. She slowly put her head up and I slid on to her back and swung my leg over. Then I went to help Renee who had slipped off the saddle and was on her horse's rump. That event ended well - luckily.



Frostbitten knees

Now, as I crawled, Princess kept her eyes on me. I felt bad. Princess couldn't keep going with me. From this point on I was on my own. If I stopped it was like giving up hope of everything, so I kept on.

The barn door wasn't that hard to open. I crawled to the main room where my dad's tools are, and a heater and a phone. When I got in the room it wasn't what I was hoping for. The phone was disconnected.

I lay by the heater and started to warm up, but I was so cold that I didn't feel it. I started to shake, badly. The way my legs were, and the pain that they were in, it hurt to shake but I couldn't stop.

Five minutes later, I looked out the window. It was dark and black. I had to get home. I went out the door that we don't use in the winter. It was the closest door to the house.

Outside, I started to crawl to the house. I got half-way and felt like I couldn't go another inch. Then I thought about Princess, and she would want me to keep trying. I kept going. With every bit of ground I covered, I thought about Princess and how she was there for me.

When I got to the house I knocked on the door, but our furnace was on and it's so loud that my mom didn't hear me. I opened the door, put my head in and yelled for my mom. When she heard me she came running to me. We got my snowy clothes off, then I crawled to the couch.

The next day I could not move to go to school, and I ended up going to St. Anne's Hospital first and from there to the Children's Hospital in Winnipeg.

I was very lucky. Although my diagnoses were of a bruised lung, broken pelvis in several places, and frost bite to both knees*, I didn't need to have any surgery, and was in hospital for only 5 days. After that I had to have bed rest and then physiotherapy because I could not walk. While I was in hospital, all I wanted to know was how long before I could ride again. The doctors said I was very brave, but I told them this is how I was raised; to get back on the horse as soon as possible.

Although I was supposed to wait 6 months, it was 2 months later when my friend Renee and I wanted to go riding. My parents said to take Princess instead of Belle. I have to admit I cried, because I was more happy than scared to get on my Princess's back.

I gave Belle to one of my friends who is a great rider. Belle is a new horse now. She is good, and calm, and does not rear up any more.

The incident changed my life at the time, because I had to learn how trust the horse all over again. They



have to trust me too, or it doesn't go well. All of 2009, I was scared, and I would get flashbacks of the accident. But Princess is the only horse I truly trust and I'm learning how to ride safely.

My advice for younger riders is that you have to understand that no matter how good a horse is trained, it can still spook. You have to be ready and hold on because otherwise it could be a ride you will never forget. A good friend of mine once told me, "The hardest part of riding is the ground." I would also tell people it is best to ride with a buddy. And always take your cell phone!

**For those medically inclined readers, Lorraine's diagnoses:*

- right pulmonary contusion;
- multiple pelvic fractures (right acetabulum, left iliac and left sacral);
- frost bite to bilateral knees.

Lorraine and her dog, with Princess.

QUICK-FIRE COMPETITION!

This little guy has been making the rounds of the Internet for a while. We thought it was a very innovative use of a hoodie!

But can you tell us - just WHAT does he keep in the pockets?

Send us your suggestions and the best one will get a prize!

The contest is open to readers of all ages, and will be judged on under-18's, and 18 and over.



Email your entries to contact@horsecountry.ca and remember to include your name, age (if under 18), mailing address and telephone number. Deadline for entries is April 5.