

# TWIST OF FATE

## THE MIRACLE COLT AND HIS FRIENDS



### CHAPTER THREE

BY CHRIS STUCKENSCHNEIDER

His name might be strange, but Bazonka Donk's a class act. In fact, he's in a class by himself at Longmeadow Rescue Ranch; he's the only hinny on the property. A hinny's kind of like a mule, except it has the opposite parentage. Bazonka Donk's dad was a horse and his mom was a donkey.

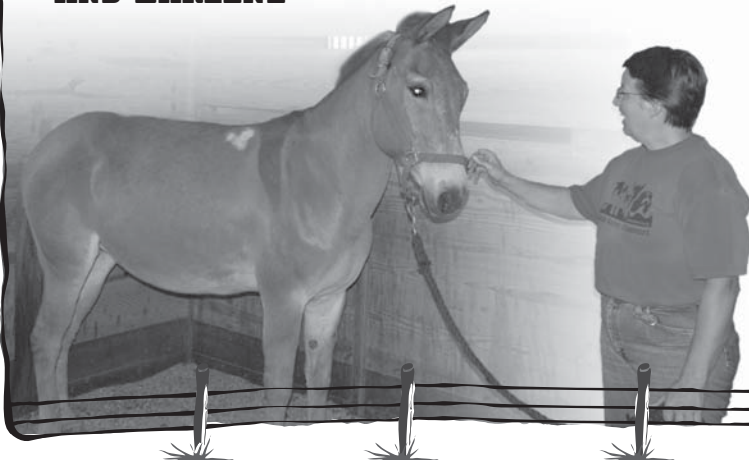
There's no hee-haw about it. Donk's unique, and he's bilingual. Folks at Longmeadow say he can bray like a donkey and neigh like a horse.

Hinnies and mules are categorized as long ears, and Donk's got a set to be proud of, though they're not as long or as pointy as a mule's.

The little fella had a rough way to go in the accident. The impact of the crash forced his back legs through the air vents of the trailer, slicing them to the bone. If a horse had been caught in twisted metal, it would have flailed around further injuring itself, but Donk was calm. His courage girded him like armor as he lay tangled in the wreckage.

Hinnies are known to be intelligent, cooperative and tough. Donk lived up to his breed's reputation. He seemed to have an inborn sense that rescue workers were doing all they could to free him.

#### **BAZONKA DONK AND EARLENE**



The lacerations Donk suffered required extensive care, and the attention paid off. Now Donk's got legs as pretty as the late Betty Grable's—if you don't know who that is, ask your grandparents; they'll filly you in.

Donk is a sorrel, which is a shade of copper red with a mane and tail to match. He looks more like a horse than a donkey. Stan the Thoroughbred and Donk were friends, but they've been having issues, so they're no longer turned out in the arena together. Stan can be a tease, and he was getting on Donk's last nerve.

While the injuries to Donk's body have healed, his spirit is lagging. Earlene believes Donk may have been abused before he stepped foot on the slaughterhouse truck.

Little is known about his past life, but Earlene has a hunch that Donk was a pack animal, a Western dude who carried supplies for people traveling to remote sites to hunt or fish. One thing's for sure, Donk's never had a rider on his back. He wants no part of that malarkey—the very idea makes him bristle like a porcupine.

Though Donk loves his stablemate and girlfriend D.D., he's picky about humans. The hinny can be as skittish as a new kid on the first day of school. Approaching

Donk, one has to be careful because when long ears kick, they do it with purpose, Earlene says. She knows all about Donk because she treated his wounds.

Cautious Donk associated Earlene with pain, so it's took her a while to win back his trust. Earlene extended her gentle hand in friendship. She enters his stall speaking in hushed tones of encouragement. If the staff at Longmeadow wants to coerce the hinny into doing something he doesn't want to do, they bribe him with a treat. Donk appreciates his food, just like Stan. Let one handful of hay drop on the barn floor, and Donk sucks it up like a Hoover vacuum. Donk makes a clean sweep every time, and could teach Clueless Too a thing or three about life in general.

All the animals at Longmeadow have tried to clue Clueless in on ranch life, but the 2-year-old is as curious as the monkey who hangs out with the man in the yellow hat that Snortin' Norton told me about at bedtime one night.

Watch for the next chapter, buckaroos, and you'll meet Clueless Too, and his best bud, Laredo. They're a couple of wild chaps.

*In 2006, a truck carrying horses bound for a meat-packing plant overturned in Missouri. Twenty-six animals survived and were taken to a rescue ranch for treatment and care. One of the horses was pregnant and miraculously delivered a colt the following spring. This story is told from the colt's perspective. Learn more about these animals today at [longmeadowrescueranch.org](http://longmeadowrescueranch.org).*

*Illustrations by Tony Rainey; photographs by Jeanne Miller Wood. Produced by the Missouri Press Foundation. © 2007.*