

TWIST OF FATE

THE MIRACLE COLT AND HIS FRIENDS



CHAPTER SIX

BY CHRIS STUCKENSCHNEIDER

We miss Frankie. But we're happy for her—she's an example of how good things come from bad. The mare has a home and a gal to love her.

Frankie was adopted. Now the mare lives with Lori, at her Crazy Acres Ranch, which isn't too far from Longmeadow. Lori is crazy about animals. She owns 11 horses, eight dogs, seven cats, one sheep, a pot-bellied pig, and a handful of guineas. Lori's a regular Dr. Doolittle, but she actually does a lot.

Frankie Blue Eyes is a Paint, mostly white with splotches of black that resemble humongous ink blots. Her eyes are her signature trademark. They're a startling robins egg blue. The Longmeadow staff thinks Frankie is 10 or 11 years old; they guesstimate our age by looking at our teeth—sure glad I brush and floss.

Even though Frankie didn't get banged up too much in the accident it brought on a load of emotional trauma. Horses feel stress, just like humans. The mare lost her appetite and dropped almost 200 pounds. She was a real "Nervous Nellie."

FRANKIE BLUE EYES



The serenity of Longmeadow soothed Frankie's raw nerves, and she's made continued progress at Lori's. For a special dessert, Lori feeds the mare Twizzlers. Red licorice sounds yummy, but my mummy worries about cavities.

Frankie has a career. She's promoting the rescue of large animals by serving as a mascot for MERS. Spelled out, that's Missouri Emergency Response Service—whew, that's more of a mouthful than a bit. It's hard for a colt like me to understand those big words, so I trotted up the hill to the red barn to talk to Snortin' Norton. The pig set me straight.

If a horse collapses in its stall or falls down a ravine, never fear—call MERS. Lori and the team use manpower, ropes, and pulleys to rescue large animals. Sometimes they use an Anderson Sling, too. With the sling, and a tow truck, animals can be lifted to safety or loaded on a trailer. It's not good to pull animals by their necks; this could further injure them, Lori says.

MERS volunteers offer a wide range of service to help large animals. They were lifesavers in the truck accident. Frankie was rescued, and now she's a key-maker in helping others. The group uses Frankie to practice its skills, so when a real emergency arises it will be able to respond quickly and efficiently.

Frankie represents MERS at horse shows, and other events, and offers information to police and firemen about how MERS can assist them when the need arises. Being a public figure requires that Frankie be comfortable around people.

Getting chummy with folks and adjusting to a new home have been hurdles for Frankie, but she's met the challenge like the trouper she is. Frankie used to be moody, and had "other-horse issues." She'd crank out a kick at the drop of a cowboy hat, and didn't want to be near anything that neighed, had four hooves and a tail.

When Lori brought Frankie to Crazy Acres, she segregated her from the other horses. Little by little, she helped Frankie get accustomed to the white, sorrels, bays, roans and the big Belgium she owns. Patience paid off. Frankie is a changed girl, a peace lover who shares grass with a paddock full of horses. Frankie's not a wonder horse, but she's found her own personal heaven, in her haven with Lori.

Hard to believe, we're entering the home stretch—next chapter, I'll introduce you to a friend who'll call Longmeadow home for quite some time. Willy survived incredible odds in the truck accident, but now he's a Barn Buddy, and enjoys horsin' around with the public.

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 www.longmeadowrescueranch.org.

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