FEATHER SOUND NEWS

Serving the Tampa Bay Area, Florida

WHILO'S STORY

Whilo

Not long ago, we received quite a nice compliment. A visitor commented on a horse, “what a lovely mare! She’s such a beautiful mover, what is she doing here?”

Little did the gentleman know that he was admiring a horse we’ve had about 15 years and when she first arrived, she was traumatized, terrified… skinny - and in pain.

She IS lovely and she IS a beautiful mover. She also won quite a bit on the racetrack, ran over 50 times, her famous sire won well over a half million dollars, but when she began to falter, she was cast aside to fend for herself. Being raised in a barn among her own kind had not offered her much to draw on when she found herself abandoned in a field.

Her only friend, who ran 72 races, did not survive. Whilo almost didn’t. Abandoned, emaciated with no help in sight, she struggled to find any sparce grazing as summer shifted into fall and the grasses began to go dormant.

Kentucky is such a beautiful state. The horses who began their lives there or retired to exquisite ‘blue grass fields’ after offering their very best to compassionate human partners, were the lucky ones. Sometimes it may only be the luck of the draw, as they say. Like thousands of others, Whilo had easily earned her keep, proven her noble bloodlines had been a worthy endeavor, but unlike others just as successful – she was left on her own, with limited resources, or hope.

As a rescue sanctuary, we have animals come to us in many odd ways. This was no exception.

A very unscrupulous fellow had been ‘collecting’ discarded mares to breed to his stallion hoping survivors would eventually produce something grand. He had no regard for those who did not make it, no concern for stables who fell for his sob stories about how he had to keep moving his stallion and mares around. He’d moved in, acquire a huge debt then sneak horses out in the night; a routine that carried this greedy deceiver well over a decade.

Whilo produced several winning foals but when the economy dropped in the racing world, she was one of many who lost their way. We can’t save them all… no-one can. But we do save some.

This lovely mare now looks like a homebred show horse. She shines in the summers, gallops with her herd, eats with her mate and absolutely loves carrots. Initially she is still shy around newcomers but warms up easily once she realizes she has met another kind and gentle soul. Her healthy condition distracts viewers, covering their eyes to her past. The months we spent finding the sources of her pain and lameness only left marks in her memories, and ours. The flesh that was pulled tight over pointy hip bones and a weary, aged look in her eyes, has long been replaced with muscles, a spark of joy and a calm demeanor from the peace of no longer fretting where her next meal – any meal – may come from.

With her racetrack wins, she could have been maintained using ‘her own money’ if someone had cared. Instead, she was dropped into a field with poor grazing and no nutrition. Had she lost the ability to survive, she

would have been buried where she fell, like others abandoned alongside.

This horse was lucky. Although the man who stole her from that field meant no better a lifestyle than what she had, he brought her to a training track where she was noticed by a compassionate horseman who loaded her onto his truck and brought her to our door. The other mare he tried to save that day, did not make it, so Whilo's legacy carries the hope and memories for them both. She will never forget her friend, but her days are now quiet and safe, in between excited romps through the pastures with her 'forever family'!

To help ease the pain or fear or hunger of animals like Whilo, donations to our rescue sanctuary have brought much love and great food to so many in need. To make a donation using Zelle, please send through info@EquestrianSpirits.ORG or through PayPal by using the link on our Home Page website www.EquestrianSpirits.ORG. Thank you for caring! Laurie – founder/director (863) 368-0775.