

SIZE ISN'T EVERYTHING

“You would NEVER guess my age or maybe even believe my story. Although I have been on this earth for quite some time, most of my story is short. Not because I do not have a lot to tell you but because I have shifted priorities of importance.

The fact that I have been a breeding stallion and have some lovely kids, or that I have had some nice homes and been able to show and jump and hang out with fun people and animals is the ‘old me’. I would like to introduce you to the ‘new me’.

I call myself Sabene. I am; hard to believe; 33 years young. Yep. Should be spending my remaining life as a retired old man, and I would have, if not for the tragedy that befell my family. The details are not relevant. The short version is my people had some problems so my entire animal family nearly lost their lives and some nice people came to help and we are all, ok.

What makes my story interesting at this time, is that I have had so many changes in a very short span which has made me look at things very differently. I was aware something was changing when the diligent care I have been used to most of my life began to wane. Day after day, things got slowly worse. Less and less brushing, less and less connection, less and less food... My shiny coat dulled. My muscles deteriorated and disappeared. My joy for life vanished. Survival became the only goal. I weakened to the point of

no longer caring what happened next. Looking back I can say it would have never crossed my mind that anything could make me feel so hopeless. When I slept I would wake disoriented, and when I regrouped I would wish I could sleep again; but the hunger pains drove me to search for food..

Before I was too weak, I managed to push down some of the dilapidated fencing so I could roam in search for something more to eat. The knowledge the mares were now loose with me meant nothing. We all just searched together.

I remember some confusion on the farm. There finally seemed to be people coming around doing busy work but although we could feel changes, nothing seemed to actually relate to us; until... A new lady came and brought us a vet. He looked us all over to see what he could do. I was so skinny he could not believe I was a stallion. That didn't even hurt my feelings. I just really didn't care.

What happened next most could guess. Obviously I am able to tell my story since I recovered just fine. What I would like to say is what life feels like to me now. I eat my food slowly. I can savor every bite since I believe the food will not run out again and it tastes so much better than what I had before. I stand over my water trough looking at my reflection, saying hi to myself and laughing, then putting my nose in for a drink I watch my image

ripple into oblivion. I love the flavor of the water since it is fresh, and now limitless. I watch the traffic and the people come and go from my farm with great interest. I don't actually care what they are up to just that it matters they are up to something I can watch.

The very best of all is I have friends again. Horse friends. I do not have to be alone. The very same alone-less that helped me heal my lame, painful, scrawny body, was taken to new heights when I met my first friends Sky and Hari. They were the best of pals but I had never seen them in all my years. They came into my field and let me chase them and play and eat before they did and we shared hay and grass... and fun. They made me laugh. We ran and faked each other out and told each other we were better than anyone else. We cantered, a gait I had not done in well over a year. I hurt, I ached but I ate and ate and ate. As my muscles came back the boys made me play that much more; and I got fast. I had forgotten how fast I could go! We would run and spin and buck! Yep, me... buck! By the time Hari and Sky went into another pasture I had two handsome friends and felt like a kid again.

I was sad at first when the boys went in the next field but I was in for another surprise. I knew by now I looked great again. I had stopped limping, I was shiny and I had muscles and flesh over my bones. I was alone in my field for about two weeks. I knew my new person was up to something; she would give me a sly smile and keep her thoughts to herself but I knew she liked her idea. While I was wondering what she was up to three new horses joined our family. In a small paddock near mine a red horse was put all by himself. He wouldn't talk to anyone and kept to himself but I could tell he wanted to fight, or play hard, or fuss with someone. I tried to ask him what he was like or what his world had been like or how he got here. He never answered. He could care less. He was arrogant but I couldn't help but watch him move. Before I got bored with no conversation from him I found out what my person was up to. She gave me that horse! Wow, what a crazy idea!

Let me tell you why. First we squealed, because we both knew we were better than the other. We struck, to show how

cool and un-threatened we both were. We reared to intimidate, we shook our heads, pawed the ground, spun around, trotted off with disinterest, stared, and then ran out of ideas. We got bored and ate hay. Our girl was watching. We munched and watched her. We got bored again. And then it happened. Hari and Sky and I had run. They told me they had been race horses. I felt pretty good because I could hold my own with them even being older and a bit shorter. But THIS guy; this guy changed it all!

As I said, we got bored. Whintir looked at me and laughed. Before I could wonder what he thought was so funny he charged me and yelled “RUN!” And I did. At first startled and a bit concerned about my aging body. At first a bit slow and trying to keep a safe distance. At first I moved carefully and dodged his threats; but then he pulled alongside of me and I ran. I ran, and he ran. My heart raced, my ears could barely hear through the breeze, my legs flew under me on their own course. My tail streamed out behind me; my lungs filled with more air than I believe I have ever allowed in at one time before. We ran. I ran, he ran, and ran, and ran, and ran...

Whintir and I became the very best of friends that day. I have never had a bad day since. I love my life. I love living. I even forgive being starved so I would have this to compare to that. What happened that day in my friendship with Whintir was a zest for life I have never felt. I had a good life until the rough patch that could have ended in tragedy but instead gave me a passion for survival my ancestors knew innately. If you come to visit me and see me with Whintir you will see why I am so impressed. He is the red one and I am white. My melanoma cancer can't be seen except when I flag my tail as I run with him and the wind. The biggest contrast is not that he is a Thoroughbred and I am an Arabian or even that I am three times his age. The part I love is we can go stride for stride; his 17 hands to my 14!

Way to go, eh?" ■

- words by
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