

How Could You?

When I was a foal, I entertained you with my antics and made you laugh. You called me your child, and despite the number of times I stepped on your feet, and bit you; I became your best friend. Whenever I was "bad", you'd shake your finger at me and say, "How could you?" but then you'd relent, and scratch my ears.

My halter breaking took a little longer than expected, because you were terribly busy, but we worked on that together. I remember those nights of nuzzling in the stall listening to your confide secret dreams, and I believed that my life could not be anymore perfect. We went for long walks through the pasture, and usually stopped at the neighbor's garden and snuck a few carrots. I grazed in the sun waiting for you to come home at the end of each day.

Gradually, you began spending more time at work and with your other friends, and more time searching for a human mate. I waited patiently, comforted you through heartbreaks and disappointment, never chided you about bad decisions, and romped with glee at your home comings, and when you were in love.

Now your human mate is not a "horse person" still I welcomed them to our home, tried to show affection, and obey. I was happy because you were happy. Then the human babies came and I shared your excitement. I was fascinated with their pinkness, how they smelled, and I wanted to mother them too.

Only you were both worried that I might hurt them, and so I spent most of my time banished to another pasture or in my stall where I couldn't "hurt" them.

As they began to grow, I became their friend. They clung to my mane and pulled themselves up on to my back they poked their fingers in my eyes, and investigated my ears, and gave me kisses on my nose. I loved everything about them, and because touch was now so infrequent I would defend my new friends with my life hoping that they would love me.

I would walk up to them and listen to their worries and secret dreams, and together we would listen to the sound of your car leaving the driveway. There had been time when others asked if you had a horse and you produced a photo from your wallet and told stories about me. These few years, you just answered "yes" and changed the subject. I had gone from being "your horse" to just a "horse", and you resented every expenditure on my behalf.

Something was happening, I understood you were all leaving, but what about me? No one had explained, I had only hoped that you might come talk to me, so I waited. You came and loaded me on the trailer, I was excited about the ride, I was sure this meant we were all going to our new home, until we arrived at a strange place. It smelled of other horses, and fear, and hopelessness. You filled out paper work and said, "I hope you will find this horse a good home" They responded with a smug look "of course we will. You had to pry your son's fingers from my lead rope. "NO Daddy, don't let them take my horsey!" And, I was worried for him, and what lessons you taught him about friendship and loyalty, about love and responsibility, and about respect for animals. You gave me a good pat on the head, avoided my eyes and politely refused to take my halter and lead rope with you. You had a deadline to meet and now I have one too.

After you left they took me to a stall that was cold and empty. They feed us of course, but I had lost my appetite days ago.

At first, whenever someone walked past my stall, I rushed to the front hoping it was you, that you had changed your mind, that this was all a bad dream... or I hoped it would at least be someone who cared, anyone who might save me.

I heard footsteps as a man came for me at the end of the day; I trotted along the isle to a separate pasture. He placed a lead rope on my halter and cracked a whip behind me. I had never seen one before, so it scared me. I reared. Then it hit me, it hurt, I jumped and tried to run away, but the rope stopped me. The whip started hitting me again and again. Then finally he put me back in my stall.