



## A Bond Like No Other

Kelsey E., Ontario

I stroked the small pony's face. It was soft and precious. The pony's lovely coat was a radiant light red with a swirl of chocolate brown smothered in. His tiny hooves were crusty black, all except one. His left hind was pale white. The animal's mane and tail was also pale white, and the hair was knotted with sharp, prickly burs. I turned to my mom, who was standing behind me. "Kodi," I replied. "My new pony's name is officially Kodi."

My mom laughed. "Do you even know what 'officially' means sweetie?" I shook my head. "Not really, but whenever I use big words like that, I sound like a grown-up. Just like you." (At the time I was three years old). We giggled, and Mom pulled out a red, soft cotton lead rope and clipped it onto the pony's green, dirt covered halter. "Kodi it is."

We led Kodi across the muddy field that was showered with manure. There were donkeys in the field as well. One trotted up to me. I patted its sticky grey coat, and it brayed as if it was satisfied. Then it trotted away again to join the other grazing donkeys. But surprisingly, my new pony answered back. He brayed to the donkey, although he wasn't very good at it. It sounded like a dying moose that had the flu. Mom and I laughed. "Maybe this is an under-cover donkey agent that dressed like a pony!" she joked. I chuckled, and we continued our journey across the field.

My mother and I finally reached the man leaning against the buckled fence. He had a dirty blue Featherlite Trailer cap on and a black t-shirt that had a rip in the shoulder. His suspenders were a deep brown, but they were coated with grime and dust. The work boots he had on were sprayed with manure, wet barley, and soggy mud. "My name is John," the farmer told me. As we got closer, the farmer kindly opened the rickety old gate. It hung on sore hinges and opened with a loud creak. My mother, Kodi and I stepped through. The young man followed behind us, closing the gate as he left. "My daughter has found a pony that she likes," Mom announced. "Just tell me your price and we'll see if it is reasonable." The gruff man looked up into the blue sky, as if he had written the price on a fluffy cloud. "Well," he started. "I've been trying to find a home for that little thing for a couple months now, so I'll have to lower my price. You're lucky you came today because he isn't worth much now." I frowned. This pony was worth a lot to me. The man turned his back on us for a moment, so I stuck my tongue out at him. Then he turned back to us. "I'll give you that pony for \$400 dollars. It's cheap."

My mom said, "WOW! That is an awesome deal! I'll take it! But there's only one problem. I don't have a trailer to take this pony home in."

John thought for a minute and then offered, "I'll let you use my trailer for an extra \$20. I'll



even hook the trailer up to my truck and drive to your house for you. You can drive ahead in your car." Mom nodded her head and paid the man, and he counted his money twice. She rolled her eyes. Then the farmer shoved the money into his pocket and gestured us toward the gravel driveway. "Shall we?"

We followed the man towards his antique trailer. It was purple and black but very rusty. The vehicle was badly in need of a new paint job. The tires were also quite flat, but the owner didn't seem to notice. John proudly strutted up to his trailer. "All I need to do now is hitch it up to my truck." That took him a good 5 minutes, so mother and I leaned up against the truck of an ancient oak tree. "This is very exciting!" I sang to my mom as I danced around the tree. She smiled. "I know!" The she tugged on the lead rope that was still hooked onto Kodi because he seemed to think that eating bark off of the tree was delicious.

At last, John got the trailer hooked up to his truck and loaded my pony into it. "So little miss, do you want to go with mommy or ride with me and your new pony?" he asked me. I thought for a while and then answered, "I think I'll go with you and Kodi, but can I sit in the trailer with my pony?"

The man shook his head. "A horse trailer isn't safe for children to be in alone. You're gonna have to come in the truck with me. Do ya still wanna come with us?"

"I guess so," I sighed. I waved good-bye to my mom and hopped into the cab of the truck. Then John started the engine. We were silent the whole way to our farm because we didn't know each other. It was a long 35-minute drive out of Cardinal to my house. But we finally got there. I excitedly jumped out of the black Ford truck. Mom was just getting out of her beige car when I ran up to her and gave her a big hug. "Thank you mommy for the wonderful pony! I love him so much! He's perfect." Mom hugged me back and then went to help unload Kodi. They backed him out of the creaky trailer and led him down the grassy pathway to our barn. My mom's horse was going nuts, racing up and down the wooden fence line like he was in the Calgary Stampede. He was bucking and kicking like a maniac. Mother opened the shiny metal gate and walked Kodi into the green paint-chipped barn. She let me inside and shut the green gate. I looked deep into the pony's big brown eyes and felt like I had known him forever. I patted the star on his face and leaned my head against his soft neck. And that day I found out that horses create a special bond between you and them. A bond like no other, that is unforgettable, like an unbreakable spirit, and more precious than the world's greatest treasure.