

When the Sky Falls

Luscious Hunko Man, APHA, roan overo gelding, "Sky"
April 10, 1989 - July 17, 2008



On July 17, our horse known as Sky was humanely euthanized after suffering a compound fracture above his left hock. There was no explanation for the injury. Apparently he got up on it wrong while being stalled overnight, as was his routine. There was no sign of a struggle.

Sky was an impressive-looking horse, a sixteen hand roan overo. What set him apart from other horses, though, was his face. He had the kindest, sweetest, most loving expression, more like something you would expect to find on a puppy instead of a horse. His size could intimidate someone at first, but his sweet face brought them around immediately. He loved treats, knew what the word meant, and was always polite about taking them, even from the smallest hand. He was understandably a rescue favorite. He was without doubt the best horse I have ever spent time with.

I didn't know the injury to be a compound fracture and I had called K-State to see about transporting him to their veterinary hospital. I told them if he could be treated and be comfortable, I wanted to try. It didn't matter if he was rideable. His greatest value was on the ground, although he was a dream horse when under saddle. He was impeccably trained and willing. More important, he was the perfect horse for a rescue visitor of any age. He was absolutely safe, unbelievably friendly and completely adorable.

That precious face was the first thing I saw every morning when I went to the barn to start chores. He had an endearing habit of nodding his head as he waited. I'd ask him, "Do you want your breakfast?" He'd nod. "Are you the best horse in the world?" Nod. "Do you have any idea how much I love you?" I'd ask. And again, he'd nod, whatever silly question I asked as I went about filing and carrying buckets.

Dr. Mendoza of Emporia Veterinary Hospital came out to stabilize the leg for transport to K-State, but it became apparent that this was a compound fracture, and with its location above the hock, the prognosis was not good. Sky was shaking in pain. I made that horrible decision every horse owner dreads. It is an unfortunate but necessary part of animal stewardship. I said, "I can't do this to him. He needs to be put down."

Dr. Mendoza handled this with caring and compassion, not only for the horse, but for me as well. Sky went down in the aisle of the barn he loved and I sat beside him and told him not be scared. The last words he heard were, "Rainbow Bridge, buddy, Rainbow Bridge." And I believe he'll be there for me.

Kristin Chambers, Executive Director
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