



# Who Would Have Known

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Stephanie Pierce

I have had the distinct pleasure of having these majestic creatures in my life for as long as I can remember, and have been operating an equine rescue for a little over seven years. There is always a special horse that reaches out and touches your inner core. But who would have known that my heart and soul would be torn apart by a very special PMU mare and her unborn foal. I have had one such horse, Nellie, and her unborn foal that I took the liberty of naming Lil Angel.

I would like to tell you Nellie's story. She could never speak the words, but her appearance and body language spoke volumes. I have to speak for her because, you see, she can't since she is no longer with us and neither is Lil Angel. But I will be her voice, and I will speak for her and the thousands of other mares who are enduring the same inhumane treatment she had as a PMU mare.

Nellie was a beautiful black Percheron mare whose main purpose in life was to remain bred and to be hooked up to equipment to extract the urine from her body to make Hormone Replacements for women. I have seen graphic photos and videos of these mares and some of the conditions they were forced to live in. Why you ask?...Money. Many of these mares were deprived of adequate water to drink. Again you may ask why? This would give a more concentrated product (urine) which then again means ...Money.

With this said, on to our Nellie. Nellie was a PMU mare, who existed on a ranch that produced Pregnant Mare Urine. I do not know what her living conditions were, or how she was cared for but if the condition of her feet and her mannerism towards humans were any indication of the treatment, then I will say it was not the best. In October of 2007, Miracle Horse Rescue (MHR) was involved in an attempt to save PMU mares that were bound for slaughter. With the assistance of many individuals around the US and England, we were able to obtain the funds to save two of these beautiful girls--Nellie and another grade Percheron mare, Jerri. However, just a couple of weeks before their arrival we were asked if we could take in one more and we did. Her name was Apple, an 8 yr old Belgian pregnant mare. All three of the girls were pregnant and due to foal in May of 2008.

On January 17<sup>th</sup> after a 1,573 mile trek from Canada, the girls arrived at the ranch. Apple gingerly stepped out of the transporter's trailer, and we were in total awe of her beauty and demeanor. Then we heard the rumbling of hooves, and bursting on the scene, with Joseph (our son) at the end of the lead rope, galloped Nellie, with Jerri leaping from the trailer as well. It was quite the sight to behold. Both Nellie and Jerri were wild-eyed and snorting. We realized at that moment that these two girls had not been handled much at all and we knew we had our hands full. But we were ready to accept the challenge of giving them a new chance at better life.

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They were settled in their stalls, provided plenty of fresh water and feed. Over the next few days, we watched and assessed their personalities. Apple was fine with the human touch, but Nellie and Jerri were not quite as receptive. Jerri in fact was quite aggressive. Through the course of the first month, Nellie was worked with consistently, and the day arrived when we could change out the halter that carried her number on it, and put on a new halter — her independence day!



Reflecting back, I think Nellie knew her purpose here at the ranch and that was the reason she accepted our efforts to show her that not all humans were rough. Teaching her to lead was a huge challenge but she did it in a very short time.

On March the 15<sup>th</sup> 2008, Nellie began to show signs of the dreaded colic. Colic can be brought on by so many things, but who would have known what was ahead. We walked her, which was not an easy task as she was not interested in moving, but she did. We contacted our veterinarian who performed an exam and provided a tubing treatment in order to get her to pass whatever was blocking her internally. We were in constant communication with our vet regarding Nellie's progress and we had some minor passing but not what was necessary. Since Nellie was not progressing, we had our veterinarian return on March 19<sup>th</sup>, 2008 to perform yet another examination and tubing as well. Once again, nothing was happening. All afternoon I had this nagging in the pit of my stomach to get her to the hospital. And we did, thank the Lord.

Nellie was in the best hands. Upon examinations of various types, including an exam of her cervix to ensure it was still closed due to the pressure she was enduring, the veterinarians stated they would tube her again, do a stomach tap to find out what was going on, and hydrate her to help push everything through. If this did not work then the only option we had was surgery. Even with this we would not be guaranteed she would survive.

This type of surgery is very costly, and being a non-profit, I was terrified because we are on such a strict and limited budget. But we knew we had to help Nellie and Lil Angel. A plea went out to the public, and individuals from around the world came together in unity and helped to provide for Nellie and her unborn foal. On March 20<sup>th</sup>, Nellie was not responding to treatment and the only option we had was surgery. She had a 30-33% chance of survival, but 0% if we did not try. We had to give them the chance to live.



At 8pm on March 20 we received the first call from the vet. Nellie and her foal had survived the surgery. During surgery the doctors filled and kept a five gallon bucket of debris from her intestines and there was even more in her stomach, which was equated to concrete. This can happen due to inadequate diet and from eating on overgrazed land. Her intestines had been extremely damaged from the years that she had this inside her; however, she was still kept on the PMU line providing the urine for the dollar. Our veterinarian was so hopeful she would survive, but the next crucial step was getting her to stand. The surgery was long and can affect all of the horse's bodily functions. At 10 pm I received the final call, stating that after five vets worked on Nellie trying to get her up, and even going as far as putting her in a sling to help her stand, Nellie could not.

Nellie, had she survived, would have been faced with many obstacles. Her kidneys suffered damage due to the fact that while on the PMU line she did not have enough water to drink...all for the dollar. We had no choice but to let this beautiful lady and her unborn foal go. I asked if we could save the foal, but was told Nellie was too far from delivering.

Through all of this Nellie was a grand lady. I think she knew what her and her foal's final purpose was in life. She wanted us to learn from her, to help others that are still enduring this cruel and inhumane treatment. She wanted us to tell others, to take care of Apple and Jerri and their unborn foals, and to let the world know that she did not die in vain.

Our voices WILL be HEARD LOUD and CLEAR we will stop this inhumane treatment all in Honor of Nellie and Lil Angel...who was destined to be an Angel without ever knowing life.

