

## How horses and men meet again

This is a story from the time that men and horses had lost sight of each other.

People knew there were horses, horses knew there were people, yet horses and men had lost all contact.

People lived on one bank of the river, they were busy, working, and all day dealing with a lot of important things. On the other bank the horses lived and in the fields that stretched out beyond the river. Yes, they saw the people, and sometimes were astonished of what they saw happening on the other side of the river. And the people saw the horses now and again, but didn't think much of it, just: 'Look, over there, horses'.

In winter there was little grass left, the horses strolled along an empty plain looking for the last bits to eat. They came across some tiny birches and nibbled the bark of the trees. They found willows they especially liked. They had some of the old acorns they discovered, but not too many because their insides cannot stand them very well. Moss was lovely and brambles were alright. This went on for a couple of weeks.

The herd moved on to find food. But when it started snowing and the ground was frozen over, they couldn't find enough to eat. The horses were hungry. And when horses are hungry they will look for help.

One quiet day the horses crossed the river and swam to the opposite bank where the people lived. There under the snow was still grass to be found because these were meadows. And even better: there was hay.

The people were glad that the horses had come. They were tired of toil and trouble of working and organizing. Around a big paddock of sand they made a sturdy fence, so the horses wouldn't eat all the grass at once and give the soil time to recover and grow new grass. And this is where the horses were given their water and hay. Winter fodder. Here they could eat to their hearts content. Horses and people became friends. And friends look after each other. The people fed the horses, the horses offered strength and cheerfulness. And during dreary days they kept each other company. The horses were tame, were playful and they allowed people to stroke them, and even ride them. Horses and men found each other.

Life of the people had changed considerably, the horses power and efforts made it possible to travel farther and the horses listened attentively though they couldn't answer. People changed horses lives too. For the horses were given love and care in exchange for labour and company. They were offered a place to hide in the storm, they were given to eat if there was no more grass in the fields. And they loved being near the people, especially when they were singing.

After winter spring came and nature awoke. Birds came back and built their nests. Off and on they flew with the horses' hair in their bills, the horses were shedding their winter coat and a shiny summer coat would soon appear.

In spring the horses often stood longing at the gate looking towards the greening fields, perceiving the fresh young leaves in the trees and hearing the soft friendly sound of the water against the riverbank.

They would love to be out now.

Go to the green grass, the large plain, and the shady and mysterious woods. Run across the dunes, rolling in the sand near the river and most of all: eat the lovely lush grass.

The people saw the horses' desire, but knew they had to start carefully letting them graze or else they would fall ill of too much fresh grass. So they made a plan, that's what people are good at.

They had the horses in a small field to start with, in the evening at dusk they were brought back into the paddock near the house, with water and hay. And the horses enjoyed it immensely, they bucked and galloped across the field or through the paddock; provoked each other, ran to and fro the people.

As if they would like to show how much fun it was out in the fields.

All of a sudden people remembered what it was like in the old days. How you would ride through the woods, trotting and galloping on horseback along the rivers and beaches in the wind, or a long and peaceful ride back home head down and one hand in the manes and the other hand on the back of your horse.

People knew they had to be careful. The horses had to become stronger and get accustomed to the food in spring, new fresh and rich grass. In this way they would be prepared for a healthy summer.

And that summer arrived. Of course it would arrive. The horses crossed the river swimming. And on their backs? The people that rediscovered the beautiful world at the other side of the river. That is, on the days they were not working and organizing. For that had to be done now and then.

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