

The Great Lie
By Cheryl Smith

“Don’t worry or cry; your pony has gone to another home, put out to pasture,” parents tell their tearful children after they’ve really dumped their beloved equine friend at a feed lot, to be shipped many hot hundred miles to a slaughterhouse.

That’s what happened to this sweet sorrel 22-year-old mare this week. After 22 years of providing joy, companionship, and service in 4-H programs, her family— instead of contacting a rescue group or incurring the modest expense of a veterinarian to end her life quickly and humanely— dumped her in the kill pen at a feed lot in Riverton so they could get a hundred bucks for her flesh. Her feet had recently been trimmed. Her bridle path clipped. Her tail still wavy from braids woven by loving hands. She stands in a hot, dusty corner of the pen, over an empty metal container that should hold water, but instead just a 1” layer of slimy green muck. I grab a nearby hose, and she starts prancing and pacing. In a nearby 6’ square pen filled with trash and feces, two filthy dogs start jumping and barking wildly, excited at the prospect of soon getting a drink.

The owner of the feed lot comes up to me. I ask about the horse. “They are all just horses to me,” he chuckles, demanding to be paid \$240 (priced by the pound) to spare her life.

Which we did, because we thought she deserved better...even if her family didn’t.

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