

REVISED

FOR THE Love



Of THE HORSE

VOLUME III

ANN JAMIESON

To Cindy and Hugh -
A huge "Thank You" for all
the ponies you've saved, and
for believing in my thriller.
Enjoy the stories. -

Ann Jamieson

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➤ MY THRILLER

She's one of those horse angels that are a blessing to horses and people alike. A science teacher by profession, Cindy Bellis-Jones uses her 50 acre Fox Run Farm in Paris, Kentucky to rescue approximately 100 ponies a year. She's been doing it for more than 30 years now and describes her actions as "an addiction."

Cindy rescues her ponies from many different stockyards. She has rescued thousands of ponies, but My Thriller was one of the worst cases she had ever seen. A walking, coughing, skeleton with green goo oozing from his nose, My Thriller was extremely ill. Not only ill but injured as well. With a two-foot gash across his chest covered in maggots, he was a candidate, it seemed, only for the killers.

Yet he caught Cindy's eye. It was more than just her desire to rescue the pony; the more she looked at him, the more Cindy realized that this was a fabulous pony that had unfortunately landed in dire straits.

She had come to the auction that day to help find a pony to purchase for a friend's daughter. When the friend saw Cindy's attention directed at Thriller, she reacted with disdain.

"You're not thinking of *that* pony, are you?" asked the friend. She wasn't. Thriller was an unbroken two-year-old pinto, not at all appropriate for the friend's child. But he was definitely coming home with Cindy.

Thriller's name on the Coggins test, "Little Dummy,"

didn't fit at all. Cindy quickly discovered just what a clever little fellow he was.

After his arrival at Fox Run Farm, the pony spent his first month in isolation. At the time his color was a washed-out dun.

With Cindy's love and care, Thriller underwent a metamorphosis. His horrendous injury healed with barely a perceptible scar, he put on weight and developed muscle, and his dull coat changed to midnight with white splotches.

Thriller turned out to be a real people pony, a pony with a heart of gold that Cindy and her daughter Heather fell in love with. In addition, he proved to be very athletic: a good mover and an excellent jumper. Breaking him was easy; Cindy and Heather played with him and made it all into a game. Thriller was an "A student" who never did anything wrong.

After Cindy heals and trains her rescues, she sells them for basically what she put into them. Thriller was for sale for \$800. Yet no one wanted him. Cindy told one potential buyer after another, "This is the best pony I've had in years." All potential buyers seemed to notice was that the pony had a long back and matching splints on his legs. Cindy found it incredibly frustrating: she had a terrific pony and somehow all people could see were his faults!

Heather had been looking for a 4-H pony to compete on, but had not chosen Thriller because she felt, that at 5'9", she was too big for the 13.3 hand pony. But after hearing all this nonsense from tire kickers, she got mad. She loved this pony. She was going to prove to these naysayers just what he was capable of!

She showed Thriller in local and 4-H shows and then took him to the Kentucky State Horse Show in July, where they won their whole division. People watching in the stands wanted to know, "Who is that pony? Who bred him?" To both Cindy and Heather, this was miraculous. A year ago, the pony had had two feet in the grave. Now he was champion at the big state horse show and everyone wanted to know where he'd come from!

Not only was Thriller competitive, he had an amazing at-

titude as well. Cindy said "he works so hard, he gives everything he has and does it with a smile. He's just a sweetheart, never a bad boy."

Now that Thriller had proven himself, the tables turned and those who had criticized him wanted to buy him. But that wasn't going to happen. They'd had their chance and they'd blown it. Cindy interviewed various people and in time sold him to a woman whose daughter, Mara Kranz, would show him.

Mara and My Thriller wiped up, winning top ribbons at the 2003 Pony Finals in the Large Green Pony Hunter Division, as well as the championship for Large Ponies in Zone 5 for several years in a row. Mara is a phenomenal rider and Cindy says she "did a great job with him!"

Meanwhile, back in East Windsor, New Jersey, the Rubin family was searching for a pony. Jessie Rubin had a great pony named Joey that she planned to take with her to Ocala. But Joey had gotten hurt. Although he would get better, Larry and Teri Rubin decided they wanted to purchase an additional, more advanced, pony for their daughter.

The family searched. Searched hard. They looked everywhere. On several occasions, they nearly purchased a pony, but it always fell through.

At the time they were training with Frank Hernandez of The Main Event. Frank had a close friend, Lance Williamson, who often brought horses and ponies by for Frank's clients to try out for purchase.

One day Jessie and her dad arrived at The Main Event to see Lance's van parked there. As they walked into the barn they spotted Thriller. He looked right at them and started neighing. He knew who he wanted to go home with.

Jessie and her father liked the pony's eye. Although it was late and they couldn't try him that night, they decided they would try him the next day.

The trial ride went well, very well. Jessie rode him over

bigger and bigger fences and felt comfortable and confident. He was quickly vetted, passed, and purchased. One week to go before the 2006 Ocala HITS series, and they had found their pony.

The show hosts a five week series: Jessie Rubin and her new pony, with only a week to get to know each other, showed in four of the weeks and won both the Children's Pony Hunter and Children's Equitation for the series.

Thriller then sustained both a serious head injury from a trailer incident, and an abscess. He had to be laid up for six months. Despite that, he finished 7th in Zone 2 and 1st in the Marshall & Sterling League and the Monmouth County Horse Show series for 2006.

Jessie says Thriller is the "sweetest pony. He's all business. You don't have to lunge him, you just tack him up and go out there and do it."

Larry finds him "incredibly unique, the most even tempered, kind pony I've ever seen, and he really wants to please." He's also "very professional. He goes in the ring, does his thing, comes back out and waits until his next round." Although, Larry adds, "he does expect a Mento when he comes out!"

Jessie loves Thriller, and Thriller gives that love right back to her. Once Thriller slipped on some ice that was hidden in the ring, and fell on Jessie. He got to his feet and went right to her, nuzzling her. "Are you okay? Are you hurt?" he seemed to ask.

Larry is "So thankful he's alive, that someone saved him. He's so loveable and eager to do whatever you want."

Jessie and Thriller, who train with Crystal Young of Chickadee Farm, came back in a big way in 2007. They had 22 over fences wins in a row! At the Zone 2 finals held in Harrisburg, Pennsylvania, they took the Grand Championship, with the single highest points of the show.

Things have changed at Fox Run Farm. After all those months of trying to get people interested in Thriller who instead found

fault with him, and turned him down, there's a real change in tune.

When people come to Fox Run Farm now, the first thing they ask is, "Do you have a pony like Thriller?"