

American Equine Awareness Shares the Christmas Story, 'Because of Love'

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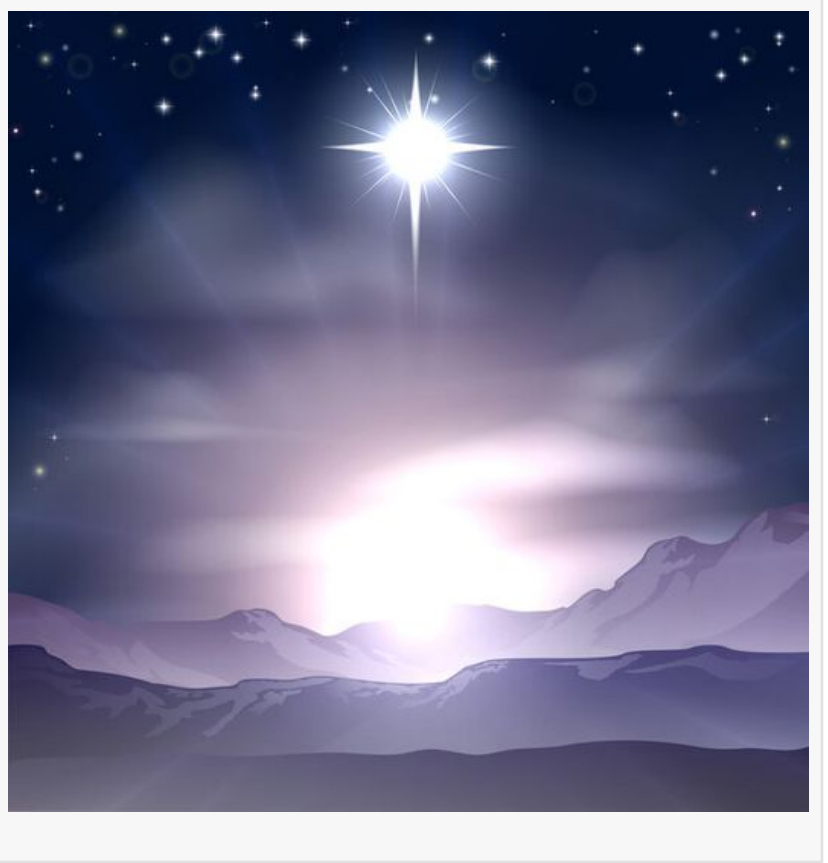
EINPresswire.com/ -- Another year has passed. Christmas is here once more. People are coming together with family and friends in a spirit of joy, peace, and happiness. Christmas brings to mind the importance of giving and sharing with one another. In the spirit of giving, American Equine Awareness shares the story of 'The Old One'.

"The young couple made their usual hurried pre-Christmas visit to the little farm where their elderly parents dwelt with their small herd of horses. The farm was named Lone Pine Farm because of the huge pine which topped the hill behind the farm. Through the years, it became a talisman to the old man and his wife, and a landmark in the countryside.

The old folks no longer showed their horses, for the years had taken their toll, but they sold a few foals each year, and the horses were their reason for joy in the morning and contentment at day's end. As they prepared to leave, the young couple confronted the old folks. Why do you not at least dispose of The Old One? She is no longer of use to you. It's been years since you've had foals from her. You should cut corners and save where you can. Why do you keep her, anyway? The old man looked down at his worn boot, scuffed at the barn floor, and his arm stole defensively about the Old One's neck as he drew her to him and rubbed her gently behind the ears. He replied softly; We keep her because of love. Only because of love.



Baffled and irritated, the young folks wished the old man and his wife a Merry Christmas and headed back toward the city as darkness stole through the valley. Because of their leaving, no one noticed the insulation smoldering on the frayed wires in the old barn. No one saw the first spark fall. None but the "Old One". In a matter of minutes, the whole barn was ablaze and the hungry flames were licking at the loft full of hay. With a cry of horror and despair, the old man shouted to his wife to call for help as he raced to the barn to save their beloved horses. But the flames were roaring now, and the blazing heat drove him back. He sank sobbing to the ground, helpless before the fire's



fury. By the time the fire department arrived, only smoking, glowing ruins remained. The old man and his wife thanked those who came to their aid. The old man turned to his wife who was resting her white head upon his shoulders as he clumsily dried her tears with a frayed red bandana. Brokenly he whispered, we have lost much, but God has spared our home on this eve of Christmas. Let us, therefore, climb the hill to the old pine, where we have sought comfort in times of despair. We will look down upon our home and give thanks to God that it has been spared.

And so, he took her by the hand and helped her up the snowy hill as he brushed aside his own tears with the back of his hand. As they stepped over the little knoll at the crest of the hill, they looked up and gasped in amazement at the incredible beauty before them. Seemingly, every glorious star in the heavens was caught up in the glittering, snow-frosted branches of their beloved pine, and it looked aglow with heavenly candles. And poised on its top bough, a crystal crescent moon glistened like spun glass. Never had a mere mortal created a Christmas tree such as this. Suddenly, the old man gave a cry of wonder and incredible joy as he pulled his wife forward. There, beneath the tree, was their Christmas gift.

Bedded down about the "Old One" close to the trunk of the tree was the entire herd, safe. At the first hint of smoke, she had pushed the door ajar with her muzzle and led the horses through it. Slowly and with great dignity, never looking back, she led them up the hill, stepping daintily through the snow. Foals were frightened and dashed about. Skittish yearlings looked back at the crackling, hungry flames, and tucked their tails under them as they licked their lips and hopped like rabbits. The mares pressed uneasily against the "Old One" as she moved calmly up the hill to

safety beneath the pine. Now she lay among them and gazed at the faces of those she loved. Her body was brittle with years, but her golden eyes filled with devotion as she offered her gift. Because of love. Only because of love." Author unknown

"Christmas is not a time nor a season, but a state of mind. To cherish peace and goodwill, to be plenteous in mercy, is to have the real spirit of Christmas." ~ Calvin Coolidge, 30th President of the United States

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