

## ***Second Place***

**Category: Writing - Fiction**

**Age Division: 15 and Under**

### King of My Heart

By: Kelsey Young

1, 2, 3.... 1, 2, 3... 1, 2, 3; a big, black gelding sends jolts through the ground as his powerful legs pound the earth. With his mane whipping in the wind, he looks like something out of a medieval fantasy book. Who would have thought that this gorgeous guy had almost died a year prior? Nobody believed that this beauty was once a starved, fungus covered, bag of bones rescue. Not everyone has the ability to look at a malnourished or abused horse and see the potential for an outstanding equine or a trust worthy partner. On some occasions, rescue horses fall short of expectations; most of the time they fulfill expectations; and occasionally never in one's wildest dreams could they imagine that the same horse is standing in front of them. Such is the case of Charlie.

It was a spring day when the trailer pulled up and out hobbled a sickening sight; a scrawny, fungus infected gelding about the size of a yearling, he was so skinny. No, he was not a yearling; he was a 5 year old according to the records. Even though he appeared weak, this gelding stood tall and was soaking in his new surroundings. I cautiously approached him, unaware of how he'd react given his past history with humans. He showed no fear or aggression, quickly sniffing my hand and shoving his nose right into my pockets in search for treats. My eyes welled up as I patted his neck; he was so abused yet still trusted people so much. Not that much can be said about most humans.

I am quickly brought back to present day when I realize the rhythmic beating of hooves that was so calming has stopped. I look up; there up atop a small hill surrounded by trees stands the proud, tall, black gelding I fell in love with from the day he stepped off of the trailer. He looks at me, opens his mouth, and whinnies. Prancing around, he does the dance that only a true king can pull off; he is the king of my heart.