

Kate is an 11-year-old girl who loves animals, writing, Roblox, her friends and family. She loves her parents and little sister, Izzy very much. Kate is in the 5th grade at Marvin Academy in NC and would like to give a shoutout to her ELA teacher, Ms. Franklin for all of her support and encouragement.

Raven's Run
by Kate Kinnin

Natasha's horse Copper soared gracefully over the jumps, his chestnut coat gleaming in the sunlight. "That was better than yesterday," Natasha remarked as she dismounted. "Thanks for letting me ride Copper," she added, turning to her best friend Melony, who was sitting nearby, gently cuddling a dog.

"No problem," Melony replied with a smile. "He can be a rascal sometimes." Suddenly, the dog in Melony's arms cocked his head, leapt free and sprinted toward the mountain.

"Ghost!" Melony shouted, but the dog kept running until he disappeared from view.

"I'll go after him," Natasha offered.

"Thanks," Melony replied gratefully. "But you'd better hurry—he's fast and might reach the top soon."

Natasha gave a quick nod, waving as she headed towards the mountain trail. As Natasha hiked up the mountain, her thoughts drifted to her old horse—a strong black stallion named Raven, her closest companion. He had a distinctive white spot on his rump, a mark she could never forget. Raven had been taken from her by bandits during a trail ride, and she hadn't seen him since.

Suddenly, she spotted Ghost sprinting after a shadowy figure in the distance...

It was a horse. Acting quickly, Natasha ran until she got in front of it and gently calmed it down. As the horse slowed, she noticed a white spot on its rump—just like Raven's.

"Could it be?" she whispered.

And then, as if time had folded in on itself, the horse looked into her eyes with recognition. Raven remembered her too. Natasha threw her arms around Raven's neck, tears welling up as the bond between them rekindled instantly. But the reunion was cut short.

Without warning, the same bandits who had stolen Raven before leapt out from the bushes, their eyes locked on the stallion. “Hand him over!” one of them barked.

Heart pounding, Natasha scooped Ghost into her arms and swung herself onto Raven’s back. With a powerful kick, Raven launched into a gallop, thundering down the mountain path. The wind roared past them, the danger close behind.

But just as they rounded a sharp bend, a heavy branch struck Natasha across the head. Pain exploded through her senses. The last thing she saw was a blur of blood, the flash of hooves, and Raven rearing into the sky—before everything went dark.

”RAVEN!” Natasha shouted, jerking upright. However when she looked around, she found white walls and beeping machines, not the woods. After a moment, she realized she was in the hospital.

A doctor hurried in, calming her gently. “You’re safe,” he said. “Your horse—Raven—he saved you. He carried you all the way down the mountain. It’s a miracle you’re both alive.”

Natasha’s eyes filled with tears.

“He’s resting now,” the doctor continued. “He took a bad hit and earned a scar, but he’s strong. You’ll be able to see him tomorrow.”

The next day, Natasha visited Raven in the recovery stable. As she approached, she whispered, “Thank you for saving me.” Raven let out a soft nicker and leaned into her arms, pulling her into what could only be described as a hug.

Months passed, and Natasha and Raven trained harder than ever before. When the time came, they entered the biggest competition of her life—and won first place.

It was a victory built on courage, trust, and the unbreakable bond between a girl and her horse.

The End