

1994 - 2011

Kerrymor's Littlest Angel



Angel sports her Rams coaching outfit for her 1996 Christmas card.



Angel arrives in St. Louis from Phoenix in 1994.

The Connemara world lost a great ambassador in May 2011, as Kerrymor's Littlest Angel was put down at age 17.

The 14-2 hand mare was a rare blend of performance horse, baby sitter, mother of two, comedian and lap dog, and she charmed all who met her by nuzzling their cheek, prompting a guaranteed response of: "Is she always this friendly?" Indeed, she was.

The dark brown offspring of Lynfields Kiltuck and Foxglove's Gold Dust joined Kerrymor Farm as a foal in December 1994. Small for her age and covered in fluffy, black fur, she stole the farm's Christmas card cover away from her father and never looked back as one of the fashion leaders in the Connemara world. Her 1994 debut card was a hit, but she outdid herself in 1996 with a Rams coaching outfit that St. Louisans still talk about today.

A quick study at circus tricks, she mastered stepping up on a block as a foal, then spent the rest of her life putting her feet up on anything less than a foot tall. She came within a whisper of learning how to bow, but misunderstood the skill and learned to lie down instead. For the next year, she tried to lie down every time the farrier trimmed her feet, effectively ending her bowing career.

At age 3, she was drafted into accompanying a child's young horse to a dressage show as a trailer buddy. Angel had learned to trot a little under saddle but hadn't started cantering, and her early reaction to being ridden was one of skepticism. "Why are we doing this?" she would ask. A pony who knew how to roll her eyes, Angel never made it hard to tell what she was thinking. An observer once noted in watching her school: "She looks like she's counting how many times she has to go around the ring." Nonetheless, she rallied to the horse show challenge, marched into the dressage ring and won her first class with a score of 60.625. She spent the rest of the day trying to put her feet up on the white cavallettis cordoning off the rings.

She went on to do hunters and put in another memorable performance in her second flat class ever in 1998 in a small ring filled with fences. Her six competitors included one large and out-of-control horse that stampeded down the long sides of the ring as the horse's young rider hung on for life. Angel's strategy for survival became turning any time the horse got behind her. Her display of canter collection and extension as she weaved in and out of jumps and continually dodged the bullet was a handy performance any hunter derby

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rider would die for, and she was given the very well-deserved blue.

She joined Ledgewood Farm in Ohio later in 1998 in the role of broodmare and produced two lovely foals, both with equally pet-like personalities. She also served as a lesson horse for riders ranging in age from 4 to adults. She returned in 2001 to Kerrymor Farm's new 10-acre setup in Missouri with intentions to go back to showing but ran into the same problem other horses at the farm were facing: laminitis.

Following a three-week stint of wintry weather in January 2004 that left the ground covered in several inches of ice and snow, she was galloping in the powder one day and unable to move the

next. Her case went from bad to worse quickly and became one of the most severe cases her laminitis vet had seen. A top laminitis expert from Sweden who visited the farm in June 2004 said he didn't expect her to make it a year.



Tougher than nails, Angel was not leaving the planet that easily. There was no therapeutic boot she wasn't game to try, and she regained

enough soundness to keep up with the other horses right up to the last few months. She moved into the area that separated Kiltuck from the others and became the steady companion that he'd always wanted. Once Kiltuck was gone, she spent her days on the porch of the cabin, living as close to her dream of being a house pet as she could.

Video and photos of Angel's laminitis case have been seen by thousands of horse owners and veterinarians around the world through an educational video put together by the Animal Health Foundation in 2007. Perhaps her role as educator can serve as some small consolation that she died so young.

As Angel was losing ground in 2011, Kerrymor Farm called most of the major laminitis researchers, looking for stem cell therapy that could completely regrow her coffin bone and hoof. A similar treatment had been tested on rabbits. We were willing to be the first horse. No one had that option. In fact, no one thought it would work. We believe it will work one day. But, alas, not in time for one very special Angel.



Angel at her first USDF dressage show in 1997 with rider Joanie McKenna aboard.



Angel grooms her sire, Lynfields Kiltuck, in 2004.



Angel performs her trick for rider Terry McKenna.