

A MARE IN SEARCH OF HER PREVIOUS OWNER

FINDING SUZANNE

By: Engy Adham



Khaled Assem and Julie.



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DEAR SUZANNE,
REMEMBER JUNE 2000?

SUNBEAMS SPARKLED OFF THE WATER WHILE A WARM GLOW OF LIGHT SHINED ALL AROUND THE BEAUTIFUL LANDS OF HOLLAND. A SANDY RING WITNESSED THE CREATION OF A LIFELONG BOND BETWEEN A YOUNG GIRL CALLED SUZANNE AND ME, A NINE-YEAR-OLD MARE CALLED JULIE.

IN THE MIDST OF A BUSY LIFE FULL OF ADVENTURES, SPOTLIGHTS, CHALLENGES, TROPHIES AND MANY NEW FRIENDS, I STILL REMEMBER YOU. IN ORDER TO INTRODUCE YOU TO WHO I HAVE BECOME, I HAVE TO REWIND THE TAPE OF MY LIFE.

Fifteen years ago, I was saying goodbye to you as I was being sold to a kind gentleman in Cairo. Travelling a long way from Holland to Cairo left me with butterflies in my stomach, but I knew I was going to adapt to the changes.

Spending our childhood together, you knew all my tricks and habits. You knew your way around me as I did around you. You left my new owner a letter to help him connect the dots of my character. You told my owner to treat me well as I will have come a long way from Holland, so he should not be too hard on me the first week. Also, you reminded him not to forget the changes in weather as I will need some time to adapt to these changes in Cairo, advising that once I got used to it, we would enjoy our training together. You never forgot that we had our own riding style, but you knew that I would need some time to get used to a different one. You understood from experience that I am not able to jump every day, so you left him a note of that as well. I like to ride outside with you every Monday to shake off some stress after competitions. You even knew my deepest and most personal habits. I have always liked to enjoy my own privacy. The stable is my safe haven; it is where I like to enjoy my own company, so it is best if you don't come close by, especially when I am having dinner. You also knew that my favorite snacks are sugar, bread, apples and carrots.

You promised to come and visit to see where I live, Suzanne. Till then, I thought I'd write to you so you can picture me after fifteen years.

Now, I am retired, weighed with wisdom, life experiences, successes and failures. Injuries have contributed in shaping me. I even have small and soft scars; you might not notice them, but they are part of me now. Small and

soft as they are, they carry memories to remind me of my history.

My body maps out my history; my eyes are wiser than my years. I am stronger and bigger but I still have my delicate features, just like you used to know me. My body is a better storyteller than I could ever be. Tracing the mass of muscles in my body would show how many miles I ran and how many fences I jumped. My owner and I won several competitions and events; you'll find a picture of us in a show jumping competition. I won so many times, but my true victory is in the bonds I have developed. Bonds like ours. They are the ones that keep me motivated to move forward even when I suffer from a bad injury.

The biggest lesson I have learned is that I have no masters, only partners. Life is a race that never stops; it does not really matter who goes faster as long as we meet at the finish line. I am proud of myself; I competed with the big guys and I reached the finish line.

Thank you for all that you taught me since I was a little mare. I long to see you and take you for a ride on my back to show you where I trained, where I tumbled and where I did my first big jump.

Now before I leave you, read carefully. Do not miss the Jumping Amsterdam 2016 event; you will meet someone special, a seven-year-old bay with silky dark hair. Her name is Julie Junior. 🐾

Yours, Julie

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