



Things that could only happen to Peck.

Dead Horse

Cleveland, Mississippi was a great little Delta town, especially for a boy like me. I always loved horses and I had several horses when I was growing up. When I was about 15-years old I lived in the city, but I kept my horse named Miss Peck out in the country, only about 15 minutes from my house. I would go out every day to feed Miss Peck and make sure she had plenty of water. There was another horse in this pasture that was owned by Ronnie Crane, my high school principal's son. Ronnie never came out to ride or feed his horse. The horse lived off the grass that was in the pasture and I kept the water trough full. When I would go out to feed Miss Peck, Ronnie's horse would run her off and eat the feed that I had put in a bucket. This infuriated me to no end. I kept shooing this horse off, and I threw rocks, dirt and anything else I could find to scare him away.

One day Ronnie's horse was doing it again and I looked around for something to throw. I picked up this 12-inch piece of metal pipe that was in the dirt and I threw the pipe as hard as I could at the horse. No!!! I couldn't believe it, but the pipe stuck in the side of the horse! I ran to the horse and pulled the pipe out. The horse started staggering and then dropped down to his knees. I grabbed the horse by the neck to try to hold him up and I was saying, "Come on horse, get up! Don't die! Please, please don't die!" The horse just kept going down and I couldn't hold him up anymore. Then I saw him defecate, his eyes rolled back, and he took one long last sigh. That was it. He was Dead. I killed this horse.

This was the biggest animal that I had ever seen die, and I was crying like a baby. Tears streaming down my face, I knew that I had to confess what had happened to Mr. Crane, the principal of the school. I had to tell him that I had killed his son's horse. Now, I didn't tell my parents anything because I wanted to wait until after I had faced Mr. Crane. I went to school the next day thinking, "This is going be the worst day of my life." I was really nervous going into the principal's office, where I had been many times before for some minor disciplinary action—I realize that's hard to believe by those who know me well. Anyway, I told him what had happened, and he was very quiet for a minute, which seemed like forever.

Then, leaning back in his chair, he said softly, "I bought that horse two years ago, and my son never appreciated or cared for him. I hope you learned a lesson, Jimmy, and we will keep this between just you and me." When I got home and told my dad the whole story he said, "Well, let's go bury the horse." So, we hooked up the trailer, picked up my dad's backhoe and buried the horse. I said a silent prayer over his grave.

I had dead horse nightmares for a while after that, and I found a new respect for Mr. Crane.
