

A Four-Legged Friend

On a farm surrounded by green fields and dirt roads, lived a boy named Marc.

Marc was four years old, and although he was small, he knew something very important: there are things that can’t be bought with all the money in the world.

For example, friendship.

On the farm, there were cows, tractors, a large combine harvester that made a lot of noise when it was time to harvest… and there was also Playboy.

Playboy was a white horse.

He wasn’t very tall. In fact, he was a short horse, with sturdy, round legs. He had very little mane, as if the wind had been taking each hair one by one. But Marc thought he was the most beautiful horse on all the farms in the world.

“Hello, Playboy,” he would say to him every morning.

And Playboy would go:

“Hiiiiii!”

Marc stroked his forehead.

“Did you sleep well?”

Playboy went again:

“Hiiiiii!”

“Me too.”

And so the day began.

Marc loved Playboy very much.

But one day he discovered something he hadn’t known before.

Loving someone isn’t just about giving them hugs.

That morning, Marc really wanted to play. He ran to the fence.

“Playboy! Playboy! Come here!”

But Playboy didn’t move.

Marc wrinkled his nose.

“Come on, Playboy!”

The horse remained still.

Marc got a little annoyed.

“You always want to do what you want!”

Then he went closer and saw that Playboy had a little mud stuck to one of his legs.

“Oh…”

The horse looked at him with those big, calm eyes.

Marc understood that it wasn’t that Playboy didn’t want to play.

Perhaps he was in pain.

So he went to get help.

Very carefully, they cleaned his leg and checked that it wasn’t anything serious. Marc stayed with Playboy for a long time.

He didn’t play.

He didn’t run.

He didn’t wander around the farm.

He simply stayed there.

With him.

And Playboy, every now and then, would nuzzle his muzzle against his arm.

As if to say:

“Thank you for staying.”

From that day on, Marc began to care for Playboy differently.

Every morning he checked if he had water.

He made sure he was alright.

He stroked him without pulling his mane.

And, when he gave him food, he waited patiently.

“You first,” he would say.

Playboy would chew.

“And then me.”

On the farm, Marc also learned that cows needed clean water, that tractors had to be cared for so they could work, and that the big combine harvester wasn’t just a huge, noisy machine.

Everything that helps the farm also needs someone to take care of it.

“If we take care of it,” Marc would say, “it helps us.”

And that, though it seemed like a small sentence, was a very big idea.

One evening, the sun began to set behind the fields.

Marc was sitting next to Playboy.

The white horse was grazing peacefully.

The boy placed a hand on its neck.

“Playboy?”

The horse raised its head.

“You know what?”

Playboy twitched an ear.

“I think you and I are friends.”

The horse moved a little closer.

Marc smiled.

“But not because I’m your owner.”

He thought for a moment.

“We’re friends because we take care of each other.”

The horse let out a soft puff.

“Ffffff…”

And Marc laughed.

“That’s it!”

The sky turned orange.

The cows were calm now.

The tractors were resting.

The large combine harvester had fallen silent.

And, in the midst of all that calm, a little boy and a white horse stayed together.

Marc still didn’t know how to explain what love was.

He was too young to describe it with big words.

But he knew how.

He knew it when he gave Playboy water.

He knew it when he hoped he would feel better.

He knew it when he gently stroked him.

And he knew it above all when he understood that caring for someone means also thinking about what the other person needs.

Because loving isn’t wanting someone to always do what we want.

Loving is looking, listening, being patient, and caring.

That night, before going to bed, Marc looked toward the fence.

“Goodnight, Playboy.”

The horse raised his head.

“Hiiiiii…”

Marc smiled.

“Goodnight, my friend.”

And as night fell over the farm, Playboy stayed there, white and short, his short mane blowing in the wind.

And Marc went to sleep knowing something that might take him many years to tell:

when we care for what we love, love grows.