



Mary Lou's Barn

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Farmer Dan had a new, fast horse. He called her Mary Lou. When he took her to see her new home, Mary Lou stomped and snorted. "This isn't home," she seemed to say. She wouldn't come close to the farmer's big, brown barn.

Farmer Dan guessed she didn't like the brown barn. So he filled up a bucket with paint. The next morning, the barn was as yellow as a sunflower. Mary Lou rolled her eyes and swished her tail. She still wouldn't come near the big, yellow barn.

Farmer Dan guessed she didn't like the yellow barn. The next day, the barn was bluer than a summer sky. Mary Lou stomped and snorted. She trotted far away from the big, blue barn.

Farmer Dan still hoped to please Mary Lou. He painted the barn as green as spring grass. Mary Lou rolled her eyes and swished her tail. She wouldn't come near the big, green barn.

So he painted the barn white, then orange. But Mary Lou still spent every night under the starry sky.

Finally, Farmer Dan had no paint left. He gave Mary Lou a pat and said, "I hope you find a home that's right for you," and he turned the horse loose.

Mary Lou followed a trail that led to a neighbor's farm. It was a big, red barn that sat on top of a hill. She quickly trotted inside and settled into a stall.

Farmer Dan soon found his new, fast horse. "Your secret is out," he said, stroking Mary Lou's nose. "I'll get back to work."

On the way home, Farmer Dan stopped to buy a bucket of paint.

"Welcome home!" he said later. The horse looked up at the beautiful, big, red barn. And this time, Mary Lou stayed.



DID YOU EVER WONDER WHY BARNES ARE PAINTED RED?

Long ago, farmers mixed their own paint, in an effort to preserve the wood and make it last longer. Originally, farmers mixed skimmed milk, lime, linseed oil, and red-iron oxide together. The red-iron oxide made the mixture look reddish in color. It also acted as a poison to mold and moss that often grew on barns. Red barns soon became home to horses and other farm animals.