



March Writing Contest Winner

My Most Memorable Moment in the Show Pen

By Shelby Roberge

I have many memorable moments and memories in the show pen including the time, after months of practice and perseverance, Oliver (my OTTB gelding) and I earned a dressage score of nine on our stretchy trot, or the time we rode a dressage test in a thunderstorm. And then there was the time when we went galloping around the arena in a bareback class as though we were in the Triple Crown.

But perhaps my most early and memorable moment is when my rescue Arabian mare, Liberty, and I entered our very first show and competed in the showmanship class. The previous fall Liberty had arrived as a rescue horse from Arkansas. She took a while to gain trust with, so we spent that whole winter working on groundwork and by spring she finally looked to me as her friend, maybe even as part of her herd. We continued to work on groundwork and by the time the first show of the season arrived we were ready to enter the showmanship class and show how hard we had been working.

We entered the arena and I remember thinking how good she looked, with her gleaming liver bay coat and long black mane. So different than when she first arrived, her coat matted with rain rot and her tail ripped out with her mane in tangles. Near the end of the class I remember being full of joy and so proud of how good she was and that we had both done our best, but I genuinely wasn't expecting to place especially when I thought of how the other exhibitors and their horses have probably done this before, maybe even have grown up showing horses. And when they had announced up to second place, I really wasn't surprised that our names hadn't been called and was already about to pet Liberty, and to tell her I was still proud of her, when I heard her and I's name announced in first place! We stood there in shock for a moment before making our way over to collect our ribbon and trophy. As we exited the arena, I gave Lib lots of praise and we were greeted by family and friends.

My first time showing with my Arabian mare remains one of my most memorable moments in the show pen.