

D.E. Kendall Writing Sample 1 - Larry

Larry

A Rescue Pony's Story of Love After Neglect

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Inspired by my amazing pony friend, Larry.

Dedicated to my late grandfather, Thomas Kendall, for always believing in me.

Also, for my wonderful parents; without them, none of this would be possible...

My Beginning

Commencing at dawn, mist captured the valley. Clinging to the black of night as it rose over hills and hedge-ways, darkness maintained its hold over earth. Until, as a hunter seeking its prey, sun sent beams of light to flush fog from the forest, its power piercing the space between every tree. Forcing its nemesis to fall back, sunrise succeeded. With that, those dreaming return to reality. Birdsong becomes an anthem of celebration, welcoming this daily phenomenon. Light had, once again, triumphed over darkness.

Well, that's how I imagined each day began anyway.

I entered earth at lightning speed and found myself at a show pony stud farm, where my world was small to begin with. I spent the first few weeks of my life in a stable; it was dim and dusty. The only natural light fought through the half open stable door, and tiny barred window set high above the hay net (a net filled with hay or haylage – hay's sweeter, richer counterpart). I could only but imagine the wonders of that world beyond our stable. All the adventure, all those new smells to discover, all that freedom.

Our stable wasn't completely boring though. She made it bearable. She kept me safe despite interest in food often overcoming interest in me. She'd amuse me when I was bored, and she sustained my wellbeing. I loved her for all that. I love her still. Her bright chestnut coat would shine, even beneath weak electric light. Her perfectly dished face held the majesty of an Arabian Desert Horse, while her knowledgeable, mahogany eyes matched the fearful beauty of a wild deer. As if an artist had painted her immaculate diamond star, it sat precisely in the centre of her forehead, and each of her delicate, refined legs were splashed with white socks. Every inch of her was indicative of excellent breeding, though her barrellike belly was evidence of over-feeding. How my dam ('Mother' to you humans) carried such weight on such fine legs was a mystery – yet she did so with elegance and grace.

My first few moments on the outside were memorable, to say the least. Straw found its way into every orifice after my crash landing. I was disorientated for a minute or so. Having been stuck in the same position for eleven months, one needs time to unfold limbs! It's rather tiresome being born. In fact, the occasion left me in dire need of a drink. Luckily, instinct instantly located the best source of nourishment, but there was a problem. She was a fair few feet from me, munching her hay, blissfully unaware of my predicament. I needed to grab her attention somehow. So, I decided to call her.

The sound I managed was more of a pathetic whinny than attention grabbing neigh. However, she didn't so much as flick an ear in my direction.

Shuffling my nose around in the straw made no difference. Neither did trying to chew my own hoof off though lack of teeth may have had something to do with that.

Soon enough, I decided there was no choice; I had to become master of my own limbs if I were to stop hunger rattling my ribcage! I shifted on the spot, to help my brain discern which leg was which. Though a strange, tingling discomfort (I believe humans refer to it as pins and needles) irritated me, blocking my ability to move. Each attempt to put weight on any of my legs left me feeling as though I had no bones whatsoever. I'd flop backwards, or forwards, or sideways onto the straw like a sack of feed. Eventually, after plenty of falling, that unpleasant sensation faded. Thus, allowing me to, slowly but surely, push myself upward to a steady standing position – for the very first time.

I stood in situ for a second. All four legs splayed out, to support every corner of my body. A wave of excitement overcame me. Apparently, standing within an hour of being born is quite some feat! I could not rest on my newly found laurels, however. I needed to walk.

Without further ado, I prepared myself to move. Despite shaking more than a leaf in late autumn, unsure as to how to begin, I decided to try moving all my legs at once. Though that decision did not reach my legs from my brain. I hopped about, unable to stop, until I bounced unwillingly into the wall. I fell to the straw once more. This walking business was such a challenge!

Second attempt at walking resulted in my wobbly limbs taking me on an unexpected journey to the opposite wall, almost tripping into my dam as I did so. Once my brain caught control of my legs (three attempts later) I composed myself. With the intention of moving my right foreleg first, I finally felt ready. Unfortunately, my brain was not. Confused, my left hindleg careered into my left foreleg, which sent me crashing to the straw. My dam turned to watch momentarily, amused, before continuing to eat. That only secured my determination.

At last, after what seemed hours of gravity induced meetings with the straw coupled with unimpressed looks from my dam, I did it. I had taken a step towards her. After taking a moment to inwardly revel in my accomplishment, I finally made progress.

Steadily moved my left hindleg, followed by left foreleg, then right hindleg, before right foreleg. Ensuring at least two of my legs were safely on the ground, to support me through each step, repeating that pattern I found myself at her side in seconds! Surprisingly, she was as elated as I. She greeted my success with her velveteen muzzle. Communicating praise through an almost inaudible nicker (a comforting secret language shared between a mare and her foal). Our bond strengthened by the locking of her scent in my memory, forever. A memory of comfort and safety I recall, when feeling lost or afraid.

She nuzzled my mane as I indulged in the object of my quest. Content not only with satisfying hunger, but with victory too. Being victorious in the first conquest of my life, I deliberately fell to the straw. Slipping into my first, real, dream-filled sleep.

Those few weeks following my first expedition rolled on. Days blurred into nights, as we endured a most boring regime. Every. Single. Day.

Dawn: Yard Person visits with bucket of feed for my dam. They muck out our stable. They replenish water bucket I'd purposefully emptied into the straw overnight. They replace empty haynet with new, full, version. They leave.

Midday: Yard Person visits with second, smaller, feed for my dam. They ignore my attempt to greet them or shoo me away. They leave.

Afternoon: Different Yard Person (more miserable than the first) arrives to muck out our stable again. They locate missing water bucket that I've hidden in the straw and replenish it. They leave.

Dusk: Yard Person replaces empty haynet with extra-large version. They give my dam a big evening feed. Stable yard is locked up before darkness falls. They all leave.

Yard People are generally grumpy humans who wear similar, dark colours and often an almost identical, vacant expression. Unappreciative of their freedom, and no interest in interacting with us.

That was, until one particularly grey day.

First Yard Person of the day had already visited. My dam was contentedly demolishing her breakfast, and I was bored. Soon setting myself the task of pulling down that mammoth haynet of hers, I hoped she might pay attention to me if I managed it. However, having just about reached the string at a stretch to pull it partially undone, I was interrupted. Three Yard People approached our stable. Two holding white rope halters, the other possessing a slight look of concern.

Smallest of the three entered first. Sensing something wasn't right, I scabbled to a safe corner nearest my dam. Unsurprisingly, she barely noticed anything was happening. Didn't even lift her head from her feed until the smallest Yard Person moved towards her.

Despite the distraction from eating, my dam surprisingly showed no resistance to a halter being secured around her head. She needed no second invitation to return to her feed after. At that moment, the haynet I'd prepared earlier fell to the floor. All of us 'spooked' in reaction – even the humans. One got splashed as they tripped backwards into the water bucket, their look of concern morphed into annoyance. He moved back to the door at that point, allowing the remaining Yard Person to continue. Gripping the rope halter tightly, she crept towards me. As she did so, she muttered strange, gaga, high-frequency sounds that didn't seem part of an intelligent language. Seemingly done to keep me calm, though it had the opposite effect; it was creepy and unnerving!

Edged closer to my dam for protection, only to be met with a flick of her tail that hit me right in the eye. How very maternal of her.

Then, the third Yard Person, the one with an expression of annoyed concern, began creeping towards me too, leaving the stable door slightly ajar. As the pair of them moved towards me in a manner resembling a yard cat stalking a mouse, my heart raced in fear that they'd do to me what that cat does to mice! Suddenly, the tallest one pounced. He'd pinned me to the spot. I tried to wriggle free. Even attempted to fight him off though it is difficult to

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cause actual bodily harm with tiny teeth and hooves. Shook my head madly as Yard Person with the rope halter fought it over my ears.

It was then, when my dam had finished her hearty breakfast, that she finally noticed I was being upset. She did try to kick the smallest Yard Person attached to her rope halter; shame her aim wasn't brilliant and she missed. I appreciated her effort all the same.

Sensing my dam's distress distracted me for a split second, which enabled that Yard Person to successfully force the rope halter over my ears. Whilst pulling away from the sudden pressure encompassing my head, I accidentally knocked into my dam. She must've been daydreaming about food and not watching proceedings, as she was instantly startled. She reacted by rearing. Smallest Yard Person slipped to the straw in shock, seeming to hope that covering her face with her arms would be defence from my dam's now flailing hooves.

Chaos ensued.

Seizing her opportunity, quicker than a flash, my dam shot from our stable through the open door. Yard Person attached to my rope halter released their hold of me to run out of the stable behind my dam quickly followed by the smallest one.

I had never been without my dam before. I felt a strong, natural compulsion to follow her, but couldn't.

Tallest Yard Person maintained a tight, locking hold around my neck. Refusing to remain at the mercy of this predator, I calculated an escape plan. Soon realised the less I struggled, the lighter his hold of me became. Therefore, I held my nerve. Maintained a false state of calm, which encouraged Yard Person's hold to weaken. At a well-timed moment, I angled my hoof just right, as I trod squarely onto one of his massive, flat feet, digging my miniature hoof into the flesh of his foot, to inflict most injury possible. I was immediately released, as Yard Person clutched his foot in pain, and made my escape.

Charging from the stable, I was momentarily blinded. I'd never been outside before. Dancing colours filled my vision until it blurred into focus. Revealing a light grey sky and cobbled pathway with rows of plain, dark stables either side. Each stable contained an inquisitive pony, peering over each half open stable door. All of them intrigued by the commotion, not being used to change from their boring regime. Thankfully some of them weren't so enthralled by the event that they couldn't react. They called to me to indicate the direction my dam had taken. I followed their instruction.

Without having ever moved faster than a pace resembling walk, adrenaline spiked my legs as they began to move in sync. In no time I found myself cantering across the cobbles! Soon located my dam – she was just around the corner. Those two Yard People were fighting to keep her under control. Only then did I realise there was water falling from the sky. A chill spread along my spine, as cold rain permeated my fluffy foal coat.

At last, bad energy dissipated. Yard People were eventually able to lead my dam back towards our stable at a steady walking pace. Steam rose from her saturated, sweating

coat as she followed obediently. They ignored me. I stayed by my dam's side. Tripping over the halter lead rope every so often, as it dragged along the cobbles beneath me.

What. A. Day.

Regime returned to its usual, boring state for another week. Yard People never left the stable door ajar again though. I was around one month of age when the first full day of sunshine was upon us.

After a season filled with rainy days, sunlight blasting through the barred window awakened me and the sunrise lifted our spirits. Until Yard People gathered at our stable once again, carrying two white rope halters. My entire body became a weapon on standby. Instinct preferred taking flight, though after that last experience I prepared to fight. Ready to protect my dam at all costs because goodness knows she wouldn't protect me, her haynet was far too interesting.

Without issue, my dam allowed them to put a halter onto her. Confused at her compliance, yet trusting her judgement, with minimal resistance, I allowed a halter to be fitted to me too. I still can't get accustomed to that unpleasant pressure encompassing my head whilst wearing a halter. With that, we were led from our stable.

I looked back at my birthplace with mild fondness as we were led around the corner, soon leaving the stable yard behind. We set off along an unfamiliar, muddy path.

The sun was blazing. Sensation of its rays beaming on my back was delightful! There was barely a lick of wind. I looked up to see beautiful bright blue skies. Suddenly, my dam realised where we were headed. There was an immediate spring in her step, eagerness evident in the manner she encouraged her leader to hurry. Holding her head and tail high, my dam danced down the pathway. Picking up on her energy, I pranced beside her. To my surprise, this seemed to please the Yard People, they actually smiled for a moment.

Before we knew it, we'd reached a shiny five-bar gate. By this time my dam could barely contain her excitement. Instinct prepared me for an inevitable charge. The gate was opened, leading into a vast, emerald field.

Sunlight glistened on dew-covered grass. There were towering trees surrounding every section of fence-line, sheltering the perimeter. Knee-high, lush meadow pasture had no end in sight. Obviously un-grazed for many months, the field sloped towards the sky in a gentle incline.

The very second our halters were removed, we were off! Like racehorses from a starting gate, we moved from standstill to flat-out gallop in a split second. I matched her pace step for step. Pure elation all I could feel, when released to open space after being confined my entire life (all four weeks of it). The sense of happiness I experienced at that moment was indescribable.

Seemed quite some time before we were physically able to calm ourselves. Eventually jogging to a halt in a corner of the field furthest from the gate, humans were not in sight from there – neither were we in sight of them. That first fraction of freedom felt

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amazing to me. Her head wasn't to be seen for the following few hours. Grazing continuously until dusk, my dam lifted her gaze just twice to check for danger. So, I took it upon myself to keep watch. Not knowing what terrible threat might befall, I did not sleep that night.

Night-time was scarily dark. Though thankfully the sky was clear, meaning the moon could light the field just enough for me to see. On the odd occasion my dam woke to graze, I gazed. Stars twinkled as if by magic, adorning the night sky like precious jewels.

Realising then I need not fear the night, I was in awe of such artistry around us. Spectacular sights, fresh air filling my lungs, new smells promising plenty of discovery – it was almost too much to take in! Sunrise was the spectacle I longed to see, however. At last, without a stable wall in sight, my wish was granted. I'm pleased to report it was more awesome than I'd imagined.

As skies slowly transformed from dark to light, striking deep pinks, reds and oranges enveloped the rising sun, banishing darkness and concealing magical stars beneath its new blanket of warmth. Daylight returned. My dam stirred, taking no time to begin grazing once more. Content the world was safe from danger, I found a comfy spot of grass alongside my dam and lay down, taking weight off my tired legs. The dew-soaked grass was cold at first, tickling my nose every attempt I made to rest my head on it. Thinking logically, wanting warmth, I rolled on the same patch of grass until it became one with the soil beneath it. My dam snorted at this activity, though I didn't mind. My logic proved undeniable (life point to me). Finally able to drift comfortably off to sleep, I couldn't help believing life is bliss.

The first mare and foal to join us arrived early that afternoon. Sounds of a struggle came from the direction of the gate, so my dam and I cautiously wandered over to investigate. Yard People were having difficulty encouraging a black mare into the field. She was being very resistant, while her dark bay foal seemed anxious. Watching her behaviour from a short distance away, it became evident this mare did not trust humans. I also noticed she was missing an eye. Assuming, based on her behaviour, she had experienced some sort of trauma at the hand of humanity, there seemed no way for my dam or myself to help the mare.

Two Yard People tried pulling her forwards with a halter rope, whilst a further three made a ruckus in attempt to scare the mare forwards from behind. Their behaviour was frightening her so much she'd frozen in fear, though Yard People didn't care. Suddenly, my dam seemed to recognise this mare.

As my dam called calmly to comfort the black mare, her struggling ceased. An ear-shatteringly loud reply accompanied the mare's dash into the field. Yard People almost didn't remove her halter in time. Greeting each other with heartfelt warmth, my dam and the mare nickered quietly as they began to groom one another's manes affectionately. Their bond seemed sort of sisterly.

In the meantime, the mare's dark bay foal and I remained a safe distance behind our respective dams. Perplexed as each other at such a remarkable reunion.

Over the following few days more mares with foals were introduced to the field. All evidence pointed towards my dam being dominant mare, for she exerted authority at every opportunity. For instance, should an inquisitive mare or playful foal approach me, they'd be chased away without fail. Never had she been so protective of me!

The dark bay foal was my only friend. He was a colt, like me. He had no white markings other than one miniature white sock – leaving that hoof lighter than the other three. He was far less confident than me.

Once, this butterfly appeared to be following us. My friend was afraid of it, hiding behind his dam whenever it flew near. I, however, found the butterfly fascinating. Brown and orange patterns were mirrored on each of its delicate wings. The intricate and interesting creature continued to flutter by. Its ability to fly was its most astounding trait I believe. I was absorbed by its beauty as it danced close to my face. I'd take a step back, allowing it to pursue its path across the field. Ignoring my surroundings, I focused on following this incredible little creature.

Casually tripping over turrets and dips in the ground as I carelessly kept my eye on the butterfly, I soon reached the fence. It flew over said fence, swiftly disappearing amongst the trees. Only then did I look around at where I'd travelled to. To my surprise, I'd been followed by my friend. He looked more sheepish than usual. We'd never been out of sight of our dams before, so I could understand his fear.

As daunting as it was at first, that feeling fleetingly flew away – like the butterfly. Instead, the situation became a source of great fun. As it was just late morning, we were allowed much daylight to explore. We stayed away from other mares and foals though. Wouldn't want to be at the receiving end of a kick from an angry mare, that's for sure.

Chasing each other, rearing and bucking, we'd start playfully biting at each other's manes. Enjoying epic racing games for an indeterminate amount of time. Losing all sense of where we were, a break in the fence stopped us dead in our tracks, mid-race. It was odd. We'd never seen broken fence before.

Being the bolder, I approached the fence with extreme caution. My every muscle on standby, in case I had to take flight suddenly. The closer I edged, the more dread filled my friend. He called desperately for me to return to our silly games, though I knew something dangerous was afoot – and I had to protect my herd. Mere metres from the break, I noticed scarlet stains appear on damaged pieces of wood. My heart was pounding as I peered through the broken fence.

I jerked unwittingly in shock, flying backwards. I landed well away from the sight I had been faced with. My friend galloped away from the situation, pleading me to join him. Though I couldn't leave after what I'd just seen.

Returning to the incident site, I made myself look tall and strong as possible – snorting and stamping as I approached, so the intruder knew I meant business, but I needn't have bothered. The injured human hidden beneath an impressive pile of clothing, and rather large carrying sack, was unconscious – totally unresponsive. Seemed they'd dropped

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a giant paper covered in squiggly lines just out of their reach, as they'd fallen with an arm outstretched towards it. This stupid human had somehow managed to impale their leg on the fence, which would explain the scarlet staining I saw on that broken wood.

Unfortunately for them, there was also a rather large piece of wood still sticking out from their leg, red liquid gushing from it at speed and I was surprised I remained conscious after seeing that! Maybe he was chasing the butterfly too and got carried away? Decided it was no use simply staring at this poor creature, I had to help them.

Not knowledgeable about humans, I chose to seek assistance from my dam. She'd know what to do – I was sure of it. Tried to persuade my friend to stay put, to keep the injured human company, but he was being such a wuss that he wouldn't.

As I charged across the field, my hooves hadn't forgotten the location of every dip and turret. I'd mapped where I'd been. Eventually found my dam grazing (there's a surprise) in warm afternoon sun.

She was not impressed that I'd disturbed her. Believing she'd have noticed my absence at least, I decided there was no time to feel insulted. No amount of tail swishing or teeth snapping would stop me, I needed her to pay attention to me. Thankfully, she gave in. Stopping to graze for a minute, to shoot me with her ears-back evil stare, she finally noticed how heavily I was breathing. Adrenaline had kept me going to this point, but even I noticed the sweat patches appearing at my sides. Concerned, she followed me as distressed as I at witnessing that poor human.

Not taking a second to deliberate, she knew what her plan was to be. Within moments the entire herd began charging around the field. She pushed them towards the gate area, where she knew Yard People would investigate.

We all joined in, accompanied by a ruckus of frantic calling and squeals. Most other mares and foals didn't know why we were doing this, they thought it all just a bit of excitement.

It took a few minutes, along with some well-timed gate kicking performed by my brilliant dam, Yard People rushed over to investigate the commotion. "WHOA THERE!" and "STEADY NOW!" were among the noises Yard People made in attempt to stop us.

When they realised that definitely wasn't going to work, they sheepishly entered the field. Waving their hands about, threatening to bring mares in if commotion continued. The Yard People's body language was of no concern to us. Their attention, however, was.

We worked tirelessly to lead them to that poor, unconscious human. They listened, eventually. Even more upset than we were about the sight at the broken fence, Yard People shooed us away.

My dam and I remained as close as we could to the action. Watching avidly from behind a rope barricade, as humans in puffy, fluorescent clothing rallied around to rescue the injured one – carefully carrying them away. I'm sure I caught a glimpse of the injured human's face, and I could've sworn they smiled at me.

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Anyway, daylight had almost gone by that time and I felt super tired. We found our favourite spot for sleeping, and my dam kept watch for once. Allowing my jellied, heroic legs to rest, soon escorted by my busy mind. Valour, braveness and butterfly races filled my dreams for weeks following that day.

Over the next four months, I gradually developed a liking for grass. After the first five hundred mouthfuls, one gets used to that bittersweet aftertaste. Which meant less reliance on my dam. Wasn't only me going through these confusing life-changes, oh no. All the other foals were too. Accompanying that drastic change for all of us was an intensifying flush of boredom. Meaning playtime was evolving too... We colts understood each other. Sharing an almost brotherly bond, we knew how far to take our play fights. Fillies became less interested in our games, and more interested in boring activities like grooming and trotting around aimlessly. They became less and less fun the older we'd grow.

Autumn leaves were plucked from trees and sent dancing in cascades of colour by strong winds. Their crispness providing great entertainment, as we'd gallop through piles of leaves, sending them floating on the breeze. Some colts even tried eating leaves.

My best friend's face was hilarious when he tried one – his top lip curled towards the sky in distaste, and he almost got kicked by three mares in his rush to the water container, it was so funny! There was a hint of rain in the air. Grey skies loomed above us, threatening to dampen our autumn antics. The colts and I were investigating the top fence-line for new scatterings of leaves to play in.

The fillies seemed to have become a mini herd of their own too, so we planned to annoy them later that day. All our dams were calmly grazing by the gate.

It was an ordinary autumn day. Yard People had been visiting just recently. Offering titbits to our dams in return for leaving rope halters on them. Luckily, said rope halters didn't have long leadropes attached, else our dams might have tripped over them.

Although we thought that was a bit weird, we assumed it was some strange Yard People custom, so didn't pay much attention to be honest. Perhaps we should have.

Our games were interrupted by frantic calling. From the distance we were, it was difficult to understand whose calls we could hear.

As we jogged on down the field to check it out, the fillies had gotten there first. They were distraught. Prancing, screaming, racing up and down the fence nearest the gate, over and over. On taking note of our surroundings, we were simultaneously struck with the same realisation. They were gone. Every one of our dams, gone.

Their distant cries weren't enough to comfort us. We understood that we were no longer reliant on them, but we didn't want them to be taken away. I know we irritated them sometimes, though that level of punishment was unprecedented, and uncalled for.

From dawn through to dusk and beyond, we called for them. Naively hoping that if we tried hard enough, our dams would be returned to us. They were not.

Amidst the sorrow flourished a new shockwave, hormones. Fillies did not seem burdened by this new phenomenon. They were just lucky I suppose, because it was torture.

A wave of brand-new feelings overcame us all. Within the space of a few weeks we went from being the best band of brothers, to a squabbling mess. Our disagreements weren't even about anything worthy of disbandment – they were mainly focused on fillies' affections. Without control, we all became obsessed with them. Whether it was the stress of losing our dams stirring up these bizarre feelings, or we'd simply reached our boredom limit, we didn't know. We didn't even understand why we felt that way. All we knew was we became so protective of our chosen fillies that nothing would stand between us and our objective.

I had my eye on a bright bay filly. Unfortunately, so did my best friend and that palomino colt. Rearing matches resulted in scrapes, biting contests caused mane loss, constant charges left us drained – it all took its toll on our bodies. Battered and bruised, desperate for some filly's affection, most of the time we were ignored by them. Well, either ignored or booted in the face. I know which reaction I preferred. Just as I'd won her affection, learning about love on the cusp of stallion-hood, the fillies were taken from us too. Yard People removed our very reason for living. We were inconsolable for about two days.

As soon as hormone levels depleted, so did our depressive state – we became friends again. Life ticked on at a manageable pace. Then winter was upon us.

Early morning frosts would cling to our fuzzy foal coats and biting winds would attack our frozen ears. Nights rapidly lengthened, becoming far less awe-inspiring. Majority of our time was spent shivering under trees, hiding from the weather, or huddling together to keep warm. No sooner had our condition improved after the fillies' departure, that stress claimed our bodies once more.

With each passing day there was less luscious grass, even the trees had run out of leaves. We were cold, hungry, and sad. Would winter ever end? It didn't end for a while.

Though winter did bring with it a surprise one morning... Having spent another long night huddled together for warmth and protection, all four of us greeted our new field in much the same manner that morning, astonishment.

Hazy dawn sunshine shone slightly, through yellow-tinted clouds – glistening on the alien, pristine, white ground. As the sun rose, it lit up our newly decorated surroundings. We didn't know what to do. After our initial amazement subsided, curiosity took over. I naturally began pawing at this bright white substance, sending clouds of mysterious, powdery snow (I did learn its name eventually) over my friends!

They quickly joined me, and soon enough we were having a blast playing in the snow. As if learning to walk again, we had to take giant steps to move forwards through said pretty snow. We danced around one another, competing at who could kick up most snow in one go. Racing about, I found myself slipping over on a few occasions. The others took great amusement in watching me wriggle back to normal leg formation after slipping

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over, even for the hundredth time. I got them back when I invented the best new game: snow rolling. It kept us entertained for hours. We'd discovered who was best at rolling snow into mud fastest (spoiler alert, it was me).

Despite missing my dam, I looked forward to spending spring with my friends.