

A brown Arabian horse is captured in profile, running across a lush green field. The horse's mane and tail are flowing, and its body is sleek and muscular. The background is a soft-focus green landscape with trees and a fence line.

# The Arabian Horse Cinderella Story

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Title page photo by Jouni Martikainen



*Samarah*

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**O**n Friday the 22nd of February 2013, my phone rang in the middle of a business meeting, “Would you like to come and see a horse? You like Arabians and there is an Arabian filly desperately looking for a home.” I was not actually going to buy a horse, but I promised to go look at this filly after work. I also decided to take my Mother with me as she loves Arabians as well.

When we arrived at the stable, there stood a very tiny two year old filly. She was not as I had envisioned; anticipating a noble purebred Arabian. Her coat was tangled and dirty, she obviously had worms and her mane was cut short.

The stable owner was at the location when we arrived and the only information she could tell us was the name of the horse--Samarah. The filly was not registered and had no papers. When I asked about the dam, the stable owner showed me the box next to Samarah's--there was a skinny black mare. No one knew anything about the sire so we decided to come back the next day.

On Saturday there was a young girl at the stable. She owned both the mare and the filly. I asked her to take the filly to the arena and show me her movement. The filly was bucking, rearing and was quite

insane. I asked my coach, who happened to be at the stable, “Would I be crazy to buy this filly?” She responded, “Why not, I think this filly would be perfect for you.”

### **My Horse Turned to Cat**

Samarah began to feel at home quite rapidly. For her cat-like movements, we named her Kissa (the Cat). We began to train her by longeing, first with one rein and then with two reins. We even harnessed her and drove her with a buggy. Next, we began to find out about the origin of the filly as we wanted to register her. My Mother, who had just retired, took the time to handle this time consuming project. Little by little we found information and each detail was fascinating.

### **Frozen Foal**

The dam of the filly, RS Sahira AT, was taken to Denmark to be sold there. At the same stable was another Finnish purebred Arabian stallion named Pelennor. One night, a construction worker had loaned some electricity from the plug used for the pasture fence. Unluckily, he had forgotten to plug the fence back in. The next morning the mare and the stallion were in the same pasture. The mare had not been the easiest one to breed and as such she was regularly in heat after this, nobody thought that she would become pregnant.



Later in Autumn the mare moved back to Finland. The owner of the mare left her to a small country stable. In early winter, the stable owner began to wonder why the mare was getting fatter and fatter, but the owner of the mare just told her to feed the mare less.

On February 3rd, 2011 the stable worker noticed that a foal was born in a snowdrift. It was -10 degrees Celsius, so it was a matter of minutes or the filly would have been killed by the frost. The mare and the filly were taken quickly inside to get warm and dry. The owner of the mare was informed about what had happened; however, because she didn't want the foal, she didn't want to pay the owner of the sire (stud fees, etc.). For a short moment, they thought that it would be better for the filly to let her pass away, as no one wanted her.

Luckily, one woman with her daughter visited the stable often, and they really loved these two unwanted horses. The woman bought both of them, and they were moved to another stable. Quite soon they ran out of luck...the woman and her husband passed away suddenly. The mare and the filly were left for the minor daughter.

This is the point of the story where my phone rang and I met the filly for the first time.

### **Surprise in the Show Ring**

Finally we were able to register the filly. She had completely changed, a wonderful look and manners. I started to dream about taking her to the horse show. In August 2014 in Metsäkylä, Hamina at the stable that was owned by the same person who owned the sire of my filly, was a show for all horses. I had been at a horse show only once, so I was quite unaware of what would happen there. I checked a couple of YouTube videos, trained a little bit and bought a pretty show halter. On the show day, we were amazed by the filly's behavior and we were even more amazed when she won her class and was Reserve Champion. Her sire was the Unanimous Gold Champion.

Thrilled by the success, we started to practice for next year's Kotham International Arabian Horse Show, ECAHO C-Show, that would be at the same location as our first show. We even went to Minttu Pihl's show course and were more prepared for our first real show. The show was better than we could have imagined. My Arabian horse won her class, mares 4-7 years old, and was chosen as the Silver Champion Mare at the end of the day.



After the show we were more surprised when we noticed there was a story about the show on the pages of *Arab Horse Couture Magazine* that included our photo! We could never have imaged anything like this, even in our wildest dreams.

We celebrated this with glasses of champagne with my Mother. It was unbelievable to see a photo of our little unregistered, unwanted surprise filly, on the pages of this fancy foreign magazine.

### **Charmed Halter**

Not so long after this, my Mother was hospitalized and only two weeks after this we received sad news--she had passed away. These were hard times for the entire family and I could not think about anything regarding any horse shows or Arabian horse items. We began to train basic riding skills, and every day we went to the stables with my daughter, Laura, and usually my Father was also with us to take good care of our little mare.

Only a few weeks before this year's show, Thousand Lakes International Arabian Horse Show, ECAHO C-Show in Forssa, the owner of the sire of my mare asked if we were coming to the show. I told him we were not prepared at all, we had only ridden the mare. Somehow she talked me into sending in the entry form, only a few hours before the entry deadline. I thought we might need some extra luck so I made

the show halter decorated with my Mother's necklace. The show day was very lucky for us, again we won our class, 4-7 year old mares and were chosen as Silver Champion Mare. Our mare was even chosen to be the best mare born in Finland and was awarded with a Falcon Trophy.

### **Golden Heart**

The story of Samarah has been a real Cinderella-story. The Arabian horse that should not have even existed and should not have become anything happened to be more than we could ever have dreamed of. Her sire has been awarded with the WAHO-Trophy, the internationally shown gorgeous stallion Pelenor (*Monograf DE x Penelope by Pomar SE*) and her dam is the black mare, awarded with Gold Points at International Horse Shows in Finland, RS Sahira AT (*Madallan by Madheen DE x Sara IV DE by Ghazlan DE*).

Only time will tell where we will go next. We are planning to participate in Arabian horse shows as Samarah seems to enjoy showing herself to people. Myself, I would like to see her in ridden competitions, she has wonderful gaits to be a dressage horse, she also likes to jump.

**I think the best part of this mare is her heart that is pure gold.**