



Sheila Watson first spotted Special-T when she and a friend went to look at a herd of Rocky Mountain Horses at Delta Dawn Farms, Goodfish Lake, AB. Sheila had raised Morgans for years and was not interested in buying a horse of another breed but was struck by the similarity in conformation and history to the Morgan Horse. As they were leaving, a little chocolate mare with a silver mane and tail looked out at Sheila through the boards of her paddock and, after three weeks of not being able to put her from her thoughts, Sheila owned her.

At the time, Special-T was three years old, registered as a Kentucky Mountain Saddle Horse with Rocky Foundation Breeding. She had not been handled much, was hard to catch, did not like her face touched and would not pick up her feet. Although not the most auspicious beginning, in the round pen, Special-T showed her intelligence, quickly learning everything Sheila threw at her. In just three short sessions, Special-T was coming on cue, picking up her feet with just a light signal and offering no resistance to being mounted. Along with training under saddle, Special-T was trained to pull a carriage and willingly went anywhere Sheila pointed her, always more eager for adventure than to stay with the herd.

In June that year, after about six months in training, Sheila took Special-T on a trail ride with friends. The mosquitoes were terrible in the long grass so the group opted to ride on the side of the road. The road was busier than usual, as flooding in the area had damaged a bridge and

traffic was being re-routed. Unexpectedly, a pick-up veered toward the group of three riders, narrowly missed the first two in line and headed straight for Special-T and Sheila. Sheila froze, not having the time or presence of mind to react, but Special-T was quick to respond, leaping off the road into the steep ditch. The driver never looked back. Sheila feels she owes her life to her quick-thinking, quick-acting little horse.

Special-T is now nine and has carried Sheila many miles and on many adventures. In 2007 and 2008, they competed in the Kneehill Championship Gaited Show in Olds, entering every class open to them. Special-T was the only Rocky Mountain Horse at the show, and placed 3rd in versatility, both years.

The team also participated at the Chinook Winds Pleasure Driving Show for several years. Special-T shines when doing obstacles at speed, loving the challenge of navigating bridges, cones, water hazards or whatever is put in her path. She never spooks or refuses an obstacle. This also makes her a very reliable trail horse and she has been on numerous rides in the Ya Ha Tinda, Panther, and Kananaskis areas. Sheila rode drag for 3 days over some very rough terrain during the Canadian National Endurance and Competitive Trail Competition held west of Sundre in August of 2008.

Last year, Special-T had a year off to have a foal, and she is in foal again for 2010. Her yearling filly, Special Sauce, is dark chocolate with a dark mane and flaxen tail. Sheila hopes this filly will be as 'special' to someone else, as Special-T is to her.