

# Evergreen Productions



## PONIES OF MIKLAENGI

BASED ON THE BOOK BY LONZO ANDERSON.

A SHORT FILM SET ON A SHEEP FARM IN ICELAND WHOSE MAIN CHARACTERS ARE TWO YOUNG CHILDREN AND THEIR VIKING HORSES.

ONE DAY ON HORSEBACK FAR FROM HOME, THE CHILDREN ARE CAUGHT IN A MAJOR EARTHQUAKE AND SUBSEQUENT VOLCANIC ERUPTION. WHILE THEY ARE STRANDED, THE MARE GIVES BIRTH PREMATURELY DUE TO THE EARTHQUAKE. THROUGH THE COURAGE OF THE STALLION, ALL ARE FINALLY RESCUED AND SAFELY RETURN HOME.

## PONIES OF MIKLAENGI

Film treatment - revised 3/6/78



### Titles

Prologue - A geyser blasts skyward. The earth explodes in a volcanic eruption. A silent glacier sits frozen in the low northern sunlight. While the viewer watches spectacular scenery from this land of fire and ice, the narrator describes Iceland: its fascinating geography, life on the sheep farms there, the people who are descendants of the Vikings, and their horses which have played such a unique part in Iceland's history.

Our story begins on a small farm called Miklaengi one spring, not so very long ago. Sheep are being herded down a green hillside to the sod-covered barns below. Two children, Gunnar and Anni both on horseback are helping their father who is on foot with the herding. Barking and running back and forth, the family's dog, Yafti, is also hard at work.

During this process, one group of three sheep breaks away and heads back toward the distant hills. Spotting them just as they are about to disappear over a knoll, Gunnar calls to his father. Gunnar's father cannot spare him at this critical moment, so Gunnar returns to the task at hand.

Once the sheep are safely inside the barn, father attends to the feeding while the children put away the horses, Jokull, the grey stallion and Hekla, the chestnut mare. They all discuss the missing sheep, and father agrees that the children can go out and search for them next morning. He reminds them that they will have to be careful riding Hekla since she is approaching her foaling time. Their work done, they all go inside for dinner.

Later that evening, the family gathers together in the living room. Grandmother leads the singing while father plays the dulcimar with a bow. After the song's conclusion, the children are reminded that tomorrow is a big day, and they all retire for the evening.

That night while the family sleeps, a slight earth tremor shakes the house. Only Yafti, the dog, wakes up in her bed in the kitchen. She raises her head to listen, and then after it has stopped, returns to sleep. The family is not awakened, and remain unaware of what has happened.



The morning dawns clear and bright; it is a beautiful spring day. After getting some careful instructions from their father, the children mount Jokull and Hekla and set off after the sheep.

After crossing a number of valleys, the children reach a gravel road. There they encounter another group of riders, each leading at least one additional horse, some with two or three. (They will change to these fresh horses as their trip progresses.) They briefly exchange greetings and then separate. A short while later the children once again leave the road, heading towards grazing lands near the volcano Mount Hekla.

Over the next hill, the children come to a swift river. Following it upstream, they discover a spectacular waterfall. The noise is deafening.

Back at the farm, mother and grandmother are occupied with work in the house. Just as father comes in from outside, there is another tremor. Stronger than the night before, it rattles dishes. A single picture falls off the wall. After it has stopped, mother voices concern for the children's safety. Father comforts her, explaining that they have probably already found the sheep and are by now returning home.

The children, however, have momentarily forgotten their search for the sheep. They have gotten off of their horses, and are playing near the falls. The horses graze nearby. Suddenly, across the river they spot the missing sheep. Scrambling to their horses, they race downstream until they can find a point at which to ford.

After splashing across the river, they climb the hill on the other side towards the place where they last saw the sheep. It is rocky and steep and when the children finally crest the hill, the sheep have vanished. After a fruitless search through the steep terrain, the children give up. Realizing that they have gotten far from home, they decide they had better start back.

They get only a short way back towards the river when the earth suddenly begins to shake violently. Rocks slide down past them, and the horses stumble with the children clinging tightly to them.

Back at the farm, the house is shaking from side to side. Books, plates and pictures fall from their places, small cracks open in the walls and dust fills the rooms. Afraid that the house might collapse, father, mother and grandmother hurry outside. Yafti, at first barking wildly, suddenly stops and huddles near the family for safety.



The ponies whinny with fear as they struggle with their footing on the rumbling, shifting earth. Then it is over, and all is quite.

Realizing that they have experienced a major earthquake, Gunnar and Anni know that they must return home as quickly as possible. But there is something wrong with Hekla. She hangs her head and moves very slowly. Anni gets down to ride with Gunnar, but still the progress is slow. The children realize that Hekla is about to give birth. The earthquake has brought on her labor.

Worrying about the children, father quickly sets out with Yafti to search for them. Mother and grandmother get busy straightening the house.

The children continue slowly making their way with Hekla until they encounter a large crevice, where the ground has been torn apart by the force of the earthquake. Smoke is drifting up from the crack. Cut off from their return route, the children gaze up and down the crack for a place to cross. All at once there is a terrible roar and an explosion behind them. Turning quickly around, they see Mount Hekla erupting; smoke and fire pour up from the summit. They are stunned for a moment watching, but then recover and lead the horses away. Now the mare's time is very near.

At this same instant, their father has witnessed the eruption. He too pauses for a moment, then rushes forward. Yafti follows close behind.

Hekla can go no farther, so the children find her a sheltered place to lay down. Jokull stands nearby, as if on guard.

Mother and grandmother also pause in their work to silently watch Mount Hekla erupting in the distance.

Bright streams of lava are flowing from the volcano now as the eruption continues. The children remain at Hekla's side trying their best to comfort her as the area around them begins to fill with smoke. Jokull is becoming increasingly nervous. He is aware of the danger as the eruption continues, and knows they can not remain safely where they are for very long. Suddenly he takes off. Gunnar starts after him calling, but it is no use. He is gone.

Making his way through the thickening smoke, Jokull looks for a way across the crevice. Finally finding a place where he can cross, he makes his way down one side of the steep walls and up the other. He takes off at a gallop.



The birth of Hekla's foal is very near, and the children forget their own danger for a time, as they watch over her.

In the growing darkness, Jokull comes upon father and Yafti. Father quickly gets up on his back, and Jokull heads back across the crevice to get the others.

Hekla has given birth. The new foal wobbles onto its feet for the first time while the volcano roars behind her. As the children look on, Hekla cares for her newborn, cleaning and loving it.

Just then the children hear Yafti's barking, and through the smoke they see Jokull returning with father. Greeting the children warmly, father smiles as he sees Hekla's foal. Renewed barking shifts their attention to the hillside above. Yafti has found the three missing sheep and is herding them back towards the group. Everyone smiles at this good fortune and then all set off for home.

At the farm mother and grandmother come out the front door to welcome the children, father carrying the new foal, Jokull and Hekla, and Yafti with the three sheep.

