



a horse is a horse of course

A horse walks into a bar. "Hey," says the barman.  
"Yes please," says the horse.

my earliest knowledge of horses came from patch the pony, who was quoted as saying, "Nay nay, from strangers stay away." i even had a button and maybe still do. if you couple that with the fact that i once rode an hysterical horse name Tom down the Royal Gorge in Colorado, my knowledge of the ways of el caballo isn't close to being in the saddle.

beyond obvious things, i don't know much about horse races either, which is partly why i loosely 'bucket listed' this years Kentucky Derby -it was in the background of my day, i picked up a thing or two and assumed i would watch some horse races with deb and that would be that.

i was indifferently aware of the earlier races and suffered through way way too much talk about fashion and silly hats on seemingly fabulous people, but did find myself surprisingly more curious about horses, riders, trainers, owners, pedigrees, odds and the overall spectacle than i thought, and so determined to follow through the crescendo.

when it was time for the big race, the horses left the barn, found their riders and staff and agents and were announced and introduced to 147,000 people as they promenaded past the camera. This included Rich Strike who was #21 in a field of 20 and wasn't in the lineup until the 11th hour. maybe it's me but by the time #21, Rich Strike came in to view the announcers voice seemed a little fatigued and maybe a hint less vigorous, but did offer an extremely brief back story of which i'll abbreviate here:

"Ole Rich Strike, he's not supposed to be in the race, but #20 scratched and so here he is - don't expect too much, he's an 80-1 long shot, bless his heart."

i tend to pull for the under horse but i'm ignorant of what calculations or how much money are prudent in betting on the long shot. ( i heard that Scut Farcus bet on him with some change from the cup holder of his 1978 gremlin, just to get a chuckle from his friends.)

Most folks didn't look up from their hats and conversations when his name was called, but he and his jockey, Sonny Leon made their way to the starting gate anyway. Deb and i noticed him and encouraged him as he went into his gate - "you go #21," and then i sipped some broth and waited for the race.

if you haven't watched the race, just stop reading and go watch it. i'll wait.  
you can't watch the race without reaction.

and the race pretty much went as the prognosticators had prognosticated - until it didn't.

all eyes were somewhere else until they weren't on anything else but #21 and his rider.

in the final turn he was in 17th position and then went on to win with the fastest quarter mile in Kentucky Derby history. Rider and horse were brilliant, skillful, inspiring, and raced like they hadn't heard they weren't suppose to win.

'be wary of a horse with a sense of humor.'

the scene after the race cracked us up. this history making - record breaking long shot was getting his close up and then decided to chew and bite (and bite) on the escort horse. for quite a while the moment was tense and comical, but i can only imagine that an 1,100 lb amped up horse can't just 'chill' but would rather run another mile and if he can't do that, well, then, biting the horse slowing you down probably makes sense. (i've seen human athletes do far worse for less.)

maybe you haven't and maybe you won't but you probably have or probably will at some point not only "feel" like the long shot - you will be the long shot.  
you never know just where the road will go.

sometimes the world isn't paying much attention because the focus is somewhere else.

listen to God and 'press on toward the goal to win the prize of God's heavenly calling in Christ Jesus'

-g.