

## LITERARY | THE PRANCE OF A FOAL

Written by Chaela “Vasilissa” Pasion

Photos by Dione Princess Yra M. Fabian and Frances Erinh G. Milo

Edited by Angelo C. Lagunilla Jr., Jenkins D. Ravelo, and Juliana Tungaoen

**The event was called Stallion Stride, and I couldn’t imagine a better name.**

Every stallion begins as a foal, every confident stride begins with a trembling step. And maybe that’s what I am right now — unsteady, nervous, yet learning how to move forward. A foal does not stay small or fragile forever. With each gallop, it grows stronger, steadier, braver. And so will I.

My heart was racing, my palms still clammy from all the noise and excitement around. It’s overwhelming in the best way; the kind that makes your chest feel full, like you might burst into laughter or tears at the same time. It’s surreal, really. I’m not just someone watching from the sidelines anymore. *I was in it.* For the first time, I feel like I belong — like I’m really a part of something greater, a stallion in stride.

Though the path may be long and the journey uncertain, my first prance marks the beginning of something greater.

For now, I am a foal. But one day, I will run as a stallion—bearing the strength, courage, and pride of this university.



**The campus was alive with chatter, laughter, and hurried footsteps, each one echoing with stories waiting to unfold.** Colorful banners fluttered above us, their colors catching the sunlight like flames in the wind, painting the walkways with the pride of the university.

*As a freshman, I felt like a foal taking its first steps: uncertain, wobbly, yet eager to run.* Every corner seemed larger than life—the towering buildings, the sprawling walkways, even the sea of students who moved as if they had already found their place. I felt small, but also hopeful. The drums of the foot parade echoed through the air, steady and commanding, and with each beat I felt my own heart trying to match its rhythm. **With every step I took, the ground beneath me seemed to whisper: this is the beginning of your journey.**

As I marched among fellow freshmen, shoulder to shoulder, I realized we were all the same: new, untested, but full of spirit. Our strides were clumsy at times, our confidence unsure, yet the crowd's cheers and the banners waving above us made us bolder. Together, our steps sounded less like hesitation and more like belonging. *I was part of the stride, part of the herd, part of a new beginning.*



*I didn't expect to feel this much alive.* One moment I was nervously clutching my umbrella earlier, and now here I am, squeezed in with new friends. Someone held up a tablet, and suddenly, our grins and silly poses were captured all at once. I leaned closer, making sure my smile didn't get lost in the crowd. The sound of laughter blended with the blaring cheers from the crowd, and for a heartbeat, everything felt like a celebration of beginnings.

**I couldn't help but grin as we bumped our fists together, like a quiet promise of friendship and survival in this new world of college.** *We've only been classmates for a short while, yet it feels as if we've carried each other through countless days already* — sharing answers, sharing jokes, even sharing silences when nerves get too loud. We teased one another about our poses for the photo, argued over who had the widest smile, and laughed until our stomachs ached.



As we passed through the oval, the world seemed to open wider. The parade carried us forward like a river, but my eyes couldn't help drifting to the sides—toward the colorful booths lined up by the organizations. *My eyes didn't know where to land first—everywhere I looked, there was color, noise, and something exciting waiting to be discovered.*

Each one was alive with its own kind of energy. Some had bright streamers and banners that shouted their names in bold colors; others had tables full of props, instruments, or projects that caught the sunlight. I could smell fresh paper from stacks of flyers, hear the cheerful calls of upperclassmen inviting us to take a closer look, and see the way their eyes lit up when they talked about their groups. **I found myself smiling without even realizing it.**

My friends and I laughed as we pointed at the stickers, imagining where we'd put them — on notebooks, water bottles, maybe even our dorm doors. The air buzzed with chatter, the sellers' voices mixing with the hum of excited buyers. I couldn't help but admire them, these students who turned creativity into something you could hold.

The crowd led us to another booth, one that immediately caught my attention: a freedom wall. I took a pen and stared at the blank slip in my hand. My fingers trembled a little, not from shyness this time, but from the weight of deciding what to leave behind. What do I want to say in my very first month of college? The ink bled softly as I wrote the words that had been sitting quietly inside me: **I am scared, but I am ready.**



It felt strangely comforting, like confessing to a friend who wouldn't judge. I pinned my note onto the wall, right between someone's scribbled doodle of a stallion and another's bold declaration of "I will make it!" *For a moment, I stepped back and looked at the patchwork of voices. My little note was just one among hundreds, but it was mine, and it was there.*



By late afternoon, the air itself seemed to buzz — not with chatter this time, but with music. One student band after another took the stage, *each beat echoing through the crowd, pulling us closer together.* I thought I was already full of joy from the day's discoveries, but then the last band came on.

The moment they played their first chord, something in me leapt. Without even thinking, I ran closer to the front, the music tugging me like a wave. My voice mixed with the crowd as we sang along, shouting lyrics we all seemed to know by heart. My friends and I jumped in rhythm, laughing breathlessly, our voices cracking from singing too loud — and not caring at all.

When the final notes faded, we weren't ready to let go. "Isa pa!" we shouted, our voices rising into the evening air. And when they gave in, giving us one more song, it felt like a reward, ***like the universe knew we needed just a little more of that magic.***

*That moment was the highlight of my day — the rush of music, the swell of voices, the feeling of being part of something bigger than myself.* For a while, I forgot my nervousness as a freshman. I wasn't just the foal taking its first steps anymore. **I was alive, free, and galloping with the herd.**