

HORSE TAILS

AYELIEN

Dear Mother,

It was such a nice day Sunday I decided to explore that road that has been tempting me for four years. As I walked out the back door Bill asked if I was planning to ride. Without thinking I answered, "Yes, if I can catch Nancy." I could have swallowed my tongue as I looked into the pasture where she was standing contentedly with the young stock, her ears pricked straight forward and the intent look of a clever pup transforming her features with a devilish air.

When I mentioned to Bill I shouldn't have said that out loud he nearly hit the sky with disbelief . . . you know how he is, he doesn't think these horses can think and act like they do. I guess it is because they are so close to me that they do not always act like the dumb animals they are supposed to be. Well, I went into the barn for a rope and a handful of crunch and sauntered out into the pasture, hoping to appear as matter-of-fact as though I were only going to take pictures or something. You know how they run up to me . . . especially if I don't want them. Nancy was wise already, (tho' after all she HEARD me).

All three of the fillies ran to me (they know I can't ride them very far) but Nancy was wandering slowly towards the creek. In the cold weather when she goes across she knows I don't like to follow as the creek runs deep and COLD. Hastily I gave some

of the fillies a handful of crunch and said to Peggy, mournfully, "How I wish you were big enough to really ride!" as she is the first to come to me at all times. I thought I would carefully outmaneuver Nancy . . . I blocked her way to the creek . . . she quickly walked up to the other place she fords and I just as quickly tried to block her again. I coaxed with the hand outstretched . . . suddenly she bolted to me grabbed the morsel on the palm of my hand and blasted into the creek with her tail spinning wildly.

Of course all the fillies followed her too . . . their tails in the air in various positions, half mast, full mast, or pin-curl. It was such a warm day and I wanted Nancy so I waded thru the creek which surprised her a little. You know we can't chase them . . . you can't even do that on another horse . . . you know, try to round them up or something as they think it is just a big fat game or else they decide to make it one! I walked and coaxed. To no avail . . . as Nancy kept nipping at her fillies and running them around me in playful bounds. Oh they were cute—the little fiends!

Finally I decided I was certainly smarter than she was and decided to catch the one I could catch . . . which I did easily. I led her back to the creek. The other youngsters followed as they know Peggy gets quite a hand-out everytime and they like to share

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the goodies. Back thru the creek I waded (it was warm) and to the barn. It was no trick at all to bunch the fillies into the barn in Sam's big stall by the door . . . they thought it was a new game . . . different stall that I NEVER allowed them in usually. You know how clean Sam keeps his stall.

As I went back outside there stood Nancy, a puzzled look on her usually sassy face . . . but a shadow of loneliness was passing over her. After all it isn't too much fun out in the sun and flies, ALL ALONE. She tried to appear very interested in the pony in the

next corral . . . who ignored her as she is used to loneliness, a maverick as only a pony can be on this farm.

I called to Nancy and opened the gate wide . . . she blew and snorted and bolted into the barn and her own stall. It was just a minute later, after returning the fillies to the pasture that I led Nancy out to crosstie. How smug I felt this time . . . I had outsmarted a horse (average mentality of a real smart horse about comparable with that of 12 year old boy). Bill shook his head in disbelief as I rode off to the hills. Don't you think she knew what I said in the beginning? I do.

love,
your daughter
