

HORSE TAILS

By AYELIEN

Dear Mother,

Well, I have really done it this time! Everyone is razzing me. You know how Bill and I are always having a sort of war about the cows? Well, when I came back from Vermont, I had one with me! Yep, a cow! And I brought it in my horse trailer . . . which is just verboten for any cow . . . usually.

Here is how it happened. For a long time I have been inconvenienced by cows . . . the way they fend for themselves they occasionally revolt it seems and cause as much trouble as they possibly can by leaving the pastures and everyone's cows always come to our front yard . . . and they stay. Even when our own Herefords get out . . . do they go any place? Of course not, they just come in the yard and stay on the lawn. So I am continually blowing my top about cows . . . they are smelly . . . they are stupid . . . so all my friends have the last laugh now because I own a cow.

And she is the cutest, smartest, cleanest, most lovable little bovine you ever saw!

When I was at Townshend, I couldn't pry any Townshend Morgans off Mrs. Ela's place, so I talked her into letting me take a 10-day old Townshend Holstein heifer home with me. Cows are supposed to be more rugged than horses . . . they say . . . so with a modern sweater (made from a feed sack) my latest addition to the farm was bundled into the trailer with Nancy. To my complete surprise Nancy made a lot of frantic mother mare noises and owned that calf (it was a beautiful black and white). Nancy was never so cheerful as on that trip with that calf for company!

Of course, the trip was too much for her and since by that time I was vitally interested in MY COW, what did she do the first day after she got home . . . of course . . . she got sick. I have seen sick everything on this farm but never have I even seen anything as sick as a sick calf. In a few hours from a blustering hungri-fied demon, the calf was stretched out flat on her side with her eyeballs rolling crazily . . . so I called the vet. I told him I don't know a thing about cows

but when he got there he sure enough confirmed it . . . she was sick. In fact he said he usually didn't get called that quickly . . . and by that fact the calf would recover quickly, which she did.

So I became pals with Jennie . . . whose mother's name is Jeannette. I don't know the first thing about cows but I moved her into the horse barn and kept busy stuffing feed into her and keeping her stall clean. I dragged all my horsy friends in to see MY COW and did they give me the business! They said with all those horses the first thing you smell is still a cow the minute you step into the barn! I know . . . but she is so cute! I tried everything I could to keep her clean. The longer she stayed the more my calf must have decided she was a horse . . . she got fed with the horses . . . when I took her out I didn't know what to do . . . and she kicked up and cow cantered at me and butted me. So . . .

I take her out on the lungeline. It isn't just the usual thing but I go to her stall and I say, "Jennie, do you want to go out?" and she bucks up and comes puts her head in a converted colt halter and then I open the door and get out of the way. She curls her tail up and bolts out the door and I get yanked along after her. She stays on her feet on the concrete and if I hold her head crooked, she lies down flat . . . she is the most funny "Horse" in our barn. When she recovers, she starts to run . . . she canters one way on one end and leads the opposite behind but boy does she go around me! I never had a colt lunge so well so soon. I duck her feet and her head and by circling we get to the stake where I fasten her and get out of her way. She nuzzles the horses at the fence and they love her. She thinks she is a horse . . . I know she does!

Finally comes the acid test . . . she has to go into the cowbarn with the cows . . . no matter how hard I try, I smell the one cow in my horsebarn . . . my friends are just having a whizz out of my efforts to keep her as clean as a horse. So poor little Jennie has to go into the cow shed. In it we had

one poorly little steer that the nurse cow wouldn't nurse so Bill is hand-raising it. It is the first time my calf has come face to face with another cow in a long time. She flaps her big ears forward and sniffs. What the steer said I don't know but Jennie is so terrified by this STRANGE critter she almost throws herself.

Well, she knows now she is a cow. It is nice to be a cow, I guess. Of course I gave up any ideas of showing her this year as Mary Arnold informed me a show cow moves one foot at a time, when you ask them and stands a certain way. I take my ~~cow~~ out on the lungeline still and she moves all her feet in all directions and I just go along for the exercise till I get her bolted down someplace on the lawn (yes, on our lawn). But I keep looking at that Holstein and I keep saying, by golly when she grows up and has calves it won't hurt me so much to sell a calf as it does to part with a colt . . . that's what it says here. She is growing like a weed . . . and I'm getting a lot of fun out of her and I guess Bill likes me to be interested in his hobby even if it is a Holstein, it is a cow which he says he understands better than horses. Don't you believe it . . . he had to feed my calf one night and he was peeved at her (like he gets at the horses) and SHE WOULDN'T EAT, just like the horses do when he is peeved—now how do you figure that? Gee, isn't a cow smart, and cute? You'd think so as you like all young things.

Your loving daughter