

# HORSE TAILS

By AVELIEN

Dear Mother:

The most amazing coincidence just happened! Do you remember when I wrote you about 5 years ago about the dreadful swim my first beloved Morgan stallion took me? If you have forgotten I can give you the highlights of that experience. Red and I missed the gang at Frieda's so decided to cut across Seecy Creek to head them off. At the time we had just had quite a January thaw and the creek was running muddy and high. By crossing where I went so often I managed to keep Red on a shelf until I reached the small island that gave us a good view of the next branch of the creek. It was impossible to cross there and I knew that as soon as I saw the murky boiling mess of swift water. I turned and retraced our previous trip but Red was getting a little nervous and was stepping sidewise and with no warning at all he must have stepped off the rocky riffles that I had chosen as safe . . . for in a few brief seconds of terror I found myself in that swift churning current with my stallion fighting to get his head up and swimming finally.

You know I let go of him and although he got out first he did the thing that I never forgot, he ran up and down the bank and whinpered and called frantically until I managed to drag my half-drowned self out at his feet.

I don't want you to think I took another swim as I have had a healthier respect for water ever since. But Lorrie did practically the same thing. The coincidence part is that her horse is Traveller, one of Red's lovely half-Morgan colts, so that the son had about the same experience as his daddy did!

Lorrie told me the other day about it. She and two others were riding along the trail and the creek was very high as usual. There is a place along the creek where a trail runs and although it was under about a foot of water you can ride a horse through that underbrush till you reach another section of the trail. Connie went barging through the water, hugging the bushes, and when she had reached the other end of the section Traveller started

along the same way. Lorrie evidently did not realize there was any danger there and blindly followed along with her colt . . . Traveller is very good but a bit of brush must have hit him and he quickly swung his rear end out slightly towards the rushing water. Immediately he found himself in the water, about ten feet of that swift dangerous stuff! Lorrie did just as I did, she let go of him, and Traveller spent a few frantic moments learning to swim . . . Lorrie who is a good swimmer went downstream with the current and managed to get close enough to the bank to grab an overhanging limb and drag herself out.

What did Traveller do? Well he made the near tragedy humorous as his great big sister Connie and the other mare were standing on the bank screaming at him as only horses will do . . . as much as to say, "Traveller, you dope . . . what are you doing in there? Get out of there right NOW." Of course he couldn't and he was really racing his motor trying to swim upstream which he couldn't do as no matter how his little Morgan engine chugged he was going backwards. Finally he figured that one out and turned and made his way downstream to a milder spot, climbed out and raced to the other horses.

They had to wring out Lorrie, and as she said later the funniest part of it all was watching Traveller swimming at a standstill with the flaps of her English saddle spread out by the current so that he looked like he had wings . . . which he pretty nearly got from his excursion! They hurried Lorrie home to a hot bath and she can talk about the experience a great deal without the fear I had five years ago as she did have company . . . with Red there was no one but me . . . I'm glad she and Traveller got out of their near-disaster so well as water is a tricky thing and these innocent looking streams can be deathtraps.

Wednesday I rode down and looked over the spot . . . although the water is lower now, still you can't see bottom in that one spot where they fell in, and the water is ebbing along in a blue way . . . although the edge of the shelf is clearly visible now I don't

think I have the nerve to cross there till there is a lot less water. We have had to carry Polly's dog across many times this winter as she is such a little schnauzer-type that we might lose her. As you know whenever we ride we take a gang of our own dogs as otherwise everywhere we come to the dogs chase us and bark at us. Although our dogs are not the least bit ferocious still we have so many of them when several of us ride together that where the other dogs are concerned, outnumbered is outmaneuvered so we can ride by many places where three dogs will stay put on their own place rather than tackle our great many (peaceful) dogs.

I hope for Lorrie's sake that she has no more such experiences with the colt and I bet she agrees with me!

Your loving daughter