



A Horse of My Own

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Ever since I can remember a horse has been at the top of my “want list”. That probably makes me no different than any other red blooded American girl, but I really wanted one just the same. This “desire” comes naturally I guess because both of my parents had horses as they were growing up and I was introduced to the idea at a young age.

Wanting and getting are two different things however. My parents knew that to have and take care of a horse was a huge responsibility. So even though I was exposed to horses at an early age, I had to prove to them that I could act in a responsible way if I were to have a horse of my own.

Fortunately my family and I live on a three hundred acre farm that has existed for generations. My uncle and aunt live on the farm as well and they own several horses. Within the last few years they have started riding Rocky Mountain horses in addition to their Quarter Horses they previously owned. They take several weekends as well as weeklong trail ride trips every year. So they would ask me to take care of the rest of the horses that were left behind. I was so happy they asked me because I truly welcomed the opportunity to just be around horses. Each day that I had to go the barn to feed I would pretend they were my horses!

Horses require all types of care, more than I ever thought. Taking care of a horse is much more than feeding and cleaning out their stall. I became aware of how important diet and exercise are as my responsibility grew when I was left in charge. As my responsibilities grew each time my uncle and aunt left me in charge, so did my interest in horses. I also found myself involved with their care even when I wasn't left in charge. I started relating all of my school projects and research around horses. Pretty soon I redecorated my bedroom with a horse theme because I lived and breathed horses. Being around horses and learning about them was more rewarding than the pay I received for the duties and responsibilities I performed while my uncle and aunt were away.

Monetary payment is good though! I was able to save enough money to attend a fancy horse camp last summer. I also used funds to buy some of my own tack I personally wanted, even though I didn't have a horse of my own. Through all of this dedication I felt for sure that I had proven to be responsible horse owner!

One day about a year ago my dream of wanting my very own horse came true.

I had dreamed this dream so many times before and it became real when my uncle and aunt gave me a horse to be responsible for all by myself! It was the best horse a girl could ever imagine and it became mine. She is a Palomino/Quarter Horse. Velcro is the perfect name for the

perfect horse I call my own. I have no doubt that we will “stick together” forever because she was my first horse but also because horses are apart of me now.

Riding has become my favorite past time. I have discovered the “right way” to ride a horse. My aunt, Tracie, has been generous to give me riding lessons. She always insists on teaching me the “right way” to handle a horse, and I appreciate all the time and advice she has given me. She wants me to be a prepared rider as a horse has a mind of its own. My mom and dad have always had a fondness for horses and they always make sure safety comes first. My interest in horses has become a family thing as well. My grandparents and great-grandparents come out to the barn to show their support by watching and cheering Velcro and I on as we perform in the “Big Ring”. My brother, Matt, isn’t old enough to show an interest other than chasing cats around the barn, but he’s always in the picture somewhere.

At the age of three I was enrolled in ballet, jazz, and tap dancing. I have enjoyed dancing for seven years. Each year I went out on stage and performed for audiences and loved being in the “spotlight”. This year I am trading in my tutu for boots and jeans. Through my experiences with horses I have discovered a love that goes beyond the fun experiences of owning and caring for my own horse. Horses are unique animals that provide a person with a friend, a pet, a tool, and a team member all in one. Through this companionship I now want my “spotlight” in a ring rather on stage

Big dreams have a way of becoming bigger and bigger. I have discovered a desire that comes from within to really care for horses in a way that can make a difference one day. That difference may come from pursuing a career as a large animal vet. Yes, this is definitely a big dream for me. But dreams start at an early age and sometimes those dreams do come true. After all, Velcro became a reality, didn’t she?

Right now I am perfectly content to enjoy what I have. An opportunity to ride and learn about horses is something that a lot of boys and girls can only dream about. I know that with the rapid growth in our world today with subdivisions, shopping centers, schools and other construction projects that these opportunities lessen everyday for some. It is a shame that more people are not given the opportunities like I was to know and love horses. I am so lucky to have a family that introduced me to this fine animal. My future plans will undergo some changes I’m sure. But I can say that my first experience with horses will always stay true to my heart. They will remain a positive influence in my life, and they have provided a joy that will I will always treasure as sure as owning my first horse.