



## My First Ride

Hope F., Ohio

Hope quickly untied the strings to the bag that held her party favor. She was at her brother's birthday party. She pulled a large, but skinny, book out of the bag. "Cool," she said, "a horse poster book!" She got up and told her parents thank you and gave them both a hug. Then she went back to her spot and sat down and started looking through her poster book. She had seen horses before but that was from a long way off and didn't happen very often. They all looked alike except some were black, some a darker shade of brown, and some a lighter shade of brown. But the horses in the book were all sorts of breeds and colors. She stopped to look at a Clydesdale. Then she turned the page to see the most beautiful horse she had ever seen. She turned it over to see what breed it was. "Friesian," she told herself. "He's the most beautiful horse that I've ever seen!" She hurried to her room and took the Friesian poster out of the book and hung it up next to her bed. Just then, her mom called to her, saying it was time for cake. She raced out of the room. For three months, Hope didn't see any horses except the ones on her wall. One day her mom got a call from a woman who had four horses and a 2-month-old foal. The woman wanted some home-schooled kids to come and be around her horses and ride them, so they would get used to having kids riding and being around them because these horses (once they were broken in) would be used for disabled children. Her mother gladly said, "Yes." Hope heard her mother say, "yes, all-righty then, see you on Tuesday, yes good-bye."

That Tuesday Hope was so excited! She could hardly eat her breakfast. But she ate a PB + J and then ran to the car.

When they got there, she hopped out of the car and walked to the paddock. She wanted to run but knew that these horses were not tame and if she ran she might spook them. The first horse she saw was a chestnut mare named Rose Bud. Then she saw the other horses. There was a white and light chestnut stallion named Two Spots, a white and light chestnut pony named Misty, a black stallion name Black (or Ace), and a colt that she named Peanut Butter for his color. The woman, whose name was Janet, came out with a bucket of bread. For the rest of the morning Hope and her brothers fed and brushed the horses, but her mother said she might get hurt since she didn't have as much experience.

Week after week, Hope and her brother went out to the ranch, and week after week Hope fed, brushed, and watched. One week Hope asked Janet, "Can I ride Rose Bud?" "Yes, you could, but you see no one can put a lead rope on her. She won't let you. But if you can get one on her, yes, you may." "Thanks!" She ran to the bread bucket and grabbed a bag of bread. (She knew that

Rosy loved to eat.) Then walked out the door.

Rose Bud was in her favorite spot, next to a tree, at the side of the paddock. "Hi Rosy," Hope said, trying to keep the horse calm. She took slow steps, but when she was five feet away from the mare, she lost her footing, slid forward and almost fell but was able to steady herself. She looked and saw the mare backing up. "Easy girl." Hope's words seemed to calm her for she stopped a few feet away. "Good girl," Hope said, pleased that Rose Bud looked at the bread and took a step forward. Hope quickly got the lead rope ready in her other hand as Rose Bud slowly got closer. One more step, Hope thought. Just as Rose Bud took the last step, Hope quickly grabbed hold of Rose Bud's halter and hooked the lead rope to the ring in the halter. "Yes!" she said to herself. She led the mare to the fence closest to the barn to get her brother (to lead Rose Bud) and the saddle. She quickly saddled and mounted. Then she rode, she rode and rode, until her brother stopped because his feet hurt. So she got off and unsaddled Rose Bud and rubbed her down. Then she led her back into the paddock. Hope went to the car and all the way home she thought of her first ride.