

Circle C Beginnings #1

Andi's Lonely Little Foal

Chapter 1 Excerpt

Contents

New Words

1. The Not-So-Good Idea
2. Taffy
3. Lasso Fun
4. Lasso Trouble
5. Up, Up, and Over!
6. Night Noises
7. Sunday Is Not a School Day
8. That Mean Johnny
9. Taffy Trouble
10. Trust Me!

A Peek into the Past

Andi's Lonely Little Foal—excerpt

New Words

bellow	to make a loud, deep noise
grain	seeds like corn and oats; food for cows and horses
hitching post	a post or railing where people tie up horses to “park” them
hooves	a horse's or cow's feet
nicker	a friendly horse greeting
nuzzle	when a horse rubs or pushes gently with its nose
señorita	the Spanish word for “Miss”
shocked	to feel surprised and angry
slingshot	a Y-shaped stick with stretchy rubber tied to the ends; used to throw small stones
yippee-ki-yay!	what the cowboys yell to round up the cattle

Andi's Lonely Little Foal—excerpt

Chapter 1 The Not-So-Good Idea

“A penny for your thoughts, Andi,” Justin said at breakfast one Saturday morning.

Andi looked up. Sometimes big brothers said confusing things.

Like right now.

“A penny?” Andi wrinkled her eyebrows. “For what?”

But she perked up. A penny could buy lemon drops. Or taffy candy.

Yum!

Justin laughed. “I just meant that I want to know what you’re thinking. You’re very quiet this morning.”

Justin was right about that. Andi always tried to be quiet at the table.

That was the rule. Grown-ups talked. Children were quiet.

Unless somebody spoke to them first.

Justin was already grown up. So was Chad. And Mitch nearly was. They always had lots to talk about, so Andi had lots of practice being quiet.

No talking at the table made it easy for Andi to daydream.

Andi liked to daydream about riding Taffy . . . someday. When her baby horse grew up. She dreamed about riding her in a real race.

Andi's Lonely Little Foal—excerpt

Taffy would win, of course! Then everybody would clap.

And Andi would win a blue ribbon.

Hooray for Taffy!

Only right now, Andi's daydreams were not so enjoyable. A boy named Johnny was picking on her at school.

Andi could not get thoughts of that mean bully out of her head.

"A penny for your thoughts," Justin said again.

He laid a penny next to Andi's plate of pancakes.

Andi looked around the breakfast table. Her mother and sister and brothers were all waiting. And smiling.

Even bossy Chad was smiling.

"I was thinking about Johnny," Andi said at last. "He's the meanest boy in the whole entire school.

He's only eight, but he's meaner than the big boys."



Andi's Lonely Little Foal—excerpt

“Johnny is a bully,” Andi’s big sister Melinda said.

“He’s got a slingshot,” Andi said in a rush. She didn’t want Melinda to tell everything. “At recess he finds acorns and tries to hit birds. And he chews paper and—”

Andi made a face. “He shoots *disgusting* spitballs with that thing.”

Johnny was mean in other ways too. He chased the girls with snakes. He put frogs in the water bucket. He pushed children down.

He even pushed Andi down once.

But Andi pulled his hair after that. Now Johnny left her alone.

Some of the time.

Andi knew Mother would not like to hear about the hair-pulling. It was not ladylike to pull hair. Not even a bully’s hair.

So Andi didn’t say that part out loud.

Instead, she picked up the penny and said, “I’m not scared of that mean Johnny. Not even a teensy bit.”

“Then why are you thinking about him?” Chad asked.

Andi shrugged. “I don’t know. I can’t stop.”

Chad grinned. “I know what will help you stop thinking about mean boys.”

“What?” Andi asked.

Andi's Lonely Little Foal—excerpt

“I have something important to do,” he said. “And I need your help.”

Andi didn't answer.

Sometimes Chad needed help with chores. Like cleaning out her pony's stall. Or picking weeds from Mother's flower garden. Or filling the wood box.

Andi did not want to do chores this morning. She wanted to play with Taffy.

So she just looked at Chad. She didn't even smile.

“You can help me take Taffy away from Snowflake,” Chad told her.

“It's time she grew up.”

Andi's mouth fell open. *Take Taffy away from her mama?*

“No!” she hollered, jumping up from her chair. “Taffy's too little!”

“Andrea,” Mother said, “please do not shout at the table.”

Andi slumped back into her seat. “Sorry, Mother.”

“Taffy is big and strong,” Chad said. “She doesn't need her mother's milk anymore.”

Andi scowled when she heard that.

Chad kept talking. “Taffy's been away from Snowflake before. Don't you remember? You and Riley got lost and ended up with the Indians.”

Andi's Lonely Little Foal—excerpt

“But that was just for one night,” Andi said. “And when we got home, Taffy wouldn’t leave Snowflake. She didn’t even want me to lead her around. Not for a long time.”

Andi took a deep breath. “So I don’t think she wants to try that idea again.”

“She’s ready to do this,” Chad said. He was not smiling now.

“Taffy is my very own horse,” Andi huffed. “I get to decide when she’s ready to do things.”

“No, little sister,” Chad said. “*I* decide when she’s ready.”

Andi felt all shivery inside. Poor Taffy! She would be lonely for her mother.

“Please wait a little bit longer,” Andi begged.

Chad shook his head. “I have time this weekend. It will only take a few days.”

“But—” A big lump was sticking in Andi’s throat.

Chad stood up. He dropped his napkin on the table.

“You can help me, Andi,” he said. “Or you can stay out of my way. It’s your choice.”

I don’t like that choice! Andi thought.

But she kept the talking back to herself.

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