

Circle C Beginnings #1

Andi's Pony Trouble

Chapter 1 Excerpt

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A Peek into the Past

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New Words

britches	pants
cattle	cows
coop	a place where chickens are kept
corral	a fenced-in place to keep horses
foal	a baby horse
howdy	hi
lope	to run faster than a trot but not as fast as a gallop
ranch	a farm where people raise cattle and horses
roundup	when cowboys gather up the cattle to sell them
whinny	a sound a horse makes

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Chapter 1 Andi's Big Idea

Andi Carter dropped her spoon into her empty bowl. "I have something to say."

Her family kept right on talking.

Andi looked around the breakfast table. She knew that children with good manners did not talk during meals. Polite children waited until somebody talked to them.

But the only time somebody talked to Andi at the table was when they said, "Pass the salt, Andi."

That was not talking. That was bossing.

"I have something to say," Andi said a little bit louder.

Nobody was listening.

Andi felt grumpy. Being the little sister was not fair. Her three big brothers talked at the table. They talked about cows and horses and round-ups. Andi's big sister Melinda was eleven years old. She sometimes talked at the table, but mostly she giggled.

And that's worse than talking, Andi thought.

Andi couldn't wait one minute longer. She had something to say, and she was going to say it.

Even if it wasn't polite.

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"I have something to say!" she yelled.

That got her family's attention, but not in a good way.

"Andrea!" Mother said. Her eyes opened wide, like she was surprised.

"Are you shouting at the table?"

Of course I'm shouting. How else can anybody hear me? Andi thought.

But she did not say those words out loud. That's what Mother called "talking back."

Andi did not like what happened to her when she talked back.

"I'm sorry, Mother," she said quickly, before everybody started talking again. "I have to tell you something."

"What is it, Andi?" Justin asked. "It must be important." He smiled at her. Justin always smiled at her. Even when she was acting grumpy.

Andi loved her oldest brother.

"It *is* important!" She looked around. Now nobody was talking. Everybody was waiting for Andi to talk. At last!

She smiled. "It's very, *very* important."

"Well, what is it?" Andi's brother Chad asked. He sounded like he was in a hurry—like always. He probably wanted to talk about cows and horses and ranch work some more.

Andi scowled at Chad. She wanted to stick her tongue out at him, but she didn't do it. That would not be good table manners.

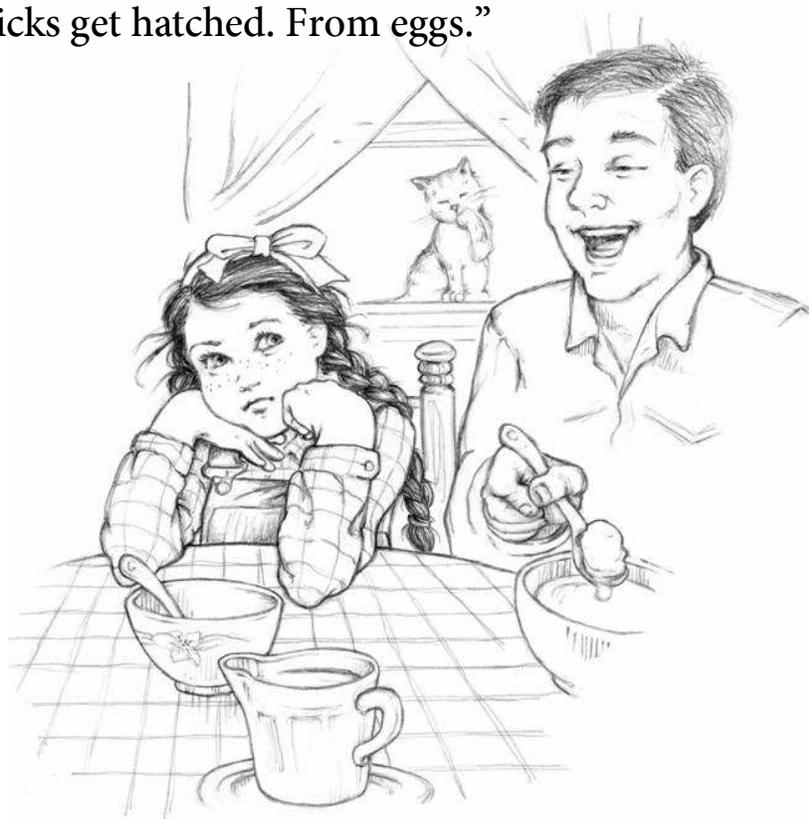
Instead, she looked at Mother. "I have decided that I'm too big to ride my pony. I want a horse of my own."

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Nobody said a word.

Then Chad laughed. "When did you hatch this silly idea?"

"It's not a silly idea," Andi said. "And I didn't hatch it. Ideas don't get hatched. Chicks get hatched. From eggs."



Andi knew this was true. There were lots of fuzzy, yellow baby chicks on the ranch. They all hatched from eggs.

"Chad," Mother said in her warning voice. It meant, *Don't tease your sister.*

Andi was glad Mother said that. Chad teased her so much that sometimes she wanted to punch him.

But he was too big and too quick. Every time she went after him, Chad grabbed her and held her upside down until she got tired of trying to hit him.

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And he always laughed.

"I'm sorry, Andi," Chad said. "What makes you think you're big enough for a horse?"

Andi gave Chad a big smile and pointed to the calendar. "I have been thinking about this ever since the calendar changed to M-A-Y 1-8-7-4."

Andi could not read, but she knew all her letters and numbers. "My birthday is this month. I'm going to be six years old. I'm much too big to keep riding Coco."

Melinda giggled. Like always.

"You're not big enough," her brother Mitch said.

He stood up and lifted Andi from her chair. "Look here. You hardly come up past my belt. You can walk under a horse's belly without bending over."

Everybody laughed. Everybody but Andi.

She crossed her arms and looked up at Mitch. "I am *too* big enough. I can show you."

Andi walked out of the dining room and into the kitchen. She did not walk ladylike. She stomped just a little bit.

"Where are you going?" Mother asked.

Andi poked her head through the doorway. "Come and see."

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