

Ottawa Valley

A place with Cows & Horses

In a small farming community in the Ottawa Valley there was an 11-year-old farm girl named Mary. Her mom and dad are dairy farmers and all the family members worked very hard. Unlike other families who worked at different jobs, a dairy farm is a 24 hour seven day a week continuous operation, day in day out. There are no holidays, no days off whatsoever.

This is because cows need to be fed, watered, milked and cleaned up each and every day. All the family, Mom, Dad, kids, and grandparents work and do chores daily. This is an absolute fact!

After school, each of the family children has specific chores to do. City and other kids would come home from school and usually spend time goofing off. This especially happens on the weekends as they are completely free with no chores or responsibilities.

However families of dairy farmers, for them the work never stops. These kids work each and every day. Each child does his own fair share but it is only after homework that the chores get done, Remember there are no exceptions.

The skill of learning to drive a tractor is always taught at an early age, as help is required with the haying, feeding and the continuous distribution of feed throughout the farm. Animals eat almost continuously.

Remember what goes in must come out and mucking the stalls and the milking areas is a continuous task. This mucking and cleaning even a very young child can learn quickly.

Mary as all 11-year-olds had a dream and hers was about horses. She absolutely loved them. Her dad and mom introduced her to horses when she was very young and Mary admired them greatly. She spent every moment she could at a neighborhood riding school. Mary fell in love with a quarter horse named Thunder who like her was 11 years old. She

was liver chestnut brown in color and 15 hands tall in size. Thunder was a very gentle mild mannered horse and was just perfect for Mary.

Mary fell in love and visited her every time she could. Horses love carrots and apples and as well being groomed and taken care of. Her owner, an older woman, Mrs. Ina Robertson who owned the riding school also had four other horses.

Ina let Mary use her tact and saddle and was very kind. She appreciated that Mary helped with the caring and grooming of Thunder. Slowly over the summer Mary learnt to ride Thunder. She actually started out riding western saddle because it is the easiest. She then switched to the English saddle which is more difficult and requires considerable more skill.

Mary really liked Thunder and was learning to ride and jump using an English saddle.

Thunder however was not always gentle, but with the love and attention that Mary bestowed, she eventually became a very mild and gentle horse. Ina was very impressed with Mary as she saw that she definitely

had a way with horses. Mary took many lessons and she became a much better rider as time went on. Thunder also learnt the commands that Mary gave her. This is quite an accomplishment for an 11-year-old girl.

Riding was not the only thing one must learn about horses. You also must learn to take care of your horse because grooming is a long learning process. Because of her school work and her chores at the dairy Mary couldn't see Thunder every day, however when she did the horse would recognize her immediately and come right over to Mary. There was no need to call her.

Over the summer Mary's mom and her dad could slowly see the love and attention both Thunder and Mary had for each other. Mary however always helped her dad first, as she was required to do more and more as she grew older. That is what is expected of children on a dairy farm. She helped with the care of the newborn calves as well as mucking & feeding. Mary had two brothers, an older one who did a man size amount of chores, and her kid brother who helped with mucking.

Because of the help from the children and grandparents, which all give so freely, the dairy farm became successful and grew considerably in size over the years.

One day her dad asked Mary if she would help him load some newborns that he wanted to sell. This was early in the morning of Dec 24th. Mary got up extra early and prepared the calves and loaded them into the trailer, all six of them. When all loaded and secure off they went to the sale barn. Mary secretly hoped her dad would stop by afterwards so she could see Thunder as she had not seen her for several days.

Mary's dad said ok they could go and see Thunder one last time before Christmas, but only after the calves were sold and the trailer cleaned out. Mary was so happy and pleased that she would see her friend once again.

Upon arrival at the ranch she ran right to Thunder by jumping over the fence. She did not see long red bow and ribbon on the gate as her eyes were only for Thunder. Her mom asked if she noticed anything different.

Mary replied yes, she could see Thunder was really happy to see her.

She was feeding her an apple when her dad said look again and then she saw the bow on the gate but still didn't realize.

She said she was happy that the owner was decorating the barn for the horses because it was Christmas time. Mary still did not connect that this was her Christmas present and didn't realize what her mom and dad had done.

Suddenly it hit her, and she realised that she had been tricked into helping take the six newborns in order that they could bring Mary to see her new Christmas present. She had no idea whatsoever that her dad had actually purchased Thunder from the Mrs. Robertson. It was a complete surprise. She knew that money (cash) was always in short supply at a farm. Mary could not believe it and cried and cried. Her parents went on to explain that this was a onetime special present.

One must remember all available cash is put back into the business for the feeding and caring and managing a dairy farm. When Mary finally

realized, she still could not believe that Thunder was to be her very own horse and they were going to bring her home to the farm. This meant that she could look after and care for Thunder each and every day. Mary knew she would still have her daily chores but she also would be with Thunder.

She could hardly believe it and was overjoyed and ran up to her parents crying giving them big hugs. So on December 24th shortly in the afternoon they brought Thunder back to their family farm.

Her own horse, Mary 11 years old, had her very own horse, Wow Wee.

The next morning was Christmas and the whole family got up early to see the presents under the tree. Mary already had hers, which was outside waiting. However when she ran down the stairs she saw a brand-new saddle, plus grooming equipment and tack. This was from both her grandparents who had chipped in together and bought it all for

Mary. Once again it was explained that this was an unusual gift and a onetime special happening.

Mary was so happy and full of glee as she had everything she could ever wish for, including the necessary grooming equipment. She would now be able to take good care of Thunder each and every day.

She sat back Christmas morning and could hardly believe what her family and grandparents had done for her. This was the very best Christmas ever for an 11-year-old. Mary knew she could now train the horse and become a better rider. She did remind her dad that she was still going to work hard each and every day at her farm chores.

Thunder is now part of the dairy farm and has a gentle way with people; however Mary still makes sure she does her daily chores first. Thunder has many visitors and everyone admits that this is one fine horse.

However, Thunder has also had some unwanted visitors like a bear and also a few young newborn calves.

Mary hopes to become a better rider and over the next couple years hopes to enter and maybe win a contest. Her family is very proud and have every confidence that she will win.

This is what cows & horses are all about in the Ottawa valley.

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