

A Horse for Beth

Beth loved horses but had never been riding on one. Sometimes she dreamed that she was riding a white horse that raced along with its tail flying in the wind. Now her dream was coming true because she was going riding with her brothers on Saturday.

Before they left the house for the horse ride, Beth's three brothers talked to her. "Now listen, Beth," said her oldest brother Jimmy. "You want to ride with us, don't you?"

"Sure," said Beth.

"Then don't tell the man at the horse ride that you've never ridden a horse before," said Jimmy.

"But why?" asked Beth.

"If you do, he'll give you a pokey old horse. You don't want to ride a pokey old horse, do you? Then we'd all have to go slowly."

Beth remembered her dream of riding on a horse with its tail flying in the wind. She decided her brothers were right. She didn't want to ride a pokey old horse. "Okay," she said. "I won't tell him this is my first ride."

When they got to the stables, a tall cowboy walked over to them. He was wearing a cowboy hat and cowboy boots. "Howdy folks," he said. "What can I do for you?"

Jimmy told him they wanted to ride, and the cowboy nodded. When he saw Beth, he said, "Tell me, little lady, have you ever ridden a horse before?"

Beth saw her brothers nodding their heads wanting her to say, "Yes." She looked at the cowboy and gulped but didn't say anything. Her brothers spoke up and said, "Oh yeah, she's a great rider."

The cowboy looked Beth over. Then he looked at her brothers. "Well, then," he said to her, "since you're such a good rider, I'll let you ride the best horse we have." Beth's face lit up. The cowboy continued, "Yep, he's so wild we call him Killer." Beth and her brothers' smiles disappeared. "Oh, he's real strong all right, and he likes to run real fast." Beth's brothers started to look very worried. "Oh yeah," he said, "I'm sure you'll like him. I'll just go and get him."

Beth's brothers couldn't believe they had put their sister in such danger. Beth couldn't ride a wild horse like Killer.

When the cowboy returned, he was leading in a small brown horse. It looked very gentle and had a sweet face. The cowboy smiled at Beth and said, "Young lady, is this the kind of horse you wanted to ride?"

Beth smiled and nodded her head yes. This horse was perfect. Beth's brothers smiled

too. They were glad the cowboy knew the kind of horse their sister really needed.

They all got on their horses and headed out for a ride. Jimmy took the lead. John and Jack followed behind him. Beth was last, trailing behind on her sweet little horse. This was turning out to be the ride of her dreams.

1. What did Beth sometimes dream about?

- A. Riding horses with her brothers.
- B. Watching horses race.
- C. Riding a white horse.

2. What did the man at the horse ride look like?

- A. He was big and had a mean look on his face.
- B. He was tall and wore cowboy clothes.
- C. He was dirty from working with the horses.

3. What kind of horse did the cowboy bring out for Beth?

- A. A large black horse named Killer.
- B. A small brown pony that liked to run fast.
- C. A small brown horse with a gentle face.

4. What did Beth's oldest brother tell her not to say to the man at the horse ride?

- A. That she had never ridden a horse before.
- B. That she wanted to ride a really fast horse.
- C. That she wanted a horse that walked slowly.

5. What would be a problem if Beth got a pokey old horse?

- A. The other horses would be unhappy with Beth's horse.
- B. She would have to be at the end of the line of horses.
- C. Her brothers' horses would have to slow down for her horse.

- 6. What did the brothers do when Beth didn't answer the cowboy's question about riding a horse?**
- A. They told Beth to answer the cowboy and say, "Yes."
 - B. They answered for her and said she was a great rider.
 - C. They told the cowboy that she could ride but not very well.
- 7. What kind of horse did the cowboy say he would get for Beth?**
- A. A horse that was strong, wild, and fast.
 - B. A horse that all the brothers would like.
 - C. A horse that would be just perfect for Beth.
- 8. What did the brothers do when the cowboy asked Beth if she had ridden before?**
- A. They nodded their heads to get Beth to say "Yes."
 - B. They told Beth to tell the truth about not ever riding.
 - C. They just looked at the cowboy and didn't know what to say.
- 9. How did the brothers feel after the cowboy told about the kind of horse that he would get for Beth?**
- A. They were upset because one of them didn't get to ride Killer.
 - B. They began to feel sorry because they knew they had put Beth in danger.
 - C. They thought a faster horse for Beth would make the horse ride more fun.
- 10. Why did Beth's brothers smile when the cowboy brought out her horse?**
- A. They were glad the cowboy knew the right horse to get for Beth.
 - B. The horse was small and looked more like a toy than a real horse.
 - C. They knew the cowboy had played a trick on them to scare them.
- 11. What happened right after the cowboy said that Beth's horse was called Killer?**
- A. The cowboy told Beth that she would really like Killer.
 - B. Beth and her brothers started to look a little worried.
 - C. The smiles on the faces of Beth and her brothers went away.

12. What did the cowboy know about Beth riding horses?

- A. Beth needed to go on a pony ride before going on a horse ride.
- B. She had never ridden before and needed a gentle horse.
- C. Beth would need a horse that was strong and fast for the ride.