



Lady in White



Chapter Four – by Kay and Russ Hively

In Judy's back yard, Sandy saw her friend sitting on a pony. Sandy ran up to the fence and yelled with excitement. Wearing a big smile on her face, Judy rode the pony over to the fence. She told Sandy that her father had gotten a new job at the coal mine. He had been hired to take care of the mine ponies. She said her father would let them ride the ponies tonight because they would not be working in the mine tomorrow.

Sandy knew about the ponies. They were used to pull coal cars in and out of the mines. Small ponies were used because the ceiling in the coal seam was not tall enough for horses or mules. Sandy had heard that some mines had to use dogs to pull coal cars because even the ponies were too tall. Judy's father came out of a shed and helped Sandy up on one of the ponies. The pony was black with a white blotch on its face and it had huge soft brown eyes.

Sandy was so excited. She had ridden a horse with other people, but she had never ridden a horse alone. This would be different, and this pony had no saddle.

Judy's father gave Sandy some lessons on how to ride the pony. Then she practiced turning around and stopping by using just the reins and her voice. The pony was very calm. It slowly wandered around the pen. The pen was on a hillside behind Judy's house. When the pony started up the hill, Sandy started sliding down the back of the pony. Judy laughed when she saw Sandy having trouble. Sandy pulled hard on the reins and the little pony stopped. Sandy adjusted herself and sat more firmly on the pony's back. If she paid attention, Sandy told herself, she could just rock back and forth to keep herself straight. Ready to try again, Sandy nudged the pony with her foot. This time she was ready when they started up the hill and everything went great.

As Sandy got used to the pony, she was able to look around. Things looked different from the back of the pony. Trees grew right next to the fence in some places. As she rode alongside the fence, Sandy could touch the leafy branches.

The pony seemed to enjoy having Sandy on his back. He trotted along, giving her a great ride. After a few minutes the two girls started riding together. As they talked and galloped around the corral, Sandy focused on guiding her pony.

When the two girls rode close to each other they reached out and tried to ride steady enough to touch hands.

Sandy was glad that Judy's father was in charge of the ponies. Now she could really learn to ride just like the cowboys she had read about.

Things to Think About and Do

- Sandy did not slide down the back of the pony the second time. What did she do differently the second time to stay in place?
- Sandy could touch the tree branches from the back of the pony. Find out what kinds of trees grow in eastern Kentucky. Make a list of trees that grow there. Put the list in alphabetical order.
- Find a story in the newspaper about an activity you would like to learn to do. Investigate how you might learn to do this.



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Next Week: Chapter Five – Visitor in church.