

Guess what? Now, that sounds like a ten year old, doesn't it? Or, maybe more like a four year old? It may be a sign of an impending second childhood in my case, and when you read what the "what" is, you may be even more inclined to doubt my mental state.

I have a new pony. Many people have told me that they think this is a strange acquisition for a person my age, and they cite valid reasons. I have heard, "What are you going to do with that?" And, "the thought of getting on a horse makes me ache all over." I have even heard, "What's WRONG with you?" Others have just rolled their eyes.

I would say that "we" have a new pony. Our possessions generally belong to both of us, and the pony does, too, but it is I who really wanted one, and I am the one who will ride it.

Jewel was the first horse whose back I sat on, and that was when I was perhaps five or six years old. She was a light work horse, and I only rode her when my father led her.

Runo and I had Morgan horses for many years, and we did a lot of riding in the national forest, the wooded area we call the "choppings" or "slashings." And now, of course, we have the team of Norwegian fjord horses, Alvik and Bjorgy. I have ridden both of them, but though they are classified as "draft ponies," they are not so very small, and I am not as flexible as I once was. They are wide, and my legs are not long! The stirrups on the saddle must be so far from the ground that I need a hay bale to boost myself up.

The new pony is a Haflinger. She is a small example of that draft pony breed, about 13.1 hands tall. She is not particularly beautiful, and I have a feeling that she is not terribly energetic under saddle either, so she is perfect for a person who has not ridden much for several years. I am hoping that as we get used to each other, she will enjoy rambling through the fields and meadows with me.

Daisy just came to us yesterday. She is nine years old, a light sorrel in color with an oddly shaped white blaze, and her mane and tail are blond. She is very calm, and she has not seemed intimidated by a new home. Alvik and Bjorgy do not impress her all that much, either. Bjorgy's stall is next to hers, and he reaches his nose out to get

acquainted. She nips him and lays her ears back. The notes her former owner sent along with her indicate that she wants to be the boss.

I rode her for the first time this morning. We were just getting to know one another, so I rode her in the round pen. She has no intention of running away, or even of just plain running. I am thinking that her name might change from Daisy to Lazy.

But, I can get up on her back without resorting to a boost of any kind. And, she seems tolerant. So, we will see what kind of relationship will evolve between us. I will duly report further developments.