

## **Circle C Beginnings #1**

# **Andi's Scary School Days**

## **Chapter 1 Excerpt**

### **Contents**

#### *New Words*

1. Hiding in the Hay
2. China Doll or Tomboy?
3. Miss Hall
4. Too Many Rules!
5. Tree Trouble
6. Tardy Means Late
7. Runaway Lizard
8. Runaway Pupil
9. Horse Thief
10. Back to School

#### *A Peek into the Past*

## **Andi's Scary School Days—excerpt**

### **New Words**

|               |   |
|---------------|---|
| blackboard    | a large, smooth, dark surface for writing on with chalk                 |
| china doll    | a fancy doll made from a glass-like material called porcelain           |
| livery stable | a place in town where you can rent horses and buggies                   |
| ma'am         | a polite way to talk to a lady  |
| pinafore      | a ruffled apron worn over a dress                                       |
| pupil         | a student in school   |
| scaredy cat   | someone who is afraid   |
| slate         | a small blackboard each pupil uses to write their lessons with<br>chalk |
| tardy         | late  |
| tomboy        | a girl who likes to dress and play like a boy                           |

## **Andi's Scary School Days—excerpt**

### **Chapter 1** **Hiding in the Hay**

Andi Carter peeked over the half-door of her horse's stall.

“Nobody's coming,” she whispered. “This is a good hiding place. Maybe I'm safe.”

Andi's baby horse, Taffy, swished her tail. She nibbled Andi's hair. Then she stamped her hoof and whinnied.

*Let's go play!* Taffy seemed to be saying.

“Shhh!” Andi said. “You have to be quiet, so nobody finds me.”

Taffy's mama, Snowflake, turned her large, white head and looked at Andi.

“You have to be quiet too,” Andi said. “I can't come out until the buggy drives away.”

Just then Andi heard the barn door creak open. She heard footsteps coming closer.

*Uh-oh!*

Andi ducked behind Snowflake. She wiggled down in the soft, golden straw and squeezed her eyes shut. She tried not to breathe . . . or sneeze.

## **Andi's Scary School Days—excerpt**

“Hey, Andi!”

The loud voice made Andi jump. Her eyes popped open.

Her friend Riley was poking his head over the stall door.

“What are you doing in here?” he asked. “Your brother is looking all over for you.”

Andi frowned. Nosy ol’ Riley!

*Maybe this is not a good hiding place, after all,* she thought.

“Shhh!” Andi told Riley in a loud whisper. “I’m hiding. I can’t let Justin find me.”

“Too late,” Andi’s big brother Justin said. He came up behind Riley and opened the stall door. “I found you. It’s time to go.” He smiled.

Andi didn’t move. Shivers went up and down her neck. Her stomach felt fluttery, like a hundred butterflies were flying around in there.

It was not a good feeling.

“You and Melinda can go,” Andi said. “I’m staying home with Riley and Taffy.”

“Oh, no, you’re not,” Justin said.

He walked right over to Andi’s hiding place and picked her up.

“Put me down!” Andi hollered. She squirmed to get free.

But her big brother was too strong.

## **Andi's Scary School Days—excerpt**

“Today is your first day of school,” Justin said. He walked out of the barn and into the bright sunshine. “I promised Mother I would get you there in one piece.”

“I *can't* go to school,” Andi said. “I have to train Taffy. I have to take care of Coco. I have to—”

“All little girls and boys must go to school,” Justin said. He kept walking.

“Riley doesn't have to go to school,” Andi said.

She twisted around and saw Riley running to the cookhouse. “He gets to help his Uncle Sid with ranch work.”

“Only until he goes home,” Justin said. “Then he'll have to go back to school.”

Justin was right about that. Riley was just staying on the ranch until his mother got well.

Justin carried Andi to the buggy. He set her down next to Melinda, Andi's big sister.

Eleven-year-old Melinda looked fresh and pretty—like always. A big, blue bow tied back her hair. She held her school books and a tin lunch pail in her lap. She was smiling.

But Melinda's smile didn't last long.

## Andi's Scary School Days—excerpt

She saw Andi and gasped. “What happened to *you*? You’re all rumped. Your hair is full of hay. You can’t go to school looking like that.”

“I can’t?” Andi said. Then she grinned. “Good. I’ll stay home.”

Quick as a wink, Andi jumped out of the buggy.

But Justin was quicker. He grabbed her arm.

“Not so fast, young lady,” he said. “Get back in the buggy.”

Andi pouted. But she did what her brother told her.

Justin climbed into the

buggy and picked up the reins. “Giddy up, Pal,” he said.

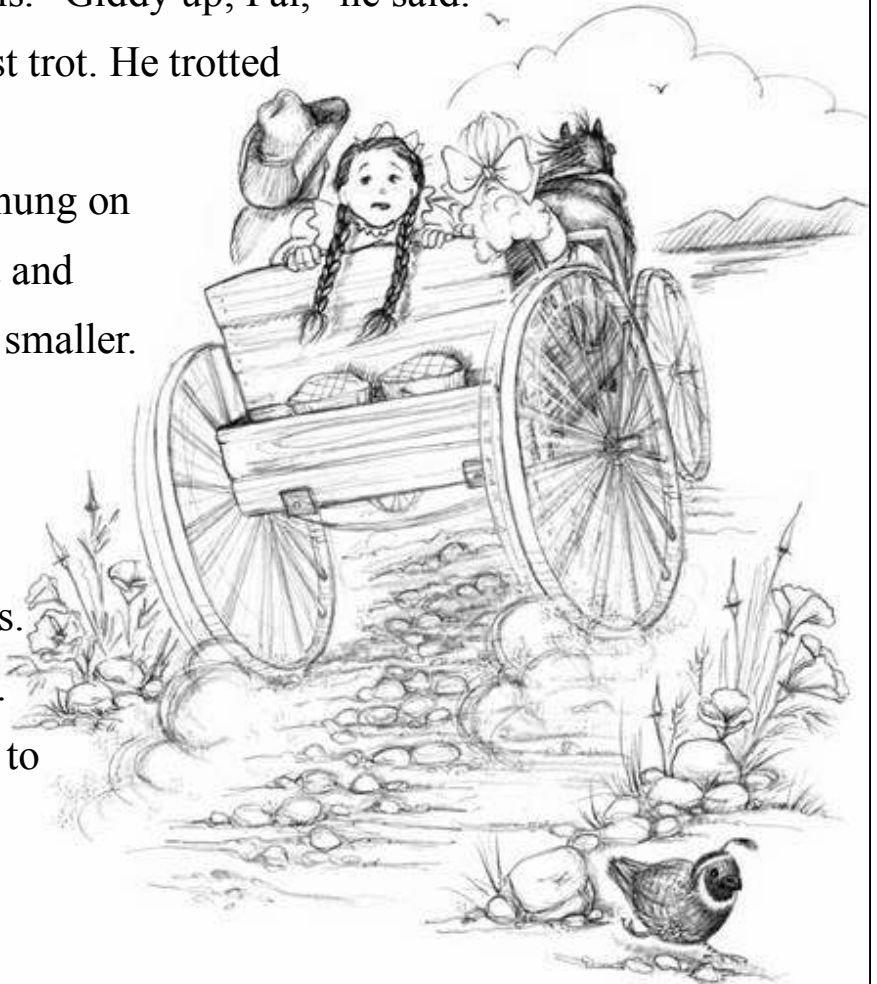
The horse took off at a fast trot. He trotted away from the ranch.

Andi turned around. She hung on to the back of the buggy seat and watched the ranch house get smaller.

She saw Riley carrying firewood for Cook.

She saw her two big brothers saddling their horses.

“No fair!” Andi groused. “Chad and Mitch don’t have to go to school.”



## **Andi's Scary School Days—excerpt**

Just then Melinda pulled Andi around.

“Can’t you stay clean for one hour?” she scolded. “You look like a tomboy for the first day of school.”

Melinda began to pick the hay out of Andi’s hair.

“Stop that!” Andi yanked her braids away.

Justin caught Andi’s hand. “There’s nothing to be afraid of,” he said softly.

“I’m not afraid!” Andi hollered.

But that wasn’t exactly true.

Andi *was* afraid. She did not want to leave the ranch. She did not want to be gone all day in that new, *scary* town called Fresno.

So many strangers! So many buildings! Streets full of horses and wagons.

Worst of all, there would be a school full of strange children. They would all stare at Andi—the youngest pupil.

Another chill went down Andi’s neck.

She felt sick inside.

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