

Horse in Fence

This morning, as I went down to feed the cat and the horse, I noticed that Sienna, the horse, was not in her usual "spot". She likes to stand up high on the property so that she can see any advancing predators. I saw that she was about halfway from there to the barn, so I hurried into her "stall" (just a fenced area) to dump her feeder of any junk she won't eat that was in the hay before putting in fresh hay. I don't like to be in there when Sienna, the 900 pound bouncing ball, comes bounding in with high excitement. I wish I could get that excited about breakfast.

After dumping the feeder, I went into the barn to feed the cat and toss Sienna's feed into the feed bin. Then I went back out and was shocked that Sienna was not there yet since she hadn't been too far from the barn.

If my animals are one second late, I default to worry and panic.

I ran up the hill, and there was Sienna, not far from the barn, standing next to the fence with her ears and eyes intensely pointed at me. Something was clearly wrong.

As I looked more closely, I saw that she was not standing near the fence, she was standing IN the fence!!

Sienna has a nose for loose wire. I have seen her walk right through a sagging wire fence without slowing down.

It was apparent that she had decided to take a shortcut to the barn by going through the divider fence, which had a loose upper barbless wire. Unfortunately the remaining three lower wires were tight and barbed.

It must have been a surprise to her once she got one leg through the fence to come up against something so prickly. The good thing was that she wasn't spouting blood at all and only had a small scratch on her leg. I assessed that much from afar and turned back to the barn to get her halter.

Once I got to Sienna I put her halter on her and tried to figure out how to get her unstuck.

Lots of horses in this predicament would panic and injure themselves, because horses are innately claustrophobic, and if they feel caught, they will take measures (like panic) to get unstuck, which can cause a lot of damage to them and whatever has them confined.

Sienna, however, only uttered a tiny bit of fear-generated snortiness, because I am sure she didn't know what I was going to do and she wanted me to do the right thing and not drag her through the barbed wire fence.

My wheels were really turning. I didn't have tools with me to cut wire and had no gloves. Should I run back to the barn to get that stuff? and so forth.

But I didn't run back to the barn. I looked Sienna and the fence over. One wire was over her back. She had ducked under it, thinking she could slip through the fence, under one wire and over three just as dainty as could be. That wire was loose from its fastener on the fence post. I pushed the three bottom wires down below her knee. Then the problem was to get her to pick up her foot so I could shove her leg back through the fence to join her other three legs.

I only have two hands, so it was a real trick to convince her to pick that foot up high enough while I held down the stiff barbed wire. We have been working, at other times, on fancy ways to pick up her feet without me touching her. She remembered that training and was compliant with my commands. I grasped her raised leg and got it back through the fence. Then she had to lower her head and neck for me while I pulled the top wire off her back, and she backed out of her entanglement with the fence.

As we worked together, she was totally quiet and cooperative. She knew I would help her, so she didn't want to do anything to kabosh that idea! I pushed her away from the fence and took off her halter. She just stood there, not sure she was free. I gave her a little shove and she took a few steps, feeling out her freedom and then started walking down the fenceline to the open gate to the barn,

I felt an immense sense of joy at how cooperative Sienna had been. She was stupid to get into the fence but very smart to not get hurt once she realized she was trapped. I think she is an adventurous and very smart horse and the feeling of connection with her was just wonderful. It made my day.