

## 2 Kiss and Tell or Not Tell

By L.L.Fenneman

One hot Sept. afternoon in 1983, I went to a ranch in the northeast part of the valley, out in the hills on the edge of the Angeles Natl. forest. to visit my friend Denise and see her 7 Arabian horses...to take pictures and paint a group portrait for her dining room. We are having a nice time feeding them carrots and petting their noses and she tells me stories about each one.

A cute cowboy in tight, perfectly faded jeans and a cute ass drives up in his truck to chat in a slow Texas drawl. After a while he gets around to the object of his visit..."You gals wanna go see my new colt? He's just up the road a piece. Pile on in my truck, there's plenty of room."

He apparently knows Denise and knows she is a sucker for Arabian horses, but what else does he have in mind?

We all three get in the bench type front seat of the truck with the gear shift on the floor, right in front of me...all squished in the middle...and take off down a dusty bumpy dirt road, on up the canyon to another ranch where the prize colt resides. The cowboy tells funny stories in a slow Texas drawl, making me a little homesick ...and reminding me of when I thought I was going to marry a cowboy...but I never met one that could actually carry on a conversation.

We arrive at the ranch, pull up in front of a new red barn. The brightness of the sunshine makes the inside appear dark and mysterious and it smells like hay and horses. No one else is around and the quiet is luxurious.

"He's way on down to the end. You gals take a look around while I go get me a saddle and some stuff...be raaaight back."

OK. But, I whisper to Denise: "Is this OK? Where are we?"

"Oh, I'm sure it's fine."

But, I know from experience that Denise is a little ...uh, whimsical...and doesn't always have good sense...she has 7 horses and can only **barely** ride one...so I'm not convinced of her superior judgment.

But, here we are...so, we look at the horses in the darkened barn stalls and pat their velvety noses.

Pretty soon the cute cowboy comes back carrying a big, old western saddle and is leading a skittery little chestnut Arabian horse with 3 white socks and a perfect blaze down his nose. I can see the whites of his eyes as he dances around...firey and spirited ... a little out of control.

The cowboy doesn't pay any never-mind to the horses' frightened antics, but flashes a big toothy smile and with great expertise maneuvers the animal around so we can see him move.

My heart is curiously racing and I can't quite catch my breath...as he swings the saddle in a graceful arc over the little horses back.

Denise thinks the horse is very **cute** and has lots of firey spirit. A very “typey Arabian dished face. I don’t know an Arab from a Quarter horse or any other kind of horse. But I am enchanted by the scene unfolding before me.

The cowboy is talking to Denise like she might be a potential purchaser of this unmanageable creature. He smiles that flashy smile showing his pearly whites, and thankfully doesn’t spit tobacco juice on the ground. “So, ya’ll wanna ride him?”

I’m surprised at the **offer**, I thought the cowboy was going to demonstrate **his** skills for **us**, but I am more surprised at my “**Yess**, I do”, even though I’m wearing a dress and don’t know how to ride.

I push Denise aside and stand at the colts head, look into his velvet brown eyes and kiss him on his soft velvet nose.

“Come on, I’ll give you a leg up.” And he grabs me around the waist and situates me for *mounting* the horse. I’m not dressed appropriately for the occasion, but that only adds to the romanticism of the moment.

My feet don’t quite reach the stirrups, but the overall sensation is **rapture**. I have a lump in my throat the size of a frog. I’m afraid I’m going to cry. The little horse takes off and we wander around a huge sandy arena. We canter and trot, whatever the horse wants to do. The cowboy and Denise are perched on the fence..watching. The sun is setting and creating a very romantic rosy picture on that fateful September afternoon.

That’s it! I’m in love! And then I do start to cry.

What on earth am I going to do? How do I tell my nice husband I’ve fallen in love? He’s going to be furious, but I have to do this. I’m beyond redempson. I’m beyond logic or reason, it’s more of a bodily function.

**I have** to do this. It was fated. Pre ordained. I’m powerless to resist and the attraction is obvious.

Somehow I got home, agog with my thoughts, confused and obsessed. My poor unsuspecting husband noticed...something was up and innocently inquired: “**So** how was your day?”

“**Arrrrrrrrrg**...” I couldn’t get words to form on my tongue and ran out the back door.

Oh, my god, what am I going to say? How am I supposed to do this? I can’t lie. I get all jittery and red...and give it all away. Don’t tell...I tell my Self.

“I kissed a little horse on the nose today and now I have to buy him.”

My husband replied “**Arrrrrrrrrrrg**...Blankety Blank Blank”... and commensed ranting and raving about logic and reason, finances, time, careers, emotional stability and my apparent neurotic/suicidal behavior.

I have no defense. It’s just something that I have to do...and did do...and, 16 years later, I still have the same horse and the same husband, and my whole life was changed. It was a fateful kiss with many consequences.