

The Cowboy's Wish



A Short Story by
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Joe McGuire, a tall and muscular cowboy who sat upon his trusted stallion, wore nothing but a pair of denim pants, boots, and a Stetson hat. He took the bandana out of his pocket and wiped the sweat off his brow. It was a hot day. A day so hot, in fact, that one could fry an egg in a skillet just by setting it out on the porch. But in spite of all the sweltering days, he loved the scenery. The flat grassy landscape spanned for miles. And miles...and miles. Very little existed near the McGuire Ranch. The cattle all grazed peacefully in the pasture. The farmhands all ate in the chow hall, except for one. Lenny had been sick with the fever again and rested in the bunkhouse. The horses neighed in the nearby barn. A scattering of sheep remained content in their own fenced area. The double-story house was small but adequate for a family. And that is what he wanted. Once a man settled into his own, what he really needed was a wife to make his house a home and bear him a couple of youngsters.

Joe shook his head. Where, oh where, would he find such a woman?

Off in the distance came the most beautiful sound in the world. He turned his horse so he could see what was coming up from the south. Something in the most magnificent shade of red raced toward him. He frowned. Just what was this odd contraption? And who was manning it?

The blond-haired woman adjusted her sunglasses as the handsome cowboy came into view. Oh goodie! The Wish Fulfillment Agency sent her to a good one! She truly feared she'd end up with a lanky computer geek whose idea of fun was working out math calculations, like the last guy she dated who spent all night telling her how the "X" in Algebra came to be. She rolled her eyes. Like she cared! As she neared tall, dark, and gorgeous, she slowed her convertible and turned off the radio. When she stopped, she checked her long wavy blond hair. Hairspray could work wonders on keeping even the fiercest of winds from messing hair up. That Super Hold Company knew what they were doing.

Putting the bonnet on her head, she stepped out of the car and slammed the door shut. "Hi there! I'm your wife!"

He looked at her as if she were crazy. "My what?"

"You wished for a wife, so here I am." She adjusted her pantaloons. "It's going to take time to get used to these clothes though. And don't even think I'm ever going to put on a corset." She put her long skirt down and studied the ranch. "Not bad."

"What is that?" He motioned to the red car.

"This? It's a Mustang!"

"It's not a horse."

“Honey, this is as close to a horse as I’ll ever ride, okay? I might have signed up for this gig, but I never promised to rough it. So where’s home?”

“Uh...over there.”

She saw the little house. Though it was small, she figured it would suit her just fine. “Cool. So where do I park?”

“Park?”

“This Mustang. It’s not going in the barn. It’s expensive and needs to be protected.”

He stared at it, seeming to be fascinated with it.

“Why don’t you leave that horse here and give this one a spin?”

He blinked. “You’ll let me ride it?”

“I’ll let you ride this now and me later.” She winked at him.

He furrowed his eyebrows as if he had no idea what she was talking about.

She set her hands on her hips and gave him a good look. “I hope you know more than you let on. I really don’t want to have to explain it like I did with Harvey.”

“Harvey? Who’s Harvey?”

“My last husband. Except he was a total dud. He had this wild dream of living in 1000 AD and joining Leif Ericson on one of his explorations. But he couldn’t swim so he drowned during a boat mishap. He never did have all his lights on, if you know what I mean.” She tapped her head. “So anyway, I went back to the agency and asked that whatever they do, they never send me to another man who has a time travel wish.” She glanced his way and raised an eyebrow. “You aren’t looking to live anywhere else, are you?”

“No. I like it here.”

“Good. Then I think we’ll manage quite well.”

She took a moment to appreciate his rock hard abs. She hoped he was as good in bed as he looked. If so, she was in for a treat! She requested cowboys because all the books in her time assured her that they were incredible lovers, but the agency could have sent her anywhere—as it was stated in the fine print on the contract she signed.

Thank goodness they came through! But just to be sure... “Hey, you are aware of how you’ll get those kids you wished for, right?”

A broad smile crossed his face. “That’s the fun part.”

Great! All lights were green. “Let’s get to the house then!”

“You get to tell me all about your feelings. I’ll tell you mine. We’ll talk about our pasts, our dreams, and our hopes for the future.”

She paused with her hand on the door handle. “What?”

“Then there’s the cuddling. I’ve never cuddled before.”

“Honey, with a body like yours, you have to do more than cuddling and talking.” She bit her lower lip. “You are familiar with the other stuff?” *The more interesting stuff?*

“The actual act? Sure. But I don’t want to be used. I want to be loved. Not lusted after.”

“Then why are you wearing those clothes?”

He looked down at his outfit. “What’s wrong with what I got on?”

“Well, that’s just it. You are barely wearing anything, and those jeans are way too tight. How can you wear such skimpy clothes and expect me not to think about sex?”

He glanced at his bare chest and jeans and then at her. “You’ll cook and do laundry, right?”

“Sure. As soon as I order the electric stove, oven, washer and dryer. I refuse to rough it. I signed up to be a wife and mother, and even if I’m back in the year 18-whatever, I

cannot bear to be without some things.” She took the cell phone out of her purse and dialed the agency number.

Joe watched her, fascinated with the things she owned. A red Mustang, something to speak into, things that shaded her eyes... He heard rumors that a man could make a wish and have it come true. He didn’t realize that a wife would come to him with such fancy gadgets, but he supposed those gadgets were going to be as fascinating as checking her out. Well...almost as fascinating. She was a looker. He didn’t know how he lucked out, but he decided not to question his good fortune. Wherever she came from, it didn’t matter. The point was she was here.

After she talked into that strange object she held up to her ear, she closed it shut and winked at him. “We’re good to go. They’ll bring the stuff through the portal within a day. In the meantime, we should go to the house and get better acquainted.”

“Alright.”

She got into the Mustang and gave him the most charming smile he’d ever seen. “You know, this place really is quaint. I think I’ll enjoy it here. And you seem like the good and decent type. It might be fun to learn more about who you are.”

At the promise of talking, he felt his body heat rise as the male part of him thickened. Perhaps there was something he should have explained to her. After all that cuddling and talking, men on Atrius could be active in bed with a woman for three hours straight -- up to a couple times a day if they wished. But they could only perform at their best when well loved.

Oh well. He had no doubt that she’d find out soon enough.