

Judy, the bull thistle patch...”*and a brave young cowboy*”!

Growing up on a 70 acre farm in Fulton County, Ohio, there was never a lot of money, but plenty of hard work and good times. As far back as I can remember I always wanted to own a horse...*what small boy doesn't*, but the money just wasn't there, so I quickly learned to ride the cows! Now, most of the cows didn't really care for a twelve year old boy climbing on their back and yelling; “Hi Yo Silver”, but they all decided they could tolerate my youthful fantasies. Well, all except for Judy. Judy was different from the rest of the milk cows. Judy didn't mind a bit letting you know she was different, and she was more than willing to show a young and dumb farm boy know who was really in charge.

Judy wasn't about to put up with a kid trying to play cowboys and Indians astride her back. I would no more than get settled in, and she would promptly buck me right back off. Strangely enough, she always seemed to find a fresh cow pie, and that is usually where I would land. Like a typical old west cowpoke, I was up to the challenge, and persistent in my belief that some day I would ride off into the sunset on Judy's back. It was a warm summer morning on the day I decided that I would conquer this rugged milk cow and I would be riding her by sundown. I remember being appropriately dressed for this momentous occasion. Yep! No shoes or socks, no shirt, I was clad only with my underwear and shorts. No sense in dirtying up to many articles of clothing in the unlikely event of Judy dumping me in another pile of cow poop for probably about the hundredth time. What could possibly go wrong? I knew this time I would ride her! Clearly a case of who was the smartest... me or a dumb animal!

I had forgotten there was a large Bull Thistle patch about thirty feet away in the pasture...but Judy hadn't. I swear she had this all planned out ahead of time. Somehow she knew these bull thistles were far taller than I was and somehow she knew I would be pretty miserable should I find myself in the midst of all those sharp pricklers! I think by now you know the rest of the story, but I shall relate it nonetheless.

I climbed on her back and barely settled in; Judy took off running as fast as a milk cow can run. I was awash in glory at the fact that finally I was riding this stubborn bovine steed with no sign of her bucking. My skinny chest swelled proudly with the realization that finally I had won. I had met my nemesis and

conquered her...and then...I saw the bull thistles...dead ahead, a much larger patch than I had realized... and too late to jump off. No problem I thought..."*I am a cowboy. I shall ride this wild beast through to the other side*". As we entered this suddenly huge thistle patch, I knew I was in serious trouble as the thistles seemingly reached out and relentlessly jabbed me in every place imaginable... *and a few other spots!* Judy wasted little time with me because as soon as she reached the center of the thistle patch, she humped her back, made an unexpected move, and off I flew; pretty much dead center. No cow pies, just a body filled with painful thorns! Gone was the brave and courageous cowboy finding adventure in the Wild West. A common milk cow had just turned a fearless cowpoke into a twelve year old pincushion!

With tears running down my eyes and not knowing if they were from the pricklers as I gingerly fought my way out of the thistle patch, or just my broken pride, I finally got out of the painful mess I had found myself in. As I slowly limped out of the pasture, picking out pricklers, I noticed that ole Judy was standing to one side contentedly grazing and chewing her cud...I don't know that cows can smirk, but she sure did have a satisfied look on her face and I never, ever tried to ride Judy the cow again.

Yes, those were the good ole days!

Written by Lyn Liechty, Thursday, March 17, 2011

This and other stories can be found at Lyn's website www.arealauktion.com