

Beautiful People Reprising

Slow Bucking

DREA RILEY

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Dréa Riley

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To every one of you who has waited for me and
my prose...who has cheered me on. This one is
for you.

To me—you are more than the sum of the part
of you. I love you.

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CAVEAT

This work of erotica contains adult language and sexually explicit scenes, which are smoking hot. This book is intended only for adults, as it is defined by the laws of the country in which the purchase is made. Keep this book out of the hands of under-aged readers.

Chapter One

Regina hit rewind on the remote and watched the scene play again. The bull danced, leapt, and kicked in the air with a single purpose. Freedom. The thousand-pound mammoth was so far from the calf that she'd bottle fed and brushed daily. He was poetry in motion. A testament to the skill of a creator. The animal's muscles rippled and bulged like the waves of the ocean. There was nothing more beautiful than that large animal. Except maybe the rider on his back. As much as Little Horns Big Noise wanted to divest himself of the burden on his back, that burden was determined to hang on. For at least eight whole seconds.

If the animal himself was poetry, then Tyce Westbrook was a haunting sonata. He didn't cling to the beast like some riders did, but rather he seemed to become part of the animal—an extension of the beast. Whereas Little Horns Big Noise was raging and hard, Tyce seemed melodic and flowing.

Whenever Regina watched these events, she thought the riders looked like rag dolls being flung about, clinging for dear life, But Tyce...floated. His

body moved as if he was feather light despite his nearly seven-foot frame, tall for a bull rider. There was none of the frantic jerkiness of other riders. Tyce should have been named Tamer. No matter what animal he drew, he rode them out, bringing them to submission under his powerful thighs. Holding them in compliance under his rear. A rear that, as he casually strolled away from the ring, Regina wanted to personally soothe and massage.

After watching the video for the tenth time, Regina turned off the TV and tossed the remote on the coffee table in front of her. She'd been twenty-seven the last time Tyce Westbrook and Little Horns Big Noise had been on the rodeo circuit. The ride had lasted longer than eight seconds, and Tyce had dismounted from the bull as if sticking a perfect gymnastics landing. He'd walked to the edge of the arena before turning back to the dusty ring and tipping his hat to his frienemy. He'd won a huge purse that night, and, being the owner of the bull, so had Regina.

Three years later, she still couldn't get him out her mind. Mostly because he wouldn't stop hounding her. Well, his lawyers wouldn't. They wanted Little Horn Big Noise...well, they wanted his progeny. She'd been reluctant to tell the world her secret, but she

supposed there couldn't be any more embarrassment in telling the truth than there was in her ducking and dodging them as if she were a spy on a secret mission.

Only she wasn't willing to deal with any lawyers. Tyce wanted her bull...well, his sperm. Regina wanted Tyce...well...his sperm. In her mind, it was an even trade. Plus Tyce would have the pleasure of gracing her bed for a period of time. A pleasure that males from puberty to dead wished they could have.

Regina had known from an early age that she was hot. Her daddy'd had a mild coronary when she'd bounded out the front door at age twelve with boobs ...and not just boobs but big, bouncing boobs.

Reginald Cloudwalker had fired every male on the ranch and promptly brought in a small army of ex-military compadres to guard his baby girl. Even three years after her father's passing, they were still guarding her.

Or cock blocking, as she and her cousin Leticia liked to call it. Regina knew if she was ever going to experience the carnal desires that burned deep within her, she had to bring in a man her father would have respected. Tyce Westbrook was such a man. Her father had loved to watch the young cowboy ride. The old man was thrilled each time Tyce drew his bulls and

would make every Pro Rodeo event in hopes that Tyce would be paired with one of his bulls.

“That’s a man who respects the animals, Gigi. That is a man who honors nature. Who honors man and beast. Earth and Heaven. That’s the kind of man I want for my baby girl.” Regina had been seventeen when her dad had muttered those words. It wasn’t her first time at the famous rodeo finals in Vegas, but it was the first time she’d seen the young up-and-comer Tyce Westbrook ride. It was also the first time she’d learned what it was to covet. She’d wanted Tyce with her woman’s heart. She hadn’t cared a lick what kind of respect her father had had for him. All she knew was, when the young cowboy had sauntered past her, he’d ruined her for other men. When he’d turned those arctic blue eyes on her she’d melted like a candy bar on a car dashboard warmed by the sun.

At nineteen years old, Tyce was everything wet dreams were made of. His deep voice gave her goose bumps, and his slight smile sent her pulse into overdrive. The dimples that were barely visible under the brim of his hat made her want to swoon. She lived for the circuit after that. Every chance she got to go on the road was a sweet torment. Just moments in time until she could be in his presence.

But Tyce had been a different type of cowboy. He wasn't into the glory or the buckle bunnies. He was in it for the ride. No one knew anything about his personal life. He was enigmatic and laconic and every other big word she'd ever learned. So instead of trying to throw herself at him with her feminine wiles, she'd thrown herself into her studies, earning a degree in animal husbandry and then moving on to veterinary medicine. She'd helped her dad with the ranch and the breeding of rodeo bulls, all the while nursing the dream of catching the eye of her favorite cowboy.

That dream had taken a back seat as she'd grown older, and then when she was twenty-seven she'd lost her beloved father. With the demands of running the ranch, she'd also given up on her childhood fantasies. Given up, not forgotten.

Regina tossed her head back on a long sigh. Three years. Three long years without her father. Three long years without either of the males in her life to entertain her. Truth be told, she'd missed the rodeo, but Little Horn Big Noise had been the last of her rodeo bulls. She didn't have time to keep an animal on the circuit and run the ranch. Besides, with Tyce retiring the sport had lost its luster. There wasn't anything exciting to her about bull riding anymore.

She'd missed the opportunity to catch his eye, and he'd faded into tales of legends that younger riders whispered about in the moments before the bright lights lit up the arenas.

Standing, she walked back down the hall to her father's study, now her office. Sitting at the massive desk, she flipped through the stack of bills and junk mail. Her mind, however, was still on the solitary cowboy who had stolen her young heart. And on the phone calls and letters from his lawyers seeking to buy her aging bull. The last piece of her father, and that memory of a time she held on to so dearly.

Before logic could stop her, Regina reached for her keyboard and logged into her e-mail. She used the address on the very first letter and fired off a missive.

Mr. Westbrook—Tyce,

My father always taught me to look a man in the eye when doing business. I'm willing to meet with you about the purchase of my bull. With you, not your lawyers. Dinner at my ranch on Friday night. If our meeting goes well, then you may very well get what you want.

Regina Na'Shelle Cloudwalker.

She pushed away from the computer after hitting send. The butterflies in her tummy danced frantically. This was it. Part one of the plan. Get Tyce to dinner. Step two, dessert. Regina à la mode.

Chapter Two

Tyce sat with his fingers steeped under his chin, staring at the photo on his desk. It was a picture he'd carried with him for nearly ten years. In the photograph, he stood with his arms loosely around the dark beauty. He'd given off the air of a typical rodeo cowboy. Cocky, arrogant, older than his nineteen years. Inside he'd been a bundle of nerves. He'd just met the man who bred the biggest, baddest rodeo bulls in the world. Turns out Reginald Cloudwalker also fathered the most beautiful female in the world as well. "Gigi," as she'd called herself before dusting her hand on her jean-clad thigh and offering it to him in a brief yet firm handshake, was a goddess. Her long black hair was braided back away from her heart-shaped face. Honey brown eyes had twinkled up at him from beneath a fringe of bangs, and her cupid's bow of a mouth, slicked with gloss, had glistened in the arena lights, her smooth mocha skin inviting him to taste.

Tyce had dutifully stood for the quick Polaroid shots before hightailing it to his trailer before anyone could notice the "fit" of his jeans. From then on he made a point to look for her at every stop. She'd be

there by her father's side, calling to him like a siren. She was no buckle bunny. In fact she seemed to ignore all the cowboys, though she always spared a shy smile for him. He'd wanted her, but he knew he wasn't good enough for her. At least not then, anyway. He was a cowboy with no family, no roots and no money in the bank. So he trained harder and harder. And when he wasn't on the circuit, he studied and invested all of his earnings. Someday he'd be able to ask Reginald Cloudwalker for the privilege of his daughter's hand. And he didn't want the esteemed rancher to find anything lacking in his dossier. He knew he had to bring his A plus plus game, in order to be in the running for Regina Cloudwalker's affections.

Three years later, he was days away from receiving his MBA and moments from the ride of his life. Tyce was set to step in the chute and mount the biggest, baddest bull ever to dance in dirt circles.

Though he'd practiced for this moment for a lifetime, he wasn't feeling any of his normal confidence. Deep in his spirit, something just wasn't right. But there was more than the huge purse at stake. He wasn't just riding for home and for glory tonight. Tonight he was going to ask Reginald to be his father-in-law.

With his resolve firmly in place, he stepped closer to the chute, and the men gathered there to help

him get in position. He was a few steps away from his destiny, when the rodeo medic stepped into his path and clasped his shoulder. Doc's crystal clear eyes were clouded with emotion and tears as he leaned forward and whispered in Tyce's ear.

"Cloudwalker is gone, son. You ride tonight for him. okay? Let him see you from up there doing it the best you've ever done."

Tyce's throat clogged with the memory. He had wanted to back out. Wanted to run and find Regina and bury her in his heart so that she wouldn't feel any pain. He had wanted desperately to go to her. The judges were learning of the news just as he was. The event had come to a stop as the announcement was made. The arena came to a hush. And in his spirit, Tyce heard his mentor speak.

"Give 'em a show, boy. Ride for me. Ride for Regina."

A sense of wellbeing had settled over him, and Tyce had done just that. When the lights came all the way back up, Tyce and Little Horns Big Noise had danced. For a brief moment in time, man and beast were one, and they celebrated the life of a treasured friend. And afterward, when the music had stopped, in that moment before the applause erupted, Tyce turned to the bull and looked him square in the eye.

For a brief moment the wild eyes of the animal were calm and serene. They reflected a wisdom and an acceptance of a soul, a spirit that was free from the burdens of this world.

Tyce left the arena after tipping his hat to an old friend. He didn't even stop to address the announcer or reporters. He drove straight to the hospital—straight to Regina.

She'd looked at him with those honeyed eyes, and Tyce felt so small. "All he wanted to do was see you ride. I know in my heart that his spirit left this room and went straight to the arena. Thank you, Tyce. Thank you for honoring my father tonight."

Pushing away from his desk, Tyce walked to the large bank of windows and stared west like he did every night. He imagined he could see her house from here, though it was miles beyond the horizon. He fingered the two-carat diamond that sat on the side table, still in the smooth velvet box it had been purchased in three years ago. He knew the shape by heart; the feel of the cool stone set in platinum was embedded in his fingertips. Pulling his hand back from the ring and pressing both his fingers and his forehead to the cool glass of the large window, Tyce closed his eyes and breathed deeply. It was the same

ritual he'd performed every night since he first met Gigi Cloudwalker. No matter where he was. He'd watch the sun dip and give way to the night sky and imagine there was no time, no space, no miles between them. He'd say in his heart over and over, *I love you. You are meant to be my woman.* And he prayed that she could hear him. Feel him. Love him too. Yes, he'd have dinner with Regina. And by dessert he'd have her convinced that they should have dinner together every night for the rest of their lives.

Chapter Three

Regina sat at the head of the formal table watching as Tyce slowly swirled his snifter of brandy. This was not going at all according to plan. She took a moment to re-count her checklist. She'd spent the day primping, preening, pampering and generally psyching herself up for tonight. Freshly showered, oiled and powdered, she looked artistically un-made up. Her crushed silk shirt-dress was perfectly cinched by a wide leather belt that matched her custom-made slouch boots. Her rave locks were "casually" tousled and tossed over one shoulder, and her lips were covered in a luscious dewy glaze. She'd convinced her best friend and cohort T'Zara to bake a deliciously sinful chocolate mousse cake to follow the brontosaurus-sized steaks that were currently being grilled by her favorite cousin and ranch forewoman, Leticia.

Letty was so excited that Regina was finally going to put the move on Tyce, she practically ran over and told the man exactly what was in store for him the minute he walked through the door. Regina knew her cousin was not paying nearly as much attention to the

meal she was supposed be cooking as she was to the action, or lack thereof, going on between herself and Tyce. She could feel Leticia's peering gaze watching them like a hawk. She knew Letty was giving T'Zara a play-by-play, and the added pressure of an audience was wreaking havoc on her nerves. On a deep sigh, she took a long draw of her water and watched Tyce. How in the world could he manage to look so relaxed when what she'd always thought of as a huge dining-room chair seemed to be squishing his body?

If anything, Tyce had grown and filled out during the last three years. Where there used to be a tall, lithe athlete was now the body of a giant. A man who was all muscles on top of muscles. He looked literally as if when he was done with the grueling work of running a successful cattle ranch he, then turned into a bodybuilder for fun. The only thing that remained of the cowboy who'd stolen her heart was—everything. It was just magnified. His hair was longer, his jaw more square, his shoulders bigger and broader. His waist was still trim, but she knew his abdomen had to be laden with more ripples than a washboard. And those thighs. Good lord, when he'd walked through the door all she could think was that those thighs could crack enough pecans to make ten pies in one squeeze.

Regina shook herself from her musings in time to look up and catch a very real, very sensual pair of crystal blue eyes blazing back at her. Intensity burned in those liquid ocean eyes. If her tongue wasn't swollen in her mouth, she would've tried to start a conversation.

Letty burst in at that exact moment, sparing her the chore of speaking.

"Good lord! There's enough sexual energy in here to power half, if not all, of Texas," the loudmouth said as she deliberately sat both plates of food down near Tyce's end of the table.

T'Zara followed Leticia's lead and placed the most beautiful cake down in the same general area. "We're leaving—NOW!" T'Zara said loudly and directly to Letty. "It was good to see you again, Tyce." Leaning low, she placed a sisterly kiss on Regina's cheek. "Call me when you get time tomorrow."

"Hell, the only thing she is gonna be callin' is the Lord! Did you see the way he was eyeballing her? I bet we come in here tomorrow and if this table ain't broke, the food will be exactly where we left it and moldy," Letty stated in what one could only assume she thought was a whisper.

T'Zara smacked her friend on the head and shoved her through the door. Regina ducked and

listened for the sounds of her friends leaving. The action also hid her face behind the cloud of her dark locks and gave her a moment to try and cool her flushed cheeks.

“I think it might be awful hard for you to eat from way down there,” Tyce’s voice rumbled through the dining room like thunder.

“Umm, yes, but suddenly I am...”

“Go on. Suddenly you’re what?” Tyce encouraged her, his molten gaze willing her to fling herself on the table and become his plate. She wanted nothing more than to be the vessel he took his meal from—wait, strike that. She wanted to be his meal, every meal, but she couldn’t get ahead of herself. She wanted to be devoured by this man. Even if only just one time. It was a memory she’d be able to carry for the rest of her life.

Tyce waited, willing Regina to speak. The sound of her smoky voice reminded him of good blues and sultry nights. Those not so sly looks were smoldering, stoking the flame he’d been carrying for years. He’d known the moment she’d opened the door that there would be no business discussed tonight.

With the way Regina batted those long kohl-darkened lashes and nibbled at her full, honey-coated lips, she wasn't giving off business vibes. Nor were her friends, who kept sneaking peeks at him and winking before drifting back to the shadows with hushed giggles. Everything about tonight told Tyce that it was going to be business all right—the business of passion. But his practical side cautioned him. They had to settle some things first. Chiefly, the “duration” of their business. Tyce wasn't looking for just one night. He needed Regina Clouldwalker to know that this was a forever kind of deal. There would never be any buy-out clauses or takeover bids. She wouldn't be able to cash in her shares of his heart. Once they sealed the deal, it would never be broken.

Tyce tipped his head and watched as Regina began to fidget under his gaze. There was something bothering his little butterfly. Something stronger than her obvious lust for him. He decided he may have to turn this seduction down a notch or two. It was going to be hard to bring the boil of his blood to a simmer, but he was in this for the distance, not the sprint.

Closing his eyes briefly, Tyce prayed for patience he wasn't sure he possessed and willed his body to relax. He needed to be able to move the food to her end of the table, and right now, the way his dick was

straining against his jean-clad thighs, even the act of breathing was torture. Rising slowly, Tyce carried both plates of food to the opposite end of the table and placed one directly in front of Regina. The other plate he deposited by the chair directly to her right, in front of the chair he planned to take. His pants squeezed tighter under her gaze, but he breathed out slowly. He forced himself to stand upright, trying to avoid inhaling too much of her siren scent. Her husky voice stopped him in his tracks before he could return for the cake.

“Leave it there. If you bring it down here I’ll ruin my waistline by eating the whole thing.” A small shy smile played at her lips.

Tyce remembered that smile. It lit up his heart and tugged at his soul. He wanted more than that small little flash. He wanted to see the whole thing. Wanted to watch it light up her face and warm the room.

“The only thing that’s going to ruin your waistline is when your belly is heavy with my children.”

Chapter Four

Regina snapped her head up to look Tyce in the eye. She was sure she hadn't heard exactly what she thought she'd heard, but she was about to question it nonetheless. That was until she saw the flush of embarrassment creeping up his neck. Tyce hadn't meant to speak out loud. Of that she was sure; she was also sure that wasn't a pistol in the front pocket of his jeans, either. She was eye-level with what Letty would have described as "something a man should have a permit to carry and a woman needed a black belt in coochie-lates to ride."

Something snapped in Regina as she sat there not even pretending not to stare at the throbbing bulge that was long enough to have its tip hidden under Tyce's gigantic rodeo buckles. She'd waited years to be in Tyce's arms, and with thirty knocking hard on her door, she had no intentions of waiting any longer. She could go back to mediocre men later...maybe. But she had a plan and more than a few itches that needed scratching. And now that she knew Tyce wouldn't be opposed to at least one part of her plan, well, hell, it was time to cowgirl up and ride.

“Listen, Tyce, sit down. I need to talk to you about this bull business. I have a counter offer.”

Regina spoke calmly though her heart was racing in her chest. She reached up to touch Tyce’s large hand and was immediately zapped by static electricity.

When she went to jerk her hand back, Tyce quickly caught it in his own work-roughened one as he took his seat. He didn’t release it once he was seated. Instead he held on to it. His large hand engulfed her smaller one. His thumb caressed a path from her wrist to her knuckles in maddeningly slow circles.

Regina forced herself to pull her hand away. Part of her realized that she could probably get part of what she wanted without actually making a deal with Tyce. The evidence of that was burning in his eyes. But from the moment she’d thought of the plan, she’d known she could never do anything that sneaky and underhanded. This had to be entirely above board, or she could risk losing what would be her greatest treasures. Taking a deep breath and squaring her shoulders, she began.

“I know you want my bull, and if I was a complete bitch and didn’t love the damn thing like a child, I’d sell him. Hell, I’d give him to you to avoid the cost of feeding him,” she said with a short laugh before casting a glance at Tyce.

“Technically, all I need is his sperm,” Tyce interjected.

And technically, all I need is your sperm, she thought.

“Well, therein lies the other problem. For a long time when he was on the circuit, we thought Little Horns Big Noise was gay because he wouldn’t have anything to do with any of the cows. Would downright bully them. In fact, the only other animal we could keep near him was the steer his momma birthed the year after him. Pop said he’d heard of such a thing before and blamed the bull’s condition on me coddling him too much. Just after Daddy died, I had the vet look him over. Turns out the old boy is just sterile and angry about it.”

Regina searched Tyce’s face for any reaction. She swore she saw the corner of his mouth tick. When she glanced in his eyes, she definitely saw humor flash in their electric depths before he shielded them from her by lowering those maddeningly thick lashes.

“Well,” he said and then stopped to clear his throat. “That, umm, does seem to be a small bit of an issue there.”

Regina rushed to finish. “I do, however, have something you might be interested in.” She paused to gage the level of Tyce’s “interest.”

When he indicated that she should go on, she rushed onward.

“I have the frozen embryos of Cheesy Grits and Biscuits.” Again she paused to gage Tyce’s reaction.

“As in the sire and dame of your bull? You have Little Horn Big Noise’s siblings. I thought Cheesy Grits was put down after siring Little Horns Big Noise. Didn’t he almost kill a rider in Amarillo?”

“He did and he was, but the thing was he never actually bred with any of the cows. It was always done artificially. My dad selected Biscuits to be the dame because he thought their names were funny. By the way, I’ve named all the embryos already, so I’d like it if you’d at least keep one of them. Luckily it only took one. Dad had the rest frozen. He wanted to gage the temperament of Little Horns before we ‘created’ anything else.”

“Wait, did you just say you named the frozen embryos?”

“Yup, I’ve named all the cattle on the ranch since I was little.”

“So you named a bull Cheesy Grits and a cow Biscuits?”

“I was little and hungry.” Regina shrugged and reached for her water cup. The butterflies in her stomach fluttered, causing it to rumble. She hoped

Tyce hadn't heard it, but just in case she reached for her plate.

Tyce followed her lead and reached for his plate as well. However, before she could cut into her steak, he reached out and grabbed her hand. He bowed his head with his eyes closed and waited a heartbeat. Obviously he intended to say grace. Regina had offered up a silent prayer in her head, not knowing how religious Tyce was to begin with. She was surprised by his gesture. Pleasantly. Closing her eyes, she bowed her head and gave his large hand a squeeze to let him know she was ready.

"Father God, thank you for all your blessings in our lives. Thank you for watching over us and bringing us to abundance in your Name. Bless this food, Lord, so that it nourishes our bodies and gives us strength to continue on your path. Bless our tongues so that all that we say may be pleasing to your ear. And bless our friendship so that it will only grow in your Grace. In Jesus' name I pray. Amen."

Regina felt a little tug at her heart. She knew she had to lay it all on the table now. The man had just asked God to bless their friendship. Was she sure she could look at him and say, "Hey, I wanna fuck for a few hours and hopefully get knocked up!"

Taking a deep breath, she lifted her head. As she did so she found herself staring directly into the same beautiful eyes that had enthralled her all those years ago. Pulling her hand back from him, again she picked up her flatware and proceeded to cut into her steak. After a few moments Tyce spoke.

“You know, I can see offering you more money for those embryos. It’s no wonder, really, that you held off. The embryos of Cheesy Grits and Biscuits...” He paused with a slight smirk on his face, as if he was forcing himself not to laugh. “...are potentially worth millions.”

Regina didn’t hesitate. Still moving the food around on her plate and cutting her steak into bite-size pieces, she said in a rush, “Well, I rather thought we’d come to a different agreement on that. A trade, perhaps. I give you, say, two embryos—and you father two children with me.”

Chapter Five

For what seemed like an eternity Tyce stared at the side of Regina's head, waiting for a second or third head to sprout from her neck. She seemed completely calm, as if her proposition was the most logical, natural thing to have said. The only indication that she was even remotely bothered by the situation was the telltale tick of her pulse frantically beating under the exposed skin of her neck. Tyce watched as she pushed the food around nervously on her plate. Somehow the fact that she was anxious gave him the strength to focus. First on swallowing the food in his mouth, then on the situation at hand.

"Well..." Tyce started only to have to stop and clear his throat.

He pushed away from the table to stand. He needed to move, to think. To formulate his words. Was she crazy? Trade a bull for a baby—what the hell? Did she not think she was worthy of a having a man? Or maybe she didn't want a man. Maybe she was one of those man haters. Whatever. She had life messed up if she thought he'd father a child and walk away. Hell, she had life messed up anyway. She would be having his babies all right, but they were doing it the old-

fashioned way. With rings and vows and honeymoons and anniversaries and all that stuff.

Tyce abruptly stopped his pacing and turned to where Regina was now sitting with her hands in her lap and her head ducked low, hidden by the veil of her hair.

“Okay, so that took me by surprise,” he said with more calm than he actually felt. “And it’s not that your offer doesn’t have some merit...you know, some substance.”

He continued as he approached her. “It’s just a little flawed,” he finished as he knelt next to her seat.

Reaching up, he gently cupped her jaw and forced her to look at him. He could feel her whole body trembling. She’d tried to deliver her little salvo as if she regularly propositioned men that way, but her heart was beating so frantically Tyce swore he could hear it in his own ears.

Or maybe that was his heartbeat. He’d waited for years for this moment. He’d known when he was nineteen that he’d be here someday. About to lay it all on the line. But now that the moment was on him, he didn’t feel like a grown man of nearly thirty-two years. He felt like a fumbling kid trying to ask the prom queen to go steady.

Taking a deep breath and holding it, Tyce closed his eyes and tried to focus on reassuring Regina that he had every intention of making a deal with her. The deal of a lifetime.

“I’ll gladly father all the children you want, but there’s got to be a big change in the terms. We can breed as many bulls as you want, but they aren’t going to be part of this arrangement. This is a lifetime contract between me and you and God in Heaven. You’ll have to be my wife in order for it to work. I feel like I’ve waited my whole life to ask you. And I understand if you need a moment to decide, but once you say yes, if you say yes, there will be no LONG engagement.”

Tyce felt like the words were tripping off his tongue. He’d rehearsed this over and over, and now he couldn’t remember a damn thing. So he stopped speaking and reached in his pocket and pulled out the ring he’d been carrying for the better part of three years.

He looked Regina in the eyes. “You were right when you said your father always said to look a man in the eye when doing business. He also told me I needed to be one helluva man to be good enough for you. I rode hard, Regina, and worked even harder to be worthy of you. I’ve waited three long years to come to

you. I am asking you now. Do you think...will you let me be your man? We'll raise as many babies and bulls as you want. Hell, I'll get some horses and chickens and ducks and whatever menagerie of critters you want...if, if only you will just be mine. For always."

Chapter Six

Regina's breath stuck in her throat, and hot tears raced down her face. Something about Tyce kneeling before her grabbed her heart and pulled. Hard. Though the man before her was big enough to block out the sun, his large blue eyes swimming with emotion reminded her of a small child on the first day of school. If she wasn't in love with the legend of him before, she was head over heels in love with the man that the legend had become in this moment.

Unclasping her hand, she reached for his strong jaw and cupped it. The prickle of his stubble reminded her of just how incredibly one-hundred-percent male he was. Her heart sang, knowing her answer was yes. She wanted to shout it, but the words were clogged behind the tears in her throat. So instead she nodded, once, very hard and very quickly, before falling on his full lips with her own and tangling her hand in his thick chestnut hair.

She fell into him, taking his mouth into hers, the two of them becoming one long before the judge pronounced them so, united in heart and spirit and soul with this single kiss. When they broke the kiss at last, Tyce slipped the ring onto her finger, his breath

labored. She trembled, swallowed the thick hunk of love, and the tiny bit of fear at what the future would bring. She looked up and into Tyce's liquid blue eyes, shivering as she watched the passion there turning them from sky blue to cobalt. She knew then it would be all right.

"You know if we stay in this dining room two things are gonna happen."

She quirked an eyebrow and waited for him to continue.

"One: Letty is gonna win that bet. Two: we're gonna have to buy a new dining-room table."

Chapter Seven

Two weeks later

Sunlight sliced through the wooden walls, seemingly split into a thousand strands of gold. Warm and gentle, the sun caressed Regina's naked shoulders, sweat-drenched face, and closed eyes. So soft, the heavens couldn't compare to Tyce's strong thighs, thighs that rode hard and hung on for the next second. Regina's lips curved devilishly into a smile.

"Who's riding for dear life now? Who's hanging on until the very last delicious second?" she taunted, mocking Tyce after he'd laughed at her dismal attempt at riding a mechanical bull at one of their many engagement parties.

Oh, he'd scooped her up, patted her ass as if she'd bruised it, and she loved him for it. But he'd also teased her mercilessly. And now a day before they were set to walk down the aisle, she was showing him who the real cowpoke was. He'd forgotten that she was a seasoned horse-woman, to the tune of several champion barrel racing and cutting horse buckles.

Through narrowed eyes she looked down at her soon-to-be husband. His tousled hair stood in stark

contrast to the clean ivory of the pillow. His kissable mouth had been transformed into a thin lash of sharp determination. If he could, he'd put his hands on her ass, slap her buttocks, and steal her rhythm.

Nuh-uh—she had this ride. Bareback riding was her favorite. And if he played his cards right, she might teach him a lil' something old school. They had time for a little side saddle. Either way, it was up to her, as she had him trussed up and tied in knots that a sailor couldn't untie. Regina smirked wider. She was good at locking down what she wanted too.

“Yeah, you seem like you're enjoying yourself up there, cowgirl. Had I known a saddle horn”—he thrust as hard as he could—“was all you needed to be happy, I'da let you ride a long time ago.”

Regina rode him out...arching her back and rotating her hips but keeping the pace nice and slow. She contracted her inner muscles, feeling the width of him, snug and thick inside her. Shuddering from pleasure, she leaned down and slowly dangled her breasts dangerously close to his mouth. The burnt orange studded bra lay open, the fastening undone.

Tyce leaned up, straining his bound hands, his neck, his tongue just licking her hardened tip. She cupped her left breast and guided it closer to his mouth. His lips closed over her sensitive tip.

In a voice stripped to a husk of heated want, Regina said, “Baby, the only saddle horn I want, I got, and it’s right where I want it. Nice and hard between my thighs...feels so good. Don’t you think so, baby?”

She reached up and tweaked her other nipple, all the while listening for the catch in Tyce’s breathing. She’d been at this dance for a while...bringing them both to the edge, then backing off, before building it up again. Like a true bull rider, Tyce hung on for the ride. His hair was damp and stringy, his eyes dark and fierce...and she loved it when it was good for him and he bared his teeth and growled at her.

“You want something, cowboy?” She slammed down onto his cock, driving him deeper inside her. She lifted up before he could thrust faster into her. Slow. That was how she wanted it. No rush. While he’d been in her heart a long time, it’d taken years to succeed in landing him in her bed. She wouldn’t speed through this.

“I’m sure it isn’t these chaps.” She reached the snap around her waist and fingered it.

Tyce bucked his hips as hard as he could, just like he did every time she suggested removing the orange leather. She used her velvety insides to milk him, rocking back and forth, riding him until he

relaxed from the hard plunge and sank back onto the crisp white sheets.

He released her nipple with his cheeks flushed, his forehead wrinkled in concentration and sweet torment.

“Leave ’em on,” he ground out, fire blazing in his eyes as he licked his lips.

She’d gotten the same response when she’d tried to take the rhinestone-encrusted bra off as well, thus it was dangling off her shoulders like a vest as her breasts bounced and swayed to the rhythm of their lovemaking.

Regina felt Tyce bring his knees up, placing his feet flat on the bed. The movement shifted her forward on his rod and braced her back against the thighs that had been trapped beneath her. The angle was such that his big dick went from just kissing her womb to caressing the soft tissue of her g-spot. Rubbing that place that sent shivers down her spine and had her crimping her toes in lush waves of desire.

Unable to hold back, she leaned all the way forward and fed the tips of her breasts to him one by one. The low moo of a cow seemed to sync with Regina’s low moan. The sound of the cattle struck Regina as awful funny. Two weeks ago, she never would have imagined herself dressed in a beadazzled-

to-death costume and rolling around in the hay with her teenage crush. When she was a girl she dreamed of them in the barn. They'd made sweet, passionate, perfect love in her dreams. She'd never dreamed about how the hay would scratch her skin or the animals would whinny and nay. But that didn't make this moment any less glorious. It made it fun. She laughed, but it died in her throat as Tyce seemed to do something magic with his tongue on her nipples.

She allowed her eyes to roll back in her head and close. The sensations were just too much, and she collapsed into Tyce's chest.

Regina's mini-gasm was just the thing Tyce needed. He'd lain as still as he could for long enough, pretending to be completely at her mercy. Oh, her knots were tied perfectly, but he'd been able to work the ropes up and over the wrought iron stake minutes ago. Though his hands were still bound together, the moment she collapsed onto him he was able to wrap her in his embrace.

As soon as she felt his arms come around her, she tensed. And the motion did wonders for his dick. She squeezed him so good...so very, very good, he had to hold his breath and think of all manner of non-

sexual things to keep from losing it. She shimmied and shook a little bit, but other than giving him part of the best ride of his life, it did little to get Tyce to release her.

“As enticing as that feels, sugar, every pun intended, you’ve run your course. I let you play, and now it’s time to let me do what I do best.”

Tyce let his voice rumble over her skin and watched as the creamy chocolate flesh pinked with a yummy-looking love flush, breaking out into goose flesh despite the triple digit heat wave.

But she refused to just lie there. Her liquid warmth coated his phallus, and he stiffened to the point that he ached. Her smooth, silky skin felt good in his hands. She had been made for his arms, for his body, and for his life. He’d known that since he’d seen her running through the rodeo grounds toward him. She’d jumped and landed in her father’s arms that first day, but now she was in his, and in twenty-four hours time he’d be legally, and spiritually, the only man whose arms she’d run to. But right now all he wanted her to do in his arms was come apart.

Turning his big body, he inched his way to the edge of the big memory-foam-covered hay bed. Not for the first time, he thanked the Lord for the Egyptian sheets. He wasn’t fond of the idea of hay rash or twigs

poking in sensitive places. Once his legs were over the edge, he kept moving until his feet were flat on the floor of the loft. Then farther still, until only his upper back and shoulder were braced against their makeshift love nest. It was in that moment that they heard it.

“Shh, baby. Listen, Leticia is down there with the baker.”

“And over here is where we’re going to set up the gift table...and Tyce wants to have the band play over there, with this space here near the doors for a dance floor.”

Tyce was struggling to stay still. Regina was doing her damndest to make him say uncle. She wiggled and tweaked and worked every muscle in her smooth honey pot until he thought he was about to pass out. His little buckaroo was not unaffected. The movement was driving her just as crazy as it was him, and soon she was making little mewling noises.

“You know, Letty, it smells like sex in here,” T’Zara joked.

Tyce groaned inwardly and tossed his head back in prayer. “Please don’t look up.”

The movement only offered the view of his neck to Regina. She used it as her playground. She feathered her tongue over his skin and sucked on his Adam’s apple. Who knew that a guy’s larynx was

connected by nerves directly to his dick? The soft suction she applied resonated directly to the head of his dick, making it jump. Her lips drifted over the stubble of new growth where she stopped and savored the taste of his skin. Tyce's whole body seemed to vibrate.

"Shush," Regina whispered softly as she continued to suck both his throat with her mouth and his dick with her quim. Tyce let her play. The more she concentrated on driving him insane, the more he could concentrate on freeing his still linked hands.

"Of course it smells like sex. Jeremy and I slipped out here earlier for some private time. Hell, if Regina knew we were snogging, this would be my wedding and not hers, but don't worry—when the men come in and clean up and bring the fresh hay down from the loft, you won't be able to smell a thing," Letty explained.

Tyce felt Regina chuckle when she heard Letty lamenting about having sex in the barn. Her body's natural convulsions both drove him closer to the edge and let him hide the fact that he'd finally freed his hands. He flexed his fingers a few times to speed up the circulation of blood, but kept his arms pressed closely to Regina's sides.

“Well, unless we catch a quickie in the loft before the ceremony—” Letty’s voice floated up to him. He wondered if she was just talking or if she was letting them know she knew they were there.

Tyce wanted to roar with both frustration and laughter. He wanted the ladies to hurry on with their little tour. And he was definitely going to make sure that THIS HAY was not the hay used to decorate the barn for the reception. Thankfully T’Zara led Letty from the barn with questions about how they planned to display the cake she was in the process of decorating.

Tyce was relieved when he heard footsteps on the gravel leading away from the barn. He let out a deep breath just to suck it in again when he felt Regina’s teeth latch on to the fleshy part of his shoulder, right where it met the flare of his neck.

He did roar then, with his head back and his teeth glinting in the sun. He took one of Regina’s leather-clad calves in each of his hands and guided her feet until they were flat on the ground. The shift in position left her bent from the waist and knees as if she were sitting in a chair. Grasping her knees, he splayed them so far apart that she had to put her hands on his shoulders for balance. And it was exactly where he wanted her.

“I know you know the rule, baby,” he said as he began to work his body beneath her, scooting back on the hay so he was supported up to his mid back.

“You fuck with the bull—” He extended his stroke, pulling nearly out of her.

He growled as he rammed his entire length home with enough force to lift her feet off the ground, forcing her to straighten herself over him so that she was standing more than sitting. With his back nearly parallel to the ground Tyce thrust again. “—you get the horn.”

Tyce reveled in the passionate shriek that escaped from Regina. Over and over he relaxed his abs, drawing his body down and away from her, then lifting up and slamming home. The slow, deep strokes were punctuated by both of their grunts. The effort to lift himself repeatedly caused a delicious strain in his quads. Tyce could feel Regina’s thighs trembling. The trembling along with her heavy breathing; the joy of lying under Regina as her climax built...all of it added up, and he knew this was how he wanted to spend every night. Slow. Bucking. Reaching up, he grabbed her hips and thrust one final time. The motion pushed them both over the edge and into a nirvana where neither of them worried about hay in precarious places.

Epilogue

Twenty-four hours later

Tyce and Regina stood next to the most marvelous wedding cake on earth. It was so beautiful neither of them thought they could lift the knife to cut into it. Shaped like a traditional wedding cake, the tiers rose higher and graduated into smaller off-centered squares until they reached the top layer, where a couple of marzipan rodeo clowns danced in front of a bucking bull.

To the crowd, they looked like the loving couple as Tyce leaned over and placed a gentle kiss in Regina's hair. She turned into his arms and kissed his chin before lovingly wiping away her lipstick. A moment later they cut into the delicious chocolate crème-de-mint cake.

Passing a mischievous smile to each other, they raised their forks as if to feed each other before spinning and shoving plates full of the decadent confection into the maid of honor's and best man's faces.

Letty and Jeremy stood together wiping cake and icing from each other's faces. Both blushed

furiously when Regina shouted they should lick it off each other and Tyce suggested they make use of the hay loft.

T’Zara paused in her duties of serving cake to add that it wouldn’t be the first time the duo made use of the loft that day.

“What?” Tyce laughed.

“The whole ranch heard you two hoopin’ and hollerin’ out here,” T’Zara said before being led away from the cake table by her own handsome husband.

“The way I heard it,” Jason whispered to his wife, “this barn is pretty darn popular. Maybe we should try the loft.” He nuzzled T’Zara’s neck.

“Stay out of my hay,” Regina whispered as she and Tyce paused to hug their friends. “Or you’ll be wearing some of that delicious cake your wife made me.”

The newlyweds laughed along with all of the guests as the two stunned attendants stood stock still with cake and frosting dripping off their faces. The reception party continued in full swing for hours, and Tyce begrudgingly shared his bride with their extended family and friends. They danced and laughed until at last Regina, still glowing and happy even though her smile and her eyes were starting to

droop, indicated that she was ready to go. She smiled into her husband's face before whispering in his ear.

Tyce didn't even pretend to care about the party or the guests. Clearing his throat, he made a quick thank you and toasted his bride before throwing her over his shoulder to a raucous round of applause and saying, "You ain't gotta go home, hell you can even stay here, just don't set anything on fire."

"Or fuck with the bull!" Regina added as Tyce spun around and carried her out of the barn and into their future.

****DR****

You can read more about T'Zara Johnson Martin in *T'Zara's Heart* by Dréa Riley available at:

http://www.lulu.com/product/ebook/tzaras-heart/6189626?productTrackingContext=search_results/search_shelf/center/5

About the Author

Dréa Riley can always be found one of two favorite places; the kitchen or the computer. A relaxing time for her would be concocting a delicious dish while connecting with her coterie online. Whenever something off the wall happens, Dréa will most likely be found in the middle of it, trying to look innocent and usually failing. With a heart bigger than the Grand Canyon and a mouth more lethal than an injection, this diva might save the world and cuss it out at the same time. This steak-loving sister always finds a way to juggle work, reading, and sleep. She channels the support from her family, friends, and fans into her sitcom lifestyle and stories.

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