

MEN ARE LIKE HORSES

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Rules Were
Made Only
to Be Broken,
Thought Jo,
Until She
Found Her Own
Heart Cracked

GLEN was grooming Palomino, taking keen delight in the sleekness of the buff body and the long, taffy-colored mane. He paused to run his fingers through the mane and tweak the mare's ear playfully.

"Don't let any one bob your hair, Pal," he said softly. "Never, never, never."

"I won't," replied a voice.

He looked into a pair of laughing blue eyes under a black derby hat. She came into view to stroke Pal's muzzle, and Glen appraised her swiftly as a thoroughbred. She was slender and straight in her perfectly tailored riding habit, her features small, but definitely patrician. Her dark hair was brushed back softly over pink-tipped ears, a braid coiled into a smooth knot on the back of her head.

"Are you Mr Stewart, the club manager?" she inquired.

"At your service," Glen answered gallantly.

"I'd like to rent a horse. This one's nice," she added.

"We're not riding Pal yet. She has a new colt. But I can fix you up." He glanced at her shiny boots. "Have you had instruction?"

"Certainly." She swirled her crop impudently. "I've worn out three pairs of boots."

"Go on," he laughed. "You're not that old. Hey, Jake," he called to the stable man. "Saddle Sundown for—" He paused.

"Your name?" he asked.

"Jo Travis."

A STRANGE expression flashed over Glen's face, and he turned his attention back to Palomino.



"I'm starved," he heard Jo say. "Mmm, what grand coffee!"

For a few minutes, Pal went willingly enough. Then suddenly she stopped and whinnied pitifully.

"Come on, Pal. There's a good girl," he urged gently.

But the mare refused to budge. Glen picked a short, prickly live-oak branch and slapped her flank. Reluctantly she began to walk in a stiff, queer gait.

"I could kill some one," Glen muttered.

A little later, he heard footsteps running toward him.

"Glen!" called Jo. "Glen, wait a minute."

He did not turn around, but continued leading Pal slowly and steadily.

She came up panting. "Glen, what is it?" Her voice was full of alarm.

"Her muscles are locked," he said coldly.

"What's that? Oh, Glen, have I done something terrible?"

"You've nearly ridden her to death. That's all."

"Will she—will she get over it?"

"I hope so." His voice was like a steel barrier between them.

"Oh, Glen! I never dreamed I was hurting her. We were having such a good time."

"It's a good thing you're not a man."

"I wish I were! Oh, I wish I were!" she choked. "I wish you'd beat me, Glen."

They walked and walked and walked.

"Men and horses are just playthings to you," he said bitterly. "They're invented just for your amusement. I don't mind what you do to men so much. They should be able to take care of themselves. But horses are different. No one can mistreat my horses and get away with it."

THEY continued walking. Glen was beginning to be a little tired. He glanced at Jo trudging at his side. Her face was the picture of misery, and from time to time she looked at Pal anxiously. The mare's gait showed improvement, but there was still a slight stiffness in the forelegs.

They must have covered miles, back and forth in the vicinity of the clubhouse, when Pal's walk began to appear normal. Glen stopped and lifted the mare's foreleg, bending it at the knee. Pal swished her tail and looked back longingly toward the stables.

He patted her. "All right, old girl. We'll go home now."

"Is she—?"

Jo's face was pale in the dim moonlight, her eyes two dark pits.

"Better," Glen said shortly.

Back at the clubhouse, he led Pal to the watering trough, where she drank thirstily. Glen stopped her before she