

Saturday May 5 2068, Tracy Ranch, Wyoming

"Horsey!" Joshua bellowed.

Dom smiled; the kid was a quick learner. Unfortunately, he had also become enamoured with the beautiful, powerful animals, and was constantly trying to sneak away towards them.

At that moment, he was held securely in his father's arms, but straining towards the horses, reaching his hands out.

"Horsey! I want...I want..."

Joshua's face contorted as he tried to say what he wanted to say, but the words would not come to him.

"I want..."

He burst into angry tears, his fists pulled into tight little balls.

"Aw, it's okay son, it's alright," Dom said in his most placating voice.

Joshua buried his face into his father's shoulder, a clear sign of his rage at himself, not the world around him. Dom gently patted the back of his head and began to rock him a little. It pained him to see the child so frustrated, but at least it was a good sign. He was learning.

David Killdeer, the son of the ranch's keepers, emerged out of the stable at the racket. Dom nodded at him, and the young man came over, somewhat wary of the sobbing child.

"What's the matter?" He asked.

"He's just a wee bit frustrated. I think he wanted to ride the horses like all the big boys and girls, but he couldn't say it, isn't that right, Jak?"

Joshua snivelled a bit and kept his face firmly turned away.

"I guess he'll be a rider when he's older," David commented with a grin.

Dominic shrugged.

"We'll see. In any case, I think I'm going to have to add another animal to the stuffed menagerie. We'll get a Horsey to go with all the rest, won't we?"

Joshua sat up a little, his tear-streaked face blotchy.

"Will we get a horsey just for you? A nice baby one you can play with?"

Joshua nodded. Dominic grinned at David.

"I think I'd better get on with that, or there'll be murder," he said.

"See you around," David said, and retreated into the stable once more.

"Now," Dom said, beginning to walk, "who do you think would be the better rider, Ducky or Squeaky Bear, eh?"

From: ArtisticRainey Sent: 8/29/2005

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