
The Reined Groom

The Reined Groom

A Blubonnet Novel

Stephanie Jackson

Also by Jessica, Mackenzie, Meredith and Stephanie Jackson

Quadruple or Nothing Series

Two Pair

Four of A Kind

Also by Stephanie Jackson

Bluebonnet Series

Lasso The Reined Groom (Bluebonnet Book 2) Me a Mom

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Note: This is a work of fiction. I have chosen to take some liberties with the way some plots in this story are handled, in the interests The Reined Groom (Bluebonnet Book 2) of relating a compelling story.

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To Katy Glance

I believe dreams don't and can't come true unless you have a friend to share it with. Thank you for all of your support in helping me achieve my dream.

Prologue

“Of course The Reined Groom (Bluebonnet Book 2) we still argue Jeff, did you really think that was going to stop?” The Reined Groom (Bluebonnet Book 2) Cassie McGregor chuckled into the phone. She had a laundry basket resting on her hip and was holding the phone between the crook of her shoulder and her neck. “Things have actually been going great. Nikki has been opening up a lot more,” she added.

It had been about six months since Nikki and Cassie returned from their court case a new family. Nikki had become so comfortable in her new role as a daughter she had cut down on her sarcastic remarks, although a few crept in here and there.

The first thing Cassie and Nikki had done when they exited the courthouse was go on a shopping trip. Nikki picked out numerous articles of clothing and Cassie had let her without a care.

That night they had watched numerous movies, had a small spa day by painting each other’s nails, gone out to dinner, and ended the night sleeping on the floor in the living room. Nikki had insisted that she pay Cassie back but every time the topic was brought up, Cassie would just say that she was “making up for lost time.”

“I’ve got to go and help her finish The Reined Groom (Bluebonnet Book 2) packing. Her flight The Reined Groom (Bluebonnet Book 2) is in a few hours and I don’t want her to miss it,” Cassie explained. “Okay, bye Jeff.” She hung up the phone and placed it back in its cradle before heading up the stairs. “Nikki, The Reined Groom (Bluebonnet Book 2) I washed some of your clothes.”

Cassie walked up to Nikki’s bedroom and paused. She dropped the laundry basket to the side and peered into the room. She gasped and stared at the mess.

“Nicoletta McGregor, you’re supposed to be packing not trashing the place,” Cassie exclaimed. “You know if you packed once school ended in mid-May like I told you to, then this

wouldn't be a problem."

The floor was littered The Reined Groom (Bluebonnet Book 2) with clothes, her desk was piled high with books and papers, and shoes were thrown across the room as if her closet had thrown up.

"Nikki, where are you?" she questioned after she didn't get a response. A second later, Nikki McGregor exited her bathroom with a toiletry bag in her hand.

"Have you seen The Reined Groom (Bluebonnet Book 2) my dance shoes?" Nikki asked. "The The Reined Groom (Bluebonnet Book 2) pink ones, I can't find them." She tossed the bag into her empty suitcase before dropping to the floor and shimmying under her bed.

"Have you tried checking your feet?" Cassie suggested. Nikki popped up from the other side of the bed and glared.

"That is not funny," she snapped. "I'm serious; I don't want to miss my flight. I can only make one first impression and I want everyone at Diamond Dance to take me seriously."

"Calm down, honey." Cassie made her way over to the bed, careful not to step on anything. "Relax a bit."

"Sorry," Nikki apologized. She moved her suitcase from the bed to the floor before jumping backwards to lie down. "I guess I'm just a little nervous."

"What could you be nervous about?" Cassie questioned.

"Well, you of course," Nikki answered. "I'm the entertainment in your life. Soon you'll be bored The Reined Groom (Bluebonnet Book 2) and wishing that I'd return." She smiled. Cassie laughed and squeezed Nikki's nose between her pointer and middle fingers. "Seriously though, I sometimes wonder if I'm good enough."

"Diane Warner traveled all of the way out here to Sterling to find someone with your talent," Cassie said softly. "You deserve this opportunity," she added.

"Well what about Gadget?" Nikki asked. At the sound of his name, Gadget ran into the room. He began to sniff around the various objects on the floor. "He's The Reined Groom (Bluebonnet Book 2) hard to take care of."

"So were you, but you've been trained pretty well," Cassie responded. Nikki rolled her eyes and half-smiled. "Do you not want to go?"

Nikki shrugged and bit her lip. "Do you not want me to go?" she questioned quietly. She looked up at her mother through her bangs.

Cassie looked as if she were about to answer. She quickly bit her lip and rubbed the back of

her neck. "I didn't say that."

Nikki nodded twice. She clicked her tongue and began to twiddle her thumbs. "And I didn't say that I didn't want to go." Nikki sat up and kicked her legs. "I just need to find my dance shoes."

Gadget growled as he pawed underneath The Reined Groom (Bluebonnet Book 2) Nikki's dresser. After a few seconds his tail began to wag quickly as he backed up and pulled a mesh of pink out. He then scurried over towards his owner.

"My shoes." Nikki pulled the pink dance shoes out of her dog's mouth. "Thank you Gadget." She leaned down and rubbed the top of his head. "Now I can finish packing."

"What about this mess?" Cassie waved her hand, motioning to the mess.

Nikki looked around the room. She raised her eyebrows in shock before shrugging. "It'll be here when I get back," she answered nonchalantly.

Cassie rolled her eyes and started to clean the floor as Nikki finished packing. They worked in silence, occasionally bumping into each other as they crossed the room to grab or put away an item.

As Nikki walked over to her desk to grab her itinerary she paused when she noticed a picture frame. Inside of the frame was a picture of Cassie and Nikki at her last The Reined Groom (Bluebonnet Book 2) rodeo competition, before she was adopted. Nikki smiled softly and picked up the picture frame along with the itinerary before placing it into her suitcase.

Nikki re-entered her bathroom and began pulling and opening a few drawers, in search of something. Cassie grabbed a few pairs of rolled up socks from one of Nikki's drawers before walking over to her suitcase. As she dropped the socks into her daughter's The Reined Groom (Bluebonnet Book 2) suitcase she noticed the picture frame. Cassie reached out and ran her thumb over the glass covering the picture.

A car horn blared outside before a car door closed. Nikki exited her bathroom and stuffed her flat iron into the bag. She then sat on top of the bag and held it closed as Cassie zipped it up.

"That's my ride," Nikki said. She propped up her suitcase and went through her checklist one last time. "I think that's everything," she muttered to herself.

"Okay." Cassie reached down and grabbed a bag. "I'll help you carry your things down." She waited for Nikki to pull up the handle to her suitcase before heading down the stairs.

Nikki's boyfriend, Cloud Montgomery, was sitting outside of the house next to his car, the trunk popped open.

"That's it," The Reined Groom (Bluebonnet Book 2) Nikki said. She grunted while picking up her suitcase and putting it into the back of the car. She clapped her hands together before

pulling the trunk door closed.

“Have a safe trip.” Cassie smiled warmly. She then nodded The Reined Groom (Bluebonnet Book 2) over towards Cloud’s The Reined Groom (Bluebonnet Book 2) car. “Be careful while driving,” she instructed.

“I will,” Cloud answered.

“See you later.” Nikki gave a small wave before climbing into Cloud’s car.

“Bye Nikki,” Cassie called out. She waved as he swung his car around and headed down the driveway. A cloud of dirt followed the car.

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Cassie sighed contentedly as she walked back into the house. She took a seat on the couch and picked up a stray book. She flipped through The Reined Groom (Bluebonnet Book 2) the pages but stopped after a few seconds. She dropped the book to the floor and turned sideways to lie down on the couch. Cassie turned on the television and channel surfed for about a minute before turning it back off. She then began to count the number of ceiling tiles.

Why am I so bored? Cassie thought.

She sat up on the couch and The Reined Groom (Bluebonnet Book 2) turned to look at the front door. Nikki entered the house and paused when she noticed her mother sitting on the couch.

“What are you doing back?” Cassie frowned. She jumped up from her seat and raced over. “Is something wrong?” she questioned.

Nikki didn’t answer. She quickly walked over and wrapped her arms around Cassie’s waist. She then rested her head on Cassie’s shoulder. “I’m going to miss you,” Nikki muttered.

Cassie smiled and returned the hug. She reached up and stroked the back of Nikki’s head. “I’m going to miss you too,” she answered earnestly.

Nikki pulled away and quickly ducked her head, but not before Cassie noticed a small tear trickle out of the corner of her eye.

“Are you crying?” she asked.

“No,” Nikki denied. She reached up and rubbed her eyes. “My eyes are just sweating,” she insisted.

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