

SOUTHERN FRIED

Written by

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EXT. PASTURE - DAY

LUKE, 29, country man, has an expression of discomfort, Stands with hands in pockets. Kicks at grass with worn leather boot.

LAUREN, 27, southern belle, holds reins of two horses on a pasture. Drops one reign, gets on other horse. Gallops away.

Hoofbeats sound and Lauren looks over shoulder. Her black ponytail fly's across her face.

EXT. PASTURE - DAY

LAUREN

Stop following me Luke. You lied.
My parents lied. Just give it up.

Lauren pushes horse to move faster. Turns horse towards large clump of trees to the right. Luke follows closely. Horse whinnies in background. Both horses continue to gallop. Luke shouts above the sound of whipping wind.

LUKE

No! Damnit woman, you give it up!
Just listen!

EXT. PASTURE/CLUMP OF TREES - DAY

Luke pulls horse in front of Lauren's horse. Both horses slide to a stop. Luke grabs Lauren's horses reigns. Horse squeals.

LAUREN

Let him go.

LUKE

No. For once in your life Lauren
your going to listen to me.

Lauren tries to yank her reigns away. Horse stays still under Luke's hold.

Luke's horse paws the ground. Its nostrils are flaring.

Lauren huffs out a deep breath and glares at Luke. Birds are chirping in the distance. Thick hardwood trees are swaying with a breeze.

EXT. CLUMP OF TREES - DAY

Lauren jumps down from her horse. Stomps away.

Luke follows, grabs her shoulders and whips her around.

LUKE

Your not twelve anymore Lauren. For God sakes your a grown adult. You can't just run away when something doesn't go your way.

LAUREN

Watch me.

Lauren yanks from Luke's grasp. She continues to stomp away. Luke catches up easily. He spins her back around.

Luke has a frustrated expression. His brows furrow. Luke sighs, runs hand through hair.

LUKE

Look Lauren, I'm sorry. I couldn't tell you. Your dad made me promise. After my parents died, your parents were always there for me. With this last years drought the farm just wasn't doing well. I told your dad I would buy some of the land and your prized barrel horse so he wouldn't get sold at auction. Is that really such a bad thing?

Luke throws up his hands. He looks around at the trees and shakes his head. Luke looks back at Lauren and frowns.

Lauren's eyes are squinted. She has a look of anger. Her brows are knitted together. Her hands are at her sides with balled fists.

LAUREN

Oh yeah, you have done quite well for yourself haven't you, Luke? You can just spend the fifty grand on my horse because my daddy says he needs it. Mind you, without even telling me!

Lauren shoves Luke and attempts to turn away again. Luke pulls her back. Lauren throws up her arms.

LUKE

I just...

Lauren stomps her foot and shakes her head. She puts her hand up to silence Luke.

LAUREN

You don't get to talk! All I get to see is a trailer loading my horse when I go out to feed this morning! Then you know what my daddy says when I ask? He says I'm sorry baby, Luke bought Three Strike. My horse, the one my best friend helped me train from a foal, the one that was taking me through to the championship. All because my daddy and my best friend tried to tell me everything was fine!

Lauren puts her hands on hips. Her nose is crinkled. She shakes her head and breathes heavily.

LUKE

I'm sorry. Your dad was going to lose the ranch if he didn't pay the bank. I bought Three Strike for you.

Luke puts both hands up in defeat. He places them palm up in an offering. Lauren Looks away and shakes her head. The horses snort in the background.

Lauren looks at the horses and slightly smiles as they walk in the tall grass grazing. She turns her focus back to Luke.

LAUREN

Don't try and justify yourself. You bought him because you saw a good deal. That was your plan from the start wasn't it? To get your grimy hands on my horse and win in the circuit.

Lauren tips her head up in a proud manner and crosses arms across chest.

LUKE

Damnit Lauren! I love you! I always have. The fact your stubbornness never allowed you to see it is infuriating. I bought him for you! So your dad wouldn't lose the ranch to the bank.

Luke now has his hands on his hips. He drops his arms and begins to walk towards lauren.

Lauren's hands twitch and her eyes widen.

Luke slowly advances.

Laurens mouth opens widely. (Noise of the horses eating grass and birds chirping in the background.)

LUKE (CONT'D)

I Love you, Lauren. I always have. Your my best friend. And if that means buying your horse so he does not end up with some other sticky-fingered jerk and you hate me for it, then so be it. But damnit for once in your life your going to listen and your going to hear me. Your going to feel me. Your going to feel what I have felt all these years. Only then can you decide if you hate me.

Luke continues to advance.

Lauren slowly backs away till her back hits a large oak tree.

Luke's body rests lightly against hers.

Lauren's eyes widen. She braces her hands against his chest.

Luke bends down and kisses her.

Lauren's eyes flutter shut. Her body stays rigid.

Horse snorts in background. Luke and Lauren break apart. Lauren stares at Luke with a pinched expression. Lauren shakes her head.

LUKE (CONT'D)

See... Was it so hard to finally feel what I have been feeling all these years?

LAUREN

You have no idea what your talking about.

Luke brushes a stray hair from Laurens cheek.

Lauren's eyes flutter shut.

Luke bends forward and kisses her again.

Lauren's body relaxes into the kiss this time. The kiss deepens.

Luke slowly pulls back. Their foreheads push together.

Lauren's lips graze against his as she speaks.

LAUREN (CONT'D)

I love you. I always have. I just
didn't think you felt the same way.
I thought we were just friends. But
that don't give you no right to
take my horse!

Lauren shoves Luke away and steps back with a partial grin on her face.

LUKE

The only friend I've ever wanted to
be is one that also calls you mine,
and by golly woman would you give
it up?

Lauren raises her eyebrows before she frowns and shakes her head.

LAUREN

I'm still mad at you and my daddy.
But I'm also sorry I overreacted. I
feel dumb as a doorknob now I
didn't see it sooner.

LUKE

That's ok. I would be worried if
you weren't. Now come here so I can
kiss you again, then we can race
back to the barn. Winner keeps
Three Strike?

LAUREN

You try to keep that ol boy I'll
dig you a grave out here by these
trees myself.

Lauren looks at the large oak trees and gestures towards them. She turns towards her horse.

Luke comes up behind her and whispers in her ear.

LUKE

I guess you better show me just how
fast Captain can run then, eh?

Lauren jumps, but collects herself as she turns towards Luke.

LAUREN

I'll do you one better. I'll show
you just how good I can ride!

Lauren quickly pecks Luke on the lips and lightly bites his lip. She jumps on her horse and kicks it forward quickly.

LAUREN (CONT'D)

Yah! Come on Captain! Git...Git!

LUKE

You pain in my wrangler jeans
woman. What have I gotten myself
into?

Lauren looks over her shoulder. Dust billows up from her horses hooves. She winks. Turns forward. Kicks horse to move faster.

Luke shakes his head. Jumps on his horse and takes off after her.

EXT. CLUMP OF TREES - NIGHT

Lauren holds a shovel. Wipes brow. Crickets chirp in the background. A horse whinnies. Lauren taps the shovel against her boot then begins digging.