

The Bandera PROPHEET

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Gone Country

City Girl

By Mikie Baker

The Bandera Prophet

I was born and raised in Dallas, Texas, in a nice, suburban part of town. Nobody had ever seen a deer, tried to dig a hole only to find nothing but rock, or been confronted by a rattlesnake. It was a safe, happy time where you could stay outside and play all day. None of this idyllic life ever prepared to me for living in the country.

I enjoyed growing up in Big D until it hit the point of no return and I could no longer get from Point A to Point B without sitting in traffic for hours. So, I packed up and headed out to the Hill Country with a child in tow and a mother who was sure I had lost my mind.

My first lessons in rural living included: Deer that eat everything, dark as in really, really dark at night, using a pickaxe to dig a hole, and to pray for rain because that was the only way your grass was going to get watered. I suffered through dial-up, had only one-bar reception for my phone and lived with more scorpions than a conglom of people born on Halloween.

There was only one thing I was not prepared for: rural people are heavily armed.

My dad didn't own a gun. When you live in suburbia, you can get in big trouble when you head out to your backyard and start shooting. In the country, people just assume you're having backstrap for dinner.

So, as they say, "Out of sight, out of mind." Until My Future Husband got a hold of me.

MFH: You need to learn to shoot a gun.

ME: Why? Then I'd be armed and dangerous.

MFH: Well, because. Everybody here has guns. It's a way of life.

ME: Of the Old West?

MFH: Look, I could be gone to town and you could get attacked by a large rattlesnake so you need a gun to defend yourself.

ME: I'd rather chop him in half with my hoe so I could have myself some mighty fine rattlesnake boots.

But, no matter how I put him off, he kept insisting. Finally, one crisp Sunday morning he loaded me, a shotgun and a revolver into the golf cart and drove us down to our ranch dump where he had placed cans up on a hill so I'd have something to aim at. Then he handed me the revolver and said, "Aim at those cans and see what you can hit." I screamed, "You mean this thing is loaded? I could kill you!" He laughed and said, "I don't think your aim is that good."

Well, I tried but my hand shook so much because all I could think about was shooting my foot off. I didn't hit any cans, the gun was loud and I handed it back to him. Then I announced, "That's no fun. Can I go shoe shopping now?"

But MFH had other plans. "No," he said firmly. "Now it's time for the shotgun. That's the one that will kill that rattlesnake." Well, my arms didn't seem quite long enough and even though I pretended to be Annie Oakley, I'm pretty sure all I killed was a cedar tree.

After that, I announced, "I'm done. Let's go back to the house, Billy the Kid."

My Future Husband was pretty disappointed in me and told me all about his Dearly Departed Wife and what a good shot she was. I made him sleep on the couch for two nights.

I guess maybe you can't take the city out of the girl.