

Love and Death on the Farm

by Nancy Martz

Once upon a farm in Minnesota, a sculpturesque redhead with a bouncing rack named Ingfrid left the verdant pasture where she had been grazing all day and headed for a white washed barn along a worn and dusty trail just before sundown. She was soon followed by Brigit, smartly dressed in black and white leather, whose stately rack was no less imposing. They both switched their fragrant tails on either side of their voluptuous hips as if to ward off flies, but really, they had noticed Oyevild standing alone across the field on the other side of the fence. And he had noticed them and gave a loud snort, pawed the ground, and threw his massive black head in the air, suddenly embarrassed when snot flew out of a nostril and hung from his left horn. He quickly tossed it away and Ingfrid moaned in disgust and began to trot faster toward the barn. Brigit stood still, her heart pounding, and with her large brown eyes turned full on Oyevild, produced an otherworldly bellow, twisted her head and bucked flirtatiously, stopping only to see if Oyevild had been watching, and their eyes met, stunning Brigit whose heart was racing uncontrollably.

When Ingfrid reached the barn door, the farmer's daughter Helgaard was already there and had turned on the radio to the PBS classical hour, for everyone in Minnesota knows that cows have refined tastes in music.

Immediately upon entering the barn door from the pasture side, Ingfrid greeted Helgaard with a drop or two of creamy discharge from her udder onto the cement floor of the milking room and a calm, deep throaty "Mooah." Helgaard grinned and slapped the three-legged stool and milk bucket down while Ingfrid placed her head between the wooden slats of the manger and began to chew her cud. By the time Helgaard had finished milking Ingfrid, Brigit trotted into the milk room, still wild-eyed and snorting from the stimulation of having bucked in front of Oyevild. Helgaard turned up the volume, and suddenly Wagner's *Der fliegende Hollander* echoed against the walls and Brigit stopped dead in her tracks, her heart soaring with the Wagnerian leitmotif.

On cue, Helgaard dropped the stool and a new bucket next to Brigit and before Brigit could recover from her second ecstatic stupor of the day, Helgaard had emptied the profound rack of its white treasure and had even squirted directly into the mouths of the five farm cats gathered just inside the door.

But as the music ended, and before Helgaard could carry away the full bucket, the thundering hooves of Oyevild, who had followed Brigit along the other side of the fence, shook the barn, and Brigit, already flushed from bucking in front of Oyevild, already high on Wagner, now gave one last bellow of rapture and shot up into the air in a magnificent twisting buck, hit her gorgeous white forehead on a low rafter, and pratfell with all four of her svelte black and white leather leggings straight up and the milk bucket upside down on her rear right ankle, the frothy cream sliding down her shapely leather thighs and onto the milking floor where the five farm cats binge-lapped with unabashed debauchery.

And that is the Minnesota version of the phrase, "kicked the bucket."