

Thou Shalt Not Steal

By Jeanne Lee

The first house my parents purchased was what some might call “in the country.” There were two bedrooms, a kitchen and a living room. Did you notice no mention of a bathroom? Yippers, there was a functioning one-seater in the back yard until dad quickly began the process of building on an addition that included a bathroom and big “back room.”

Once the construction was completed, the small barn-like building was inhabited by chickens. The hens were friendly, but certainly not the cantankerous rooster. Once while I was feeding the chickens the rooster started to attack me. One swing of my father’s shovel saved me. When time came to have the rooster at dinner – or should I say FOR dinner - we noticed when the leg meat was eaten that the leg dad had hit to deter the rooster had been fractured. OUCH! Once the hens had all been introduced to my mother’s kettle, the barn stood empty.

Dad’s friend offered to loan us a pinto pony named Pet. The unused outhouse was repurposed to store hay bales. One night as I was being aggressively encourage to get Pet to trot down the driveway, she decided to take off like a shot. Thankfully, there were no cars coming as we whipped onto the dirt road and finally came to stop about a block away. The next time I rode – I was told I needed to “get back on the horse” – Pet had a curved bit in her mouth and I had been taught how to be more persuasive when riding.

Then there were Susie the cocker spaniel and the stripped mother cat. Mother cat managed every spring to have a litter of kittens on top the hay bales. Being a farm boy and doing things like they were done “in the day,” my father decide to take her for a ride one night so that she could have her kittens elsewhere. It took her that night and two days to get back to the hay bales and have her kittens where she had in the past.

The neighbor’s dog was notorious for stealing our dog’s dinner. One night during our dinner there was a shrill howl coming from the back yard. Dad jumped up and headed for the back door telling everyone else to say seated. Once he cleared the door we all crept to the screen door to see what was happening. There on the ground was the neighbor’s dog, being held down by sweet, lovable Susie and the mother cat using her claws to rake down the other dog’s undercarriage. Well, may I assure you that dog NEVER attempted to steal food from that backyard again.

So, remember Thou shalt not steal thy neighbor’s dog’s food when two good buds have each other’s six!