



# WHEN A CITY GIRL *goes country*

By Annette Bridges

**“W**ould you like to come up to the farm and haul hay with me?”

His enthusiasm made the experience sound like so much fun, how could I refuse?

I had never driven a stick shift before. I had never driven a truck before. I had certainly never hauled hay before. In fact, I had no idea what it meant to “haul hay.” So what was my boyfriend soon-to-be husband thinking when he invited me to haul hay with him?

Why was he willing to risk his life by putting this totally inexperienced city girl behind the wheel of his flatbed truck with an old granny four-speed? Did he want to test his balance? Did he want to see how much patience he had or how good of a driving instructor he could be? Perhaps he wanted to see if this adorable, naïve city girl he was so very enamored with could muster up what it would take to partner with him in his ranch life? The answers to all of these questions would be revealed on my very first trip to the ranch.

He may have been impressed by my eagerness to help him. I was sincerely interested and curious about his life in the country. I’m quite certain he had never received a more animated and delighted response to his request.

He might have given me some tips on appropriate attire for hauling hay. I don’t think he minded seeing me in my sexy shorts and flip-flops though. It was a hot summer day in August, and I probably would have thought he was crazy if he had suggested I wear jeans

and boots.

Long story short, I didn’t throw him off the truck bed even though I did kill the engine dozens of times, and let’s just say I did not master how to release the clutch slowly in my first try. I did get pretty darn good at getting the bales into the loader, except when I needed to turn to go down a new row. That skill would require many more hay hauling adventures, but we did get all the bales picked up and stacked in the barn. I learned how to use a hay hook that day, too. The old adage “practice makes perfect” would prove to be a true one for driving an old granny four-speed and maneuvering a hay loader.

There would be many more things to learn about this unfamiliar world where the love of my life lived. Much practice would be required from this city girl, and much patience would be needed from both of us. Rome wasn’t built in a day, and the successful merging of a city girl and a country boy would be no different.

The idea of doing something I’ve never done before has always been intriguing to me so one thing that was certain is that my boyfriend-soon-to-be-husband had a willing partner by his side.

I may not have picked up ranch life perfectly in my first attempts, but I was not the type of city girl to give up. I was actually a steel magnolia born in Atlanta, Ga., with my mamma’s grit and hard-headed determination in my blood. I knew, in the words of Thomas Edison, “The most certain way to succeed is to try just one more time.” In my case, many times.®



Annette Bridges had many things to learn when she married a farmer and moved to Tioga, Texas, from the city. (Photo courtesy Annette Bridges)



Annette often wonders why her husband was willing to risk his life by putting an inexperienced city girl behind the wheel of his flatbed truck while hauling hay. (Photo courtesy Annette Bridges)