



Measuring the Rein

Jae Moran

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Dear Author,

I thought that I could hide who I really am from everyone. My family and friends don't know my secret, I'm gay. More specifically I'm a gay cowboy, I've been riding the rodeo circuit for several years now. What's worse is my best friend, the person I've shared everything with since we were in grade school, doesn't know the 'real' me. So here I stand, saddle in hand, trying to muster up the courage to come clean with him. He's over in the arena getting ready to ride one of the most dangerous bulls in the circuit, he's probably looking for me right now for support. We've been there for each other through all the injuries and self-doubts, been supportive for each other when our families have thought we were crazy for leading a rodeo life.

I take a deep breath and go watch my friend, the one I'm about to lose when I tell him I'm gay, I wonder what he'll think when I tell him I'm in love with him too?

Photo Description:

Black and white photo of a muscular cowboy standing in a field, holding his saddle in one hand. He is shirtless and wearing jeans. His head is dropped to his chest and his face is obscured by his hat.

This story was written as a part of the M/M Romance Group's "**Love's Landscapes**" event. Group members were asked to write a story prompt inspired by a photo of their choice. Authors of the group selected a photo and prompt that spoke to them and wrote a short story.

This story may contain sexually explicit content and is **intended for adult readers**. It may contain content that is disagreeable or distressing to some readers. The M/M Romance Group strongly recommends that each reader review the General Information section before each story for story tags as well as for content warnings.

Measuring the Rein Details

Date : Published June 21st 2014 by M/M Romance Group @ Goodreads

ISBN :

Author : Jae Moran

Format : ebook 138 pages

Genre : Romance, M M Romance, Westerns, Contemporary

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From Reader Review Measuring the Rein for online ebook

Neko says

[She even had to stay at the hospital too when she started yelling my infant niece but after she got the care she needed she couldn't dote

Sandra says

Offered for FREE from the M/M Romance Group's Love's Landscapes event. Thank you too all the amazing authors who participated!

This could have been about a bajillion times shorter. It was a sweet friends-to-lovers that I enjoyed as a solid 3 star up until the 40 page mark or so. Stuff with Gavin's family was sappy and resolved *way* too easily, but fine, angst free. That's good.

It really could have ended there. But instead they just kept taking and talking and *talking*. About how important fitness and diet and yoga are. And about how important family and friends and yoga are. And about how important rodeo and rodeo and yoga are. Gouge a pencil through my eye. Please.

Then a lame and obvious attempt at drama that resolved with... guess what? Yup, *more talking!* After I hit the 100 page mark I just skimmed the last 40.

Jeanne 'Divinae' says

I usually LOVE cowboy stories. I was anticipating an awesome story. It was fair. We didn't really follow through some of the things I thought we would. The whole story is about Gavin and Toby. Best friends since middle school, Gavin has been harboring an unrequited love for Toby for over a decade. Finally, he just can't stand it anymore, being in the closet and comes out to Toby and also confesses his love for him. Their relationship isn't all smooth and easy as they transition from friends to lovers. Let alone do they need to figure out what they are; but also about their careers. They both well known in the rodeo circle. But not everyone in the circle may approve if they are found out. Most of the story is about 'what' if they are found out? Would they be willing to throw their careers away and start anew or try to keep it a secret. Well, we never really find out because it is never brought to light. Even though, Toby want and spoke to his agent about it and the best way to come out to the world...that is something that was never addressed. I would have liked it a lot more if it ended a little bit differently. It had a good ending, but it could have been better.

Cassie Richards says

I absolutely loved this cowboy story about two rodeo riders who come out to each other and their families. I loved the characters and there was a really interesting plot - didn't quite go how I expected from the build-up either.

Brilliant!

Janie says

Well in no way can you go wrong with gay cowboys, none what so ever! This was really good. I liked the hidden feelings that were revealed at just the right times. This story had just the right amount of angst in it and touchy feeling feelings as well. I'm also glad that it was a bit longer than a lot of stories wrote for this event, this book needed it. Great ending!

Rachel Emily says

So this was sweet, and fluffy, and I liked the characters. I think I was expecting a bit more angst or serious business. I felt like things were just a bit too easy for Gavin and Toby with everyone being so supportive and them finding other gay men so easily. I wanted a bit more build up for Gavin and Toby. Still, solid writing and I enjoyed it!

Megan says

This is one that will stick with me for a while and definitely going on my favs list and one of my favorites from the LL stories!

I couldn't help but fall for the MCs in this story and the supporting characters, especially Val, Matt and Pietro. Then you add in Gavin's supportive family and you get that wow factor that I love. I absolutely loved when Gavin's dad ordered them both to stand up just so he could hug them! So sweet and unexpected and how each dad should behave when their child comes out to them.

I don't know if Jae Moran has anything else published out there in the m/m genre but I'd love to read more and hope to see more from this author.

GlamLawyer says

Too much yoga, talking, family drama, sappiness and comparing men to women for my taste. There's no peak in that story and all problems just resolve somehow. Not deep enough for me but I am someone who rolls around in angst. ;)

Seiran says

I thought this was a wonderful sweet story about best-friends becoming lovers. It's set in and around rodeo (can't go wrong with some hot yummy cowboys! but I digress sorry) Anyhow, Gavin and Toby have been friends since they were kids and stayed in each others back pockets throughout their childhood and decide to rodeo together.

Gavin and Toby are great together, and I thought the author handled Toby's bisexuality wonderfully. I also really enjoyed the communication between the two, it wasn't light and fluffy, it was hard, complicated, and even hurt at times which rang true for me. I also loved that the author didn't use this as a big miscommunication to break the friendship up. I also really loved the side characters, they added great depth to the story.

~◊~Doxni(ela) ♥ ?? love & semi-colons~◊~ says

There are many things to recommend this novel: best friends to lovers; realistic portrayal of the rodeo circuit; a nice set of secondary characters (Gavin's supportive family, as well as the other guys on the circuit); first-time gay love (although the steam in this book is very, very mild); a sensitive (and believable, I think) portrayal of bisexuality.

And you all know I love me some gay cowboys. (The prompt image is awesome!)

I appreciate the author writing a longer book for this fabulous free event. This one's more than 50,000 words, about 2,400 locations, so it's a fully developed novella. I like longer stories. But this one dragged a bit. There was no particular climax or slow tension/burn between the MCs. I wanted more chemistry, but all I saw was sweetness, a steady friendship, which is great but doesn't make for a particularly interesting story.

There was also a lot of dialogue. All the characters spoke in long paragraphs, and I often lost track of who was saying what to whom. The conversations felt awkward. Everyone spoke like a therapist. There was lots of talking about feelings and giving advice, and it was a little boring and tedious (not to mention unrealistic for gruff, bull-riding cowboys).

I'm also not sure the conflict with Toby's mom was necessary. It didn't really go anywhere, and the mom's long diatribe/monologue about postpartum depression, etc., toward the end felt random.

The ending was sweet. I expected no less. And the writing was strong. I just wanted a tighter plot, more chemistry, more steam, some angst, something to keep my interest better.

K says

3.5 stars rounded up

Contemporary friends to lovers cowboy story. Set in the world of the professional rodeo, Gavin and Toby have been friends since childhood, dropping out of college to ride on the circuit. Gavin has been in love with Toby for years, and has decided that the time is right to come out to friends and family, but gets a shock when Toby kisses him after he tells him he's gay. Toby himself is bi, and knew Gavin's secret for the past 18

months. Whilst Gavin's family is supportive, Toby's mother is not and her partner catches them kissing and photographs them, trying to use the photo to blackmail them. There is some drama in the story, but it's not overly angst. I would have liked to have seen the pair come out but the story didn't take it that way. Very sweet round up type ending. Overall an enjoyable read

Breann says

3.75 stars

I do love me some friends-to-lovers romancing. There's always so much build-up and tension and I just can't get enough of it. Even though Toby and Gavin got together a little bit early, *Measuring the Rein* still had allllll the build-up and tension that I love.

Plus: **COWBOYS. HOT COWBOYS.**

There were a couple little things that were bothersome. The dialogue was long. As in, they would speak for paragraphs at a time, without any back-and-forth communication. Also, Gavin's family was a tad too perfect for my tastes. *shrugs* But those things weren't enough to ruin the story for me.

I appreciated The Conflict and that it wasn't resolved in the way I expected. The support that Gavin and Toby gave each other through it all was sweet and made the characters increasingly likeable.

Cute and sexy, BFF, rodeo cowboys falling in love. Really, you can't go wrong. It was almost too fluffy and just fluffy enough to make me sigh and swoon throughout.

Check out all of our favorite Love Landscapes stories from the third week of this awesome event!

Lisa says

I really enjoyed this book. The story of again and Toby who had been best friends for 14 years and who now travelled the rodeo circuit together. Until Gavin was seriously hurt and through a pain medication haze told Toby how he felt about him, he did not even know Gavin was gay or in love with him.

Toby himself, is bisexual but was beginning to have feelings for Gavin.

This book was the story of how they came to terms with their love and the way it affected the lives of those around them.

Usagi Tsukino says

Did-not-finish. Cowboys or not. I don't care. I couldn't stand them anymore, so I just give up.

Gwen says

It was an interesting read but the book seemed to drag on and the story didnt pull me in. I stopped many times and almost gave up on the story but i do like Toby and Gavin, they make a cute couple.
