

Must Love Horses

It Can be Tough for Horsewomen to Find that Perfect Valentine

By Cindy Hale

If you're a single horsewoman there's a good chance you'll be spending Valentine's Day with your horse and not a devoted date. Not that there's anything wrong with that, but if you're looking for some romance in your life chances are you've discovered it's tough to find a man willing to share you with a 1,000-pound animal.

Undeniably handsome George Springer, 44, is newly divorced and back on the dating scene. Though he lives in a horsekeeping area where plenty of single gals trot down the trails past his house, he hasn't made any advances. "I don't do the cowgirl thing," he says. "I like horses. I even like to ride a little. But every horsewoman I've ever known puts her horse first in the relationship. You can never just drop everything and go away for a few days because there's always something going on with the horse. After a while that gets old."

Ironically, while it seems that men think it's fine and dandy to brand themselves as an avid horseman or cowboy, many of them balk at lassoing a woman who's passionately involved with the same interests. One fellow posted on a matchmaking site specifically geared toward equestrian singles, "If you're interested in me, email a photo of yourself. That means you. I don't want to see pictures of your horses. I'm not interested in dating them."

In all fairness, when browsing matchmaking websites aimed at horse lovers, the online profiles of many single horsewomen do indeed feature numerous candid photos of foals and show horses, trail rides and grooming sessions. Tucked amongst the snapshots of life at the barn will be one quick glimpse of the actual woman, and often her true identity is cloaked beneath a ball cap or helmet and a pair of sunglasses. Yet perhaps what these horsewomen are saying is, "Forget the wine and chocolates. If you want to love me, you have to take me as I am. And the horses are part of the package deal."

So what's the deal with men? Are their egos so fragile that they can't share a woman's affection with an animal?

"Honest to goodness, sometimes I think men feel like we're cheating on them with our horses," offers Sharon Perez, 32, a single woman who shows Paints on the APHA circuit. "It's like my gelding is the other man."

When a horsewoman does corral a guy who accepts the way she dotes on her horse, it becomes a source of inspiration. The horsey gals that remain unattached cling to the possibility that they, too, can wrangle a man who's self-confident enough not to feel threatened by the everyday needs of the average equine. Though they may seem rarer than palomino Thoroughbreds, men who love horsewomen do exist. It just takes a while to cut them from the herd of unsuitable suitors.

Horses are a girl's best friend, but that doesn't mean she can't like jewelry, too! Check out our Equestrian Jewelry Extravaganza.

Read on for some tips on balancing your equestrian life with your family and friends.