

Montana Made a Man Out of Me

She made a hair-braided horsewoman strong enough to carry a saddle in one arm and a bucket of water in the other.

She made a witness through icicled eyelashes to the beautiful struggles of visible breaths in a below-zero sunrise.

She made a tractor-driving, snow-plowing ice-breaker with near-frostbitten fingers.

She made a skeptic of the snow but an optimist for the moisture to follow.

She made a sleep-deprived, you-don't-eat-till-they-do provider.

She made a day-and-night-shift nurse in a hospital of grass and sky with hands that could pull life from a womb and patch open wounds shut.

She made a poet, speaking words suitable only for the cows when they didn't want to find the gate, and words of thanks when they finally did.

She made a trailer-tire changer on the side of the highway with 5 horses still loaded.

She made a white-line chaser, crying behind the steering wheel driving until daylight with no buckle in the backseat and no money in the wallet and another rodeo to reach by morning.

She made a no-days-off, five-to-nine employee with no chance of paid overtime and no room to complain.

She made a door-holding, look-them-in-the-eyes, hand-shaker with a firm, leathery grip.

She made a get-on-when-you-fall-off conqueror in a battlefield of tough conditions and tough luck.

She made a dusty cowgirl-queen who ruled in a steel-pipe palace with a dirt-floor throne room, a chair made of leather and rawhide, and a crown made of felt.

She made a soft-hearted, firm-minded girl with a woman's authority and a child's love for the Lord's land.

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-Paige Rasmussen