



ABBA

Life.Love.Letting Go

Patty Ann

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Life, Love & Letting Go

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Thank you.

~ Preview Sample Chapters ~

Foreword

Crossroad decisions result from major events. Such was the death of my beloved horse Abba, which spurred a new passage. Abba and I had traveled a very long road together—one saturated in fun and personal growth, rich with history. We explored many trails, some less traveled. With each new path another perspective emerged. And this was the case during the week prior to and following Abba's final days.

New beginnings grow from endings. Abba's death was a process of emergence. As I reminisced on his life—our life together—it became evident that unseen gifts were bountiful. Our story crosses bridges where no time exists. It questions choices. It explores the soul. It forces insights. And, in the end, it reveals that life and death are but a mirror, a complement to worlds not so far apart.



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Life Cycles

Keeping a horse for their lifetime is rare. Thirty years with any one being stretches a notch beyond true friendship. Between our dynamic duo, I am not sure who helped whom to grow more over the years. As physical transformations go—the birth of both of my children, the deaths of several friends, the passing of my father, the career changes—as an onlooker to many family events, Abba was the more sure-footed of us two. Steadfast and tolerant. A constant of integrity. A perfection of artwork upon my landscape. He was unwavering. This is his story—and that of our life together.

Abba continued to live beyond his means. He helped me write our story over the last nights beyond his rebirth. And look at that last poem that we created for

him; it is like I was riding him again. Verses flowed in canter-rhythm strides. I could not have created it myself. His voice held strong and steady as sentences were structured through his ethereal vibe. I cannot stop crying though. The damn burst. It is not because I am sad; it is because I'm so very glad. In our life, we rode at will with freedom, just like the breeze blows. And Abba gave me his wings of flight after I gave him his. God, almighty, how I loved that horse, because I saw—and see—his spirit as no less than equal to mine.

I had not cried much before this night, but the flood dike broke. The human body does what it does best: de-stress with tears. Although I admit I do not purge in this way often enough.

So now I am ready to tell you about my journey with my Abba this past week. I had waited for months, years

really, mentally preparing for this day—our day. Intrinsicly I knew I owed Abba my life for his lifetime. Just like I owe Lily and JD, Abba's soul mates. They will journey with me into their end days too. It may seem odd perhaps that I would write and talk about my horses as no less than family—but that is my way. Never did I imagine that, through Abba's physical death, I would write of our life. But it is fitting. Really it is. Through death much is learned.

Abba was not my first horse in this life yet I always fondly called him my firstborn. Now I see he was our firstborn special golden horse. He entered my path four years before I gave birth to my son. He was everything I manifested. I told Ellen, a family friend and renowned Arabian breeder and horse-show judge just what I desired in my next horse. I looked for months, but no horse fit right. Not until that day Abba peered from out

from the darkness of his stall. It was then my world shone bright with delight.

In my mind's eye, I had pictured my horse to be a chestnut with a flaxen mane and tail. This type of coloring is in the pedigree genetics of a golden Palomino. Perfect I thought. I gave my description to Ellen and never thought more of it. I kept looking. My search seemed futile and I grew tired. Ellen, who rests her soul with Abba's now, called me one day. "I think I have found you a horse. He has the bone structure you want. Believe it or not, he even has the color you want!" She told this to me in amused amazement. I had grown tired of looking, and decided I was in no rush to see this horse. Plus Ellen lived far away.

Finally I traveled north and saw many wonderful equines that Abba buying day. All were very nice, but

none put a fire in my belly. I grew tired. On my way home, I was sort of going past Ellen's farm. Well, it was a choice of routes. I drove down her road. In hesitation and being very road-weary, I almost did not stop in. What would I find but another barn full of promises that again might not hold mine? But I was pulled to stop in. Ellen, while a beautiful being herself, was an aged woman who lived in a dark, dank place. She had sold her ranch to the state years earlier as a new freeway was to plow through her property. It never happened. So Ellen had leased her home place back, and it had fallen into sad disrepair. It stunk. It was collapsed. The side yards held debris. It was dirty. The stable was unfit. Years of neglect showed through. And yet this place was full of love, and filled full with horse life.

My copper penny, the lucky penny in the dirt, was found here in this rundown stable. He shone bright amidst the muck as he stuck his curious head out and around the corner of his stall door to peer down the aisle at me. And the rest, as they say, is history. Now I can see that finding him here in this dark, desolate place was sort of fitting to bygone eras of yesteryear. Abba was a bright star shining inside the dead of my night.

Abba Fun

Our first years were testy, and zesty as life was abundant. We had so many, too many wonderful times. We did it all. High-altitude mountain pack trips. Long day-trail explorations. Fox-hunting excursions. Dressage and three-day event training. Plus we showed—in jumping mostly. We always loved a challenge. Flat classes bored Abba. He cursed any class where one went round and round in circles. He told me so many times. He would buck silly, saying *I don't want to be here doing this*. There were times we were excused. Times I excused us. And times he performed so brilliantly and could do no wrong. These rare times he won many colors of red, blue and golden yellows as he circled dutifully. But it was his jumping that got him noticed. It was his forte. We loved to fly. Over any obstacle of any height. And this genre was where we

competed. For fun primarily, and to prove to me that we could outrun the best of them.

The practicality of serious showing and winning loads of ribbons is a curious endeavor. Showing is a rich man's sport, and in some circles one can perceive it as totally status-seeking. It seems nonsensical to gauge your worth through a horse performance that could be bought with the color of money. And, *the best* is relative. It's a bias based on the judgment of one person's opinion. Nonetheless, ribbons do look pretty and make you feel “kid good.” Ribbons are icons of one's achievements. It's a thrill to hear your name announced in the top placings of a class. It is nice to know your hard work is recognized. So, pretty ribbons strewn through my pony's tail or hung from his bridled head are a fun adornment. Colored rosettes upon the stall wall boast that your training paid off. Awards won

through dedication are gratifying. It is proof of accomplishment and that you merit the judges' nods. Yet for me it was much more. This recognition was the ultimate proof of setting a goal, attainment, and reaching a higher standard. Coming from an impoverished childhood, the pinnacle of winning ribbons was far more about self-accomplishment than leading a well earned life privileged with horses.

Anyway, Abba could jump and he had the ribbons and trophies to prove it—which have long since been put away. Abba stood out among jumpers. His small stature was imposing in a jumping arena full of slick, tall serpent thoroughbreds. Lordy, lordy, Ab was a leaping gazelle to ride. Abba would approach a jump, listen sharply with pert ears, stride long, launch up, tuck his legs up under himself tightly, sail high in a graceful, perfect arch, and clear any size obstacle by extra

measure. As he dropped down off the hurdle, he unfolded his legs until his grounded hooves touched ever so lightly. A few purposeful strides later he was airborne again. Abba always placed well in huge classes. Even sport-horse-biased judges took notice of our little copper penny team.

There were only two times where we did not compete well. I was sidetracked in thought on both. At our last jump show ever, I was quite preoccupied with the timing and the imminent conception of my second child. That weekend was when my daughter's soul flew into my body. I didn't know it then, but adding a second child would forever change our family dynamics, push another agenda for my life, and cease our show-jumping days. A second child forms a basis for significant family obligations. At that point I believed that our mother-father-son-daughter was a completed

family unit. And with two small children, rarely can one escape easily away. Squeezing in Abba time was done after working full-time, after housework, and after attending to our children. Two children increase home responsibilities tenfold. Thus, my life settled into an occasional trail ride whenever a free hour would surface. Quiet Abba times were stolen while I fed him. He became my resting spot in my days of plenty. Abba took a backseat during these child-rearing years and he adapted well. He knew our home front was growing and welcomed the extended family.

Memories were all I had left of our disciplined jumping dates. Some of my all-time favorite rides were our competitive jumping courses. These were the ones that got me through the birthing of both my son and daughter. Abba helped me ride out the pain of natural childbirth. My memory is sharp in remembering

certain events. As I bore each contraction, my mind drifted back to favored fox-hunting fields or show-jumping patterns. Retracing each footfall, approaching each hurdle, stretching out in full gallops got me through my birthing pains.

I would have to say, hands down, our most favorite rides were when we fox-hunted. Jumping natural terrain without restraints was beyond exhilarating. Thankfully we rode only to the scent of a fox, because hunting down a live animal did not agree with me. In a field of 100 hunters, even in our first time out, we rode way out ahead of the pack. Abba was so fast he became the wind. We jumped the highest, most solid walls of stone, and mortifying four-foot sturdy logs that the hunt field had to offer. We joyously flew past and over everything and everyone. Even passing the hunt masters, who gave us the evil eye. I was soon told it was

not polite—actually politically incorrect—to pass the pack leaders, and that we could be—*would* be—dismissed, as in kicked out and off the field and not invited back, if it continued. I smiled. We were indeed frontrunners. After that, we held off by a few paces behind yet pushed the huntsmen on, pressing their egos forward faster because we were hot on their heels. This riding fun was advanced, akin to a steeplechase. Not for the faint of heart or for a novice; this sport sat on the edge of dangerous. I referred to it as *heads-up horse mastership*. Oh, how we loved racing in those open fields!

Timing. I finally put Abba's jumping saddle up for sale five days prior to his passing and before I actually knew his days were numbered. I thought to myself, *who am I kidding? I will not jump another again*. And this saddle

of ours only fit him, not others. I had sold his western saddle to a friend just a couple months prior.

It was after I had taken some pictures of the saddle that I realized, “Oh, my gosh!” I could not sell Abba's saddle after all! Do you know what showed in the pictures? Abba’s orbs! His life force and spirit! So that saddle went nowhere; it stayed with me. For those who have not been introduced to orbs, these are typically round, translucent shapes found in pictures in which uplifting energy is/was present. You will see an orb presence around ceremonies, among nature, near animals, and in other earthly environments. Orbs are a fairly recent phenomenon. There is much speculation around their construction and purpose. The best I can say is that these are a type of spirit being that represents nature's balance. Orbs will show up in photographs—and, to the gifted, to the naked eye. Abba's saddle had displayed

several large orbs. I chose to believe it was Abba's energy because for the few months after he had crossed over, I felt his essence in my path constantly.

Returning to the open fields where my soul felt rested, contented, and happiest. Memories of how fast my Abba horse could run are still exhilarating to reminisce. I do not think I ever asked Ab to do his full speed. He—we just loved to run full tilt in grassy pastures where I let Ab pick his pace. And to jump I just aligned him square, gave a nudge, and off he flew. The higher the better. He was a small jumper by most equestrian standards. But it was soon apparent he loved to jump *big*. It was no wonder, as he loved to buck big too . . . for joy as he came off huge jumps!

He was athletic to say the least. Abba was a teaser. Always testing, not maliciously, but to see how far he

could take me—or, rather, ground me. His buck of delight gave me the best seat ever. He taught me how to sit centered and stay balanced during the rockiest of rides. I always thought it would have been fun to ride a bucking bronco and live to tell about it—and I guess, really, I did. Abba's bucks were relentless. He would run, then go into a full body-twisting buck. His back end would whiplash up, his tail flying high, as his front end disappeared with no neck or head in sight. I found myself perched upon a launch pad and cannot even tell you the number of times I found myself returned to the soft earth. Yes, I see it here too. Abba always dumped me in soft grass! He did not want to hurt me. There was no fear of this ever. He always came back to see if I was okay, to protect me and stand over me.

Other horses buck and now I just laugh. They are no match for my Abba, who taught me how to sit rough

rides and then fall not gracefully, but with great flexibility and ease. I never got hurt. Abba made sure of that.

Through the years, Abba taught me about life as I taught him about disciplines. We found ourselves on top of the world high above tree lines in the air streams where he now lives. We of course ran through and over every green field we found. There are no fields left here in my neighborhood now to run over. Isn't that interesting, too? How we loved the open space to run and fly free; it too is all gone.

Whenever people watched us ride, really watched us, they would truly understand what *fun* meant. They did not need a dictionary to comprehend the meaning of the word *fun*. One only had to look our way when we galloped. They often would say to me, "That looks fun!"

Or, “You look like you’re having fun,” or, “What a fun ride!” I guess I was always grinning ear to ear. Yes, rides should be fun. Abba taught me this too.

End of Sample Chapters. Thank You!



3! Birds on old Ab’s back—
Fitting for a horse who won his wings.

Owed 2 Ab ~ 33 & Forever Free

I bid my best friend a final farewell today.
As a firstborn child remembered, He won't go away.

Our memories not forgotten, as I hold them near,
Just like our first encounter when we met in yesteryear.

I was the only one to enter His stall corridor that day.
He was the only one to peer out and down the aisle
my way.

In those first eternal moments I bought Him sight
unseen.
It was fate merging our paths with a cause and a mean.

My Dream Horse shone like a new copper penny,
Trimmed in a golden mane and tail He stood out among
many.

Gentle, forgiving, curious, yet strong,
He challenged me to new heights and brought
me along.

Like my own spirit there were times He bucked
really hard,
Yet He returned to me always, where He stood
over guard.

My seat learned secure with a sense of balance,
held firm,
And although grounded often, my respect for Him He
did earn.

His rocking-horse canter floated upon air,
Extending and releasing like elastic, without a care.

As always, I held His soft mouth tender as we rode.
He wore His rubber-egg butt proudly, as we had
last strode.

At 15 point 1 His package was small.
Yet He felt so very big—so absolutely tall.

Who knew He flew with the birds, and had their wings
of flight?
As He could run with the wind blowing at the speed
of light.

And we ran and we jumped, as one does just for joy,
As a gazelle might and would, over life's hurdles,
oh boy!

Others came and went, but He stayed, sharing more
than half my life.
He laughed with me, cried with me, and consoled me in
my times of strife.

He raised me up into the person I've become,
As I bore and raised my own children, and then some.

Known to all as 'Good ole Ab,' He fostered novice
riders along,
Making them confident in character—they too
grew strong.

He taught me, my friends, children et al,
That just being is beauty, and honesty stands tall.

Among His herd He roamed independent and free.
Like me, Abba belonged to no one, only to thee.

His life made full, brought mine complete.
Our journey saw too soon where our trail end
would meet.

The best I could do was offer Him His lifetime home,
But His real reward lay across heaven's gate alone.

He taught me to listen, then told me when.
It was His time to go, but He would see me again.

This morning, I saw a shiny new copper penny.
It fell out of my pocket and onto the floor like many.

But this one stood alone, both shiny and bright,
As a symbol of his freedom that lived long in this light.

With the breeze at our backs, Ab took one final buck,
In the world He so loved; I wished upon Him a final
good luck.

As my friend laid my friend ever so gently to earth,
The breeze carried His spirit into the land of new birth.

I don't pray to the Lord for His soul to keep,
Because He rests inside me eternally, for mine to reap.

Thank you Abdaar Fadan for the gifts that you gave,
No longer must you play a part here, as you rest in
your grave.

Single handed you raised JD into your mirror of a
special horse.
And in His turn, and by your guidance, He has taught
Lily your course.

Together your herd stands solemn over your final
resting spot,
Knowing you go before them, leading the way—and
you found your way out.

Freedom rides high and rewards those who deserve it,
And you, my dear friend, won yours, as heaven
assures it.

Each morning I will hear your soft nickering voice.
Each night you will trail in; I will miss seeing you, but
respect your choice.

And when my time comes, I know you'll be there
standing at my gate,
Peering out once again down our aisle, impatiently,
wondering if I'm late.

To toss at me, push at me, burrowing your head deep,
To make sure I am listening, looking up ahead, and am
not asleep.

No farewells to you, My Dear Sweet Old Friend,
As your heart and soul live on inside me, to my final of
no end.

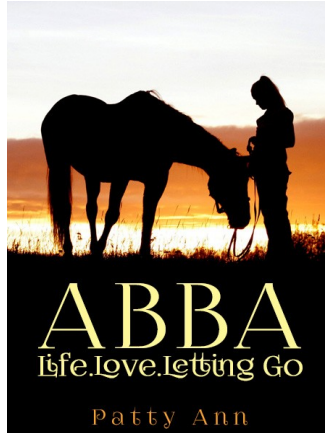
*Registered as "Abdaar Fadan" aka "Ab," "Abba," and
"Good ole Ab."*

*Born May 12, 1976—As remembered this 28th Day of
January 2010*



Ab & JD—Best Friends,
always as a mirror of each other.

Thank You for Previewing



ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Patty Ann is a life-long educator who has taught college, high school, and was an Instructional Designer who wrote training for corporate development. Now Patty authors a variety of genres. From fiction and non-fiction, to real life use-it-now lesson books.

Patty is an avid animal lover. All her book proceeds benefit animal welfare through her **Patty Ann's Pet Project** a 501(c)(3). Contact Patty through her website at **PattyAnn.net**.



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