

Excerpt from *Mystery on Inheritance Ranch*, Book Three in the Meg Miller Cozy Mystery Series, by Phyllis H. Moore

Meg settled in an overstuffed chair with a book. She stared at the baby, unable to focus on reading. She was distracted by thoughts of a ranch, Teddy and Dorie. Closing the book, she put it on the end table beside the chair and daydreamed.

Ted had mentioned their mother talking about her childhood. Meg had never heard her say anything about her family, but Teddy was older, remembered more. Meg had been eleven when their mother died. It wasn't until Meg was an adult that it occurred to her to wonder about her mother's past. She had been angry at her mother for taking her own life, still was. At times, she wanted to erase the memory forever. Could be the reason she was ambiguous about visiting her uncle's ranch.

Maybe the family had been dysfunctional. Maybe the mental illness that claimed her mother was present in other family members. Maybe Uncle Neal had been mentally ill, too.

Meg closed her eyes and put her head back against the chair. *What will I do with a ranch? I'll sell it. I have no business with such a thing. I don't even like beef that much, or cow poop, or wearing boots.*

She could hear the baby making a slight purring snore in her sleep.

Meg opened her eyes to see Mikayla's lips turn up in a smile. It made Meg grin to see the baby's face, pleased with her dreams. Looking at Mikayla napping, Meg made a decision. *It's not just my family, my mother's legacy I've tried to erase. This family history belongs to Dorie and her daughter. They have a right to know there was an Uncle Neal, that he had a ranch, that their grandmother and great-grandmother had a family. I have to go see it and talk with anyone who might have known them.*

Her mind *was* made up. The baby was three months old. Dorie didn't need Meg there any longer. In fact, Meg had been back in her own house for over a month. Mikayla was sleeping most of the night, and Dorie could work at home. She could schedule shopping for when Michael was there with the baby. It would be good for them to be on their own with Mikayla. Figuring out motherhood without Meg for a while would probably be a good thing for Dorie. There was no reason Meg couldn't travel to South Texas to visit her ranch and talk to people who had known her mother's family.