

*The Real Thing* - Plans to move to a boat and write a romance novel fall apart for a burned-out Boomer when she meets a sexy, Gen-X knight-in-shining armor. (Romantic Comedy)

Excerpt  
from

*The Real Thing*

His helmet was raised, and Susanna felt her heart do a little flutter. Cafe-au-lait skin. Cobalt-blue eyes. Generous mouth with teeth a medieval knight would have killed for.

Slowly, but elegantly, the tall knight pushed to his feet. A minor victory when she considered managing the sword he brandished.

Who is this guy? Screaming probably wasn't the way to win new friends among the nautical set. And for some crazy reason he didn't scare her a bit

Her visitor threw her a heart-stopping smile. The skin crinkled around his deep, sexy eyes. On its own, her hand came up to pat her hair. An attempt to jumpstart her stunned brain?

She stood a little straighter, holding in her stomach, nervous she was barefoot. What if she had to kick him for some reason?

She blurted, "Where'd you leave your steed?"

"At the stable." Clinking with every step, he sauntered across the deck. "The poor beast hates walking across the moat between here and Camelot."

Every muscle she'd used moving onboard The Lollipop screamed in protest, but Susanna laughed. Her shining knight was blue eyed, handsome and had a sense of humor.

"By the way," Handsome pointed over her left shoulder, "yonder lies Camelot."

Her laughter turned to a giggle. Was he dangerous?

Handsome dazzled her with a broad grin. Did his Rhett Butler-moustache keep the visor from catching the short, black hairs above his lip? She hiccupped, rushed to say, "Funny, I always imagine Camelot on dry ground."

"A common misconception."

"I guess I could sue all the writers who misled me." Did Handsome have a clue who Rhett Butler was? Unless Susanna missed her guess, he belonged to the X-generation with her kids.

"Never trust a writer." He made a little bow, then extended his hand. "Rex Arthur, M'lady--?"

"Susanna." Rex Arthur? He was pulling her leg, wasn't he? She let the writer-crack go, bit her bottom lip and swallowed the snicker choking her. "Susanna Walker."

"It's okay." He gave her a smile with lots of those TV-perfect teeth.

"Laugh. I don't want you to explode or anything."

Something—hot and tingling—exploded in her stomach. Feeling ridiculous, Susanna thrust her hand at him. "I'm not going to explode."

"If you're sure." Metal fingers closed firmly over hers. "But I don't mind if you do laugh."

The twinkle in his eyes challenged her to keep a straight face. She pursed her lips, shook her head. Having the name Rex Arthur and wearing that armored getup, he'd better have a twinkle in his eye.

"What can I do for you?" She tugged at the hand he hadn't released.

"Someone left your zibbergigget on. I turned it off."

"Why, thank you, Your Majesty." The words fell out of Susanna's mouth without a brain-consult. He hadn't really said . . . zibbergigget, had he?

His eyes widened under arched, black brows. Gloved fingers closed around the pulse racing in her right wrist. He threw his helmeted head back, roaring while his left hand cupped her elbow to support him.

"I'm sorry!" Heat burned her neck and ears and she felt like a teenager instead of a soon-to-be senior citizen. "That was a silly thing to say. Must be the move. I apologize."

"No need." He shook his head and let go of her hands, but the grin played around his mouth. "My mother had a weird sense of humor. . . as you can imagine from the name she gave me. She used to call me Your Majesty when I got a too big for my britches."

"Did she?" Susanna gritted her teeth so her gaze wouldn't stray lower than his neck— even if his britches were metal.

Her bright tone must have given him the impression she was interested. His helmet bobbed up and down.

Or was that The Lollipop? A slight wake lapped at the edges of the boat. What if she fell down? Worse, what if she fell against him and brought him down on top of her?

Get a gr-r-rip, Susanna.

She blinked away the vision of their entwined bodies and gave him her listening-raptly face. An intelligent woman would thank him for his neighborliness and send him on his way.

"Sometimes, when I really blew it? Mom called me Your Lordship." He flashed that melting smile again. "Then, I knew I was in for it."

"Uh-huh." Susanna bet all he had to do was bat those to-kill-for eyelashes and Mama forgave him anything from stealing cookies to flunking college.

Who wouldn't?

"I blew it a lot." Rex winked. Behind him a couple of gulls screamed.

Susanna struggled for composure. And for words. "I bet."

"Couldn't you pretend to waver on my guilt?"

"I prefer honesty—" A speed boat roared past the nearest buoy,

creating a rolling wake. Water slammed into the side of The Lollipop. The deck swayed. Susanna squeaked, stumbled and lost the battle against gravity.

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### **Where'd you get the idea for *The Real Thing*?**

Several years ago, a middle-aged friend of mine moved to a tiny boat and lived on it for two years. She intended to restore it, sell it, move back to her house. She often mentioned her interesting neighbors--most of them single men much younger than she.

Younger man, older woman, living on boats next to each other . . . the idea took hold and opened up themes about:

- chasing fantasies,
- stretching to do something without pay after years of working to make money
- listening to our hearts instead of to our commonsense
- taking a risk--even when friends and family think we're nuts
- believing that age differences don't matter to the heart

Take a heroine who looks her age. She has two grown kids, an ex and a general wariness about men, She meets a younger guy who looks young enough to be one of her kids. How can they get together? Are there any laughs?

I hope you'll contact me about the excerpt and this story in general.