

looking back. The drizzle became heavier and the thunder clapped closer.

Mathew had almost lost his seat as Mezeppa spooked with that last crack of thunder. Letting the stallion pick his way on the trail, Mathew searched from side to side for other trails Randi might have taken. Then he heard Skyler's nicker. They were close. Mezeppa's head came up and was going to answer back when Mathew saw Randi off to one side. He hollered to her and in answer she sent Skyler into a lope to get away.

"Stop, Randi." Cueing Mezeppa into a gallop Mathew chased after her. The stallion was receptive to his cues and sped off. Minutes went by and he still couldn't gain on her. In his mind all he heard was Randi's voice repeating parts of the old legend. 'The King's ride would go on forever. The stallions name was Mezeppa.'

"Come on big guy; let's live up to your name." Mathew crouched low in the saddle and squeezed his legs to encourage Mezeppa's speed. The horse took off and Mathew could see the gap

finally closing.

Randi was torn. She knew she should pull up for the horse's sake. Skyler was nearly tapped out and Mezeppa's young legs were at risk in this mud and that scared her as well. The rain was coming down hard now. She knew she could not out run him, nor should she try. She had to think of something else. Then it came to her. She made a sharp left turn at the next bend in the trail, went down the small bank and splashed into the creek and pulled Skyler to a trot.

Mathew over ran the turn so he had to slow Mezeppa and trotted him back to it. He saw Randi trotting slowly away and thought she had given up the escape. He nudged Mezeppa up to the bank at the waters edge, but the horse refused to go through it.

“Damn it, Mezeppa get going, walk on, walk on. Randi for God's sakes, wait please.” Mathew hollered to her while he frantically kicked the horse's sides. The bank was slick with mud and the horse would have none of it.