

BOOKS

The Pioneer Woman, on meeting the Marlboro Man

Popular blogger to visit Dallas and sign copies of her new memoir

By **KATE PARHAM**
Special Contributor

You may know her from her award-winning blog, thepioneerwoman.com, which turned out her No. 1 *New York Times* best-selling cookbook, *The Pioneer Woman Cooks*. Or perhaps you saw her on Bobby Flay's *Throwdown*, where the two battled it out for best Thanksgiving feast in 2010. The Pioneer Woman took the trophy, in case you missed it.

Whatever the case, Ree Drummond is at it again; this time, sharing her love story, which

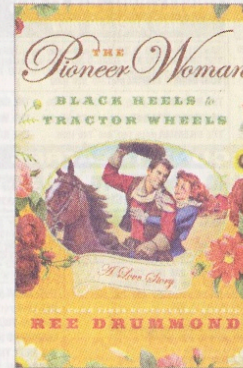
she refers to on her blog as her "Harlequin Romance-meets-*Forrest Gump* saga," and what the publisher (and the rest of the world) calls *Black Heels to Tractor Wheels* (William Morrow, \$25.99).

Drummond, who built a huge following with her first book, *The Pioneer Woman Cooks*, will be in Dallas on Valentine's Day to sign the new book.

The memoir tells the story of how Drummond met her real-life Marlboro Man, whose actual name (Ladd Drummond) is never

mentioned in the memoir. She documents their first years together and her transition from big-city glitz in bustling Los Angeles to cattle-ranch wife in rural Oklahoma.

The book is actually another spinoff of Drummond's blog, *Confessions of a Pioneer Woman*, where the accidental ranch wife started writing about her romance back in September of 2007. Drummond created a single post recounting the night she first met her future husband, after which she received more than 150



comments and wishes from readers to continue her story.

For the next 18 months, Drummond wrote the series, then called, "The Night I Met Marlboro Man." She finished the story in June of 2009, with more than 1,500 readers commenting. On the blog, their romance concluded with their wedding day, but the book takes it a step further, relating their first year of marriage.

As with many newlyweds, there were quite a few adjustments to be

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Blogger pens her memoir

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made, not the least of which was a baby on the way and the impending divorce of Drummond's parents after a 30-year



Bill Nyard

Ree Drummond is the author of the blog pioneerwoman.com.

Plan Your Life

Ree Drummond will appear at 6 p.m. Feb. 14 at Borders, 10720 Preston Road, Dallas, 214-363-1977.

marriage.

But in Drummond's signature snarky, Southern humor, she laughs away just about any problem she comes across, including lack of sushi and showering, inexplicable nausea and rectal exams on cows.

The pages are decorated in much the same fashion as her website, with pretty florals and vintage-inspired decals, while the content mirrors that of a PG-rated romance novel.

And if the Pioneer Woman hasn't seen enough success yet, just wait. Columbia Pictures recently acquired the film rights to *Black Heels to Tractor Wheels*, with talk of Reese Witherspoon playing Ree.

Kate Parham is a Dallas freelance writer.

PIONEER WOMAN'S MARINATED FLANK STEAK

- 1/2 cup soy sauce
- 1/2 cup cooking sherry
- 3 tablespoons honey
- 2 tablespoons sesame oil
- 2 heaping tablespoons minced ginger
- 3 to 5 cloves minced garlic
- 1/2 teaspoons red pepper flakes
- 1 flank steak

Combine first 7 ingredients in a glass or ceramic dish. Rinse flank steak, place in marinade and refrigerate for 3 to 6 hours.

Remove steak from marinade and place on a plate. While heating grill pan, turn on exhaust fan because there's likely to be lots of smoke during cooking. When pan is extremely hot, place steak at an angle in pan (for more interesting grill marks). Cook without touching for 1 1/2 to 2 minutes. Rotate meat about 45 degrees and cook for an additional 1 1/2 minutes. Flip and cook 1 1/2 minutes, then rotate meat 45 degrees and cook 1 1/2 more minutes.

Thinly slice meat against the grain and serve with sauce, which is optional. Makes 5 servings (actual number will depend on the size of the steak).

Optional sauce: Before grilling flank steak, strain the marinade through a sieve into a saucepan. Add 1/2 cup water and boil marinade for 10 minutes while heating the grill for the steak. Spoon some marinade into a dish to use as a dipping sauce.

PER SERVING: Calories 204 (41% fat) Fat 9 g (3 g sat) Cholesterol 43 mg Sodium 449 mg No fiber Carbohydrates 4 g Protein 24 g

SOURCE: *Black Heels to Tractor Wheels*, by Ree Drummond (William Morrow, \$25.99)