

# A Permanent Holiday

by Beth Newman

How wonderful to feel the warm sea breeze dance across my ancient skin. *Arthur*, I thought, *it's exactly how I remember it being on all those romantic holidays we took years ago.* I stood for a moment, letting the warmth of the sand radiate up through the soles of my sandals. I felt joy. I shielded my eyes from the late afternoon sun and said, "Carlo, it's so much more beautiful than I remember it, you know? I've always loved the way the breeze plays on the fronds, such a quiet wave of motion."

Carlo smiled at me and pulled the cinch tight around the horse's middle. "Senorita Bess, you have waited until after siesta time. You are certain you can do this painting adventure on your own? Is it the sunset you are after?"

"Yes, that's exactly it, Carlo." I smiled, handing him my art box to strap on the horse's back. "I want to be in that moment when a wave crests and has that low, brilliant, sunlit light behind it. What's this beast's name anyway?" I asked, laying my hand on the horse's warm hide.

"Angel," Carlo smiled.

*'Of course it is,'* I thought as Carlo strapped my art box over Angel's wide solid back.

"He's our gentlest old horse. Aren't you old boy?" he said, patting the horse's neck and holding him steady for me, while I managed to climb aboard.

*'I'm glad I didn't wait any longer. It's possible I wouldn't be able to do this in just another week,'* I thought. I adjusted the camera around my neck and got comfortable in the wide sidesaddle and said, "So, there's another platform of steps down the beach a bit?"

"Si. Yes, you'll come to the first one at the end of the beach, near the point. Angel here will take you right up to it. Won't you, ol' boy? You'll get your oats and water there." Carlo said, patting the horse and looking up at me as he finished. "If you don't find what you are looking for there, you can travel a bit further around the point and see another beach. They go on and on," Carlo said with a big grin.

I smiled back thinking, *Yes, it feels right to come back here to do this. It's been a long, painful process that I could continue for a few more months, or I could put a stop to all the fuss and bother now while I'm still able. I've told everyone that I love them. And the insurance policies are all up to date. Now, if I can manage to make it look like an accident, my loved ones can collect double.*

"Will you show me your painting when you get back?" Carlo asked.

"You are a kind and gentle soul to an old lady, Carlo." I watched a breeze lift his curls as I added, "I'll be lost in my painting and gone for awhile." I turned to look down the stretch of beach and picking up my camera, I took a snapshot over Angel's head.

