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# HIS UNTAMED LOVE

Cuffs and Spurs Book Four

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ANYA SUMMERS



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This book contains fantasy themes appropriate for mature readers only.  
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advocating any non-consensual sexual activity.

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## Chapter 1

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“I’ve got a bad feeling about this,” Mia whispered.

Peering at the craggy mountains, she shifted her vehicle into park and killed the engine. She gawked at the main building of the Black Elkhorn Lodge and Resort, although resort was a term she would use lightly. It was the furthest thing from a resort Mia had ever viewed. Not that she’d vacationed at a plethora of them in her lifetime but at the few she had visited, there had been pools with sexy bartenders ready to refill your beverage, not miles upon miles of untamed wilderness to behold and brave.

Whereas... this?

Mia was about as out of her element as a whale on dry land. What did she actually know about the great outdoors? Nothing. She wasn’t a survivalist or outdoor enthusiast. The closest she’d come in the last few years to the great outdoors was a walk in the park near her apartment. But here, slate gray spears of rock touched the vast blue sky, almost competing with one another in height and savage beauty. Mountain slopes were blanketed with dense forests of pine and evergreen. The mountains surrounded the resort property, which was nestled inside a lush valley with

tall grass and rolling fields. The chestnut-colored log cabins were charming, with a rustic appeal, and blended with the land of rugged outdoors.

Mia was in Jackson Hole, Wyoming, a breathtakingly beautiful land that filled her with hope and was absolutely terrifying—all at the same time. Fear of the unknown, of being lost, abandoned and alone in the wilderness hummed in her system, right in step with the inherent desire to explore the world around her. She understood she was in a panic-inducing conundrum.

Kind of like the rest of her life.

The sky was a pristine, vibrant sapphire, edged on the distant horizon with dark, threatening cumulonimbus clouds that were supposed to bring the forecasted rain tonight. As she rolled her window down, the crisp, fresh air carried a hint of smoke. A few cabins beyond the main building had tufts of smoke curling up from their chimneys. The nearby fields rode the edge of winter, with a few hardy wildflowers poking through. The precipice of spring was evident with the deciduous trees on the eve of budding even with the bite of a chill in the air.

It was starkly beautiful, and vastly different from the flat plains of Illinois.

How was she supposed to write here?

Fear skittered along her spine. She gripped the wheel. Her heart palpitated, each pulse like a drum beat in her ears. Her palms began to sweat. Clammy perspiration dotted her neck. Acting like a tilt-a-whirl, her stomach tumbled and roiled at the mere thought of putting pen to paper—or, in this instance, words onto the blank screen of her computer. And Mia wondered for the hundredth time whether she just needed to walk away from her life completely with the all too familiar mind-numbing panic eviscerating her control.

Wasn't that why she was in the middle of nowhere? To get away from her daily life, maybe shake up her malaise a bit, and

the horrible, crushing, bone-chilling writer's block she'd been fighting unsuccessfully for months?

That blank white screen taunted her daily, invaded her nightmares, and left her withering, spiraling into a blinding panic from which Mia feared she would never recover.

That was why she was here. To get away from the prison that her apartment in downtown Chicago had become. To experience life a little bit, instead of watching it from her windows overlooking Lake Michigan.

Mia had withdrawn from life over the last year. She knew that. To be fair, she had never been very extroverted. She'd always had her nose stuck in a book, with a fierce love of knowledge and the profound joy she experienced each time she was sucked into the pages of the latest paperback thriller. Which was why writing books had been such a natural progression for her to make.

After she graduated, Mia had taught American History at Northwestern University. During her first year as a professor, somewhat on a whim, she had written a historical fiction novel, *Following the Westward Train*, about the westward expansion of the railroad. It had detailed a fictional family who worked in the small tent towns.

It had unexpectedly sold to a New York publisher.

And her writing career took off seemingly overnight. Mia hadn't been prepared to be thrust into the spotlight, to have her book optioned for a television series on a prominent cable channel.

Nor had it prepared her for Joe Walsh.

He was dashing, attractive, and an inherent charmer. She could still remember when he'd first flashed her a smile with his golden good looks. She'd been too naïve, too sheltered and his betrayal had been her undoing.

Mia wasn't in the middle of Wyoming to mope about her past, but to forget—even if only for a little while.

She was here to face the million-dollar question: when was she going to finish the next book? Time was passing, too much time, and if she didn't want to violate the terms of her contract, she had to break through her writer's block, like, yesterday.

Hence her wild scheme. Spend time in the middle of nowhere and rattle her brain a bit. See if that was the ticket toward surmounting what had become an impenetrable blockade.

In truth, she'd laid a map of the United States out on her desk, closed her eyes, and pointed to a location. It was purely by chance that she had blindly chosen Jackson Hole, Wyoming. It could have as easily been Sheboygan.

Her plan: climb out of her shell. Experience what life had to offer for a change—outside the pages of a book. Considering she'd been acting like a turtle knocked on its back for the last six months, she needed the jolt to her system. And, if luck were on her side, she'd finally finish the third book in her historical fiction series.

It all scared the hell out of her, hence the panic attack the size of a two-ton bomb brewing.

Before she lost her nerve, Mia exited her Audi Q5. She realized, upon scanning the parking lot, that the luxury SUV stood out amidst the pickup trucks and other sport utility vehicles like a swan among a bunch of ducks.

Perfect. Just what she needed. To look more like an alien than she already felt.

Leaving her luggage in her vehicle, she crossed the expanse of the parking lot, taking in her surroundings. She shivered at the gusts of frosty wind blowing down from the snow-covered mountaintops. Crossing her arms in front of herself against the chill, she realized she should have grabbed her parka from the back seat. Instead, she was in an oversized gray sweatshirt, black yoga pants, and a pair of her favorite Uggs. She'd taken her coat off because between the heated leather seats and heater, it had been

downright toasty, and far too warm to wear her big coat for hundreds of miles.

This morning before she'd left the hotel in Cheyenne, she'd piled her hair into one of those messy topknots because it was easier than trying to style the long mass that she wasn't quite sure what to do with anyway. Growing up, Mia had apparently missed the class on how to be a girlie girl and style your hair properly. Most days, her hair was pulled up out of her way and that was about it. She had no clue how to do anything more exotic than that. Besides, messy topknots were still in. Right? At least she thought they were, and if not, well, she had never jibed with convention anyhow.

Mia entered the lobby and found herself charmed by the décor. The main lodge building was impressive. Glossy wooden pine floors, exposed beam ceilings, and a plethora of stuffed animal heads from bison to elk were on display on the walls. Inside the lobby stood the front desk, which wasn't one of those sleek modern numbers, but made to look almost like a wooden fence, with thick slats of tawny golden wood on the front and top. She appreciated the Western design, which gave an appearance of age and history to the place. The reception area led into a great room of sorts that contained a huge flat screen television and a stone fireplace, surrounded by an overabundance of sumptuous, chocolate-colored leather sofas. A small bar stood in the corner of the great room and sported the identical Western theme as the registration area.

Behind the registration desk was a blonde woman, roughly around her age. But where Mia felt she looked like a bedraggled escapee from the local loony bin, this woman, in her pretty ivory blouse and pinstripe navy blue blazer, appeared to be a calm and confident businesswoman.

Mia wished she had a tenth of the woman's poise.

Her face lit up at spying Mia and she said, "Hi, welcome to the Black Elkhorn Lodge. I'm Billie. How can I help you today?"

“I, um, have a reservation,” Mia said in a pained whisper. She kept herself from wringing her hands together, but just barely.

“And your name, hon?” Billie asked, not showing any sign that she thought Mia was crazy.

“It’s Mia. Mia Evans.”

Billie’s smile widened at her name. “Miss Evans, yes, I have you down here as arriving today. It looks like you are going to be with us for a month, correct?”

“Yes.” If she made it that long. She might be carted off to the asylum before then. So...

“Perfect. I will just need your driver’s license and a major credit card for any amenities, since you’ve already paid for your stay in full. We’ve put you in cabin D, and it is just the sweetest little place that I think you will adore. Here are your keys. It’s one of our luxury cabins and an absolute peach. We stocked the refrigerator and pantry as you requested. I put together this packet of all the information about our tours, what to do with your trash, whom to contact if you need after-hours maintenance, and some of the local attractions in the area. If you have any questions about any of the information, just let me or one of the other clerks know and we can help you out. The Elkhorn Restaurant is open until eight every weeknight and nine on the weekends. Trust me, you will want to experience Chef Emily’s cooking. It’s simply out of this world.”

“Okay, thanks.”

Billie whipped out a map and circled a building with a pen. “This is where we are, the main lodge. To get to your cabin, take the road here, make a right when you come to the three-way split in the road, and your cabin will be the last one at the end of the drive.”

“Great.” That way, if she had a total meltdown, there would be fewer people around to witness the spectacle.

“And if there’s anything at all that you need or have a ques-



tion about, don't hesitate to contact us here at the front desk," Billie said and gave Mia a friendly smile.

Perhaps a padded cell or a personality transplant?

But Mia just nodded and replied quietly, "Okay, thank you."

She scooped up the packet, the map, and keys. Then Billie handed her license and credit card back. With everything clutched in her hands, Mia headed back out to her SUV, setting the packet on the passenger seat.

She started the engine and began backing out of her space—only to slam on her brakes.

*Shit! Crap! Dammit!*

She blanched. She'd nearly taken out a guy on horseback.

Mia could imagine the headlines now: *Famed Author Mows Down Innocent Cowboy! More in the news at eleven!*