

Silhouette Desire

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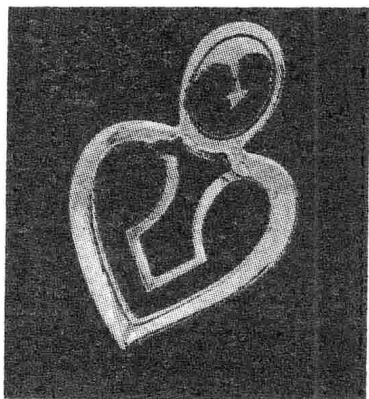
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Coming Next Month

The Wrong Man by Ann Major

Grant and Abigail had loved each other years before, but he hadn't fit into her wealthy and privileged world. Now Grant was back—and though Abigail *knew* their love was still wrong, somehow nothing had ever felt so right.

Sweetheart Of A Deal by Suzanne Michelle

Tilley had left Wall Street for a calm life as a candy shop owner—and not even David Danforth was going to muscle her back into big business. Tilley set him straight, but found her life not nearly so sweet without his love.

Danielle's Doll by Angel Milan

Peter Weston was astonished to discover that his contractor "Danny" was all the woman he could want. Fighting for her child, Danielle didn't want his passion but found that caution didn't work in matters of the heart.

Promise Of Love by Ariel Berk

Carla's husband was gone, and she was sure she'd never love again—but Bryce Dalton aroused in her a desire she'd never felt before. Could this intensely passionate man banish her memories to let her reach out again?

Odds Against by Erin Ross

Schoolteacher Lori decided to play blackjack dealer for the summer, but found that her biggest challenge in the casino was vibrant Nick Minelli. Lori quickly learned how to gamble, but did she want to risk her heart against the odds?

Maid In Boston by Paula Corbett

Dairy farmer Kathryn hadn't thought she could be stirred by just the look in a man's eyes. She took the job in a big-city firm for excitement, but Mitchell Grant's particular brand just might be too hot to handle!

"That Arena's No Place for You. You'll Get Hurt."

"Oh, now I see. What you mean is the arena's no place for any woman."

"Damn it, I didn't say that," he cried in exasperation.

"No, but you *thought* it. Well, just you listen to me. I'm a grown woman, and you're not my keeper. So just leave me alone!"

"And let you get yourself killed? Nothing doing. What's going on, anyway? How'd you manage to get into the men's roping competition? And why?"

"I can't tell you that."

"You'd better," he threatened. "Because I'm not leaving here till you do."

NORA POWERS

taught English at the college level while working on her Ph.D. A prolific writer, she is the author of some 500 pieces of children's verse, 58 short stories, 9 novels, and various newspaper articles. She has been a published author for the last twenty years and reports, "I don't even recall how I started writing, I was so young."

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Karen Solem
Editor-in-Chief
Silhouette Books

**NORA
POWERS
*In A Stranger's
Arms***

P 888



Silhouette Desire

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For another Emily



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In a Moment's Time #84

This Brief Interlude #117

In a Stranger's Arms #148

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The Montana sun was warm, and out beyond the corral the range was still invitingly green. Emily Aspersen wished she could be out there, enjoying a good gallop, instead of standing here rapidly getting nowhere. She stifled a sigh and looked up at the tall, dark, ruggedly handsome man beside her. Jerry Graves was very attractive. There was no doubt about that.

"I'd like to go to the dance with you," she told him again, trying to keep her voice patient. "But I'm competing tomorrow. I can't afford to be out so late. Brockway's fifty-five miles away, you know."

Absently she stroked the nose the chestnut mare thrust against her.

Jerry shrugged impatiently. "Of course, I know. I came off the circuit especially to take you to this dance."

Emily continued her stroking and kept a rein on her

IN A STRANGER'S ARMS

temper. How like Jerry to expect her to drop all her plans the moment he arrived!

"I really am sorry," she said again. "But I just can't do it. You should have called me ahead. I've put up entry money, you know."

He ignored that. As she knew he would. Jerry thought woman's rodeo was a joke. A big joke.

"Then I guess I'll just have to take someone else," he said gruffly.

She held back another sigh. Even though Jordan, the closest town to the Double A Ranch, was over fifty miles from any other town, she knew Jerry wouldn't have any trouble finding someone. He attracted women like flies to honey. The trouble was—he knew it.

She tried for a light tone. "I guess you will. You won't have any trouble, I'm sure."

"Hell and damnation, Emily!" The words burst from him in a half shout that sent Gypsy skittering away from the fence. "When are you going to stop this silly playing at rodeo and act like a woman ought to?"

She lost the battle with her temper then. Maybe it was because she no longer had the mare's velvet-soft, comforting nose under her fingers. Whatever the reason, her patience had deserted her.

She whirled so quickly that her Stetson blew off her head and lay ignored in the dust. Her blue eyes blazing, she let him have it. "My rodeoing is just as important to me as yours is to you." She ignored his snort of derision, but it certainly didn't help to dampen her anger. "It's not my fault that the PRCA doesn't allow women to compete or that men like you don't take us seriously."

She took a deep breath and became vaguely aware

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that another man, a stranger, was standing some distance behind Jerry, an expression of acute embarrassment on his face. Well, whoever he was, he was going to get an earful. She was tired of being taken for granted, of being patronized. Good and tired.

"Now you're being silly," Jerry said. "You know that you're my girl. I want you to be with me." Totally unaware that they had an audience, he reached out for her.

Emily evaded his hands, her anger growing. "Oh, no, you don't!" she cried. "Kissing me won't do you a bit of good. I'm not some brainless thing to be kissed into obeying you!"

Jerry's temper, never too well in check, blazed higher. "Sometimes I think you're not a woman at all," he shouted. "You sure don't act like one!" He jammed his Stetson down on his dark hair and growled, "I'm going to find me a real woman."

"Good luck!" she threw at him.

He whirled on his heel and caught sight of the stranger. For a second she thought the newcomer might be in for trouble. But then Jerry stomped on, threw himself into his pickup and roared away.

She retrieved her Stetson, took a deep breath and tried to let her anger go. To help herself do that she took a good look at the stranger, who seemed unsure whether to approach her or not. Her sense of humor asserted itself momentarily and she thought wryly that he must be wondering what kind of woman he was facing here.

He was tall, though not as tall as Jerry, and very lean. His blond hair was sun-streaked, his eyes a deep brown. His nose was strong and so was his chin, but he didn't have Jerry's half-sinister look, the look that she knew was so attractive to women.

IN A STRANGER'S ARMS

She pushed the thought of Jerry from her mind and advanced toward the stranger. He was probably the student Dad had said was coming today.

"Hello," she said, forcing her voice into a welcoming tone. "I'm Emily Asperson and this is the Double A. Have you come about roping lessons?"

He took the hand she offered him. His handclasp was warm and firm, just as it should be, but his hand lacked calluses.

"My name is Alex Calloway," he replied. His voice was very rich, very deep. Strangely familiar in her ears, though she was sure she had never seen him before. "I was in touch with your father."

She nodded. "He told me. I'm sorry, we only hold our roping schools once a month and you just missed the last one."

Alex nodded. "Yes, I know. But he did say I could have some individual instruction."

She read hesitation in his face and before she could stop herself she snapped at him. "As long as you don't mind learning from a woman. Dad has other plans for this week."

A flicker of something crossed his face and vanished. She couldn't tell if it were amusement or surprise, but the deep voice remained neutral. "I have no objections to working with a woman," he said. "I also understand that you may be gone part of the time."

That was as close as he came to referring to the quarrel he had just overheard. She couldn't help appreciating his tact.

"I only have one rodeo this week," she said. "But I'll be gone the whole day."

He nodded. "Is that your horse?"

"Yes, that's Gypsy." She glanced to where the

chestnut was standing by the bars, calm now that the angered Jerry was gone. "She's a great roping horse."

The mare stuck an inquiring nose over the bars and Alex walked closer and rubbed it with an ease that spoke of long association with horses. "I don't know how much your father told you," he began.

Emily smiled at the mare's evident delight in finding a new friend. "Not very much. Just that you wanted special instruction."

He nodded. "Well, then, let me give you some background."

She knew already that he was an easterner. His accent gave him away, of course. His voice lacked the slow, drawling quality of western speech. And his clothes were too new. Oh, the jeans were weathered and the boots scuffed. But his Stetson had plainly not seen much wear. And his hands, long and slender, were too light and unscarred to belong to a cowman.

"I'm from Ohio," he said, shifting his gaze to her and continuing to rub the mare's nose.

"You've been around horses," she said quietly.

He nodded. "Yes, I know horses. You won't have to teach me to ride."

"Only to rope," she said. "You know," she went on, "most competitors are cowmen. They've been around stock all their lives, worked in the out-of-doors."

His smile was so disarming she almost lost her train of thought.

"I don't intend to compete," he said.

For a minute she didn't know what to say. "Then what are you doing here?"

"I'm a writer," he explained. "I'm doing a book on rodeo. I thought learning something about the events might help in the writing."