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A COLD CREEK BABY

RAEANNE THAYNE

COLD CREEK



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See below for a sneak peek from our inspirational line, Love Inspired® Suspense

Enjoy this heart-stopping excerpt from RUNNING BLIND by top author Shirlee McCoy, available November 2010!

The mission trip to Mexico was supposed to be an adventure. But the thrill turns sour when Jenna Dougherty and her roommate Magdalena are kidnapped.

"It's okay. I'm here to help." The voice was as deep as the darkness, but Jenna Dougherty didn't believe the lie. She could do nothing but lie still as hands slid down her arms, felt the rope around her wrists.

"I'm going to use a knife to cut you free, Jenna. Hold still."

The cold blade of a knife pressed close to her head before her gag fell away.

"I—" she started, but her mouth was dry, and she could do nothing but suck in air.

"Shhh. Whatever needs to be said can be said when we're out of here." Nick spoke quietly, his hand gentle on her cheek. There and gone as he sliced through the ropes on her wrists and ankles.

He pulled her upright. "Come on. We may be on borrowed time."

- "I can't leave my friend," Jenna rasped out.
- "There's no one here. Just us."
- "She has to be here." Jenna took a step away.
- "There's no one here. Let's go before that changes."
- "It's dark. Maybe if we find a light..."
- "What did you say?"

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"We need to turn on the light. I can't leave until I know that—"

"What can you see, Jenna?"

"Nothing."

"No shadows? No light?"

"No."

"It's broad daylight. There's light spilling in from the window I climbed in through. You can't see it?"

She went cold at his words.

"I can't see anything."

"You've got a nasty bruise on your forehead. Maybe that has something to do with it." His fingers traced the tender flesh on her forehead.

"It doesn't matter how it happened. I'm blind!"

Can Nick help Jenna find her friend or will chasing this trail have Jenna running blindly again into danger?

Find out in RUNNING BLIND, available in November 2010 only from Love Inspired Suspense.



DEBBIE MACOMBER

Mrs. Miracle on 34th Street...

This Christmas, Emily Merkle (just call her Mrs. Miracle) is working in the toy department at Finley's, the last family-owned department store in Manhattan.

Her boss (who happens to be the owner's son) has placed an order for a large number of high-priced robots, which he hopes will give the business a much-needed boost. In fact, Jake Finley's counting on it.

Holly Larson is counting on that robot, too. She's been looking after her eight-year-old nephew, Gabe, ever since her widowed brother was deployed overseas. Holly plans to buy Gabe a robot—which she can't afford—because she's determined to make Christmas special.

But this Christmas will be different—thanks to Mrs. Miracle. Next to bringing children joy, her favorite activity is giving romance a nudge. Fortunately, Jake and Holly are receptive to her "hints." And thanks to Mrs. Miracle, Christmas takes on new meaning for Jake. For all of them!

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He remembered every moment of their time together five years ago. Each sigh, each gasp. The angle of her head as he touched her, the flutter of her hands curling into his shirt. The agonizingly sweet welcome of her body.

This, though. The sheer delicious reality of having her in his arms once more—of her heat and softness against his skin, of her mouth trembling beneath his—beat the eche of those memories all to hell.

He knew it worken't last. It couldn't. In a moment, one or both of them would find a semblance of good sense and pull away. But for now, she was here in his arms and she was kissing him...and the prowling restlessness inside him quieted.

Dear Reader,

I sincerely love every hero and heroine I've ever created-flaws, foibles and all-but some seem to leave a more indelible impression on my heart than others. After I finished writing A Cold Creek Baby, I must confess to a few little qualms of disloyalty toward all my other heroes when I realized that Cisco Del Norte just might be my favorite hero ever (until the next book, I'm sure!). I adored this dangerous, troubled, mysterious man from the very moment I came up with the idea for this latest series of Cold Creek books and couldn't wait to tell his and Easton's story. I think I've received more mail from readers asking when I would finally write their story than about any other characters I've created! Through the process of writing A Cold Creek Baby, I came to love them both even more and was so happy to help them find their happy ending together...and to show Cisco the way home for good this time.

All my best,

RaeAnne

A COLD CREEK BABY

RAEANNE THAYNE



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A COLD CREEK BABY

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RAEANNE THAYNE

finds inspiration in the beautiful northern Utah mountains, where she lives with her husband and three children. Her books have won numerous honors, including three RITA® Award nominations from Romance Writers of America and a Career Achievement Award from RT Book Reviews magazine. RaeAnne loves to hear from readers and can be reached through her Web site at www.raeannethayne.com.

Chapter One

Something yanked Easton Springhill out of a sound sleep.

She rolled over and squinted at her alarm clock, which glowed the dismal hour of 4:26 a.m. Her curtains were open, as usual, so she could wake to a view of the mountaintops still covered in snow. But from her bed she could only see a bright glitter of stars pinpricking the dark sky.

With a heavy sigh, she flopped back onto her pillow. She wouldn't be going back to sleep anytime soon, especially since her dratted alarm was set to go off anyway in little more than an hour.

What a pain. She really hated waking up before her alarm clock, especially when she had a feeling she'd been smack in the middle of some sort of lovely dream. She could only hang on to a few wispy tendrils of memory about what the dream might have been about, but she could guess that somehow he was involved.

She rolled over. Probably better, then, that she woke up. Whenever she dreamed of him, she spent the next day in a strange, suspended state—partly elated at having something of him again, even if only through her subconscious, but mostly depressed that she had to wake up and face the endless work of running an Idaho cattle ranch.

Alone, as usual.

The cotton pillowcase rustled as she shook her head a little, annoyed at herself.

She had a wonderful life here. She loved the ranch, she loved her friends, she had an honorary niece and nephew she adored.

So she didn't have the one thing she had wanted since she was just a silly girl. Was that any reason to fret and fuss and pine over the impossible?

She sat up, wondering what had awakened her. Jack and Suzy, her border collies, were barking outside, but that could mean anything from a loose cow to a hapless rodent foolish enough to enter their territory.

Whatever it was, she knew she would never go back to sleep now. Better to just take advantage of the unexpected hour to get some work done before she had to go out and take care of the chores. The Winder Ranch accounts were always waiting, unfortunately.

She slid out of bed and was just feeling around for her robe when she heard a sound that seemed to echo through the huge, empty ranch house.

She froze in the dark, ears straining. What the heck was that? It sounded like a cross between a shriek and a yowl. A moment later, something clattered downstairs, a jangly, ringing sound, as if a hard plastic bowl had