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Originally published in 2002 as TAMING JESSE JAMES

Jesse James Harte grew up as wild and untamed as his Old West namesake, but now he's the law in this stretch of the Wyoming high country. That meant trouble is his business—and if he'd ever seen somebody in trouble, it was the town's new schoolteacher, Sarah McKenzie.

She is as beautiful as a mountain meadow in springtime. But the haunted look in her eyes says she's running from something—something that might be catching up with her. He ached to protect her, to take that look away—and make her his forever.

But what could a lady like her want with a lawman with an outlaw's heart?

Springtime in Salt River Details

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From Reader Review Springtime in Salt River for online ebook

Julie says

Taming Jesse James by RaeAnne Thayne is a Silhouette "Intimate Moments" novel. (These are usually romantic suspense/ adventure) If you can get over the terrible book cover (the worst cover I've ever seen, I think), this is a pretty good afternoon read. It is a little corny, and predictable at times, but it also dealt with some uncomfortable topics.

Sarah McKenzie has moved from Chicago to Wyoming to spend some time away from friends and family after suffering a brutal attack. She is hired on as a school teacher for a year, and then she will decide from there where she wants to go.

When one of her students shows signs of physical abuse, she goes to the town's police chief, Jesse James Harte to report it.

Jesse was a hell raiser back in his younger days, but has since cleaned up his act. He is the police chief and he loves his job. When Sarah McKenzie comes to him with her suspicions regarding one of her students, they don't exactly see eye to eye on the matter. But, Jesse is curious about her and he does his job and checks out the situation.

Then Sarah has a few disturbing occurrences at her home and has to call Jesse. The two can't deny their attraction to each other, but Jesse feels like Sarah is not his type. But, after her home is vandalized, she has to tell Jesse about her past, and things between them change.

I thought the author handled the delicate issues involving Sarah's attack very well. We were given some insight on how it might feel to have to deal with the aftermath of such a brutal crime.

As for Jesse, he mainly was just in denial. He kept trying to convince himself he wasn't good for someone as nice as Sarah. He was afraid of commitment and knew Sarah deserved that.

The mystery was also good. I never suspected who was behind the vandalism and who was behind the troubles Sarah's student was having. HEA ending. Overall a B-/ C+

Alita Macelhiney says

Good light reading!

Great book to sit down at night and relax. No thought needed just read and sit back and fall into the life of Salt River.

Bonnie Gonzales says

This is a wonderful love story bringing a lump to my throat and tears to my eyes a few times.

There is also some mystery to keep me guessing who is the dirty culprit?

And the main characters Sarah and Jesse were so easy to like and even Jesse's sister Cassie was soon a favorite of mine.

Just like the other books I've read of RaeAnne Thayne's it stole my heart.

Suze says

SPRINGTIME IN SALT RIVER

Sweet romance, this is a fast, quick read. Enjoyed the characters, the romance, and suspense. A story to get lost in for a few hours.

Janeiowa says

RaeAnne Thayne is a favorite author. She's one of a very few "auto-buys" for me.

This book was another of Ms Thayne's great reads...good characters and plot.

Barbara says

Lovely story

This was a story that included a rape, violence, revenge, suspense and so much more. The story of one woman's quest to overcome the tragic events of her past so that she could have a wonderful future. A woman who vows she will never be a victim again and will fight back with all her might.

Saly says

Before I start, I must say what a horrid cover!

Jesse Harte is the law, the chief of police. His elder brother Matt always knew what he wanted the ranch, he was the most well-liked. Jesse was a trouble-maker and when he witnessed his parents dying at the age of seventeen he went of the rails, drinking too much, raising hell but one day in jail for a drunk and disorderly he finally realized what he wanted and has worked for it. His only vice is women who are fun and not that serious, so he doesn't understand his thinking about Sarah, the new teacher who seems uncomfortable around him.

Sarah adores children and the only reason she came to town was to heal and get away from the carnage of her life in Chicago, where she taught in a not so great neighborhood and her care for a student left her raped and almost dead. Her family tip-toed around her and her engagement ended and so did the vivacious person she was. Now, she keeps to herself, is quiet and tends her garden but concern for a student sends her to Jesse.

I enjoyed the book a lot, Jesse tried to stay away from Sarah while Sarah had her own issues to deal with, she knows she is not his type, someone who is scared.

I liked seeing them come together, how tender Jesse was to Sarah's fears and I liked seeing Sarah take charge at the end of her own safety.

Off to read Cassie's book which should be mighty interesting with the back story we got in the first book.

Rating 3.5

Joyce says

Secrets

RaeAnne Thayne has written a wonderful emotional book. Old secrets turn Sarah away from Jesse even though she has feelings for him. Jesse still feels he caused his parents deaths and Corey a little 10 year old has secrets too. Well written and I know you will enjoy.

Luv_a_good_story says

This was like a 2 1/2 stars. There wasn't a lot of suspense or even tension. I didn't really feel anything for the characters.

Debby says

Sarah McKenzie has fled Chicago after a horrific experience in her inner city classroom. Physically and emotionally damaged, she's now teaching 4th grade in Salt River, Wyoming. When she feels that one of her students is being abused, she takes her concerns to the chief of police - Jesse James Harte - the former town bad boy made good. The two fall gradually fall in love, but their pasts haunt them, and their present is not always looking good. Good light summer read.

Marcia Haskell says

Can people whose lives are affected by their past get beyond their pasts?

An interesting romance where the town's former bad boy, currently the town sheriff and the newest 3rd grade teacher are attracted to each other, but hold back because of their problems overcoming their respective pasts. She was attacked, raped and badly injured, while he survived a car accident that killed his parents. Current problems serve to remind them each of how damaged they each are, but also help them to find their own strengths.

As usual RaeAnn Thayne has written a story of strong people who work to become stronger, and her secondary character bring a lightness and sense of normalcy and happiness. I recommend this book to anyone who likes contemporary romances with well developed characters and a not obvious mystery.

Donna says

Hard to get into

Chandra says

SENSUALITY RATING: (One) sexual encounter; "his long finger played at the apex of her thighs". Book focuses on desire.

PROFANITY: occasional use of "bitch" and "damn"

GENRE: Romance, Modern day

SETTING: rural Wyoming

CENTRAL FEMALE CHARACTER: Sarah McKenzie - teacher; an introvert; secretive and withdrawn.

CENTRAL MALE CHARACTER: Jesse James Harte - Sheriff and town's most eligible bachelor

SYNOPSIS: Having been battered and raped, she moves from Chicago to Wyoming. The Sheriff is suspicious of the reason (s) behind her being so withdrawn.

WHAT I LIKED: finding out the person who Cory Sylvester fears.

WHAT I DID NOT LIKE: too much emphasis on sexual desire. It seems not to be the author's style and it was a bit over-the-top.

Jean says

Truly great book!

The story of Sarah, a sweet schoolteacher who is stronger than she knows, and Jesse, the police chief who is a much better person than he ever realized, was very well written and entertaining!

Susan says

Very good book. Sarah came to Wyoming to heal. She had been an elementary school teacher in a depressed area of Chicago. Discovering that one of her students was in a dangerous situation she did the right thing and reported. Unfortunately, that made her a target and she ended up raped and nearly beaten to death. She lost her fiance, and could no longer deal with the way everyone treated her, so getting away was her solution. She loves her new job in small town Wyoming, but when she suspects one of her students is being abused she feels that her nightmare is happening all over again. Still, she does what she must and takes her suspicions to police chief Jesse Harte.

Jesse spent a good part of his youth raising hell and getting into trouble before he made the decision to turn his life around. Now he's the police chief and it's his job to stop trouble from happening. He's surprised by Sarah's allegations but determined to find out if there is cause for alarm. Their encounter is somewhat contentious as Jesse is doubtful and Sarah insistent.

I loved the development of their relationship. Because of what happened to her in Chicago, Sarah has been rather withdrawn and quiet around other people, especially men. Jesse makes her very nervous, not just because of his size and reputation, but also because of the strange way she feels around him. But she's tired of her new Nervous Nellie personality and sticks to her guns, discovering that he's not so scary after all. Jesse has been intrigued by Sarah ever since she came to town, but feels that with his less than stellar past she would have no interest in him. However, there's something in her eyes that makes him want to protect her.

As they work together to help young Corey, Sarah finds the ability to trust again. Jesse's caring and compassion give her the strength to overcome the effects of the attack on her and renews her sense of who she is. She's understandably scared when she becomes the target of some trouble. She's afraid that telling Jesse about her past will change the way he treats her, and she'll lose the man she's coming to care for. I loved seeing her go after what she wants. Jesse is impressed by her strength and even more so when he finds out about her past. But that only adds to his feeling that she won't want anything to do with a former bad boy like him. He fights his feelings for her hard, convinced that he's the wrong man for her. I loved seeing his sister tear into him, explaining exactly how much of an idiot he is being. Jesse's big moment at the end was really sweet and romantic.

The suspense element of the story was great. Sarah is certain that there is something going on with Corey and overcomes her fears to do something about it. I loved Jesse's realization of the similarities between them and how he wants to steer him the right way. Both of them realize that Corey appears to be in trouble but they have little success in finding out what. The intensity increases with the vandalizing of Sarah's house and the question of who is behind it. When the final confrontation came, it was from a source I didn't expect. The resolution was great and gave both Sarah and Corey the opportunity to show what they were really made of.

I loved the secondary characters in the story. It was great to see Jesse's two nieces from The Valentine Two-Step and how they have him wrapped around their fingers. The chicken pox scene was especially fun. I also liked Jesse's sister Cassidy. She seems to have a good handle on Jesse and his issues, which makes her the perfect person to help him at the end. But my favorite of the secondary characters was Corey. You could see that he was fighting what was happening to him, but that it was too big for him to handle alone. I loved his emerging friendship with Jesse and the way he came through in the end.
