



Carbon Copy Cowboy (Texas Twins Book 3)

By Arlene James

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An injured woman in a wedding veil on Jack Colby's ranch property? Jack has no idea who she is—and neither does she. "Kendra" doesn't know her name, what the veil is all about or where she belongs. And since Jack's entire life changed with the unwelcome discovery of a twin brother, he's not in the mood for secrets or surprises. Like finding out that Kendra might be spoken for. Yet even as she helps him open his heart to his family, he finds himself praying for the opportunity to make new memories.

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Editorial Review

About the Author

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"That can't be good," Jack Colby said to his grullo stallion, Tiger. Tugging his hat low over his brow, he brought the horse to a halt and leaned an elbow on the saddle horn. He judged the speed of the sleek, ruby-red coupe as he visually tracked it across the Texas landscape. "Slow it," he urged the unseen driver. "Slow it down."

Everyone in the area knew that the sharp curve at the base of Blackberry Hill was a dangerous spot. More than one driver had missed the turn and careened off the road. Some cars flipped, and one had even flown right over the bar ditch and plowed into the massive hickory tree on the other side. Nearly all of the accidents happened at night or in poor weather, but unless this particular driver slowed down, they were going to have a crash in broad daylight on a warm Monday afternoon in early September.

"Lord, help whomever's in that car," Jack prayed, "before it's too late."

Sitting tall in the saddle now, he held his breath, hoping the car would brake. Instead, it dropped out of sight, plunging down the hillside at breakneck speed.

Jack heeled the slate dun and set off at a dead gallop over the ridge, his ears tuned for the screech of brakes. He heard only a muted, metallic *thunk*, enough to tell him that the car had missed the curve. He'd been following the fence line, checking the wire for breaks, when he'd first spotted the fast-moving red car. Riding fence, the hands on the Colby Ranch called the job, as had cowboys since the first wires were strung across the open grasslands. For Jack it was mostly a way to escape the insanity of his family life just now. Today it could be some accident victim's blessing. If he found anyone alive and got to them in time.

The grullo's powerful legs, the insides tiger-striped in shades of brownish gray, ate up the ground, flying over gullies and low bushes until Jack reined it back on its haunches. They mostly slid down the steepest part of the incline, coming to rest just before the three-strand fence. The car rested at an angle with its crumpled front fender on one side of the drainage ditch and a single rear wheel on the other. Standing in the saddle, Jack dropped the reins and vaulted over the barbed wire, hitting dirt on the opposite side with both booted feet. He then slid down the ditch and clambered over to the car. Despite its precarious position, the vehicle didn't appear to have suffered much damage. A female with long blond hair slumped over the steering wheel and through the open window trailed what looked like a long, white wedding veil.

"Hey!" Jack called. "You okay?"

The woman lay still as death, her head all but wedged into the steering wheel. Finding that he couldn't reach the driver's window from the bottom or side of the ditch, Jack quickly ran around the car. He dragged a fallen tree limb over and positioned it so that he could ease out to the passenger door, which he thankfully found unlocked.

Tossing his hat to the ground, he carefully leaned inside to reach across the empty seat and push back the

lady's long hair. He intended to check her pulse, but the purity of her profile momentarily arrested his hand. In a blink, he took in the gently winged tip of her eyebrow, the delicate ridge of her nose, the prominence of her high cheekbones and the strong, clean lines of her chin and jaw. Then he saw the steady beat at the side of her slender neck and realized with great relief that she lived. A trickle of blood ran along the stitching of the leather-covered steering wheel, however, spurring Jack back into action.

Withdrawing from the car, Jack hopped down off the branch, and dug his cell phone out of his pocket. He swept his sweat-stained straw cowboy hat up off the ground and automatically plopped it down over his shaggy brown hair as he jogged toward the top of the hill. Halfway up, he picked up a decent signal and dialed the clinic in Grasslands.

"Yeah," he said to the woman who answered the phone, "this is Jack Colby. I need the doc and an ambulance out here on Franken Road. Car missed the curve at the bottom of Blackberry Hill. Female driver's alive but unconscious. Better send out a few extra fellows and some planking, too. Car's straddling the ditch. No," he said in answer to a question. "Got no idea who she is, but she's wearing a wedding veil with her jeans."

After assuring the receptionist that he wasn't kidding, Jack got off the phone and made his way back down the hill. Whoever she was, he told himself, she could thank God that she was alive. He prayed that she wouldn't wind up in a coma like his mother.

Belle Colby had fallen from a horse over two months earlier and remained unresponsive. Jack couldn't help feeling guilty because he had argued with her about their mysterious past just before she'd jumped on her grulla mare, Mouse, and charged off. Belle had always kept the past shrouded in secrecy, limiting the family to just herself, Jack and his younger sister, Violet, but he had longed to know the truth about his forebears.

He'd wanted to know if they had a father out there somewhere. Cousins? Aunts? Uncles? What about grandparents? Belle had refused to answer those questions, saying only that she was doing what was best for her children. After her accident, Jack had vowed to forget the past. But then the past had come to visit them with a vengeance, in the form of his sister Violet's identical twin, Maddie.

Jack still couldn't quite believe that he had two sisters instead of only one. Most difficult of all to accept was the fact that he, too, had an identical twin, Grayson, whom he had yet to meet. Their supposed father, Brian Wallace, who had raised Grayson and Maddie, had conveniently disappeared just after Belle's accident.

Shaking his head, Jack focused once more on the problem at hand. Clambering back down to the car, he reached in and clasped the young woman's limp hand.

"Won't be long now," he promised her. "Help's on the way."

While he waited, Jack brushed her hair from her face again, pressed his bandanna to the cut on her head until it stopped bleeding and made a cursory search of the car. Unfortunately, he came up empty and didn't find so much as a piece of paper, let alone a handbag. He noted, too, that she wore no rings, despite the wedding veil. Ten minutes later, a squad car showed up, followed by the area's lone ambulance and Doc Garth's pearly white pickup truck, which was adorned with a long, metal ladder and a couple of wide boards sticking out over the tailgate. Using the ladder to span the ditch, they laid the boards atop it, inside the rails.

After removing the bridal veil and tossing it into the backseat of the small car, the doc—dressed in boots, jeans, a plaid shirt and pale, straw hat—did a quick examination. Outside of the clinic, the stethoscope sticking out of his shirt pocket was often the only sign of his occupation, and many of the cattlemen in the area could attest that he was as good a cowboy as he was a doctor.

"Scalp laceration," he announced. "Probably a concussion. No other obvious injuries, but she's out cold." He waved at the police officer and female nurse who served as EMTs for the Grasslands Medical Clinic. "Let's get her out of here."

While the pair worked to get the victim out of the car and onto a gurney, Jack watched from the side of the road with the fiftyish doctor and the sheriff.

"We need a warning sign up on that hill," Doc Garth decreed, pointing.

"Kids hereabouts just keep stealing it," George Cole, the Grasslands sheriff, reported laconically. A stout, balding fellow of midheight in his mid-forties, George was as laid-back as it was possible for a man in his position to be. He lifted off his tan felt hat and wiped his forehead with the sleeve of his uniform shirt, saying, "But I'll pull together some statistics and petition the county for a replacement any ol' how."

"Let me know if you need help with that," Doc said, moving aside as the gurney rolled past him. "We've had way too many accidents out here, including some fatalities." He trudged off toward the ambulance in his heavy, scuffed cowboy boots.

"I hear tell a whole family died back before my time," George commented to no one in particular. "Well," he went on, looking at Jack, "I reckon you better come into town and fill out a report, seeing as you're the closest thing we got to a witness."

"I'll do that straightaway, George," Jack promised, watching the EMTs cover the blonde's pretty face with an oxygen mask. "What do you think the deal is with that veil?" he asked.

"Don't know," the sheriff replied, gingerly crossing the ladder to poke around inside the car. "We'll ask her when she wakes up. Maybe she was running away from her wedding."

"Maybe so," Jack mused, rubbing the stubble on his chin, "but if that's true, why isn't she wearing an engagement ring or a wedding gown instead of jeans?"

"I got some more questions for you," George said, backing out of the car. "Who is this gal? She's got no ID at all unless it's in her pockets. Hey, ya'll," he called out to the medical personnel, "check her pockets for a driver's license." He waved at the vehicle, adding, "Car's got no tags, even. I noticed that right off."

Jack walked around to get a look at the back of the vehicle, which was as bare as the chief had said. "Car's a late model, though. Can't be many around."

George reached inside to turn the key in the ignition. "This baby's brand spanking new," he proclaimed. "Less than a hun'erd-fifty miles on the odometer."

"Nothing here," Doc called just then.

The sheriff parked his hands at his waist just above his gun belt and pushed out a sigh. "She's a mystery, sure enough.&..."

Users Review

From reader reviews:

Alejandro Jones:

Spent a free the perfect time to be fun activity to complete! A lot of people spent their leisure time with their family, or their own friends. Usually they accomplishing activity like watching television, planning to beach, or picnic inside park. They actually doing same thing every week. Do you feel it? Do you want to something different to fill your own free time/ holiday? May be reading a book could be option to fill your totally free time/ holiday. The first thing you ask may be what kinds of e-book that you should read. If you want to try look for book, may be the e-book untitled Carbon Copy Cowboy (Texas Twins Book 3) can be great book to read. May be it can be best activity to you.

Lola Taylor:

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