



Count a Hundred Stars

Bonnie Wisler

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“Mind if I join you?” Calder asked, climbing in and sitting next to her before she could object,” the author writes. “Calder’s leg brushed against her as the van turned a corner, and the image of his hand on hers flashed through her mind, prompting unexpected thoughts.”

In Bonnie Wisler’s enjoyable romance, *Count a Hundred Stars*, Hope is on her way to Wyoming to vacation at a dude ranch; she wants to get away from it all and sort out her life. After the death of her fiancé, Brian, she is not sure what direction her life should take, except that it won’t include cops or cowboys—until she meets Calder Elliot, who is both a cop and a cowboy. Calder tells her of a local legend that says if you count a hundred stars your wish will come true.

Before she even gets to the Dude ranch, Hope comes across the victim of a hit and run car crash, and her nursing skills come in handy. The remote Snowy Creek dude ranch is set in the magnificent Windriver Range in Wyoming, not far from the small town of Buffalo, where Calder is police chief. When the accident begins to look like attempted murder, Calder gets Hope involved in some detective work. Another guest at the ranch, Angela, is jealous of the Hope for the attention she’s giving to Roger, who is at the ranch with his young son. Calder wants to ask Angela some questions, but doesn’t want to “scare her off.” So he uses a cover: “I want her to think I’m your boyfriend,” he tells Hope. But Hope isn’t interested in Roger—she’s falling for Calder. At the same time, she wonders whether it was Calder or someone else who hit her with a shovel and ransacked her room. As the beauty of Wyoming begins to draw Hope’s thoughts away from city life, and her affection for Calder deepens, the mystery of the attempted murder begins to unfold.

In her debut novel, Wisler, a member of the Romance Writers of America, includes accurate local references and manages to avoid cliché. *Count a Hundred Stars* is believable as a romance and as a mystery. The characters are complex and the plot is skillfully woven. Both romance devotees and occasional readers of the genre will find themselves longing for Wyoming and touched by the blossoming of love.

DAVID GEORGE (June 28, 2010)

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