

## Lorelei James' author's notes:

I love writing the Rough Riders series, creating larger than life cowboys and the women who love them, all wrapped up in a multi-book arc. Because the series is actually a western saga, not all questions are answered in every book. No, I don't consider this 'series baiting' but detailing the trials, triumphs and tribulations of an entire family and how it affects the entire family over the span of several books and several years.

The other thing I love? Hearing from readers. I adore that. So in honor of my readers, fans, and people new to the series, I've received quite a few of the same questions, for the Rough Riders series in particular. I'll try to address them all here in one fell swoop, because I understand just because something is crystal clear to me for the extended plan for the series, it might not appear that way initially. Here goes:

### \*\*\*\*\*WARNING\*\*\*\*\*SPOILERS\*\*\*\*\*

In **LONG HARD RIDE** I leave a relationship unresolved between two male characters. I plan on tying up Trevor Glanzer and Edgard Mancuso's story arc in Rough Riders book 5.

**RODE HARD, PUT UP WET**, involves a dual – but separate storyline between Gemma Jansen and Cash Big Crow, and Cash's grown daughter, Macie Honeycutt and her paramour, Carter McKay. The reason the blurb didn't delve into more detail about the separate, yet intertwined plots, is because there's not enough room on the jacket copy to give a mini-synopsis of both love stories.

This is a little trickier to explain, so bear with me. There is a method to my madness, I swear! In **COWGIRL UP AND RIDE** a minor character dies. This character, Dag West, is shown in same sex (M/M/M/M) situations early in the book. Some detractors have suggested A) I killed off the character because he was a closet homosexual B) Those sex scenes were uncomfortable to read and had no place in a romance.

My official response? A) Dag West died not because he was gay, but because he did a **dumb thing**: he operated farm equipment while he was drunk. Unfortunately, ranch accidents are a way of life even when sober, and being drunk adds another level of

stupidity to the lethality of machinery. Dag's death in no way reflected my personal commentary on his sexual orientation, B) The multiple partner sex scenes, with M/F/M and M/M/M/M were **supposed** to be uncomfortable. The point of view I chose to show those scenes from is a heterosexual male cowboy living in Wyoming. The scene Kade McKay stumbles on involving his cousin Dag and three other men is shocking in many ways and I stand by the character's reaction to the situation. It might not be PC, but so many things out here in the Wild West are not and I won't sugarcoat the harsh realities and prevailing attitudes. Sometimes sex isn't sexy. And yes, **COWGIRL UP AND RIDE** is still first and foremost - a romance.

In **TIED UP, TIED DOWN**, which takes place a year after **COWGIRL UP AND RIDE**, Trevor Glanzer and Chassie West are married. I've had a lot of readers ask if they missed a book or a novella in between these two books. No. My reason for not explaining the details of this union is I already had enough backstory with Kade and Skylar. I intend on filling in the all blanks with Trevor, Chassie and Edgard in Rough Riders book 5. Also, McKay cousin Quinn and his wife Libby are introduced. We see them bickering and I've had readers ask if I plan on telling their story. Yes. Their novella will be out in May 2009.

**ROUGH, RAW AND READY** reveals what happens when Edgard comes calling three years after he and Trevor split in **LONG HARD RIDE** and Trevor is married to Chassie West. After Chassie finds out her husband loved another man, she leaves to sort out her feelings. Chassie returns with the intention of seeing how Trevor and Edgard act when they're together as lovers. From then on, all three of them work at figuring out if a ménage would be viable on a permanent basis. I've had some criticism that Chassie accepted Trevor and Edgard's relationship way too quickly - to which I answer, in fiction, I couldn't very well have the next chapter heading read...**Two months later**, invariably readers would want to know *exactly* what happened during those two months (see above notes, where I threw in the information about Trevor and Chassie already being married!) So for fictional purposes, yes, I speeded up Chassie's acceptance of Trevor and Edgard's relationship so I could tell the story. Also, Cam McKay is seriously injured in Iraq at the end of the book and I will fill in the details about his life in Rough Rider book 7.

In **BRANDED AS TROUBLE**, Colt McKay has been sober for three years and he's still struggling with earning his family's acceptance and trust. I appreciate all the letters of support

from readers, who understood the ongoing struggle with addictive behavior. Between books 3 and 4, some readers were skeptical I could redeem Colt. Naturally I have insider knowledge of a character's arc <g> and I'm grateful for everyone who stayed with the series and believed Colt and India Ellison should get their happily ever after—especially after all the personal struggles they've endured in their lives.

**SHOULDA BEEN A COWBOY**, was chock-full of issues, Cam feeling less than whole being an amputee; Domini feeling the same with her missing uterus. I did not choose the subject matter to be gratuitous. In fact, it would've been easier to craft a story that skirted those serious issues. I spent many many hours researching Army amputees and trying to understand their adjustment to civilian life so I didn't get it wrong, make light of it, or offend the soldiers who've given so much to the protection of our country. Again, **SHOULDA BEEN A COWBOY** is first and foremost a romance, a love story about acceptance where it's mistakenly believe this is none. The car accident deaths of Nadia and Rex, as well as Luke McKay and the unnamed Indian man, happen all the time in Wyoming, sadly. Since medical facilities are a great distance apart, even what would be considered a survivable injury in a metro area, is not in the wilds of Wyoming. Readers find out what happened between Keely McKay and Jack Donohue at Colt and India's wedding reception in *Rough Riders* book 8. I've had readers ask if I have book planned for Brandt McKay and his brother Luke's widow, Jessie McKay. My answer? Stay tuned ☺

**ALL JACKED UP**, was a blast to write and I've been looking forward to telling Keely's story for three years—since she showed up at the dance scene in **LONG HARD RIDE**. It is not the last book in the series—but I am taking a bit of a break. And yes, Jack did ask Keely's dad Carson for permission to marry Keely when he was sitting on the log at the end of the book.

Kane's (Buck) story is next and will be *Rough Rider* book 9.

As far as language issues—and I'm not talking about swear words or that I don't use euphemisms for parts of the male and female anatomy—a few critics/reviewers have complained they find it hard to believe people “really” talk like that. Hah! Again, not grammatically correct, but we do drop most of our g's out here in the Wild West.

For example:

Grammatically correct: *Are you going out hunting?*

Proper western phraseology: *You goin' huntin'?*

Might piss some readers off, but guys, I can't please everyone and I'd rather stay true to my roots, and the way I KNOW IT TO BE, than change it to how someone who's never been here, expects one size fits all and foists their language expectations on us unsuspectin' folks out here in flyover country. <g>

And most adult cowboys chew tobacco. Might be considered gross, but it is very realistic. Glossing over it would be untrue to what I'm attempting to do with the series.

**MISTRESS CHRISTMAS** is the first in the Wild West Boys series, a spin off series from the Rough Riders, which will feature members of the West family (see family trees on this website) the McKay cousins.

**MISS FIRECRACKER** is the second in the Wild West Boys series.

Both novellas will be packaged together for a print book entitled **WILD WEST BOYS**, the publication date is May 2010.

I've also had readers ask if there will be a book with Geo and Shawnee, secondary characters from **RUNNING WITH THE DEVIL**. Yes. And no. I have the story, **RUNNING ON EMPTY** started, but at this time I'm focusing on the Rough Riders series. I'd like to go back and finish it at some point. Not sure when.

I have no plans to write a book revolving around Ryan Cross, Tate Cross's older brother mentioned in **DIRTY DEEDS**. But never fear, you get a tiny peek at Tate and Nathan's life ten years later, in my novella, **WICKED GARDEN**, which is part of the **THREE'S COMPANY ANTHOLOGY**. In a perfect world, I'd get to write a story about Jon White Feather, the third player in **WICKED GARDEN**, who seemed to gather interest and fans.

Also in that perfect world, I'd get to tell Brock Tennyson's story, Cam McKay's Army buddy from **SHOULDA BEEN A COWBOY**.

As always, I encourage reader comments and feel free to contact me [lorelei@loreleijames.com](mailto:lorelei@loreleijames.com) with any additional questions and I'll try my level best to answer them!