



Taken, Not Spurred

Ruth Cardello

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Previously published as Gentling the Cowboy, part of the Texan Nights series.

From *New York Times* and *USA Today* bestselling author Ruth Cardello comes the steamy debut to the Lone Star Burn series.

Would-be writer Sarah Dery has just turned twenty-five and feels like her life is on hold. She's done squat with her English degree and is just killing time working for her parents. So, when the opportunity to spend the summer working on a ranch in Texas comes her way, she jumps at the chance—figuring it might be just the jolt she needs to get her creative juices flowing.

Tony Carlton is a handsome and reclusive horse trainer with a tortured past and an eye for trouble, this time in the form of a naked blonde stranger he finds in his shower.

The wrong turn that led Sarah into the arms of this sexy, brooding cowboy turns out to be just what she needed to find her steamy inner voice, but will their connection be enough to break down Tony's defenses?

Taken, Not Spurred Details

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From Reader Review Taken, Not Spurred for online ebook

Heather andrews says

I loved this book I loved the first meeting of Tony and Sarah:

She looked down at her state of undress, then back at him. Her eyes were as wide and expressive as a young filly's. "I'm nod dressed," she said.

He hoped his swollen d*** wasn't as obvious as it was painful. "I noticed."

Tony he's a serious guy but there is one thing that boy is always serious about and that's Sarah, "do I look like I'm joking?" he asked. The heat of her gaze dropped to his bulging jeans, making his boner jerk and strain for freedom. "I'll admit I'm finding it hard to concentrate on anything but getting you up to my room and showing you just how serious I am." I loved me some hot, hard headed cowboys and Tony fit that description.

Bethany says

I just happened to find Gentling the Cowboy one day when I was looking at books and I'm so happy that I did. Gentling the Cowboy was funny, VERY steamy, heart felt and I really enjoyed it.

In Gentling we meet Sarah, unhappy with her life and ready to make some changes. She decides to pack up her stuff and her horse and go stay with a friend for the summer. Unfortunately, that plan doesn't work out as she had planned. She ends up in the wrong Texas ranch with a very grumpy ranch owner. Tony found the perfect place to hide from the life he no longer wants any part of, his Texas ranch. He keeps everyone at arm's length and makes sure they hate and fear him. Coming home one day to find a naked lady in his shower turns Tony's world upside down. The heat and chemistry between Sarah and Tony is like fire. Their need for each other is unstoppable and they could careless where they are when that need comes over them. Sarah pushes Tony to be better and Tony just keeps trying to push her away. Together they help heal hurt pasts and uncertain future.

Gentling the Cowboy is book one in a new series by Ruth Cardello. I will be keeping my eye out for more in books in this series, because I became invested in not just Sarah and Tony's story but the supporting characters too. They played a big role in this book and I can't wait to read their story.

Hetty says

HOLY COWBOY HOTNESS! This is one searing hot romance that will leave you completely satisfied.

"This is what life is about: seeing new places, meeting new people, grabbing life by the balls and squeezing until it coughs up a story forth telling."

Sarah Dery desperately needs a life change. A summer trip to Texas is just what she needs to clear her head and finally start writing her novel. What she doesn't plan for is Tony Carlson but he was a very pleasant surprise. I absolutely loved the accidental way they met! Their intense, immediate attraction had me fanning my face from the start. I appreciated that the heat turns up right away... no waiting around. Even though they

don't fall into bed immediately, there is plenty of sexual tension to keep you busy.

"It had been years since anything had made his heart race and his breath catch in his throat. Something about this woman pulled at a part of him he'd long considered dead."

Sarah is absolutely hilarious and the perfect match for Tony's bad attitude. They push each other's buttons and it makes for some fantastic banter that had me rolling on the floor laughing. After spending far more time together than either thought, they finally give into their passionate desires. Sarah is fairly inexperienced and has no clue how fantastic sex can be. Tony is all too obliged to show her exactly what she has been missing. Prepare to be blown away with their mind-blowing action between the sheets!

"This is only the beginning."

"It gets better?"

"Oh, Sarah, you have no idea."

Sarah and Tony are amazing for one another but it isn't a flawless, easy relationship. Both are riddled with guilt from the past that makes them believe happiness will never come. Sarah realizes the grip her past has and decides to finally deal with it. Tony is far too stubborn to believe he can be saved. What is hotter than a broody, moody cowboy? Nothing! He took my breath away and made my heart race page after delicious page. I applaud Sarah for her dedicated efforts to help Tony, no matter how hard he pushes her away. But everyone has their limits...

"Sometimes I think you're the man I've waited my whole life to meet. You're gorgeous, you're great in bed, and have a tortured side that helps me feel less alone in my own hell. We could be more than lovers, we could be friends, too. I feel safe when I'm in your arms. But then, like now, I wonder if I'm completely wrong and you're nothing more than a coward."

This novel was an outstanding surprise! I loved everything about it and cannot wait for the next novel in the series. The writing was exquisite and flawless... you fall right into the story. One of my favorite aspects was Sarah's novel within this book because it added a fun twist. The storyline was interesting and definitely grasps your attention. Buy this highly recommended novel today!

5 Diamonds

J *deep in the heart of Texas* says

4--Cowboy--Stars!!

"This is what life is about: seeing new places, meeting new people, grabbing life by the balls and squeezing until it coughs up a story worth telling."

Sarah is a writer, or at least she's trying to be. She steps away from her city life and decides to spend the summer helping out an old friend on her farm in Texas. She's looking for an adventure. A story.

After days of traveling, Sarah and her horse Scooter find their way to Double C Ranch.

"Yesterday was not a dream. I really did get lost, made a complete idiot of myself over the first cowboy I met, got ditched by a woman I thought was my friend, and slept in the home of a complete stranger."

Instead of finding her friend Lucy, Sarah finds brooding cowboy Tony. Tony is not a happy person, by a long shot. He doesn't like people. He doesn't smile. He doesn't laugh. But he likes Sarah.

Once Sarah discovers she landed at the wrong ranch, her adventure begins. Lucy no longer wants her to stay and Tony doesn't want her to leave. So Sarah decides to stay with Tony and let her story unfold.

Tony isn't sure what motives Sarah has for landing at his ranch. Tony was once a celebrity in his own right. Before life brought tragedy. Now Tony no longer lives, he just exists. And even bright, sunny full of life Sarah can't save Tony from his past.

"Everyone has scars, Tony. If yours were on your skin and not in your heart, would you hide them from me? Would you be ashamed?"

"If they were as ugly, I might."

There were more than a few times I wanted to knock Tony upside the head.

He was so stubborn and at times he toyed with Sarah's emotions. But underneath, you could see that he was a really caring, sweet guy. He just got a little lost along the way.

I really enjoyed this one! It was a really fun, sweet read. Very little drama. Some great steam and I laughed quite a bit!

Dee says

3.5 Stars

I have never read RC before so not sure what I was letting myself in for, I really thought that she wrote fluffy, sweet and sickly tame reads where it would fade to black at the sex scenes but that is seriously not the case. Yes it is still a light and a bit fluffy read but it was full of tension between the H/h and it definitely

didn't fade to black at any stage :)

If you are in the mood for a light enjoyable read where you can lose yourself for a few hours then this is for you.

Heather says

I received this book through First Reads!

I was reluctant to read this once I finally cracked it open. &got a good look at the cover. and I wasn't sure if I'd like it, or the main character, because she def doesn't look classy on the cover.

in some ways I liked it better than I thought I would, and in others, I didn't like the book.

I'm glad I finally got around to reading it, and I wish I had done it sooner!

I was surprised in the beginning of the story, because sarah didn't seem the type to ride horses at all.

-started out with every cliché. Girl on the run. Leaving behind kith &kin. Family is mad. Don't understand it. She leaves behind her well-ordered life working at the family business &her perfectly acceptable but bland parent approved boyfriend. Insert an overprotective brother.

&she made it sound like she was on this grand adventure for the rest of her life. It's just a summer in texas with a friend. Come. On.

Why, after saying she didn't wanna cause trouble with his wife, would you ask "do you like my slutty, cheap, stripper boots?" ok I inserted a few words there that weren't in the book. But that's what that translated too. How dare you ask what could be a married man how he likes ur slutty boots? No1 is that dense. &I don't find idiocy charming. U just made urself look like an airhead.

&then she thinks it's his gf in the house and then goes and says he saw me naked. Why would you bring that up?

Saying she wasn't gunna leave until he kicked her out. That's ridiculous, desperate, and completely unrealistic. I started to not like the character very early on because of stuff like this.

It was pathetic how she would be going to leave and then would end up staying. Freakin leave already! He stood her up twice, and gets mad and then gets talked into staying. Or I should say distracted into staying. He'd kiss her or make a reference to what he'd like to do with her in his bed &she'd be all, idc how he treats me! As long as I get good sex!

You met her the night before and she appears in a nightmare you've been having since you were like 12. So not buying that! I really hated how feelings and connections happened so quickly in here.

"&what if I told you I like a lil *** in a man?" -&what if I told you you sound completely desperate? It was annoying how she immediately could sense a sadness in him &knew he needed saving and kept thinking she was the person to do it. It had a lil angel quality to it that I didn't believe in. idt sarah was capable of that angel role. &she wasn't really special enough to save him. If I could sum her up I'd say-desperate for sex. She wasn't really a funny, strong heroine, who was spunky and made u connect and root for her, that's for sure.

Its absolutely NOT charming that he says no talking or she can leave his ranch.

"go make us breakfast, but stay naked." &she doesn't say anything. Because she's that desperate for sex with a total and complete stranger that she doesn't even mind how they treat her. Her way of getting mad was making runny eggs and too-sweet coffee. Way to go sarah, I think you got him!

This whole immediately looking through his tough exterior to see a wounded guy is absolutely ridiculous.

Its disgusting how she wont stick up for herself. I have no respect for someone who doesn't respect themselves. And who wont stand up for themselves. A character who lets herself be treated like this is one I absolutely cant root for.

When she all of a sudden said "I killed my brother" I literally had no reaction besides the urge to roll my

eyes. 1st off-let's hold off the dramatics. We know you didn't actually kill him, so don't word it like that. &what are the chances that characters inadvertently lead to someone's death?yeah, not very likely.idl authors that give their main characters similar backgrounds just so they understand each other. It makes it too easy. It's like they think they wont understand each other otherwise. That's not true. I wanna c how a normal person with a happy background would react and help tony.

'attempts to pretend she can cook may lead to a condition called "the nervous fart that must be held in at all costs.'" TMI! TMI!

I got incredibly sick of sarah saying I should smack him, kick him in the shin, etc.for things he did.he's a total stranger tat u absolutely dk. But you think you do. If you're that good at reading ppl why don't you be a psychiatrist?

Don't force yourself in someone's life &get mad when they don't want you there.

When he says that haiing children cant happen because he doesn't want any, and she's like I should slap him,I was like why the freak would you do that? Does this author really think we agree with her?

If he's such a butt hole leave him. You moron.

He's completely entitled to say he doesn't want kids. There's absolutely nothing wrong with not wanting kids. &then when she says he looks sick at the idea of marrying her and she's like I should throw my drink in his face.there again I didn't agree with her.

He's completely entitled to not wanting to marry you. Seeing as how you're a complete and total stranger. &annoying.

This whole about to leave, not leaving thing was driving me up the freaking wall.

The plot of this book is: goes to texas.meets hot, but very rude,crude, and demanding guy.almost leaves.doesnt. decides to leave.doesnt. mentions leaving. Doesn't. gets packed up to leave.doesnt. gets kissed&talked to dirty to, and forgets her decision to leave. Great willpower!

When sarah flips out about dinner, I didn't get it. Yeah it didn't go well towards the end. But I honestly thought dean&david's teasing was funny. There was no call for her saying they should be ashamed of their behavior when it was only really dean and tony's fault towards the end. &that's between brothers,so it doesn't concern you. So, getting onto someone for their behavior at their ranch,or their brother's ranch, or the place where they work, when you've only been there for a hot minute, isn't acceptable.or likeable.

&there's certainly no call for stomping off &slamming his door. Like ur having a lil temper tantrum at someone elses house. &then go get packed up to leave. Once again. like we believe you'd actually do it. It's like the boy who cried wolf. Except in this version, the "hot" guy walks in, makes some lame butt apology that usually contained some sexual innuendos and then the horny heroine would give in.

'a home she felt comfortable enough to spend her afternoons writing in.' awwww, wellas long as YOU'RE comfortable that's all that matters. Goodness forbid you go to a complete stranger's house and not be comfortable there. seeing as how u rolled into town at the wrong ranch, and found that this strangers house wasn't warm enough for you! By all means, redecorate and make him get a computer!

'their clients appreciated the sparkly hoof polish she applied to each &every horse they sold.' Yeah like everyone appreciates or wants that. That's all this 'heroine' contributes to tony's ranch-sparkly nail polish for the horses.

Her brother likes Melanie. Eye roll. Nothing more corny than side characters all of a sudden finding love too. That really didn't need to be in here. Its not necessary to the story at all.

Great.every time someone blames themselves for a death,it turns out someone else does too. Sarah blamed herself for her brothers death, but dean blamed himself. Tony blamed himself for that girls death, but then her dad blamed himself cause he couldn't deny her anything. Eye roll.

David working for the staten's was a nice surprise. &I like how it tied into the story, how he came to the ranch to get to tony, and ending up helping him.

Towards the end when she was saying she was sorry and not angry at tony and thanking him for letting her find her voice &er family.&for realizing that the way she acted, forcing herself into his life, was why it didn't work out I thought that was really mature.

Missy being alive is too convenient & ridiculous.

Them almost doing it at the ranch in front of his workers, and in front of his brother & the rescue team, and in the front seat of her car on the side of the road, and in the barn in front his workers was ridiculous. Basically any time they did that in public. Which was like all the time. & trashy. at least find some privacy.

Also cooking naked, and playing pingpong naked is not attractive. Being naked for certain things is gross. Seinfeld, anyone?

I like how he reconciled with that girl's dad, and planned to have a charity in her name.

*** Crystal * says**

5 stars all the way! I so loved this book. The humor was awesome... I loved her inner dialogue. Both characters were flawed and the humor soon turned to more serious and somewhat angst. It was so emotional for me in a few spots... but truly perfect. I loved how this book made me feel... And, I was pleasantly surprised as to how deep and moving the story was. I will absolutely read more books from this author.

Sorento62 says

This is my first book by Ruth Cardello (Taken, Not Spurred -- previously published under the title Gentling the Cowboy). I would call the genre erotic romance. It's a contemporary romance with a fair bit of explicit sex.

The writing is light, not literary, but the author does give us some nuggets of wisdom. See quotes below. Taken, Not Spurred is about a young woman and a young man who both need emotional healing from punishing themselves for past tragedies. For the young woman, there is also a sexual awakening and increase in sexual confidence. It's a life affirming book, and I enjoyed it.

“there are no winners in a tragedy, only people struggling to survive the aftermath.”

“Life is scary, but I think it’s supposed to be. If you’re living it right, that is.”

KathyAnne says

4.5 rating

I really, really enjoyed this book! It was funny, steamy and also tugged on my heartstrings... a great combination for an enjoyable read. :) This is a wonderful tale of city girl meets country boy and the way they both provide for the other the courage needed to make big changes in their lives.

When I started this book I was definitely in the mood for some romantic humor. I got that... and there were lots of giggles to prove it! What I didn't expect was to be drawn to these two and their back stories. I got a little teary eyed when Sarah was talking about her past tragedy from her childhood. The things that happen to us as children forever define us don't they?? Gotta' love an author who can successfully make me laugh and cry all in one book!

Sarah finds herself in the wrong place at the right time. Ending up at the wrong ranch and completely off course of her original destination, she comes face to face with Tony... aka... Mr. save me sad eyes. Tony is a good looking rancher who is definitely hard to get along with and is very much a product of his painful past.

Sarah decides to stay at the ranch and use Tony for inspiration for her romance novel. Yep... a girls gotta' do what a girls gotta do... right?? **wink wink**

What started as an opportunity to take advantage of the undeniable lust they felt for each other turned into something so much more than they both expected... much more. Sometimes people come into your life just at the right moment.

I loved Sarah's love scene entries into her journal... very entertaining and funny. Probably my favorite part of the book.

If you like a lot of steamy time in your books then this is a good choice. I don't usually like an excess of steam but in this case it really worked. I did enjoy how Sarah would always find a way to turn things back around on Tony and surprise him. She was not the kind of woman he was used to but she was definitely the kind of woman he needed.

This was a great read and one I would highly recommend to fans of western romance.

ARC was provided by Montlake Romance

www.ktbookreviews.com

Renita McKinney says

I love to read....with a passion. Books have always opened doors for me, entertained me and took me on unstoppable journeys. That is what Gentling The Cowboy did for me.

This story is so much more than a romance novel. It is a story of love, forgiveness, redemption, compassion, discovery and joy. It is a tale of losing a part of ones self and finding another. It is a tale of life....the good, the bad, the ugly. It is a tale of pain, survival, and growth. It is a tale of facing your demons and forgiving yourself.

This tale touched me more than any other by Ruth Cardello. It had me up til 3:30 am, tho I had to be at work at 08:00 am. It had me sitting in my office crying, it caused me to search myself, forgive some people and accept that it's ok to hurt, but to know I can't hurt forever.

This book made me laugh out loud, want to throw my kindle across the room, to slap Tony six ways from Sunday and to then root for him like he was the captain of the football team.

The journey of Sarah and Tony is filled with rough roads, mistrust and unspoken feelings. She needs redemption as does he. Tragedy has caused them to lose their way, searching for redemption has brought them together. Love has sent them on a roller coaster ride.

Please don't get me wrong this book is filled with humor, joy, laughter and some damn hot sex! I laughed out loud, I nodded my head in agreement and I sometimes just smiled.

Ruth, you are amazing, you are talented and Lawd knows you can tell a story!! Can't wait for more of the series, more of your words and a whole lot more of a cowboy....after all I'm a Texas girl!

Karen says

Tony Carlson has escaped to an isolated ranch to forget his past and try to survive in the present.

Sarah Dery is an aspiring writer who is looking for her story, and she finds it: in the wrong town, with a cowboy who is as sexy as he is broody and angry. He's more than willing to help her research the spicier scenes, but when it comes happy endings, he doesn't believe in them.

The first book in Ruth Cardello's newest series, Texan Nights, launches one sexy cowboy and one sweet city girl into some scorching situations. You like angst? Tony delivers. How about sassy females? Sarah is your woman. And sizzling sex? Tony and Sarah try some things I've never read before... And don't forget Ruth's wonderful humor, this one gives you plenty of that too.

Troubled souls finding themselves and each other make for one hot-to-trot (or canter or gallop) romance!

Pamela says

I would've enjoyed the story more had the heroine showed some self-respect. All it took was one look or touch from Tony and she'd turn into a mush of goo, jumping into bed with him each and every time. Kind of hard to believe she's a strong, intelligent, and courageous heroine; more like TSTL just to get laid. If anything, I thought Tony treated her like a whore. Am I wrong? Would love to hear from others. Seriously though, what woman would accept a stranger's invite to stay the night at his home regardless that she'd be sleeping in the guest room? Oh forgive me, he's a gorgeous cowboy and that makes it all right. It must be as she decides to masturbate that very night with thoughts of the cowboy who she knows nothing about except that he's gorgeous. Give me a break! Cue eye-rolls. As for Tony, he was not an "alpha-male." An arrogant, selfish, rude, demeaning, and cruel SOB is what he was. A complete turn-off in my eyes.

Jenn says

Tony Carlton: Horse trainer. Hard-shell-of-man. Full of pain, anger and guilt. Domineering, especially in the bedroom.

Don't look, act or speak with him if you value your life. Unless you're name is Sarah.

Sarah Dery: A struggling writer. A shell-of-herself. Full of pain, guilt and sadness. Wanting to fix her life and will stand her ground if needs be.

So don't get in her way or she will wear your down, crack your shell widen open, and burrow herself right into your heart. Especially if your name is Tony.

Two broken people over guilt for something they may or may not have been able to stop. Not knowing how to cope so they both do it in ways that make their lives unhappy. Until one decides to take a chance and change their life path for the better. While the other can't let go of things of the past that can't be fixed.

Together they will:

- * fight with each other
- * have very heated passionate moments
- * laugh together
- * tear each others walls down
- * learn to fight for each other
- * and realize that they deserve to live, love and be happy

What I liked

1. David and Dean
2. Sarah was really good for Tony
3. The last 30% of the book was the best part for me.
4. The lessons a lot of the characters learned.
5. The cabin

Over all, I really enjoyed this book. At first I wasn't so sure. I wasn't loving it in the beginning. It took a bit to get in to. What I thought would be a jerky, domineering, thinking with his libido man type of a story, actually turned out to have a deeper meaning when it was all said and done. I'm glad that once we got the focus off all the steamy parts that a good message of acceptance and forgiveness came through. I loved that not only did the two main characters need this lesson, but several others did too.

My only complaints would be:

- Lucy's situation was a loose end not tied up.
- Some lingering questions about Melanie, her son, and her family were left lingering in my mind.

I REALLY hope Melanie and Charlie get a book.

The Book Junkie Reads . . . says

open, honest, witty, funny, real, unfiltered . . .

Overall 4 out of 5 stars

Performance 4 out of 5 stars

Story 4 out of 5 stars

Sweet Sarah Dery was on a mission to make sense of her life and the choices she have yet to make. One decision to drive from the north of New England to the southern state of Texas may just turn out to be the worse decision of them all or the best she could have ever made. Sarah finds that she had mistaken one town for another and being caught in a strangers shower was not exactly the way she wanted to be greeted. Tony Carlton was not big on people and especially not strangers. He comes home to find a vehicle and horse trailer in front of his home. That was nothing compared to the surprise he was going to find in the house. The two started out a bit on the wrong foot but the days and weeks to come show them that sometimes the most unexpected things could make life that much more.

The two have both suffered loss and life and now they face a chance with each other there by their side. This was a good way to start a new series with new friends made in to a family. Sarah, Tony and all their friends and family bring you a big welcome to Texas.

Narrator Mary Kowal was good. For the most part you could distinguish between characters. You could enjoy the ebb and flow of the narration.

D.G. says

What an uneven book! On one hand, it had really funny parts, very touching moments but a penchant to devolve into porno style situations where the main leads where minding their own business and then just start taking off their clothes no matter who was watching. I don't object to very explicit books - in fact, I prefer them - but I'd like to see rhyme or reason to the love scenes, not like they happened in here.

Sarah has dreamed of becoming a writer but at 25, she hasn't written anything. In order to get some inspiration, she decides to spend the summer at a friend's ranch in Texas, but alas, she makes it to the wrong ranch and Tony finds her in his shower. Through a convoluted set of circumstances, she gets to stay in Tony's ranch and pretty quickly is warming his bed.

Both Tony and Sarah feel terribly guilty because of some tragedy in their lives. Tony is the kind of man who hides from the world and doesn't form any attachments. Sarah is a woman who diverts serious conversations with humor - her voice is so funny that at the beginning, I was laughing constantly. Then the book turned into a porno fest, where they couldn't stop each other from groping each other in public or doing it in the side of the road for the world to see.

One of things I liked best about the book is that they don't get over their tragedies - and both are doozies - but just learn to live with it. This is such a relief from most romance with the "love conquers all" crap. No matter what anybody says, you don't get over what happened to them.

Mary Kowal's male voices were below average as usual. Not even Tony's sounded appealing.

Not sure if I'll continue the series.
