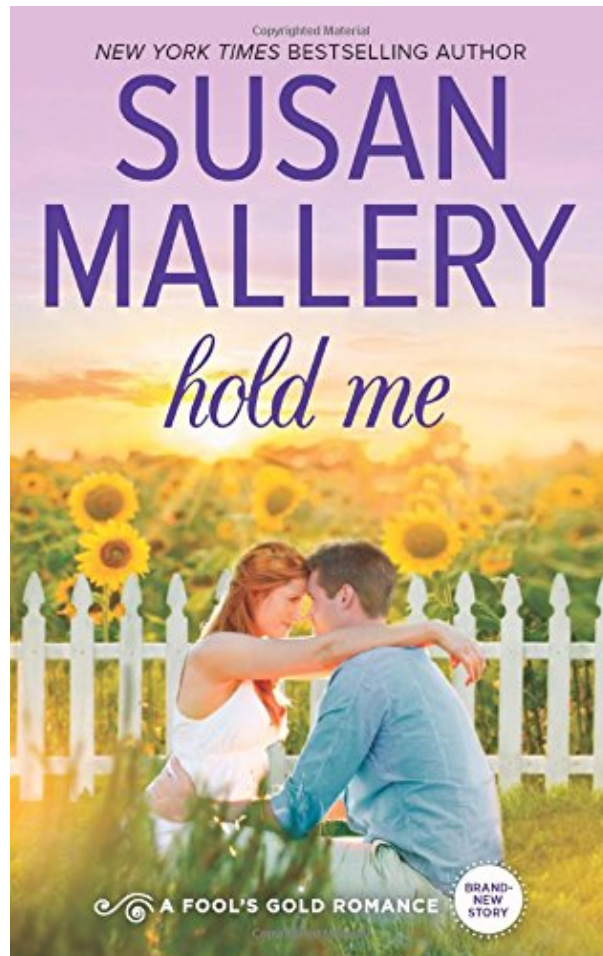
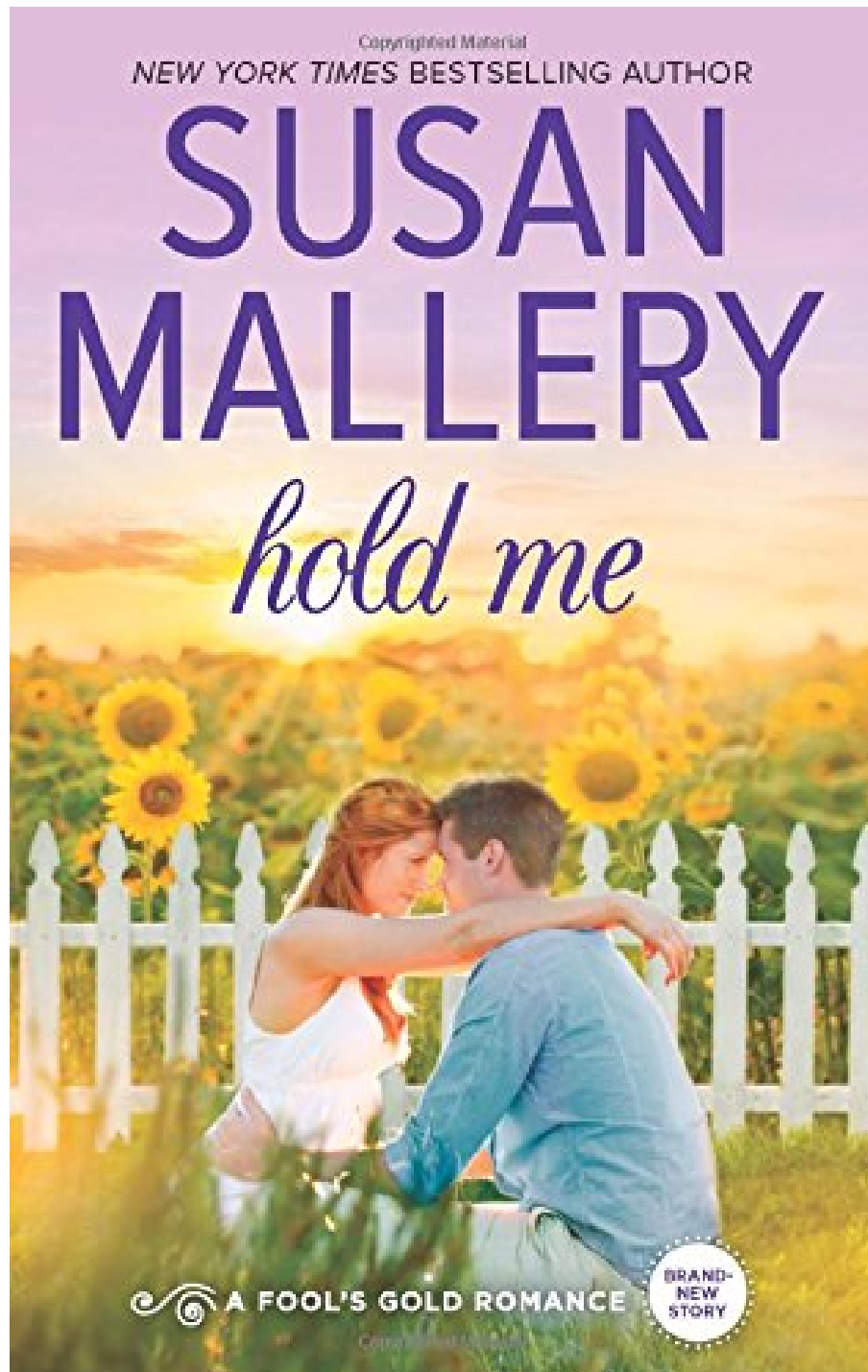


# **HOLD ME (FOOL'S GOLD, BOOK 18) BY SUSAN MALLERY**



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"Have you met Mayor Marsha yet?" Kipling asked.

Destiny shook her head. "No. She hired me, but it was all done through my boss. I have a meeting with her later today."

Amusement returned to his eyes. "I'll be there, too. I think you're going to like her. She's California's longest-serving mayor. She looks like a sweet old lady, but she's actually pretty tough and keeps firm control over her town. She gets things done, and sometimes I've left wondering what just happened."

Qualities she could totally get behind. "I like her already."

"I thought you might." He stood. "Welcome to Fool's Gold, Destiny."

She rose, as well. "Thank you."

As he left her office, she let her gaze drift over his body. He was in great shape, she thought, admitting he was just charming enough to make her wonder if there was any potential there.

She shook her head, because she already knew the answer, and it was no. No way, no how. She wanted ordinary. Regular. The kind of man who understood that life was best lived quietly. Kipling, aka G-Force, had roared down a mountain at who knew what speed. He was a thrill seeker at heart, which meant not for her.

She would simply keep looking. Because the man of her very own calm, rational dreams was out there, and one day she would find him.

Kipling crossed the street. As he waited for one of the few traffic lights in Fool's Gold to change to green, he glanced up at the mountains. Now that it was late spring, he could look at them and not feel anything. The only remaining snow was up at elevations that didn't allow for skiing. So there was no sense of loss, no reminder that he would never again be able to fight the mountain and win. That the sense of flying on snow was lost forever.

He knew what his friends would say, what the doctors would tell him. That he was damned lucky to have made as much of a recovery as he had. That he could walk and that was its own miracle. Anything else was gravy.

Kipling heard the words. On his good days he even believed them. But the rest of the time, he avoided thinking about what had been lost. When it got bad, he simply stopped looking at the mountains.

The light changed, and he crossed the street. As he walked he considered the fact that it might have been easier to simply find a job somewhere there weren't mountains. There were flat places. Maybe in the Midwest or Florida. Only he couldn't imagine what that must be like. To look up and see nothing but sky. He might have an uneasy relationship with the mountains; he might equally love and hate them, but there was no way he could be away from them. They were a part of him. It would be easier to cut off an arm than live



without them.

"Hey, Kipling."

He waved automatically at the woman pushing a stroller who had greeted him. Fool's Gold was a friendly kind of place. Where neighbors knew each other and tourists were welcomed as much for their presence as the money they brought with them.

He was used to people he'd never met knowing who he was. That came with the celebrity he had been. Only being in Fool's Gold was different. More intense, maybe. This town wasn't just a place. It was a living, breathing essence.

He shook his head, wondering where all that had come from. He didn't usually think too much about things. He was a doer, preferring to move than sit still. Which had made his recovery a particular brand of hell. But that was behind him now. Except for the scars, the limp and the dull aches that would be with him always, he was healed. And walking.

He headed into his offices at the corner of Eighth Street and Frank Lane, right by one of the fire stations and the police station. No one was going to break in, he thought with a grin. Or party too hard in this neighborhood.

As he unlocked the front door and stepped inside, he reminded himself that years ago he would have chafed at being so close to any kind of authority. That he'd believed that with the ability to fly down a mountain came the right to party as hard as he wanted, and damn the consequences. As long as he beat the clock by even a thousandth of a second, he was a god. At least until the next race.

But time had a way of maturing people. He'd been dragged kicking and screaming into adulthood, and here he was, running the town's search and rescue program. Who would have guessed?

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Destiny Mills believes passion has its place—like in the lyrics of the country songs that made her parents famous. After a childhood full of drama and heartache, she wants a life that's calm. Safe. Everything that Kipling Gilmore isn't. Her temporary assignment with the Fool's Gold search and rescue team puts her in delicious proximity to the former world-class skier every day. Part of her aches to let go for once...the rest is terrified what'll happen if she does.

Though an accident ended his career, Kipling still lives for thrills—and a hot fling with a gorgeous redhead like Destiny would be a welcome diversion. Yet beneath his new coworker's cool facade is a woman who needs more than he's ever given. With her, he's ready to take the risk. But love, like skiing, is all about trust—and before you soar, you have to be willing to fall.

Look for Best of My Love, the next title in Susan Mallery's Fool's Gold series.

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- Binding: Mass Market Paperback
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"I thought you might." He stood. "Welcome to Fool's Gold, Destiny."

She rose, as well. "Thank you."

As he left her office, she let her gaze drift over his body. He was in great shape, she thought, admitting he was just charming enough to make her wonder if there was any potential there.

She shook her head, because she already knew the answer, and it was no. No way, no how. She wanted ordinary. Regular. The kind of man who understood that life was best lived quietly. Kipling, aka G-Force, had roared down a mountain at who knew what speed. He was a thrill seeker at heart, which meant not for her.

She would simply keep looking. Because the man of her very own calm, rational dreams was out there, and one day she would find him.

Kipling crossed the street. As he waited for one of the few traffic lights in Fool's Gold to change to green, he



glanced up at the mountains. Now that it was late spring, he could look at them and not feel anything. The only remaining snow was up at elevations that didn't allow for skiing. So there was no sense of loss, no reminder that he would never again be able to fight the mountain and win. That the sense of flying on snow was lost forever.

He knew what his friends would say, what the doctors would tell him. That he was damned lucky to have made as much of a recovery as he had. That he could walk and that was its own miracle. Anything else was gravy.

Kipling heard the words. On his good days he even believed them. But the rest of the time, he avoided thinking about what had been lost. When it got bad, he simply stopped looking at the mountains.

The light changed, and he crossed the street. As he walked he considered the fact that it might have been easier to simply find a job somewhere there weren't mountains. There were flat places. Maybe in the Midwest or Florida. Only he couldn't imagine what that must be like. To look up and see nothing but sky. He might have an uneasy relationship with the mountains; he might equally love and hate them, but there was no way he could be away from them. They were a part of him. It would be easier to cut off an arm than live without them.

"Hey, Kipling."

He waved automatically at the woman pushing a stroller who had greeted him. Fool's Gold was a friendly kind of place. Where neighbors knew each other and tourists were welcomed as much for their presence as the money they brought with them.

He was used to people he'd never met knowing who he was. That came with the celebrity he had been. Only being in Fool's Gold was different. More intense, maybe. This town wasn't just a place. It was a living, breathing essence.

He shook his head, wondering where all that had come from. He didn't usually think too much about things. He was a doer, preferring to move than sit still. Which had made his recovery a particular brand of hell. But that was behind him now. Except for the scars, the limp and the dull aches that would be with him always, he was healed. And walking.

He headed into his offices at the corner of Eighth Street and Frank Lane, right by one of the fire stations and the police station. No one was going to break in, he thought with a grin. Or party too hard in this neighborhood.

As he unlocked the front door and stepped inside, he reminded himself that years ago he would have chafed at being so close to any kind of authority. That he'd believed that with the ability to fly down a mountain came the right to party as hard as he wanted, and damn the consequences. As long as he beat the clock by even a thousandth of a second, he was a god. At least until the next race.

But time had a way of maturing people. He'd been dragged kicking and screaming into adulthood, and here he was, running the town's search and rescue program. Who would have guessed?

Most helpful customer reviews

25 of 25 people found the following review helpful.

Hold off

By Paper or Kindle

I'm generally a fan of the author's Fool's Gold series, but this entry is a dud. It's boring, boring, boring. Some of Ms. Mallery's weaknesses are to blame: the incessant rehash of the hero's traumas, the heroine's traumas, and - for good measure - a couple of secondary characters' traumas. The characters obsess to themselves, to each other, and to an assortment of untraumatized supporting characters. If all this reiteration were removed, the remaining pages would equal, at best, a long short story. Possibly a novella. A second problem lies in the length of the series and the author's determination to 1) bring readers up to date on characters from 15 previous books, and 2) introduce characters who will be the heroes and heroines of upcoming books. The result is a nearly Dickensian cast of unusually good-looking, talented men, unusually beautiful, talented women, and after a while the reader can barely tell who's who. In brief, Destiny is afraid of letting herself love a man, thanks to being raised in a whirlpool of parental marriages and affairs and the resulting numerous half- and step-siblings, some of whom she's never met. She has one on her hands at the moment, as their mutual father is off touring and Starr has nowhere to go. Kipling, a former Olympic skier, is also afraid of loving a woman, as he distrusts the notion. His sister is on hand, the victim of domestic violence. The reader is presented with these four dysfunctional people, in a charming town filled with benevolently nosy folks, most of whom have already found their happy-ever-after in previous books which were similarly filled with trauma and angst and constant rehashing of same. Since the series is erratic, I plan to continue to follow it and hope that the next book is an improvement.

17 of 19 people found the following review helpful.

I commented that all the hero's in that year's Fool's Gold trilogy had the bad habit of running away toward the end of the ...

By Carrie

It's spring, almost summer, so it must time to return to Fool's Gold, California with Susan Mallery.

HOLD ME is the first book in this year's trilogy.

Destiny Mills is in Fool's Gold for the summer, helping the town set up their new search and rescue team. Kipling Gilmore is also new to town. He's been hired to run the search and rescue team. Destiny's company sells topographical and tracking software and she likes moving every few months. She likes her predictable life. She had enough upheaval and instability in her growing up years. Her parents are famous and tumultuous country western singers.

Kipling is healed up from a horrific skiing accident. Healed up on the outside, at least. He's left his old life as an Olympic skier to take up Mayor Marsha on her offer of a home for him and his sister in return for him running the new search and rescue operation.

Destiny's half-sister is spending the summer with Destiny in Fool's Gold. They share a father but don't know each other. As the summer progresses, Destiny, Starr, and Kipling all learn lessons about themselves and about life.

A couple of years ago, I commented that all the hero's in that year's Fool's Gold trilogy had the bad habit of running away toward the end of the book. Kipling does not run and I loved him (and Hold Me) for that.

The things that I love about Mallery are abundant in HOLD ME. Smart characters. Great dialogue. Humor. Quirky secondary characters. And still, the sex is fairly graphic, so be warned. Or be prepared to skip ahead. Although it's not the sexiest of her books that I've read.

I loved it and recommend it to readers of light and fun romance. Stay tuned for the next in the series: KISS ME.

Disclaimer: I received a free copy of HOLD ME in return for an honest review. We both kept our end of the deal.

13 of 15 people found the following review helpful.

Surprised I didn't enjoy this one more

By Debbie's World of Books

Wow, I have to say I am really surprised I didn't love this one more. Usually Mallery can do no wrong but this one totally missed the mark for me. I never really connected with either Destiny or Kipling. I thought Destiny did make poor choices in regards to being a sister at the beginning. Granted she has her half-sister dumped on her but I would think most people would realize how disconcerting it could be for a 15 yr old to be dumped with basically a total stranger, in a new place and not knowing anyone else. I could have lived with that because she does redeem herself but then she continues to make questionable choices. I found the sex without protection and then trying to convince herself that as a virgin she is allowed a one time gimme of no consequences unbelievable. She's 28 years old and even with such an odd upbringing it's such a teenager behavior. Kipling makes similar stupid choices and delusional behaviors surrounding those choices. Instead of being endearing I just found myself irritated that two grown ups were behaving that two teens.

I also found the side story about Kipling's man cave and feud with Jo silly and kind of pointless. I thought instead of showing solidarity, which I'm sure the purpose was supposed to be, it felt thoughtless of Jo and her friends towards Destiny. Destiny admits there's something going on with Kipling and then that they're together but that didn't stop them from causing Kipling all sorts of trouble. It would have worked better for me if Destiny was included in the "hey Kipling, that was a dumb move maybe you should rethink this" plan but nope, she's clueless to it all.

I still love Mallery's writing and I loved seeing some of my past favorite characters so the book was still ok but definitely not one I would read again in the series.

See all 683 customer reviews...

# **HOLD ME (FOOL'S GOLD, BOOK 18) BY SUSAN MALLERY**

## **PDF**

Based on some experiences of many people, it is in reality that reading this **Hold Me (Fool's Gold, Book 18) By Susan Mallery** can help them to make far better option and also offer even more encounter. If you wish to be among them, allow's purchase this publication Hold Me (Fool's Gold, Book 18) By Susan Mallery by downloading the book on web link download in this site. You could obtain the soft file of this book Hold Me (Fool's Gold, Book 18) By Susan Mallery to download and install as well as deposit in your readily available digital gadgets. What are you waiting for? Allow get this publication Hold Me (Fool's Gold, Book 18) By Susan Mallery online and read them in any time as well as any kind of location you will read. It will certainly not encumber you to bring heavy book Hold Me (Fool's Gold, Book 18) By Susan Mallery within your bag.

### Review

"Susan Mallery is one of my favorites." -#1 New York Times bestselling author Debbie Macomber

"This sweet Christmas treat is a pleasant introduction to Mallery's popular series." -Publishers Weekly on A Fool's Gold Christmas

"Mallery does her usual excellent job of giving readers a funny, warm-hearted story that is edged with cutting emotion!" -RT Book Reviews on All Summer Long

"The wildly popular and prolific Mallery can always be counted on to tell an engaging story of modern romance." -Booklist on Summer Nights

"Mallery infuses her story with eccentricity, gentle humor, and smalltown shenanigans, and readers...will enjoy the connection between Heidi and Rafe." -Publishers Weekly on Summer Days

"Romance novels don't get much better than Mallery's expert blend of emotional nuance, humor and superb storytelling." -Booklist

"A sweet, heartwarming Christmas romance with engaging characters, a family-redemption arc and a winning seasonal charm that will delight." -Kirkus Reviews on A Fool's Gold Christmas

### About the Author

New York Times bestselling author Susan Mallery has entertained millions of readers with her witty and emotional stories about women. Publishers Weekly calls Susan's prose "luscious and provocative," and Booklist says "Novels don't get much better than Mallery's expert blend of emotional nuance, humor and superb storytelling." Susan lives in Seattle with her husband and her tiny but intrepid toy poodle. Visit her at [www.SusanMallery.com](http://www.SusanMallery.com).

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No one woke up in the morning and thought to themselves, Today I'm going to get lost in the woods. But even without a plan, it happened.

Maybe it was simply that innate human need to explore. Maybe it was bad luck, or maybe it was just people being idiots. Grandma Nell had always loved to say, "Beauty is skin deep, but stupid goes clear down to the bone." Not that Destiny Mills was going to be judgmental either way. People got lost, and her job was to make sure they got found. It was kind of like being a superhero. Only instead of laser vision or invisibility, she had a brilliant computer software program and a finely honed search and rescue team.

Well, technically the team wasn't hers. It belonged to whatever town or county had hired her company. Her firm had created the software program, and she was one of three facilitators who helped those wanting to use it. She showed up, trained the search and rescue group and then moved on to the next assignment.

If it was Monday, she must be in Fool's Gold, she thought humorously as she stepped into her small, temporary office. Fool's Gold, California. Population 125,482 per the sign she'd seen on her way in. Nestled in the foothills of the Sierra Nevada mountains, the town attracted tourists by the thousands. They came in winter to ski, in summer to hike and camp and all year long to attend the dozens of festivals that had put the community on the map.

None of which concerned her. What was of more interest were the literally hundreds of thousands of acres right outside the city borders. Uncharted wilderness with plenty of slopes, gullies, streams and caves. Places where people got lost. And when someone was lost, who you gonna call?

Destiny chuckled as the Ghostbusters theme music played in her head. She didn't know about anyone else, but for her, life was a soundtrack. Music was everywhere. Notes formed melodies, and melodies were little more than memories to be recalled. Hear a song from your high school prom and you were back in your boyfriend's arms.

She settled in her chair and plugged her laptop into the docking station. She only had a week or so to get up and running before the real work began. For the next three months she would be mapping the terrain, feeding the information into the incredibly intelligent software her company used and training the local search and rescue team. She was the point of contact, the human connection. And in three months she would move on to another part of the country and do it all again.

She liked the moving around. She liked always being somewhere new. She made friends easily and then just as easily left them behind when it was time to go. There would be more friends at the next new place. Sure, there was a lack of continuity, but on the upside, she was spared the emotional drama that went with long-term friendships. Whether it was her getting close to them or them getting close to her, relationships could be exhausting.

She'd grown up in a family that made any of the "real housewives" shows look as interesting as reading the phone book. Reality TV had nothing on her parents. As an adult, she got to choose whether or not she wanted that drama, and she'd decided she didn't. Destiny had deliberately picked a job and a lifestyle that allowed her to forever be moving on.

But for the next few months she would enjoy the small-town quirkiness of Fool's Gold. She'd already read up on the place and was looking forward to sampling plenty of local flavor.

Right on time, the door to her small office opened. Destiny recognized the tall, blond, good-looking guy standing in the doorway. Not that they'd met before—she'd been hired by the mayor, not by him—but she'd seen him on plenty of magazine covers, television interviews and internet articles.

She stood and smiled. "Hi, I'm Destiny Mills."

"Kipling Gilmore."

His eyes were a darker blue than she'd expected, and he had that easy grace that most likely came from a lifetime of being an athlete. Because he wasn't just Kipling Gilmore. He was the Kipling Gilmore. Famous athlete. Superstar skier. Olympic gold medalist. The press had called him G-Force, because on skis, at least, he went for speed. Rules of physics be damned. He could do things that had never been done. At least until the crash.

They shook hands. He handed her a small, pink bakery box. "To help you settle in."

She lifted the lid and saw a half-dozen doughnuts. The scent of glaze and cinnamon drifted to her. It was intoxicating and made her instantly want fifteen minutes alone with her sugar fix.

"Thank you," she said. "Way better than flowers."

"I'm glad you think so. When did you get to town?"

"Yesterday. I got to Sacramento the night before and made the short drive in the morning."

"You're settling in okay?"

"I am, and I'm excited to get to work."

"Then let's get to it."

They both sat. She angled her laptop toward him and tapped on several keys.

"There are two major parts to getting the search and rescue software functional," she began. "Mapping the physical geography of the area and then getting you and your team trained on how to use it."

"Sounds easy enough."

"It always does, and then reality sets in."

One eyebrow rose. "Is that a challenge?"

"No. I'm simply saying the process takes time. STORMS can adapt to nearly any situation. The success or failure of a search is usually a combination of information and luck. My goal is to take luck out of the equation."

STORMS—Search Team Rescue Management Software—worked with the rescue team. Data was fed into the system, and the program then projected the most likely areas to search first. The more information known about the person missing, terrain, time of year and weather conditions, the faster the search went. Each searcher had GPS tracking information on his or her person. That information was sent back to the software so the search could be updated in real time.

As more areas were eliminated, the search was narrowed until the missing person was found.

"I'll start mapping the area in the next day or so," she continued.

"How does that happen?"

"First by air. We use a helicopter and various kinds of equipment to supplement the satellite data we already have. The heavily wooded areas and steep mountainsides will have to be mapped on foot."

"You do that?"

While the question was polite enough, the tone suggested he wasn't a believer. Silly man, she thought with a smile.

"Yes, Kipling. I can hike when necessary. If the areas are too remote, I take in local guides."

"I thought you were a city girl. Didn't someone tell me you live in Austin?"

"That's home base for me, yes. But I grew up near the Smoky Mountains. I can hold my own in the great outdoors."

What she didn't mention was that when she'd been younger, she'd spent several years living with her maternal grandmother in those same mountains. In addition to knowing her way around rugged terrain, she could fish and knew three ways to cook squirrel, but she wasn't going to share that. Tell someone you grilled a mean steak and you were applauded. Mention squirrel stew with root vegetables and they looked at you like you were in league with cannibals. People were funny, but she'd known that for a long time.

"Then I'll trust you to take care of business," he told her. "When does your helicopter arrive?"

She checked her calendar. "By the end of the week. It's going to be a busy summer. Once we get the geography into the database, we'll start testing the system. That means looking for people who aren't really lost."

Humor pulled at the corner of his mouth. "I read the material."

"Good to know. Does that mean you also open instruction manuals?"

He hesitated just long enough for her to start laughing.

"I didn't think so," she said. "What is it with men and instructions? Or asking for directions?"

"We don't like to admit when we don't know something."

"Ridiculous. No one knows everything."

"We can try."

No surprise there, she thought. Bravado seemed to go hand in hand with being male. Another reason she'd had so much trouble finding the right one. She wanted an absence of bravado and minimal ego. When emotions got riled, the opposite sex could be counted on to act crazy, and there was no place for crazy in her life.

"Are you going to have a problem taking instructions from me?" she asked. "Because if you are, we need to get that taken care of right this minute. I can arm wrestle you into submission, if necessary."

Kipling laughed. "I doubt that."

"Be careful with your assumptions. My grandma taught me a lot of dirty tricks. I know places to dig in a knuckle and make a grown man scream like a little girl. And not in a happy way."

"There's a happy way to scream like a little girl?"

She wrinkled her nose. "I've had to use that threat before, and some men think I'm talking about sex."

"I'm not."

His gaze settled on her face. "Interesting."

"So, am I going to have a problem with you?"

"No."

"Then this will be a good summer. I've never had a job in California before. I'm looking forward to getting to know the area."

"The town is a little strange."

"In what way?"

He sat easily in his chair. There was no squirming, no sense that he wanted to be somewhere else. He had patience, she thought. He would have to. Waiting out bad weather, waiting out the seasons. Needing conditions to be right.

Kipling Gilmore had won big at the Sochi Olympics, then disaster had struck a few months later. She wasn't one to follow sports, so she didn't know many of the details. Obviously, he'd recovered enough to take the job of heading the Fool's Gold search and rescue team. She wondered if he'd had trouble adjusting to regular life.

She knew it could be difficult for those cursed with fame to try to live like ordinary mortals.

"Everybody here knows everybody's business," he said.

Right. She'd asked him about the town. "That's not uncommon for small towns."

"Yeah, but it's different here. People here are more involved. We'll talk in a couple of weeks and see what you think. The festivals are interesting, and you don't have to lock your doors at night. If you live near the center of town, you don't need a car very often."

"Sounds nice." Despite having her home base in Austin, she wasn't really a big-city girl. She preferred the eccentricities of a small town.



"Have you met Mayor Marsha yet?" Kipling asked.

Destiny shook her head. "No. She hired me, but it was all done through my boss. I have a meeting with her later today."

Amusement returned to his eyes. "I'll be there, too. I think you're going to like her. She's California's longest-serving mayor. She looks like a sweet old lady, but she's actually pretty tough and keeps firm control over her town. She gets things done, and sometimes I've left wondering what just happened."

Qualities she could totally get behind. "I like her already."

"I thought you might." He stood. "Welcome to Fool's Gold, Destiny."

She rose, as well. "Thank you."

As he left her office, she let her gaze drift over his body. He was in great shape, she thought, admitting he was just charming enough to make her wonder if there was any potential there.

She shook her head, because she already knew the answer, and it was no. No way, no how. She wanted ordinary. Regular. The kind of man who understood that life was best lived quietly. Kipling, aka G-Force, had roared down a mountain at who knew what speed. He was a thrill seeker at heart, which meant not for her.

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But time had a way of maturing people. He'd been dragged kicking and screaming into adulthood, and here he was, running the town's search and rescue program. Who would have guessed?

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