



THE LONG ROAD HOME

TWO CALEB MARLOWE SERIES WESTERNS

TREMORS
OF THE
PAST

AN ELKHORN, COLORADO SHORT STORY

THE
WINTER
ROAD

AN ELKHORN, COLORADO NOVELLA

AND

MISSION
SAN JUAN
CAPISTRANO
1776

MAY MCGOLDRICK
NIK JAMES

HISTORY WHISPERS. SECRETS REMAIN.

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NIK JAMES



PRAISE FOR NIK JAMES NOVELS

“AN EXCELLENT READ! I love a good western and that’s what this was, a really good western. It had all the elements. A dangerous small town filled with down and out of luck silver miners whose mines were played out. A shifty-eyed sheriff and trouble....

Reading a Nik James book is like watching a movie. The description of the country as well as their crafting of characters made everything as clear as watching it...”

— Long and Short Reviews

“I have not read a good Western for a while and this one really hit the spot. It took me back to the days I would borrow books from my father that were written by Zane Grey, Louis Lamour, Max Brand and other authors that he had collected and treasured enough to keep on his shelves. This book has the feel of those old time favorites and took me back in time....”

— Cathy Geha, GoodReads Review

“Caleb Marlowe is handsome, honest, loyal, fearless and strong enough to wrestle a cougar. He’s also an appealing character and bound to be popular with readers....

The story is filled with heinous outlaws, plenty of shootouts, heroic acts and twists and turns. The stagecoach

robbers are not your average bunch of outlaws. The ending is a nice surprise...”

— Barbara Ellis, *The Denver Post*

About *BEYOND THE ECLIPSE*

*Winner of the Will Rogers Bronze Medallion for Best
Traditional Western*

“Refreshing.... A timely addition to the Western canon.”

— Sarah Steers, *ALA Booklist* Review

THE LONG ROAD HOME

Two Tales of Justice, Danger, and the Truths That Won't Stay
Buried

TREMORS OF THE PAST & THE WINTER ROAD -
CALEB MARLOWE SERIES WESTERNS

MAY MCGOLDRICK

NIK JAMES

Book Duo Creative

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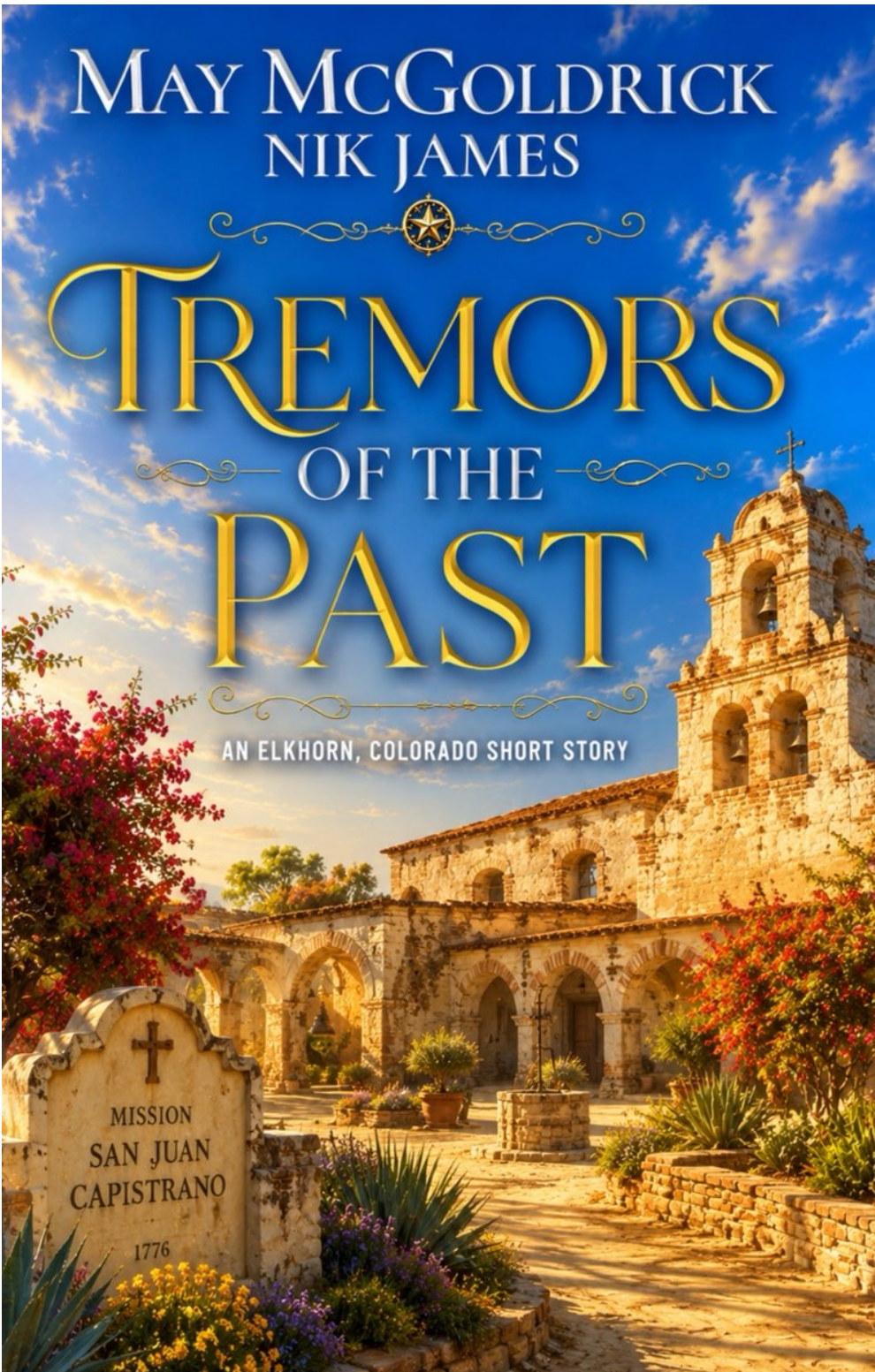
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MAY MCGOLDRICK
NIK JAMES

TREMORS
OF THE
PAST

AN ELKHORN, COLORADO SHORT STORY



TREMORS OF THE PAST
AN ELKHORN, COLORADO SHORT STORY

Denver, Colorado
November 7, 1882

HENRY JORDAN STOOD across the street from the office of the *Rocky Mountain News*, Denver's largest newspaper. Pulling up the collar of his elk-skin coat against the cold wind, he screwed down his black, wide-brimmed hat a little tighter. The silvery disk of a sun had disappeared a couple of hours earlier. But on each of the three floors, every damn window was ablaze with light, and the building glowed in the November darkness.

Just looking across at the place stoked the anger that had been simmering inside him for too long. Maybe he was tired and hungry. Maybe he was thirty-one and feeling every one of those long years in the saddle.

Or maybe he was just feeling like it was time to settle the score. It had been sitting in his craw for almost five years now. And that was long enough.

Henry took the leather wallet from the inner pocket of his coat and pulled out the yellowed news clipping.

Unfolding it, he held the paper up to the brand new electric streetlight and studied the name of the sonovabitch who'd penned the slander. *N.J. Hawk*.

Yes, Henry had been in that damn fight. No, he hadn't started it. Still, he'd served jail time and paid his dues. And since then, he'd worked hard to be a respectable citizen of Elkhorn, running a cattle ranch with his friend and partner Caleb Marlowe. This article had been written a year after the fight. And what for?

Henry glanced up at the windows across the way, hoping Mr. Hawk was sitting at his desk right now. The fella was about to get a visit from the past. And he wasn't going to like it much.

Putting the paper back in his pocket, Henry crossed the street and marched into the building.

The small lobby was lit by a chandelier, and two sets of stairs led to upper floors. Straight ahead of him, the newspaper's name was painted on the pebbled windows of large double doors. He strode across the lobby and pulled one open.

Before he could enter, though, a woman suddenly backed out, bumping into him.

With gleaming black hair pinned up on the back of her head, she was wearing a high-necked white blouse and a long black skirt. Under each arm, she was carrying folders stuffed with papers. The collision staggered her, and she clutched at the slipping folders.

Henry reached out to help her, but she righted herself and backed away.

"I have them," she said. "Thank you."

He tipped his hat.

Without another word, she crossed to a door by the stairs, pried it open, and disappeared.

As Henry turned back toward the office, he stepped on a folder.

When he picked it up, a page slipped out, and a few words on the paper jumped out at him. Pushing it back in, he followed her and went through the door and found himself at the top of a wooden stairwell. It was fairly dark, but he could see a dim light down below.

He descended and at the bottom found a wooden door with the words 'Records - Private' painted on it. It was slightly ajar, so he pulled it open and went in.

The musty smell of old paper and ink hit him square in the face. A single bulb dangling over a large wooden table illuminated the room. The cellar was a storage area for old editions of the newspaper. Rows of shelves stretched out into the darkness. An ancient printing press sat in pieces by one wall.

The woman was alone, standing at the table, staring at him, alarmed. Her folders were stacked in front of her, and she had one in her hand.

"You dropped this, miss," he said, holding the one she'd dropped out to her.

Josie Sinclair's pulse quickened as the door at the top of the stairs creaked open. She heard the thud of boots coming down the wooden steps, each one deliberate, as if

whoever was coming knew exactly where they were headed.

She'd planned to be down here at an hour when there was little chance of running into anyone else. A news office is naturally populated by nosy people. But in this cellar space, she was safe from curious glances and prying eyes.

This research was personal, and what she hoped to eventually write about would be frowned upon and possibly rejected by her superiors. But two generations of keeping secrets had taken a painful toll on the women in her family. Josie was the first one in a position to expose the lies that had been told and retold. Her ancestors were long gone, but she'd be damned before she'd see them erased from history.

And if the men upstairs refused to print the truth, she'd find another paper in this country that *would* print it.

Josie's eyes darted to the door of the record room as it swung open, and she recognized the tall man she'd collided with in the lobby.

"You dropped this, miss."

She had no chance to take it. As Josie started to reach for the folder in the stranger's outstretched hand, the table began to shake violently. The floor beneath her feet rolled like the deck of a small boat on river rapids, throwing her off balance. The piles of papers on the table spread out and spilled onto the floor, and the crash of shelves behind her raised a cloud of dust.

The walls shuddered and groaned in protest as a low rumble filled the air, and the sound of falling furniture somewhere above reverberated dully. The packed dirt floor

rolled again, and the door behind the stranger slammed shut with a bang.

A second later, the light above the table flickered with a rasping buzz and then died completely.

Josie felt like she'd suddenly been thrown into the black abyss of a bottomless hole. Her heart raced as she grabbed for the desk.

Once again, the floor rose and fell beneath her feet like a living thing, and she held on for dear life.

The man's voice was calm in the darkness. "Earthquake. Hold on. It should stop soon."

Then, as suddenly as it began, the shaking and rolling stopped.

"I've never felt anything like that," she gasped, her heartbeat still a loud drum in her ears. "Terrifying."

"The brick walls are standing," he said. "Reckon the building is solid enough."

Josie listened intently to his tone. Low and almost conversational.

The building trembled again, but this time, it wasn't an earthquake. The rumbling came from above. Panic-stricken people rushed to flee.

"Let's get out of here," she said, listening to the furor.

"Yup. Not a bad idea." There was an odd tranquility in his words, as if the situation didn't faze him in the slightest. "That door's over here somewhere."

"There's a lamp." Josie felt for the end of the table, pulled the oil lamp from its hook, and set it on top.

"I got a match," he said.