



HEARTS HAVEN

HAUNTED HEARTS

FANYA STOWE

CAN SUZY GET OUT
OF THE WAY OF HER OWN FEET
AND LET THE ANGELS DO THEIR WORK?

Excerpt from Haunted Hearts

by Tanya Stowe

From there, Suzy's long-suppressed imagination had taken flight.

Scott Lunsford became Heathcliff, hurrying across the moor. She was Cathy, who gingerly picked her way down the incline of the trail...it seemed her clumsiness wouldn't leave her even in her daydreams...and then ran across to leap into his arms. But frankly, she couldn't quite see herself making the leap either without some sort of mishap.

Better yet, he was Rochester to her mousy Jane Eyre.

Rochester. She wondered where he came from, how he made his living. How did he get that taut waist and those muscular arms? In a gym or training for a joust? Did he move with such purpose because he was meeting someone, a woman forbidden to him because of a family feud? Did he walk every day to escape the oppressive responsibilities of a multinational corporation? Could he leap tall buildings in a single bound?

After seeing him that first time, Suzy kept her routine the same, and every day she caught a glimpse of her Rochester coming or going, crossing the

clearing, fueling new stories in her head. Stories that drove the numbers away.

One thousand fifty-one. One thousand fifty-two. One thousand fifty-three.

Suzy sighed. Well, the stories drove most of the numbers away. She couldn't stop counting her steps, even when she tried. The breeze lifted her running jacket with a cold touch, piercing all the way through her light T-shirt. Autumn had well and truly arrived at Angel Falls. They'd had a late summer but now, daylight grew short, and fall was just around the corner. Suzy could feel it in the air and see it in the dark of the forest. Shadows that had clung to corners now ate up great spaces, like dark ooze creeping over the land.

Suzy shivered and zipped up her short jacket. Her imagination was getting the best of her. She should head back...but no, not before she reached the clearing. Would her Rochester be there? She'd missed seeing him the last two days and wondered if it would be the same today. Picking up her speed, Suzy turned the corner.

One thousand sixty-three...

The next number died on her lips. Suzy came to a grinding halt. In the center of the clearing, her Rochester stood stock-still, hands fisted at his sides,

his gaze uplifted.

Suzy took two steps forward, closer to the edge of the trail. She squinted into the twilight, not believing what she saw. A dark cloud floated over him. As she watched, it shifted, crystallizing into the shape of a woman with flowing hair, stretched out...right above Suzy's Rochester.

She gasped, stepped back, and tripped over her own feet. Then she tumbled down the side of the trail and screamed all the way to the bottom.