



A Prairie Dog's Love Song

Eli Easton

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*A story from the Dreamspinner Press 2013 Advent Calendar collection **Heartwarming**.*

Ben Rivers always was a showman. He won awards in 4-H and rodeo competitions from the time he could walk, and he's happiest in the spotlight. So when he got the chance to be a star—in porn—he took it. He still loves Montana and everything about being a cowboy, but when news of his alternate identity leaks out, he figures he's lost the town's goodwill forever. Clyde's Corner would never accept an openly gay cowboy, even a hometown boy born and bred.

Joshua Braintree always had the notion that he and his best friend's kid brother, Ben, would end up together. Ben's always been a diehard cowboy, just like him: they need the land and its freedom as much as they need air. So when Joshua learns Ben moved away from their small Montana town to be a porn star in Vegas, he can hardly believe it. He's determined to finally declare himself and bring Ben home.

Despite his longtime crush on Joshua, Ben won't be as easy to tame as Joshua's "lost cause" horses. It will take a lot of heart and holiday spirit for Joshua to convince Ben that even old prairie dogs can learn new tricks in the name of love.

A Prairie Dog's Love Song Details

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From Reader Review A Prairie Dog's Love Song for online ebook

Anke says

More like 4.5 stars

This story was really Heartwarming! Beautiful writing - Just a few words and you were right there, with Joshua and his hopelessness, poor guy. You not only read, but you could feel the loneliness and longing. And then Joshua speaking up at the town meeting - priceless!

This would have been a 5* read for me, but I found the ending way over the top and I would have enjoyed a toned down one much more.

Meags says

3 Stars

I picked this one up because I'm attempting to catch up on the backlog of books from authors I love, and Easton is definitely one of my favourites in the M/M genre.

Unfortunately, this particular story didn't do much for me. It felt a little underdeveloped to me and the relationship between MCs Joshua and Ben moved way too fast for my liking. I wanted more on page interactions between the two, but instead I felt like I was just meant to believe in their new relationship simply because we'd been told they'd grown up together and had been harboring secret feelings for one another for so long. As it was, Ben and Joshua barely even shared page time here, which didn't work for me. I needed to see them together and feel their connection for myself, but I didn't.

I'd previously met Joshua and Ben and the other residents of the small Montana cowboy town of Clyde's Corner when I read Easton's first Dreamspun Desires offering, The Stolen Suitor, so I had already formed opinions on the people and the place. Much like my experience with that story, this one left a lot to be desired. (Note: this story was released first but both can be read as standalones).

There is also a porn star aspect, too, with the story beginning with Ben being outed to the town for having been secretly doing gay porn for the past two years. It was an interesting catalyst to get the story started, as cowboy Joshua had been hiding his own sexuality from everyone, while also pining for Ben for years, who just happened to be his best friend's younger brother. I found that I wasn't bothered by Ben's porn background; it wasn't a very heavy theme and it was barely touched on throughout the story. Plus, neither character had sex with other people once they'd connected in a physical way, so this helped to ease any worries I had going in.

As I mentioned, there is a falling for your best friend's brother theme in use here, which is always a welcomed element in my M/M reading. Pair that with the whole lonely cowboy's in love thing and this story really had some good tropes working for it. On top of this, Easton's writing is of the highest quality, as always.

This was a nice little story, for certain, but I simply wanted *more*.

Martin says

Now if this wasn't the cutest cowboy novella!!

I absolutely adored this and yet I try to understand why the overall rating isn't the highest. I think it might be the fact we have something really rare in romance here: A one man show.

This is the story of Joshua Braintree. He's a cowboy through and through, a man of few words, but a good guy who is loved in the small town community of Clyde's Corner. He runs a horse ranch and teaches kids to ride.

One of his assistants is his best friend's brother, Ben. Ben is 6 years or so younger than Joshua and funny enough, the book revolves around him, even though we follow Joshua almost exclusively through the story.

Joshua would be a boring character, living his cowboy life, if it wasn't for a certain event that shakes things up for everyone in Clyde's Corner:

People find out that their dear young Ben is a rising gay porn star in Las Vegas!

Joshua knew that Ben traveled to Vegas regularly, earning some cash on the side for what he made everyone believe to be modeling gigs. Now that the cat's out of the bag, Ben flees from Clyde's Corner, ashamed and afraid that the people he grew up with would hate him.

Joshua misses the boy and helps Ben's father cope with things, the cowboys of Clyde's Corner being totally out of their depth with the series of events that Ben caused in the city.

Sure, Joshua might not know a lot about big city life, but he knows he doesn't want to see Ben's family suffer. And if he listens closely to his own heart, it tells him that the hole that Ben left behind in Joshua's life can only be filled by doing something he feared for so long.

So he travels to Las Vegas to bring the boy home where he belongs.

It's a perfect clash of cultures! I have hardly ever read anything like it. The sweetest thing is, Joshua works through so many of his own issues to become what Ben needs, it's fascinating to watch his thoughts run wild until he comes up with the most courageous conclusions that not many cowboys would dare draw.

I absolutely LOVED the moment in the town hall in front of the entire population of Clyde's Corner. This was so unexpected and brave that it simply took my breath away:

(view spoiler)

(hide spoiler)]

It's safe to say, I LOVED Joshua!

The only flaw I saw in the whole story was Ben's POV being extremely underrepresented. We do get to see things through his eyes for a bit, but why a country boy like him would dive into porn was not fully explained. And I think it would have been important (not to mention fascinating) to see his reasoning behind this.

Still, the entire plot was totally unique and made for a wonderful romance, I could hardly ask for more in a novella.

And by the way, who were all these gay couples at the end?? It seemed like they might be MCs from other stories, but I'm not sure. Is this novella a stand-alone or does it share a romance universe with other books?

In any case, a true 5 star favorite for me!

Adam says

Hmm..yeah, this one wasn't a winner.

I think the main issue, which many other reviewers have noted, was that there was just too much going on in such a short book. Cowboys, friends-to-lovers, coming out, porn stars, family drama, homophobic small town. It was a bit much.

But what I really didn't like was Joshua's belief that he was somehow *entitled* to Ben, and anything sexual that Ben had to offer. No Joshua, you weren't owed Ben's virginity. And really, now that I think about it, Joshua was a bit of a controlling douchebag.

On the plus side, at least the audiobook was good. It was well-paced, and the narrator differentiated between the characters well enough.

So, 2 stars. This novella was just too short for the story it was trying to tell. Though it says on Eli Easton's website that she has a sequel planned for sometime this December, so I'll be interested to see where she goes with that.

Lena♥Ribka says

4,5 all-I-want-for-Christmas-is-you stars!!!

Have you been ever thinking about this well known phrase...

And **what if** it could be that easy

and almost impossible at once?

Why it is still so difficult to be yourself and live out loud? To be proud of what you done and who you are?

It was snowing today, the scent of crisp apples, cinnamon and vanilla filled my home and I was in the mood for a beautiful Christmas story with a candy HEA. Sweet and spicy at the same time.

This small novella was...just perfect.

It was exactly what my turbulent soul needed.

It has only 70 pages. It's why I don't want to tell a lot.

Let yourself be surprised and inspired by the beautiful warmhearted and tenderly funny story about

- * the courage to stay true to yourself,
- * about seeking and finding your own truth,
- * your own path,
- * your soul mate,
- * your predestination
- * despite everything
- * in spite of all obstacles.

It is about acceptance and hope

It is about love...

about all-conquering

all-triumphant power of love...

SIMPLE

AND

AMAZINGLY

BEAUTIFUL...

...

I'll for sure re-read it someday, maybe next Christmas.

Because it is how we wish the life to be

...because we all hope that the **love will always win** and not only on Christmas...

...because it **did something magical to my heart...**

and because it is not just delightful romantic and emotional

but

simply beautiful...

Macky says

Does Everyone love a cowboy? Well I'm pretty damn sure they will after reading Eli Easton's wonderful addition to Dreamspinnars 2013 advent calendar set, because I know I've just fallen 'stetsoned head over spurred heels' for Joshua Ellen Braintree and the guy who stole his heart and mine, Ben Rivers.

All I can say is that once again the anticipation I always get when I know there's another Eli book on the horizon hasn't ended in disappointment. I absolutely adored this delicious story, from the moment Joshua realises that Ben is doing porn causing Ben to run, through Joshua's attempt to bring him home, to the moment when everything that stops them getting together over the course of the story finally culminates in one of the loveliest endings I've had the pleasure of reading all year. I found it gorgeously romantic with lots of emotional satisfaction from all areas because not only is it tender and sweet but it's gently funny and full of extremely likeable and loveable supporting characters who help make the book the delight that it is. Is it the Christmas story you might be expecting? Perhaps not but the magic of Christmas shows in its delightful HEA and I'm tingling nicely now and just want to go back to read it all over again.

A novella that's worked its way into my favourite reads of 2013 and high in my most favourite Eli Easton books up to now. Go on and treat yourself to some sweet cowboy lovin' and be prepared to lose your heart too.

Kaje Harper says

My favorite Eli Easton story to date. Joshua Braintree is a quintessential cowboy, slow and steady and quiet. So much so that the boy he loved and was waiting to make a move on... someday... had no clue Joshua was interested and ran off to the big city and started working in gay porn. Joshua missed that boat, but with every fiber of his being, he wants Ben back on the ranch. Except that to reclaim Ben, he's going to have to re-route the slow, sweet river of the rest of his life and maybe come out. And he'll have to convince Ben to come home. Sometimes it looks easier to just ride and rope and teach beginners and be solitary. But loneliness gets harder, not easier, with time.

It can be difficult to write an archetype without turning him into a caricature, but I loved Joshua and I thought the author caught him perfectly. This story had more emotion, while keeping some humor and sweetness. The HEA was a big neat bow but this one felt plausible and not forced, and just made me smile. A comfort reread for sure, and one of the best holiday stories this year.

Meep says

Reminded me of the old alpha-male Harlequins that I never liked.

Written as a cute little fic, but the characters don't spend much of the book in the same town let alone together, there's no connection between them and they're not in any sense believable.

There's a contradiction the books starts with Joshua discovering something online but then it's said Ben stays away because Henry had told everyone. So the shock and revelation doesn't make sense.

Joshua gets angry/upset because Ben's first moments *should have been his* nice sense of entitlement there Josh boy!

How to win an argument (*when meeting with your friend's kid brother after xyears*) - throw em' over your shoulder, find a bedroom and start stripping, even if they scramble away *purely panicked* it's important to prove the person is gay. More important than finding out if they're alright... Oh but then when they say ok but they want to live openly - well then dress and walk away, because..

There's a big dramatic announcement, with no input/choice from Ben. Then suddenly there's a horse with bells on and a main street lined with gay couples that have appeared from the abyss. Even though I love a bit of fluff this was a step too far into cutsey-movie-land, I gave up at 88%.

And there's a cowboy so ya can expect lots of *yups*

Basically there's a tough cowboy and a sweet little porn star - I should have known this wouldn't be for me.

Susan says

3.5 stars

I love cowboy books.

I don't love porn star books.

I love holiday books.

I don't love rushed-story books.

I love Eli Easton.

YAY...the loves outweigh the don't loves!

This was actually a really sweet story (shocker, Eli Easton writes a sweet story? *gasp* :)) about a cowboy, his best friend's younger brother who heads off to film high class gay porn, a small-town with small minds, and a Christmas miracle...of sorts.

Joshua is my dream cowboy (as everyone needs themselves a dream cowboy...though I have many...Zane being my #1 dream cowboy/FBI agent...but Joshua ranks up there). And Ben...well, Ben is adorable enough...a little on the bratty side...but *shrugs*...he's ok.

I know it's hard to tell a full, robust story in these holiday shorts...but some actually manage to do it. For some reason, this one was just little too rushed for me and maybe tried to bite off more than it could chew. Still, the story was heartwarming and a quick/fun read.

If you really want a GREAT holiday book from Easton, I'd highly recommend "Blame it on the Mistletoe". Firmly in place on my Favorite Holiday Books list! "A Prairie Dog's Love Song" will do for a short, make-ya-feel-good, pick-me-up.

Amy says

4.5 stars!! A closeted cowboy, a "gay for pay" porn star, and a heartwarming holiday story? Yes, please!! Eli Easton has become an auto-buy author for me. I love everything she writes and this is no different. I can only say I wish it had been longer and I wish there had been more cowboy sex :) But, all in all, a very charming holiday read!

~☆~Doni(ela) ♥ ?? love & semi-colons~☆~ says

2.5 stars

Sweet as all get go, but utterly unbelievable. Major, momentous decisions were made nearly overnight. I didn't truly feel the two MCs, and I didn't buy either Ben or Joshua's change of heart. It was a painless read, a

bit of fluff; didn't love the porn theme, but that was mostly glossed over. Cute but forgettable.

Heather K (dentist in my spare time) says

Maybe 2.5 stars for the story, 3.5 stars for the narration, averaging to 3 stars overall.

Gah! I'm so bummed. My first Eli Easton story that I haven't gone gaga for. I guess it was bound to happen eventually.

pouts

I honestly think that this story tried to do too much in too short a span of time. Imagine a story successfully blending cowboys, friends-to-lovers theme, porn stars element, and coming out all in 95 pages. It's hard, right? And picture that story with minimal sex content and a holiday backdrop to boot. My head was spinning trying to keep up.

I think my main problem is that though the story was *fine*, I didn't actually care about any of the characters. I thought that the switch from friends to lovers was way too fast with too little buildup. I didn't get to know these guys as people and I didn't care much about them as a couple. I like more slow build, more character development. I feel like I got just bits and pieces of that instead of something more complete.

As far as the narration goes, I think that Michael Stellman did a nice job. He didn't have a large range of voices but I liked his expressiveness and how he sounded age appropriate. I enjoyed listening to him and I would get another audiobook by him.

Overall, an easy listen but not what I expected from this author.

****Copy provided by the publisher in exchange for an honest review****

Jenni Lea says

This little story sure does pack a punch! I wanted to read a heartwarming story to clear out all the angst from prior reads so, after hearing about how sweet this one was supposed to be I decided to give it a try. I've never read a book by Eli Easton before. I have no idea why I waited so long.

Joshua and Ben grew up together in Clyde's Corner, a small town in Montana. Well, more accurately, Joshua grew up with Ben's big brother Chet and watched Ben grow up behind him. Both have carried a secret love for each other around for many, many years. Ben thought his love was unrequited and Joshua was waiting for Ben to grow up. They almost missed their chance at love. Almost.

Ben, in a bid to "find himself", decides to try out gay porn. He has been in the industry for two years now and no one was the wiser. Until now. After an altercation at the diner wherein he was outed to the entire

town he flees to the safety of his porn persona in Vegas.

Joshua finally realizes that Ben is all grown up now and decides to hunt Ben down and make him come home. He reveals his attraction for Ben to him which culminates into one afternoon of joyous lovemaking. But is it enough? Will Ben come home? Will Joshua have the love he's always wanted at last?

This book was one I enjoyed very much. I loved the MC's as well as the secondary characters. I especially loved the "hick" talk. There were quite a few one liners and descriptive sentences that were laugh-out-loud funny. And the story kept me entertained throughout.

And even though parts of this story broke my heart it did end up being quite heartwarming. I would recommend this book and I will certainly be reading more of Eli Easton in the near future.

Mandy*reads obsessively* says

Finally! I have been waiting for this one to be in my inbox from the DSP Adventscalender.

4.5*

I admit I am always on the look-out for stories by Eli Easton, she won me over with Superhero and hasn't disappointed me yet.

I pre-ordered the DSP set and eagerly awaited this release. Now, I'll admit I'm not a huge cowboy fan, but I do have a *thing* for porn stars.

This short was so full of sweetness and emotions, but in a calm and understated way. I really don't know how to describe it, there is a lot of feeling, but no drama. Joshua and Ben aren't even together on page very much, but I never doubted how much they meant to one another.

In short, I loved it, and seriously if Joshua isn't the most romantic and sweetest cowboy ever, I don't know who is.

This is how I see them under the unending sky of Montana.

Ami says

3.75 stars rounded up

Every single time I see Eli Easton announcing that she has a new story coming out, I get a flutter of happiness in my belly. Because yes, I will state this again, she is one of my favorite new author of the year 2013. If she has a new story, you betcha I'm going to read it.

This story has a cowboy and a porn star... and what a heartwarming story indeed.

I am not one for cowboy characters (I know, SHOCKING!) -- but I know that this one will easily satisfy all

cowboy lovers. What Joshua did to ensure Ben coming home, without having to worry about his porn career or the fact that Ben was gay, was romantic, and totally befitting his character *siiiigh ... hearts on hand*.

I loved the distinct characters of these two. The solid Joshua, who liked his privacy, who wasn't happy about changes, but still wanted to have Ben in his life nonetheless (even if he needed help from others to make him see that). The younger Ben, who had had a crush for Joshua for years, who was determined to live free as he was, even if he couldn't get home again. Both were wonderful characters to be around with. And I also loved the secondary characters of the small town -- it had all the recipe of small town love story :)

If I had something to fuss about, it would be that I sort of wanted more 'evidence' of the past to see how Ben crushing on Joshua and when Joshua started to see Ben in a new light. It said that Joshua felt he supposed to make his moves way before Ben left town, but I guess I didn't have enough back-story of that. There was a flashback of sort, but it was incorporated into a story without some sort of 'pointer', which threw me off a little bit.

But all and all, just another story that made me happy...
