



## **The Cowboy's Homecoming**

*Donna Alward*

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BACK...FOR GOOD?

Once, rodeo star Rylan Duggan had called Crooked Valley Ranch home. But after an incredible, romantic night with neighboring rancher?beautiful, strong, smart Kailey Brandt?he'd bolted. He didn't look back, telling himself he preferred life on the circuit with no commitments and no ties.

Until now. With Rylan back for a few short weeks, Kailey can't deny their attraction is as strong as ever. She thought she'd learned her lesson the first time he'd hurt her?and the handsome cowboy is still adamant he will not be sticking around. While helping him build Crooked Valley's business, Kailey sees a different, more grounded side of him. Has Rylan finally found his home...in Kailey's heart?

## The Cowboy's Homecoming Details

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## Harlequin Books says

Miniseries: Crooked Valley Ranch

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### Susan says

Rylan is the youngest of the three Duggan kids and the last of them to come home to the Crooked Valley Ranch. He is only there to use the ranch as his home base while rodeoing and to fulfill the terms of his grandfather's will. He wants to help his brother and sister keep the ranch, but he has no intention of staying permanently. He also has to figure out how he's going to face Kailey.

He and Kailey had connected back on Valentine's Day and spent an incredible night together. But something about that night and Kailey had touched him in a way that scared him, and he had left the next morning without speaking to her. He knows it was wrong and that he needs to apologize to her, but facing her again isn't going to be easy. Kailey is still furious with him three months later and forgiving him isn't going to be easy. She's not just mad, she's hurt, because she'd thought they had something special, and she's not going to make things easy on him now that he's back in town.

I really liked both Rylan and Kailey. The first impression of Rylan is that he's a bit selfish and only interested in what he wants, but it doesn't take long to see that he's much more complex than that. When Kailey confronts him, he doesn't try to make excuses, he owns up to the mistake. He also admits that he's still attracted to her, but for the sake of peace he'll try to ignore the attraction and just go for friends. Rylan is also fighting the sense of home that he feels whenever he's at the ranch. Long ago he had made the decision that he was never going to get attached to a place or a person, because losing them hurt too much. And even though he keeps insisting that he's not going to stay around, his actions show that he wants to. I loved the scene when he brings the horse to the ranch, and how it begins to change the way his brother and sister look at him, and how he looks at himself.

Kailey is a strong and smart woman. She's the only child in her family, and as such knows the ranch her parents own will be hers. She loves what she does but there are times when she wants more. After a romance that didn't work out because of her commitment to that ranch, she feels especially alone, and that's when she has her night with Rylan. It turns out to be much more intense than she expected and his disappearance the next day makes her feel worse rather than better. When he comes back it is hard for her to face him at first, and she has a hard time accepting his apology. It doesn't help that she's still attracted to him. She wants him, but risking her heart on a man who is leaving isn't what she wants to do.

I really liked the way that, once they get past their initial reunion, they are able to put together a friendship that works for them. One thing they don't have trouble with is talking to each other and I liked that they were able to share some of their deeper fears and memories. Rylan is actually a much more sensitive guy than he first appeared. He sees how hard Kailey has to work at things because she is a woman doing what it is mostly men doing. At the same time, Kailey sees Rylan's love for his family and how he tries to show it. I loved seeing how she stands up for him about the horse and gives his family something to think about. Over the months that Rylan is there, their friendship grows, but so does the attraction. Giving in to it, both of them try to pretend to themselves that it's just physical. Admitting their feelings to themselves is hard enough, but

confessing to the other is a risk that's hard to take. A misunderstanding drives them apart, and both have to look hard at their own fears before they can move ahead together.

The family dynamics were really good and such an important part of the story. The things that happened with his family when he was a kid had a really huge impact on Rylan's outlook on life. His brother and sister had never realized just how big, or the influence it had on the man he became. I wanted to smack them a few times for not seeing how much he really cares, but is afraid to show it, I really loved seeing Rylan with the kids, and seeing him hold his brother's baby was really emotional. I loved the ending and how well it wrapped everything up.

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### **Karen Machamer says**

A great book to end the series on. Loved Rylan and Kailey.

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### **Barbara Leuthe says**

Cowboys,rodeo and romance whats not to love.good true characters Ryland and Kailey both have good stoylines that mesh so well with each other.I hope ther are more crooked valley ranch stories

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