

## His Hometown Cowgirl (Diamondback Ranch Encore) (Volume 1)

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His Hometown Cowgirl (Diamondback Ranch Encore) (Volume 1) Anne Marie Novark HIS HOMETOWN COWGIRL Diamondback Ranch Encore #1 Contemporary Western Romance Novel 45,000 words/176 pp Heat Index: Hot and Steamy

When fate deals a cruel blow to Kelsey McCade, she returns home to the Diamondback Ranch to rebuild her life and heal her shattered heart. Unforeseen circumstances keep throwing her into the company of Pete Lafferty, the object of her teenaged fantasies. Against her will, Kelsey finds herself drawn to Pete--to the boy from her memories who kept her safe, and now to the strong and honorable man he's become.

Pete Lafferty has known a lot of women, but he's never fallen in love. When Kelsey McCade finally returns home, vulnerable but not broken, he quickly realizes she's a threat to his carefree existence. He's always had a soft spot for Kelsey, and seeing her grown up and beautiful stirs up emotions he's not sure he's ready to explore. He's never done a long-term relationship, and she deserves nothing less. He knows he's not the right man for her, but how can he convince his heart?

#### **EXCERPT:**

"Oh, honey," Pete said. "Please don't cry again. You don't know how bad it tears me up inside to see you so unhappy."

"I can't help it." She wiped her cheek with the back of her hand, blinking and sniffling as more tears fell. She raised soul-sad eyes to his. "Don't you think I'm tired of all this? Tired of crying? Tired of being sad?" Her voice broke on a sob. "Why did he have to die? Why? God, I feel so alone. So very much . . . alone."

Pete pushed back his chair and quickly walked around the desk. He pulled Kelsey from her seat and into his arms. "Shush now. You're not alone. You have a loving family and good friends to support you."

*And me*. But he didn't say that. They didn't belong together. He wasn't the right man for her. But that logical argument didn't seem to matter to his heart. He was constantly fighting an internal battle against wanting Kelsey and knowing he couldn't . . . shouldn't start anything with her, especially when she was in such a vulnerable state.

Hell, what was he thinking? He couldn't start anything with her ever.

He held her close while she sobbed her heart out. Poor kid. He rested his chin on the top of her head, the scent of strawberries and woman filling his nostrils. He rubbed her back with one hand, while hugging her to his body with the other. She wrapped her arms around his waist and leaned against him, her head tucked in the crook of his shoulder like when they'd danced together last week.

Only, now it was just the two of them. No family, no friends, no interested spectators.

Pete let her have her cry out. After several minutes, her tears finally stopped.

She hiccoughed and stood frozen in place, plastered against him. Damn, why did her body have to fit him so perfectly? With a will of its own, his libido kicked into full throttle; he couldn't control the flash of heat hardening his body to almost painful intensity.

Kelsey slowly unwrapped her arms from around his waist and moved her hands to the front of his jacket. She patted the damp fabric right above his heart. "I got you all wet. I'm sorry." She tilted her head to look at him, her eyelashes spiked with tears.

He felt her stiffen in his embrace, her eyes widening, dilating with awareness. His body flexed in response to that primal signal of desire. Well, hell. How was he supposed to resist that? Resist her? He was only human after all.

"Pete?" Her voice was breathy, a whisper, bedroom soft.

Never before had his name sounded so good, so sexy on anyone's lips.

Her breath hitched, and before Pete could do something stupid like act on his inappropriate hunger for her, Kelsey took his choice away. She stood on tiptoe, draped her arms around his neck and pressed her mouth to his.

Instant sexual combustion blind-sided him. His mind went blank and instinct took over. She was female to his male. He wanted her in the most elemental way. He'd wanted her for weeks, months, years, and now she was in his arms, kissing him like there was no tomorrow.

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