



When Souls Collide

N.J. Nielsen

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Tossed off the Golden Spur with nothing but the clothes he was wearing and his newborn son. Riley Stuart contemplates his life. He gave up everything he knew to come halfway around the world to find things don't always work out like you planned. On her deathbed his wife outs him to her family – her very bigoted family.

Noah Johnson finds a naked man and infant in his barn. What are they doing there, and where did they come from? In the course of helping Riley get back on his feet somewhere along the way he felt their souls collide.

When Souls Collide Details

Date : Published June 15th 2012 by MLRPress

ISBN :

Author : N.J. Nielsen

Format : ebook 78 pages

Genre : Romance, M M Romance, Contemporary, Westerns

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From Reader Review When Souls Collide for online ebook

♥Laddie♥ (Lee Lee) says

Le sigh

2.75

This story was such a disappointment to me. I was excited about it because it's COWBOYS and BABIES. Two things that I love, but this story was not something that I ended up loving.

Riley's an Australian who's been kicked off of the ranch of his dead wife's family. Now Riley and his newborn son have nowhere to go, no money and no prospects. The family's driven him to the middle of nowhere in the middle of a cold and rainy night. Dramatic right? I know but I was sticking with it because of the *cowboys* and *babies*.

In any case, Riley ends up in a barn and is found the next morning by Noah, a big strapping cowboy. What comes next is gobs and gobs of drama and tears. Kidnappings, vicious rumors, hostility, cops, crazy women and...well, did I mention the tears?

Riley seems to cry quite a bit and I thought that he could have used a Valium or something.

With all of the melodrama and tears not even cowboys and babies could save this story for me. Recommend? No, I just can't.

Candice says

[1. Riley has a cold that requires bed rest for over a week. I don't know what kind of cold he had, but, sorry, if you're a parent you have to get off your ass to take care of your kid--sick or not. I get that he had Noah there, but he didn't even KNOW him.

2. Too much drama--kidnapping, evil woman, evil ex-brother in law, evil ex-in-laws.

3. Noah comes out and hardly anyone reacts. Ummm...in a small town in Texas? Seriously

Shaz says

This was a short, but sweet read.

As is so common in the shorter stories, there was insta-love and things seemed to all happen very quickly. But the MC's were cute and while there were a lot of extra characters hanging around it didn't get too confusing.

And, another bonus point in this books favour, often in a short story (okay it's a shortish story lol) there seems to be a lot of sex in comparison. This book avoided that, for which I am grateful.

SheReadsALot says

ONE & A HALF STARS-- The plot and idea was very original, the execution was weak. The story tried to make a stand against homophobia and racism which is always great but Riley (on of the MC) could have easily been confused as a woman. And the alludes to "stuff" when describing condoms and lubrication didn't help either. Also the 'country' talk of the supposed Texas locals was laid a bit too thick.

And I loathe extraneous crying, albeit from men or women.

Anna says

I apologise, but I couldn't even finish this. Poorly written, too many gaps in the story, horrible dialogue... I apologise, but I just couldn't. The summary looked extremely promising though, so I hope maybe one day the author might think of re-writing this.

Elisa Rolle says

A nice and sweet novella, as it should be considering there are babies involved ;-)) this is the story of Riley, a young gay man who accepted to help a girlfriend who was pregnant and single; Riley moved from Australia to Texas to marry Karen and adopts her baby, but he didn't plan to remain a single dad: Karen dies just weeks after the baby is born and her family tossed off Riley and the baby right away.

A desperate Riley finds shelter in Noah's barn, and when Noah discovers them, Riley has got a bad fever and Noah nurtures both father than son back to health. The nice coincidence of Noah being gay and single, and loving babies, is an added bonus: as soon as Riley is good enough to leave bed, he basically wants to go back into it, this time bringing Noah with him.

Riley is searching no excuses, he is gay and no means to hide it; he is highly emotional, not really strong, and tends to let other people drive him. What happened with Karen is a clear example, Karen was stronger than him, and Riley let her dragging him in an impossible situation. When Riley is at Noah's home, he tries to behave as independent, but it's clear that he would prefer to let Noah taking decision for him. It's not a question of being submissive, that is even proved when they are in bed the first time, with Riley being in the top position, it's more his natural attitude, Riley is more a follower than a leader.

<http://www.amazon.com/dp/B008C29VUS/?...>

Deeze says

Another case of a good idea being poorly told.

There is no depth to this story at all. It feels like there was no real thought put into the plot, rather it reads as

if it was made up as it went. The writing style is very simplistic and in my opinion childlike. A lot happens quickly and is dealt with just as quickly, and finally everything is tied up with a nice pretty bow.

2 stars, 1 for the idea and 1 for the cover.

Rachel Emily says

Uggg...didn't finish this one. Got to about 65% before I had to stop. I sorta-kinda hate pet names and how overused they are, and this was a classic example of just that. I started getting really tired to seeing "Boo" every time Noah spoke. And who has a cold *that* bad? The plot seemed all over the place and didn't care for some other aspects of the story either.

Katrina says

Actually didn't finish. Too many issues with back story and editing kept throwing me out of the story.

Kinny says

SPOILERS:

3 stars. I definitely liked One last kiss goodbye better than this. That was a 4.5 to 5 for me.

This was a sweet and beautiful love story where sweet caring pretty boy underdog is rescued by studly prince charming who is also secretly a multi millionaire. My main complaints with this one?

1. More people should have gone to jail! Did that Mike who just picked and left with the baby go to jail for kidnapping? The Golding family that threw him out with the baby should have been arrested for at least reckless endangerment. They also held him hostage against his will to be free labor in the farm-- that's kidnapping and slavery! Throwing you out of the car in the middle of nowhere without money and your personal things in the pouring rain with a baby?-- You could have died of pneumonia, been raped and the baby sold at the black market if it did not die. Theft too, for keeping your personal possessions.
2. Riley was stupid! What educated person/ much more a gay guy would fly to another country where you do not know anyone to marry some girl you met online so you could adopt her baby with a one night stand? His stupidity leads him to be held hostage as a rancher with no salary.
3. Riley would not call his parents who seem like they could afford it and definitely loved him for money or get him out of Texas? Talk about false pride in a life or death situation!

JUSTICE was just NOT served in this one PLUS This guy's problems were his own fault!

Cole Riann says

Review posted at The Armchair Reader.

I was excited to read this story after having reviewed and enjoyed this author's recent novel release, *Rules Are Meant to be Broken* (reviewed here). Instead, I didn't connect with this story, which was a bit of a disappointment for me.

The story starts with Riley being kicked out of a car with his infant son Kai into the pouring rain. Riley doesn't know where he is, other than in the middle of nowhere, the baby is crying and hungry and wet and cold. All Riley can think about, besides how to take care of Kai, are the hateful words his brother in law, and once a friend, directed at him as he abandoned them. He's alone now with a baby to care for a no money -- and he's getting sick. The only family he had in the US was his wife's family, but when she died and inadvertently outed him in the doing, the family wrote him off, taking his and the baby's possessions.

The night's respite comes in the form of a ranch. Riley stops in the barn and crawls into the hayloft to get his son out of the rain, hoping to be back on his way before light. He's too sick, though, and might not make it too much further. Noah finds the young guy and baby sleeping in his barn and takes them in. Soon their attraction for each other, as well as the small-town gossip of Riley's ex-in-laws puts them at odds with the town.

Several things got in the way of my enjoyment of this story, and though some were nitpicky details (saying Chase, an easily influenced character, was "mildly retarded") that probably only bothered me and not other readers, I did feel like there were some choices made in the writing that negatively affected the story as a whole. First, for the length of the story, just barely more than a short story at 25k words, there were negative external influences from several directions instead of a focused antagonist. The two MCs had to deal with hatred from the town as a whole, from a ranch hand, from the Goldings family (the family that threw Riley and the baby out when they learned he was gay), as well as a specific person in town. It was a lot of problems from different directions. Not only does that leave almost no time for the exploration of the central relationship between Noah and Riley, but there really isn't much time to explore the dynamics of the town where all this hatred is coming from. Because of that, I really missed the connection between the two men and even though time passes as Riley stays with Noah and they apparently get to know one another, it still felt like Insta-Love.

I did have quite a bit of trouble with some of the writing in this book -- mostly the dialogue. It sometimes felt a bit unnatural. I realized when I was reading that it seemed as if these characters were playing roles themselves -- those of a small town western. They seemed more like archetypes of Texans, even Noah at times. Gun-toting vigilanteism...that type of thing. I can deal with that I suppose, since that really is supposed to be what this town is like. It was stranger to me when it ended up coming through their dialogue:

(Officer Brady) "Look, if that was my fella in there I would keep him close to home for a while, just until we can work out just who the hell this is and which one of you he or she [is] trying to hurt," Grady said quietly.

(Noah) "I will, but be warned! I will do anything to keep my family safe, and my guns are fully loaded."

It just seems a bit too melodramatic and took a little too much suspension of disbelief for me to accept the way things fall into line from seemingly nowhere. I find it strange, because this story seems out of keeping with what I know of this author's writing. And while I haven't read a wide range of her work, I thought the writing in her novel was excellent. Maybe this was written a while ago and her writing has improved?

Maybe... writing about Texans was more difficult for her than the characters and setting of the novel, which was in Australia. Then again, maybe it is just me and for some reason I really didn't click with this one. Whatever it is, I'll definitely keep reading this author's work, even though I can't recommend this novella.

?? Michaelle ? says

3.5 Stars

A bit OTT, but I liked it.

Mandi says

Had to add a star for that adorable cover.

Story didn't really work for me. Too much suspension of disbelief (which I can usually go along with, but for some reason, couldn't do it with this), one character was too weepy and the other was too good to be true.

But, damn, that cover is cute!

Erin Muses says

Terrible.

"But, Erin," you say. "It has cowboys and *babies*!"

Terrible, I say again.

Exhibit A: One MC calls the other "Boo," not because that's a common thing to call another but because he's small and scared-looking.

Exhibit B: (pg 77, nook version) "He was a very good hand, but an accident as a child had caused him to be very mildly retarded." Um, no, not the R word. Developmentally disabled, cognitively disabled, difficulty with cognition - I don't care what you call it - just don't use the R word. www.r-word.org

Exhibit C: The MCs kiss (after what seems to be a couple of days in the same vicinity - IDK because time seems to flow a little differently in this world), and the very next day the cowboy MC claims the "Boo" MC's adopted son. Two days later they say the **I <3 Us** and have decided that they are life partners. Life partners. After 4 days. Ooooooaaaaaaay.

Exhibit D: The cowboy MC comes out by simply saying it with no change in vocal tone or nervousness or any indication that what he has done is a significant action in the course of his life. The reaction of the people around him? Nothing. Ummmmmm...

Exhibit E: The Overly Dramatic storyline - a baby is kidnapped and left on some random stranger's doorstep, the house and barn are set on fire, people boo and hiss at the MCs when they are seen walking down the street. Yeah, OK, I believe that there are haters out there. And then there are the rest of us. Even fiction doesn't mean that you can throw this much crap together just to prove how much Trew Luv Conkerz All.

Exhibit F,G,H,I...:

A doctor pushes drugs for a mild spate of anxiety;

The cowboy MC "never stopped touching his lover and son" (correct me if I'm wrong, but doesn't lover imply something sexual has been done? These two haven't even been together for more than 4 days or done anything more than kiss!);

A character serves brisket with white gravy (WTH? As a true gravy connoisseur, I say that you do NOT put white gravy on red meat!);

The WooWoo Crazy Villainess who knocks out Boo by smacking him with a can of beans, leaving him in a coma for more than a day;

The WooWoo Crazy Villainess to whom the sheriff says

"Oh, Lord have mercy, Mae Beth. Everyone told you Noah didn't swing your way. Besides he's too young for you anyhow. Now the cursing I could have let slide, but the *fire and the battery* are a different matter. They are going to get you in serious trouble. I'm going to have to *call your daddy* and let him know what's happening. Can you imagine how disappointed and pissed he is going to be knowing you are caught in the middle of this?"

...because God knows how much the sheriff calls to Daddy and tattles on his grown daughter;

The hero MC who responds to this fu€ker¥ by saying, "I want her charged with anything we can possibly charge her with." (while his beloved of like 3 days lays on a stretcher in the coma caused by getting whacked with a can of beans)

...and my inner bitch, who yells, "Yeah, you go girl!"

OMG, this book is a mash-up of completely incorrect stereotypes of cowboys, ranchers, people who are gay, people who are straight, people who eat, h8rz, Southerners, Texans, law enforcement personnel, heroes, people who have children, people who do not have children, people who walk on the left-hand side of the street while exercising, people who like to wear their underwear inside-out, and all the rest of the people. And probably the cows.

Oh, thank God it's over.

Arthur says

Question: What is the stupidest thing an openly gay man could do?

Answer: Move to Texas and marry a woman...

- Blurb on AllRomance.com and amazon.com -

This book is written on an assumption that Texas is a bigot state that no gays should ever be there. Some interesting facts:

- One of the main m/m publishers is located in TX (guess which one!)
- Several m/m authors, including gay men, live in TX

I'm not Texan, don't have any relative there or ever lived there. I just wish authors don't use stereotypes about place or groups that they got from assumptions, rumors, etc.

In fact, if I were an Australian meandering in the middle region of the United States, it's probably better to be in TX than in other states in the region. One of the cardinal rule when an expatriate got into trouble in foreign land is to find his/her consulate. There's an Australian Consulate in Houston, Texas.
