

## **She was a grown woman, for heaven's sake, not some prepubescent girl nursing her first crush.**

The word *crush* caught her up short.

Why had she just thought that? she silently asked. Where had it even come from? Had it really been *that* long since she'd had even the mildest form of a relationship in her life?

Feeling unaccountably nervous, Shania cleared her throat. "Belle probably thinks that I must have run away from home."

Daniel surprised himself when he told her, "Can't have that."

"No, we can't," she murmured. One hand on the door latch, she still hesitated. What was she waiting for? she asked herself.

Forcing herself to open the door, she heard Daniel call her name.

Turning around to look at the deputy, Shania asked, "What?"

And then she had the answer to the question she'd asked even though Daniel didn't say anything in response. Instead he slipped one hand behind her, cupping the back of her head just enough to bring her a shade closer to him.

And then he kissed her.

**FOREVER, TEXAS:  
Cowboys, ranchers and lawmen—oh my!**

Dear Reader,

Welcome back to part two of Wynona and Shania's story. At the end of the last book, Wynona agreed to marry Clint Washburn. When we pick up the story here, Shania is now living alone in the house that she and her cousin rented when they returned to Forever. Shania doesn't do well alone and fills her time by keeping busy teaching math and physics. One of her students is a particular challenge at the outset. Elena is sixteen and has just discovered partying. Elena is also Deputy Daniel Tallchief's younger sister. Daniel is both mother and strict father to the teen, having taken on the roles after their parents were killed in an auto accident several years ago. As it turns out, Daniel didn't just lose his parents, he lost his fiancée, Lana, as well when the latter gave him an ultimatum: it was her or his sister. But now his sister is giving him trouble and he has no idea how to get her to come around.

Fortunately for him, Shania takes on this problem and, by making the girl realize how much potential she has, gets Elena to come around as well as settle down.

Daniel finds himself indebted to the woman. When the irrepressible Miss Joan steps in, one thing leads to another and Daniel's faith in love is renewed. Come and watch the evolution as a good man discovers that there is such a thing as a second chance.

Thank you for taking the time to read my book, and from the bottom of my heart, I wish you someone to love who loves you back.

All the best,

*Marie Ferrarella*

*The Lawman's  
Romance Lesson*



*Marie Ferrarella*

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The Lawman's Romance Lesson

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USA TODAY bestselling and RITA® Award-winning author **Marie Ferrarella** has written more than two hundred and fifty books for Harlequin, some under the name Marie Nicole. Her romances are beloved by fans worldwide. Visit her website, [marieferrarella.com](http://marieferrarella.com).

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Patience Bloom  
And  
Gail Chasan  
With Gratitude  
For Allowing Me  
To Live In Forever  
A Little  
Longer

## *Prologue*

The evenings were the hardest for Shania. Somehow, the darkness outside seemed to intensify the silence and the feeling of being alone within the small house she used to occupy with her cousin.

Before she and Wynona had returned to Forever, Texas, the little town located just outside of the Navajo reservation where they had both been born, noise had been a constant part of their lives.

Joyful noise.

Noise that signified activity.

The kind of noise that could be associated with living in a college dorm. And before that, when they had lived in their great-aunt Naomi's house, there had still been noise, the kind of noise that came from being totally involved with life. Their great-aunt was a skilled surgeon and physician who was completely devoted to her work.

Because Naomi volunteered at a free clinic at least a couple of days a week as well as being associated with

one of the local hospitals, patients would turn up on their doorstep at all sorts of hours. When she and Wynona grew older, Aunt Naomi thought nothing of having both of them pitch in and help out with her patients. She wanted them to learn how to provide proper care.

Between the volunteer work and their schooling, there was never any sort of downtime, never any time to sit back, much less be bored.

She and Wynona had welcomed being useful and mentally stimulated because that was such a contrast to the lives they had initially been born into. Born on the Navajo reservation to mothers who were sisters, Shania and Wynona spent their childhoods together. They were closer than actual sisters, especially after Wynona lost her mother. She'd never known her father. Shania's parents took her in to live with them without any hesitation.

Shania herself had been thrilled to share her parents with her cousin, but unfortunately, that situation didn't last very long. Nine months after Wynona had come to live with them, Shania's father was killed in an auto accident. And then less than six months later, her mother died of pneumonia.

At the ages of ten and eleven, Wynona and Shania found themselves both orphaned.

The girls were facing foster care, which ultimately meant being swallowed up by the social services system. Just before they were to be shipped off, their great-aunt Naomi, who had been notified by an anonymous party, suddenly swooped into town. In the blink of an eye, the strong-willed woman managed to cut through all manner of red tape and whisked them back to her home in Houston.

And after that, everything changed.

Shania and her cousin were no longer dealing with an



uncertain future. Aunt Naomi gave them a home and she gave them responsibilities as well, never wanting them to take anything for granted. They quickly discovered that their great-aunt was a great believer in helping those in need. Naomi made sure to instill a desire to “pay it forward” within them.

They had found that their great-aunt was a stern woman, but there had never been a question that the woman loved them and would be there for them if they should ever need her.

Shania sighed and pushed aside her plate, leaving the food all but untouched. Having taken leftovers out of the refrigerator, she hadn’t bothered to warm them up before she’d brought them over to the table. She could almost hear Aunt Naomi’s voice telling her, *If you’re going to eat leftovers, do it properly. Warm them up first.*

Shania frowned at the plate. She really wasn’t hungry.

What she was hungry for wasn’t food but the discussions they used to have around the dinner table when Aunt Naomi, Wynona and she would all talk about their day. Aunt Naomi never made it seem as if hers was more important even though they all knew that she made such a huge difference in the lives she touched. Each person, each life, Aunt Naomi had maintained, was important in its own way.

When she and Wynona had moved back to Forever, armed with their teaching degrees and determined to give back to the community, for the most part those discussions continued. She and her cousin had been excited about the difference they were going to make, especially since both the local elementary school and high school, for practicality purposes, were now comprised of students who came not only from the town but also from

the reservation. The aim was to improve the quality of education rendered to all the students.

But there were times, like tonight, when the effects of that excitement slipped into the shadows and allowed the loneliness to rear its head and take over. Part of the reason for that was because she now lived alone here. Wynona had gotten married recently and while Shania was thrilled beyond words for her cousin, she had no one to talk to, no one to carry on any sort of a dialogue with.

At least, not anyone human.

There was, of course, still Belle.

Just as she got up to go into her den to work on tomorrow's lesson plan, Belle seemed to materialize and stepped into her path. The German shepherd looked up at her with her big, soulful brown eyes.

"You miss her too, don't you, Belle?" Shania murmured to the dog that she and Wynona had found foraging through a garbage pail behind the Murphy brothers' saloon the first week they moved back. After determining that the dog had no owner, they immediately rescued the rail-thin shepherd and took her in.

Belle thrived under their care. When Wynona got married, Shania had told her cousin to take the dog with her. But Wynona had declined, saying that she felt better about leaving if Belle stayed with her.

Belle rubbed her head against Shania's thigh now, then stopped for a moment and looked up.

"Message received," Shania told the German shepherd with a smile. "You're right. I'm not alone. You're here. But there are times that I really wish you could talk."

As if on cue, Belle barked, something, as a rule, she rarely did. It was as if Belle didn't like to call attention to herself unless absolutely necessary.

"You're right. I shouldn't be feeling sorry for myself,

I should be feeling happy for Wyn.” Dropping down beside the German shepherd, Shania ran her hands along the dog’s head and back, petting the animal. “You really are brighter than most people, girl,” she laughed.

As if in agreement, Belle began licking her face.

And just like that, the loneliness Shania had been wrestling with slipped away.