

Protecting the Cowboy's Baby by Elle Marlow

Heir to a Texas dynasty, rancher Hayden Courtland thought he had the perfect life. That is until his beautiful Comanche wife deserted him and ended their dreams of having a family. She traded Texas cattle for Hollywood glamour a year ago, and he hasn't seen her since.

Native American actress Alana Austin regrets running from her real life cowboy. Now she's back to film a movie, and hopefully right a wrong. As Alana and Hayden struggle with the past and one man's dark obsession, they find a second chance at love. And maybe, the best roles of all. Parents.

Editor's Critique:

This blurb somewhat skillfully introduces a romance with lots of hooks that instantly pique interest! The Texas rancher with the broken heart; opposites attract; reunion romance; possibly a baby? These are all elements that can be used to help structure a vivid story, but there are a couple of components that don't quite fit comfortably. The idea that the runaway wife has regrets about leaving her husband also sparks my curiosity—what made her leave? The movie role is bringing her back—or is it something more? I want to know!

The ending of first paragraph is a little problematic. The phrase “He hasn't seen her since” is too ambiguous—he obviously knows where she went, and why she left him. Considering that the second paragraph delves succinctly into both the heroine's regrets as well as their attempt at a reunion, it would be more intriguing here to hint at the hero's emotional perspective over the desertion. What would he do if he *did* see her again? Or, how did he react emotionally to the abandonment? It would be great to get an insight into his character here, to better set up the heroine's regrets at the start of the next paragraph.

The second paragraph does drop in the possible twist of “one man's dark obsession—which seems like an odd fit here. Does the heroine have a stalker? How does this fit in to the overall story? Is this part of why she left the ranch, to escape from someone? If so, why didn't she simply talk to her husband? Whose baby is she having—which makes me wonder if she was unfaithful to her husband while she was away (or is there a darker story element at play here?) (You can see how one small phrase can raise so many questions—I might be guessing correctly, but then again . . .)

Again, though this element is unsettling, I want to know more about this story and the characters. It might be worth taking a second look at that first paragraph ending and fine-tuning the phrasing to show the hero with more depth. And perhaps try polishing the second paragraph, to give more clarity to the confusing story element. While you don't want to turn the blurb into a synopsis, there might be another way of crafting the line that offers a stronger look into the situation between the characters, while still hinting at the mystery underscoring the love story.

Thanks again for submitting your pitch, and best of luck with your story in the contest!