



## Crooked Tree Ranch

*R.J. Scott*

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## **Crooked Tree Ranch R.J. Scott**

*When a cowboy meets the guy from the city, he can't know how much things will change.*

On the spur of the moment, with his life collapsing around him, Jay Sullivan answers an ad for a business manager with an expertise in marketing, on a dude ranch in Montana.

With his sister, Ashley, niece, Kirsten and nephew, Josh, in tow, he moves lock stock and barrel from New York to Montana to start a new life on Crooked Tree Ranch.

Foreman and part owner of the ranch, ex-rodeo star Nathaniel 'Nate' Todd has been running the dude ranch for five years ever since his mentor Marcus Allen became ill.

His brothers convince him that he needs to get an expert in to help the business grow. He knows things have to change; but when the new guy turns up, with a troubled family in tow - he just isn't prepared for how much.

*This is a previously released title. It includes a new chapter and is re-edited with new cover art.*

## **Crooked Tree Ranch Details**

Date : Published November 16th 2015 by Love Lane Books Ltd (first published December 13th 2013)

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Author : R.J. Scott

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## From Reader Review Crooked Tree Ranch for online ebook

### Jenni Lea says

#### Jay - city boy extraordinaire

Jay was recently laid off from his marketing job in New York. He's desperate to find work so he can support his small family. He's taken on the role of provider for his sister and her two kids. After many unsuccessful attempts at landing a new job in the city he answers an ad for a business manager and marketing director at a dude ranch in Montana...

#### Nate - gruff cowboy alpha male

Nate is co-owner of Crooked Tree Ranch, a dude ranch that has been in his family for generations. After a meeting with one of his partners in which he's informed they are on the down slope to going under he agrees to hire someone to come in and revamp the ranch and hopefully garner more business. He never expected someone like Jay to answer their ad.

Jay and Nate were simply adorable together. After a few false starts they eventually agree to become "friends with benefits" in order to avoid any feelings developing. Yeah right. Like that ever works out. Both want more but is afraid to voice it. Finally, they decide to cut all the bullshit and just tell each other how they feel. I love it when honesty prevails and we don't have to trudge through all the angst to get to the HEA.

There are two things RJ Scott really excels at. The first is the slow burn. I'm not normally fond of the slow burn. I'm more of an insta-love fan. I have the patience of a four year old who was just told they were going to visit Disney World soon. When I come across a slow burn, while reading I usually end up saying something like "When are they going to get together?" or "Just hurry up and fuck already!". But with Ms. Scott's books I get drawn in and find myself more invested in the story than the sexy times. Don't get me wrong. I'm all for the sex but I like everything else that goes into one of her books just as much. The way it is drawn out is not angst ridden. It is more of a natural progression; something you would see or experience yourself in real life. Funny thing is, this is the fastest I have ever read of her MC's getting together. Usually it takes months or even years with her characters. This time it only took three weeks. But it felt like a lot more time was spent with them getting to know each other. It felt realistic and natural.

The second thing that RJ Scott is aces with is the portrayal of children and family. In this book in particular, Josh, who is six acts just like a six year old would. He's excitable and exuberant and so completely *normal* and just an all around joy to read about. Kirsten is a sullen 15 year old who is hiding behind her goth persona and bad attitude until she figures out who she is. I can relate to every bit of it. It just makes the book all the more believable.

I was thrilled at how the secondary storylines played out. The portrayal of the secondary characters was thorough and fully fleshed out. The time was taken to explain why some characters acted the way they did. Take Henry for example. When you first meet him you get the idea that he is just an intolerant, hate filled bastard. As you get to know him you see there is way more to his story than simple hate. There are *reasons* why he is the way he is. That doesn't excuse his behavior but at least you have some understanding as to why he acts as he does.

While the story does have a satisfying HEA, there are a few plot lines that are left open ended. This excites me because it means there are more books to come. I can't wait! I'm eager to read more about these families and how their lives mesh together.

*ARC provided by the author in exchange for an honest review.*

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## **Karen says**

4.5 stars rounded down to 4 because still no 1/2 stars here on GR. I really, really liked this one...what was I thinking waiting so long to enjoy this story....audio book #2 is happening soon and so is my full review on this one...but, I have a Buddy Read to get to right now so...later ya' all!

With his advertising career coming to an abrupt end, Jay finds that he suddenly needs a way to support not just himself but his sister and her two children. The Crooked Tree Ranch needs saving. Nate's been running things since his mentor Marcus Allen became ill five years ago but if something doesn't give soon things are going to go from bad to worse.

When Jay first sees the add for someone to manage the business end of the dude ranch he's less than enthusiastic but the more he thinks about it, the more he begins to think this might be just the thing for him, his sister and her kids. A fresh start in a new place. What he wasn't looking for was a new man but Nate pushes all his buttons and resist as they might both men soon realize that there's an attraction that neither of them know how to fight, but neither are they sure that they want anything either. So maybe friends with benefits?

'Crooked Tree Ranch' is the beginning of this series and along with giving Jay and Nate's story we're given the a whole lot of secondary characters and background as well as an overall story line that will thread it's way through the series...it's a bit of a thriller mystery that this series will continue to build on.

Sean Crisden has once again added depth and uniqueness to the voices in this audiobook making this story all the more enjoyable for me as I was drawn into events by his easy cowboy drawl and needless to say I'm more than ready to get into the next book in this series. I really don't know why I've waited so long to get into this series but I'm glad I haven't waited any longer.

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## **Macky says**

3.75\* rounded up.

The start of a new cowboy series and a very nice, sweet read. I loved the friction between Jay and Nate when they first met and the fact that it built up some good tension in the early stage of their relationship. There's a few story lines and mysteries brewing in the background which I can see coming into the series as it progresses so I'm definitely going to keep reading. I like the family theme running through and there's some interesting characters in there that I'm sure we'll come to know and love.

It takes a while before the two guys finally get together, and the love scenes are fairly spaced out but that doesn't really matter as the story has enough threads going on to keep you invested. There's Jays family and their problems concerning his sister, her abusive ex and her kids and the backstory and ongoing conflicts surrounding Nate, his brothers and the ranch's future which again will obviously be addresses more over time. Both families are very likeable even though for a while Kirsten, the goth teen does have her moments!!!

Overall a good solid start and one I think will get even better as the series goes on. Enjoyable!

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### **A??ela W. says**

This was a pretty good read that I liked. Jay Sullivan answers an ad for a business manager with an expertise in marketing, on a dude ranch in Montana. With his sister and his niece and nephew they leave NY behind. Nathaniel 'Nate' Todd has been running the dude ranch, for five years ever since his mentor Marcus Allen became ill he is a former rodeo star and part owner of the ranch along with his two brother Gabe and Luke. Nate and Jay didn't exactly hit it off when Jay first got to the ranch Nate ran him over with his horse and broke his phone. This was a story with two families blending together the book also had some funny scenes in it. We also get to see a relationship between Nate's brother Gabe and Jay's sister Ashley which was nice. This was a good read this book was well written with no errors in grammar or spelling I am looking forward to reading the next book in this series.

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### **Ezinwanyi says**

This story was very sweet and satisfying. It wasn't overly dramatic and angsty but it was emotionally engaging enough that I listened to the book in one day. I have to be honest, I am on the fence about Sean Crisden, but his narration of this story was spot on. The author told the story in a dual POV and the voices the narrator used for the characters fit my image of them. This one was one of Sean Crisden's better performances.

Jay Sullivan worked for a marketing firm while taking care of his sister Ashley who has a history of falling in love with abusive guys. Currently, Jay was standing as a male figure for his 15 year old niece Kristen and 6 year old nephew Josh as Ashley's husband was serving time in jail for abusing them. When Jay is laid off from his firm, coupled with Ashley's husband was released from jail, Jay quickly accepted a job to be a business manager for a ranch in Montana and they quickly flee New York City.

Crooked Tree Ranch was hemorrhaging money so they agreed to trying marketing the Ranch differently to attract new customers. The Ranch is owned by three families, The Todds, The Allens and the Starachs. Nate, Gabe and Luke represent the Todd family and work on the Ranch. They were skeptical about the City boy Jay being in charge of creating a marketing plan, but they were low in funds and they were desperate. Nate is the oldest and he used to work in the rodeo circuit so the city boy just rubbed him the wrong way. But Nate accepted that Jay's expertise was necessary so he tried to temper his irritation with Jay. What Nate couldn't ignore was his attraction to Jay and vice versa. Soon, the two agreed to try a relationship. Nate and Jay were a delight because their attraction was clear but they were so supportive and accepting of each other and their respective families.

I though the author did a great job in building up the relationship so while it was short amount of time, it didn't feel like insta-love. RJ Scott's writing appeals to me because she focuses on the family, their interactions and their emotions more than the physical acts between the couples. I prefer a juicy story over copious amounts of sex so this audiobook was so good. There was a number of subplots, but the pace at which the author tackled them was comfortable so the reader never felt bogged down with angst or overly emotional scenes. I am looking forward to finding out more about the second family of the Ranch trifecta, The Allens.

*I received this book for free from in exchange for an honest review. This does not affect my opinion of the*

*book or the content of my review.*

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## Candice says

3.25 stars

I have mixed feelings about this book. I love this author and pretty much have read most of her stories, so when a new series came out, especially with my favorite, cowboys, it was an auto buy for me.

I enjoyed the book, however unlike others by this author, this one was very slow going for me. I kept wanting it to move along. I realize that this is the first in a new series and the characters need to be set up and the background given, I understand and appreciate that but it just seemed to take a little too long and I was getting frustrated.

I liked the sense of family with this series and really liked the Todd brothers, more so Gabe and Luke. Nate grew on me a little, but I really didn't like him in the beginning, I felt he was just a jerk for the sake of it, not just to Jay, but to the other people around. He did redeem himself somewhat, but he was not my favorite and I hope that he will grow on me more as the series continues.

I felt this book was definitely more of a set up book for the rest of series, too many unanswered questions about Marcus, his son, the other missing son, etc. I am interested enough to continue with series and see where the author takes it.

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## Heller says

3.5

Start of a new series. I'd read more. On a bit of cowboy kick lately and this definitely delivers. A struggling Montana dude ranch hires a marketing expert from New York City. This focuses quite a bit on the marketing strategies which I found interesting. There are a few mysteries alluded to in the story so I'm curious to see where the other books in the series go.

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## Christelle says

An enjoyable read with cowboys, horses, the Montana mountains, and families.

Jay takes care of his sister and her 2 children and decides to take a marketing job in a ranch after being fired and wanting to put some distance between his family and his sister's abusive ex. There, he meets one of the owners of the ranch, Nate, and his brothers.

The cute city boy meets the grumbling cowboy. It's sweet, full of nice feelings. For a short story, it's entertaining, even though with no surprises, and leads the way to other romances at the ranch.

*PS : this is a nice gift from an unknown elf during the SS exchange. **\*\*Thank you, anonymous Elf :-)\*\****

## Cory says

It seems that any book R.J. Scott writes about cowboys draws me in! I really enjoyed this short story about a cowboy running a failing ranch and a city boy who comes to help.

First off....Nate. He definitely doesn't mix words and sometimes doesn't say the right things, but I absolutely adored him. Especially the way he was with his little brothers.

Jay had an edge to him and was sometimes cocky, but as with Nate, I loved the way he was with his sister.

I love books that put two explosive personalities together where the first meeting is a disaster and then it builds from that point! It's one of my favorite types of books to read. The ending did feel slightly rushed, but it was a short story so it is what it is. I loved it none the less and will definitely be reading the second book.

Until then....I will be anxiously awaiting for Texas Christmas which comes out in a few weeks. If you read this an enjoyed it, you should definitely read the Texas series! :)

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## BWT (Belen) says

*Crooked Tree Ranch* is the first book in a (so far) four book series. There's a dual POV with slow burn, on page sexy times, some humor, and not a lot of angst.

While I thought the characters are mostly fleshed out, there's a lot that just skims the surface, and I felt like the story was missing some real conflict to drive it forward.

Nate is dyslexic, Jay was in a toxic relationship, Ashley has depression and has been physically and emotionally abused, and her son Josh has dyslexia, but none of this seems to be really explored.

The angst definitely could have been overwhelming from those storylines (especially concerning Jay's sister Ashley), but because everything is only very superficially explored, it kept the story from becoming too OTT.

At the same time, I can't help wishing some of the topics *had been* explored more. (view spoiler)

As for the audio, **Sean Crisden does a wonderful job with the narration, as well as with all the character voices, and the timing is really good. It's a smooth, enjoyable listen.**

All in all, it's a slow burn romance and the pace of the story reflects it. It's a sweet romance and has a strong HFN/HEA and likable characters.

I enjoyed the narration, and will check out the next book in the series.

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## Nic says

Yippee - A new series!

Available for pre-order 1 November (15 Nov release Total-e-Bound)

*Crooked Tree Ranch* is the first book in the new *Montana* series by R.J. Scott. Those of you who read my reviews regularly will know that I have a definite soft-spot for R.J. She's one of those authors who's on my must-read list and I have yet to be disappointed. I love her characters and I love the stories and I adore the way she builds a series. Without fail I get emotionally invested in the characters and love to see them appear in subsequent books.

This series is a winner because of it's cowboy theme - who can resist a gorgeous cowboy! "**Nate was a cowboy, all yee-haw and camp fires and macho crap. It was unlikely there would be any Brokeback action anywhere near Crooked Tree.**" How wrong Jay was!

This book had a nice contrast with city-boy Jay and country-boy Nate. Most of the story takes place on the ranch but we spend a bit of time in New York when we first meet Jay. Jay is a marketing executive who is retrenched and circumstances lead him to taking a job on the ranch owned by Nate and his brothers.

It may be financial pressures that prompt Jay to look beyond New York for a job, forced to widen his net when he can't get a job, but it is his love of family and his desire to provide for his sister and her children that results in the big decision to relocate.

As in most R.J. Scott books, there is a strong family theme. In this case, we have a focus on two families, where the brother has taken on a role as head of the family. Firstly there is Jay's family, where Jay takes a role supporting his sister who had been abused in the past and acts as a father figure to her kids. There is also Nate's family, where Nate had been the head of the household since his parents were killed when he was eighteen. Most of his decisions have been based on keeping the ranch running for his younger brothers. Both our main characters put their family first and are supportive and protective.

Nate hasn't really had a relationship beyond a one night stand and Jay's last relationship was a disaster with a selfish, two-timing boyfriend.

On one hand I loved the slow development of the relationship between Nate and Jay, particularly Nate's desire to take his time and not treat Jay as a one-night stand. But on the other hand I wanted them to get together faster! I think it was midway through the book before there was any substantial action.

Not a huge amount of drama but a nice start to what promises to be a great series. I can already sense (or hope) that we will get a book about the missing Justin (son of Marcus who lives on the ranch), or maybe his brother Ethan the cop, and definitely Sam the chef.

The second and third books are due in July and September next year - something to definitely look forward to!

*Thanks so much to R.J. who provided a copy of this book in return for an honest review.*

I publish all my m/m reviews on my blog so if you want to see all my m/m reviews in one place come visit at [Because Two Men Are Better Than One!](#)

## ~☆~Doni(ela) ♥ ?? love & semi-colons~☆~ says

Considering its short length, this book was amazingly well developed with solid characters. Nate and Jay felt real to me. They both had deep loyalty to their families and knew what they wanted. There wasn't a lot of angst here, just tension, a slowly developing love story, and two guys wanting a forever (swoon on cue here). A few plot points were seemingly dropped (What happened to Justin? Did Henry have something to do with it), but I'm assuming they'll be further developed in book 2 (which I would happily read). And of course, ride-me gay cowboys are always a boon...saddle up!

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## Cadiva says

I love starting a series from RJ Scott because I know I'm going to get a well crafted tale of family and romance with a side order of steamy encounters and a little bit of humour.

Montana is no different and this relatively short opener sets all the scene without ever being a wall of exposition. We see Jay and Nate connecting and falling for each other, we see Gabe and Ashley doing the same.

There's tensions enough to stop the narrative all being one tone but they're the every day life kind, not mad dramady or unbelievable events.

I can't wait to find out more.

#ARC kindly received from the author in return for an honest and unbiased review.

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## Lily says

3.3 stars. It was good to see a nice cowboy read since I have not come across one for quite some time; quite well portrayed characters, an interesting universe but a too rushed romance... The protagonists' relationship was developing at a reasonable pace with some tension and revealing banter, when suddenly the super fast-forward button was pushed - they fell in love, most problems were solved and the story ended. I fail to understand why a few more pages could not be added to properly present the climax and ending, when the introduction and bulk of the plot were nicely laid out...

And it was not clear to me who had the final say on ranch business - were they all equal partners? Had Nate and his brothers (or their parents) invested more financially and by offering land? There was a character (Marcus) whom I did not like at all. (view spoiler)

Perhaps the situation will be clarified and explored more thoroughly in the next instalment.

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## Trisha Harrington says

Another RJ favourite for me.

Crooked Tree Ranch is the first book in the new Montana series by RJ Scott and let me just say, I adored it! I'm a huge fan of cowboys so this was definitely my thing.

I loved the build up to everything. Nate and Jay don't meet straight away. But that gives us a nice bit of background and character introduction. Two things that I really loved in this book. We also had a chance to get to know the characters. Everything started out really well, which was a really good thing.

It's unusual for me to adore kids in books. Here, though, I adored them. Kirsten and Josh were really great. Kirsten, the teenager, definitely won me over straight away. She wasn't the perfect, preppy kid. Josh was adorable and I felt both he and his sister complimented Jay. He was such a dad to them. It was definitely cute.

The romance was really sweet. I liked the two together. Both men had their issues, in a sense. But those issues seemed to make them perfect for each other. And I hope we get to see more of them in the series.

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