



## Branded

*Laura Wright*

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**Branded** Laura Wright

**In the small town of River Black, Texas, sits the Triple C—a working cattle ranch that sustains the town. But it also holds painful memories and shocking secrets for the Cavanaugh brothers...**

When the Cavanaugh brothers return home for their father's funeral, they discover unexpected evidence of the old man's surprising double life—a son named Blue, who wants the Triple C Ranch as much as they do. The eldest son, Deacon, a wealthy businessman who couldn't wait to leave the ranch and move on with his life, is looking to use his powerful connections to stop Blue at any cost. He never expected the ranch's forewoman, Mackenzie Byrd, to get in his way.

Mac knows Deacon means to destroy the ranch and therefore destroy her livelihood. But as the two battle for control, their attraction builds. Now Deacon is faced with the choice of a lifetime: Take down the Triple C to feed his need for revenge, or embrace the love of the one person who has broken down every barrier to his heart.

## Branded Details

Date : Published June 3rd 2014 by Signet

ISBN :

Author : Laura Wright

Format : Kindle Edition 384 pages

Genre : Romance, Contemporary, Contemporary Romance, Westerns

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## From Reader Review Branded for online ebook

### Stephanie G says

The first book in The Cavanaugh Brothers series is a mesmerizing and heart gripping read. Consumed with vengeance, Deacon Cavanaugh returns to the Triple C ranch for his father's funeral all set to destroy the ranch and everything on it. He never expected the ranch's foreman, Mackenzie Byrd to get in his way, but as the battle each other for control, their attraction builds and now Deacon will have to choose; take the down the Triple C or embrace the love of the one person able break down the barriers to his heart.

The steady to fast paced and smooth flowing plot keeps readers on the edge of their seats with suspense, drama and romance. The author brings the story to life with well written descriptions of the scenes and events which inspire vivid images that capture the imagination and draw the reader deeper into the story. Tension builds throughout the story as secrets are revealed and Mac and Deacon battle their feelings and the past. The strong compelling characters are charismatic, easily related to and capture the heart of the reader from the very beginning ensuring the reader wants to know more.

The attraction between Mac and Deacon sears the pages and the sex scenes are hot and steamy, but it's the relationship that has sparks flying in every direction. The reader can't help but get emotionally caught up in the story as they empathize with the Cavanaugh brothers and with the people of the Triple C Ranch. The snarky dialogue and tempestuous romance between Deacon and Mac adds chuckles and passion, while the past and unknown future brings tears, keeping the reader completely engrossed with the outcome.

The author has created a wonderful, heartfelt romance with four sexy cowboys that have the reader wanting to take them home and make everything better. The author keeps the reader guessing with some surprising twists and secrets being revealed add spice and depth to the story and I can't wait to read the next one.

- Eva

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### Flavs is Mrs David Gandy♥~♥' says

Oh Darlin... I just love a cowboy...lol

Nice... Definitely reading the next one!

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### Dianne says

**Branded** by Laura Wright starts out flying high with tension, as three brothers must return to the place they fled years before when their estranged father passes away. Focusing on the eldest brother, Deacon, who is a self-made financial success, and the most bitter of the brothers, this is a story of learning that what is important to your future may be stronger than the bitterness and need for revenge from your past. Mac grew up around Deacon and his brothers, being their sister's best friend and the four of them still feel the pain of her murder and her loss. Younger than Deacon, she was in love with him from afar, even as a child. The family imploded the day the body was found, and the skeletons in the Cavanaugh family closet begin to mount.

The “Mac” Deacon remembered is nothing like the Mac she has become beautiful, strong, intelligent and full of heart. She is also manages the ranch his family owns. This is her home. When Deacon makes it clear that he plans on destroying the ranch, a line is drawn, Mac versus Deacon. But their romantic attraction is hotter than a branding iron. Can they keep business separate from their growing feelings? Has Mac broken through the hardened shell around Deacon’s heart or will his need to destroy the demons that haunt him the only way he knows how destroy his chance for love?

Laura Wright has combined high sexual tension with taut emotional tension as she tells a story of love, loss and need. Mac is one of those characters you admire from the start, determined and caring, while Deacon may take some getting used to. His over-the-top hatred and cruelty within the first few pages is hard to forget as he lashes out at those around him. I will say, the skillful blending of mystery, the shocking revelations that pepper this tale and the amount of angst it provides comes together wonderfully as a firm foundation for this new series.

I received this ARC edition from PENGUIN GROUP Berkley, NAL / Signet Romance, DAW in exchange for my honest review as part of the Branded Tour and Giveaway stopping at Tome Tender.

Series: The Cavanaugh Brothers - Book 1

Publication Date: June 3, 2014

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Genre: Contemporary Adult Romance

Available from: [Amazon](#) | [Barnes & Noble](#)

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## **Hbeebti says**

Really enjoyed this. I cant wait to read about the rest of the brothers, but I loved LW's Vampires more.

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## **◊◆ Naomi says**

### **4.5 stars**

First of all, let’s talk about this amazing cover. I must admit, it was the cover who drew me to the book. I mean, hot cowboy, hot SHIRTLESS cowboy with a beautiful background...what’s not to love? And then, I read the synopsis and I wanted this book. I was right. **Branded** was a great read and I cannot wait for **Broken!**

I’d also like to say that I love the title of this book, after reading it, it makes perfect sense. And I also love the details on the cover, very well done! I’m impressed. Penguin knows how to design the perfect covers.

Deacon Cavanaugh is rich. Immensely so. He owns a big company and lives in Dallas. Shortly after the death of his father, Everett, Deacon needs to go back to the Triple C Ranch, the ranch where he grew up with his brothers and sister. He doesn’t want it, he hates it and wants to destroy it. He has his reasons. After his

little sister's death, his family went to shit. Especially his mother. Things happened, bad things and because of that he does not want the Triple C Ranch to live anymore. He knows his two brothers, James and Cole, will agree with him but what he doesn't expect is the surprising news during the reading of his father's will. He has another brother, Blue, a worker on the ranch. Deacon, still determined to destroy the ranch, offers Blue money, lots of it, for him to sell his parts of the ranch. Meanwhile, enters Mac. The foreman of the Triple C. She's tough, she loves this ranch more than anything else and she will not let Deacon destroy it, even if she had a big crush on him when she was younger. Mac was Cass's (Deacon's little sister) best friend, she was practically born on the ranch and she cared deeply for the three Cavanaugh brothers. Until Cass's death. She doesn't know what truly happened but after Cass's abduction and death, the three brothers left the ranch and never came back. Now, they're all back and one is determined to destroy her home. But things don't go as planned. Deacon and Mac grow closer to each other, what will happen when the finale decision is made? Will they choose each other? Will Deacon destroy the Triple C and in the same time destroy his relationship with Mac? Read the book and find out...

I love cowboys. I do. And Deacon Cavanaugh was one hot cowboy. I really liked him. Deacon is a sweet and nice guy, very rich but not arrogant, trying to be the good guy. He is just so desperate to destroy the ranch, he wants it gone and yeah, that must seem heartless and mean but Deacon truly has his reasons. He doesn't want that just because. It's deeper than that, it's important for him, to find peace, to find happiness again, to let go of the past. I loved how passionate he was about his work and everything else around him. How nice he could be with Mac. Understanding, patient, funny. Mac doesn't know Deacon's reasons for wanting the ranch gone, she doesn't understand but she tries and that's why I loved her. At first, she kinda hates him but then, she realizes that Deacon is not a bad man, she wants to know the true reasons, why does he hate that part of his life so much. Mac is in love with her work, with the horses and saving cows, fixing fences and riding in the sun. She's like Deacon, passionate. I loved that Mac wasn't too judgmental with him or with anyone else, actually. She was brave, independent, not too stubborn (not too annoying), strong.

And yes, I loved them together. Laura did a good job with them, I think that they worked great as a couple. They had chemistry and the sexual tension was palpable! What I loved about them was that it wasn't a hate-love relationship, I'm so done with those, they bore and annoy me. With the circumstances I was afraid it was going to be like that but not at all. They both know the other wants something completely different, they both know that one of them will get hurt at the end but still, they don't "hate" each other constantly nor do they try to hide their feelings for each other. They just go for it. It wasn't too sudden either, they didn't jump each other after 10 pages. Laura took her time at the beginning, explaining everything to us, every sides, and then she brought them together. Their relationship was beautiful, powerful and HOT. Laura knows how to write dirty. I had time to enjoy them as a couple and I loved that as well, they didn't get together-together just at the end, I had time to read about them as a couple and it was awesome and cute and sweet and hot and nice.

Of course, **Branded** doesn't revolves only around them. For one, there is Cass, the little sister. Cass was abducted when she was thirteen and found dead a few days later. Her killer was never found but she kept a diary, a diary never found by the police either. A diary Laura shared with us, only a few pages but it was so interesting and I'm intrigued. In this diary she talks about an older boy, she calls him "Sweet" and Mac knows about him because Cass told her. Mac told the police but they never found anything about him. They dropped the case after several months. But we learn new things in **Branded** (it takes place 12 years after Cass's death, if I'm not mistaken), I really wanna know more, especially after that ending!! How could Laura do that?! I WANT ANSWERS!!!

And then there are Deacon's brothers. James and Cole! Oh my Lord. YES! I want some of that. Seriously, I cannot wait to read their book. Especially Cole's (he has tattoos everywhere and he's a professional fighter

and he was/is Cass's twin brother). I already know their heroines, I'm sure for James but not completely sure for Cole but I have a good feeling! ;)

Anyway, read this book. You won't regret it. The only reproach I have is that I felt like some things were overlooked, especially with Blue and his mother. If you like cowboys, hot sweaty stubborn cowboys you will love this book! Don't miss it!

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### **Kelly says**

well that was yummy. I really liked Mac. I loved how she wouldn't back down to Deacon. The sex scenes. hmmmm. they were hot. But most of the time I was listening to sexy Kaleo Griffith narrate this and...Kaleo did an outstanding job but...my eyes were rolling and not in a good way...the sex was a bit cheesy.  
oh who cares...I'm on to the next book...BROKEN...I've got a tiny crush on James. By y'all.

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### **HTL says**

This book was kind of ridiculous. I mean, I can get behind the premise of the plot, but holy shit the two main characters were just.... dumb. And boring. And the sex scenes were laughably horrible and cringe worthy!

\* Deacon **growled** 21 times in this book. WTF. A growl here and there... okay. But 21 times! Deacon and/or Mac moaned 23 times. There were 25 instances of gasping. Between the growling, gasping and the moaning, I'm sure it sounded like dying animals.

\* The sex scenes were just so.... awkward for me to read. Lots of talk about 'darlin' and 'creaming' and blech!

But back to the romance--it's just ridiculous! I mean, they haven't seen each other in TEN YEARS and then Deacon shows up for his dad's funeral, they fuck, and suddenly they are like soooOOOOoOOOoo in lurrrrrve.

Whatevs.

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### **Reading In Pajamas says**

SPOTLIGHT, Review & Giveaway: Branded: The Cavanaugh Brothers by Laura Wright

<http://wp.me/p3d0RZ-1kd>

Publication Date: June 3, 2014

Reviewed by: Reading In Pajamas/ Cori

Rated: 5 Stars

#### **◆REVIEW:**

I have been looking forward to this book since Laura Wright announced this new series on her Facebook page and asked her Texas readers for information on area ranches. I'm a Texan myself and a story about some hot cowboy brothers in Texas sounded great to me. I love Laura Wright's Mark of the Vampire Series

and Bayou Heat series and would have tried anything else she decided to write as well, but this plot really captured my interest. My review partner Dawn and I were both blown away by Branded. I got to write the review though. Branded has everything I look for in a great love story. It has great characters with an intense emotional connection and chemistry. Their story was filled with emotion, conflict, and scorching romance. If you're a fan of Laura Wright's paranormal romances you will not be disappointed in this contemporary romance series. The scorch factor is still there as well as her great writing style. I loved Branded and can't say enough good things about it. I'm hooked and will be impatiently waiting for the second book, Broken, to release in October. I highly recommend this series!

\*Review copy provided by Berkley/NAL in exchange for an honest review.

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### **Dee says**

4.5 stars. Narrated by Kaleo Griffith

Listened to the audio version and was glued from start to finish. This is the first book I have listened to with this narrator and I can easily understand why some of my GR's friends raves about him. He is an excellent narrator, one that I would happily recommend, he brings the characters to life and has a nice smooth voice which is easy to listen to and is the perfect choice for reading romances. In this there was quite a few really steamy scenes which were enough to get anyones blood racing, but oh boy, after listening to Kaleo I was left drooling and in need of an ice cold shower ;))

I only had one complaint about this book (view spoiler)

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### **Dark Faerie Tales says**

Review courtesy of Dark Faerie Tales

Quick & Dirty: Deacon Cavanaugh will do anything to destroy the Triple C Ranch. Mackenzie Byrd will do anything to stop him. Add in a sizzling attraction to each other, and that makes matters extremely complicated.

Opening Sentence: Today it took five dollars to get the cowboys to look the other way when Mac and I saddled up one of Daddy's prize cow horses.

The Review:

This book was just what I needed, as I've been going through a bit of a reading slump lately. I do find it funny that a book I normally wouldn't have picked up (I'm not always a huge contemporary romance fan) is the one that pulls me out of my slump. I'm incredibly grateful for it though!

Growing up, the Cavanaugh brothers had a great life on their father's ranch. That all changed when their 13-year-old sister went missing and was later found murdered. Life on the ranch changed, and it was no longer a

place any of them felt safe or loved. All three brothers left as soon as they were able and never looked back. Since then, Deacon Cavanaugh has made himself into a very successful businessman. What he wants more than anything is to tear down the Triple C Ranch and move on with his life. He's made numerous offers to buy the Triple C, all of which have been refused. When his father dies, Deacon sees his chance. What he doesn't foresee is the fight he will have on his hands with the ranch's foreman, Mac. Mac was his sister's best friend and cannot understand the hatred Deacon holds for his father and his ranch. She will everything in her power to stop Deacon's plan from going forward. Who will win in this battle of wills? Will Deacon and Mac's burgeoning romance be able to withstand the fallout?

The book is told mainly from Deacon and Mac's perspectives, although we do get a couple scenes with the other Cavanaugh brothers as well as Deacon's assistant. Spending so much time in the heads of our hero and heroine really helped me forge a connection to the two characters, although I felt more connected to Mac. In the first part of the book, Deacon comes off as a bit of a jerk, making it very hard to like him at first. Thankfully, this changes once the romance really takes off. Mac, on the other hand, is likable from the start. She's incredibly strong and doesn't need a man to make her life complete. At the same time, she's not afraid to open up and make herself vulnerable. She's just very easy to identify with.

While I will say the romance did seem to move a little quickly, it honestly didn't bother me too much. I think this is due to the fact that the chemistry between Deacon and Mac is just perfect. You could practically see the sparks and steam come off the pages. That chemistry greatly made up for any rushing of the romance that occurred.

This was an incredibly enjoyable, quick read. I think fans of contemporary romance will be greatly pleased and those that aren't normally into this type of book will be pleasantly surprised. I know I was!

Notable Scene:

“Everett Cavanaugh was good to this town,” he said in a deep, controlled voice. “No question about it. His success shows in every building, every business, and every home. But his failures were just as impactful. And like his successes, they shouldn’t go unobserved.”

Beside Mac, Elena gave a tiny gasp. The rest of the room, however, fell silent and still. Clearly captivated by Deacon Cavanaugh's audacity. Even the members of the congregation with fans held them aloft and immobile.

“A town can be built on the destruction of others,” he said, his voice near to ice now. “But that kind of foundation ain’t strong. It won’t last. It can’t. I won’t allow it.”

Without warning, his eyes dropped to the front row, hitting Mac with a dark, quizzical look that turned her insides lava. Will you be the one who gets in my way now? he seemed to be asking.

Damn right, she wanted to shout back at him. But she had no voice. No goddamn voice. Staring up at him, she felt as if she were completely alone—on the bench and inside the church. She felt like a prisoner to his stare and that if he wanted to take something from her, not only would she let him, but she might just be inclined to fall to her knees when she handed it over.

After a few long seconds, he pulled his gaze from hers and settled it back on the crowd again. As Mac regained her mind and chastised herself for shrinking under the weight of that intense look, Deacon continued with his backward eulogizing, undaunted.

“Today you buy Everett Cavanaugh,” he said tersely. “Tomorrow I bury everything he’s ever worked for.”

FTC Advisory: Signet/Penguin provided me with a copy of Branded. No goody bags, sponsorships, “material connections,” or bribes were exchanged for my review.

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## Leigh says

*I received this from NetGalley in exchange for an honest review.*

Wow! Just wow! That ending was a killer! I need to get my hands on the next book now. Laura Wright delivers a steamy, emotionally charged romance with plenty mystery and HOT cowboys in Branded. It will keep you on the edge on your seat from start to finish.

Deacon Cavanaugh grew up on the Triple C, a cattle ranch in River Black, Texas. Tragedy drove him away and tragedy has brought him back. Deacon and his two brothers are in town for their father's funeral. Will the Cavanaugh brothers be able to bury their anger and resentment toward their father now that he is dead? Being back at the Triple C has stirred up memories and emotions that might have been better off buried for Deacon and his brothers. Mackenzie Byrd is the foreman for the Triple C. She grew up with the Cavanaugh brothers and had a crush on Deacon. Now that he is back, will sparks fly between Deacon and Mac?

Deacon is a sexy, wealthy businessman who is comfortable in both the boardroom and in the saddle. The scars of his past direct his decisions. Can he learn to forgive? Mac may be feisty and stubborn, but that is what is needed to run a ranch. She is willing to fight to the bitter end for what she wants. Deacon will have his hands full with Mac. The chemistry between Mac and Deacon is sizzling with plenty steamy scenes. I would definitely recommend it.

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## Ksenia says

Story rating: 3.5 Stars

Audio rating: 5 Stars

Overall rating: 4 Stars

Branded take place in a small Texas town. When owner of the Triple C – a ranch that sustains the town passes away his three sons return home. They left their hometown after tragic death of their little sister and they don't want to have anything with the ranch. Actually the oldest son Deacon would stop at nothing to destroy the ranch. Mac is the foreman of the Triple C and their sister's childhood friend. She also happens to have a crush on Deacon when she was a girl. As they battle for the ranch they can't deny their mutual attraction.

I labeled this book as romantic suspense, but I think Branded is more of a character driven romance; suspense takes a back seat here. There was a mystery to solve of course – a tragic death of Deacon's little sister, but it was in background. The author did a great job writing very different characters, each of them with their own distinct personality. I love character-driven stories, so it was a pleasure to meet them all.

I admit that the book was a little slow in the middle, and my interest began to waver, but then Laura Wright

changed the scenery. The first 50% of the book took place in the small town and have this “cowboy story” vibe. Then Deacon invited Mac to a dinner in the big city, and we unexpectedly have a look at his businessman side. I know FSOG ruined the whole “rich and handsome businessman” plot for many readers, but I love a sexy businessman in my romance. This aspect was a pleasant surprise in this country story.

This is Adult, so as expected there were some steamy and hot scenes. They were well-written, but I wasn’t impressed by romance in this book. My favorite aspect in romance is build-up, anticipation, and unfortunately there wasn’t much of it in this book.

Branded is the first book in this series. While the story centers around Mac and Deacon, there are also subplots about other brothers.

I also want to warn you: the mystery behind Deacon’s sister wasn’t solved in this installment. And I have a feeling we wouldn’t get answers in the next book too. I found this frustrating, because I don’t like unresolved mysteries.

#### **My thoughts about the audiobook**

**Branded is narrated by Kaleo Griffith. I liked his performance. He has a smooth deep voice and he did a perfect job voicing different characters. There was a scene where all three brothers were present, and his performance was amazing. I had no problems to distinct which one of three was speaking. It was my first experience this this narrator, and I want to listen more of his works.**

While Branded wasn’t a mind-blowing book, it was an enjoyable one, with interesting characters and intriguing mystery. I’m interested enough to continue with this series.

PS. I’m not a big fan of bare-chested covers, but I’m in love with this model. I showed this cover to my husband with my comment: “Look at this gorgeous guy”. He was unimpressed. I hope he wouldn’t show me photos from some men magazine in retaliation. Lol.

You can find my reviews:

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#### **Jennifer Lyon says**

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I can't wait to read this! I got a look at the first pages...yummy!

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#### **Darcy says**

A lot of this one was predictable, yet it was a fun read. I wasn't sure at the start, Deacon was an ass and I had a hard time liking him. It didn't help that no one else seemed to either, including his brothers. It was only as the past was slowly revealed that you understood why Deacon was so cold and out to ruin his childhood home.

Mac was a great foe against Deacon. She could stand toe to toe with him and had some sneaky moves of her own.

With how this one ended it will be interesting to see what will happen for all the brothers.

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### **Ellie says**

I'll have to think how to rate this book.

So, it's just 2 stars and here are the reason's why.

I was excited about this book but unfortunately, it didn't work well for me. I expected a cowboy story of love and second chance and instead I got a billionaire hero (a character which I generally don't like and avoid reading about) and some instalust and over-the-top love scenes which read more like paranormal than contemporary.

The hero and heroine had a complicated history, he was her best friend's older brother, her teenage crush and he had tried to stay away from her. At present they have opposite goals and nothing much in common. The beginning was promising - liked the atmosphere at the ranch and getting to know the characters, not Deacon and Mac, but Deacon's brothers as well. They had an important role and strong presence in the story which I quite liked.

Deacon and Mac didn't work for me as a couple. I felt we were not given any reasons for them coming together (except, pure lust) and no real development of their relationship. They became from adversaries to soulmates overnight. It was unrealistic and their romance seemed forced.

The love scenes, which were plenty, were so over-the-top that I skipped a lot of them. The chemistry didn't seem authentic but forced, the dialogue was stifled.

On the positive side, there was a strong mystery/thriller element and it really held my attention throughout the whole story. This, together with the interactions between the Cavanaugh brothers were the best elements in this book.

Still, despite being intrigued by the mystery I had too many issues with this story and I'm on the fence about continuing with series.

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