



Caden's Vow (Hell's Eight Book 6)

By Sarah McCarty

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His past has haunted him for a lifetime...but one woman could be his salvation

Gunslinger Caden Miller's compadres are becoming a bit too domesticated for his liking. So he's off to Kansas territory to carve out a living and a space of his own—alone, just the way he likes it.

Maddie O'Hare has been drawn to Caden ever since she escaped to the Hell's Eight compound from the brothel where she was born and raised. And she's not ready to let him go so easily...until she's captured by his new neighbors.

When Caden discovers that Maddie is being held by a rival at a nearby ranch, his plan to rescue her backfires, and he finds himself the groom in what's *literally* a shotgun wedding. As shocked as Caden is by the bizarre turn of events, Maddie's grateful kiss holds a fiery promise that's far more unexpected. But with old enemies catching up with him, Caden and Maddie will face a danger that tests their passion—and will either bind them together forever or break them apart for good.

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Editorial Review

Review

"McCarty is a sparse, minimalistic writer, with a great ear for dialogue. She's a passionate observer of history, and manages to deftly and accurately weave her spicy stories through with important facts and issues of the epoch she invokes. She's also good at capturing that intangible magnetism surrounding dangerous, rugged men...I'm hooked." -USATODAY.com

"What really sets McCarty's stories apart from simple erotica is the complexity of her characters and conflicts....definitely spicy, but a great love story, too." -RT Book Reviews

About the Author

Before becoming a full-time writer, Sarah McCarty traveled extensively. She would bring a pencil and paper with her to sketch out her stories and, in the process, discovered the joy of writing. Today, Sarah is the New York Times bestselling author of more than a dozen novels, including the award-winning Hell's Eight series, and is best known for her historical and paranormal romance novels. You can contact Sarah through her website at www.SarahMcCarty.net.

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Hell's Eight was doing Tia proud. Caden Miller looked around at the normally peaceful garden Tia had started and Tucker's wife, Sally Mae, now helped maintain, at all the people crammed into its well-tended confines to celebrate Tia and Ed's wedding, and couldn't help a smile. Ten years ago he wouldn't have given a snowball's chance in hell that Caine could pull off his dream. But like the others, where Caine had led, Caden had followed. And Caine's drive to succeed was evident in the sturdy outbuildings, the assortment of equally sound houses and the contentment reflected in the faces of those in attendance. The men of Hell's Eight weren't just content; they were flourishing. They were settling down, marrying, having children, sinking their roots deep into the east Texas soil. Of the original eight, only he, Ace and Luke remained footloose and fancy-free. Something that should have pleased him but instead had him feeling a pang of..envy? *Shit*. Since when did he feel envy for something he didn't even want? He wasn't a settling man. He'd always been as restless as his father before him. As all the Hell's Eight used to be.

Glancing around the garden, at the tables laden with food, at the couples standing side by side, the contented smiles where he was used to seeing hardness and purpose, Caden again felt that strange tightness in his gut. Hell's Eight was changing. The reckless rage that had driven them for so many years had smoothed into something just as durable but...calmer. Caden rolled his shoulders. He didn't like calm, but it seemed to be settling all right with Hell's Eight's most notorious members. Shadow, Tracker and Tucker, three of the most feared men in the territory, known for reckless deeds that were as dark as their looks, were hovering over their wives, every bit the doting husbands. Caine and Sam, wild men known for getting the job done no matter what, were looking as confident as rich bankers—that is, if one discounted the subtle tension in their muscles and the alertness in their gaze that spoke of men accustomed to surviving by their wits. Not to mention the guns strapped to their thighs and the knives tucked into their belts. *Shit*, they were all going soft, and if he stayed here, so would he.

Caden sighed and took a drink of the fancy champagne Desi had ordered all the way from Chicago for Tia and Ed's wedding. It tasted like cat piss to him, but what did he know of the finer things? He was the son of an Irish nomad, a dreamer. A man who'd sworn his pot of gold was just over the next horizon, around the next bend. Caden had a brief mental flash of his father's face. Rigid with determination as he'd told Caden to

hide when the Mexican army had raged into their town. He'd been seven going on eight, anticipating the gun his father had promised him for his birthday two days hence. He hadn't wanted to hide. He'd wanted to fight, but his father hadn't given him any choice. He'd shoved him into the hidey-hole under the kitchen floor, and on a gruff "Remember who you are, son," he'd replaced the planks above him and left him in the dark. Those were the last words his father had ever spoken to him. His mother he hadn't found until...after. She'd been at the mercantile when the army came.

Caden took another swallow of the champagne, wishing it were something stronger. There were times when a man just needed something to drown out the noise of the past, but champagne wasn't whiskey, and the memories kept coming. He'd lain beneath the floorboards for what seemed hours, listening to the shouts and screams, wincing at the gunshots, straining to hear his father's voice, feeling helpless and scared until he couldn't stand it anymore.

By the time he'd climbed out of the hole, the battle was over. He'd never forget the smell that struck him as he'd stood—gunpowder, smoke and...blood—nor the carnage that spread out beyond his front door. Bodies of friends and neighbors littered the road like trash left by the wind, changing the street from familiar to macabre. He'd found his father's body lying in the doorway of the still-burning mercantile, his head caved in on the right side, blood pooled around his shoulders. His father's legs had been on fire as Caden had dragged his body into the street. The stench of burning flesh fused indelibly into his memory that day as he'd beaten out the fire consuming his father's body with his bare hands. He hadn't felt the pain, hadn't felt anything. And when he'd looked up and seen Sam, his expression had reflected the blankness that Caden felt. And then he'd learned what Sam already knew. Everything that had made up their lives was gone. The town. Their parents. Their childhood.

The only survivors of the massacre were the eight friends. By agreement, none had buried their own parents. They'd thought it would help. It hadn't. And, also by agreement, they'd vowed revenge. Extracting justice one by one as they grew up, earning the label of Hell's Eight along the way. Caden didn't know what would have become of them if Tia hadn't caught them that day, starving, stealing that pie, and taken them under her wing. They sure as shit wouldn't have become Texas Rangers. Tia was one in a million. Strength and softness mixed in one. If he ever met another woman like her, he'd marry her in a minute.

Fingers slid over his forearm. He didn't need to look down to know who it was who touched him with such compassion and gentleness. Maddie. Poor abused Mad-die. Born to a whore. Raised in a whorehouse. Used by men all her life until Tracker had brought her home after one of his failed searches for Ari. Maddie was as fleeting as sunshine, here one minute, gone the next, retreating into fantasy as fast as she snapped out of it. Her fingers tightened slightly on his arm. He smiled down at her automatically. Despite the harshness of her past, there was something about Maddie that remained untouched, that drew a man to smile. That enticing illusion of innocence probably had made her a damn good whore.

Caden regretted the thought as soon as Maddie smiled back at him with complete trust, her dark green eyes picking up the deeper green of leaves of the pear tree, her wavy red hair dragging the sunlight with it as tendrils escaped her bun and blew across her cheeks. Freckles sprinkled like pale kisses across the bridge of her nose. And her smile...that sweet, gentle smile that captured the hope of the world added to his guilt. So trusting when she had no reason to trust anyone, least of all him. Fey, his da would have called Maddie. One of the special ones that bridged the space between this world and the magical one.

"Tia looks like a queen, doesn't she?" Maddie said in a soft voice that eased a man's tension. For all her differences, Caden had always found Maddie a very restful soul.

"Yeah, she does." He was happy for Tia and Ed. It'd taken Ed seven years to convince Tia he wasn't going

anywhere. And Tia, well, she deserved the best of everything. Not just because she'd taken eight ragtag boys and raised them into men, but because of who she was. She stood next to her husband, petite and elegantly plump in her golden silk gown, her graying black hair pulled back into a sedate bun, her white, gold and black lace mantilla draped artfully around her face. He felt that familiar twinge of unease that came with the thought of settling.

Voices rose and fell around him, taking on an unreal quality, and the moment froze with sudden clarity. They were all settling down. Caine had his Desi. Tucker had Sally Mae. Sam with his Bella. Tracker had Ari, and Shadow had his Fei. The wild boys of the plains were becoming the builders of the future. Hell's Eight had been Caden's focus for as long as he could remember, but looking around the ranch he'd helped build, Caden had that ever-increasing sense of "wrong." His feet itched and his nerve endings crawled impatiently beneath his skin. He'd been a part of Hell's Eight for twenty-two years, but he didn't feel as if he belonged here anymore.

"Are you worried Tia won't love you anymore now that she has Ed?" Maddie teased, her fingers sliding between his and squeezing. It was a totally inappropriate gesture. Yet it completely soothed his unease. Caden tugged at his hand. Maddie didn't let go.

Shit. The woman made it easy to take advantage of her. Her sweet nature and the fact that more often than not she was in her make-believe world where nothing bad could touch her made her an easy target. Everyone wished she was stronger, but disappearing into her own mind was Maddie's defense against what'd happened to her in her life. Caden thought they should just let her be. It was a hard world, harder if you were brought up in a whorehouse. Harder still if you had the sweet personality of a child. Too many men had taken advantage of the optimistic woman in Maddie. He didn't want to be one of them. This time he tugged his hand free. "I'm not worried, Maddie mine."

The endearment just slipped out. She blinked up at him. "If I'm yours, why do you need to lie to me?"

How was he supposed to answer that? Across the garden, he smiled at Tia and Ed before lifting his glass in a silent toast. Tia smiled back, but Caden could tell from the tension at the edge of her mouth that she knew he was leaving. He hated to ruin her day, but he was who he was. A Miller didn't let grass grow under his feet. He pursued rather than settled. He took another sip of the champagne, wishing even more that it was whiskey.

"Habit, I guess."

"You don't lie to anyone else."

Everyone else could handle the truth. Maddie continued to stare up at him, her fingertips resting on his forearm, as if the pressure took his measure. The way she stared at him so steadily made him uneasy, as if she really was fey and really did see mo...

Users Review

From reader reviews:

Sandra Yunker:

Information is provisions for folks to get better life, information currently can get by anyone from everywhere. The information can be a expertise or any news even a problem. What people must be consider any time those information which is inside the former life are challenging be find than now's taking seriously

which one is suitable to believe or which one the resource are convinced. If you receive the unstable resource then you get it as your main information we will see huge disadvantage for you. All of those possibilities will not happen inside you if you take Caden's Vow (Hell's Eight Book 6) as your daily resource information.

Nancy Collins:

Exactly why? Because this Caden's Vow (Hell's Eight Book 6) is an unordinary book that the inside of the book waiting for you to snap the idea but latter it will shock you with the secret the idea inside. Reading this book beside it was fantastic author who else write the book in such wonderful way makes the content interior easier to understand, entertaining technique but still convey the meaning completely. So , it is good for you for not hesitating having this anymore or you going to regret it. This excellent book will give you a lot of gains than the other book get such as help improving your talent and your critical thinking way. So , still want to delay having that book? If I have been you I will go to the e-book store hurriedly.

Annie Resnick:

Caden's Vow (Hell's Eight Book 6) can be one of your beginner books that are good idea. Many of us recommend that straight away because this reserve has good vocabulary that could increase your knowledge in words, easy to understand, bit entertaining but nevertheless delivering the information. The article writer giving his/her effort to put every word into delight arrangement in writing Caden's Vow (Hell's Eight Book 6) but doesn't forget the main position, giving the reader the hottest along with based confirm resource data that maybe you can be certainly one of it. This great information can certainly drawn you into fresh stage of crucial imagining.

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