



## A Taste of Texas

*Liz Tally*

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Returning to Oak Stand, Texas, doesn't mean things haven't panned out for Rayne Rose. In fact, she's a celebrity chef so successful she desperately needs her equilibrium! Fixing up her aunt's B and B is the perfect step back. But how's Rayne supposed to get perspective with Brent Hamilton—the best friend who broke her heart—next door?

Beauty in motion. That was Brent then—and now. The boy Rayne adored has become a good-time guy...and all wrong for this widowed single mom. Still, she can't resist the different version of Brent she glimpses beneath the surface. And that taste tempts her to dig a little deeper. Because maybe what they once had could still be.

## A Taste of Texas Details

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Author : Liz Tally

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## From Reader Review A Taste of Texas for online ebook

### Jeannie Lin says

As a foodie, I am an absolute sucker for books with cooking subplots. In this one, the heroine is a celebrity chef who is recuperating in her hometown and helping her aunt start a bed and breakfast. This was a second chance sort of romance with a flawed hero who is trying to be a better man and a girl who was once picked on who has now come into her own. Wonderful comfort read with great secondary characters.

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### ReaderOz says

Good premise, tedious execution

This is a good story. Good premise, good characters. However, it was too slow for me. Superromances can be great or mediocre, and by halfway through A Taste of Texas, I was bored. We spent too much time inside the hero's and heroine's heads while they rehashed thoughts about where their lives were – or weren't – heading. There was more introspection than plot.

There's a lot of potential with this book: as a teenager the heroine's heart was broken by the hero. She considered them to be a couple. He did not, and had sex with the head cheerleader on prom night instead of turning up as the heroine's date.

The problem was that nothing much was made of this, and instead we had an endless series of scenes where Rayne misunderstood Brent's actions, and he didn't bother to correct her.

It's a difficult thing, creating a powerful Superromance, as the books are supposed to be about everyday situations. I believe there was more interesting material here that was left unused. Perhaps showing the heroine making compost, and showing the hero playing pool with minor characters, were not the most interesting things to focus on.

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### Maureen Howard says

This story is just what the chef ordered! Liz once again does not fail to impress. The fear of a single mother to overcome what had once broke her heart. And the strength of a man too long buried in an image of what everyone expects him to be. Lets not forget the sexy passion between the two. What recipe could be better. I hope everyone joins me in enjoying this addition to the wonderful world of Oak Stand Texas!

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### Sarah says

I loved the town, the heroine's son, the aunt and above all the writing. Talley has some truly beautiful phrases in this book. even the sensual scenes, which I often skim, were eloquent and original.

I wish the heroine hadn't spent so much freaking time waffling and whining and going over and over her

conflicts ad nauseum. She spent a lot of pages going over the same problems and it became redundant and diminished her character.

But I will definitely stop for Talley books in the future. Her writing was amazing.

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### **Elisa Beatty says**

Liz Talley's voice is wonderfully breezy and fresh--it's like having a girlfriend talking to you over a nice glass of wine. With a really sexy, shirtless guy nearby.

I've loved loved loved the whole Oak Stand, Texas series; Talley has created a wonderful, homey town full of terrific characters, and it's a place that seems to heal hurts for a great many people. I was really wondering how Talley was going to manage to redeem unrepentant ladies's man Brent Hamilton from the earlier books and turn him into a hero...but she did it in spades! Underneath the macho exterior, Brent has a rich inner life and a heart of gold--and watching him reconnect with childhood best friend Rayne Rose (and work through all their layers of adolescent heartbreak and adult cynicism to become soulmates again) was a delight!

Plus, my favorite of the secondary characters, Bubba Malone, gets a little lovin' in this one!

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### **Elizabeth says**

Author's should take care of who they insult. SOMething a character said at the beginning of the book annoyed me so much that I nearly DNF'd in the first chapter. I ended up enjoying it, but it's that throw-off comment that sticks with me.

This book's a decent example of what the Super Romance Imprint has to offer. Contemporary characters, with a female heroine who does not simper at the mere site of a hot man, though she does feel attracted to him. Rayne had been in love with her best friend Brent when she was in high school, but he broke her heart. She took off and became a succesful chef and business woman. Now that she's returned to her home tow, Brent is determined to win her back.

She fights those emotions well, but once again old love conquers all.

An in case you're wondering, early on in the book a lunkish friend of the hero grabs the heroine's assistant Megan on the butt. Megan understandably gets mad. She probably could have done it more nicely, but the lunk had no business grabbing her if she didn't ask to be grabbed. Yet the hero makes some derisive comment about not wanting some "Snooty slip of feminist". Excuse me, when a lunk makes unwanted advances on a woman, he's the problem not her. And why would the the author choose to insult feminists in that way. I'm a feminist. I read romance novels. Get over it and don't insult us in that way. More importantly, don't ever suggest that when a woman reacts, even strongly reacts, to a man making an unwanted grab that the woman is the one doing something wrong.

(rated on my 5-star romance scale)

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## **Joy says**

When a celebrity chef returns to her home town of Oak Stand, Texas, she must face the man she used to love--the local womanizer, former football hero, and coach, who hides his sensitive artistic side. Also Bubba gets a city girl! Another great offering from Talley.

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## **Robyn Rychards says**

I thoroughly enjoy Liz Talley's authentic, lovable, Southern characters and this one lived up to expectations! Thanks for a great read!

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## **Harlequin Books says**

Miniseries: Hometown U.S.A.

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## **Gail says**

I liked this one a lot. It's a reunion story about a couple whose romance never really got off the ground back then. The heroine is now widowed and the hero is ready to drop the facade he's lived behind and become who he really is.

Talley kind of skimmed over the fact that, yes, you do drive over prairie heading east from DFW airport but it's through city for a good hour and a half. And you're in the East Texas Piney Woods well before you get to the Tyler exits. Prairie stops an hour or so east of Dallas. The ground is still flat, but it's forest. I guess nobody wants to read about the forests in Texas...

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## **Tiffany says**

Okay quick read with some angst and likable characters.

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## **Brandy says**

A good read that felt a little drawn out. Emotions were touched on and got halfway there but I didn't think they were explored/explained to the fullest. I never felt invested in the characters or the outcome even though I liked them well enough.

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## **Vanessa says**

Widowed, Rayne Rose Albright returns to her hometown with her young son in tow. She's looking to find something that she hasn't been able to find in the city. Perhaps it is a reconnection with a childhood sweetheart or perhaps it is just some inner peace and closure that she needs. She needs to just breathe!

Brent Hamilton hates himself. He hates what he is – as opposed to who he really is. For the past 15-16 years he has been living the life that should have been his older brother's, but now he is determined to step out and become the real Brent Hamilton. To find that something more that he has been missing for years! Brent broke his friend's heart years ago when she discovered him "in" the head cheerleader on prom night instead of escorting her to prom as he had promised.

Brent seemed to realize he needed to change, but Rayne's return and the opportunity for a second chance just helped him along. I felt that Rayne was true to form all the way through and the real Brent was finally emerging from that Man-ho that he had become for all of those years. At the end of the story I truly believed that Brent loved Rayne and loved her a lot! I was reminded of Mercy by Jodi Picoult though. When one of the characters said that sometimes one person will love more than the other. I felt that was Brent in this relationship. While I felt as though Rayne loved Brent, because of the pain that he inflicted on her years ago, she doesn't love him as much. Once bitten twice shy – it will take time for her to be that free again. He changed her with that hurt he inflicted upon her, perhaps it even made her stronger. She seemed a bit scared of leading with her heart as she had years ago. It will take time for her to get over that pain. Brent got to feel some of her pain now because he loves her so much, but isn't so sure of her love for him. She takes steps to alter some things but she still weighs things out carefully and I don't see this changing overnight. It was nice that Brent learned what it was like on the other side of the fence though – loving Rayne but not sure if she loved him and feeling used as he no doubt used all those other women. His explanations to her seemed to ring true as well as to why he acted the way he did towards her. Brent was truly lost in a world of his own making because no one asked him to take on what he did, but he did thinking that he could be everything to everyone and forgetting that he was lost to himself because of this. Rayne never needed a white knight now and she has Brent to thank for that. She doesn't need Brent to be happy, but he enhances her life. It was a nice story that showed that perhaps some people that travel a road were put there because they were trying so hard to please someone else and they weren't being true to themselves. Some of the actions and growth seemed realistic. I truly liked that Rayne defended her heartache and laid some truths out there for Brent, but she was still willing to give him a second chance because she saw that he had changed – that he was being the real Brent Hamilton and not the image that others wanted.

Needed a conversation with the aunt acknowledging the pain and heartbreak at the very least, that Brent handed to Rayne all those years ago, instead of her pushing for Rayne to hook up with Brent. The stereotype that a man-ho can't be parental, made it sound like Brent had no feelings. It wasn't necessary. Seeing Brent objectified by those women seemed to open Rayne's eyes up more. I do have to say that given what we are told about Brent I wonder why no one asks if he is clean.

Now I want a story with Stacy finding out about Brandi and her husband. How can that girl be so dense? Can she be redeemed? Why not? If Brent can be redeemed then so can Stacy, and besides I want to see Brandi get what she deserves.

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## **Darynda Jones says**

I just love Liz's books!!! Fun and oh-so romantic.

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## **TINNGG says**

This one has a backstory. Lessee...

The H was apparently a creeper in earlier books in the series (no; am not hunting them down). He's the younger son of a couple who prized (or at least, the father did) his older brother's athletic prowess and indulged in his waywardness, while mostly tolerating the studious and somewhat whimsical H. Older brother got killed, so H felt it his duty to step into his shoes. In the meantime, he had this friend that he ignored publicly...

The h was one of two children to a couple of aging hippies who eschewed responsibility along with authority apparently. Kids spent their formative years bouncing from commune to commune. At some point, the preteen h managed to get herself plopped at her aunt's B&B where she spent the next 6(?) years. The H was her neighbor...and friend - at least in private. He ignored her in school. He also was too busy screwing one of the cheerleaders to attend some sort of recital and hear a poem she'd written for him. So she hand delivered it - as a paperwad, and left town. Oh, of course he was still with the cheerleader when she delivered it.

I'm hazy about this but...she was 16 at the time and still a minor, so where exactly did she go? She didn't finish HS; got a GED instead. She married some guy shortly after graduating culinary school, and is now a well-known chef. Her husband died 2 years prior while on the way to either collect their son after karate practice or some competition (confused about that one too). She's a driven workaholic and is discovering, when forced to actually spend time with the kid, that there are holes in his housebreaking.

She's staying for some ungodly reason with her aunt, next door to the H, trying not to be attracted to him, trying to keep her son from forming an attachment, etc. I can't really figure out the reason behind this. She knew he lived next door, how did she expect to avoid him, or did that never occur to her?

He, genius that he is, encourages the kid's sports obsession over her objections, flirts with her, etc.

The aunt tries her own form of manipulations to get them together.

And the kid makes me want to drag him by one ear to a room somewhere for a "come to Jesus" moment. He's rude, ill-mannered, disrespectful.

Somehow, they wrangle a HEA out of this. Somehow, the H grows a pair and tells his parents in general and his dad in particular to shove it. And I'm just wondering why he sat there, in a carriage house on his parents' property, on a degree in British Lit? Why didn't he push to become a teacher or something? Why the heck didn't he MOVE?

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