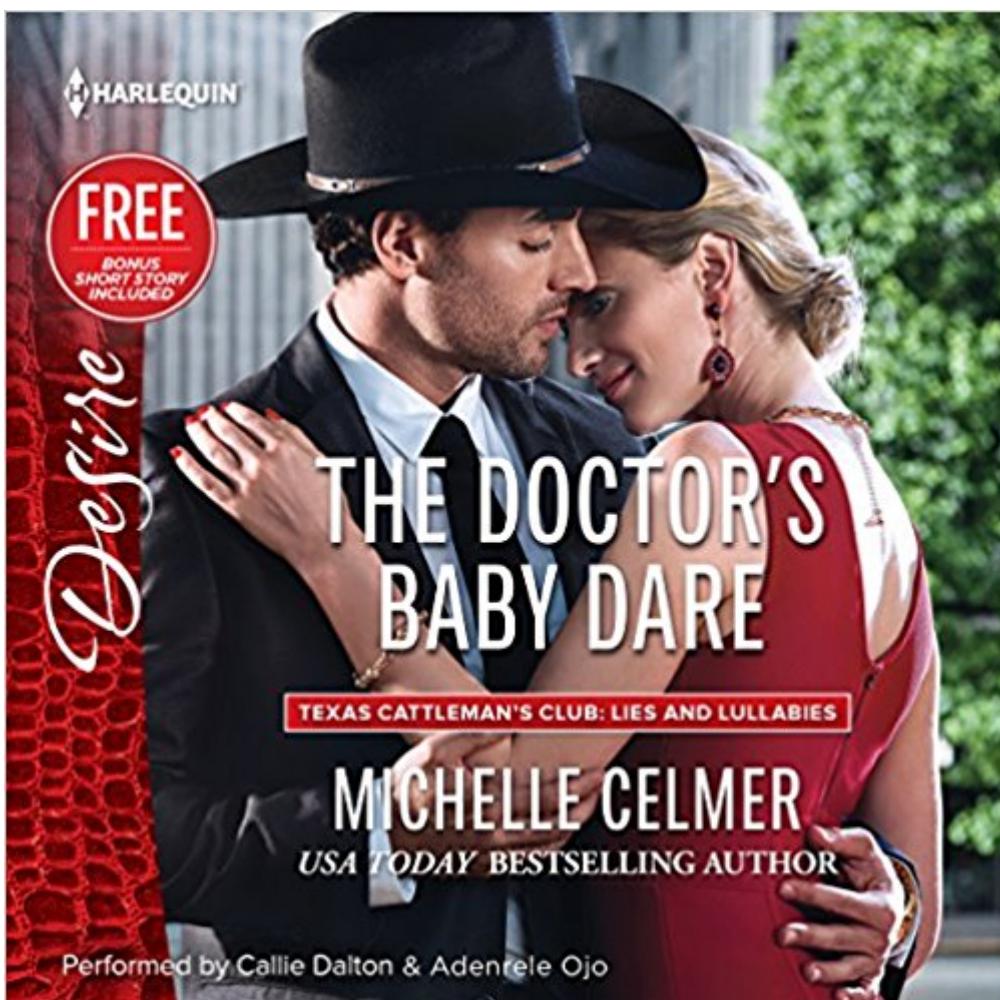


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# The Doctor's Baby Dare (Texas Cattleman's Club: Lies And Lullabies Series) (Harlequin Desire: Texas Cattleman's Club: Lies And Lullabies)



## **Synopsis**

Pediatrician Parker Reese likes to play the field and usually has women at his beck and call. Until caring for a newborn in crisis sets him on a collision course with beautiful but standoffish nurse Clare Connelly. He's willing to wager he can seduce her despite herself. But as they bond over healing the baby, the question becomes: Who's seducing whom? Soon all bets are off, but can Clare trust her heart to this player, or is it just a game?

## **Book Information**

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## **Customer Reviews**

USA Today bestseller Michelle Celmer is the author of more than twenty-five books for Harlequin and Silhouette. You can usually find her in her office with her laptop loving the fact that she gets to work in her pajamas.

Dr . Parker Reese considered himself an all-around great guy. He was affable and easygoing and had a great sense of humor. He was also honest and respectful and always willing to lend a hand. He was a rock in a crisis and a natural born leader. And despite the fact that he'd lived in Texas for only three months and knew nothing about cows, he had just been accepted into the prestigious Texas Cattleman's Club. And they didn't let just anybody in. Parker was one of those rare individuals who got along with everyone. Everyone who knew him liked and respected him. Well, almost everyone. Parker glanced across the hospital cafeteria to the table where the object of his recent fascination sat eating her lunch, phone in hand, earbuds in place to deflect any

unwanted attention. Head nurse of the new pediatric ward at Royal Memorial Hospital, Clare Connelly was smart and competent, by far one of the best nurses he'd ever worked with. She ran a tight ship on her ward, and was highly regarded by her coworkers. And for reasons that escaped Parker, she refused to like him. Lucas Wakefield, chief of surgery and fellow Texas Cattleman's Club member, set his tray down on the table and dropped into the seat across from Parker. "Mind if I join you?" Parker grinned. "I think you just did." If it wasn't for Luc, Parker wouldn't even be in Texas. The two had met at a conference when they were both medical students. At the time, Parker had been working toward a career in cosmetic plastic surgery for the rich and famous, the only medical field his father considered lucrative enough for a tycoon's son, and one that Parker knew would never elicit any real sense of pride. As was often the case, his father's own selfish demands and archaic values trumped Parker's happiness. Luc had told him to screw the old man and convinced Parker to follow his true passion. Pediatrics. And for the first time in his life Parker stood up to his father. There had been a fair amount of shouting, and threats to cut Parker off financially. His father had even threatened to disown him, but Parker told him that was a chance he was willing to take. His father finally, though reluctantly, conceded. That put an end to the threats and manipulations his father had always used to control him, and for the first time in his life, Parker felt truly independent. But the event had caused a fissure in their relationship, one that took many years to heal. Even so, by the time his father had passed away last year, they'd managed to resolve most of their differences. After a lifetime of coveting his father's approval, he'd earned it. And now, with his inheritance, Parker had the means to do anything he wanted, wherever he wanted. He knew that he needed a change, that the only reason he'd stayed in New York was to be near his ailing father. Aside from his practice, and a few good friends, there was nothing tying him there. He knew it was time to move on. But where? Enter Luc. He'd called out of the blue to offer Parker a job in the town of Royal, Texas. Dr. Mann, Royal Hospital's neonatal specialist, was retiring and they were looking for a replacement. The salary wasn't all that impressive, but Parker's inheritance left him set for life. So he sold his practice and relocated to Texas. Best move he ever made. "So, did you ever call that girl you met in the gift shop?" Luc asked, dumping a packet of sugar in his coffee. "We had dinner," Parker told him. "And... Then I took her home." "Your home or hers?" "Hers." "Did she invite you in?" They always did. And he didn't doubt that the next stop would have been her bedroom, and a couple of months ago he wouldn't have hesitated. But something about it, about all of his romantic relationships lately, felt hollow. "She invited, I declined." Luc made a noise like he'd been punched in the gut. "Dude, you're killing me. I'm married and I'm

having more sex than you are."At thirty-eight, the ever-widening age span between Parker and the twentysomethings he'd been dating was losing its luster. What he was looking for now was an equal. Someone to challenge him. He glanced over at Clare again. Someone capable of stimulating his intelligence as well as his libido.Luc followed Parker's line of sight and rolled his eyes. "Dude, let it go already. How many times have you asked her out?"Parker shrugged. He'd honestly lost track. A couple dozen at least. At first her rejection was firm, but polite;for the most part. Not so much anymore. Lately he could feel the tension when they were forced to work together. Which was often. But that was okay. It would just be that much more satisfying when she gave into him. And she would. They always did."What do you think it is about me that she finds so offensive?" he asked Luc."Could it be your inability to accept no as an answer?"Parker shot him a look. "She wants me. I guarantee it."He glanced over at her again. Her eyes were lowered, but she knew he was looking. He wasn't sure how he knew, he just did. He could feel her from across the cafeteria. In her early thirties, she was nearly a decade older than the women he typically dated, but he liked that."You really can't stand it can you?" Luc said and Parker turned to him."Can't stand what?""That she won't bend to your will."It would irritate him a lot more if he didn't know that it was temporary. But yes, he was used to women falling at his feet. And honestly, it wasn't as great as it sounded. "Clare will change her mind. I just have to catch her at the right time." "When the chloroform kicks in?"Parker laughed in spite of himself and said, "Let me tell you a story. When I was a kid, there was a girl at my school named Ruth Flanigan. And for reasons unknown to me, Ruth relentlessly picked on me." "You were bullied by a girl?" Luc laughed. "Is that some sort of ass-backward karma?" "It's funny now, but at the time it was traumatic. She would shove me in the lunch line or kick my shins on the playground. She pulled my hair and knocked me off the swings. For years I was afraid of girls." "Clearly you got over that."Had he? Sometimes he wondered. When it came to relationships, he was always the one calling the shots, the one in control. He only dated women who were substantially younger and intellectually inferior. That had to mean something."So, what happened?" Luc asked him."At some point in the second grade she either moved or switched to a different school. I don't remember exactly. I just remember coming back to school in the fall, and being relieved that she was no longer there. I didn't have any contact with her again until college. I was home for the holidays and I ran into her at the party of a mutual friend." "Did she kick your shins?" "No. She confessed that she'd had a huge crush on me, and torturing me was just her way of showing it." "Don't tell me you're going to kick Clare in the shins and pull her hair." "Of course not." Though he was sure the hair-pulling part would come later, if she was into that sort of thing. "My point is, just because

someone acts as if they don't like you, it doesn't mean it's true. ""Are you seriously suggesting that Clare is only pretending not to like you?" Parker shrugged. "It's not impossible." "You clearly have your pick of female companions. Why this infatuation with Clare?" Because she fascinated him, and not just because she was the only woman he'd ever met who was seemingly immune to his charms. Weird as it sounded, he just felt drawn to her. He wanted to crack her open, peek inside and see what made her tick. Metaphorically speaking of course. Clare had been on the hospital staff for almost a decade, but Parker had yet to find a single person who knew her on a deeply personal level. Which he thought was weird. He spent far more time with his coworkers than anyone. He liked to think of them as extended family. But then, he had always been a very social person. Clare was not. She always sat alone in the cafeteria, and kept to herself on the ward. He'd heard that she had never been married or had kids, and had lived with her old-maid aunt since college. But like the librarian who wore sexy lingerie under a conservative and drab suit, Clare had layers, and boy would he love to be the one to peel them back. He was sure he would find sexy underthings in there somewhere. He was betting that if she wanted to, Clare could teach him a thing or two about having fun. "I'd just like to get to know her." "I've never known you to fixate on a woman this way," Luc said. "I have to say it's a little disconcerting. It's like you're obsessed." He had no explanation for why he felt such a deep connection to Clare. In the past he'd avoided deep connections like the plague. Why this time did it feel so natural? He knew her work routine like the back of his hand. Knew exactly when she started her rounds, when she ate her lunch, when she worked on charts. He knew her smile, and the melody of her voice, though when she used it to address him it was always filled with irritation. But he was getting close, he could feel it. Okay, maybe he was a little obsessed. "Even if you're right," Luc said, "and she doesn't hate you as much as she lets on, everyone knows that Clare doesn't date coworkers." "There's a first time for everything," Parker told him. "And I never say never." "I think that's your biggest problem." Luc could poke fun all he wanted; Parker was confident he would wear her down. "I give it a month, probably less." With a sly grin that said he was up to something, Luc asked, "Are you willing to bet on that?" "You'll lose," Parker told him. "If you're so sure, put your money where your mouth is." It wouldn't be the first time they had entered into a friendly wager. "The usual amount?" "You've got a deal," Luc said and they fist-bumped on it. Parker's phone rumbled and he pulled it from the pocket of his lab coat. It was Vanessa, a nursing assistant from the NICU. "I'm sorry to bother you, Doctor, but we need you up here. Janey's vitals are erratic again." He cursed under his breath. Born premature and abandoned on the floor of a truck stop, Baby Janey Doe had been

brought into Emergency last month and had instantly captured the heart of everyone on the ward. And though she was getting the best medical care available, her little body just wasn't ready to heal."Be right there," he told her, then rose, telling Luc, "Gotta go.""Janey?" Luc asked, and when Parker nodded Luc shook his head grimly. "No improvement?""It doesn't make sense," he said, gathering up what was left of his lunch. "I've run every test I could think of, scoured the internet and medical journals for similar cases, but nothing fits. I'm at a loss. In the meantime her little body is shutting down. I'm worried we might lose her.""It sucks, but you can't save them all."He knew that, and he'd lost patients before. "Maybe I can't save them all," he told Luc, "but I'll never stop trying."Clare Connelly sat in the hospital cafeteria, headphones in, wishing this day would hurry up and be over. This morning when she'd gotten into her car, it had stalled several times before she finally got it running. Then it had stalled again at a red light when she was halfway there, and she'd wound up with a line of angry drivers behind her. As she'd pulled into the hospital lot the skies had opened up and dumped a deluge of rain on her as she walked to the building.Yesterday had been their monthly family dinner at her parents' horse farm an hour away, and though she had warned them that she might have to work, apparently Clare's absence had caused a stir again. Her phone had been blowing up all morning with calls from her seven siblings. When her brothers or sisters missed dinner no one freaked out. Of course, they all saw each other on a regular basis.Her three brothers and two of her sisters worked on the farm, and her other two sisters were stay-at-home mothers with four children each. In total Clare had twenty-two nieces and nephews ranging in age from newborn to twenty-six. It seemed as if every time she turned around one of her siblings was expecting another child, and her oldest niece and nephew were both newly married with first children on the way. An entirely new generation to remind Clare how much of a black sheep she really was.Being single and childless in such a traditional family made her a target for well-meaning and sometimes not-so-well-meaning relatives. No one could grasp the concept that she actually enjoyed being single, and that she wasn't deliberately going against the grain. She was just trying to be happy on her own terms. Refusing to join the family business after high school had sent relations into a tizzy; they'd tagged her as the rebel. If they had bothered to pay attention they would have known she had always dreamed of being a nurse. But from the day she graduated from nursing school they had teased her relentlessly, saying that she'd only entered the profession to snag a rich doctor and live in a mansion.Her gaze automatically sought out her new boss.An attractive, smooth-talking multimillionaire well-known for his philanthropy, Parker was every woman's dream. With his GQ model physique, rich brown hair always in need of a trim and eyes that looked green one minute

and brown the next, he was way above average on the looks scale. Way, way above. At the sight of him on his first day at the hospital, her female staff had been reduced to giggling, blushing, hormonally driven adolescent girls. He was hands down one of the finest physicians she'd ever worked for. He was trustworthy, honest, reliable, and she had never once seen him in a foul mood. He was as charming as he was funny, and his often rumpled, shabby-chic appearance only added to his appeal. And despite being an East Coaster, he had exceptionally good manners. But most important, his rapport with children made him an outstanding pediatrician. He was also a shameless, womanizing serial dater. Or so she had heard. One who had apparently set his sights on her. As if. She'd learned the hard way that emotional entanglements with a coworker, especially one in a position of power, were a prescription for disaster. It was how her no-dating-coworkers rule had come to be. And though she'd made every effort possible to ignore him, he made that nearly impossible with his relentless teasing and barely veiled innuendo. All of that unwanted attention had resulted in a mild crush. Mild crush? She nearly laughed out loud at the understatement. She could fool her family and her coworkers, but she couldn't fool her own heart. And though she would die before admitting it to another human being, she wanted him. Badly. --This text refers to the Mass Market Paperback edition.

I really enjoyed reading this book, although the title doesn't have anything to do with the book. It was funny, romantic, with a very good storyline. I recommend this book.

I like this book becuse. There all. About the storm and the people in it are friends

It's great book!!!!!!

I love the Texas Cattlemen series

Good read.

very good

Fun book. Parker showed up as one of Liam's friends in Nanny Makes Three, a popular doctor who has a reputation with the ladies. In this book he has set his sights on Clare, a woman who has

intrigued him from the moment he met her. Though she discourages his advances, he gets the feeling there is some interest. Caring for a critically ill newborn together gives him a chance to get a little closer. I really liked Parker. He always seemed to have an upbeat attitude and wasn't one of those arrogant, know-it-all doctors. I loved seeing how much he cared about baby Janey and finding out what was wrong with her. Clare's touch-me-not attitude was a challenge for him, and he loved poking at her with his pet names and flirting ways. I liked Clare too. She is just as drawn to Parker, but a bad experience when she was younger makes her keep her distance from doctors as relationships. That experience also makes it difficult for her to trust men, especially ones that she sees as players like Parker. I loved the development of their relationship. After several months of not quite adversarial interactions, they came together over their mutual concern for baby Janey. I loved seeing Parker's sensitive side come out when he was talking to her in the stairwell. Then his protectiveness when he found her stranded with car trouble, and the way he used it to his advantage. He was really funny when he took her home and kept teasing her with his outrageous actions. Out of the hospital it was harder for Clare to deny her attraction to Parker, and seeing her just go for it was awesome. Again, Parker shows great sensitivity when Clare shows evidence of some hangups, and that makes Clare soften even more toward him. As they get closer, both of them are able to open up to each other about the things in their pasts that have affected them the most, which only deepens the feelings that are starting to develop. Things are really looking good until a boneheaded action of Parker's threatens the trust that Clare has shown in him. I loved the advice that he got, and who it came from, showing that there have been some really big changes in his outlook. I also liked Clare's big moment at the end, and the changes it showed in her own life. There's also an interesting twist regarding the identity of baby Janey. Who she turns out to be also solves the riddle of what had been making her so sick. I'm looking forward to the rest of her story in a later book. I will say that the title really didn't seem to have much to do with the book. The only baby was Janey and there was no dare involving her. The only dare I saw was Parker daring Clare to take a chance on them.

I really enjoyed this book. The writing was good. The only problem for people who have been reading the Texas Cattlemen series is that the author used different names for the previous book's male and his twin brother who is the lead male in the next book. Liam because Logan in this book and Kyle became Seth in this book. Somebody did a terrible job of editing this series.

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