

# Media Kit for California Homecoming by Casey Dawes

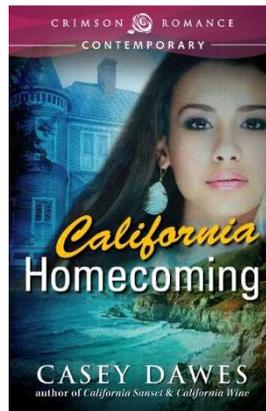
**Title:** California Homecoming

**Author:** Casey Dawes

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**Genre:** Contemporary Romance



## ***Book Blurb***

Pregnant and alone, Sarah Ladina wants to regain her independence and do what's best for her soon-to-be-born baby, but buying a run-down Victorian for an inn wasn't her brightest idea. An inability to cook or fix a leaky faucet will make the job even harder. When a friendly golden retriever, disabled vet, and potential cook show up on the first day, she knows her life is going to get a lot more complicated.

After returning from duty in the Middle East wounded in both body and spirit, Hunter Evans is in search of employment and a home. Finding a job has been tough and housing doesn't come cheap in Costanoa, the town that he loves most on the California Coast. His prosthetic leg allows him to run, but keeps him from his childhood passion, surfing.

Ghosts from their pasts haunt them. Sarah's Victorian is Hunter's childhood home. A dusty box of letters hidden in a closet hint of a long-ago affair. When her ex tries to get back into her life and her doctor orders modified bed rest, Sarah wonders if she'll ever be able to stand on her own. With a low-level job and a transient motel for a home, Hunter isn't sure life is worth living.

Spring is coming in Costanoa and love is in the air. With the help of good friends, Sarah and Hunter may be able to get beyond the painful past and complicated present to find the love and respect they want and deserve.

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### **Excerpt**

Sarah Ladina turned the key and pushed open the oak door, her pulse quickening in anticipation. Stale smells of forgotten perfumes and long ago dinners wafted from the entrance hall. She crossed the threshold, shut the door behind her, and leaned against it.

*Mine. This soon-to-be-inn is all mine.*

She rubbed her hand on her stomach. *Ours.*

Cobwebs huddled in the high corners of the paneled entry and a screw sticking from the staircase newel told of a missing cap. Layers of dust added texture to the floor.

The work was also going to be all hers.

Her shoulders sank. What had she been thinking?

“If you want a job done right, do it yourself.” Other people aren’t dependable.

A bark from outside made her drop her bag of cleaning supplies, snacks, and tools on the floor. Cautiously, she opened the door.

A golden retriever sat on the porch, staring up at her, dark eyes pleading entry. The dog barked again, stood, nosed the door open, and walked in. He...or she...made a beeline for the front sitting room, circled, and laid down.

*Great. A dog who thinks it owns the place.*

Keeping a wide berth, she walked toward the dog. “Shoo,” she said. “Go home.”

The dog looked up at her, rolled over, and beat its tail against the floor.

*Definitely a girl dog.*

“Go! Get out of here!” Sarah raised her voice. She did not need anything else to take care of.

The dog whined and thumped her tail harder.

Tires crunched the driveway gravel.

Sarah groaned, stomped to the door, and opened it wide.

The dog got off the floor, followed her, and sat down crowded close to her leg.

The heat of the retriever’s strong body against Sarah’s leg gave her courage, ready to face whoever was coming to call. Maybe I do need a dog. A single woman—correction: a single pregnant woman—might be at risk living alone.

She glared at the newcomer’s car, a black Jeep polished to a gleaming shine.

A tall man with broad shoulders emerged from the Jeep. His dark hair was clipped short and he stood with the rigid carriage of a soldier, an odd contrast to the banana slug T-shirt and shorts he wore. His right leg ended in a prosthetic below the knee.

*How sad.*

“Hello,” he said, his deep voice easily carrying across the distance between them. “Nice dog,” he added and walked toward her.

A rumble from the dog’s throat made her put her hand on its head. The soldier wasn’t a threat.

Yet.

The man reached out his hand. Automatically, she took it. “I’m Hunter Evans.”

Her cold hand was engulfed by his strong warmth.

“I’m Sarah.” She withdrew her hand. “What can I do for you?”

“I understand you just bought this place.”

She nodded. “Today.”

“Will you sell it to me?”

She almost laughed out loud. Is he serious? “No.” She stepped back to close the door. The dog stood.

Hunter didn’t move. “I’d really like to buy it.”

“It’s not for sale any more. I bought it.”

His green eyes glittered with determination. “I know, but you haven’t had time to get attached to it yet. I’ll give you ten percent more than you paid.”

Now she was getting irritated. Why couldn’t he accept “no” to mean “no” and move on?

Typical male. “Why do you want it so badly?”

His lips went to a thin line. “My family used to own this house. I spent some of my best years here. After spending some time in the war...” He gestured to his leg. “I was hoping to return to happier times.”

Her irritation fled. “I’m sorry, I really am, but no.” She wouldn’t give up her baby’s future for anyone, even a vet. “I wish you well, but this house is not for sale. I’m going to make it into an inn.”

“Interesting.” He took a piece of paper from his pocket and scribbled on it. “In case you change your mind.” He handed her the paper.

He gave her a mock salute, climbed into the Jeep, and drove off.

Sarah patted the dog, anticipation and regret tingling her nerves. Even with a bum leg, Hunter Evans exuded testosterone. He was the kind of man who could take the place of Rhett Butler, swooping up a reluctant Scarlett, and ascending the stairs to bed.



## **Author Bio**

Casey Dawes has lived a varied life--some by choice, some by circumstance. Her master's degree in theater didn't prepare her for anything practical, so she's been a teacher, stage hand, secretary, database guru, manager in Corporate America, business coach, and writer.

With a few marriages, two sons, and three step-children, her personal life was a challenge when she met and married her current husband who has proved to be the love of her life. They reside in Montana where she quilts, writes, and coaches on the banks of the Clark Fork River. The couple has been adopted by two gently used cats.

## **Links**

**Website/Blog:** [www.stories-about-love.com](http://www.stories-about-love.com)

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