



The Outlaw Hearts

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The Missouri-bound train that is carrying Jenny Leigh Colter to her new schoolmistress job is forced to stop in an Ozark valley by the notorious Luke Morgan, a handsome outlaw who tempts Jenny with promises of lawless passion.

The Outlaw Hearts Details

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From Reader Review The Outlaw Hearts for online ebook

Ladyvixen says

Quoique l'histoire soit très bien écrite et intéressant, j'ai pas réussi à la trouver excellente... Bien sans plus.

Mercedes Keyes says

Gotta read it again, it was a long time ago!

Misfit says

(3.5 stars)

1870. Jenny Carter has been through hell – left for dead with the rest of her family brutally murdered and their Georgia plantation burned to the ground. Crippled for life, tortured by nightmares and virtually penniless and with no prospects for a husband on the horizon, Jenny takes a position as teacher in the remote Missouri town of Tumbling Creek. Along the way to her new home, her train is stopped and robbed by the notorious Morgan Brothers gang and Jenny accidentally gets a look at the face of one of the robbers and she's in for quite a surprise when she arrives in Tumbling Creek and comes face to face with that robber – Luke Morgan. Luke tells her she's wasting her time turning him in, with his huge family he's got alibis aplenty, but he's still a bit worried and wonders if it wouldn't hurt getting her to marry him as a wife can't testify against her husband (yes, my eyes were rolling at this one).

Neither here nor there, this is a romance so you know there's this undeniable attraction between the two, and Luke can't help lusting after Jenny despite her plain appearance and unattractive limp from her injury as he sees the *beautiful* woman on the inside. Luke has his own emotional baggage from the past and Jenny turns out to be just the woman to heal it and set him back on the straight path in life. The plot takes many twists and turns as our pair battle the town gossips, the baddies (and they are sooooo bad indeed) and Jenny's suppressed memories of what really happened to her family.

Is this not the most awful cover ever?

Yes, I know it sounds like the usual romance stuff, but there's a few twists in this that bring it up a notch or two. I really liked having a plainer heroine, as well as a hero who cares more about what's on the inside. I liked the interactions with Luke's large family and most especially the way Jenny was able to heal the emotional wounds of Luke's two children and in the process perhaps heal her own as well. There's quite a nail-biting finish topped off with a very enigmatic HEA that will leave you wondering what really happened. Despite the appearance of the covers (thank gawd I didn't get cover #2), the sex scenes are rather few and far between, although when you do get them the purple prose is plentiful and fairly standard for 80's romances. All in all a quick, enjoyable read and the only quibbles I had was how the entire town (minister, sheriff et al) could look the other way and accept a notorious band of robbers into the bosom of the community and for that I'm knocking off a half star – 3.5/5 stars rounded up to four.

Christy Stewart says

I can't see the forest for the trees.

The forest is the plot and the trees are overly dramatic prose and racist terms.

My lilly-white-new-age ass can't take it, man.

Holly says

After surviving a truly horrific attack in her home after the Civil War, Miss Jenny Colter takes a teaching position in the small yet closeknit town of Tumbling Creek, Missouri. She's with her two Negro servants, Moses and Delcine, when the train she is on is held up by the infamous Morgan gang. Two of the brothers, Raiford and Luke are going through the passengers, stealing their belongings, when Jenny is overcome by the violence that Luke and Raiford use in order to subdue the conductor, and she takes off into the woods with Luke hot on her trail. After a brief tussle and a few gropes, he reluctantly lets her go, instantly smitten by her brave defiance of him, but afterwards he realizes to his horror that his bandana had slipped from his face during their brief skirmish and Jenny had gotten a good look at his face. Luckily for him, her destination of Tumbling Creek happens to be the Morgan brother's hometown and surrounded by his kin, he knows she will be unable to bring him to justice, but just in case, he devises a bunch of ways to keep her quiet, least of which, stealing into her hotel room to impart a friendly warning. He tells himself he is just keeping an eye on her while he is ruthlessly surrounding her within the friendly embrace of his family but Jenny has touched the deepest recesses of his lonely heart and for her, he is willing to give up his life of crime. He hopes to turn over a new leaf and go into politics and while on the campaign trail, Jenny sees a horrible ghost from her past and it's up to Luke and his two children to help save his beloved outlaw heart.

This book starts off with us, the reader, being chosen to bear witness to the undying love that our hero and heroine hold for each other that still resonates within the Ozark Mountains. It's a very private moment that we are intruding upon, but if I had stumbled upon two spirits getting it on before me, I would have stared, too. Our guide in this book, known as the Old-Timer, gifts us with this story through his eyes.

My first impression: Not as inflammatory as Huck Finn, but I still felt uncomfortable reading Moses and Delcine talk to each other. Not only that, I had to slow down my reading to try and figure out what the heck they were saying to each other. The "N" word is sprinkled about as well.

Jenny is a plain, freckled young woman who lost all her family during the war and after it. She's crippled and thinks noone could want her, which is just as well because after what she witnessed, she doesn't particularly want to be with a man. Enter Luke. No bodice of hers is safe from his demanding lust and though he starts off as a typical bodice ripping alpha male, complete with the obligatory scene of the bodice ripping male slapping his heroine in the face, (done to calm down her hysterics) he soon becomes a very sweet, gallant and caring hero, notwithstanding the whole threatening her life at knifepoint bit. I really liked him. True, he starts off a little grabby and a little rough with her, but he soon realises he needs to employ a much softer touch with his Jennilee, soon to be his Outlaw Heart.

This book has a gentle pace and I can easily see people dropping out before the finish line, but don't do that. This is a really lovely story and has an interesting look into the South and the sprawling Old West post Civil War. The infamous outlaws from the time era that this book encompasses (1870-1875) receive a few honorable mentions and I thought that was fun. It also gives us several glimpses into the savagery committed from both sides of the war though this book is decidedly skewed from the South's perspective, which was not so fun. Jenny sings a Southern song during a party and after I read the words from the song, all I have to say is wow. Bitter much?

There is plenty of romance between Luke and Jenny, though a lot of screen time is shared with the quirky characters from the town of Tumbling Creek, plus Luke's family and his two children and the children that Jenny teaches. Also, this book goes off on a couple of different tangents. Luke reminiscing about his part in the infamous Lawrence Massacre in Lawrence, Kansas and Jenny, when she finally chooses to tell her story about the truly horrific day she lost her family. That story was **BAD**. Truly horrific. Though it makes me wonder how the Old-Timer knew that story. *shrug*

All in all, this was a very lovely story. Luke and Jenny were a great couple, but the use of the Old-Timer as the storyteller kind of gave me a standoffish feeling. It was as if I was reading this story through a filter. Eh. Just a minor complaint. 4.5 stars.

Debbie says

I love this book! Rebecca Brandewyne's earlier books are a little to brutal "bodice ripper" for me. This one is wonderful. The heroine is a wounded, brutalized young woman fleeing the destruction of her family after the Civil War. She arrives in a small Missouri town to become the new school teacher. Along the way she crosses paths with the Morgans, a group of outlaw brothers (who just happen to live in town). Jenny finds herself attracted to the handsome Luke Morgan as well as two his two sad, lost children left heart-broken at the loss of their mother. The story follows Jenny and Luke as they help each other heal from their pasts and move forward into a future together.

Brandewyne offers a lot of interesting historical detail about the horrific and bloody skirmishes that took place along the Missouri/Kansas border during the Civil War. She also explores the damage war does to soldiers' psyches and the difficulty returning to a normal life after seeing and participating in such soul-crushing bloodthirsty and ruthless savagery.

If you're a fan of historical fiction I think you'll enjoy this. Yes, it glosses over the cruelty and degradation of slavery but it does offer an interesting glimpse into the viewpoint of Southerners who were not slave-owners and supported the Confederacy.

Regan Walker says

Post Civil War Story of Love's Power to Heal

Set in Missouri in the years following the Civil War, beginning in 1870, this is the story of two people wounded in both spirit and body. Jenny Leigh Colter was a plain girl in a family of handsome men and beautiful women. It was a family she loved. But a brutal Yankee colonel took her sisters from her and the

war took her brothers. Without funds and only her two former servants for companions, she answers an ad for a schoolteacher needed in the Ozarks.

On the way to her new position, the Morgan gang, former Confederate heroes who now make their as outlaws, robs Jenny's train. However, one of them, Luke Morgan, returns all the money they took from those who served the South. Luke notices Jenny right away and her plainness does not repel him having been married to an unfaithful beauty, but he knows she has seen his face and can report him to the authorities. When he discovers she is the new teacher in town, he considers marrying her to prevent her testifying against him.

These two wounded souls help each other. It's an endearing romance and a story of healing and hope. There are some great secondary characters, too, but be aware, the flashbacks to what happened in the war are vivid and brutal.
