



The Handsome Road

Gwen Bristow

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The Handsome Road Gwen Bristow A WORLD TURNED UPSIDE DOWN!

The Old South was a world of extremes. Ann Sheramy Larne, a hoop-skirted belle, lived among stately mansions and dozens of Negro Servants. Corrie May Upjohn was "po' white trash," living in slavelike squalor down on the docks.

The Civil War transformed their world.

For Ann, the war meant disaster-the end of everything she had known. But for Corrie May, it was a beginning-a chance to build an exciting new life on the ashes of the old.

The Handsome Road Details

Date : Published January 1st 1974 by Pocket (first published 1938)

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Author : Gwen Bristow

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From Reader Review The Handsome Road for online ebook

Tweety says

How is it I enjoyed this so much even when I disliked each character by turns?

Bree (AnotherLookBook) says

A historical novel about two women whose lives are changed by the American Civil War, and whose worlds repeatedly intersect, often in unexpected ways. 1949.

Full review (and recommendations of other little-known books!) at Another look book

A high-quality historical fiction that afforded me some nice escapism during the final parts of a very cold winter. I especially appreciated being exposed--for basically the first time--to the plights of the poor, white laboring class during the Civil War-era South. The idea that a whole class of people (arguably) had it worse than slaves was quite eye-opening. A great, engaging story! I also liked that the two women didn't turn all chummy towards each other; it was more like they were nemeses. Made things much more interesting.

LemonLinda says

The second book of this trilogy is set in Louisiana along River Road immediately before, during and after the Civil War. It juxtaposes plantation life with that of the "poor white trash". Life at Ardeith Plantation is glamorous and extravagant until the war takes a toll and will only endure with determination and acceptance that life has now changed. The lives on the other side of town take on a prominence never dreamed of only to be dashed, but yet with the changes made after the war there is a hope of pulling oneself out of the gutter with sheer force of will!

His is another fun and quick read that I had previously read as a young teen. Reading it again was also fun, but this time rather than be swept away by the romance and nostalgia of the era, I was more aware and more interested in the subtle implications of the opposing way of life lived at Ardeith Plantation and in Rattletrap Square and how the war changed life for both.

Trudy says

This was the 2nd book in the trilogy and takes place up to and after the civil war. It is from the point of view of Corrie Mae, a "white trash" girl and Anne Larne, a plantation aristocrat and the difference in their living circumstances.

There is a line in the book:

"Nigger pick de cotton, nigger tote de load,

Nigger build de levell foh de ribber to smash,
Nigger nebber walk up de handsome road,
But I radder be a nigger dan po' white trash!"

This sums up the book. The story focuses on the difference between poor white people and wealthy plantation owners and the way the negroes themselves treated the poor whites. Before the war the negroes were taken care of everything was provided for them and after the war it was a level playing field for the poor whites and the free slaves. The book doesn't downplay any of the three distinct roles of rich white, poor white, field slaves or house slaves but rather looks at it from their point of view with clarity and sympathy for each group with developing characters.

Mary says

The Handome Road brings some of the characters from Deep Summer further along in history. Telling the story of the causes of the civil war from various viewpoints makes it easier to understand why the South defended slavery. The plantation owners needed the slaves and the poor whites could never rise from poverty because who would pay them to work when slaves would work for nothing? That meant they had nothing to fight for. Only the slaves had anything to gain and even they were sometimes living better than they would have on their own. The fictional characters gave so much life to the history that these books in the plantation trilogy were hard to put down.

Lana Hasper says

A unique perspective on the Civil War South featuring the disdain between the rich plantation slave-owners and the poor non-slave/land-owner whites. Corrie May Upjohn (and Gwen Bistow, for that matter for 1938) is quite ahead of her time in her refutation of The Lost Cause.

Interestingly, I googled "White Trash" and the term first came into use in the 1830's as a perjorative used by house slaves against poor whites. Not only does Corrie May have a beef with the rich land owners, but also with the house slaves with whom she comes in contact.

Emma says

As a stand alone, this would have been 4 stars, but the context of the trilogy enriches the story for me. Gone with the Wind, set in the same time period, focused on the rise and fall of the plantation families, whereas this book compares and contrasts a Southern Belle and a young woman who is 'po' white trash'. Other books have focused on slavery and in this book we see that the poor white workers of the region and period were worth much less. I learned a lot of history from this story including the existence of breeding houses, where black infants were sold into slavery; also the rise of the carpetbaggers. Am looking forward to completing the trilogy soon and then working my way through Gwen Bristow's other novels.

Glen Stott says

This is the second book in the Plantation Series. I have read and reviewed the first book, "Deep Summer," and am currently reading the third, "This Side of Glory." I would say these are "chick" books and that is not just because her main, strongest characters are women. I actually like strong women characters. I judge these books that way because of the detail given to description, especially to the clothing women wear. An outfit can take more than a page. This is also true for furnishings, food, parties, etc. etc. For me, a couple of lines to give basics and color are plenty.

This book takes the story through the Civil War. In Louisiana, black people were an important part of the culture. In Bristow's novels, before the war, blacks were happy, self-fulfilled slaves and after the war they appear as happy, paid servants or angry derelicts wanting free stuff. In "Handsome Road" the Klu Klux Klan is portrayed as white heroes protecting the plantation owners from northern carpetbaggers and violent blacks. While the KKK did play that role, the darker, violent aspects did not make it to this book. I suppose that having been born in 1903 in the South Carolina, Bristow may have been raised with a rather narrow view of the southern culture and blacks. In any case, that narrow portrayal of the racial situation during the time of the novels has a serious impact on the reality of the stories.

In "Handsome Road" the main characters are Ann Larne, married to Denis Larne a rich plantation owner and Corri May Upjohn, who is poor white trash. Being poor white trash is the worst thing. Even field slaves sing a little ditty proclaiming how happy they are to be slaves instead of poor white trash. The fortunes of the heroines reverse a couple of times, and we see each character and her reaction to being rich and poor.

In spite of the negatives, the book has an interesting story with believable characters.

Started 2018.07.12 - finished 2018.07.19

Misfit says

This book takes the story of the Larne, Sheramy and UpJohn families through the civil war and it's aftermath. The author provides a very realistic portrayal of the upper class Larnes and Sheramys and the poor UpJohns, the latter having to struggle for work as the upper class had the slave labor to do most of the work for "free". Also, the turnaround of the cultures in the aftermath of the civil war, the Larnes and Sheramys having to struggle to survive and keep their plantations while Corrie May was able to catch a coattail of a carpet bagger and his money.

Mela says

What a great novel! This is why I love a historical fiction. This is a perfect example of this genre.

Let's be more specific.

Firstly, the book is full of historical information. Not only about facts like battles, political events and so on, but first of all about how the people lived then, what they ate, what they wore, how the world around them looked like. And, as it is always in Bristow books, I was feeling as I would have lived in this world. I

want to stress that it isn't a simple task. A writer has to know how to give a reader many specific information needed to understand a described world but in a way that wouldn't overload a reader, wouldn't make him bored. This is way I love Bristow historical novel.

Secondly, the fictional stories about two women are magnificent. They, these women are real, they are "products of those times". Of course I don't know any man from those times, it is obvious ;-) But I think that the characters in this books are so close to the truth as they could be.

Ann or Corrie May are so full of faults and prejudice. But as I said they are real. They (and other characters) live and struggle. One of the most amazing parts of the story is that their paths meet a few times and you think that you know how their relationship end up but (view spoiler)

Nonetheless, we see that despite that Ann and Corrie May are so different at a very basic level they are the same. Through their struggle during the war and for the first years after the war we see they fight for the same thing.

"You got trouble and I got trouble", said Corrie May, "and I ain't concerned about whether we deserve it. I'm concerned about whether I myself personally can stand it."

Thirdly, the book is almost a philosophical and psychological study. Bristow showed us a reality of the war and its consequences (for humans, an economy, the civilisation and the future of the nation). I was struck so many times that I can't tell how many times it was. Again, perhaps a reader would think it is too sad, too pessimistic but it isn't. You have to take a lesson from this story, from the history. We can have a happy life and a great society if we only want because human has potential for good or evil. It depends of circumstances. So, we just have to not allow other people to make a wrong circumstances (for example wars).

but the war was over and you had to riot in foolishness lest you remember you were dancing over a milion graves."

"I reckon a lot of things happen that we don't know anything about and yet it seems like they're our fault just the same."

How little, after all, one knew about the people one knew best.

Most of psychological truth is between the lines, through the decisions and actions of the characters. There is about freedom, a barrier between poor and rich, a reward (or lack of) for goodness and honesty, coincidence and bad luck.

I think I could write and write. **The more I think about it the more wonderful seems to me this book.**

So, if you want something more from a historical fiction I don't know what it could be.

Carla Turcotte says

4.5 stars. The Handsome Road is the second book of Gwen Bristow's Plantation Trilogy and I actually like this one better than the first book. The time period is pre- to post-civil war and it continues the story of the

Larne/Sheridan family, now expanded into walks of life other than the big plantation dwellers. Corrie May Upjohn's life differs vastly from that of Anne Larne. I love the history, detail, and complex characters. I'm looking forward to reading the final book in the trilogy soon.

Janetkc7wvy says

This is the second in a Trilogy. The first one "Deep Summer" and the last "This Side of Glory" Being set in the Civil War of course I had to read it.

The forward to the book starts out "On the 14th of March, 1794, Eli Whitney patented his cotton-gin. It was one of the greatest disasters that ever fell on the United States." (a little different than you learn in school). He goes on to explain "The cotton-gin was bound to come sometime. Too many people were looking for it. But if it had been delayed fifty years, almost certainly by that time American slavery would have ended; the lords of cotton would have built their fortunes with laborers who worked for wages, and there would have been no Civil War. In the 1790's most Americans thought slavery was on its way out."

The forward was as interesting as the book.

nettebuecherkiste says

Louisiana Mitte des 19. Jahrhunderts. Die 14-jährige Corrie May Upjohn gehört zu den "armen Weißen" des Landes, denen es oft schlechter geht als beispielsweise den Haussklaven der reichen Plantagenbesitzer. Doch sie hat den Ehrgeiz, etwas zu erreichen in ihrem Leben. Anne Sheramy hingegen ist eine Tochter des Südstaatenadels und eine Nachfahrin der Sheramys aus "Tiefer Süden", ebenso wie ihr Freund Denis Larne. Auch Corrie May ist entfernt mit diesen verwandt, was jedoch keiner ahnt, auch wenn ihr ein entsprechendes Gerücht bekannt ist. Sie schafft es, eine Anstellung bei Anne zu ergattern. Zu sehen, in welcher Pracht die Sheramys und die Larnes leben, verbittert sie in zunehmendem Maße. Und dann droht auch noch der Bürgerkrieg...

Im zweiten Teil ihrer Louisiana-Trilogie vermittelt Gwen Bristow uns den krassen Gegensatz zwischen Arm und Reich in den Südstaaten der Vereinigten Staaten zur Zeit des Bürgerkriegs. Im Gegensatz zu den meisten Geschichten über die alten Südstaaten steht hier jedoch nicht der Sklavenkonflikt im Vordergrund, sondern die furchtbaren Lebensbedingungen der zwar freien, doch häufig im Elend lebenden armen Weißen. Eine Perspektive, die ich sehr interessant fand, insbesondere, inwiefern auch diese Menschen indirekt unter der Sklaverei zu leiden hatten. Wie schon im ersten Teil ist Gwen Bristows Erzählstil mitreißend und lebhaft, ihre Charaktere haben Tiefgang und der Leser fühlt sich direkt nach Louisiana versetzt. Die Hauptfigur, Corrie May, ist zunächst ein durchweg anständiges, sympathisches 14-jähriges Mädchen, doch in ihrem Ehrgeiz trifft sie ein ums andere Mal die falsche Entscheidung, was den Leser schier verzweifeln lässt. Auf der Seite der Plantagenbesitzer scheint Anne Sheramy eine unbekümmerte, naive und oberflächliche Person zu sein, doch auch sie muss einiges durchleben und ihr Potenzial wird dabei oft verkannt. Folgenden Satz fand ich beispielsweise sehr weise: "... sanft ist die Straße, über die ich gewandert bin - mir fehlt ein Maßstab; von den Gipfeln und den Abgründen der Wirklichkeit weiß ich nichts." (Seite 75)

Mehr als im ersten Teil der Trilogie geht es in diesem Roman um Armut und Ungerechtigkeit. Er liefert ein sehr wirklichkeitsnahes Porträt der Südstaaten zu Zeiten des Bürgerkrieges. Alle Daumen hoch für dieses

lesenswerte, weise Buch! Ich wünsche mir, dass die Klassiker von Gwen Bristow wieder mehr gelesen werden, sie sind es wert.

Kate Quinn says

Handsome Road is the second in Gwen Bristow's Plantation Trilogy, picking up several generations down the line with two very different women in the American Civil War. Ann is the pampered young wife of a Louisiana planter; Corrie May is a dockyard cousin who fights for survival in a society where she is viewed as white trash. The Civil War up-ends most of that, and both girls endure parallel experiences of loss, luxury, poverty, and motherhood. There is no real hero in this book, just two very different women gritting it out. Ann keeps her plantation together through all costs to herself, and Corrie May's snatch at luxury ends her poorer than ever - though her son offers a chance at redemption that Ann will never have. This is a very different Old South from the one in Gone With The Wind.

Shin Mon Thway says

The second book of "Plantation trilogy" by Gwen Bristow .. The atrocities and the cruelty of American civil war .. and the the lives of two women who overshadow one another .. this is a very interesting read rich in culture, romance and history. Again, I admire southern woman and adore this book. Well deserved 4 stars ..
♥?♥?♥?
