



A Bargain Struck

Liz Harris

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Widower Connor Maguire advertises for a wife to raise his young daughter, Bridget, work the homestead and bear him a son.

Ellen O'Sullivan longs for a home, a husband and a family. On paper, she is everything Connor needs in a wife. However, it soon becomes clear that Ellen has not been entirely truthful.

Will Connor be able to overlook Ellen's dishonesty and keep to his side of the bargain? Or will Bridget's resentment, the attentions of the beautiful Miss Quinn, and the arrival of an unwelcome visitor, combine to prevent the couple from starting anew.

As their personal feelings blur the boundaries of their deal, they begin to wonder if a bargain struck makes a marriage worth keeping.

Set in Wyoming in 1887, a story of a man and a woman brought together through need, not love ...

A Bargain Struck Details

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Author : Liz Harris

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From Reader Review A Bargain Struck for online ebook

Jodie Portugal says

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=84kpb...>

Dianne says

This was a good book, there were elements of it I didn't, but those improved as the story continued. In a way I understood some of Connor's feelings, however I thought throughout the first half of the book he treated Ellen dreadfully. I was pleased when I witnessed an improvement. I thought Ellen was far too forgiving especially about the wedding. I love books with children in the plot and read a lot of them. Never have I disliked a child character as much as I did Bridget. She was despicable and very well written, I say this because of the way I reacted to her behaviour. Thankfully she too improved in the end.

I recommend this book, but if you are like me, you will more than likely feel frustration because of the attitude and actions of some of the characters. I was ready to quit at one point in the story, but I am glad I persevered.

Sandi *~The Pirate Wench~* says

Setting: 1800s Wyoming Territory

3 1/2 Stars

Steam Factor: Mild

Desperate for a home to call her own, widow Ellen O'Sullivan answers an advertisement from a widower Connor Maguire who is looking for a wife to help raise his young daughter Bridget, as well to help him with his sprawling Wyoming homestead. Although Ellen and Connor have only corresponded by letter Ellen appears to Connor all that he needs. When they finally meet face to face, it's clear that Ellen has withheld some more personal details about her past as well as her appearance. So now that she is here what is Connor to do? Should he honour their agreement?

So then it becomes a business agreement...but will it crumble under the pressures of reality, or the resentment of his daughter as well as the interference of the small western town? Or could this evolve into something much deeper and lasting? This is the story of two total strangers, burdened by the scars of the past and try to make a new life together in the wilds of the American West. A unique story with great attention to historical detail which I always love in my historical romances. The author did a great job of understanding her characters, and the bond between Ellen and Connor that was established was wholly authentic as well as an insight to a bygone time period.

Bookread2day says

This is truly a lovely story. It will take readers back to 1887. You will be able to picture the scenery, water, horses with wagons and the dress code.

Widower Connor Maguire advertised for a wife to help him raise his eight year old daughter. Connor brings

home his new wife Ellen O'Sullivan. Ellen wants to know why Connor did not advertise for a housekeeper to look after the home and his daughter. Connor tells Ellen that a man has neds and he wants a son to take over him just like Connor took over from his Pa.

Connor introduced Bridget his daughter to Ellen his new wife. Bridget raised her eyes with a hostile expression wrinkling her nose in disgust at Ellen. Then Bridget asked Ellen why are you so ugly.?

Ellen tells Bridget what happened to her face.

Connor finds out that Ellen has not been entirely truthful about something. Will Connor be able to over look Ellen's dishonesty?.

Will a bargain struck make a marriage worth keeping?. I have lots of book reviews on ireadnovels.wordpress.com

Lucinda says

In a way, reading this book slightly reminded me of the time I watched the movie Oklahoma!, which is an old musical film about people living in the late 1800s/early 1900s America, particularly in the southern regions, hence the title.

The characters in this book lived in a very small, tight-knit community, the sort of small place where everyone knows everybody else's business. Connor Maguire, the main male character of the book owns a farm deep in the Wyoming countryside, and has a young daughter, Bridget. He is also a widower who is still mourning the death of his wife and Bridget's mother.

Ellen O'Sullivan, the other main character, is also a widow, and bears the scar of an accident that claimed her late husband's life. The two characters come together as Connor needs someone to raise his daughter and help him run his farm, or homestead as the way it is described in the book.

There are also other characters in the book such as Oonagh Quinn, who becomes friends with Ellen, and Connor's brother Niall, who shakes the farm up when he comes to stay.

Although I've read a few books that are set in the 1800s, I haven't read anything set deep out in the countryside of America, particularly somewhere that sounds like it could be the setting of an old Western movie. The subplot involving Connor's daughter Bridget was also intriguing; she and Ellen don't get on at first and she is quite rude to Ellen regarding her scar, but I can certainly understand why a recently bereaved child would act that way towards a strange woman, and nowadays similar situations arise regarding children and their step-parents, so I applaud the author for highlighting an issue that still goes on in modern society.

I was intrigued as to how people led their lives back then, especially people who didn't live in big cities, and small communities like the one that the book is set in. I found Connor and Ellen pretty likeable characters. I'm still not able to get my head around the fact that people could just advertise for wives in those days and women willingly married people they don't know. However, as mentioned above it was very interesting to learn about how things worked in that part of America in those times and how simple were the lives that people led.

I would read more books like this as it seems like an interesting sub-genre to write about.

Beadyjan says

I have to be honest - when I read the blurb for this new Choc-lit title by Liz Harris - author of the outstanding romance *The Road Back* I hummed and ahhed, wondering why, when choc-lit's romances are usually so innovative and inventive, they'd bring out a book in the UK on a theme which could be described as done to death (and often quite badly by the often slightly tacky American romance houses) but I worried needlessly, from the first few pages it becomes obvious that the talent of this author and the quiriness of this particular story lift it acres above the mass paperback market this kind of story is often aimed at.

OK I'd better tell you a bit about it hadn't I? Set in the American West in the late 19th century when women had few options apart from staying with and caring for families, often treated little better than a slave, or marriage, also frequently not a bed of roses. Take a woman, Ellen, recently widowed and not considering herself in a position to be in any way picky, with no caring family and no home or even a job to fall back on and those limited choices become almost non-existent, so when she reads an advert from a widowed homesteader, writes to him and gets accepted by him as a potential bride, we can forgive her for being somewhat reticent to reveal in advance her shortcomings.

Stepping off the train in Wyoming she is relieved that her "mail order" husband Connor, is prepared to overlook her flaws and go ahead with this unconventional pairing and even seems kindly and easy on the eye. Thus she finds herself quickly Mrs Maguire, wife in name and in bed to a man keen to father a son and in need of a hard working woman to keep house and care for his truculent and reluctant 8 year old daughter Bridget who finds it impossible to accept this newcomer, seemingly intent on replacing her late mother whom she still misses so much its turned her into a bitter and angry young woman..

Ellen throws herself into her new life, grateful for his willingness to marry her and provide her with a home.

We are drawn into the life on a homestead and in a small Wyoming town, keen to see whether their bargain will last and if they will manage to weather the inevitable storms. Ellen faces feelings of envy towards the fashionable and beautiful Oonagh whom she believes Connor should have married, and when Oonagh extends a hand of friendship to Ellen she is happy to comply, not having many friends she can talk to. When Connors estranged brother arrives on the scene this causes further friction in the household.

I felt as though I was living there with them as a fly on the wall, its so very descriptive and it really brought home how limited choices were, especially for women and how prejudice was rife and if you were the brunt of peoples scorn or criticism it was just easier to put up with it rather than fight back and risk an already tenuous position.

My only criticism is that I found it a little hard to accept the young Bridget's appalling behaviour towards her new step mum would be tolerated for so long but otherwise its an absorbing and enjoyable historical romance which will carry you away to an unfamiliar place and time whilst entertaining you and keeping you wanting to know what happens to Ellen, Connor and Bridget.

Shelly says

I cried, I laughed, I couldn't put this down. Set in 1880's Wyoming, the premise of this story is one that I think is much more common than we'd like to admit - marriages created on the basis of need versus love. Connor Maquire is a recent widow with an 8 year old daughter that he desperately needs help raising. Answering Connor's advertisement for a wife, Ellen O'Sullivan travels from Omaha to her new home. Once she meets Connor, he discovers the last thing about her that Ellen didn't divulge in her letters to him. When I

started reading I was immediately drawn in and remained so all the way through. This is my first Harris story but will not be my last.

I didn't like, not even a little bit, Connor for the first half of this story. Connor didn't expect to nor did he want to feel any emotion toward Ellen which he told her, many times, that he was still in love with his dead wife. Furthermore, Connor's actions and words trickled over to his wonderful daughter. What do children do - imitate their parents of course so you can guess what this would mean for the relationship that Ellen and Bridget have. It's hard for me to not like a kid in a story but Bridget really tested my patience, a lot.

My emotion ran the gamut until I just had to settle on strong dislike for Connor in his treatment of Ellen. The way Harris wrote her - I can't say that I was ever not on Ellen's side. I found fault with a couple of things she did but I certainly understood why she did them. She'd already had the love of her life and this arrangement with Connor provided her a home and possibly a family who might care if she lived or dies.

I have to go back on this for a little bit because I do not want to give off the impression that Connor was not likable, but for me I think his choice of words to Ellen was just so blunt and it came off harsh and unfeeling. Interestingly, Connor's treatment of Ellen was in accordance with the bargain they made; she would come to the territory where he lived, they would marry, she would help him raise his daughter, she would work the homestead, and bear him a child (preferably a son). All these things were expected of Connor from Ellen and that was all.

The writing for both Ellen, Connor and Bridget was superb and the secondary characters were so well done that I found myself either wishing for happiness for some and death and dismemberment for others. Pretty powerful. Connor's neighbors were some of the more interesting characters and because their dependence on each other was so high, I thought that Harris captured the dynamics.

The pace was spot on, I can't tell you how many times I wanted to put this book down and just wouldn't because I couldn't wait to see what happened next. Now for those of you looking for a bedroom moment, there's none. We know they do have them because we all know that Ellen wasn't going to give birth by immaculate conception. I didn't miss it as I was so focused on the relationships I didn't even think about not liking this book because of its lack of sex.

The progression of Ellen and Connor's relationship from need to love was a tear-jerking experience and I would highly suggest that you not read this either in public or at work because yes, you're going to have teary eyes.

Happy reading folks!

Rating: A-

*ARC provided by Choc Lit Publishing for review.

Review posted on www.redhotbooks.com

Sanaa Iona says

The story line lacked depth and not enough substance. Boring.

Shaz Goodwin says

I was looking forward to A Bargain Struck having loved The Road Back. Although it didn't affect me in quite the same way (emotionally) it is beautifully written and takes the reader back to a time when life was totally different with a slower pace and life was hard.

Ellen O'Sullivan arrives in Baggs, Wyoming Territory in July 1887 to marry Connor Maguire. Having communicated with each via letter, this is the first time they've met. This is a marriage of convenience. Ellen needs a husband having lost her first husband in a stage coach accident and Connor's first wife has died. He needs a wife for his daughter Bridget and wants a son to take over the homestead in the future. Both needs are on a practical level.

It's obvious on meeting that Ellen hasn't been entirely honest and she is not sure whether Connor will go through with the deal. Man of honour, he takes her for his wife. Once back at the homestead, Bridget does not accept Ellen and is rude and disobedient.

The accident that killed Ellen's first husband has changed her spirit. Hiding away, Conn gets to see the real Ellen peek through now and again. As time goes on, they get to know each other better and he is protective when they go into Liberty. I enjoyed watching Conn's inner turmoil.

Peggy, their closest neighbour was great. She was good for Ellen, accepting her as she was. Not judging. We all need a Peggy in our lives ...

There is plenty of rivalry besides Bridget and her tantrums. Oonagh Quinn, school teacher, appears to be genuine and I couldn't quite make my mind up about her at first. The unexpected visitor brings conflict for the Maguires. He literally made my skin crawl!

I was fascinated by the historical aspect of A Bargain Struck. It is very obvious that Harris has researched (and spent time in Wyoming). Everything felt very authentic. I was reminded of Little House on the Prairie! and this brought back poignant memories.

If you like historical romances, I would recommend A Bargain Struck for your reading list. The romance is slow building (but dynamite nonetheless) and the history comes alive.

I would like to thank the publishers for providing a review copy in exchange for an honest review.

Tripfiction says

Novel set in Wyoming (Married life in 1887)

A year after Connor has been widowed he decides he needs a new wife to help with the work on the farm, look after his 8 year old daughter and bear him sons, so he places an advert in a newspaper. From the many applicants he chooses Ellen, without having met her, as the list of attributes she mentions in her letter seem to make her the best candidate. However Ellen has omitted to mention something, and that lie of omission may be too great to allow her the happiness she longs for. And anyway is Connor the man to offer her happiness? After they are married he says "I don't ever think about her. She's got her work to do, I've got mine, and that's the way it is." However Ellen is desperate, a widow herself, she has little (or no) choice but to marry a man she has never met, and put herself at his mercy. She is grateful for a roof over her head and food to eat, and tries to put up with the resentful daughter and the flirtatious attentions the beautiful Miss

Quinn pays her husband. Then an unexpected visitor arrives. Does “A Bargain Struck” always need to be kept?

This is a great book, that has you enthralled from page one right through to the end. It has mysteries, suspense, twists, historical details and a great pace that just keeps you reading a little bit longer than you meant to. The family live on a homestead near Laramie in Wyoming, and it is fascinating to read about the different roles the men and women take in order to survive in this harsh environment. The most helpful neighbour lives 30 minutes away by horse and cart (in good weather), and when a horse is heard approaching the farm the women rush in and lock the doors, and the men rush out with their guns. Liz Harris’ writing is so good that the reader can easily imagine the various scenes and the characters are so well drawn, you feel that you are almost there with them, sympathising with the viewpoints of Connor, Ellen and Connor’s daughter Bridget. Indeed at one point, I was so involved in the story that I gasped out loud at an incident.

Having spent a little time in this area, I love the way this book brought back memories of the small towns and many homesteads I saw, and gave me an insight of how life was in the 1800’s.

This is the first book I have read by publishers Choc Lit, who describe themselves as publishing “quality stories with a romance at the heart.” That is exactly what this book is, and I shall certainly be looking for more books by Liz Harris and by this independent publisher.

Melissa says

The character in this book has a scar on her face from an accident, and the entire book is based around her husband calling her ugly, her stepdaughter calling her ugly, random strangers calling her ugly ... Til suddenly birds chirp and rainbows appear and they realize that what's on the INSIDE is what matters! Ridiculous.

Laura says

Ellen lost her husband and gained horrible scar in one horrible wagon accident, now she is a mail order bride hoping her future husband will overlook her scars.

I find it interesting that Connor and his daughter are focused on the surface the rest of their community is most welcoming of Ellen. I should say most of the community because the mangy school teacher and the creepy brother in law care only for themselves and what they want and don’t even care if they hurt those they profess to love. Ellen is pretty brave to pack up and go to a new place, knowing that she will risk ridicule and pity because of circumstances beyond her control, hoping to find a modicum of happiness in her now lonely life.

The begining of the book had a good start and I made past the fifth chapter and then it turned painfully boring and I desperately needed to skip several chapters. I did go back a few chapters to brief read a key scene to explain why Connor thought Ellen did something that she claims she didn’t do. I was amazed that I had actually managed to get the end of this story and extremely happy is was finally over. A Bargain Struck is one book I am wishing I had thought twice about especially in this age of digital books where I can’t trade it in for something else until I find a book worth keeping.

This review posting contains the body of the review, which is only a portion of the original review which is posted here <http://lauralusbookreviews.blogspot.c...>

Rosemary Morris says

A Bargain Struck by Liz Harris

This is the first book I have read by Liz Harris. I am impressed. The plot engaged me from the first page. The hero, his small daughter and the heroine will stay with me for some time.

“Widower Connor Maguire advertises for a wife to raise his young daughter, Bridget, work the homestead and bear him a son.”

He chooses Ellen O’Sullivan, a widow who lost her beloved husband in tragic circumstances. However, when she arrives it is obvious that she has not been truthful. Connor prides himself on keeping his word. They have struck a bargain so he marries Ellen, but, although Connor is always courteous, he remains emotionally distant from her. Ellen must win hostile Bridget’s affection and build a life with Bridget and Connor.

I enjoyed the historical background. I also enjoyed many of the word pictures which I could visualise.

“The sun was dropping behind the hills , and the streaks of crimson and orange that arched the heavens were slowly being consumed by widening bands of deep grey that were reaching out across the sky. Stark against the darkening horizon, the branches of isolated trees formed an intricate network of black lines. But as she...etc.”

Liz Harris has captured life in Wyoming Territory in 1887.

Megan Readinginthesunshine says

I really like the cover of A Bargain Struck – I always like to read something a bit different and this seemed like an intriguing read!

This was SUCH a refreshing read, it was something new and different, and I particularly liked that I never knew which way the story would take me next.

The characters are very strong in this, and Liz Harris has done a fantastic job in creating them and making them so lifelike. I really liked Ellen from the beginning, she was longing for a home and a family and I really wanted to her to have that in her life. As she throws herself into her new life as a wife and a step-mother to Connor’s daughter Bridget, it soon becomes clear that Ellen has not been entirely truthful. I would LOVE to talk about this but I’m keen not to spoil it for any readers – I found it to be an intriguing and compelling story and I want other readers to experience the same for themselves!

The setting was brilliant. Whilst reading I genuinely felt as though I had been transported back in time to the West, I could see the horses in my mind, imagine the scenery around me, and I felt as though I was living daily life with the characters. The detail was rich and it felt as though every single little detail had been thoroughly researched, well-thought out and placed perfectly within the pages.

I thoroughly enjoyed A Bargain Struck – I kept turning the pages because I wanted to know what would happen in the lives of Ellen, Connor and Bridget. For me it was such a fascinating book and so I have no hesitation in recommending it.

Terry says

This book was given to me in exchange for an honest review.

This is a fun romantic read set in the early 1800's in Wyoming during the late homesteader days. The main character meets her husband through mail, they literally decide through mail written correspondence only that they both have something to offer the other and she travels from back east to marry him. He is seeking a mother for his little girl, someone to run his house and give him a male heir for whom he can pass the homestead farm onto. Quickly he finds out that she did not include vital information about herself...her disfigured face.

But true to his word he marries her anyways and takes her home to his daughter. This is where the real fun begins as the daughter proves to be very angry with this new mother. The story continues on to tell of how these 3 people learn to heal from their losses and become a family, while that's not to say they don't have their troubles. It was a sweet read about love, friendship, healing and that looks aren't what makes a person good.

I loved that this story was so raw and real when it came to the cruel and sweet sides of life. It was a great read and I would recommend for anyone that loves an old fashioned love story.
