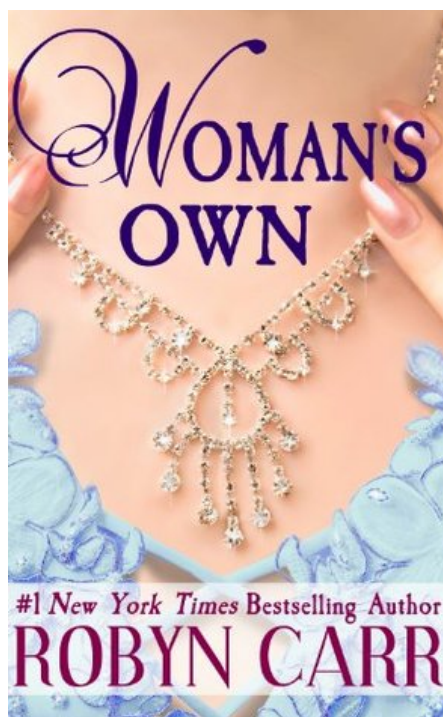




Woman's Own

Robyn Carr

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Ablaze against the bustle of nineteenth-century Philadelphia is this sweeping saga of three generations of strong, indomitable women – all seemingly cursed when it comes to love. At its center is young Lilly Armstrong, a beauty on the brink of womanhood, too brave and too fearless to settle for the status quo. In a booming city animated by inventors, builders and artists, and now excited for the great Centennial Exhibition, Lilly aspires to carve out a life of independent freedom for herself and her women kin – lives not dependent on men.

But of course there is a man – a man who admires Lilly, who thinks like she does and who would move heaven and earth to help Lilly realize her dreams.

With the guidance of her quietly resilient mother and the unexpected aid of her estranged and powerful grandmother – and despite the foolish meddling of her shallow and ambitious sister – Lilly is determined to lead her family of women into the challenge of the next century on her own terms, forging an empire that will survive for generations.

Lilly intends for her family to have it all, not the least of which is enduring love.

Fans of VIRGIN RIVER will enjoy this timeless novel of new beginnings, untamable passion and all-redeeming love.

Praise for Robyn Carr's historicals:

"A remarkable storyteller...the plot moves swiftly and cleverly. A well-told tale." -Library Journal

"This is no routine romance...Carr presents a personal, inside view of life...in historically accurate detail. A reader's delight." -Bestsellers

"Thanks to sophisticated character development and elegantly simple prose, Carr deftly handles the themes of betrayal, envy, greed and the psychological patterns that recur over generations." -Publishers Weekly

Woman's Own Details

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Author : Robyn Carr

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From Reader Review Woman's Own for online ebook

Arlene Newman says

Wow!

This was a page turner. I'm so glad I read this book on my recommendation list. I always love a good story.

Jennifer says

First of her books that I've read! Loved it!

Elizabeth says

Just loved this book. I enjoy reading about that time period and I thought the characters were great. I agree with an earlier reviewer...it made me think about and appreciate the early woman's movement.

Kay says

The author did a wonderful job telling the story of 3 strong successful women in a time where women were seen and not heard. The love and struggles of these women were up front & personal. Life takes center stage in their daily lives but it's complicated by the love of the unattainable men.

Cheryl says

This was one of those books that you never want to end. I listened to it in my car every day between home and work and felt I really got to know each character well.

This book spanned the lives of 4 generations of women, though admittedly the fourth was only a young child at the end of the book. Retaining the interest of the reader whenever a new generation is introduced can sometimes be tricky for an author because the reader has already grown fond of the previous generation of characters. Robyn Carr however introduces her characters effortlessly and so we read about them all together as a family, learning more about each of them at the same time.

I loved this story. I loved the strength of Amanda and Lilly and the gentleness of her mother Emily. Lilly's self-centred sister Patricia was easy to dislike and Andrew and Noel easy to love.

I especially loved learning all the historical aspects of the era. Thank goodness women's rights have changed the plight of women between then and now. It was fascinating to read about the differences between then and now and to see what they all endured in the name of morality, gender inequality, societal expectations and socio-economic variations. The ending of the book wound all the stories/relationships of the characters up well and was a lovely way to finish the story. A lovely read

Thuan says

First off, I have to say I DNF this book at 47% on my kindle. I love Robyn Carr's *Virgin River* and some of her recent standalones, such as *What We Find*, *Backward Glance*, *Swept Away*, and etc. What's great about Carr's writing is her ability to create believable characters, a great cast of supporting characters and the world they live in with their slice of life moments.

However, I think *Woman's Own* is a miss. While I initially do like the women in this story, being strong and distinctly different with their own dreams and problems, it quickly becomes apparent there's too much caricature. It feels as if Carr is hellbent on pushing certain types of character and keeps hammering it while forgetting to make it realistic or entertaining.

So, this book is a miss because firstly the characters fall flat from her later works (oh, the women were strong in this book but the caricature presentation made it unrealistic), and secondly the plot is plain boring. Yea, I think Carr spent too much time trying to build one-dimensional strong women but forgot to write an entertaining plot.

Frankly, I am surprised to find so many 5s and 4s for *Woman's Own* but after realizing most of these are from female reviewers shouting "I LOVE THIS BECAUSE THE WOMEN ARE SO STRONG" (but kinda neglected other aspects of a book that would make it good/bad)...well I guess...

Unfortunately, this book is a two star because it was just plain boring. Note: After realizing this is one of her earlier books, I guess it's not that surprising it isn't as good as her recent ones.

Polly says

This book was epic like a series all in one. Four woman, who's lives can be described as not only epic, but, tragic, selfish, loving joyful, with life's disappointments and success' gained through hard work. I loved it.

Kathleen says

Whenever I read a book by Robyn Carr, I know I am going to enjoy it. It is going to make me feel glad I read it. This book was even more so for me. It was an epic read. Robyn's books are never without depth. And this one for me was doubly so. Her story, or saga as I think of this one, is was so different from her contemporary books and series. This book was in the vein for me of "A Woman of Substance". Three different generations of woman who live in 19th century Philadelphia, who are strong, intelligent and who's only want in life is to be with the men they love and to be at the same time strong and independent. In an era where woman of society, were seen to be only a wife and a mother and who must live to a strict code of conduct as chattel to their husbands, these woman were independent and carved out an empire that gave them meaning and the riches to live the life they wanted. But it did not come without risks, sacrifice and heartache. But, these woman overcame all of these to have the thing they most wanted Love. I give this book a 5++ rating.. It should be read by all who are fans of Robyn Carr.

Loretta says

A 19th century novel about Philadelphia , this story revolves around a family of women and their ways of coping with their plight in that era. A couple of good romances and a great cast of characters. Loved the story and it made me thankful for the women's movement !!

Sigrun says

Though I found this book slow reading--small print--the story was intriguing and very satisfying. It concerns the lives of four women in the Philadelphia of 1859 and 1876 to 1884. Each of them shows different strengths and weaknesses as they struggle to survive.

Linda Smatzny says

This story is set in Philadelphia in the late 1870's and early 1880's. It is the story of four women from the same family. A mother, daughter and two granddaughters and hows lies can come back to hurt you. Each woman is searching for love which in this society is hard to do if you wish to be true to yourself.

Jeanne says

It took me forever to read this book, probably more due to being in a "reading funk" than the quality of the book. Having said that, the book was a very old-fashioned read, reminiscent of Gwen Bristow's books. I kept at it because I did want to find out what happened to the characters.

Kiki Belle says

I have been reading this book a little bit everyday but apparently I've only read 15% of it. So I'm giving this one a miss. The beginning is interesting, and if the story were about Emily I might care, but so far nothing's been happening and I don't care enough to keep reading until something does happen.

Jacqueline O. says

This book has been sitting on my shelf for years, but I finally sat down and read it. I must say I did enjoy it.

Woman's Own is the story of three generations of women in 19th century Philadelphia. I'm more familiar with Victorian England than the US so it was a nice change - though at times I thought her historical detail was just... off.

The book begins with a Midwife making her way to the poorest section of Philadelphia to help a woman in

childbirth. She reflects on the many way women end-up in the shacks along the river, and recalls this woman is condemned even by other poor women because she has no skills - she can't even make bread if she's given the ingredients. The Midwife births the woman's daughter, but, though she normally doesn't help other women, she takes her in.

That's the prologue -- the book skips ahead about 15-17 years, and the poor woman is now running her own boarding house, and has a fairly decent side business making jams, jellies, and sweetbreads to sell in her new neighborhood. Her older daughter, the one who was a year or two old in the prologue, is now 17. The younger, the one born in the prologue, is now 15. We also meet the men and women living in her boarding house.

Things move along, but through a series of misfortunes, Emily (the mother) finds herself without boarders. Patricia, the older daughter, is set on getting herself a rich husband because she feels she has no skills (unlike younger daughter, Lilly). Unfortunately, she's vain, pushy, and doesn't listen to anyone - including her mother who was abandoned by her own rich husband. Patricia is very like Scarlett O'Hara in the film *Gone with the Wind* except no one likes her and she's less sympathetic. Patricia's shenanigans end up with her being raped. Though her mother is at first sympathetic - both Lilly and eventually Emily end-up blaming Patricia for her own rape.

Lilly is bookish and strong. When her mother sends her to an inexpensive girl's finishing school, she rapidly gets bored - and starts spending her time at the library instead. There, she meets library patron Andrew, who signs permission for her to read whatever she wants.

With the problems at the boarding house, however, Emily's health deteriorates and she develops consumption (TB). Just when things seem at there worst - Amanda arrives. Amanda is Emily's mother. Emily had quarreled with her to marry "the man she loved" - the self-same rich so-and-so who abandoned her. Amanda is filthy rich, having married and been widowed three times - each time more or less to a more wealthy man. (When Emily's father died he left the family in debt - Amanda's forced to sell off the family home to survive - it's the other cause of the rift between mother and daughter.)

Amanda's return is the luck and the money Emily and her daughters need. Patricia decides she wants to force her rapist to marry her -- thinking she wants his money, she'll be accepted into society - which she also wants, and that no one will love her because she's lost her virginity. Emily and Amanda warn her - but Patricia insists. Amanda uses her power as a pillar of Philadelphian society to arrange and pay for the marriage. Patricia finds out her mother and grand-mother were correct in their warnings, and is quickly miserable.

Lilly, meanwhile, has her own dream. Seeing how her mother turned the boarding house into a profitable business (for awhile), and having read up on it -- she decides to first buy the hotel her grandmother has moved the family into, and then to build her own hotel. Amanda pays for her world-wide "homework" trip, where Lilly learns all there is to know about luxury hotels.

Lilly, Amanda, and Emily are soon running their own hotel. It's the most interesting part of the book -- but it's a bit anarchistic. In the Victorian Age, American women couldn't vote, hold property, work, or even read (popular thought had it women's "delicate" minds would explode if they read books). Occasionally, the blatant sexism of the age emerges, but for the most part the novel lets these women do what they want - acting almost modern. It helps that Amanda is extremely rich and from one of Philadelphia's oldest, richest, and most respected families. In some ways, the section of the book would make a good television series.

Various other threads of the novel emerge, occur, and conclude. Lilly, eventually runs into her old pal, Andrew, again and they start an affair. Patricia also, after many hard lessons, finds her own happiness - then disappears (tho' Lilly doesn't approve of her own sister's actions).

Woman's Own is the type of book that's almost like an ice cream sundae or a rich, decadent dessert. It's a fun, interesting, and engaging read. But when you think about it -- it's full of a lot of the cliches of quote "women's fiction" unquote, which is why I seldom read that genre of romantic fiction. I liked Lilly alot, and she's fascinating as a businesswoman - but the moment she starts her affair, I thought, "Oh, I'm done." Still, if you want something frothy, it's worth it -- and the writing style is very competent.

Dawn ♥ romance says

A very full historical covering multiple generations. I was totally absorbed toward the end but it took a long time to setup all the characters and sometimes it seemed more like a woman's lib book than romance. Emily, daughters Lilly & Patricia, and mother Amanda are all extremely challenged by the men in their lives.
