



She Had No Choice

Debra Burroughs

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Mexico in 1918 was a dangerous place to live. Disease was ravaging village after village. Young Sofia's parents decided to take what was left of their family and brave a perilous midnight crossing into the United States, hoping to save the lives of their remaining children. They did not anticipate the hardships that lay ahead of them. After a family tragedy, Sofia is sent to live with a well-to-do aunt in Phoenix. Sofia's father assumes this is for the best, that his sister would educate her and treat her as a daughter. He could not have known it would plunge her into a life of hard labor and bad relationships with the wrong men. Hungry for love, her first lover leads to a daughter, Eva, born out of wedlock. When he abandons her and their baby, another unsavory man is quick to come to her rescue. But when he tries to convince Sofia to leave what little family she has left to go west with him, to work in the fields of California, she is torn. Weighing what few options are available to her, she believes she has no choice but to go with him. If only that was the lone circumstance in which she had no choice. Sofia's difficult, yet inspiring life unfolds over the next twenty years, through a series of highs and lows, with her devoted, headstrong daughter by her side. As a young woman, Eva hopes to avoid the mistakes her mother made with men, but she is not always able to steer clear of them. When life becomes dangerous and unbearable for Sofia, will Eva and her beau be able to save her, or will Sofia have to save them? This poignant and gripping drama plays out from 1918 to 1960, and is full of love and heartbreak, prejudice and betrayal, lovers, friends and family. It is inspired by the true stories written in Debra Burroughs' book CARMEN.

She Had No Choice Details

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From Reader Review She Had No Choice for online ebook

Laurie Carlson says

I give this book a 2 star review. I 'did' finish this entire book, but only because the author had asked me to review the book, so I did.

I am going to be completely honest in my review of this book, as I always am in the book reviews I do write. This book bored me to tears and the author thinks she can write. Not in my opinion.

I held off on writing the actual review because the author kindly offered her book to me to use this book as a Giveaway Prize during a Blog Hop. I did not want to write what I truly felt about this book until 'after' the hop was over as I did not want my negative review of this book to deter people from making up their own minds as to whether or not to read this book.

The summary from Goodreads, (up above) pretty much sums up this entire book, excluding the continuous Domestic Abuse that Sofia suffers through all the years of her living with a man who won't marry her, almost to the point of death. I honestly got tired of reading about the abuse. Yes, it happens, but she could have LEFT. It takes this characters' oldest daughter to grow up and start having a family of her own before she does something to get her mother OUT of the situation.

The author has referred to this book as "A Spin on the Color Purple." I HIGHLY disagree. How and WHY? Is it because of the abuse? The book, "The Color Purple" by Alice Walker, has TRULY written a 5-star book! This book, "She Had No Choice, A Spin on the Color Purple" by Debra Burroughs, has NOTHING to do with "The Color Purple" at ALL. I don't even see HOW these two books could even be compared side to side? I wonder how Alice Walker would feel knowing this author, Debra Burroughs, is advertising her book in comparison to her book?

The history of this story in the very beginning of the book was interesting and I am guessing this is why the author wrote this book. This book is supposed to be based upon her own family's experiences. That was about it for interesting for me. As for the rest of the book, it was the same, repeat after repeat. Each time a new character was introduced to us, whoever introduced us to them, the author made us have to read about the ENTIRE HISTORY of the family escaping from Mexico again, and the subsequent abuse over and over, again and again. I was BORED TO TEARS!

Why? The book was written poorly and in dire NEED of editing. I felt NO attachment to any of the characters whatsoever. Even reading about the abuse did not make me 'feel' anything. Something is wrong with the writing if that alone does not make you feel something, except to think that this woman needs to get away from that man. She never does until her daughter makes her in the end.

The book, in my opinion, could have been written for a middle-grade /elementary reader, as it was written that format. At least this is how I felt. I felt as if the author thought I was stupid and had no memory of the events of this story that occurred earlier in the book. She continuously kept repeating things over and over again. I JUST read it, I'm NOT going to forget about it that quickly. Heck, some elementary kids see MORE abuse, or abuse this author described in this book, in their own homes, unfortunately.

I just did NOT find reading about the abuse enjoyable, either. It was continuous throughout the story.

The author also made a comment in the beginning of the book that some of the names had been changed and others not. This is a GREAT book for the family, but it's not for me!

In my opinion, if you have just read the Synopsis, that's all you need to know about this book. Skip reading the book, It will only be a loss of your time, unless you enjoy reading the same thing over and over again.

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Katie says

It was okay.

The story itself is pretty good, although highly annoying at times (I tried to understand how times were different 60-80 years ago, but it was hard for me to imagine a women slaving away in the fields, being abused, and having 10 children with a man she didn't love... It, of course, goes into more details that just made me want to yell at the characters! Seriously? You had NO other choice? I didn't buy it.) and the storytelling was pretty bad. Granted she had to cover a lot of ground in the book, but it kind of read like a high school biography assignment.

The ending was great and gave me something to smile & cheer for, however; it does not need a sequel (as a previous reviewer mentioned). I already know how their lives will turn out, it's pretty obvious.

There was a lot of editing issues, the timeline was often confusing, very repetitive (as if you needed reminding of what happened which had already been repeated 3-times), and the author would often tell you something that was about to happen and when it did happen, you weren't allowed the emotion that usually follows a surprise or a climatic moment, and (along the same lines), many foreshadowing moments which, again, took away from the story.

Bottom line, the story was good, the book was just okay, thus getting 2.5 stars.

Judy King says

I'm sorry to say I quit reading this book at 47% -- It's too bad, a good editor would have solved most of the problems. I liked the premise, I liked that characters, I cared about what was happening to them -- BUT...the inconsistencies, small errors and outright mistakes (WWII ended in 1944 according to this book) I quit reading. The time line was WAY off...at one point She and her next siblings were born about 1 year apart. later they were 2 years apart. At one place it reported something that happened when she was nine, then the next two chapters she was 7. It sounds petty when I write it -- but it ruined the read for me, and that's too bad. It could have been a a high 3 or 4 star book with that help.

Ms Burroughs, take another look, watch the repeated material, check out dates, clean it up and republish. It's worth the effort.

Wulfwyn says

For me this book was slow going because of the narrative style. It is third-person style which I find, at times, to be difficult for me. I find it hard to form a relationship with the characters when a story is told in this style. However it is a compelling look at everyday life in a alcohol related domestic violence home. It is a poignant reminder of how sad and painful that life is for all. Sofia and Eva's hopes for the future and their tenacity at reaching that brighter future brings to mind the resilience of families caught in this nightmare. I found this to

be a very interesting story and would like to read what happened after this book ends. Full review at <http://www.alaskanbookcafe.com/2011/1...>

Tammy says

I am so glad I finally got this to load on my Kindle. I didn't think I would get a chance to read it but I did and I am glad.

This is a story about a family who escapes Mexico during The Spanish Flu. Having lost three children already, the thought of losing any more is so much worse than giving up their home and the life they know. The family become migrant workers to survive and when Sofia is still a young girl, her mothers death causes her father to make the heart-breaking choice to send her to her Aunt. He has not spoken to his sister in many years but Sofia's father knows that this is the only chance Sofia will have at a decent life.

Sofia is not welcomed by her aunt and becomes more of a servant in the household than family. Her life is lonely and hard and when she meets the handsome Enrique, she is overwhelmed by his attention. However, when she becomes pregnant with his child, he abandons her.

Left with no choices, Sofia decides to go with Carlos, a migrant worker heading to California, in order to gain protection for her and her child.

The story from here chronicles the harsh lifestyle of a family of migrant workers. Back-breaking work and poor living conditions. Most times children are put to work in the fields as soon as possible never gaining the advantage of an education. Sofia ensures her daughter Eva will go to school but Carlos has no affection for the daughter that isn't his and as time progresses he drinks more and gets more and more abusive toward Sofia and the rest of the growing family.

Having grown up in California, in a community where the migrant population is prevalent year round, I have met families with this type of history. The struggle is real even now. Those of us who have never experienced the type of hard work and poor treatment that these migrant workers still experience can count ourselves very lucky. Although I was raised by a single mom and lived close to the poverty line growing up, I was pampered in comparison. I have never worked a hard day in my life. Several of my friends spent their summers and weekends picking strawberries while I enjoyed socializing and lazing about. The story brought memories back to me and I wish I understood then what I do now, we owe so much to these people who do the hard work it takes to get produce to our tables.

This story is very poignant. I felt that the narrative seemed a bit unemotional for such emotional events but was still touched by this story.

Here is the book Summary:*Northern Mexico in 1918 was a dangerous place to live. The Spanish Flu pandemic was ravaging village after village. Young Sofia's parents decided to take what was left of their family and brave a perilous night crossing into the United States, hoping to save the lives of their remaining children. They did not anticipate the hardships that lay ahead of them.*

After a family tragedy, Sofia was sent to live with a well-to-do aunt in Phoenix. Sofia's father assumed this was for the best, but in truth it plunged her into a life of servitude and relationships with the wrong men. Hungry for love, her relationship with Enrique led to a daughter, Eva, born out of wedlock.

When Enrique abandons them, Carlos comes to her rescue. But when Carlos tries to convince Sofia to go west with him, to work the fields of California, she is torn. Weighing her options, she has no choice but to go with him. Her life unfolds in a series of highs and lows, her daughter by her side. When life becomes dangerous and unbearable, will Eva and her boyfriend be able to save Sofia, or will Sofia become the

savior?

This poignant and gripping drama plays out from 1918 to 1960, and is full of love and heartbreak, prejudice and betrayal, lovers, friends and family. It is inspired by the true stories written in Debra Burroughs' book CARMEN.

Ann says

Love has many faces

This story is very much about life through the ages. It has no real ethnic group. Only strong faith in God will keep love safe.

Kaye says

The story is about making difficult choices for the sake of family. However, sometimes the choices we make don't necessarily turn out to be the best one for our family or ourselves in spite of our good intentions.

This is the all too familiar story of the struggles of women and the abuse they had to endure or felt they did and eventually finding the courage to change their situation.

The story is a good one unfortunately I found that as the chapters went on it was telling the same story in a slightly different way over and over. I believe it would benefit from more elaboration and less repeating same or similar scenarios. I found that I kept hoping for a different reaction from some of the characters but sadly they were all too predictable.

I would give the first few chapters 5 stars but the rest of the book only 3 so will settle on 4

Norma Budden says

Debra did a fantastic job writing this book. The family situations she portrayed, from one generation to the next, were of the caliber that, if given a choice, I'd rather not discuss. Abuse was prevalent and children were continually being added to families with an already debilitating financial situation.

Even so, there was always money for alcohol and tobacco which I couldn't grasp, from the perspective of a mother who wants the best for her children. Even so, I know it to be true in some societies as I've personally seen tobacco being purchased while milk was discarded when a family didn't have enough money to buy both.

This story showed how circumstances can drive us to do things we normally would not consider and how those decisions have a profound effect on the human life - indeed, the human soul and how it has great potential to cripple future generations.

As a writer, I'm not sure I could have written such a book. I truly believe I would have spent so much time crying, thanks to a vivid imagination, that I couldn't have written past the first couple of chapters. Even

writing the scene of a spousal assault taking place would fill me with dread and I really applaud writers who can do this effectively without letting their emotions get in the way.

She Had No Choice certainly provides a lesson to us all: to appreciate the blessings in our lives instead of taking things for granted, or focusing on trivial things which don't add meaning to our lives.

I will caution that you have to be a strong person to see this book to the end. Otherwise, you will find yourself feeling despair at the thought of picking it up and might have to set it aside for a while, or indefinitely. Even so, I'm glad I endured the experience and witnessed the heartaches; they enabled me to appreciate the joy which came at the end of the story and to appreciate life's blessings even more.

Nicole Hill says

This was a very well written book. Some parts had me mortified and crying from anger all at the same time. Others, I was crying from happiness. This is not a fairy tale by any means. This is a story that could have been written about so many women from past to present, who have had to endure hard living conditions and the injustice of a world that even still today is ruled by men. Some of whom chose to do so with their fists. This book is about survival against all odds and coming out the other side. Maybe, not completely whole but realizing that there is always light at the end of the tunnel, even if it takes a while to get there. I would recommend this book whole heartily. Especially for those of us who have faced some of the same hardships and somehow managed to crawl out. Because sometimes as when, we are really left with no choices.

kathleen says

Did I read the same novel everyone else did? Yawn...The plot was formulaic...there was no character development.. the author doesn't know how to tell a story...doesn't know how to make the people sound mexican, just throwing a few "adios amigos" around doesn't quite make one believe. So very painful to read. One of the reviewers said "this book needs a sequel". I would respond, please no!

Lorrea - WhatChaReadin'? says

After finishing this book, I still didn't see how it was the Latin, Color Purple. Seeing as the Color Purple is one of my favorite books and movies, I was really looking forward to reading this book.

This is the story of Sofia. Her family is forced to leave their farm in Mexico when she is a small child and go to the United States. While there her parents work as migrant farmers until her mother dies. Her father wants a better life for his Sofia, so he sends her to live with his sister who has a hotel and restaurant in Arizona. Surely Sofia would have a better life with her. But that would not be Sofia's fate. She was treated more like Cinderella than the princess her father thought she would be treated like. After years of abuse in that situation, Sofia leaves and meets a man she thinks is going to treat her well, but he doesn't. He is very very abusive to her and to her young daughter, Eva. When Eva is old enough she tries to escape the abuse and is successful. She meets a man and marries him. Will her life continue to be abusive, or has she finally found someone who will love her and treat her the way she should be treated.

Mary says

She Had No Choice is a family drama which originates in Sonora, Mexico. The year is 1918 during the Spanish influenza epidemic. The Ramirez family has already lost four children due to the outbreak. Juanita and Emilio make the decision to give up the land and home they own in Mexico and flee to Arizona to save their family.

Once in Arizona, the family is free from the flu epidemic; however, life is far from easy. Work is hard to get for migrant farm workers and the family suffers. Juanita dies and Emilio is left with his sons and two daughters. He sends one of his daughters, Sophia, to live with his sister, Consuela, in Phoenix. He thinks she will have a better life. For six years Sophia works as a servant girl for her Tia and the abuse only ends with Tia Consuela's death.

Sophia makes poor decisions regarding men. She ends up alone and pregnant with her first daughter, Eva. Her second relationship she is a victim of domestic abuse from Carlos, who continually beats and abuses her and her children for 25 years. She has a child almost every other year and her life is a living hell.

Eva's life is not going as expected. She is abandoned with two children. She is determined to rise above her adversities while trying to help her mother escape abuse from Carlos.

Does Eva succeed? Does Sophia have any part in the plan? Does either woman find real love?

Burroughs writes with such intensity and you feel what each character is going through on each and every page. She states the book is inspired by a series of true stories. I feel this enhances the reader's expectations.

The story ends in 1960 and I am hoping for a sequel! Sophia and Eva, along with their families, have come a long way since 1918. I want to follow their lives and I have no doubt all readers who enjoy She Had No Choice will agree.

Book Review by Mary Crocco
Mrcrocco.wordpress.com

Jeff Dawson says

Excellent Story

Let's get this out of the way. There are some serious editing and time line issues. The most glaring is the end of WWII is not 1944, rather 1945. Miss Burroughs needs to go back and make the corrections to ensure an excellent product.

Now let's move on. Gals, you should truly enjoy this gripping story. There is no fluff in it. This is the life of Mexican-Americans attempting to find a better life for their families. Some might think that parts of the abuse Sofia and her children endured at the hand of a jealous, abusive, hard drinking husband were overdone. I assure you, they were not. I saw most of the events the author described (except the hitting) first hand as I was in the contracting business for twenty-five years and spent a lot of time with the men and their families. Sophia makes the best out of her situation and hopes her own children won't be condemned to the same fate she chose.

Fate is a funny animal as her daughter Eva appears to be heading down the same path. She falls in love with the first man she ever dates and starts spiraling down the same path as her mother. All appears to be lost until

an old friend of Eva's return from the past and is flung into the families dire straits. Will he be able to help the family distance themselves from the past, or will their sorrows and plight continue to compound? This an excellent read and I highly recommend it for any woman or man who believes they have reached the end of their rope. Read this book and you might realize, no matter how dark the horizon appears, given a chance, the light will eventually show itself.

Lindsay (Everyday Is An Adventure) says

First, let me say that THIS BOOK NEEDS A SEQUEL!!! As a reader, I am dying to know what became of the characters and their story. You are hanging on every detail towards the end of this book and it leaves you wanting more.

I am so appreciative of Debra Burroughs writing style - she definitely has a way with words and she writes with such compelling language that you feel as though you are right there on the pages with the characters experiencing their lives with them...and that isn't too common.

The third-person narrative that this book is written in could be a bit of an obstacle for some readers, but I didn't find it difficult. I enjoyed the change of pace from other works I have read lately. This is a generational story, and I felt like the author chose the perfect mode to tell it.

I would also add that I love books set in different time periods and this one definitely delivered in setting and atmosphere. I appreciated that the author added a small flare of her own experience to the novel. I also liked that it is based on real people, real events, and real characters - that is important in storytelling and oftentimes we don't find a better story to tell than something that actually happened. It made the story that much more believable as well.

I HIGHLY recommend this book to my readers...it isn't often that I stumble across something that I like as much as I did this!

Jessica says

I quit after 44%. The book was stagnant. There was little dialogue, no suspense, and little emotion. I felt like the author was very repetitive and told us too much information that the reader should already know. The book is supposed to take place in the early 1900s, but there was little to nothing to indicate that. I kept telling myself that I would finish the book because it's not hard to read (definitely doesn't seem like it was written for adults), but I know that there are much better things out there and decided to quit after I realized I wasn't even halfway done.

Spoiler

This is how bad it was. The author basically told us that the character got raped and then made dinner. Where is the emotion in that?!
