



Mail Order Man

Heather Gray

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Some people get a mail order bride. She got a mail order man.

A well-meaning friend places an ad to find a mail order husband for Sarah, the proprietress of Larkspur's stage and mail office. Sarah, who is generally quiet and reserved, doesn't know about the ad and has no idea what to do with all the people that are showing up in her community. Before long, the town is overrun with men and mail alike. Sarah is trying to avoid some men who have accosted her on the street when she stumbles into Samuel. Through long days spent together at the stage office, some very adventurous pots of coffee and a shared faith, the two become friends. Sarah knows that Samuel is hiding something from her, something important, but that doesn't stop her heart from leaping wildly into love. Lacking the confidence to trust her heart, Sarah wars with herself over the feelings she can no longer deny. When some of the men who have come to town show their true intentions, a shootout follows. Sarah finally gets answers to many of the questions circling through her mind. One question remains, though.

Where will her mail order man go when the dust settles?

Mail Order Man Details

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Romancing the Book says

Reviewed by JoAnne

Book provided by the publisher for review

Review originally posted at Romancing the Book

This was an enjoyable western romance but totally unexpected in its premise since I did not expect an inspirational book with lots of prayers to God to guide their actions, thinking and future. The conversations were often stilted and interspersed were a lot of prayers and talk of trusting God's path for the characters.

I like books set in the late 1800's and this book is set in Idaho for a real western flair. Sarah was easy to like in her simple and religious ways but very forward for a woman since she ran the stage office which her father had run before he died. She also couldn't cook or make coffee but no one seemed to mind. Samuel always had a smile on his face and in his eyes along with laughter but was also religious and took it very seriously. He also had secrets that couldn't be revealed due to his promise to the mayor. The mayor's family was delightful and like Sarah's second family since her parents were deceased. The Martinez family was hardworking and were woven throughout as well as Samuel's cousin Ida and her husband John.

I enjoyed the twist on the mail order bride theme that most of us have heard of since there were hordes of men who came to Larkspur looking for a bride not all who were savory. There were family, friends, romance, love, laughter, some tears, heartache and a happily ever after. The epilogue was a nice touch since not only were loose ends tied up but we got a glance at Sarah and Samuel's life together.

I don't believe I've read books before by this author but I look forward to reading Just Dessert, book two in the series along with any future ones. I will also add her other books to my ever growing TBR pile!

Favorite Quote: When he kissed her for the first time, he planned on it being the kind of kiss that staked his claim for all time. He didn't feel he could do that, though, until she knew everything there was to know about him. Then, if she was still interested in spending time with him or being courted by him, he would kiss her for all he was worth. And if it ended up that he couldn't persuade her with words, then a couple of honest, well-placed kisses would have to do the job for him.

Becky Smith says

History & Humor: How much better can it get!! I loved the colorful characters in this book such as the "flashy dresser" Samuel Livingston and Sarah Jenkins who made BAD coffee and who had trouble with the mail and males! This book has fun descriptive lines like: "Her heart no longer fluttered like a bumblebee. It thumped like a herd of wild mustangs." Then there are the thought-provoking lines like: "whatever the problem is, it's there because God allowed it and you will see it as simply another way to glorify Him, another opportunity to praise Him." And: "much of her obedience had been from fear rather than love...was it fear that had shaped her?" A fun, easy, and humorous read, yet it is filled with great probing questions and thoughts.

Kathy Heare Watts says

What a fun story, instead of a mail order bride, we have a mail order man! No, Sarah Jenkins did not place the ad looking for a husband, her best friend Minnie, with good intentions, placed an ad because she felt that Sarah could use a husband to help her out. Sarah lost her mother when she was six years old and then right as Sarah became a young woman, her father died suddenly. Sarah continued on in his business running the stage coach office and handling the mail. Well, the town started having an influx of men, some of which made Sarah feel uneasy, and then the stage coach office was over flowing with letters addressed to "Eligible Female, Larkspur, Idaho Territory." Not just a few but bags full of letters, so many that it required an extra stage to bring the mail in. Sarah's friends, Ida and John also had a relative come into town, Ida's cousin, Samuel Livingston.

Now this story is not only a story of two people finding love, but it is a gentle reminder of the love God has for His children. We have mystery and suspense, because part of Samuel's business is kept a secret. We watch and see the relationship build between Samuel and Sarah. We learn about their lives before they met and watch they fall in love. This story is a clean story with a reminder that as God's children, His will in our lives is for us to worship Him and to live our lives with Him as the head of it. I do love HEA.

Amie says

Sarah's town is infested with men and mail, answering an anonymous ad for a mail order husband. She runs the post office in town, and has a responsibility of parceling out and sorting the letters. In the meantime, she meets Samuel, who is in town for a different purpose. As the town is over run by mysterious shady men, he becomes a security figure and the object of Sarah's affections.

This was written by a personal friend of mine, my best friend throughout high school. This is her first book and very solidly written for a first-time author. (And can I add right now how proud I am of her!?). It was cute, light, sweet, with some great Christian messages. I have read some excerpts from other books that will follow in this series, and am excited to read more about the ladies in the town of Larkspur.

On a side note, I know both the author and the main characters have quite the obsession with coffee. I am not a coffee drinker, so that entire section wasn't as amusing to me as it might be to someone else. I did enjoy the little bit of mystery and excitement with the shoot out. The love story was very enjoyable as well. Great job, Heather!

Teresa Snyder says

Always enjoy discovering new authors. This book was not great, but it was good. At times it read like a text book - stiff, conversations that felt heavy, forced, unnatural - but the book, and writing, got better by the end.

The first few chapters contained the majority of the books humor with "the talking wall" as Sarah, the heroine referred to Samuel, the books hero. Sarah was starting to get on my nerves by the middle of the book with her wall of perfection. She was like a walking Sunday school lesson. Samuel was adorable. He, at times,

also came across as a Sunday school lesson.

Enjoyed the story line, but not the stiffness of the book. As previously mentioned, it was like reading a Sunday school lesson instead of a fictional book with believable characters and conversations. The second half of the book was slightly better than the first half.

The ending, especially the epilogue, was good - extra points for including an epilogue. This was presented as book one in The Ladies of Larkspur. I will be watching for additional books in the series which will hopefully not include Samuel and Sarah, but also new characters as well as continuing the story line of existing characters.

Loved the books cover - good to get a mental picture of Samuel and Sarah. Although the book gave the appearance of being small with 217 pages, it really wasn't. The books overall size is smaller than most, as is the font size, making it an uncomfortable read.

All-in-all a good first book by this author. At least a first book for me by the author.

Maureen Timerman says

A twist on a mail-order bride...only this time thousands of letters and men show up in Larkspur. Can you imagine a run on a town, that does not have a lot of eligible woman available.

There is one man who has just show up, Samuel, who's cousin lives here. He comes to town with some secret business issues. Sarah runs the local Stage and Mail Office, her Dad has passed away and left the business to her. She starts receiving bags and bags of letters. She is also in line to meet Samuel!

We find that some unusual couples due pop up, and as they say "Love Is Blind." There is also something sinister happening in town, and there are a few secrets being kept.

Your in for a real treat of life in a Historical Western Stage Town. There are more sparks that just from romance. Will the town find out who posted the ad asking for suitors? What will happen to this person if they found out? Some are ready for jail time.

For me there were a few unanswered questions when the book ended, but as this is book #1, maybe they will be answered in the next one.

I received this book through First Wild Card Book Tours, and was not required to give a positive review.

Mutsy1967 says

A wonderful read, enchanting "sweet romance" and endearing characters. I read it in two days I enjoyed it so much.

I normally wouldn't buy a romance novel but this one was recommended, and I'm glad I did as it wasn't at all like a typical romance novel. Romance is definitely in the air, but there are no sex scenes dragging down the narrative.

I find it hard to believe that this is a first book from this author. Her website lists two more books coming out at the end of this year - I'll be buying! Many times I've gotten books from "first time authors" and found them to be such a tough read: many typos, no voice, undeveloped characters, etc. That wasn't the case here.

I also read Ms Gray's blog () and learned more about what has brought her to this place, it was a tear jerker. I admire her for creating charming and realistic characters that I want to keep in my life, and I hope she can learn to write faster! Reading her blog makes it clear why she chose a religious element to this book, but I wasn't put off by that aspect of the book. It flowed seamlessly into the characters of a very small territorial town. Anyone who's ever lived in a small town will understand!

Erika says

Unfortunately, I couldn't finish this book. I really wanted to like this book. I love the premise, and the writing's not bad. And it's clean!!! Hurray for clean romance! So why is it one star? I felt that there was a very strong unequal power dynamic between the men and women in this book. And that unequal power dynamic was shown as being part of God's teachings ("the woman should submit" and so on).

The leading male character (Samuel) almost immediately decides he is interested in Sarah. Sarah is very reserved, but he is always pushing her for more information about very personal and private feelings and things. He justifies this with internal dialogue saying that if they are going to be together she needs to open up to him, or else it's the end right now. Um, excuse me? He's only known her for less than a week when this starts.

The scene where I stopped reading though was actually fairly early in. VERY MINOR SPOILER AHEAD: She's living with her friend's family, whose dad she sees as a sort of father figure. This father figure puts Samuel in charge of protecting them for the day. During this day Samuel presses her for her private feelings on the sermon. When she doesn't share, and asks him why he wants to know, he does not answer her, and instead of respecting her privacy (come on, it's been 2 weeks now?!) he continues to pressure her. Finally, Sarah reasons "Well, women should submit to their parents, and my friend's dad is sort of like my parent, and he put Samuel in charge, so I have to submit to him and answer his questions."

This just seemed terribly tragic to me. I am a devout Christian, who is happily married. I believe God considers men and women equal. I believe healthy relationships should bloom naturally, with people sharing when they are ready. Not because they are pressured to do so. The unequal power dynamic in this book really deeply bothered me on an emotional and spiritual level. And that's why I gave this book one star. To be fair; I did not finish this book. So maybe it gets better later on.

Dottiebears says

Well I liked the premise of a mail order groom, which the H really wasn't. The whole mail order thing didn't ever really come in to play.

This book was really really preachy. I'm not a huge fan of christian fiction/romance in the first place, and I didn't realize from the description that this is what this book is. Gray seemed to make a lesson out of every darn scene in the book. Ugh. The further along I got in the book the preachier it got.

Wilani Wahl says

What an interesting twist of the typical Mail Order Bride! I loved, loved, loved this story. One of the things I loved was the spiritual thread. I did not want the story to end. Getting ready now to read the second book in the series.

Ryoko says

Charm and depth Good story telling with characters you want to meet.

The story was a bit whimsical and yet had depth. Bad coffee, newspaper adds, and humor capture the story and interesting characters your heart. Heather is quickly becoming one of my must read authors. Through in a tad of suspense and yes u are in for a treat

Scarlet Fanning says

Someone wishing to help Sarah find love posted ads in several newspapers requesting good Christian men to write "eligible female" in Larkspur, Idaho. Sarah, who managed the stage office was swamped with mail, plus single men of all sorts were showing up in town. It was dangerous for single women there, so all were invited to guest at homes for protection.

Samuel was coming to Larkspur to visit his cousin and planned to open a business there. Sarah caught his attention and soon his protection. Sarah was quiet and reserved, while Samuel was outgoing with a sense of humor. As they discussed God's lessons and how each processed information, they became closer.

Samuel has kept his past career and history from Sarah, but he has told the Mayor everything, so she is willing to be patient till the town calms down and he can share his past with her.

Samuel and the deputies stop a bank robbery and most of the extra men leave town. Samuel is shot, but survives unders Sarah's care.

A nice romance. I would have enjoyed a few more stories about the other women finding love. The start of the novel dragged, but it is worth the journey.

ASC Book Reviews says

I was a little conflicted, but over all I REALLY enjoyed reading Mail Order Man. When I started out it immediately changed from what I thought it would be about and how it would be written. I did however immediately LOVE the humor and good hearted teasing woven throughout; as well as the unique concept and idea of a mail ordered man. For me I felt there where some slow parts with some dips in the story that I had to get through in the begging, but then I started feeling a connection to Sarah and found some GREAT messages about Faith and our relationship with our Savior. I always love a book even more when I find connections with the characters as far as personality and events in their story. Then Heather COMPLETELY

BLEW me out of the water with a turn of events!!! LOL! There are GREAT scenes in Mail Order Man with things I didn't see coming and events that I felt were completely out of the blue I LOVED IT!!! With enough lovable heartwarming characters, mystery, and finally a great conclusion Mail Order Man is a GREAT read! :) The only other thing I wanted, but wasn't in Mail Order Bride, was some loose ends with characters tied up. Some of them were left unfinished in my opinion.

Songs straight from the book and my choices: "Joyful, Joyful, We Adore Thee" by Amy Grant, "Just As I Am" by Holly Dunn, and "Hurry Up and Save Me" by Tiffany Giardina I think this last song has a lot to do with the book and the relationship Samuel and Sarah have, but also with how God uses Samuel in Sarah's life. :) Only Jesus can truly save and it's amazing to see the instruments He uses to do so. :)

John 3:15-16

~ASC

Janis Cox says

I am not a romance reader but this book captured my interest. I learned a lot about myself through the main character Sarah. Relationships, past heartaches and mystery fill this story. Great read.

Brenda says

I have always been drawn to mail-order bride stories and this one certainly puts a different twist on that premise. The story takes place in Larkspur, Idaho Territory during April 1878. Sarah Jenkins is on her way to her job, where she runs the stagecoach station, when she notices an unusual amount of strange men on the streets of Larkspur, and when she is accidentally knocked down one of those men, Samuel Livingston comes to her aid, and escorts her the rest of the way to the office. While the strange men are a conundrum, it's the bags and bags of mail that come to town on the stagecoach that causes a red flag to go up, because most of the mail is addressed to "Eligible Female, Larkspur, Idaho Territory. Turns out that someone placed an ad in newspapers stating that they are looking for a husband, with the instructions to send inquiries to Larkspur. Who placed the ad and why. Meanwhile as Sarah spends time with Samuel she finds herself drawn to him, but will he stick around once all the hoopla dies down!

Historical fiction is one of my favorite genre's to read, and "Mail Order Man" was great! I loved the premise of a "Mail Order Man," and the reason why the ad was placed in the first place. I thought the character of Samuel was great, instead of a rushed relationship, it builds slowly allowing us to see what a wonderful character he really was. Sarah was a strong female, who had been on her own since the death of her father. There were so many things that made this a stand out read for me, such as the small town feel of Larkspur, and how the residents worked together, the inspirational feel of the story was very well done also. Fans of historical fiction with christian themes woven in will enjoy this one, I know I did!
