



## **The Touch of Fire**

*Linda Howard*

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Annie Parker came to Silver Mesa, Arizona, because it was the only place she'd found where folks thought a woman doctor was better than no doctor at all. Her lonely life became harder still on the winter night Rafe McCay broke into her office with a bullet in his side and a bounty hunter at his back. With a gun aimed at her heart, he led her deep into the Arizona mountains, and into a world of danger and passion, for Annie discovered in Rafe not only a wounded man, but a soul betrayed...and Rafe, healed by her skill and the magic in her hands, awakened in Annie a woman's tender longing and hungry desire. Pursued by dangerous secrets of the past, they are swept into a thrilling odyssey of the heart -- a bold, exhilarating journey that rekindles Rafe's lost hope and transforms Annie's healing gift into a deep, enduring love.

## **The Touch of Fire Details**

Date : Published September 1st 1997 by Pocket Books (first published October 1992)

ISBN : 9780671019723

Author : Linda Howard

Format : Paperback 312 pages

Genre : Romance, Historical Romance, Historical, Westerns, Western Romance

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## From Reader Review The Touch of Fire for online ebook

### jenjn79 says

I think this is the first historical romance I've read by Linda Howard. It was okay for me. A pretty standard "falling for her kidnapper" story.

Annie Parker learned medicine at her father's knee. She loved helping people and wanted to go to school to be a doctor. But it was something a woman just did not do. She persevered, though, and went to medical school. Then she moved to a remote western town where people would actually let a woman treat them. One night outlaw Rafe McCay ends up in her office, needing treatment for a bullet wound.

Annie patches Rafe up and tells him he'll need some continuing treatment if he hopes to survive. Rafe needs to be on the move now...so he forces Annie to go with him, so she could look after his injuries. The two hole up in an abandoned cabin in the woods where Annie must treat his wounds and figure out how to get away from him. But as she gets to know him, she realizes he's not the man she first thought he was.

Pretty basic story in this book - man kidnaps woman, woman tries to escape, but eventually falls in love with him and helps him clear his name. The setting and bits and pieces of true history give the book a little originality.

I'm not a big fan of the whole "woman falling for her kidnapper" storyline. It just doesn't ring my bell. This one was okay. Not horrible, but not great. I thought the early-to-middle parts of the book got bogged down some because nothing was really happening in the story and all you keep reading is Annie and Rafe living in a rustic cabin. It was a bit boring. Then the later part of the book, where the "plot" gets resolved flies by. Howard did a lot of skipping around and summarizing in that section. It made the story feel kind of uneven.

And the whole thing with Annie having mystically healing hands...weird. That came across really out of place in this story, at least to me. And I didn't think it was needed at all.

Also...the first sex scene in the book. One word...yikes!

So...hmmm. I would necessarily say all Howard fans should read this book. But it wasn't horrible. Probably something worth reading if you find it used somewhere.

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### Tetty Marlinda says

#64 for 2017 RC

Genre : Historical Romance

At the start, I got bored with this book. Alur yang lamban dan hampir tidak ada kejutan sepanjang cerita.

Bercerita tentang buronan Rafe McCay yang terluka dan menyandra Annie Parker, seorang dokter yang dipaksa menyembuhkannya. Rafe terpaksa membawa serta Annie dalam pelariannya, dan berencana akan mengembalikannya setelah lukanya sembuh.

Tapi sejalan dengan waktu, Rafe tidak pernah membawa Annie kembali ke kotanya...

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## Kento Bookworm says

Loved it ♥?♥?♥?

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## Mara says

A weak heroine marred this book, above all because she was totally lacking coherence. She survived medical school, at a time when women were considered a nothing, but here she's a blooming missus. Eww. Pity

An other coupe de grace was the absurd paranormal elements thrown in for no reason, and that had no reason within the text itself.

It's a real pity, as both the hero and plot are good. Not one of her best books, IMHO.

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## Preeti ♥? (Romance She Reads) says

[Really the story can

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## graveyardgremlin (formerly faeriemyst) says

I got to page 182 when I just had to stop - the book wasn't totally horrible but I didn't like it. I didn't hate or love, like or dislike either Annie or Rafe, which in a romance I need to like at least one of them to keep reading. Annie was a personality that changed; one second she's a strong, independent woman, the next a simpering, dependent, and insecure girl. I hate when authors make characters go from one extreme to another like that. The plot and pacing were rather slow and not that interesting either. The thing I disliked the most was the loves scenes, if you can even call them that. They felt weird and wrong, were disturbing, and not romantic in the least. I think that covers my main reason for not continuing other than not caring to finish the book.

This is the second book of Linda Howard's I haven't cared for, but the first I didn't finish. Even though everyone seems to absolutely adore her books I'm beginning to think they aren't for me. However, I will read Son of the Morning because I love time-travels, and will most likely give at least one of her other books I have lying around and a romantic suspense novel a chance before I write her off for good.

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## Hasnamezied says

Wow just Wow . I will take a while before I start reading any new book or any book.

Linda Howard is the Queen, how can she make a strong sweet lovely plot ??? Love Oh Sweet Love yes that was how I felt while reading it and after I finished SIGH. I still feel good no great .

Highly Recommended.

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**Rachel says**

[ No (hide spoiler)]

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**Lady Vigilante (Feifei) says**

**5 stars!!**

I think there's truly something magical about a book if you can re-read it multiple times and still be enamored with the story, characters, and writing. Most, if not all, of Linda Howard's books are like that for me but the one I've re-read the most is this book. Set in the wild & dangerous time period after the Civil War, The Touch of Fire is a captivating western romance about two individuals striving to *belong* and how they discover a love that is found in the most unexpected of places.

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Well on her way in becoming a spinster, **Annie Parker** is a dedicated and meticulous doctor, a profession that most people believe to be unladylike so she is constantly looked down upon. Nevertheless, that doesn't diminish her passion for her job or her innate love for healing. On a typical work night, she is shocked to see a hooded but wounded man stumbling into her clinic.

An outlaw only by name, **Rafe McCay** has been on the run for 4 years, evading bounty hunters and lawmakers after being at the wrong place at the wrong time. After being shot by one infamous bounty hunter, Rafe stops by Annie's clinic and seeks medication, only to be told that his wound could fester and without proper care, can contaminate and lead to death. Thus, Rafe kidnaps and takes Annie with him to treat his wounds.

Due to extreme weather conditions, Annie and Rafe are temporarily stranded in an abandoned abode for days. Both are naturally wary of each other and don't expect to develop feelings but it happens. With little outside interference, they both have the time to learn more about each other.

When it's finally revealed what turned Rafe into a wanted man, both Annie and Rafe set out to try to clear his name, encountering Native Americans, unwanted bounty hunters, and one tough lawmaker along the way.

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Just to clear out the air, this book is far from perfect and to top that, there is a very *slight* paranormal aspect (which I'm usually not too fond of). However, this book is perfect for *me*. I loved the setup of the story:

kidnapping mixed with a strong, silent hero and an intelligent heroine. I think what made this really work for me – again and again – is that I *knew* there was nothing to fear from Rafe. He may be a kidnapper, an alleged murderer, but not purposely so. Life dished out a terrible plate for him and he did what he had to do to survive but he never hurt an innocent. Pairing him with a character that's his complete opposite was just brilliant. It was very interesting to see this rough and rugged man fall for the sweet-tempered, warmhearted woman.

My favorite part about this book, however, wasn't the romance (shocking right??). It was the rich & beautifully described historical setting. I'm a huge American history geek, and I thought it was a genius move to incorporate historical icons like Vanderbilt, J.P. Morgan, and Jefferson Davis into the story. There's a mix of everything in here – romance, history, and political intrigue that made for an entertaining and thrilling read.

I would recommend this book to fans of historical romance that aren't bothered by extra details about the Civil War and enjoy a little dark & suspense in their stories.

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### **Lisa says**

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Okay so the story goes that Rafe McKay is wanted for a murder he didn't commit and

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### **new\_user says**

Poor writing (e.g. many instances of "..., for she frequently had to travel..." Overly formal and archaic in comparison to the tone of the rest of her text. Also many instances of the author obviously conveying historical and situational context using characters as mouthpieces, a little clumsy. E.g. a distraught, grieving character exclaiming, "He was only about seven-years-old!") Good physical descriptions though.

Solid, interesting hero. Heroine was a mite too perfect for my tastes. Hero was very convincing as a good, strong man on the run, driven, because of circumstances, to be ruthless. It was very interesting to learn more about him as the plot and their relationship progressed. Believed him as a skilled gunslinger. All around hot guy, LOL. (Even his name is cool: Rafe.) Much more developed than the heroine, who is just... perfect, that's all, a stand-in for the reader to place herself in the action.

-1000 points for her trite response ("pain on both sides") to the colonials' conflict with the Indians. Give your readers some credit, please. Don't dumb down history. The colonials were the aggressors, let's face it, and this is a modern, PC sugar coat and an amateurish approach to dealing with historical subjects. I don't think that has a place in literature (art imitating life and all that). Is this really what a colonial woman's reaction would have been? Almost certainly not. For those who expect novelists to have a responsibility to teach, here you are. Have some respect and gravity towards history. I'll grant that she did bother to consider the Indian perspective, at least, but spinning centuries-old history? One can educate without bending facts and trust a sensible audience to come to the right conclusion. At least she researched some, even if she didn't cover this

subject respectably (in which case I prefer an author not to go into the subject at all). Pet peeve. At any rate, this is a small part of the plot.

Moving right along, secondary characters are a trifle stereotypical Western. A few provide some lighter notes to the story.

Good plot. Heroine's resistance to a physical relationship with the hero is rather contrived, but once that hurdle's passed, the real plot arc begins and that's very interesting, involving escape from pitiless bounty hunters, a political conspiracy and a setup, etc. Gradual development of relationship and trust between characters believable.

Bedroom scenes were more heated for the urgency and passion conveyed by the hero than the heroine (passive). He took the lead there. They are not very long, and after the first one or two, they are not detailed, although still heated. (Though I was struck by the fact that the hero often foregoes foreplay and still finds the heroine exceedingly receptive each time. Different strokes, I suppose.)

Not a big fan of the supernatural element tossed in, but the plot did need a little something more to power it another xx pages and the characters treated it in a believable fashion.

I'm between three stars and four. I'm assuming since this was one of her earlier books that the somewhat amateur mistakes seen here in her writing improve in later books.

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### **Jenny says**

Rafe an outlaw kidnaps a doctor, Annie to treat his wounds. They fall in love and together they set out to clear his name! It is always amazing reading about an alpha brooding male falling for a sweet intelligent woman! Romantic book with lovable characters!

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### **Paige Bookdragon says**

REREAD AS OF NOV 27, 2016.

Previous ratings: 4 stars

Current ratings: 1 star

**Okay. I totally forgot this was a reread. I read the book without any idea that I'm already done with this. What I read (and I read them thoroughly) disgusts me. I have to find my notes to explain my review well, but (sorry Miss Howard) this will be the first L.H book that I'll rate as 1 star.**

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### **Jane Stewart says**

Enjoyable western.

The story begins in 1871 with Rafe on the run from bounty hunters. He is shot and goes to a doctor's home where Dr. Annie Parker treats his wounds. She tells him his wounds will need medical care for three days, so he kidnaps her to keep her with him while on the run.

Most of the story happens while they are on the run together. There are some neat things happening toward the end of the book. The ending was great.

AUDIOBOOK NARRATOR:

Natalie Ross did a great job.

DATA:

Narrative mode: 3rd person. Story length: 312 pages. Swearing language: moderate plus s\*\*\* a few times. Sexual language: moderate. Number of sex scenes: eleven. Setting: 1871 Arizona. Copyright: 1992. Genre: historical western romance.

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## **Miau says**

Caution: minor spoilers ahead. Tread at your own peril.

I should have loved this book, since it contains a lot of the elements I enjoy in a romance:

- Historical + western + romance. As the saying goes, *you had me at hello*
- A well-liked author. The Mackenzie collection and Mr. Perfect are among my favorite reads from 2012
- A brooding hero, and an outlaw to boot.
- A lady doctor, from whom backbone and some maturity is expected. I loved Dr. Quinn TV show back in the 90s.
- An enemy-to-lovers storyline, always promising.
- A miner town, so Jack London, and I loved The Call of the Wild even more than Dr. Quinn.

And how did it go? Terribly disappointing, let me tell you.

He's a dark, tall fugitive who kidnaps a woman doctor in a miner town. He's on the run, has been shot and needs time to recover. So she's forced to follow him to an isolated cabin/shack in the mountains with the promise of being taken back to the city as soon as he's healed.

But from the first page, my cheesy-alert signal started bleeping. Never a good sign. Repetitive sentences, sappy undertones, out-of-character or out-of-situation inner dialogues and so on.

After 50 pages, it was obvious the cheesiness was there to stay. 30 pages more, and the allegedly courageous heroine was sounding more like a scatterbrained damsel in distress. Bear in mind we are told this woman has studied medicine in opposition to society rules and strictures, overcoming its rebukes and criticisms and finding her place in a miner town. She's supposed to have come out of that ordeal, if not unscathed, at least knowledgeable. But what she does is not consistent with what we're told about her. She's supposed to be smart and independent, but acts rather foolishly. She's clearly infatuated with the hero from the beginning and therefore forgives his rudeness, abruptness and cruelty. She starts doing stupid things. For example, at some point she attempts to escape (finally, some initiative), but does it all wrong, proving she's not capable of fighting to save her own ass. He catches her immediately –there was no challenge there, really- and she's so thankful with him for saving her life...



So far, this book had found its place in the cheesy bookshelf. Right there, it was awarded a place of honor among other TSTL heroines. Only by adding a jerk hero could it get worse. It does.

So now, the hero. Brooding heroes are expected to... well, brood. Fine with me. Brooding entails a dark past, personal struggles, issues to work out... all of which provide some flesh to an otherwise black-and-white character.

But this guy doesn't just brood. He's cold and rude and cruel and selfish and, according to what we're told he can't *control his urges*. There is something inconsistent with the character here too. While on one hand he's portrayed as cold and inexpressive, on the other he can't get hold of his temper or *desires*.

And then we come to the attempted rape scene. He wakes up in the middle of the night with a hard-on. She's sleeping by his side, half dressed (to prevent her from escaping), and he removes his underwear to be closer to her. Closer as in *inside* her. She wakes up with an acute pain and fights her way out of the makeshift bed before his final thrust. When she confronts him, he claims he's not a rapist and that he prefers his women conscious. But then, what would you call it, since she was asleep and therefore unaware of his actions?

I didn't like this scene, and I didn't like how it was resolved. The lady doctor seemed to be terminally stupid, and the hero insufferably mean.

I'll put off this book as unfinished, because I refuse to keep reading it.

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### **Kathleen says**

[\$100,000 of 1870 dollars would be worth: \$1,785,714.29 in 2013 (hide spoiler)]

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### **Karla says**

**4 Stars! Not sure that I liked the set-up in the beginning, but then it came around nicely, and was quite enjoyable!**

Don't know how I missed this Linda Howard book, but I'm glad I finally got a chance to read it. I love her older stuff and although this wasn't one of her best, it was still a memorable read.

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### **Kathrynn says**

This is a historical western. It started out with a lot of potential. Outlaw being hunted and on the run. Bounty hunter hot on the trail. Shot. Goes to small mining town and finds doctor (Annie). Kidnaps her and takes her

into the mountains to tend to him. Is mean and cruel, says very little to her and most dialogue is snappy and short or he curses at her. Humiliates her on more than one occasion, attempts to rape her in her sleep then gets mad at her for stopping him.

She decides to just get "it" over with and he acts like an animal.

That was all This Reader could take.

Too many other great books to read to mess with this one any longer.

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### **Fani \*loves angst\* says**

It's actually more like 4.5\*.

I absolutely loved the beginning and the days spent in the cabin. I was somewhat turned off by the slight supernatural element which I found completely uncalled for and didn't actually add anything in the story. Overall a great read and a keeper.

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### **Pamela(AllHoney) says**

Stockholm Syndrome? Well, maybe but it was a great story for the first 3/4s. It slowed down after a while and ended well but it seemed like it lagged for a bit. I liked the strong characters. Set in the old West in Arizona territory. Annie Parker, a woman doctor, is kidnapped by Rafe McCay, a wanted man, being chased by a bounty hunter.

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