



Paper Roses

Amanda Cabot

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The future stretches out in front of Sarah Dobbs like the pure blue Texas sky. Leaving the past behind in Philadelphia, mail-order bride Sarah arrives in San Antonio ready to greet her groom, Austin Canfield, a man she has never met but whose letters have won her heart from afar. But there is one problem--he has died. And Sarah cannot go back East.

As Sarah tries to reconcile herself to a future that is drastically changed, Austin's brother, Clay, struggles with his own muddled plans. Though he dislikes working on the family ranch and longs for a different life, Clay is driven to avenge his brother's death. But something between them is growing and neither Clay nor Sarah is ready to admit it.

Paper Roses Details

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Author : Amanda Cabot

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From Reader Review Paper Roses for online ebook

Maria says

Mail-order bride Sarah Dobbs moves to Texas to meet her future husband, Austin Canfield. She has never seen him in person but his letters (that she calls her *Paper Roses*) have won her heart. Her destiny is quite different, though, because when she arrives in San Antonio, she does not find Austin waiting for her. His brother Clay meets Sarah instead to tell her a dreadful news: Austin has died. What is she supposed to do now, since she cannot go back home where there is nobody who cares about her and her little sister?

Despite its difficult and poignant themes, this book made me feel relaxed while reading it. I loved the calm and the tranquillity that Ms. Cabot gave me through her words. Probably I was in the mood to read a book like this one, probably what happened to the protagonists was inspiring. I do not know, but I can safely say that this is definitely one of the best books I have ever read!

The Christian theme was very strong, but I thought it was appropriate to describe all the events that took place, and to explain the change Sarah and Clay felt in their hearts by the end of the story. They were so angry and disappointed at the beginning and I thought this was going to be a sad story. But it was not. It was reassuring and emotional and I savoured every page with curiosity and eagerness. I loved Sarah and Clay, and I loved how everything went for them. I really hoped that her *Paper Roses* had led her in Texas for a reason, and that reason was a very pleasant surprise. It was a proof that though some things can be painful, life is always unpredictable and we just have to accept our fate. When we think that things are not going the way we wanted, it does not mean that they are wrong. On the contrary, that is the moment when life surprises us. And I think that is the message of this novel, a message that Sarah and Clay did not want to see at first.

As for the villain... oh my goodness!! The villain was evil and totally insane! I had some suspicions at first, but then I changed my mind because I did not want to believe it was possible. There were some characters I did not like at all and any of them could have been the bad person in my opinion. But when I realized who the responsible for many horrible things was, I admit I was quite shocked. My suspicions were well-founded and the whole scene was terrible to see. Not because I did not like it, but because I was scared to death! I could not believe what I was reading, and I found myself hoping that things would get better soon.

I would recommend this novel to Christian Fiction readers because of the religious aspect that is central in the story. However, all the people that like reading good and engaging books may give this one a try. You will not be disappointed, I promise!

Anne says

Aaaahhh what a beautiful book! Gorgeous cover! Dreamy title! Blurb that sounds just like my cup of tea! Christian romance! Yay!

I was expecting rainbows and sunshine, and instead I got heartache and nightmares.

Do not be fooled! Ignore the title! Ignore the cover! Ignore the blurb! IGNORE IT!!!!

I have no idea what in sweet heaven's name just happened, but I *hated* this book. At best, it was a boring

story with good principles the characters had difficulty grasping, and at worst it was an annoyingly concocted tale of revenge and murder, with a mystery that made no sense, a feeble attempt at romance, and characters that drove me completely up the wall. *Paper Roses* was 75% annoying and boring, and 25% creepy.

First of all, there was little to no setting description, no real attempt to create an atmosphere, and the only moods established were on the one part a dreary sadness as depressing as staring at a fading yellow painted wall, and on the other a thirst for vengeance so corruptive it rivals that of any modern-day terrorist.

The heroine was a good girl, afflicted by a limp and bearing a heavy grudge against her father, and other than her incomprehensible partiality for Austin, I found nothing to really dislike against her although she was as interesting as a doorknob. She didn't have much personality, no vitality, she was sad and depressed all the time, she never smiled, in short, was just plain boring.

And her feelings for Austin? I'll tell you why they're incomprehensible. I definitely understand falling in love over letters, and wanting to marry the man who wrote them, but **as a reader**, if you never get to read those dashed letters, it remains a complete mystery why Sarah would be in love with Austin. So, when she learns that Austin is dead and grieves like he's been her husband for thirty years, it makes no sense because to us, she has never met Austin and doesn't know him at all. So, yeah, all that grief over him? Why, God? Why did you have to let him die? Yeah. ANNOYING.

I'll never understand why we were never privy to those darned paper roses (that's what she calls the letters, hence the title). *Especially* since (view spoiler).

And now, we must add to that Austin's super top-lofty, boorish, thickheaded and STUBBORN brother, who just happens to be one of the worst heroes I've ever had the displeasure to encounter. Look, I love a stubborn, mulish man as much as the next gal, but *him*, he had NOTHING of the hero about him. Nothing. He was disagreeable, foolish and so damnably bent on revenge that it became completely insupportable. His self-appointed mission is to refrain from eating, sleeping, laughing, and being normal until he finds Austin's murderer and kills him.

That's where the creepiness creeps in. Maybe it wasn't a good idea to be reading this while watching an episode of *Forensic Files* about a severe case of cold-blooded overkill, and maybe that's what affected my mood so much, but nevertheless, the fact is, after all the sadness and grief and boringness, I just wasn't prepared at all for the major twist at the end that felt completely out of place and plain random, not to mention totally ridiculous. It was bloodcurdling, and so dashed unnecessary.

I think I need to shelf this in the "horror" genre.

And the romance?! THE ROMANCE?! Someone please tell me where it is. I can't find it. There was NOTHING, absolutely NOTHING, and I repeat, NOTHING, romantic about this book. Did I say nothing? NOTHING!

All the hero was thinking about was his blasted revenge, and all the heroine was thinking about was her little sister.

Which reminded me why I used to dislike children in romance novels. Because they suck the H/h's attention and derail the focus of their relationship to bring attention on themselves. In this case, Thea was a cute two year-old, but just that **a cute two year-old**. I have no idea why the heroine went to so many lengths to ensure that her sister knew what was going on, BECAUSE SHE WAS ONLY TWO! I don't know about y'all, but

when I was two, I was - oh sorry, right, I can't remember what I thought when I was two, BECAUSE I WAS ONLY TWO! Sheeeeeeeesh. Start focusing already, Sarah. Thea will be happy with you as long as you take proper care of her, but for heaven's sake you don't have to be stressing about her future the way you would if she were of marriageable age.

Ladies and gents, I don't know what happened here, all my friends loved this and heartily recommended it, I was so excited for it, but...no. Just no. It was horrible, from start to finish, and don't even ask me why I read it all.

The ONLY reason it's not getting a 1 star rating is because some of the Christian beliefs and principles were worthy of notice, and the importance of forgiveness was duly heightened, but don't let's talk about the sudden "conversion" of the hero, or I shall really explode.

Scattered Petals or Tomorrow's Garden down the road? I don't know. The covers are once again so enticing...but I've seen what comes of trusting covers...and friend recommendations ;) To those who told me this was awesome, you owe me :P

And now, please, someone please comment below and tell me what made you like this book, because I can't for the life of me understand why it has so many high ratings.

Heather says

Hmmmm...so disappointed. I really wanted to like this book, because the book description sounded like something right up my alley. I'm always on the lookout for new authors in this genre that I actually like. Unfortunately, I don't think I'll read more from this author. The first part of the book was flat, and the characters were very two dimensional. There were several instances where the characters had revelations about each other ("clearly Sarah was spunky..." or "clearly she would make a good mother...") without any real evidence given to support the assumptions. The lack of romantic tension was really disappointing, and the religion was too heavy-handed.

Liza says

"She'd judged Papa, calling his sin unforgivable, acting as if she were spotless. She was not. She was a sinner, a worse sinner than Papa, for she'd broken one of God's holy commandments, not twice as Papa had, but countless times."

Her sin? Not honoring her mother and father. Anger. Hatred.

His sin? Killing her mother and himself and leaving his two daughters, one of whom was less than two years old, without family, friends, or money.

This is generally my problem with so-called "inspirational" novels. I am a moral person. I sleep well at night. However I don't consider murder to be the same as think my dad's an asshole for killing my mom in cold blood. Somehow, that just doesn't line up as being the same sort of gravity.

This book wasn't terrible. Not nearly as preachy as some Christian novels I've (tried to) read. At 75% of the way through the book, it got a little hard to digest and overlook. I found myself skipping large paragraphs by about 60% (and entire pages by the last chapter) because by then, the author was fixating on the religious aspect, which I felt added nothing to the novel except an unrealistic excuse to forgive everyone and anyone of anything they did in the past, present, or future. Yeah, forgiveness is great, but only if the forgiven cares enough to change their ways; otherwise, prison would be a lot more reasonable.

The one upside to Christian-themed novels is that they're not one giant, torrid, sex scandal. It's refreshing. However, honestly? Too much "you're a horrible person because of XYZ and you should come to God because you're worth nothing and can't be saved unless you do" ruins a novel for me a lot quicker than fifty pages of sex does.

Without the religious references, this probably would've been a 3. The characters are mostly decent, it's not *too* terribly predictable, and like I said, while I don't mind badly described sex scenes (read one and you've read them all), not having to wade through pages and pages of an author struggling to come up with a new word for "penis" is somewhat of a relief.

Anne Osterlund says

Sarah is haunted by the violent deaths of her parents. With nothing left in Philadelphia, she heads west to find a new home and a new future with the man she fell in love with via his letters. But when Sarah and her two-year-old sister disembark in San Antonio, her fiancé isn't there to greet her.

Clay Canfield has lost almost everyone in his life. His father has suffered a stroke. His wife and their unborn child are dead. And now his brother has been murdered.

Leaving Clay to inform his brother's fiancé, before committing his own life to the hazardous task of tracking down his brother's murderer. The only obstacle is that Sarah refuses to go home.

Paper Roses is my first Amanda Cabot read. My favorite part of the book was the premise, seeing Clay and Sarah come to grips with the destruction of their previous hopes and dreams in order to embrace the beauty of their current relationships and greater community.

Sarah says

Age Appropriate For: 15 and up (romance and mild violence)

Best for Ages: 15 and up

Have you ever gone through a time where you felt you couldn't find a decent book to read? Well, that has been me this year when it comes to fiction. It seems that most of the fiction I have read has turned out to either be just okay, or something I downright dislike. This book was a good book I read in the middle of some not so great ones.

Set in Texas (near San Antonio) in the 1800's, this book was off to a good start. I am partial to books set in

my home state, and this one did a good job of catching some of the Texas flavor without going overboard.

The main character was a strong woman who was still very womanly. Her love for her sister, and determination to provide her with a better life, was so beautiful. She faces so many challenges right off the bat, and she keeps going and trying to make her sister's life and the lives of the town members better.

The main guy, while I was confused and didn't like him as much as first, grew on me. I liked how he wanted to make sure that (name) was taken care of, even though he wasn't sure about her. He was a man of honor, even if he struggled with unforgiveness and resentment.

There were two things that confused me about this book and detracted a little from my overall feelings about it. While Austin is dead, I was confused about him. On the one hand, he was a strong Christian and on the other hand was getting into trouble because of his temper. The things people said about him sometimes were conflicting. I don't want to give anything away, but who wrote the letters and why confused me.

The mystery that surrounds some of the strange events going on confused me, even though the author had laid clues toward the beginning of the book. The solution was one I felt I should have guessed, but took me by surprise. For me, that is a good feeling.

The romance was sweet, predictable, and nothing that would make anyone blush. Unlike some of the books I have read this year, the romance was God-honoring and without improper elements. The message of forgiveness and trusting God was well done and not over-powering.

I recommend this book to those who like historical fiction, sweet romance, and stories that keep you guessing.

Sydney Elaine says

I was originally not interested in this book because of it's Texan/western theme, but it was free on kindle so I decided to try it out. It was an amazing book, so I'm really glad I didn't let the setting get in the way of reading this sweet story.

The relationship between Sarah and Clay was gradual, it wasn't really love at first sight, which I liked. It seemed more realistic. I also liked the plot twists in the book... gave it a bit more dimension. The characters had real problems, they didn't have cookie cutter lives and then all of a sudden something happened. They started out with problems, which made them seem more real. The story really grabs your attention, making it a page-turner.

The ending felt a bit fast paced for me personally. I feel like Cabot could have drawn it out just a little bit, but it still had a nice closure to it.

All in all, this book was just really good. I would definitely recommend this to anyone.

edited April 23, 2014

Stephany says

I'll be honest, I wasn't expecting a lot out of this book. It was free on my Kindle so I thought the book would be lame.

Luckily, I was wrong because this book was seriously good! It followed a woman who was betrothed to a man, who came from Philadelphia to Texas to marry him with her 2-year-old sister (her parents had died earlier) only to find out the man was dead. The man's brother came to tell her this news and she went to live with him and his father for the time being. The man, Clay, has recently lost his pregnant wife to food poisoning and is bent on revenge for his brother's death. The woman, Sarah, wants to escape the pressures of society life (and subsequent back lash of her father committing suicide) so she finds a job as a schoolteacher. Through it all, they find faith and a love for one another.

What I loved most about this book was how seamlessly the author showed the development of the characters, especially the relationship between Clay and Sarah. You could see the gradual changes as the story progressed.

I also loved the way she weaved their faith journeys. It wasn't something that happened overnight and I loved how she showed their coming to know Jesus. It felt real and natural.

It's a great story with a great message. I would thoroughly recommend this book.

(And I see now it's almost \$10 on Kindle, so I'm glad I snatched it up when it was free!)

Margaret Chind says

In the author's letter to readers, Amanda Cabot states that she had referred to this book as the mail-order-bride-meets-Cyrano-de-Bergerac book. After reading it, I find it to be that and so much more. I initially requested this book and through confusion received it months later and it was on my back burner, but when I realized I could have the opportunity to read the sequel *Scattered Petals* and I had enjoyed starting this one I snatched it back up. I enjoyed getting back into the characters lives and now I am eager for the sequel.

Paper Roses is my first introduction to author Amanda Cabot, but after reading this one I definitely do not plan for it to be my last. This story of *Paper Roses* has the best title (and I am certain that *Scattered Petals* will be just as appropriate). Bringing together the elements of faith, forgiveness, vengeance, murder and madness as well as trust and child-like intuitiveness this story finds its way into your heart and holds on. The characters are real and their plights are difficult. The mystery is woven through out and the clues kept quiet. Romance is palpable, but confusion as it is in real life.

Through out the story I could not guess what would come next, but my interest was peaked and the pages kept turning. I highly recommend this read as I am sure will recommend the entire series.

Thanks to Revell Books for providing a copy for review.

Melissa says

It's not that I didn't like the book, though it certainly wasn't necessarily a favorite, either. There were many aspects I enjoyed, in fact--including the romance between Sarah and Clay, the historical setting in the Texas frontier, and the mix of mystery and historical, Christian fiction.

As is typically the case, there were aspects to the Christian fiction that did not resonate with me, but on the positive side Cabot did not dwell on these as some authors of Christian fiction do. I did not find this book to be as preachy as some Christian fiction can be, which is another plus as far as I'm concerned. It was enjoyable to read the romance between Sarah and Clay unfold, though at times I wished there was a bit more excitement to their courtship. There was at least an added element of suspense and excitement with the mystery of Austin's murder, as well as a thief who strikes all over town. Cabot effectively works the mystery into the rest of the story and manages to tie all of the pieces together. My main complaint about that was that the story did have some slow points and the book might have benefited from having 75-100 pages cut out to improve the pacing a big.

Overall Paper Roses was a pleasant read. Probably not a must-read, but if you're looking for something relatively light with a positive message, you might pick this one up.

Agnieszka says

I don't understand why I didn't like this book very much. It's very well written, has interesting characters and story plot. I liked the way it started and the back-ground story - especially the meaning of the title and its importance for the story, I liked Sarah and her sister very much, the relationships she developed - on the ranch and in the town - and her development within the story. In the beginning I wasn't so sure about Clay but liked him more with each chapter.

Still all in all I don't feel like I'll miss anything if I never read this book.

Wendy says

BACK OF THE BOOK BLURB

Her future stretched out like the clear blue Texas sky.

But a storm is coming.

Leaving the past behind in Philadelphia, mail-order bride Sarah Dobbs arrives in San Antonio ready to greet her groom--a man she has never met but whose letters, her paper roses, have won her heart from afar. But there is a problem--Austin Canfield is dead, and Sarah cannot go back East.

As Sarah tries to reconcile herself to a future that is drastically changed, Austin's brother Clay wants nothing more than to shake the Texas dust from his boots, but first he must find his brother's killer. And then there's Sarah.

Something is blooming out in the vast Texas landscape that neither Clay nor Sarah is ready to admit, and the promise of redemption blows like a gentle breeze through the prairie grasses.

(copied from Amazon.com)

MY REVIEW

I love the song "Paper Roses" so this title naturally pulled me to get this book, and I must say that I enjoyed the book as much as I do the song, two completely different 'stories' though. Well maybe if I do a little finagling there may be something kind of similar, let's see if you can figure it out. I am looking forward to reading the next two books in this series and I also have my eye on The Westward Winds series.

Chandra says

AUTHOR: Amanda Cabot is a Historical, Inspirational, Romance fiction author. She has a fantastic command of being able to describe people, scenery and situations. You do not have to use your imagination very much to be brought into her story.

GENRE: Historical fiction, Romance, Inspirational romance, Western

SETTING: San Antonio Texas 1856

CENTRAL FEMALE CHARACTER: She is determined regardless of the situation. She encourages others and looks after needs. A resourceful woman but where was God when she needed Him the most.

CENTRAL MALE CHARACTER: He is also determined. A rancher he is not but a doctor is where his heart lies. He has had much taken away from him recently. He no longer has use for God. He can do it all on his own.

SYNOPSIS: After tragedy strikes, she moves her little sister from Philadelphia to San Antonio as a mail order bride. She knows from the letters that she has been receiving that this man will make a wonderful husband. Upon her arrival in Texas, she finds that tragedy has struck again. The man that picks her up and takes her to the Bar C ranch wants nothing more than to find out who killed his brother so that he can get back to his medical practice. This is a story of mystery, secrets and about two people that have shut God out.

WHAT I LIKED: The way the main female character is committed to her very curious little sister. I loved how the main male character continuously got sucked in deeper and deeper which slowly took him away from his ultimate goal. With all of the strange occurrences, you knew there was a dark presence lurking somewhere right around the corner. But God never closes the door. He just waits for you to figure it out.

WHAT I DID NOT LIKE: The main female character really went over the top in her protectiveness of her sister. Became a bit annoying. The book moved just a little itty bit to slow which is why 4/5 stars.

Brenda says

I really liked this book! I always like the going west, mail order bride type stories and this book doesn't disappoint. She goes south after reading wonderful stories of love to meet her groom and finds that his brother picks her up and her groom has died. What a disappointment. It is the west and you don't just turn

around and go home it takes a very long time to take those trips. She calls her letters her Paper Rosees and in the end she finally falls for.....well you need to read the book. It is a beautifl old west story and I loved every minuted of it.

Here is the story that appears online that describes the book: Her future stretched out like the clear blue Texas sky.

But a storm is coming.

Leaving the past behind in Philadelphia, mail-order bride Sarah Dobbs arrives in San Antonio ready to greet her groom--a man she has never met but whose letters, her paper roses, have won her heart from afar. But there is a problem--Austin Canfield is dead, and Sarah cannot go back East.

As Sarah tries to reconcile herself to a future that is drastically changed, Austin's brother Clay wants nothing more than to shake the Texas dust from his boots, but first he must find his brother's killer. And then there's Sarah.

Something is blooming out in the vast Texas landscape that neither Clay nor Sarah is ready to admit, and the promise of redemption blows like a gentle breeze through the prairie grasses.

Book 1 of the Texas Dreams series, Paper Roses will sweep you away with a tale of love, loss, and tantalizing possibilities.

Amanda Cabot is an accomplished author under various pen names. She is a charter member of Romance Writers of America, the co-founder of its New Jersey chapter, and an avid traveler

Paula Vince says

Sarah, a mail-order bride, has fallen in love with her future groom, Austin Canfield, through the wonderful letters she's received from him. She and her baby sister, Thea, arrive only to be greeted by his brother, Clay, with the tragic news that Austin has recently been killed. Going back home is out of the question, as there are too many bad memories. Sarah decides to stay at the small town of Ladreville and attempt to make a new start anyway, although it will be nothing like the one she anticipated for them.

I love it when romance novels are blended with other riveting elements. This one had a murder mystery to be solved, which turned out to be far more than just an isolated incident. Is Austin's death connected to an earlier one which didn't seem to be sinister? Has it anything to do with a spate of robberies which keep occurring? The solutions turned out to be genius. The twisted logic which went through more than one character's head was warped but believable. I liked the way everything neatly tied together, becoming significant at the perfect time, such as Sarah's fear of riding horses and her attempts to get Clay's infirm father walking again. Even the bits which seemed a bit melodramatic, such as the history of her parents' deaths (how could her father do that to two young daughters?) and Patience Canfield's supposed cause of death were there for a purpose. I liked how Sarah seemed to be wiser than Clay in guessing who the murderer was, yet it turned out, they were both wrong.

It was unfortunate that Clay, being a doctor, didn't realise how Sarah's administrations would help his father's legs, but sadly, it didn't come across as infeasible.

Sarah is a heroine with a loving, altruistic outlook. The enmity between the French and German settlers of the Texan town was interesting. Instead of regretting the situation, she is admirable the way she decides to do all she can to turn things around. This meant that other townsfolk become real flawed, but lovable, people too, as we see them through Sarah's eyes. Her romance with Clay was great but I would have appreciated even a bit more kissing. After all, we bore with them for a long time.

I'm sure I'd enjoy reading the sequels to this book.
