



The Promise of Jenny Jones

Maggie Osborne

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A desperate mother takes Jenny Jones' place in front of a firing squad in exchange for Jenny's promise to see her daughter safely to California. Though she and the six-year-old Graciela get off to a rocky start, Jenny will do everything in her power to keep her promise, even with the child's cousins in hot pursuit. Then she is mysteriously drawn to the handsome cowboy Ty Sanders, and though neither know it yet, their purpose is the same.

The Promise of Jenny Jones Details

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From Reader Review The Promise of Jenny Jones for online ebook

Mei says

I must admit that I'm a sucker for this kind of romance!!!
Maggie Osborne is one of the best (the other is E. O'Connell)!

What is remarkable, and I repeat: **REMARKABLE**, in this book is the heroine, Jenny!

I don't think I ever met another heroine like her! She's big, she's strong, she's honorable, she's the absolute best!

What she isn't is a lady! She cusses, she wears trousers, she doesn't wear corsets, she rides astride, she knows how to fight and how to shoot, she smokes and drinks and she doesn't know what to do with a girl child! Oh, boy!!! I would fall in love with her myself!!!

But she has to deliver the girl, Graciela, to her father in San Francisco. She promised that to the girl's mother and Jenny never breaks a promise. Her word is all she has!

But she doesn't know how to manage such a gently bred girl. So their relationship is very difficult: she hates the "useless" and spoiled girl and Graciela hates her crude companion.

During the trip they're chased by the girl's cousins who want to kill her to gain her inheritance and by the girl's uncle, Ty, who wants to bring her to her father too. But when Ty dismisses Jenny and takes Graciela away, Jenny is not some weak woman who just accepts it: she just ambushes Ty, takes Graciela and leaves Ty tied as a salary to contemplate cactuses! LOL

I loved, loved Jenny!!!

Slowly, facing the murderous cousins both Ty and Jenny decide that it's wiser to join forces than to fight between themselves!

During the trip both Ty and Jenny will learn that being a loner is not such a nice thing. They will grow up and fall in love both with Graciela and with each other!

I adored Jenny! (I know, I know, I've already told you that several times!)

But I loved Graciela and Ty too!

Graciela has grown up too during the travels. From a snotty, spoiled girl pretending to be a lady to an intelligent and self-sufficient young girl. Slowly she grows to like and then love Jenny and Ty, where at the beginning she asked God, during the nightly prayers, to kill Jenny!

What a wonderful, heart-warming and sometimes heart-wrenching book, full of action, funny moments, tenderness and some hot "hunkering"!!!

?Karlyn P? says

Loved it! A great, fun and at times emotional historical about a down-and-out woman who gets a second chance at life – and finds a perfect love that surprisingly does bring some tears at the end. Saved from the firing squad in Mexico, Jenny switched places with a dying woman in exchange to bring the woman's 6-year old daughter to the father (Robert) in California. The daughter is an heiress, and according to many greedy relatives she would be better off dead so they could inherit the family fortune. Jenny's word is gold, and a promise is a promise. The daughter is a handful, and really makes this story come alive. (If you love kids with personality in your romances, this is a must read!) Unknown to Jenny, Robert's brother Ty is on a mission to help locate Robert's wife and daughter he hasn't seen in six years. As you can imagine, Jenny and Ty cross paths in Mexico and the sparks start to fly (as do the bullets!).

It's a fast paced story filled with action, humor and a lot of heart. The relationship between Ty and Jenny evolve into something bone deep, and the heat was steaming off them! I discovered this author last month with 'Silver Spoon' and am now glomming her backlist.

Karla says

5++ Stars!! I. LOVED. THIS. BOOK!!

One of the most amazing books I've ever read. I loved it all! Fantastic characters; a tough as nails heroine, a larger than life hero, and little girl that will steal your heart. There's action, adventure, romance and undying love that you feel deep in your soul. It's one of those books where you remember everything and when you think about it...you smile. It lived up to the hype and all the great reviews and is a book that I'll be reading again and again. A top notch read!

Lisa Kay says

I'm partial to western romances, and this is one the way they should be written. Jenny is a tall, rawboned, mule-driving - and skinning - redhead who smokes cigars, drinks hard liquor and uses cuss words as part of her daily vernacular. Her **word** is her bond, the only thing she has left in a 'kangaroo' court, in a dank jail cell, or anywhere else in a cold, cruel world where she has survived alone since she was nine. It is appropriate, at this juncture, to tell you she carries - not a Bible - but a **dictionary** in her pocket. She is a self-educated woman and she's always looking up the words people say to her. Sometimes she finds words on her own and wonders how to pronounce them. She daydreams about a word, savors it, and ponders how she'll one day use it in a sentence.

To Jenny a "*promise is a promise*," and she does not lie. All this endears her to me; despite her roughness in interacting with Graciela, the sheltered, pampered, and manipulative six year old she has promised to take from her mother's Mexican hacienda to her father's ranch in California. I found myself liking Jenny more and more. For Maggie Osborne has presented us with a very different heroine in this western romance, one I

can't help admiring while shaking my head at at the same time. I often found myself gasping at the way she interacted with Graciela, other times laughing outright.

Here came the tears again. Jenny rolled her eyes.

"My mama always kissed me good night..."

"Well, I'll be goddamned. First you ask God to kill me dead, now you're hinting I should kiss you good night?"

Indeed, Graciela detests Jenny, and sees her as the cause of her mother's death. For those readers who don't like children in their romance books, hang on to your runaway horse's mane. Ms. Osborne has written Graciela as a real person, a real child, which is vital to this wonderfully real romance. Truly, this is also Graciela's book, as well as Ty and Jenny's, and we get to see all three transformations. Graciela had me when, even though she hated Jenny, she had enough sense to ask herself: "What would Jenny do now?" It is a perfect question to ask when she finds herself trembling, confronted with snakes in an alleyway, in the desert, or in her family.

More related quotes that come further in the story:

"Anything else, Your Majesty?"

"I didn't say my prayers."

"I'll say them for you. Our father who art in et cetera, bless all the rotten cousins and kill Jenny. Amen."

And what of Ty, Graciela's uncle? Well, he is a hero damn near perfect as written for Jenny. *sigh* From his reasons for his attraction and admiration of Jenny, to his determination to woo her, to his willingness to be honest with her.

I became totally invested in these poignant characters and this pivotal chapter in their lives. None of them had TSTL moments, nor was there a Big Misunderstanding. Never having read MO before, I wasn't sure I was going to get a HEA. Was Ty going to tell Jenny those three precious little **words**? It made me cry when I didn't think it would, and turned the tables around to do the same thing with my laughter. The title of the book had new meaning by its conclusion. Plus, there's a wonderful epilogue that is perfectly written. God, I love a good epilogue.

Zumbagirl says

The Promise of Jenny Jones is the first book I've read by Maggie Osborne - and it's a winner!! Not usually a great fan of westerns, this one roped me in (tee hee) and I fell head over heels for the heroine, Jenny Jones, the little girl in the story, Graciela, and the cowboy hero, Ty. This is an unlikely trio - all at odds with each other at different times. It's often humorous hearing the altercations between Jenny and Graciela and Jenny and Ty. With so many problems and obstacles, I wasn't sure how a romance was going to happen - but it sure does! Because the H and h are always together in their journey, we see how the relationship develops between them, romantically and otherwise, as well as how their relationship with Graciela takes root. How are two people, both very independent and not wanting to get involved raising a child, going to handle caring for a 6-year-old girl, while being chased by greedy, blood-thirsty relatives trying to kidnap and kill said girl? Hmmm...

Something I particularly loved: watching Jenny and Ty learn to love and protect Graciela. People who have

never had their own child see things very differently than parents. So as this journey progresses, from Mexico to California, these two basically become parents to Graciela - sometimes disagreeing on the best parenting methods - but essentially becoming focused and in sync with each other about how to deal with Graciela. Graciela was a rip and I loved her to pieces. All that they went through really pulled on my heartstrings and I was worried they wouldn't get their HEA. It was a bittersweet ending, but the epilogue was amazing, one of the best ever. It really made me think about how life goes by too fast.

I also loved how Jenny had a star she spoke to and named after Graciela's mother, Marguarita. Everything she said was so beautiful. I cried and felt so sad that Marguarita didn't get to see her little girl grow up and be there with her. But I felt so happy and proud to see how well Graciela did grow up.

This is a quirky, sweet, funny and beautiful story that illustrates how different families are - some have a mother and father, others don't, but they still are a family, just a little different. Highly recommend it:)

Kathleen says

4.5 delighted stars for this historical novel, set in the Wild West, especially Mexico and California. Unique plot! Unique romance, too. Personally, I love credible kids in the plot, but some readers don't, so be warned: the little señorita plays a *major* role throughout the book. I'm not sure if this was a love story between Jenny and Ty, or between Jenny and the six-year-old child she promised to see safely home, Graciela. But either way, it's a winner on both counts! I laughed out loud repeatedly, and felt warmed by the bond that developed between Graciela and Jenny, and even Ty. The romance between Ty and Jenny was straightforward, no games, sizzling hot and very sweet. Dulcet!

Loved seeing little Graciela learn to cope with reality far away from her pampered lifestyle at her Mexican hacienda. Enjoyed watching her character develop. Credible. Poignant.

No time to write more now, but thanks to all my friends who recommended this one over the years. Why did I wait?? Guess I'm hardheaded like Jenny, a frickin' mule! (But wait, that kind of cussin's been banned in this book, in favor of "dulcet" delights in the dictionary.)

Contents include one or two sex scenes, some swearing and religious profanity, and some bloody murder. Lots of survival scenes in Mexico, too.

Sweet epilogue!

Ira says

The funniest American Historical Romance I've ever read so far!:))

Still plenty violent as usual happened in the era but much lighter than the one I usually read for this type of story. The affections which growing between Jenny, Ty and Graciela is delightful to read.

The epilogue? I truly loves it and the conversation Jenny have with Marguarita's star is so sweet:)

I certainly will read more of Ms. Osborne's books.

MomToKippy says

As I read this I kept saying to myself this would make a good movie. Books that make me think that have an interesting scenario, move along quickly (stuff happens), have colorful characters and are visually interesting. This does all that. However, the writing is mediocre and there is quite a bit of implausibility and nonsense along the way. When the hero can only describe his feelings for the heroine repeatedly as "she has great breasts" either the character is very shallow or the author has little imagination or both. He does get a little more eloquent (as does the author) as things move along though.

I often asked myself, why am I reading this?? I think I went past the point of no return so I had to finish it. This tends toward being a slapstick western that switches randomly to seriousness. So many incredible coincidences abound. It was truly a mixed bag for me. I was either laughing out loud, rolling my eyes, saying "isn't that sweet" and sometimes I think I had a tear in my eye. (shhh)

If I am making no sense it is because this book didn't make all that much either but was somewhat entertaining. If you like a humorous historical romantic western that is a bit cheesy at times you may have fun with this. It earns about 2.5 stars from me.

KatLynne says

Wow! There are no words that haven't been said before, and I'm sure much more eloquently, that describe the wonderful Jenny Jones and the value she puts behind her promise. Honesty is the core of her fiber and she refuses to tell a lie. She believes that telling a lie would be killing the only thing that's good in her. She believes her worth is in her word. *"If I don't have my word, I might as well be dead. I'd rather die with honor than live without the only thing that makes me feel like I can face another day."*

This distinguishing characteristic is what brought Marguarita Barrancas Sanders to the filthy, lice infested cell of Jenny Jones. The very rich heiress has a proposition to make and is willing to take Jenny's place in front of the firing squad in exchange for Jenny's word that she will take her six year old daughter, Graciela, to California. This is no easy task as upon Marguarita's death, Graciela will become the rich heiress and her Barrancas greedy relatives will want her dead!

I soon learned there is so much more to Jenny Jones. This woman sure knows how to take care of herself and it is very evident that her way of life was shaped by circumstances and not by choice. Being on her own since age nine, she is self-sufficient and has worked a variety of jobs from dish washer to mule driver and animal skinner! Not only can she hold her own doing men's work, she packs a mean pistol and a hardy right punch. She dresses like a man, fights like a man, works like a man, and can hold her liquor and loves her cigars. And without a doubt the profanity can flow!

Another important thing about Jenny is that she has never wanted to be a mother. Heck, she doesn't even like children! And now she finds herself strapped with an uncooperative, prissy, spoiled, sassy mouth six year old who hates her and a slew of male relatives who will stop at nothing until this little one is dead!

As you can imagine Jenny has her hands full. And in the middle of it all enters another problem...one tall, sexy, handsome as sin cowboy, Ty Sanders, Graciela's uncle from California! ...sighs...I have to say now that as the story progressed I soon realized he was perfect for Jenny in every way! He very quickly stole my heart as his thoughts showed that everything about this strange woman fascinated him in a way few other women had. He quickly saw through her layers, and wow did he want more!

As I traveled this journey with Jenny I soon learned that underneath and within is a strikingly beautiful woman who hides her soul pain and her vulnerability in a variety of ways. Her transformation is beautiful. I loved that she carries a dictionary and is always learning new words. She's smart and a survivor. There's nothing eloquent or dainty in her and neither is there vanity. The things she endures and the methods she chooses to fulfill the promise are amazing!

Emotionally, this was a roller coaster ride. There are so many laugh out loud moments. My favorite started with the conversation between Jenny and Graciela and the "hair between the legs" question asked by a curious six year old who'd never seen anyone naked before. It became a full blown out laugh later when this same conversation was related to her Uncle Ty in wonder and still disbelief and in the presence of a very embarrassed Jenny. And of course I loved Ty's reply. The dialog between Jenny and this child and Jenny and Ty is perfectly captivating!

My roller coaster ride also brought me to those tender, precious moments where my heart filled with their pain, their sorrow until the fountain flowed. The pain of losing her mother and the loneliness Graciela experiences as realization comes that she will never see her again touched me to the core. Here, it is brief and yet powerful. And also are the glimpses surrounding the circumstances of Jenny's life, and though this author doesn't linger, it is felt.

And then there's the "hankering" and the "licking all over." As they are fighting for their lives and making their way to California, I experienced the riveting excitement and the perfect sizzle and sensual moments as Jenny discovers what a true kiss holds and they both discover a night of pure heaven!

I loved every word and every minute invested!

This is my 2nd book by this author and she has an amazing talent! This lady can tell a story and her heroines are not soon forgotten! This is a true western romance at its best!

Thank you to my GR friends Jill and Denise for introducing me to another author who has the magic!

This is a long review for me and I've only skimmed the surface and not even written other facets involved in this story. There are so many quotes and lines that grab you and cause you to stop and do a re-read. Here are just a few of my favs:-)

(view spoiler)

Dina says

I'm not a big fan of historical westerns, but this book might turn me into one. Yup, it was *that* good!

As the story opens, Jenny Jones is in jail, accused of killing a man. It was self defense, but no one believed a Mexican soldier, no matter how drunk he was, would try to force himself on a woman like her, rough and used to taking all kinds of unsavory jobs to earn a living. As Jenny is contemplating her impending death, Margarita Barrancas, a wealthy Mexican woman who's clearly dying from consumption, enters her cell and offers her a deal: she will take Jenny's place in front of the firing squad tomorrow. As Jenny has requested to be wearing a hood when her time comes, the Mexican guards won't notice the exchange until the deed is done and Jenny is long gone. Naturally, Margarita wants something in return from Jenny: Jenny's promise to take Margarita's daughter Graciela safely to her (Graciela's) American father in California. The catch is, Graciela will become the sole heir to a large fortune when Margarita dies and her cousins won't think twice to kill her in order to get their hands on the fortune. Jenny is a loner and hates kids, but Margarita convinces her to accept the bargain. After all, the Mexican woman is dying anyway and even though Jenny thinks her (Jenny's) life isn't much to talk about, dying so soon isn't appealing. So the next day, Jenny finds herself saddled down with Graciela, a prissy, spoiled and snotty kid who hates her and blames her for the death of her mother.

Unbeknownst to Jenny, Graciela's estranged (and wimpy) father Robert Sanders has finally decided to fetch his wife and child. Not that he's grown cojones and stood up to his father after years of submission. No, no. The old man has just died and now Robert is free to acknowledge his Mexican wife and daughter. Obviously, he still isn't man enough to go get them himself, so he asks his brother Ty to do it. Humph! Can you tell how much I disliked Robert? :(

As expected, Jenny and Ty end up running into each other and, boy, that was fun. They are slightly attracted to each other, but mutual distrust keeps them apart. Only when Graciela's murderous cousins catch up with them and snatch the girl, Jenny and Ty decide to join forces to get her back. Not an easy task, considering they have to fight Graciela's belief that they are wrong and her cousins mean her no harm. Will Jenny be able to fulfill her promise to Margarita and take Graciela safely to Robert? Will she get over her hankering for Ty? Or will she be heartbroken when all is said and done?

~~This book~~ Jenny made me laugh and cry - not at the same time, of course. :) I just adored her. She was rough, hard, cussed all the time, drank and some cigars, and could beat the crap out of any man - including Ty - in a fight. She's the most unconventional heroine I've ever met and I didn't think I'd like her at first, but she won me over. The same way she won Ty and Graciela, I couldn't help admiring and loving her in the end.

I also loved Ty. He was equally tough and imperfect, with his prejudice against all things Mexican - including his niece Graciela. He was in Mexico to do a job, to take his sister-in-law (he didn't know she was dead when he accepted his brother's request) and his niece to their new home, and that was it. He didn't care for Graciela at first, but he was a fair man and it didn't take long for him to realize his prejudice was unjustified. If all cowboys are like him, I'm moving to Texas, LOL.

As for Graciela, what can I say? The girl drove me crazy and I fully understood Jenny's frustration and impatience with her. I don't care much for children in my romance books, but I have to say that Graciela was perfect. Not perfect in the sense that she was a little angel who could do no wrong. Quite the contrary. She

was like a *real* child: one moment, you wanted to cuddle her; the next, you wanted to tell her to shut up and stop pestering you. She was smart, but not *adult*-smart. She spoke and acted like a 6-year-old, and that was refreshing.

I loved, loved, loved this book! It was funny, it was touching, it was... real. Ms. Osborne has pushed all my emotional buttons. Jenny's transformation from loner to caring mother was aptly written. Some authors would be tempted to turn Jenny into an unbelievably mushy, utter feminine woman, but Ms. Osborne avoided that trap and kept her true till the end. Ty's and Graciela's character growth was also very well portrayed and none had sudden epiphanies that turned them into someone else. Excellent writing all the way, Ms. Osborne!

I realize this review has become quite long, but I couldn't help it. I tend to go overboard when I really like something and, as you surely know by now, I more than liked this book. :) Okay, I'll stop now.

Mo says

5 fricking fantastic stars.

I loved Jenny. This is the second book I have read by this author and her leading ladies sure are that ... "leading". No shrinking violets here. Jenny Jones is honest, independent, hardworking, stubborn.

A desperate mother takes Jenny Jones' place in front of a firing squad in exchange for Jenny's promise to see her daughter safely to California. Though she and the six-year-old Graciela get off to a rocky start, Jenny will do everything in her power to keep her promise, even with the child's cousins in hot pursuit. Then she is mysteriously drawn to the handsome cowboy Ty Sanders, and though neither know it yet, their purpose is the same.

"Honesty is all I've got," she said finally, speaking in a low voice. "I don't have family. I don't have beauty, or a man. I don't have money, and I sure as hell don't have a future. All I've got to prop up my pride is my word." Her chin rose. "When Jenny Jones says something, you can bet your last peso that it's true."

"Anything else, Your Majesty?"

"I didn't say my prayers."

"I'll say them for you. Our father who art in et cetera, bless all the rotten cousins and kill Jenny. Amen."

Jenny didn't like children. The banter between herself and Graciela is very funny. Jenny loves to cuss. Graciela has been raised as a proper little lady. Chalk and cheese.

“Listen. Just because we got a mutual hankering, doesn't mean we have to act on it. Aside from the hankering, there isn't much about you that I like. So far, you've been a pain in the behind. And I might as well tell you, I've followed through on one hankering and getting shot was more of an enjoyable experience. I didn't like it.”

“Say yes, Jenny. Promise you'll marry me. Promise you'll still be here, driving me crazy and loving me when we're little and old and surrounded by grandchildren. Promise that you'll let me love you until I take my last breath. Promise.”

I got my epilogue ... many years later. Swoon.

Bark says

Don't think you'd like a heroine who smokes cigars, cusses like there's no tomorrow, and can whip the hero's butt in a fight? Then you probably haven't read this book yet! Breaking all kinds of stereotypes the author creates an untraditional heroine you can't help but admire, laugh with and cry for.

Jenny Jones, accused of killing a man in self defense, is awaiting death by a firing squad when she is approached by a rich dying woman who offers to take her place. Naturally, there is a catch. Jenny must promise to deliver the woman's daughter safely into the arms of her Father in California. Jenny is a loner who thinks kids are barely half human but decides her life, as pitiful as it may be, is worth the aggravation.

Jenny not only finds herself saddled down with a snot nosed, prissy kid who prays for her death each night but hot on her trail are the kids' money grubbing cousin's who are bent on killing little Graciela so they can grab her inheritance. To make matters worse Jenny is also being followed by Ty Sanders, a real sexy dude, who appears to want Graciela for his own perverted reasons.

Ty, unbeknownst to Jenny, is also on the same mission. He is Graciela's uncle and has been sent by his brother to retrieve her. He'll do everything he can to save his niece from the hands of the obviously insane Miss Jenny Jones. Still, as nutty as he finds her he can't help being attracted to her. She fascinates him and this scares him more than Graciela's murderous cousins.

Eventually these two hard headed, tough as nail people realize they need to stop beating the crap out of each

other and join forces if they intend to bring Graciela home safely.

The three spend time together and struggle to keep themselves alive but will they be strong enough to protect their hearts from breaking when they're forced to say goodbye at the end of the trip?

THE PROMISE OF JENNY JONES is often times hilarious and extremely touching. Author Osborne handled Jenny's gradual transformation from loner to big hearted woman so beautifully I had tears in my eyes throughout a major part of the book. I also liked the little girl Graciela's transformation from a stuck-up little brat to a sensitive and loving little girl. And, of course, Ty was also a terrific hero whose first mistake is assuming he is going to tame Jenny! The character growth in this story is just amazing. Because the character's are so well drawn and actually get to know each other before they jump into bed the love story between this unlikely couple is completely believable and the sexual tension intense.

The grittiness, humor, realism and emotion of this story are just a few of the things that make it so special. Maggie Osborne knows which buttons to push to melt this reader's heart. Very highly recommended

Oana says

I have finally found an author to keep me busy in between Ellen O'Connell and Lorraine Heath's new releases - yes, I loooove them historical western romances. Maggie Osborne seems to write them for my heart. *The Promise of Jenny Jones* has an extraordinary pace, a couple of wonderful characters, a very original premise and a feel-good after-glow. Wonderful read, I cannot hardly wait to start another of her novels.

Christina ~ Brunette Reader says

5 Unreserved, Heartfelt, Shiny Stars

"After you give a promise, see, the person you gave it to is out of the deal. It's just you and the promise." - Jenny Jones

Inside a fetid prison on the rugged and dry land along the Mexican border, a young woman, who has nothing left to lose but a frayed dictionary in her pocket, is spending the last hours of her life waiting to be executed. Her name is Jenny Jones and her unflinching honesty is what will have her face the firing squad come dawn. She could have lied, there were no witnesses, she could have said she didn't kill the soldier who tried to rape her, but she didn't. Pleading for self-defence has been useless, as the sham court judging her was convinced no man in his right mind would have forced himself on the likes of Jenny, a mule-skinner, a freight-hauler, a coarse woman with more calluses on her hands than years on her shoulders. But, for all the troubles it has always caused her, this time unwavering honesty might also mean salvation when a second chance at life arrives in the form of another young woman who too has nothing left to lose.

Margarita Sanders Barrancas is dying of consumption. With only few days in her, maybe hours, and having decided to confide in the reputation of an uncompromising word of honour, she's ready to take Jenny's place in front of the firing squad if only Jenny will promise to safely deliver her daughter Graciela to California

and to Robert Sanders, her estranged husband and the child's father. The product of an unwanted and ostracised marriage between feuding families, old Mexican aristocracy Barrancas and new American landowners Sanders, little Graciela will be the heiress of an immense fortune once Marguarita is gone, and a long string of greedy and unscrupulous cousins is ready to kidnap her for ransom at best or to downright kill her to inherit in her stead at worst.

Grasping the last chance to survive, Jenny accepts the deal, easing her struggling conscience by knowing this way she'll at least assuage Marguarita's desperation, and promises to smuggle little six-year-old Graciela to California at all costs... accusing, prissy, pampered, bright, infuriating little six-year-old Graciela...

In the meantime, unbeknownst to both Marguarita and Jenny, Robert has sent his younger brother Ty looking for the child. A tough and dashing cowboy, Ty is soon hot on his niece's trail all the way down to Texas, but he's certainly not prepared to find her escorted by an intense, rough-edge, mouthy and determined woman as prickly as the cacti punctuating the road from El Paso to Chihuahua and a few miles more.

And while these two try to decide whether to keep outwitting each other or join forces, the sweetest and most amiable courtship the Old Wild West has ever witnessed ensues, to our utter delight, along the same line as:

He: *"I can't explain this, but I have a powerful hankering for you."*

She: *"You make a move in my direction, and I'll shoot your butt."*

Written back in 1997 but presenting a standard in terms of originality, pace and craft current authors active in this specific sub-genre could still look up to, the story, both poignant and exhilarating, is a charming blend of oh so many entertaining and inspired ingredients I found simply irresistible.

Choosing to emphasise the more romp-ish and humorous sides the Western setting allows, Maggie Osborne deftly weaves a tale that is adventurous on-the-run romance and emotional journey in equal parts: the thrilling spirit and energy expected to be permeating the frontier scenario are evoked, the wonderful characterisations, the flowing prose and the engaging dialogues do the rest, underscoring the protagonists' complete arc. So together with the heat, the dust, the blinding sun, the jingling harnesses, the lonesome starry nights, we get to see the rewarding transformation the leads go through, building the bonds of a lifetime, healing and bettering one another.

And what a sight it was to behold, leaving you just as breathless as the chases, the dangers, the laughter and conveying the book's deeper and heartwarming message about love and acceptance, which gradually sinks in while you're distracted by all the fun and the romance.

The characters might appear typical-fare at a first superficial glance, mind you, the independent hardened woman, the suave deceptively laidback cowboy, the precocious child, but the author's skilful and intelligent storytelling reworks and reshapes them into unique individuals you won't soon forget.

Besides the hero and the heroine, Graciela, fully a third lead in her own right, must be one of the most endearing kids I've ever encountered in fiction and I was anticipating the moments when the narration briefly shifted into her perspective. She's adorably smart and inquisitive, sometimes embarrassingly so, though this maddening handful is always portrayed as a believable six years old. Representing everything Jenny was never permitted to be, Graciela is the apt foil to Jenny's change from embittered loner to embracing person. And their banter, alternatively taut, hilarious, touching, never sappy, is priceless.

Even the secondary characters are carefully chiselled and nuanced, starting from Marguarita, so present in her absence, a silent beacon of admiration and courage in Jenny's solitary thoughts, to Robert and Ty's wise mother and to Robert himself, with his hopeless inertia.

The cousins, if I really wanted to nitpick, I'd say have been sketched like a monochromatic block, a little too cartoonish in their villainous intentions, but after some mulling, I gather the author probably took such route in order to make the indigestible and repulsive idea of some guys willing to harm a child for money fit in a lighthearted context. In other words, to not excessively darken what should remain a sheer, unadulterated

comedy.

The romance? Ahh, the romance...

... infused with a hot, unsophisticated, sweet and tender sensuality that so perfectly suits both their frank souls and the impassionate fireworks they're experiencing in spite of themselves. Then again, I did not expect anything less from these two.

Ty is the quintessential cowboy and man of action, gallant to the core, easygoing and cheeky. He knows to be in for all kinds of trouble the instant he sets eyes on this odd woman on a mission he can't help being attracted to. Jenny breaks all the moulds about femininity life has taught him and as the initial pull develops into respect and eventually into love, he woos and teases her, eager to make her step out of the shell she's built around herself, but also understands that he wouldn't have her any other way, wild and unconventional as they come, clinging to her promise and her word as she has always proudly done to rise above her circumstances and relishing every scrap of new knowledge she can glean from her battered dictionary to nurture her rough-diamond intelligence.

Jenny is wary at first and quite confrontational (with often some very funny results), she harbours some notions about men she had to learn the hard way that prevent her from really letting go and bask in what Ty is offering. When she finally realises things can and should be different even for her, she starts to slowly reach out, softening just enough, but always staying true to her untamed self.

And if there ever was a big-hearted fighter deserving her own HEA, that is Jenny.

Strongly recommended to anyone who enjoys Western Romances. An older sparkling gem that hasn't aged a day, in which Maggie Osborne dares you every step of the way to not fall in love with this mismatched trio. An impossible feat for me, I gladly lost on page one.

[~Ami~]♥Sexy Dexy♥ says

4 stars

This was a little gem. I liked everything about this book. I love Ty and Jenny, the plot kept me on the edge of my seat, the romance was believable. Some parts of the story did feel a bit unbelievable but it didn't bug me much. This is historical but it had a modern feel to it. I will definitely read more from this author.
