



# Short-Straw Bride

*Karen Witemeyer*

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## **Short-Straw Bride** Karen Witemeyer

No one steps on Archer land. Not if they value their life. But when Meredith Hayes overhears a lethal plot to burn the Archer brothers off their ranch, a twelve-year-old debt compels her to take the risk.

Fourteen years of constant vigilance hardens a man. Yet when Travis Archer confronts a female trespasser with the same vivid blue eyes as the courageous young girl he once aided, he can't bring himself to send her away. And when an act of sacrifice leaves her injured and her reputation in shreds, gratitude and guilt send him riding to her rescue once again.

Four brothers. Four straws. One bride. Despite the fact that Travis is no longer the gallant youth Meredith once dreamed about, she determines to stand by his side against the enemy that threatens them both. But will love ever be hers? Or will Travis always see her merely as a short-straw bride?

## **Short-Straw Bride Details**

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Author : Karen Witemeyer

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## From Reader Review Short-Straw Bride for online ebook

### Kathy \* Bookworm Nation says

4.5

I really enjoyed this one. I thought the premise sounded cute, but to be honest I didn't have the highest expectations. I knew it was a Christian fiction, which sometimes tend to be overly preachy for my taste. So, I was pleasantly surprised by just how much I liked this one. I thought it was really well written, with very likable characters.

Meredith was a fun leading lady. She is feisty, stubborn and kind. She is also fearless and honorable. It was endearing to see her ride onto the Archer ranch knowing she wouldn't be welcome, but knowing she had to warn them. Surrounded by four burly men didn't scare her off, she held her own. I just loved the Archer men. Travis of course was awesome, but I especially loved Crockett. I loved the relationship with the brothers and their loyalty to one another. Travis was a doll; I loved how he was just crazy about Meredith right from the beginning. His attempts to court Meredith were endearing and sweet. Although they really needed to just ditch the brothers and have some alone time! ;)

I liked the side story of Jim and Cassie as well, but I'd really love a story about Crockett. He always added a little humor to the situation and was just a likable guy. I want to hear all about his HEA. I admit though, if these boys were truly all alone on the ranch for at least 12 years, they seemed very knowledgeable, mature and I guess normal for having no contact with the outside world. I don't know how they were all so well adjusted, but I didn't care because I loved them all. I loved the changes Meredith brought about and just thought the whole story was charming.

Content: Clean. Mild Christian elements (praying and scriptures).

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### Abby Moreland says

holy cow, I loved this book. definitely surprised me. honestly, I don't really know what I was expecting as I sat down to start this book, but I don't believe I was expecting to fall in love! already have another book by Whitemeyer on hold at the library. hehe.

rarely ever do I start the first chapter of a book and immediately get sucked in. rarely, rarely, rarely. (my standards are pretty high for books, if you couldn't tell. hah.) but this book had me captured by the first few paragraphs. even with family here traveling from 2,000 miles away, I read this book in two days. didn't even have time to record my progress on goodreads. that's such a nerdy thing to say.

Whitemeyer's writing style had me captured as well. I can't even place what it is... it's like I kept reading things in the way I would write it. which made me excited. the writing is fairly simple, but still keeps all the good stuff in there. I also found that I rarely encountered a cliché saying... ya know like the "raked his hand through his hair" or the "remorse coursed through his body." the kinda thing found in historical fiction romance books. hah.

the plot was pretty predictable... not terribly so. but enough to not be surprised by the ending. of course it's kind of like that with love stories - they're going to fall in love and be happy the rest of their life. that's just the way it is and if that changed I would be sad. I like happy endings. it wasn't boring to read at all, though...

and of course all the subplots kept me guessing.  
if you like love stories, I would definitely recommend this book. it's really sweet and original.  
one thing that did sort of annoy me though, was Merideth's change of mood so often. maybe it's just cause she's a girl. ;) but it seemed she would believe Travis loved her in the morning, then by night think he'd never want to see her again. anyone else find that a tad annoying?  
the book has lots of action, lots of suspense, and lots of bad guys to dislike. awesome.  
overall it was a great book - and hey, I rated it 5 stars! only the best of the best get a 5 star. I found a new book that I'll probably re-read, and found an amazing author whose other books are at the top of my book list.  
bravo, Whitemeyer!

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## **Staci says**

Super cute novel about protective brother Travis Archer. Travis is the eldest brother and has taken staying on one's land to defend it to an obsessive level.

As a young girl Meredith steps on to the edge of the Archer property and runs across Travis. She is smitten with him from that point forward.

It was a sweet romance and I especially loved that the marriage occurred in the middle of the novel rather than the end. I also liked that each brother was named after one of the main defenders at the Alamo.

In rare fashion, I have already read the second book in the series. It was a good one as well.

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## **Sarah says**

Age Appropriate For: 15 and up for marital themes

Best for Ages: 18 and up

This book had been sitting on my Kindle for a few months. Several of my friends kept raving about Karen Witemeyer, so I decided to give her a try thinking it would be a nice, light, one-time read. Boy, was I in for a big surprise.

It was so refreshing to have a strong Christian message without feeling preachy. I know it is hard for many authors to find that happy medium. If they want some pointers, study Karen Witemeyer. Her messages are woven seamlessly into the story, yet make you feel stronger in your faith. I don't know how she does it, but I plan to study her work.

Travis? I wish I could marry a guy like him. He was human, had faults, but had a strong, sustaining faith. He has respect for Meredith and other women and is a real leader. I love how he develops.

Finally! A book set in Texas that actually sounds like Texas. So many books sound like Hollywood's version of Texas, which, if you live here, is far from the truth. Witemeyer is a Texan so that helps, but she did an excellent job of representing the state I call home.

This book is for older reads due to the fact most of it takes place after they are married. There were a couple of conversations that might make younger and sensitive readers squirm a little, but nothing is described at all. I am pretty sensitive, but nothing talked about took away from the enjoyment of the story.

I highly recommend this book to those who love romance, cowboy stories, and faith-building fiction.

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### **Lisa Kay says**

★★★★½ (This is a review of the audiobook.) You know a narrator is good when a secondary character starts speaking and you know who it is right away, without other clues. Pilar Witherspoon gives such a performance in this wonderful, sweet romance. Her enunciation, pace, and tones are all perfect for every character. I'll definitely look for more of her readings.

What a lovely romance. It is certainly "one-foot-on-the-floor" – but still, there is plenty of heat between the hero and heroine. And there's plenty of action in the storyline. I loved Travis and Meredith's love story. Both characters come alive in Karen Witemeyer's book. While I've certainly noticed her books before, due to the lovely covers, I've never read anything by her. That's about to change; I definitely will be reading more of her work. Also, the religious aspect of the book is not shoved down your throat, but done in a heartwarming, realistic way for time, place, and situation.

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### **Heidi Robbins (Heidi Reads...) says**

Short-Straw Bride is one of my favorites by Karen Witemeyer! I loved all the characters, and really connected to their emotions. The romantic tension is so great; it's one of the best marriage of convenience stories I've read!

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### **Judith (Judith'sChoiceReads) says**

Both Travis and Meredith were excellent characters, this book is a lot of fun with great wholesome values that cannot help but inspire and poignant romance that stirs the heart. This author has a knack for writing humorous fiction abound with great faith lessons, you won't want to miss getting your hands on her latest instalment!

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### **Beth says**

I adored every minute that I spent reading Short-Straw Bride. The tension and interaction between the main character, Meredith, and the male lead, Travis, was swoon-worthy and so sweet. Travis was protective, stubborn and sweet and Meredith was both brave and vulnerable at the same time. Their relationship progressed in a really heartfelt way, and watching their relationship develop after their "short-straw" wedding tugged at my heart. The supporting characters, especially the other 3 Archers brothers, were endearing. I like how the story emphasized familial love and not just romantic love.

The plot flowed so well. The story line itself could have been predictable, but Witemeyer through a twist in there that definitely gave the story it's own unique twist. It was adventurous, exciting and a little on the tense side, which I loved. Witemeyer does a great job with intermingling details about the Archer's past as well as Meredith's past without resulting to exposition, and they really added depth to the story. There were some parts that I found a little cheesy, but for the most part, I didn't mind it.

I definitely recommend Short Straw Bride for readers who like romantic stories with some adventure thrown in the mix.

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### **Anne Osterlund says**

As a young girl, Meredith Hayes made the mistake of stumbling onto restricted Archer land. And into a steel trap that left her with a permanent limp. As well as a permanent weakness for the young man who pulled her out of that trap, Travis Archer.

Years later, Meredith is now a young woman, expected to marry for the good of her aunt and uncle's financial security. But when Meredith overhears her espoused suitor plotting to burn down the Archer barn, she eschews family loyalty. And sneaks onto Archer land in order to warn the man who rescued her so many years ago.

A decision that results in the dissolution of her near engagement, a dire threat from her father, and the startling possibility of a future with the man she has always loved.

But will HE love the idea of being forced to marry HER?

Sheer wonderful romantic fluff! So much fun. I especially enjoyed Travis's relationship with his brothers and his inner conflict as he tried to balance his family's history of seclusion opposite Meredith's uncageable spirit.

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### **Regina Jennings says**

Warning - reading this book in public can lead to embarrassment.

I had a doctor appointment recently and was excited to finally have some quiet time to read "Short-Straw Bride". Unfortunately, the waiting room was too quiet.

When young Meredith steals onto Archer land and Travis - the misunderstood and feared hero - comes to her rescue, I was hooked. I was completely engrossed in the story when Meredith, under the impression that she's dreaming, tells the scary Mr. Archer what she really thinks of him...and I snorted...snorted loudly earning concerned glances from my waiting-room friends.

But I couldn't stop thinking about the story and when I got back to my car I gave into temptation and decided to sit there and read at least one more chapter - after all, the kids were okay without me for just a bit more. One chapter stretched into another...and another. When would Travis figure out that Meredith didn't want

him to be SO gentlemanly? Would Crockett, Jim and Neill find brides of their own? (Love their names, by the way.) I was deep into the story when one of my new waiting room acquaintances knocked on the car window to see if I was having car trouble. Busted.

Short-Straw Bride is a wonderful story. Travis's confused handling of his bride is endearing. Meredith's hero worship transforms seamlessly into a mature understanding of her husband, without costing him any shine. I don't know if there are subsequent books planned for these entertaining brothers, but sign me up for the petition drive.

Well done and highly recommended. Just don't read it with an audience.

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## **Kiki says**

2.5 stars rounded down.

1. Really strong characters, both main and supporting.
  2. All the brothers were fun and extremely respectful to heroine.
  3. They drew a straw to decide who gets to marry h, because they all kinda wanted her in a very non creepy way.
  4. Hero was ready to cheat to marry the heroine so no question about his feelings even at the beginning.
  5. However not enough chemistry/spark!
  6. Too clean.
  7. Way WAY too Christian for my liking! The aunt deserved comeuppance.
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## **Anne says**

### **NO ONE STEPS ON ARCHER LAND!!!**

Ok, so, I don't know if it's just me being half-witted or what, but I \*still\* don't understand the whole Archers-are-not-allowed-off-their-land-and-no-one-is-allowed-on-it-either affair. I mean, I understand how Travis felt responsible for his brothers and did not want anybody trying to coax him into selling his land, but forbidding everyone to even step on his land? I mean, they probably had friends and neighbours, no? Anyway, I didn't bother me that much, and I was able to go with it, but I simply thought that the way it was delivered was a bit implausible.

The mental image of four hot men working on a ranch was not exactly unpleasant, I must say!

He he he ;)

The story was overall a lot of fun. Some parts still feel a bit unanswered (view spoiler), but it had a great plot and wonderful characters. Meredith was a beautiful heroine. She represents the hope and freedom for the Archer brothers, as she teaches Travis to trust God with his life and that of his brothers, and to learn to trust others as well. Meredith is strong, determined and courageous, but she also brings along the sweetness and femininity that was lacking on Archer land. The men aren't used to having a woman with them, or a decent meal and spotless kitchen (one of the brothers is even afraid that his clothes will smell like flowers because a woman is doing the washing! Hahahaha!!).

Travis was a very likeable hero; tortured, yet very brave and heroic. And not to mention mighty good-looking ;) The love story was cute and heart-warming and I really enjoyed it. The characters were really well-drawn and believable and the writing was just perfect. I had a really hard time putting this book down, and I finished it in 3 days. For the records, that is *extremely* fast for me!! Karen Witemeyer, I am looking forward to reading more books by you!! *Stealing the Preacher* will be up next, I can wait to see how Crockett's story will turn out! He was a very fun and likeable character in *Short Straw Bride*, so I am very excited for the next installment!

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### Jane says

4.55 stars - mild pg13

Great, fun story of romantic and family love. Bit of adventure. Trusting God. Wonderful secondary characters (loved Crockett and Moses). { Where do I find one of these ranches full of smokin' hot Godly men just waiting for the right woman??? Somebody please give me directions to this place. I need to go there! } Travis Archer was a strong, stubborn, protective alpha Hero, hiding a tender heart. Swoon. Our heroine, Meredith, was sweet, yet strong-willed (perhaps too much?). Some things in the story were a tad far-fetched and cheesy, if you really stopped to consider. The villain was a bit over-the-top.

For some reason the book seemed long to me (probably just my mood?). Even so, I truly enjoyed it and especially loved Crockett. However, I'm not dying to stay and immerse myself in "Archerworld" right now. I definitely want to come back and read Crockett's story and the others (and have already purchased those books); but first I'll take a little diversion, probably to "regencyworld" (my favorite place).

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### Alyssa says

So I finally got a chance to read *Short Straw Bride* and Oh. My. Goodness. Karen never disappoints me, her novels are pure perfection and I just adored this sweet story. It seems all of Karen's books that I read end up on my favourites shelf. I absolutely loved this story and I'll have a more full review to come soon!

UPDATE 04/13/2015:

*Short Straw Bride* is absolutely on my BEST of 2015 list and snuck to the top of it. *Short Straw Bride* is my third Karen Witemeyer novel and reminded me why Karen is one of my favourite historical authors. Karen's



writing is so engaging and historically accurate that it sucks you in from the first page. I never put this book down as I started it at midnight and did not finish until 3 am. Short Straw Bride is Travis and Meri's story and what a story it was. Good-looking Cowboys, swoon-worthy romance, and life-altering conflict, for me is the perfect recipe for the perfect read. I also love that Karen is not afraid to show religious conviction and Scripture in her novels. Something I have noticed as of late that is lacking a bit. This is Christian fiction after all and we are commanded to preach the Gospel and share Jesus in every aspect of our lives. Thank you Karen. And oh the romance...it was so good and full of tension. Just one of the many ingredients of this story that kept me turning the page. I will absolutely purchasing the three novels previous to this one sometime this year! I suggest you pick up this book and once you do you won't want to put it down for any reason.

UPDATE 03/23/17: Yeah...it's still amazing and I still swoon over Travis Archer.

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### **Brittany says**

I can't believe it took me so long to pick up this wonderful book to read! I'd read the other stories in the Archer Brothers series and loved them...and now I have a new favorite! This story was so much fun from beginning to end. It was packed with great characters, lots of emotion, and terrific romantic tension between the two main characters, Travis and Meredith. I highly recommend Short-Straw Bride.

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