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Joan Johnston

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A rogue nobleman, a rescued lady, and revenge undone by romance all play a part in *New York Times* bestselling author Joan Johnston's irresistible novel of best-laid plots, delicious deception, and unexpected passion.

Two years have passed since Josie Wentworth was bought from the Sioux for a gold watch and whisked back to England by Marcus Wharton, the Duke of Blackthorne. When Marcus breaks his promise to return Josie to America, she ends up as a maid in the home of his charming but neglected nephews. Once Josie's long-lost family finds her, however, the suddenly wealthy heiress sets out to save the two boys from their indifferent uncle—and teach the duke a lesson in honor.

Learning that Marcus is seeking a rich American bride to save his estate, Josie plots to catch his eye—certain he'll never recognize the beauty she's become as the ragged captive he rescued. But Josie doesn't wager on her marital charade taking a tender turn, as the nobleman she's despised for years proves to be a very different man than she's imagined. And there's no denying his passionate caresses, as she falls deeper under the spell of a husband determined to claim her heart.

Blackthorne's Bride Details

Date : Published June 27th 2017 by Dell

ISBN :

Author : Joan Johnston

Format : Kindle Edition 432 pages

Genre : Romance, Historical Romance, Historical

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From Reader Review *Blackthorne's Bride* for online ebook

(Tori-Smexybooks) smexys_sidekick says

Originally reviewed at Smexybooks-<http://smexybooks.com/2017/07/review-...>

Favorite Quote: “Rebuke? Censure? How dare she! Did she know who he was? What he was?”

Marcus Wharton, the Duke of Blackthorne bought a young girl’s freedom with a gold watch and a knife, saving her from certain death. Instead of sending her home to her family as promised, he sent her to work as a servant on one of his neglected estates with his nephews. When a Pinkerton detective finally locates her and lets her know she is a wealthy heiress, Josie Wentworth makes plans to finally see her family. However, when she learns Marcus needs to marry for wealth, Josie decides to stay in London a little while longer so she can save her boys while teaching their uncle a much deserved lesson.

She was done being the Duke of Blackthorne’s servant. It was time to confront the man and make him pay for his dishonorable behavior toward her—and the two boys who’d had the misfortune to become his wards.

Marcus Wharton doesn’t want to marry again. He loved his first wife and her death almost destroyed him. Especially when he learned she had hidden her illness from him. However, his father left him with a mountain of debts that not even his first wife’s money could touch so he must remarry though he vows he will not lose his heart this time around.

His wedding couldn’t come soon enough. Once he’d had Miss Wentworth, the froth would be off the beer. The bloom would be off the rose. He’d be satiated and satisfied, and this unbearable longing would be over and done.

When Marcus meets Josie again, he has no idea who she is but finds himself falling head over heels all over again. When he discovers the real reason she married him, he must decide if he can stand living a lie or will is he brave enough to love another Blackthorne Bride?

I’ve long enjoyed Joan Johnson’s historicals. They are quick, romantic reads with clever characters, witty dialogue, steamy romances. *Blackthorne’s Bride* is Josie Wentworth’s story. The last of the Wentworth siblings, Josie was captured by the Sioux from her wagon train and hasn’t seen her siblings in years. Though I haven’t read the first three in the series, that in no way impeded my enjoyment of this story.

I love the premise of this story. Second chances, marriage of convenience, revenge, reconnection, and redemption. Josie and Marcus were fun to get to know as individuals and as a couple. Their dialogue flows so smooth and we are made privy to their innermost thoughts so we know what the truth really is. Marcus unknowingly fell for Josie when he rescued her but she was too young and he was engaged to someone else so he did the honorable thing and let her go. Their second meeting at his solicitor’s office sparks flames and only grows hotter the more time they spend together. They marry quickly and while Josie hasn’t been completely honest in her intentions, their relationship slowly flourishes and deepens as they become further acquainted with one another. Though it was Josie’s beauty and money is what initially attracts Marcus, it’s her charm, passion, honesty, and genuine caring of those around her that ensnares him. He gradually comes to realize that her pretty face hides an intelligent and complicated woman.

Josie also finds herself having to reconsider her feelings towards Marcus. He isn’t what she thought him to

be. She can't reconcile the man who broke his promise and left her to languish in servitude with the man who stands before her and treats her like someone precious to him. There is strong sense of convention and compassion behind his seeming disregard for his human obligations. His autocratic attitude is well ingrained but Josie's little digs and ability to completely ignore him are very amusing.

He'd be damned if he was going to let some barely-out-of-the-schoolroom American girl shame him into changing his behavior.

He didn't say another word to her, determined to show her his displeasure.

When the performance was done, she chattered on effusively about the play, seemingly unaware of his continuing silence. Which made him wonder if he was always this surly, so she simply expected this sort of behavior from him.

The love scenes, unfortunately, are far and few between but this slow simmer is perfect for showing their change in attitude and deepening affection for one another. Sensual in its tension, this couple's dance is a thrill to watch as Marcus sets out to seduce his bride while keeping his own heart firmly locked away. I loved he didn't push her though by law he could have. He takes his time and is very nicely rewarded for his patience.

He stifled a laugh when he saw what Josie was wearing. The white flannel nightgown had a bow at the throat that was tied up tight. The blousy sleeves covered her arms to her wrists, and the heavy winter material left nothing but the tips of her bare toes showing on the Aubusson carpet. His breath caught in his throat when he focused his gaze on the glorious golden curls tumbling across her shoulders.

"I was in bed waiting for you," she said. "I didn't think about having to let you in."

He saw the pale-pink silk sheets on the bed were rumpled, saw the indentation of her head on one of the pillows, and felt an immediate flare of pure animal lust.

She must have sensed his reaction, because she took a step back, gasped, and put a hand to her throat.

He took a step toward her, and she took another step back. He grinned wolfishly. "At least you're headed in the right direction."

She glanced over her shoulder and apparently realized that in a few more steps she would be backed up against the bed.

"I'm a little nervous," she admitted, lifting her chin and standing her ground.

"Me, too."

She looked flustered at his admission. "At least you've done this before."

"Not with you."

The main plotline is pretty low-key in terms of conflict despite its introduction. Grief is the main theme on which this story is built. Most in here are experiencing grief of some sort. Marcus still grieves for his first wife, his son, and his parents. Everyone he has ever loved has left him. I like that Johnston did not vilify his

first wife in order to facilitate his relationship with Josie. Josie also grieves her parents, the lost time with her family, and her freedom.

I admit there was some confusion in the extreme lengths Johnson went to expose the culprit and the reasons behind their deception. It was melodramatic but Johnston cleverly uses it to interject and quick develop a humorous secondary romance. The story drags as we are waiting for Josie to come clean or Marcus to recognize her. A single conversation would have cleared it up quick and easy but Johnston choose to keep Marcus in the dark until it's almost too late, using it as a plot device to force his hand and heart.

An engaging cast of secondary characters round out the story. Johnston flashes to Josie's siblings on occasion, giving old updates on their lives and new readers a chance to get to know them. Marcus's twin sisters and grandmother are quite amusing and it was nice to see the deep bond he shares with them. Marcus's nephews are adorable though we don't see much of them.

The ending wraps up the story in a nice neat bow, leaving us with a sweet epilogue that assures us of this couple's longevity. Blackthorne Bride is another winner from Joan Johnston that gives readers delicious story of love, laughter, forgiveness, and family.

Grade: B-

Susan (susayq ~) says

What a great read! I really enjoyed this.

Josie was determined not to like Marcus because of things she thought he did after rescuing her several years before. Marcus had no clue she was the same girl he rescued and has pined for. But all worked out in the end ?

thanks to the publisher for sharing a copy with me

Dorine says

Rated 3.5 - BLACKTHORNE'S BRIDE by Joan Johnston, book four in her MAIL-ORDER BRIDE series, is Josie Wentworth's story. It takes place after she was abducted by a renegade Sioux when her family's wagon was attacked in America. Josie fought back, which enraged her attacker, subsequently resulting in her capture and punishment. Her sisters search for their youngest sister for two years before they know what happened to her during that time.

Marcus Wharton, the Duke of Blackthorne, witnesses Josie's brutal punishment by the renegade who inflicted her pain and almost caused her death. Blackthorne bargained for Josie's release, then tirelessly cared for her during the journey by ship back to England. His traveling companion and best friend, David Madison, the Earl of Seaton, questions Blackthorne's sanity. Especially since Marcus is due to marry the earl's sister, Fanny. But Blackthorne is determined to help Josie heal then send her back to her family in America when he finds out who they are.

Two years later, and after his wife Fanny's death, Blackthorne advertises for a wealthy American bride to help him save his family's heritage in exchange for a title. Josie learns of her inheritance at the same time and happens upon the advertisement. In previous books we learn that Josie's brothers and sisters were orphaned during the Chicago fires. Their time in an orphanage led a couple of the girls to become mail-order brides to escape, bringing some siblings with them, which leaves Josie as the last sibling whose fate is unknown until now.

Josie blames Blackthorne for what she endured over the past two years. The only thing that's important to her are the duke's two nephews, who had languished in the same castle where she was forced to work as a maid. Can Josie trick Blackthorne into marrying her without relinquishing who she really is? Her plan is to escape to America with his nephews before he finds out.

I have thoroughly enjoyed this series, and even though this final book isn't my favorite, it kept me riveted for most of the story. Fans of the series have anticipated Josie's story probably more than the other sisters'. That's because she was the one abducted and we didn't know if she was alive. It wasn't until her sister hired a Pinkerton agent who located Josie and made her aware of their mutual inheritance.

Let me forewarn you that what Josie endures is brutal. It's described in the prologue, so if violence offends you, this is the only place it's vividly defined. I know that sometimes violence toward pioneers portrayed in Western historical romance is a big bugaboo with some readers. In this case, it was a renegade group of Sioux, which doesn't excuse the stereotypical "white woman is abducted by an Indian," but it explains the violence as if it were a group of outlaws.

For a large portion of the story, the reader is fully aware of where Josie has been since her brutal attack, but the duke is left in the dark. He doesn't come off as a very caring individual by his deeds, other than that he personally attended to Josie's wounds and was prepared to send her home to family when she was well. When Blackthorne meets her again, he's unaware of who she really is but is instantly attracted to her. A marriage of convenience quickly becomes one of love for the duke, even before he realizes Josie is the woman who haunted his thoughts for two years.

This plot is complicated and oftentimes outrageous, but even that didn't stop me from reading. I have a fascination with Joan Johnston's books, even when I'm shaking my head at myself for gobbling these up. Josie's inner thoughts were too repetitive, and I really didn't like Marcus at all. Oh sure, he was compassionate and saved Josie, but he was sort of an idiot during the next two years. I didn't find him romantic in the way he handled his virgin bride. He was brutish and determined to consummate. Their lovemaking never felt right, even though Josie didn't complain.

But, little by little, the man starts to show who he really is, and Josie begins to fall in love with him. She's not happy about that any more than I was, so we were on the same page there. Still, even with all these mixed emotions I felt while reading, I rushed to the end. I enjoyed the journey overall and was happy with the conclusion, so I don't mind a few quibbles.

I highly recommend that you read the first three books before *BLACKTHORNE'S BRIDE*. It can be read as a standalone, but *TEXAS BRIDE*, *WYOMING BRIDE* and *MONTANA BRIDE* successfully lead up to this conclusion. It's an engaging series that is better read as a whole because of the interwoven storyline of a family separated by tragedy.

Although *BLACKTHORNE'S BRIDE* doesn't contain the wackadoodle hilarity from some of the characters and situations I've grown to expect from the series, it's still absorbing in a darker way until its satisfying

happy-ever-after. It's good to finally have the answers to questions I've had since the beginning of the series. If you need a break from reality, then this family's story will charm you. Once you read the MAIL-ORDER BRIDE series by Joan Johnston, you'll have a variety of other related books to consume, both contemporary and historical, starring the Blackthornes and the Creeds.

Reviewed by Dorine, courtesy of Romance Junkies. Digital copy provided by the publisher through NetGalley for an honest review.

Esther says

ARC provided by NetGalley and Publisher for an honest review.

Rating 2.5

First time reading this author and found I didn't really care for her plot/story.

The story opens in America with Marcus, The Duke of Blackthorne and his friend rescuing Joise the heroine from Sioux Indians. Joise is tied to a post and is being whipped when the Duke comes upon the scene. Marcus barter/trades Joise for a knife and his fathers gold watch. Marcus is engaged to his friends sister.

The Duke takes Joise back to England and during the trip back to England he nurses Joise and develops feelings for her. Marcus knows it wrong as he is about to marry, so he asks friend to care for her.

Two years later Marcus is a widower, his wife has died and during that time he couldn't stop thinking of Joise. But he believes she was well taken care of, thanks to his friend. But The Duke needs to marry for money as his estates are crumbling and he has hit difficult times.

Joise, unfortunately wasn't well taken care of, in fact she was dumped at one of Marcus's estates that is crumbling and became a servant/slave. She's angry and hurt as she was told she would be cared for and sent back to America. At the estate was also Marcus's two nephews who were also dumped and mistreated. Joise came to care for the two boys and loved/nurtured on them. Joise wants revenge on Marcus and an opportunity is handed to her. She finds out she's a heiress and also that dear Marcus is now a widow and in search for a wife that is wealthy. She devices a plan to marry and then take the two boys with her back to America with her.

I did not like two major premises of this story. One thing that really, really bugged me was that Marcus marries and during his two years of marriage he thinks of Joise and can't forget her. That overshadowed the story for me throughout, just not okay in my eyes. And two, Joise pretty much lies to Marcus for over half the story and harbors hurt and bitterness but never thinks to just confront and ask him why he never kept his promise (this is almost two thirds now into the book) and about the nephews too.

The conclusion was rushed and had several other problems that bothered me again (Marcus wife was involved in Joise's staying at the estate and being ill treated) and felt like an obvious easy out. So for me this was a real disappointment. Not sure if I will endeavor trying this author again.

Writing was average and pacing was good but the plot and storyline was not at all to my liking.

Sissy's Romance Book Review says

Book Review For: Blackthorne's Bride by Joan Johnston 'Blackthorne's Bride' by Joan Johnston is Book Four in the "Mail-Order Brides" series This is the story of Marcus and Josie. I have read the other books in this series, but feel this can be a standalone book . Marcus saved Josie from Indians when she was younger and he nursed her back to health on the ship back to England. Marcus had promised her that she would be sent back to America when she was able to travel again. He left instructions with his soon to be brother in-law to send her home. Marcus was to marry and felt his new wife wouldn't understand his connections to Josie. About two years later Marcus's wife has died and he is in need of a new wife with a good bit of money. Josie has been kept on a poor estate of Marcus and left work as a maid. But her family has just found her and she has money now. Josie has grown close to the two little boys who have been left at the estate with her...that are Marcus nephews. Josie plan is to offer Marcus money in exchange for the boys but when she shows up he thinks she is there to become his wife. Which set in to motion Josie new plan to take the boys with her as their Aunt. But will she be able to leave? Will Marcus be upset when he finds out who she really is and how she was treated? <https://twitter.com/soapsrus68> <https://www.facebook.com/RomanceBookR...> <http://sissymaereads.blogspot.com/> <http://booklikes.com/blog> <https://romancebookreviewforyou.wordpress...> <https://www.tumblr.com/blog/romancebo...> <https://plus.google.com/+SissyHicks>

Jessica's Totally Over The Top Book Obsession says

4.5 Reunited Stars

I was so excited to get Josie's story from Netgalley. Having read all the other books in this series and seeing the Wentworth family slowly get their HEA I couldn't wait to see how Josie's story played out. I wasn't disappointed. Blackthorne's Bride was my favorite book in the series. I'm sad that this will be the last of the series. I want to know what happens to the children. The children would make a great spin off series, and let us catch up with the parents...Hint! Hint!

Josie was great. She was brave, smart, and caring. Marcus was kind, protective, and sexy. He had some abandonment issues and just wanted to be loved. Josie and Marcus were great together. They had a strong connection. I loved getting to catch up with Miranda, Hannah, and Hetty. I also really liked Marcus's sister Lark. On the other hand I couldn't stand Marcus's first wife, and I thought his best friend was a crappy friend. This book was lower on the action, and angst, and more about the romance and a sweet family reuniting after years of being separated. I loved everything about this book. The only reason it's not a full 5 stars is because I felt the ending was rushed and I would have liked a little more of an epilogue.

<https://jessicasoverthetopbookobsessi...>

Amanda Richardson says

I liked “Blackthorne’s Bride” this is the first book I have read by Joan Johnston and I would like to read more of her work in the future. If you are a reader who doesn’t like plot lines built on a huge, kind of silly, misunderstanding then this book will probably not be for you. I did wish Josie and Marcus would just sit down and have a conversation, but they didn’t for a bit.

Marcus first meets Josie when he saves her from a beating. He takes her onboard the ship and cares for her until he reaches England. He wants her to be sent home to find her family, but that doesn’t happen. Josie ends up working as a chambermaid in one of Marcus’ family homes in the country and seethes. She is furious that she has been forced into virtual servitude, but loves Marcus’ nephews who she helps care for.

Josie learns that she is an heiress and concocts a scheme to take Marcus’ nephews away from him to America to live with her family. Before she can put her plan into action, she finds out Marcus needs a wealthy bride and offers herself, what better way to get him to agree to give her his nephews?

There is a lot of back and forth in this book – both Marcus and Josie. They like each other, but they don’t – they want to sleep with each other, but don’t want to talk to each other. It did get kind of annoying at times. I really wanted them to have a conversation – especially after Marcus learned that Josie was the girl he saved in America.

A number of circumstances were also too convenient, no spoilers here though, I will leave you to read and decide for yourself.

There is some passion in this book, nothing too steamy, but there are love scenes. Could have been more passionate for my taste. I really enjoyed the story and both main characters – along with the side characters – were quite likable.

I received a complimentary copy from NetGalley in exchange for an honest review.

Jen Davis says

It takes a lot for me to give up on a book. I hate marking something DNF...I always feel like I didn't try hard enough.

I tried with this book. I really did. But while the rescue was a cool start, everything after made me cringe and want to skim. If this woman really thought Blackthorne was a liar and so callous as to abandon her and those boys, there is NO WAY she would want to marry him. That's not revenge, that's ridiculous. On top of that, I knew this book was part of a series, but there was way too much info dumping about Josie's family and their backstory. I don't even care about her yet and I get a chapter basically summarizing everything that happened in previous books.

To be fair, I only read about 20%. But everything irritated me, made me eyes roll, or left me cold.

Some people loved it, though. It just wasn't for me.

DNF

Linda says

Five Star, yes I said five stars for my very first Joan Johnston book, I know what your thinking what idiot starts with the last book in the series, well hands up I guess me! Seriously though when I picked the book I had no idea; the cover captured my attention , the book blurb pulled me in even father and truth be told the story is so well written it does not matter, you can read this as a standalone and not be lost.

Our heroine Josie Wentworth along with her sisters and brothers survived the great Chicago Fire , unfortunately loosing their parents and sending them all to an orphanage. Life at the orphanage was so terrible the older sisters resort to answering ads for mail order brides, setting the remaining family on an adventure to the American west. An American west that is still in its infancy , still being settled and still being fought over between the invading white man and the Native Americans .It is that very Wild West that finds Josie's wagon train being attacked, then she is carried off by a Souix warrior, a warrior who when injured by Josie in her desperate attempt to escape, chooses to repay his single injury by inflicting so much more, beaten ,half stripped and strapped to a whipping pole,enduring the lash of the bull whip across her back and wishing for death is how the Duke of Blackthorne, Marcus Wharton finds her. To spite his friend Seaton's urging and ides urging not to get involved Marcus does just that, he rescues her from The Souix warrior in the end by trading her life for his great grandfathers pocket watch and a hunting knife. Marcus is in awe of this young woman her bravery and spirit .

Marcus finds himself enthralled with this young woman and unable to leave her behind as ill as she is , he chooses to take her back to England with him, see to her wounds and nurse her himself But Josie's ongoing fever no healing requires more time than the voyage back to England allows.

Marcus is after all returning to England to wed his best friend Seaton's sister Fanny , so his infatuation with this young Unknown girl must end , he leaves her in Seaton's hands to ensure her well being and make sure that she is returned to her family in America.

This however is where the deception begins .

Two long years later Josie is still trapped in England a maid of all work at a remote holding of the very man who rescued her and promised to return her back to her family in America , just a broken promise . However if not for Josie the Duke's orphaned nephews would be left to the devices of battling staff that have no interest in protecting or caring for these young men; Josie finds herself caring for these boys and keeping them out of harm's way . Frustrated with her and the boys situation she writes letter free letter to the Duke with no answer . Leaving Josie to wonder why the Duke never comes to see the girl he rescued or his two nephews , what type of man leaves his two nephews to the whims of an uncaring staff for two years without so much as looking in on them once .

Fate intervenes for Josie and the boys when a Pinkerton man arrives seeking her out , informing her that her family has been searching for her and she is also. Wealthy heiress , her family's fortune pre Chicago Fire having been found.

Josie determined to save the boys from their hell chooses to visit The Duke of Blackthorne and entreat him to allow her to take them back to America since he cares not for them. What Josie discovers when she reaches London is that the very same Duke is seeking an American heiress to wed to save his financially ruined estate

Josie , just happens to be an American heiress, one who is plotting some revenge that will cost of her new found wealth , but that will save the boys also. Marrying the Duke to achieve the desired result a small price

to pay. Once she is the boys aunt she will not have legal issues leaving with the boys. And doubly the Duke would bother to follow. What she does not expect is to fall in love.

Overall, a wonderfully engrossing read with plot twists multiple levels of deception and two hearts that fear heartache. Of course in the end an HEA for all!

Melanie says

I waited a loooooooooong time for this story and I can only say this: It was damn worth it!

This is the fourth book in Mail-Order Brides series ('Texas Bride' by Joan Johnston, 'Wyoming Bride' by Joan Johnston, and 'Montana Bride' by Joan Johnston I loved), and it was worth the wait.

I know that mail-order bride tropes are dime-a-dozen out there and sometimes I'm really skeptical about them, but this series in this author's hands was one of the best I've ever read. The reason for it is because the trope takes second place to the characterization, so that the story is character-driven.

To better understand the character and story of Josie, the youngest Wentworth sister, I highly recommend you read all three books before this one. I think you'll get the dynamic of this family and their history much better. You'll find out what happened to Josie and what shaped her character. As heroines go, she was everything we can only dream of being, smart, strong willed, loyal and witty. My heart went out to this young woman who has endured so much heartache yet remained optimistic and hopeful.

Our hero, Marcus, was a complex man and I needed some time to fully warm up to him, even though he'd exhibited plenty of good qualities.

I was truly happy to see the ending included all the Wentworth's and their families. It was like a cherry on top of my sundae!

If you like western romance then this author and her books, this series included, must be on your list.

Melanie for b2b

Complimentary copy provided by the publisher

Lover of Romance says

This review was originally posted on Addicted To Romance *Summary*

Jose Wentworth while with her siblings traveling across the west, was captured by Indians, and was tortured and whipped near death until an Englishman traveling, saved her life and took her to England while helping her heal from her wounds with the promise of sending her back to England. But it's been two years since then, and she is practically working as a slave at one of his country estates, taking care of his two nephews

who without her would be abused in the fighting and bantering between the governness and housekeeper. But when she learns that she has inherited a fortune and that the same man that rescued her is the same one that is searching for a rich wife to save his estates. And once she is his wife, will take his nephews away from the abuse and to her home in America, but she finds herself doubting her plan as she softens toward her husband and falls in love with him despite his faults, she wonders if she can trust him fully

Plot and Story Line

What a story and I have waited years for this book to come out and man did I love it so very much and so different from what I was expecting. This series is loosely connected with Johnston's Bittner Creek series, only back in the 1800's era instead of a contemporary setting. The first three books are based on this family of siblings, all orphans after their parents were killed. They are pretty close to each other. Josie had the worst of beginnings of them all though. I didn't expect this author to stretch herself and write a story set in Regency England, since she normally focuses on western themes, but she did a dang good job on this one and I was very impressed and I wouldn't complain if she wrote more Regency romances because I fell in love with this one. Our heroine, has been working as a servant, protecting these two young boys as best as she can, and they are very close to each other. Our hero, has lost his wife and infant child and a part of him is still grieving. But a part of him has always been in love with Josie, ever since rescuing her from the indians two years previous. At first he has no idea that this woman offering him marriage in return for her fortune is actually the same woman that he fell for two years ago. I did find it a bit odd that he didn't recognize her, but I guess she was badly beaten but I did find it a peculiar detail. Josie is obviously keeping a secret from our hero, but I understood why. There are other factors involved into why Marcus was left in the dark, but it offers some conflicts that this couple has to face and I enjoyed the way they draw close to each other despite the misunderstandings and secrets that develop in the story, it doesn't take too much away from the romance. and it did have some strong emotional undertones and I am curious to see what this author comes up with next.

The Cover

The one thing that really drew me to this cover, was the pose we have here. I love this cozy and tender pose we have here. And her dress is so pretty, and I like the red, it just works with the yellow.

Overall View

Blackthorne's Bride is a sweeping tale that takes you from the wild west of the America's to Regency England....a feisty and surprisingly enticing romance that takes you on adventure through the city streets of London and the countryside, and discover a powerful masterpiece of history and a delectable love story!!

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[image error]

Barbara Rogers says

Series: Mail Order Brides #4

Publication Date: June 27, 2017

My rating would actually be 3.5, but I rounded up to 4 because I really did enjoy the story.

The story follows Marcus Wharton, Duke of Blackthorne and American Josie Wentworth. It has a really exciting beginning with Marcus and his best friend coming upon a Sioux renegade whipping a young woman (Josie) who is tied to a post and stripped to the waist. She's almost dead and Marcus rescues her. Marcus is fascinated by the girl's bravery and instead of leaving her in the care of someone in America, he brings her

aboard the ship he is taking back to England. However, when he gets there, he turns the arrangements for her care and eventual return to America up to his best friend. Since Marcus is marrying his best friend's sister as soon as they return to England, he doesn't want his rescue of the girl to cause any issue with Fanny – his betrothed. Things really go awry from there – Fanny dies, Josie has been virtually imprisoned on one of Marcus' properties (without his knowledge), Marcus' estate is bankrupt and he has to marry an heiress. The rest of the story is filled with Marcus and Josie getting together and falling in love. I won't give you a step-by-step because that will spoil the story for you.

What didn't I like?

* The author really needed to do more research. Evidently, she normally writes westerns or contemporary novels and that is probably why this book just doesn't 'feel' right for the time period and the place. A couple of examples of where more research would help.

** Marcus is NOT a royal duke, but the author mentions that over and over and over in the book. In order to be a ROYAL DUKE he must be the son or grandson of the current reigning monarch and the story doesn't say anything about that at all.

** Spencer and Clay are not Lord's. As children of a second son, they would be plain Spencer and Clay. They do not have an honorific.

* The regular use of the term 'mail order bride'. That is a common American term, and I understand that is the name of the series, but it isn't a normally used term in England and therefore, the Duke wouldn't think of himself as marrying a mail order bride. He would think in terms of him having a marriage of convenience.

* I didn't like Fanny – and maybe I wasn't supposed to. She is supposed to be this ethereal, sweet, and angelic (too good to be true??) person, but she does some pretty rotten things.

* The ending/solution just felt rushed to me. I could have done with less of the book on the American part of the family and more on the resolution of the issues between Josie and Marcus.

What did I like?

* I absolutely LOVED the epilog – it was a great wrap-up for the story.

"I requested and received this book at no cost to me and volunteered to read it; my review is my honest opinion and given without any influence by the author or publisher."

Joana V. says

I've received an eARC through NetGalley in exchange for an honest review. 3.5*

Review in Portuguese: <http://pepitamagica.blogspot.co.uk/20...>

This book was a bit odd. Not because it was bad, on the contrary, but sometimes it created contradictory feelings.

Marcus Wharton, Duke of Blackthorne, always kept me guessing. Heroic enough to save a girl and almost lose his life doing it, but not enough to deliver her directly to a safe haven. I know he "hands" her over to his friend and almost brother-in-law, but still. If I had saved someone and made sure they survived taking care of them, I wouldn't have them with someone else at the end. Even if there was a nuance to consider.

Same thing with the "abandonment" of his nephews. For someone who said that loved them, a small letter

from a governess shouldn't be enough. At least (more in my opinion, but let's keep a low bar) a visit once a year, to be sure they were well fed and well taken care of and were learning what they needed to learn. I agreed with the female lead character – Marcus should have sent the boys to live with him, but I understand that at the beginning, it might have been a difficult decision – but not forever.

Josie is strong-minded and she is determined to get her revenge for being left in England and not sent back home to America, and made a maid in her supposed-to-be rescuer's country house. She also wants to avenge the two boys that the duke left almost abandoned at that same house. When the opportunity arises, Josie was a bit torn about going straight home or getting her revenge, for herself and the boys, which she planned to take with her to America. Choosing the second option, Josie tricks the duke, thinking him the horrible villain, but she then starts to realize that he is a broken man, who is still suffering, and he actually believes that the girl he saved is back home with her family and that his nephews are happier in the country where they can play, than with him in the city. Josie basically tells him that he should think for himself, that he should open his eyes and see that he deals with his matters himself, and not shove them to someone else, even if he trusts them – that's how he got into this mess.

I realized right from the beginning how everything got mixed up, but I believe the point the author wanted to make was that there wasn't a "real" villain, but just people who were flawed and did what they thought was right even though it was wrong.

In the end, it was a nice book, because Josie managed to entice me and made Marcus understand his mistakes and correct them. And, in the end, as it should be, all the family gets back together in America, for a visit with the characters from the previous books of the series (which I haven't read). A happy ending, no doubt.

Mei says

This is Josie's story, the last Wentworth sister. Josie was kidnapped by Indians and tortured, but she was saved by Marcus and nursed to health.

But Marcus was engaged at that time and he left Josie in his future brother-in-law and friend's hands.

Now Marcus is a widower and must remarry quickly in order to be able to maintain his estate and his nephews. So he interviews a heiress to marry, practically selling his title for money.

Meanwhile Josie was segregated with Marcus' nephews in a decrepit manor of Marcus and treated like a serf. She thinks her sisters dead and doesn't have any means to leave that situation. She also cannot leave and abandon the darling boys he came to love like her own. She also doesn't understand why the man who saved her has left her there to suffer.

When the Pinkerton's detective finds her and reveals that she's a heiress, Josie decides to confront Marcus and free also the boys.

So their meeting is peculiar: Marcus doesn't know that the heiress he's interviewing is Josie and Josie wants revenge for being abandoned and for the treatment his nephews have suffered with her.

And they marry. And the deception continues...

It's actually a very nice love story and I loved this last installment of the series, even if I found Marcus to be a little too naive. He was ready to believe everything everybody told him. He didn't check on his nephews, he didn't check on Josie... he blindly believed what he was told by others!

I liked Josie better. First she was bitter and angry, but when she slowly discovers that Marcus is a good man and not the monster she thought, she mellows and forgives.

If you've read the previous books, I'll advise you to read this one too!

Susan says

Good conclusion to the Mail Order Brides series. In the earlier books, the four sisters had all taken steps to escape the horror of their lives in a Chicago orphanage after their parents' deaths. Josie was captured by renegade Sioux warriors, and in the prologue of this book is whipped by one of her captors because she resisted. Marcus, Duke of Blackthorne, and his friend David, Earl of Seaton, happen upon the scene. Horrified by what he sees, Marcus buys Josie from the Indian, determined to save her. Unwilling to leave her behind to recover, Marcus takes her with him back to England, nursing her himself during the journey. As he is to be married to David's sister on his return home, he charges his friend with making certain that Josie is returned to her family in America once she is healed.

Two years later, Josie is practically a prisoner at one of the Duke's estates, working as a maid and caring for the Duke's two orphaned nephews. She is furious at the Duke, both for his broken promise to her and for his neglect of his nephews. She has written to him numerous times with no response and her anger at him continues to grow. Her life takes a sudden and drastic change when she is visited by a Pinkerton detective. She is stunned when he informs her that her sisters have been searching for her for two years and that she has inherited a significant amount of money. She decides to use that money to bribe Marcus to allow her to take his nephews back to America with her. That decision undergoes a change when she discovers that he is looking for a rich American to marry to save his estates. I loved Josie's spirit and determination to protect the two little boys she has come to love.

Marcus's life since his return has not been an easy one. His father died, leaving the estate in debt. His brother also died, leaving Marcus to care for his two nephews. His beloved wife also died, along with their son, after an illness she had hidden from him. Though he doesn't want to marry again, he needs an heir and the wherewithal to restore his estates. Throughout it all, he has never forgotten the girl he rescued and has often wondered how she is and why she has never contacted him. Marcus irritated me at the beginning with the way he had neglected to follow up on his promise to Josie. He also seemed far too willing to depend on other people's word instead of checking things out himself.

I enjoyed the meeting between Josie and Marcus. He doesn't recognize her as the woman he rescued, and he never knew her name. Josie is determined to dislike Marcus, based on his broken promise and neglect of his nephews. Neither expects the buzz of attraction between them. It was fun to see Marcus begin to regret the bargain that he had made, promising that he would not seek out the physical side of their marriage past their wedding night. Josie keeps the secret of her identity as she still plans to leave him as soon as she can. But as they spend their honeymoon preparing to restore his main estate, they begin to get to know each other. There are some terrific scenes as Josie's American outlook butts up against Marcus's British reserve. Josie discovers that Marcus is not the unfeeling man she thought he was. Marcus is stunned when he discovers the truth about Josie. The attraction between them continues to grow as do their feelings, though neither is ready to

admit it.

As Josie fights with herself over her best course of action, family crises create complications. One of Marcus's sisters disappears, and Marcus and Josie embark on a search for her. Josie receives word that one of her sisters is fighting for her life. Josie and Marcus become separated, and he discovers the truth behind what happened to Josie. I wasn't surprised by who was behind it, though the reasoning was somewhat incredible. Josie's fear for her sister causes her to act precipitously and by the time she realizes that she may have made a mistake it's too late to change course. I liked their big moment at the end as they finally admit to their feelings. I loved the epilogue as the family is reunited.

I enjoyed the occasional update on the other sisters as they waited to hear that Josie has been found and is on her way home. I also liked Marcus's sisters and their immediate acceptance of Josie into the family. There is a good secondary storyline involving one of those sisters that shows Marcus's love and protectiveness for his family, even though he sometimes has a hard time showing it.
