



Bandit's Hope

Marcia Gruver

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Stream on down to Mississippi, the setting of Marcia Gruver's second book in the breathtaking Backwoods Bride series. Reddick "Tiller" McRae is tired of the outlaw life, even more so when he falls for a respectable innkeeper's daughter. Will he face the gallows before he can win her hallowed heart? Maria Bell is tired of waiting for God to bring her a husband and protector. Taking matters of the law and love into her own hands, she sets a trap to catch a thief and a husband. What will she do when she finds out they are one and the same?

Bandit's Hope Details

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From Reader Review Bandit's Hope for online ebook

Judy says

Bandits Hope by Marcia Gruver

Reddick "Tiller" McRae left his uncles home ten years ago with Nathan Carter. Tiller and Nathan rode with two other fellows in the gang. Tiller's boyish and innocent looks were used to get travelers trust and when their defenses were down, the others would jump in and rob them. On this particular day, with this particular old fellow, Tiller felt a change. It no longer felt right. He tried to get the man to leave but it was too late. The others rode in. And as always Tiller took off like an innocent, only he realized this day that he was as guilty as the rest, maybe more so.

Mariah Coffee Bell just buried her father, only she did not tell anyone he passed. She needed to marry first so she could hold the land. She promised her Choctaw mother that she would hold onto the land, right before her mother died two years ago. She would keep Bell's Inn running. She would marry. She had Miss Vee, Dicey & Rainy to help her continue on. Most people accepted Mariah, others considered her a half breed squaw.

Tiller came to stay at Bell's Inn. While there some men brought in Otis Gooch, the man the gang had attacked. Mariah and Miss Vee had asked him to stay on and fix things up and in return he had free room and board, when he seen Otis he felt his time there was short. Otis was hit hard on the head though and did not remember. So instead Tiller helped care for the older man.

As time passes Tiller starts to care for Mariah and knows he must one day tell of his past. Mariah hurts whenever her father is mentioned. She knows Miss Vee cared for her father and deserves to grieve for him rather than believe he was somewhere else being cared for. They survive a tornado, lack of funds, a kidnapping and even her Uncle Joe who is determined to take her back with him and have her marry the chief's son, Uncle Joe had been trying to bring her back to the tribe since her mother's death. This book is full of love and adventure.

**Received through NetGalley for review

Noela says

I LOVED Bandit's Hope!! An exciting and intriguing tale full of adventure, drama, and romance – I found this sequel to Raider's Heart maintaining the same high standard, if not exceeding it.

Bandit's Hope picks up the trail of Reddick 'Tiller' McRae, much older but still on his life of crime with his gang. But it's not long before the shame and discontentment with the bandit's life catches up to him and he finds the need to get away. Which brings him to Bell's Inn and the lovely Mariah... a young woman of Choctaw heritage with her own secrets. Tiller finds much more than he ever bargained for while at this Inn and more than he could ever hope for as well.

I was also impressed that all the prominent characters in this epic tale were complete and so interestingly unique. And that Marcia Gruver was able to add so much clever humour to such a heart-warming and yet gripping tale!

Sharon Tyler says

Bandit's Hope by Marcia Gruver is the second book in the Backwoods Brides Series of Christian, historical romances. I have not read the first in the series, but did not feel the lack except for when we meet the hero's family toward the end of the book. As I have said before, I do not read a lot of Christian romance, simply because it is so easy to go wrong, but this hit all the right cords with me.

In *Bandit's Hope*, readers meet Reddick "Tiller" McRae. He is traveling with outlaws, acting as their decoy to help them commit robbery. However, Tiller is tired of the outlaw life and is looking to make a change. When the company robs an older man, Tiller has had enough and heads off on his own, with no promise to return. Mariah Coffee Bell has just lost her father, but kept that news to herself. As a woman, a woman of mixed heritage no less, she has no claim on the property and inn that she has been running with her father since her mother died. Now she needs to marry in order to keep control of everything that she loves. When Tiller stumbles upon the inn in bad weather, it becomes harder for Mariah to follow through with her plan to marry a local farmer, but she is determined to hold onto her mother's beloved land. Tiller's life seems to be crumbling when the older gentleman that was victim in his last act with the outlaws is brought to the inn in bad shape. Then Mariah's uncle comes to the inn determined to bring her to live with the rest of her mother's family. Secrets are in danger, and the cause of misery. Can everyone find the future and forgiveness they seek, while offering others the same forgiveness they desire?

Bandit's Hope is definitely a Christian romance, with strong messages about forgiveness, family and honesty. However, the message is one that people of all faith's and backgrounds can enjoy and take something from which is important in a world with so many different religions and cultures. The mentions of the bible and faith flowed perfectly with the story, rather than feeling forced or added on just for the sake of the label 'Christian Fiction'. The story was complex, but not in a bad way. The cast of characters were varied, and extremely well built. They all felt fully three dimensional, even the characters that we only see once or twice.

I think I can safely say that *Bandit's Hope* was the best example of Christian romance done well that I have ever read, and I can recommend it for all fans of the genre. I would also recommend *Bandit's Hope* to readers that enjoy well fleshed out romance novels, and might not normally seek out Christian fiction. The only people that might not enjoy this book are those that do not like romance novels, are bothered by mentions of faith in their fiction, or do not like historical fiction set in early America.

Iola says

Reddick MacRae (known as Tiller) left home many years ago with his cousin?, attracted by the drifter lifestyle. He travelled with a band of thieves, but didn't consider himself to be a thief because he was the decoy who 'befriended' the potential victim before the others arrive to commit the robbery. After stealing the life savings of an old man, Tiller suddenly develops a conscience and leaves the gang, ending up at the Bell Inn, owned by John Coffee Bell.

Mariah is half-Choctaw Indian, and had promised her dying mother that she will maintain ownership of the Inn that once stood on their tribe's land. She reasons that no one will permit a half-Indian female to maintain ownership of the property, so she must hide her father's death until she can marry. Her initial thought is to

“find a husband with a strong back and a feeble mind”, but the arrival of Tiller MacRae sends her thoughts in other directions... Tiller agrees to work for room and board, undertaking some necessary improvements to the Inn, but the arrival of the injured Otis Gooch with his God talk disturbs both Mariah and Tiller as their relationship develops despite their secrets.

Bandit's Hope had an interesting premise and a terrific opening sentence that immediately grabbed me - “Mariah Bell reached the bottom landing, stumbling under the weight of the most precious cross she'd ever had to bear. Balancing her father's lifeless body ...”. Unfortunately, the novel went downhill from there, although it did improve towards the end. The writing had occasional flashes of brilliance, the inclusion of the local Indian culture in the plot was original and the characters were well-written and interesting. But overall, while overall Bandit's Hope was a pleasant enough diversion, it was not a compelling read.

Thanks to NetGalley and Barbour for providing a free ebook to review.

Laura says

The second book in this series, "Bandit's Hope" did not disappoint! The book has just the right amount of adventure, humor, and inspiration...and a wonderful cast of characters! Can't wait for the next book in this series! :)

Ausjenny says

I got this book from Netgalley to read. It was the final state I needed to complete my 50 state challenge for 2011. I really enjoy the story. I haven't read the first book in series but it didn't affect the story. This can be read alone without feeling you are wondering what has happened. Maria is a strong women who has some issues to deal with, one being saving the inn and praying for a husband to help protect her. Tiller is tired of being an outlaw and happens across the inn and helps out. There are other interesting twists which add to the story. This book deals with forgiveness, misconceptions, acceptance. A good read.

Dee Schwinn says

This was a good read. It kept my interest. The characters of Mariah and Tiller were well drawn and the reader was allowed to know the thoughts. There was a good mix of Christian values, romance, historical, Indian culture, and family relationships. There was also an emphasis on always forgiving and on telling the truth.

Shantelle says

Such a touching story... about a reckless young man with an unwanted past, and a hurting young woman hiding big secrets. They have a chance meeting and fall in love, but it seems there's such much that wants to tear them apart.

Bandit's Hope is the second book in Marcia Gruver's Backwoods Brides series... and I enjoyed about as much as the first one. Charming and sweet, but with plenty of tension to keep you on your toes. Great historical romance... all fans read Backwoods Brides series! :) ?

Laura says

BANDIT'S HOPE is the second book in Ms. Gruver's Backwoods Brides series but it easily stands alone. Its an older book, one I didn't get read four years ago, but for fans of historical fiction, it's a treasure found. Mariah is a strong, feisty woman, on the verge of making a stupid mistake. The book starts with the mandatory death (for formula historical romances) but it is done in such an unique way that it instantly grabbed my attention. Unfortunately, that attention wasn't held, as the story dragged (except for occasional flashes of brilliance) for the rest of the book. Fans of Ms. Gruver might disagree. The story was written in a stellar manner, and one could easily dissect it to teach the finer points of writing historical romance to a beginner (which is good for those who learn best by example).

I cared deeply for Tiller. My heart went out to him and I loved Mrs. Vee and Otis. Dear, dear characters.

If you like historical romance and haven't given Ms. Gruver a try yet, pick up BANDIT'S HOPE. Previous characters from the first book in the series do make an appearance, For those who like to read them in order the first book is Raider's Heart.

Faye says

Honesty is always the best policy.

Mariah Belle struggles to keep her father's death a secret in an attempt to hold on to the family inn. Mariah is of Chocktah heritage so she has to find a white man willing to marry her before her father's passing is discovered.

Tiller is an outlaw, who lives on his own scheming and cheating honest folk, but he longs to get away from his unscrupulous living. When the chance presents itself, in the form of helping one of his victims Tiller takes it. Ashamed of his past, Tiller lies to cover his past.

What will Mariah and Tiller do when their lies catch up with them?

I had a hard time getting into this one, though I will admit that I haven't read the first book in the series, I believe that Bandit's Hope is a stand-alone novel. The book was well written, but I found the plot a tad hard to believe. I kept saying to myself while I was reading "If only they would tell each other the truth!" And

sometimes I struggled to understand the motives behind some of the characters' actions.

My favorite character was Otis, a nice elderly gentleman who had a simple faith, though at times he was a bit forgetful, he could always bring a smile to my face.

Overall, this book has plenty of action and romance that overcomes the odds. I enjoyed the characters of Ms. Viola (Vee) and Otis immensely, yet I never really connected with Tiller or Mariah, the main characters. I would mostly recommend this book to readers of westerns :) This is my honest opinion. Thanks.

I received this book from the publisher in return for an honest review. Thank you.

Kate says

Mariah, new owner of Bells Inn is in search of a husband but others believe they hold her choice. Reddick (Tiller) McRae has other things in mind than being with his ruthless gang members. Tired of running, Tiller is caught in a storm landing him on the doorstep of Bells Inn. He is quickly made welcome by the Inns workers and for Tiller bidding time seems the best solution yet. A search operation turns up more than is expected.

The second in a series, of which I have read the first, has as much charm and personality, but can easily be a stand alone novel as well. With the introduction of new characters, Otis and Miss Vee, for example, added to the storyline, I was really drawn to them, along with my old favorites made this quite an enjoyable and fulfilling read! I always expect to have a great time when I read one of Mrs. Gruver's novels and this one did not disappoint. Excellent character development and dialogue the novel flowed well and I connected with the characters right away. The book held my interest and did not have any dull parts. Excellent! I would definately recommend this book to others.

Elizabeth "Eli" Olmedo says

The second book in Marcia Gruver's Backwoods Brides Series, Bandit's Hope is a romance through and through. It is the typical boy meets girl. They fall in love and circumstances try to separate them, but in the end boy and girl live happily ever after. While this story didn't capture me as much as the first book in the series, Raider's Heart, it is still a nice read. I enjoyed watching the characters get themselves into some crazy situations in their attempts to hide the truth.

Though the story got pretty cheesy at times, it was fun to watch the relationship develop between Tiller and

Mariah. Overall, it's a sweet and entertaining story, but readers should be prepared for clichés in both the romance and faith aspects of the novel.

Joan Arning says

Bandit's Hope takes place on the Natchez Trace in 1882. When Mariah Bell promised her Indian mother to always keep Bell's Inn, she didn't realize what drastic measures she would have to take to fulfill that promise. Tiller McRae leaves his gang of robbers but doesn't plan on feeling guilty about his past. The author manages to make you feel sorry for Tiller when the last man he was involved in "distracting" is brought to the Inn. The first few chapters introduced so many characters that I had difficulty keeping them straight. I felt that perhaps some of them could have been introduced into the story a little later. Overall the story by Marcia Gruver was well written with surprises in the end and I would recommend it to others.

Joleen says

Bandit's Hope is a story of a young man, Tiller, (so named for his ability in a garden) who, for the past 10 years, has been running with a gang...a gang of thieves, highwaymen I believe they were called. As a kid, his mother was selfish, mistreated him, and eventually sent him packing to his uncle's home. He stayed there until he was 15 or so, and when he was influenced by a few older, less than honorable young men, his uncle kicked him out. So, now he feels like he has no family nor home, and leaving with this gang seemed the only likely thing for a kid to do.

At some point along the way he makes a decision he just can't take it anymore. He doesn't even take his share from the last thieving, since it upset him so much...an elderly gentleman who was kind to him.

He makes it to an old western inn, and decides, when they offer him a job, to stay. He does well and life is looking good, until a few monkey wrenches are thrown into the lives of the people at the Inn.

Mariah is the proprietor of the Bell Inn, part of the ancestral land of her Choctaw mother. She needs to keep it in the family so she sets out to find a husband...a white husband, otherwise she will lose it all. Good story, good writing.

I had a few problems with certain storylines that made me scratch my head, but in the long run didn't really detract enough from the story for me to enjoy it less.

So, good job.
I can recommend it.

Jane says

A book of forgiveness and mercy. Tiller finds hope while staying at Bell's Inn. Also the man he helped his friend, Nathan, and gang rob shows up at inn. Otis is a unique character and in the end Tiller McRae finds forgiveness from him and God. He also makes things right.

Mariah runs the Inn and is trying to keep the secret of her Dad's death so she will not lose the inn and place

her Mom and Dad are buried.

I recommend you read Book 1 of The Backwoods Brides first. Then you will see how some of the things fit together.

Tiller's ma starving herself and son really does happen. I knew a Preacher's wife growing up who hid money all over the house. She was a lot like Tiller's Mom. Her husband had enough to keep him the rest of his life at her death. So this part of story I could relate to first hand.

Mariah did not intend to fall in love with Tiller. She had her plans laid to save her inn. Plans that back fired and almost got her hurt. Tiller and others rescued her.

Mariah saw the true Tiller. I think sometimes people get messed up in things and can change and find true hope as Tiller did.
