



# The Doubting Heart

*Brenda Gayle*

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## **The Doubting Heart** Brenda Gayle

A woman determined to prove her friend was murdered questions her sanity when his look-alike appears.

When Shelby Holt convinces a friend to work at Wildhorse Pass tourist ranch, she never imagines he will die there. The police say Michael's death was accidental, but Shelby doesn't believe it. Haunted by guilt, she puts her academic career on hold to investigate.

Just back from the Middle East, Chad Graham is guilt-ridden over Michael's death too. He poses as a ranch hand at Wildhorse Pass to investigate the woman claiming his cousin's death is suspicious. Were the police wrong? Or is Shelby hiding something?

Shelby knows she can't trust her heart, but when it comes to Chad, she can't trust her head either. He looks uncannily like Michael. Yet even as their distrust deepens, sensual attraction simmers between them. The closer Shelby and Chad get to answers—and to each other—the closer they get to danger...and to a killer who will stop at nothing to avoid discovery.

## **The Doubting Heart Details**

Date : Published January 25th 2013 by The Wild Rose Press (first published October 1st 2012)

ISBN :

Author : Brenda Gayle

Format : Paperback 350 pages

Genre : Romance, Romantic Suspense, Mystery, Contemporary, Westerns

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# From Reader Review The Doubting Heart for online ebook

## J says

I won this in a Goodreads Giveaway.

A nice romance that had just the right amount of conflict.

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## Judith Lott says

A very good book - I really enjoyed the story - kept you guessing until the end. Thanks to Ms Gayle and Goodreads for a wonderful experience!

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## Bookish Indulgences with b00k r3vi3ws says

Shelby Holt convinced Michael to take up the job at Wildhorse Pass even though Michael isn't much of a field work kind of person. So when Michael meets his untimely death there, Shelby feels guilty and swears to bring the murderer to justice. She puts up a façade in order to stay on at the Wildhorse Pass and do a little bit of investigating on her own. Chad is sceptic about his cousin's 'accidental' death and Shelby's claim of murder. He goes undercover to decide the truth for himself. The last thing he expects is to fall for Shelby, yet that's what happens. Will Shelby be able to prove that Michael was murdered? Why are a number of accidents happening around Shelby? Will Chad be able to protect Shelby and divulge his identity and still win over Shelby?

I had read the first part of Heart's Desire Series, The Hungry Heart, quite some time back and remember enjoying it. So when the author offered me the chance to read the remaining two books in the series, I happily accepted.

The characters in novel are vibrant and full of life. Each of them has a distinct role to play and none of them are dispensable. I loved Shelby because of her Loyalty to Michael. It's the first quality about her that a reader notices and is one that never fades away. She is also smart and quick on her feet. She is caring and loving too. So how can one not like her? Chad shares the loyalty trait with Shelby. He is loyal to his family. He is also hot and sexy. He becomes an integral part of Shelby's life at Wildhorse Pass and her investigation of Michael's death. I usually do not expect a complex plot in a romance or romantic suspense novel. It is usually quite straightforward and predictable. But do not expect such from this series. There are always layers of secrets that unfold slowly to build up tension among its readers. So just when I thought that I had it figured out, the author threw something new at me.

Overall, this books certainly makes for an entertaining read that I would recommend to all romance and romantic suspense lovers.

## **Carrie says**

The Doubting Heart is another tension filled, well written romantic suspense from Brenda Gayle. The heroine, Shelby Holt, is convinced her dear friend and mentor, Michael Graham, has been murdered. In order to stay at the ranch she and Michael were conducting research at she pretends to be traumatized by his disappearance and believe that he will return for her. The owners feel some sympathy and allow Shelby to remain at the ranch. To earn her keep she works with the guests and helps with the chores.

A new worker shows up to the ranch that instantly affects Shelby. Chad Greene looks so much like Michael it's eerie. Besides that, Shelby feels an attraction to Chad she never had towards Michael or any other man. Shelby needs help looking for clues and she wonders if Chad could help her since he obviously isn't a suspect.

Chad is however deeply involved in Michael's life. He is actually Michael's cousin, sent by the family to investigate the possibility that Michael was in fact murdered as Shelby claims. There is also a fear that Shelby might be a gold digger, trying to get in with the family for monetary gain.

Chad quickly discovers that Shelby isn't trying to harm his family, she truly wants to discover the truth to Michael's disappearance. Plus, there are numerous attempts on Shelby's life that tell him someone wants her out of the way. What does Shelby know? What did Michael know?

This is another fast moving, page turning tale. Like Gayle's first book in this series, The Hungry Heart there is romance but it's not the focus of the story. There is a mystery to be solved and despite the dangers, the heroine keeps searching until she finds her answers.

I had my suspicions about who might be responsible for the disappearance of Michael and the accidents Shelby encountered and I was pleased to see my guess was correct. Besides solving the mystery, the characters themselves grow and change from the experience. Old habits are discarded and hearts are opened up to love and trust another person. Gayle has a delicate touch with her character's damaged psyches. In the end it is always about being true to yourself and respecting the person you are that matters, never what other people think or feel. I like that she crafts women who become stronger and independent.

I will say that once again, I'm not thrilled with the cover. It is so stereotypical Harlequin-esque, steamy romance. And this story just isn't like that. Yes, there is romance and a hot bedroom scene but it's not the focus of the book. It's the characters. I would have liked the characters shown in a less Fabio-style pose. But that's just my own quirk. Don't judge by the cover, that's so true in this case :)

4 out of 5 stars

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## **Romancing the Book says**

Reviewed by Nadene R.

Book provided by the publisher for review

Review originally posted at Romancing the Book

When I read the blurb for this title I thought to myself that this sounds like an exciting read. I am not conversant with this author's writing style as such I was not sure what she had in store for me. However the one thing I was expecting is that I would get a story that would keep me thoroughly entertained. It was entertaining to some extent, but it simply did not deliver that WOW factor that I have come to expect from the romantic suspense genre.

The story started out rather well and it had my attention at the start, still, there were portions of this story that I found quite boring as a consequence it took me some time to finish it. It did not grip me in the way I was expecting it and so it left me a quite disappointed. There were no unexpected surprises nor were there any twists and turns that one would expect from this type of genre. It was quite easy to figure out who the villain in the story was as such when it was revealed it came as no shock. In spite of this the story did have some merits, especially in the areas of character development and the theme.

The manner in which the characters were portrayed made it easy to understand what they were thinking and feeling. I found the female protagonist, Shelby Holt to be very insecure. She was of the mind that she was not beautiful and she found it difficult to believe that Chad, the male protagonist would be drawn to her. When it came to her belief that her best friend, Michael Graham was murdered she was very tenacious. She is willing to go to any lengths, even if it meant risking her life to prove that this was the case. It was this character that caught the Chad's eyes. At first he was not sure what to think of her, but as he got to know her better he realized she is the woman for him.

Chad came to the Wildhorse Pass Ranch with the intent to look into what really happened to his cousin Michael. He also meant to ascertain what Shelby's motive in all of this was. The one thing he was not expecting was to be attracted to her.

The author's writing style was rather descriptive, especially as it relates to life on the ranch. It was rather engaging and it made feel as if I was actually there.

The Doubting Heart is a story of passion, betrayal, secrets and forgiveness. It portrays the devastating and the disabling effect that secrets can have on a relationship, but with love and forgiveness it can be healed. Although I did not get the experience I was expecting from reading this title I am still looking forward to reading more of this author's work.

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**Lindsay says**

Amazon Freebie 11/7/2012

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**InD'tale Magazine says**

3.5/5.0

Though this is the second book in the 'Heart's Desire' series this can be read as a standalone.

Read full review in the 2013 June issue of InD'tale Magazine.

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### **Jody says**

Every now and again I get in the mood to read something suspenseful and after reading the blurb to Brenda Gayle's newest release, *The Doubting Heart*, I was greatly intrigued. After turning the final page I'm left a bit disappointed though. There were many good aspects about this book but some things just didn't work for me.

What worked for me were the scenic descriptions. Coming from a rural background I applaud the author on the rich and realistic descriptions of ranch life and the rugged men who work there. It was easy to get immersed into this world. To go with this rugged world is a truly sexy hero who I found myself enamored with. Chad's a strong leader, a reliable hero, who's been through the emotional wringer and he definitely deserved a HEA. I just wish his chosen heroine had been more worthy.

I never warmed up to Shelby. I found her rather weak and unthinking at times in that she carelessly put herself in jeopardy and expected others to save her. I also never felt that passionate spark between her and Chad which led to very little sexual tension between them and a rather clinical sexual interlude. The suspense part of the story was a bit predictable and the ending felt a bit rushed but with its intriguing premise I felt compelled to continue to the moderately satisfying conclusion.

As the second book in the Heart's Desire series this book can definitely stand on its own. With its warm romance and sure and steady writing style *The Doubting Heart* will appeal to those looking to read a story that doesn't require much thought. Just sit back and relax in a reading haze. Though this book didn't work for me on every level I will gladly return to Ms. Gayle's library to see what other storylines grab my attention.

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### **Tonileg says**

Contemporary Western mystery with romance tendencies at the Wildhorse Pass tourist ranch, where Miss Shelby Holt invites her friend to work with her which goes horribly wrong when Micheal dies in suspicious circumstances. Dr Chad Graham is guilt-ridden over his cousin Micheal's death so he decides to pose as a ranch hand to investigate. Chad comes from a close family so he keeps in touch with his cousins, so it hits him hard to think that Micheal may be dead or murdered. Shelby and Chad have an instant lust which attacks them unawares when ever they end up alone together.

The evil Charisma is perhaps only a spoiled child of a woman, but there is definitely something fishy going on with Wyatt, Donna and perhaps the Resort company that wants to buy the ranch.

This was well written, but boring at times when the obvious is going to happen and then it does and I just want to flip some pages ahead, but I can't because this is on my kindle. Guaranteed HEA with one vanilla sexy scene.

268 pages and kindle freebie

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