



## Stubborn Hearts

*Carol Ritten Smith*

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## **Stubborn Hearts** Carol Ritten Smith

Can the love of an honorable man be enough to forgive a woman's one felonious act? Should that woman risk everything to find out?

When Tom Carver, Whistle Creek's blacksmith, tackles a youth prowling in his barn, he certainly doesn't expect that youth to be the recently-hired school teacher, Beth Patterson.

Her feeble excuses invite his suspicion, so for the next few weeks, he devises "chance" encounters with her so he can watch her every move.

Hiding from the law, Beth had hopes of starting afresh in the town of Whistle Creek. But with one brother obsessed with stealing a horse, and the other, younger one befriending the town's intrusive blacksmith, she fears her ugly past will be uncovered.

Tom's deliberate encounters with Beth reveal she is a deeply devoted sister, and a beautiful, loving woman. Soon desire expels his distrust and he purposely courts her. Denying her own yearnings, Beth knows she must reject his advances for the sake of her small family. Surely Tom, a decent and respected man, would condemn her for her one tragic deed. Wouldn't he?

## **Stubborn Hearts Details**

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## From Reader Review Stubborn Hearts for online ebook

### Cary Frates says

Stubborn Hearts is a solid story with winning characters and plot twists and changes that keep the reader either bemused, on edge or deliciously anxious. I enjoyed each ratcheting up of the relationship between the primary characters, as well as the issues and situations they encounter. It was hard work hitting the off button and leaving the continuation of their story for the following day, and when I did reach the end, I did so with a smile for the culmination of a fun tale, and regret at having to leave behind some new-found friends. Well Done. I purchased this book online and have given this review freely and without monetary compensation.

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### WiLoveBooks says

This was a great western historical romance. I wanted to dislike Tom for being so cocky, but it ended up being endearing. Beth is a strong, stubborn character who just wants to protect her family. They don't get along at first and it is fun to watch them butt heads. I was swept up in their story and had to keep reading until I knew how things would work out. A lovely, sweet romance that made me laugh at times and also had me in suspense.

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### Tara says

I generally gravitate towards contemporary or paranormal romance but when I had the opportunity to read an advance copy of Stubborn Hearts I put my hand up and said, "yes please." I wasn't disappointed.

I liked the premise, the unmistakable decency of the hero Tom, and the spunk and protectiveness of the heroine. The older of her brothers was a trial for me, but then, he was a trial for her too which lent authenticity to the story.

The author has a delicate touch with romantic tension and it works. I love it when good guys, and girls, come out on top. If that's your thing too, here's a story worth considering.

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### Brandy Dorsch says

I am not normally a western romance reader and will avoid them if I can. It's just me. However, when the author contacted me about reviewing her story, I have to admit that I was intrigued.

This is a very well written romance story and the history is true and deep. I read passages to my husband (who is a history nut) and he was impressed with the accuracy. It is not often that you find a story that is rich in detail and develops with the book. Beth is a complicated woman who is doing what she needs to survive. As a teacher in a small rural area that is always going to be difficult. Tom is one of those guys you want to smack and end up loving. I love a story that combines romance and suspense. It leaves me wondering where the characters choices will take them. The author has created a beautiful story that captures the essence of

Beth and Tom.

I rated this story a solid 4 Bookworms and would love to know what you guys think!

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### **Molly Gray says**

I don't often read period pieces, but I was immediately swept up in this Old West tale. Reminding me a bit of a grown up's "Little House on the Prairie," Whistle Creek is populated by well-developed and interesting townsfolk.

Tom Carver, the town blacksmith, is a well respected member of the community. When he catches the new schoolteacher, Beth Patterson, in a compromising position, he suspects she's keeping a secret. The question he has is..why?

Beth Patterson and her two younger brothers arrived in Whistle Creek to start a new life. She's determined to ensure the true story of their past stays well hidden. That means keeping her distance from the other members of the community.

When Tom forms an unexpected bond with Davy, Beth is torn between allowing her brother the much-needed male influence in his life and keeping the walls around her family intact. As time passes, the bond between Beth and Tom becomes undeniable, but Beth doesn't know if this honorable man will be able to forgive the full story of her past.

Stubborn Hearts was a fast read. I finished it in two sittings. I'll be anxiously waiting for the next book Ms. Smith has to offer.

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### **Peggy Bird says**

This is a story of the Old Canadian West without a gunslinger or cowboy in sight. Just Beth, a school teacher with two brothers and a secret past, and Tom, the town's blacksmith who's never gotten around to marrying the woman he's been sleeping with. They are the owners of the stubborn hearts in the title. She wants to protect her brothers at all costs. He finds himself attracted to the much younger, very irritating school teacher who has recently arrived in town. It takes the length of Smith's book--and a couple of crisis moments--for them to come to terms with each other, as the reader quickly hopes they will. Smith deftly puts the reader into the scene without using any of the corny stereotypes of a cowboy town in the Old West, which I much appreciated, as she creates a sweet and satisfying story of the triumph of love over the most stubborn of hearts.

I received an advance reader's copy of this book in exchange for an honest review.

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### **Brenna Chase says**

What can I say about Stubborn Hearts? I loved this novel from start to finish. Beth Patterson is doing her best to keep her family together, and out of sight of the law, while Tom Carver wants to find out the truth about

her. Neither wants to be attracted to the other, or to fall in love, but of course they do, and though their progression is gradual it is every bit as satisfying and passionate as a more explicit story. This novel will make you laugh, it will make you cry, and it will make you hold your breath in fear and worry, but most of all it will leave you smiling at the end, the way a good, happy ever after ending should.

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### **Karen Johnstone says**

I can't remember the last time I read a Western, let alone one featuring a romance! I was given this book as a gift, and I'm very glad I was because It's unlikely I would have tried it otherwise. I really enjoyed the story - simple and sweet, but the writer takes you back to a simpler time and it's a breath of fresh air. It definitely felt like an escape from the complex urban daily grind so many of us experience these days.

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### **Anna says**

The romance level on this book said "behind closed doors" but I still thought it was a bit too steamy for my taste. The storyline was good though and I liked the father/son relationship between Tom and Davy and eventually Bill.

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### **Marianne says**

Very sweet.

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### **Leslie G. says**

This was a neat story, different because it was about life in the Canadian west. I liked everything about this novel, and I hope the author writes a sequel.

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### **Lucy Oliver says**

I really enjoyed this historical romance tale. Beth is a school teacher, who moves with her two brothers to a small town. But she's hiding a devastating secret that, she is convinced, will destroy all her new happiness. Tom Carver is the blacksmith; older and more experienced, he looks after the young Beth and they fall in love.

The characters in this story are quite captivating. Tom in particular really came alive for me, I could picture him working in that blacksmith's shop. The setting too is delightful and daily life in the school house was beautifully illustrated. I'd never heard of 'box socials,' before either!

Altogether, a lovely story of life and love in small town America.

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### **Naapio says**

Oh golly, this was a badly written, boring book. I didn't even finish it, it was so dull. The female lead is supposed to be 19, but she doesn't act any more maturely than her 16-year old brother. The male lead is booooring, predictable, spineless and overall dull. and the only saving grace was the sweet little brother and his funny way of speaking.

There was no spark between the characters, not much of a plot in general and the writing was clumsy. Not good.

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### **WiLoveBooks says**

This was a great western historical romance. I wanted to dislike Tom for being so cocky, but it ended up being endearing. Beth is a strong, stubborn character who just wants to protect her family. They don't get along at first and it is fun to watch them butt heads. I was swept up in their story and had to keep reading until I knew how things would work out. A lovely, sweet romance that made me laugh at times and also had me in suspense.

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### **Deborah Cordes says**

The Canadian West comes alive in Ms. Smith's STUBBORN HEARTS. Her characters are strongly written and true to the kind of people who populated the frontier. I was on the edge of my seat as Beth's dark secret was revealed slowly, layer by layer, until a surprising twist made me believe all would end well. Then came another twist and more worry, a delicious jolt of suspense that kept me reading long into the night. Tom, the hero, is a wonderful man, and, in his own way, as complex and tortured as beautiful Beth. How I yearned for their happily ever after (no spoilers here)! The secondary characters also brim with vigor. Whiskey Creek and its environs are peopled by a cast I won't soon forget.

As a historian, I deeply appreciate Ms. Smith's skilled research and attention to detail, and I was particularly captivated by the little touches. The "grand" events in small town Whiskey Creek, like the school's Christmas pageant, the blizzard, and the box social, loom large, but the small, sweet things make this novel special: the way Beth strikes a match and lights her stove; the games the boys play; and Tom's giving Davy a penny for candy put me squarely in a time long past.

I highly recommend this novel. If you love the Old West, you will love Stubborn Hearts!

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