



A Texan's Promise

Shelley Gray

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Past promises will be tested as new ones are given...

When Clayton Proffitt, foreman of the Circle Z Ranch in Texas, discovers Vanessa Grant crying in the barn late one night, he first thinks she's gotten herself into another scrape. But when he spies the marks on her back and hears about her stepfather's advances, Clayton knows he must spirit Vanessa away to safety. As they make their way west, it becomes apparent that there's something special between Vanessa and Clayton—far more significant than mere friendship or his sense of duty. Unfortunately, also heading west are Vanessa's brother Miles and her stepfather Price Venture. Price wants Vanessa back for obvious reasons; Miles wants to earn his stepfather's respect. Eventually, unexpected confrontations reach a harrowing conclusion. As their family begins to heal, their journey and trials they've faced helps them realize their future is in God's guiding hands.

Same author as Shelley Shepard Gray.

A Texan's Promise Details

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From Reader Review A Texan's Promise for online ebook

Sarah says

Absolutely terrible. Featured for free on B&N's Nook blog...do not be fooled by the categorization under "historical fiction."

Ni_kii says

Done for <http://scorchingbookreviews.blogspot....>

Ever since she was a girl, Clayton has looked out for Vanessa. When her daddy died, he made a vow that he would keep her safe and he has spent every day since keeping that promise, even to the detriment of his own welfare. When Vanessa's mother married the first man to give her attention after her former husband passed on, Clayton knew that his life would be getting a whole lot harder. Price Venture is a horrible man, happy to spend the money of the family ranch on prostitutes and liquor. Clayton is happy to let them run the ranch into the ground as long as Vanessa stays safe. However, one night Price decides that taking Vanessa is now his right. After escaping from his clutches, emotionally and physically battered and bruised, she goes to find Clayton. Realising that Venture will never leave her alone, Clayton decides the best thing for them to do is run away. Time is of the essence for our two runaways, as Price will saddle the horses and attempt to round them up again, leaving Vanessa in danger and Clayton in trouble with the Law. They travel through town after town, meeting people who Clayton has dealt with during his time in the war and calling in favours left, right and centre. When it becomes clear that Vanessa is still not safe travelling with Clayton as an unmarried woman, Clayton calls in yet another favour and gets a Pastor to marry them. Unfortunately for Clayton, he has started to have less than brotherly feelings Vanessa during their time on the trail. Can he resolve his inner turmoil at falling for his charge and treat Vanessa like his wife?

OK, this is a side note here for readers (because I didn't realize it at the time of getting this book!) but this is a faith book. I'm not usually one for faith books as I have had some very bad experiences where authors have used a book as a tool to ram their faith down a reader's throat. However, it wasn't the case here as the religion felt right for the time period of the book and, although was quite overt, wasn't preachy. It was something that the characters found comfort in and used to explain awful events that were put upon them (i.e "God must have wanted that to happen" etc). It didn't bother me in the slightest and enhanced the story.

Clayton was such an honourable hero he was quite lovely. He struggled so hard with his feelings towards Vanessa as, in his eyes, it conflicts with his promise to her Father to keep her safe. Throughout the book it becomes apparent that all Clayton has ever been is the protector. In the war he was a Commander and protected his charges. When he arrived at circle Z (the ranch) he quickly becomes both the leader and protector of the ranch hands, and the protector for Vanessa. He seems to have the world on his shoulders and has never been happy for himself. He pushes and fights against his feelings towards Vanessa, feeling that it is an abuse of his position. He thinks that she only married him because she had to, that she only went away with him because she feels he is safe and that she would be horrified if she knew that he was thinking of her in a rather more romantic way. I wanted him to just talk to her, to ask her, but no, he went all stubborn male and made the stupidest decision ever read in a Romance. I wanted him to be selfish for once and make a decision based on his needs. Apparently, that was too much to ask!

Vanessa is an interesting character. At the start of the book, the world as she knows it is ripped from her. She knew that Venture was a trouble, but she felt that she was protected from him in her own home. When it becomes clear that she is never going to be safe from him whilst they are in proximity, she goes away with the only man that has ever really felt safe with. She hasn't felt sisterly feelings towards him for a while and, to me, it was only natural that she would be attracted to him, because he is her protector. She started the journey to being a woman during the opening scenes and there were many hard lessons for her during this story. To be honest, I enjoyed that the love story grew over the book, as she needed to change to become the woman to make Clayton see that he could be something other than what everyone else needed.

The most interesting side story was that of Vanessa's brother. I'm assuming that he will be getting a book in the series and I will be reading it. Miles starts the book as the man who just sits there and lets his sister get hurt. He tows the line with Venture, looking out for himself with the man that scares him. Before he leaves, Clayton accuses him of not being a man, telling him a man wouldn't have just listened to his sister getting hurt. Those words haunt him and over the course of the book, he tries to help Vanessa stay free of their step-fathers clutches. It isn't an easy job and Miles grows harder during those months but, I feel that he also grows in a more positive way too. He grows to be a man that can protect those he cares about, much like Clayton. I can't wait to see if there is woman who can penetrate that outer shell later in the series.

Overall, a very enjoyable western love story. The characters were likeable and watching them grow over the course of the book gives you a warm feeling than refuses to diminish no matter what the horrible Venture does. Even with the horrific start to the book, and some rather horrible moments throughout the course of the tale, overall the book made me feel very cuddly and happy.

Donna Porter says

This was a great christian romance book set in 1873 in colorado and texas. It was a very good romance story of a young girl Vanassa and a ranch hand she has loved named Clayton. He promises her father on his death bed to protect Vanassa always. When her life is threatened Clayton takes matters into his own hands and runs away with Vanassa. As the lord leads them on and speaks to their hearts their romance grows. It is a good read

Debra Chapoton says

I picked this book up on my kindle because the download was free. It was quickly evident that this was, perhaps, a self-published endeavor. It read like a first draft and there were many, many formatting errors. I thought this novel had a nice steady plot that would be enhanced by some expert editing, but I was shocked when I got to the end and discovered that this was a traditionally published book put out by Abingdon Press. Shame on their editing department.

Shelley Gray writes from a gentle Christian perspective. The story is not preachy or overly religious. The characters are well developed, but there are no surprises in the story line and early on I was wishing that about a third of the writing had been chopped out. I stuck with it because I liked the main characters and I wanted to be sure that love would triumph in the end. It did.

Another curious thing (editing problem) was that in the middle of the book for a couple of chapters the characters started using the expression "y'all" and then stopped. I wondered if in a previous draft this was

standard and then got (mostly) deleted.

LadyCalico says

This book might be a pleasant read as long as you don't pause long enough to think about anything and realize that so many, many things in this story make no sense whatsoever. It also helps if you don't mind dialogue that is accompanied by scads of drawn out internal monologue spelling out whatever the speaker is supposed to be thinking or feeling, as if the author doesn't trust her own story and dialogue to reveal the plot and characters--because they don't. Sadly, even after more than enough ruminating and emoting to succeed in stifling the flow of action, many things in this story still make no sense whatsoever.

Cara says

Ok...so this one was really a 2.5 for me.

I like the overall plot and the characters. I LOVED Clayton. But for me the storytelling was flat. It felt like "just the facts, ma'am." My feelings and emotions weren't drawn in nearly as much as they could have been. It felt underdeveloped.

And can we just say – that ending? All that building up and worrying and fretting over Price and Miles finding them, and when they do? No real drama. Miles just fires a gun and the problem is solved. It was very anticlimactic to me.

So I'd say there was definite potential here, but it was not realized as it could have been.

Ann Keller says

Price Venture romanced Vanessa's mother and she married him on a whim. After all, she really had little choice. She and her two children had no idea how to manage the large ranch, but she didn't realize how dangerous Price was until it was too late. Price drank excessively and was prone to violence.

One dark night, Price cornered Vanessa in her bedroom. Van fought furiously, clawing at her attacker and shrieking in fear, but her brother Miles was too afraid to help her. Foreman, Clay Proffitt, found Vanessa after the attack and spirited her away before Price could do any more damage.

Vanessa and Clay flee across the country, bound for a homestead in Colorado. Slowly, they get to know each other better and it seems a logical step for them to wed. If Price Venture finds them, carrying Clay's name will help protect Vanessa from her stepfather's wrath.

Mustering the forces of his former Civil War regiment, Clay enlists the aid of a shopkeeper and a rancher, who offer their assistance. Merritt's huge ranch in Colorado seems the perfect haven for the young couple - until Vanessa reveals a terrible secret.

Ilene says

I tend to stay a way from historical but once in a great while I read it. Once I tried to read a Christian based story. This was a combo but I wasn't really aware till I began.

It is a huge switch from bad assed, tattooed bikers/rockstars/cowboys. Clayton was an 'alpha' of the 1870's. And Vanessa was a spoiled daddy's girl of that time until her stepdad came into the picture.

Times may be drastically different but sadly times never seem to change but adapt.

This was pretty thick with Bible quotes. Yes I pretty much bypassed them, sorry! It was still a sweet story with a nice little bow to boot.

Can you imagine traveling between a few states and it taking days on horseback. Makes the annoying red light not so bad.

Dee says

Two-haiku review

Stepfather hurt her
Ranch foreman takes her away
Marries to protect

Good Christian romance
Bible quotes seem a bit forced
Too many side plots

Lorraine says

Rating: 3.5

When Clayton Proffitt, foreman of the Circle Z Ranch in Texas, discovers Vanessa Grant is the victim of her stepfather's advances, he knows he has to follow through on his promise to her father. They both hit the trail to Clayton's sister's ranch in Colorado. Clayton is trying to forget the past that placed him in the Confederate Army during the Civil War. Vanessa is trying to forget the extreme change that her stepfather made in her life. Can God help them both to forget, forgive, and find God's path for their future?

The storyline is excellent. I loved both Vanessa and Clayton. Vanessa grows and matures both as a woman and in her faith through the trials that she has to live through and escape. Clayton is such a caring, other-centered person and shows strength on which Vanessa could depend. He is trying to escape the memories of the horrors he lived through in the Civil War and wonders if he is good enough to have the future God promises. Miles, Vanessa's brother, made for a good character as he changed drastically from the start of the book to the end.

I would have given this novel a higher rating, but there were several historical/geographical errors along with use of grammar that wasn't accurate for the time period. Here are examples of historical/geographical inaccuracies: the Circle Ranch is supposed to be near Lubbock in 1875, but Lubbock was not founded until 1876. Vanessa claims to miss the Bluebonnets and Indian Paintbrush but they don't grow in the Lubbock area. Word usage such as: rethink, expertise, descriptor, reminder call, were not appropriate to the time period.

This book did have a strong faith thread which is incorporated throughout the storyline.

The book was enjoyable enough though that I will complete the series as I would like to find out what happens to Proffitt and Grant Families. Gray writes excellent Amish fiction, and I am hoping that her western historical writing improves in the second book of this series.

FAVORITE QUOTES: "The only thing harder than telling someone your thoughts is living with the guilt of keeping your silence."

"Home is where your mind goes when the night is black and your heart is hurting. Home is where you go when things are happening that you can't control but wish you could. Home is where the person you love is waiting for you."

"I realized that if I open my heart to Jesus and to prayer, everything will be all right. No one has to be perfect. We shouldn't expect them to be either."

Ashley says

I am shocked this book has such a high rating. I am used to and don't mind light Christian romances, but this book was terrible. I felt the abuse scenario was based on an outsider's perception and not reality, and the characters (especially the stepfather and brother) were one dimensional stereotypes. Much of the details and explanations was unnecessary - the author did not seem to trust the story to speak for itself and let the reader make his/her own conclusions. I found the romance odd and stilted; I kept getting confused about why the characters were reacting the way they did. Did they love each other or not? Why did they continue to push each other away after they were married when they knew they were attracted to each other? (Both emotionally and sexually, though there was reason for the latter.) Ugh! The beginning was especially odd, I thought, and I wish the author had done more research on the abuse dynamic and how it can manifest itself in different family members. There was potential to tell a powerful story but the author fell way, way short. If the author wanted to keep it light and airy, she should not have introduced such a violent scene. The climax was disappointingly anti climactic and the ending predictable. Also, a few historical errors which bugged me - how hard is it to research the name of a Native American tribe and make sure they actually lived in the place where the story takes place? Seriously, Cherokee in Colorado? I'm glad this was a free ebook and the only thing I wasted was time.

Bethany says

[Vanessa, not telling her husband she'd already wired for the money and then not telling him they were having a kid and before that other little

Renee says

I'll be the first to admit that I'm not the world's biggest Amish fiction fan but I thoroughly enjoy each of Shelley Gray's Plain stories. When I learned that she was writing and historical western series I knew I had to read it. The first book, *A Texan's Promise* did not disappoint. Ms. Gray's stories are traditional but in the best sense. In *A Texan's Promise* she takes the damsel in distress plot and adds a bit of faith and hope in the mix and the result is a finely told love story for any reader's keeper shelf.

From the very first page I can almost guarantee you will be hooked. The chemistry between Vanessa and Clayton is terrific. In spite of the unthinkable circumstance that led them away from the Circle Z Ranch I loved the way that their romance developed--slowly and tenderly. I was slightly frustrated by Clay's actions midway through the book but what is a romance without a man getting some fool notion in his head now and then?

If you're a fan of Shelley Gray's smooth style of storytelling and characters you can connect with you won't be disappointed. *A Texan's Promise* is a journey across the West that will capture your heart and quench your thirst for danger. I enjoyed this book and look forward to *A Texan's Honor* releasing soon!

* I received my complimentary copy from the publisher in exchange for posting my honest review.*

Eric Wright says

Gray's book explores in considerable detail, whether Clayton and Vanessa's marriage is one of convenience to save her from a lecherous and violent step-father, or the real thing. Clayton came to Vanessa's ranch full of the pain of the civil war but did an admirable job of running the ranch. When Vanessa's father died, his widow quickly married Price, a cruel villain. After a horrific attack, Clayton rescues her and they flee the ranch. On the way, for propriety's sake they marry. They make promises to give each other time. The story then unfolds as a story of flight, misunderstanding, and the exploration by each of their own feelings. In my opinion there was too much description of internal feelings, questions, hopes and not enough dialogue and plot. However, those who love romance, of which I am not one, will probably find it a good read.

Ron says

An interesting exercise in Christian fiction. Gray captured some of the grit of the post-Civil War east and wove in Christian themes and values. A good early effort, but needed editing. "...when Clay's patience was at its wit's end." Checking a regional map and a western history would have eliminated many gaffs.

While this was not historical fiction *per se* by identifying the time and setting: west Texas in 1873, Gray assumed the burden of some semblance of accuracy. Instead, her heroes ride to Lubbock, Texas which wouldn't be founded until 1876. They travel west Santa Fe, then ride west to Colorado Springs. In her geography Denver seems to be south of Colorado Springs. (How else does Clay ride from Wyoming to Colorado Springs to Denver to Larkspur without doubling back, twice?) Since there is a Larkspur, Colorado--between Colorado Springs and Denver--she should have chosen a different locale for the Merritt ranch,

which was apparently north and/or west of Denver, otherwise "as the sun rose over the Rocky Mountains" is hard to do when the Rockies are to your west.

Her characters are confronted by Red Cloud, a "Cherokee"!? mounted and equipped as a plains native, apparently not to be confused with the famous Sioux chief Red Cloud, who was then in the midst of his ten year war against the whites, just north of this book's setting.

Modern vocabulary also knocks the reader out of the western mood. "So much drama in their lives." "mentally deranged."

When writing a period piece, research the period to get a few facts right.

The defective e-book software does not track successive pages. Very frustrating.

Actually a good story, for all that. Could have been much better.
