



High Desert Haven

Lynnette Bonner

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"Is Jason Jordan really who he says he is?
Everything in Nicki's life depends on the answer."

"Oregon, 1887"

When her husband dies in a mysterious riding accident, Nicki Trent is left with a toddler and a rundown ranch. Determined to bring her ranch back from the brink of death, Nicki hires handsome Jason Jordan to help. But when William, her neighbor, starts pressing for her hand in marriage, the bank calls in a loan she didn't even know about, bullets start flying, and a burlap dummy with a knife in its chest shows up on her doorstep, Nicki wonders if this ranch is worth all the trouble.

To make matters worse, terrible things keep happening to her neighbors. When her friend's homestead is burned to the ground and William lays the blame at Jason's feet, Nicki wonders how well she knows her new hand - and her own heart.

"A desperate need. Malicious adversaries. Enticing love.
Step into a day when outlaws ran free, the land was wild, and guns blazed at the drop of a hat."

High Desert Haven Details

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From Reader Review High Desert Haven for online ebook

Ibjoy1953 Hannabass says

MY THOUGHTS ON THIS BOOK

This is my first book from this author and wow, I love it! High Desert Haven takes readers back to the 1800's Oregon Territory, a historical setting I love reading books about. Imagine being bought by a strange man, and volunteering to go because you want your family to be debt free. This is just what Nicki did, not knowing if she would ever see her precious parents and family again. Life was not so bad, until her husband died from an accident and left her alone with someone trying everything possible to take her land from her. What Nicki didn't realize was that God had a young man all set to come and rescue her. But then so much happens, and can Jason really find out what is going on and protect Nicki from someone who wants her dead?

This book captured me in the first few pages, and I couldn't put my Kindle down until I finished it. Took me less than one day to read this wonderful book! Lynnette Bonner creates a cast of characters that are interesting and intriguing, some that you grow to love, and some that are really difficult to even like. A lot goes on between the pages of this book, there are so many twists and turns to keep your eyes glued to the book to see what is happening next. And I really appreciate the way Lynnette stresses putting God first in our lives, and letting Him have control. This is what it's all about, and I am always encouraged to read fiction stories like this. Don't get me wrong, these characters had more than their share of heartaches and difficult situations, but when they kept their eyes on the Lord, they had peace that the Lord would see them through.

I highly recommend this book for you to read and enjoy. And if you are a historical fiction buff like me, this is a must read! You will be very glad you read it! I didn't read the first book in the series, but it was ok as a stand alone. I do encourage you to read the entire series by Lynnette Bonner, The Shepherd's Heart.

On and I forgot to mention, the detailed and vivid descriptions of the setting, first California, then the Oregon Territory was amazing. I could feel the dusty dry sand, the beautiful scenery and the feel of historical living during that time. This book is not only a great read, but a great history lesson!

I want to thank the author, Lynnette Bonner and FIRST Wildcard Tours for providing a copy of this book for me to read and review. The opinions in this review are mine only. I was not required or expected to write a positive review.

Kathy says

Enjoyable!

I really enjoyed reading this book. It is the second book of the Shepherds Heart series. Even though the story is predictable the characters still hold your interest. The message of Christ is very definite throughout the book. The main character have to rely on peace and strength from God. One interesting concept I will take from this book is putting Jesus in the flesh and doing for others the way Jesus would want you too. I am looking forward to reading the third book.

Marian Baay says

Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil: for you are with me; your rod and your staff they comfort me.

This is book 2 in The Shepherd's Heart Series. I love the name of this series, because Psalm 23 is one of my favorite Psalms. In High Desert Haven Lynnette Bonner beautifully shares the Lord Jesus' Shepherd's Heart again.

I enjoy books with characters that love the Lord, so this book was a feast! In Rocky Mountain Oasis we already met Jason Jordan. Jason had given his heart to Jesus and stopped drinking. Now it's his turn to get settled.

Nicki Trent gave up everything to save her family. Now she's widowed and left with her young son. They're living on a ranch and Nicki needs a ranch manager to help her out. So she hires Jason. They both feel attracted to each other from the start, but her neighbour William doesn't like Jason and is trying to push Nicki into marriage. Why is William in such a hurry to marry her so soon after her husband died?

Someone is trying to scare Nicki and her neighbours away from their lands. There must be a connection to the flying bullets, fires and killing of animals. It seems like Jason has to do with it. Nicki thought he could be trusted. Was she wrong?

This book has everything that I like to see in a story--love, suspense, and a fine Christian message.

I enjoyed this book immensely. I love Lynnette's writing style and the stories she's sharing. I feel so at home with her characters--I loved them from the start. In High Desert Haven she already had me smiling and crying early on in the story. I hope she won't keep us waiting too long for the next book in this series!

Melanie says

Review on Amazon: <http://www.amazon.com/review/R2A0EWZZ...>

Review to be posted on my blog 8/24: <http://christianbookshelfreviews.blog...>

When I started High Desert Haven I wasn't quite sure if I'd like it (there were some Spanish words and I was thinking that if there were going to be a lot of foreign words, without interpretation, it would be hard to follow the story). Thankfully that wasn't the case. While there were times in High Desert Haven that a word or phrase wasn't explain, for the most part they were. :)

Once I got a couple chapter into High Desert Haven, that is when I really got into the story! I liked a lot of the characters and the story was very interesting. Even though it wasn't really a secret who the bad guy(s) was/were in this book, there was still a lot of suspenseful moments, and that kept me clicking my kindle to go to the next page.

Even though this is the second book in Lynnette Bonner's "The Shepherd's Heart" series, I haven't read the

first book yet and didn't feel lost.

All in all I loved High Desert Haven and definitely recommend it if you enjoy historical books. I am really looking forward to book three because I want to find out what will happen with certain characters.

I received an eBook copy of this book for my review. I was not required to give a positive review, only my honest opinion - which I've done. All thoughts and opinions I've expressed are my own.

Amber Stokes says

For a well-rounded Christian historical romance novel, High Desert Haven has it all: a caring and cared-for heroine, a charming and God-fearing hero, great secondary characters, and a rather well-paced plot. The elements that really shine are those secondary characters and the plot riddled with tension and dilemmas.

Nicki is a bit typical in her feisty damsel-in-distress role. Jason helps her find the gumption to keep persevering through her ranch's endless problems, and ultimately she does an adequate job at holding the reader's sympathy, although she does lack a certain something to make her stand out and inspire the reader.

Jason really does fit the bill as a great cowboy-hero. He respects and loves his family, takes on tasks wholeheartedly, never ceases to try to save the day for Nicki, and is man enough to work off the land and still play with a little boy. He's quite likeable, although he does seem to be portrayed as too perfect in some ways.

The emphasis on the secondary characters admittedly came across as a hindrance for me initially. After all, this is Nicki and Jason's story, right? And I can be impatient when there are distractions from the budding romance! But the quirks and mannerisms and heart of those secondary characters won me over, perhaps even more so than Nicki and Jason for the most part. Even one of the villains quite intrigued me with his disastrous marriage.

It is evident that High Desert Haven is only one book in a series, because characters from a previous novel (Rocky Mountain Oasis), as well as characters promised to star in their own future books, share the spotlight on occasion in this installment. But the story stands on its own. Some of the attitudes and words of the characters come across as more "modern" at times, and the faith element is kind of forceful. Still, High Desert Haven is a story that holds one's interest and contains a cast of interesting characters.

With thanks to the author for providing me with an e-copy of the book in exchange for my honest opinion.

Lis K says

This is the second book in a series about the Jordan family. Jason Jordan was a minor character in book 1, Rocky Mountain Oasis, although this book can be read without having read the previous one. In this story, Nicki Trent has to figure out a way to save her ranch after her husband was killed in a supposed accident. She hires Jason as a ranch hand, just as suspicious events start occurring on her ranch. When the bank calls in her loan, Nicki is about to give up but Jason is determined to save her ranch, even as someone is determined to sabotage it. The spiritual content in this story was strong and woven throughout the book as

both Nicki and Jason try to rely on God when all seems hopeless. They have a sweet but restrained romantic relationship and there is some action towards the end of the book. The reader knows who the villains are but the mystery is in how they will be caught. Although the plot is a little predictable, it is still a nice clean read. I listened to this as an audiobook but did not really connect with the narrator. For readers who've read book 1, Sky and Brooke have several scenes in this book and Rocky and Victoria in book 3, Fair Valley Refuge, also make appearances in this book.

Jacquelyn says

This series is getting better and better! It's a balancing act for me when I read Christian romance. I like the focus to be more on romance and less on prayer and this author has the perfect mixture. I don't like feeling like I'm being preached to. But I love the wholesome values and the old western times. I will definitely be reading more from this author ASAP!

And I LOVED that she tells the story from different perspectives even tho it's focused on our main chapters POV's. She also gave us a good look at the couple from book #1. This book was really great! I didn't want to put it down.

I guess my only reason for 4/5 stars is because I wanted more in the end. I won't hold it against her too much because I have a feeling I'll get more of their story in book #3. But still a nice epilogue never hurts. And I also felt the same verse was overly used in this book. I mostly started just skimming the prayers and verses to keep the story moving. But like I said before...it wasn't too overly done. And the drama and angst was perfection.

Phycilla Gable says

Excellent book! Great plot and interesting reading. You definitely will want to read this one!

Rachelle Sperling says

The first thing about this book that captivated me was the way the author made me feel immersed in the story. I was there in the dusty California heat as Nicki made a choice about her future. I saw the Oregon landscape as it stretched out before her and her new husband. I felt her confusion as she struggled to choose a path for the future. The writing excelled at drawing me into the story.

With well-developed characters and a faith that underscored the entire novel High Desert Haven kept me turning the pages.

My one struggle with the story arises from a purely personal preference. I avoid murder mysteries and suspense novels because I have strong reactions to images of calculated cruelty. I've encountered enough of it in real life that I prefer not to confront it in things that I chose for entertainment. The very detailed writing that I loved in this novel came back to haunt me as the author described the true to era violence (like butchering a pet) as a scare tactic to get settlers to leave. Most of the tension in this novel was confronted head on - engaging with the villain as he sets a fire and then again as he hears the results, for example. When

I could connect to the struggle within the villain I was able to process the results. Yet, the side notes of violence given as brief images into the overall tension of the story caught me off guard and I might not have read the novel if I'd known it was more of a suspense novel than a romance. That said, I don't think most people would have been overly disturbed by these things. It would just be my recommendation that sensitive readers be aware of the contents of the novel before you pick it up, because once you start reading you won't be able to put it down.

Personal preference aside, I'd still give the novel five stars. The style of writing, the characters, the focus of faith and the beauty of hope all made for a compelling read.

I received a free digital copy of this novel in exchange for my honest opinion.

Renee says

Nicki Trent is left alone with a toddler, a suffering ranch, and a mountain of debt after the suspicious death of her husband. With nobody to turn to and the threats on those who work the ranch Nicki wonders if it would just be better to return to California and her childhood home but decides to hire on a new hand, Jason Jordan and try to make a go of it. When the debt is called in and the death of a dear neighbor in what appears to be a case of arson coincides with Jason's arrival things begin to look bad for him. Jason must prove he's a good man all the while trying to keep his new friends alive and keep their trust.

I've always had a soft spot in my heart for prairie and western romances although it's been a while since I've last picked one up. When I was offered the chance to read and review a book by the new-to-me author Lynnette Bonner I hoped it would be a book that I would enjoy and I'm happy to say that I did. While not perfect and at times a bit hard to keep up with I still really like this author and hope to read the other books in the series.

One of the reasons this book was hard to keep up with was the fact that there were so many characters and the story would jump from Nicki and the ranch, to Sky and his wife halfway across the state, to Cade and Rocky. I guess if I had read Rocky Mountain Oasis I would have liked to have read more about Sky and Brooke but it didn't really help with the "flow" of this story. Still, for a self-published novel it was a quality story. I loved Nicki and any guy who will take on an ailing ranch for little to no pay makes for a great hero. The events leading up to the end of the story was enough to take my breath away more than once. We all know romances have a happily-ever-after but I honestly wasn't sure how Nicki was going to get hers! Whew! There were definitely a few close calls!

All in all this was a good book but I definitely say it's probably best to read book one first to get more of a feel for the other characters who were in this story.

Special thanks to Lynnette Bonner for sending me a review copy.

Trinity Rose says

This is the second book in The Shepherd's Heart series and after reading it I want to read the first book and any that come after it. High Desert Haven is an excellent book full of love, mystery, intrigue, death and

happiness. I will be adding High Desert Haven to my favorite books for 2012 and giving it a 5-star rating. To me Nicki was a very unselfish, precious follower of Jesus in this fantastic book. In every page from the first to the last Nicki puts her family, her husband, son and friends ahead of herself. After her husband dies even though she only married him to help her family and didn't really love him she cared deeply for him and wanted to keep his ranch going for their son.

When the larger ranches tried pushing her off her ranch and the other smaller ranches she didn't give in. Nicki ran an ad for a ranch foreman because she didn't know anything about ranches. Then Jason, a new Christian, comes and things start happening not all for the good, but he doesn't want Nicki to give up without a fight even when the bank calls in her loan. How will she make it? Will she find how God wants her to survive? Will Nicki give in to pressures to sell and marry the next door rancher or will her heart and head win out and do the right thing?

I really love this book and so glad I read it. Lynnette is such a brilliant author, I'm glad I found her writing because she is one of my new favorites. So I HIGHLY recommend this book High Desert Haven.

Thank you to the Author/Publicist for providing this book for review. I was not required to write a positive review. The opinions I have expressed are my own. I am disclosing this in accordance with the Federal Trade Commission's 16 CFR, Part 255

Naty says

I have to start by saying that I'm not much of a historian, but decided to give this book a try. This book gets you from the prologue, you start wondering what's going to happen to Nicki, therefore you're not going to put it down.

This is a story of a woman who starts by being sold to a man for marriage and ends up teaching us the strength of faith throughout her life. Through her story we confirmed that God will show up and show out on time in your direst moments.

This book not only talks about provision. This book has action and lots of it. There were times where I had to sit up straight asking myself when are they going to catch this evil man. It also shows how God's vengeance always comes to those who are bad to his children.

What I also liked about this book is that it shows what it was like living in community. Now with our lifestyles we rarely get to experience that life, where neighbors would help each other and really worked together for the well being of the community.

I recommend this book to any Christian, romantic, historical fiction buff. I really enjoyed it.

Christy Calhoun Miller says

Great read

Beautifully told history with mystery, intrigue, doubt and God's mysterious works. Engaging and believable people who have flaws and sin, but God reigns in spite of it.

Brandi says

Just as sweet as the first!

A wonderful western book that will make you sigh at the romance and gasp at the action. The characters are so real you can nearly touch them (which really comes in handy with Jason's kisses... LOL). The setting is incredibly lifelike and I am continually learning new things in the author's note at the end. I adore the sweet romance and the heart-pounding action. The faith is wonderful as well, though I noticed it wasn't as strong as it was in the previous novel.

I love how she portrays her characters. The good guys (and gals) kind and sweet, yet with weaknesses of their own. And the bad guys vile and cruel, and yet with a touch of humanity.

I'm not sure if this story made me laugh (though I certainly did chuckle), but I know it made me cry. Which surprised me.

Any fans of Mary Connealy or Karen Witemeyer will love this series.

(*SPOILER ALERT!!!*)

Goodness gracious, Jason is so different in this one than he was in Rocky Mountain Oasis, that I couldn't even put them together! My mental image of a fat, belligerent drunk suddenly now a lean, self-controlled cowboy was just too much for me to process. I still can't put them together. Jason the respectable cowboy was simply amazing – and so much more than just respectable. No, he was handsome, and brave, and kind, and sweet, and loving, and funny, and romantic, and awesome, and strong, and... oh, stink, I'm running out of adjectives! He was great.

Nicki was sweet. She was kind and gentle and easy to relate to. She was just... good. She was willing to go with John because of her family, willing to sacrifice her own happiness for their futures. She was kind and generous to those around her. She was the perfect mama to Sawyer, and I know she'll be the perfect wife for Jason. ;) (I found out that she was pregnant way sooner than she did.)

Sawyer was the cutest little munchkin ever. A naughty troublemaker and an irresistible sweetheart all at the same time. He was the classic baby with his sweetness and his mischievousness. I thought the goodbye to the flowers part was simply adorable.

William was a jerk. At first I didn't think he was that bad. I mean, he obviously was; he killed John. But I kind of saw him more nice. Not sure why. Maybe because he seemed to actually care for Nicki (quickly discovered that he didn't at the party in Portland). I just couldn't really see him as the underhanded, thieving, womanizing murderer he was.

Roland, on the other hand, was easy to see as the outlaw. He immediately came off as cruel and selfish.

Though I was glad it made him somewhat human as well. That part with Vanessa was sad.

The Jefferies. They were all so sweet. With Rolf, and Brenda, and John, and Bobby, and May. And that was so, so sad when May died. The family's grief was just so real. Made me cry.

Ron and Connor were great. I was so glad Ron trusted Jason – I knew he would. Connor and Tilly are adorable. I hope they end up getting married.

Janice was so sweet. I loved how she blabbed on and on. It was so cute! I'm glad she has her own cowboy now to listen to her.

Sky and Brooke have a baby! So cute! They are just as I remember them in the previous novel – absolutely amazing.

Rocky and Cade were great too. I can't wait for Rocky to lasso Vanessa. And for Cade to realize that pretty Sharyah's all his if he'd just notice.

I loved that moment when Jason walked in on Jeff and Marquis. That was so classic!

Can't wait for the next one!

Brenda says

It's July 1883 and seventeen year old Nicki Vasquez can't help but worry about the situation her family is in. Her parents owe money and if they don't pay her father will have to go to jail, so she prays for a solution. When a man named John Trent stops for water he sees Nicki and wants to buy her. While her parents are against it Nicki sees it as a way to help her family and agrees. She winds up going to Oregon Territory with John where he buys a ranch. They eventually have a son, and while she doesn't love John he has been good to her. When John is killed in a suspicious accident, Nicki decides to stay and run the ranch. but will need help. She has an offer of marriage from a neighbor who wants to run the ranch but she isn't interested, instead she hires Jason Jordan to help out. She soon learns that the bank holds a note on the property, and not only that strange things start to happen, not just to Nicki but to her neighbors as well, someone is trying to scare off the ranchers but why? Just who can Nicki trust?

Vivid descriptions and details along with a very likable cast of characters made this a great historical fiction tale. I was pulled in from the beginning because Nicki was such a selfless character willing to sacrifice herself for the sake of her family. She had a strong sense of faith, and never wavered from it. I also enjoyed the secondary stories that went on. I thought the story line that revolved around Brook and Sky was great, the love they shared, which was something that Jason hoped to have someday. I thought Jason's sister Marquis and her husband Jeff also added another element to the story. For me there was never a down time, the plot moves along at a brisk pace, filled with rich detail, along with a strong faith filled message that was very well done. Overall a very well written historical romance with a faith based theme that has suspense, and romance that easily pulled me back in time, and leaves me anxious for the next book in the series. While this book is the second in the "Shepherd's Heart " series it can easily be read as a stand alone work, although I enjoyed this story so much I fully intend to go back and read the first book in the series. Historical christian fiction fans shouldn't miss this one!
