



Walls for the Wind

Alethea Williams

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2015 LARAMIE AWARDS 1st Place Prairie Fiction winner

2015 WILL ROGERS MEDALLION gold level winner

2015 WILLA LITERARY AWARD finalist

2014 MPIBA READING THE WEST AWARD nominee

Can an angel survive Hell on Wheels? Kit Calhoun leaves New York City with a train car full of foundlings from the Immigrant Children's Home. Her assignment is to sever ties, so she has no idea of the tangled threads of connection that await her in Dakota Territory. First is what to do with the leftover children who simply refuse placement. Second is handsome Patrick Kelley, continually managing to distract Kit from her task. Third is the demented gambler who fastens deadly attention on Kit and keeps turning up everywhere from Julesburg to Cheyenne.

Forced to leave behind everything familiar, is it possible for a company of New York City castoffs to learn to fight for their hopes in the raw new American West?

Walls for the Wind Details

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Author : Alethea Williams

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From Reader Review Walls for the Wind for online ebook

Kathy says

I liked the setting for the story. But this didn't strike me as a well-written book.

Toni says

If you've seen Hell on Wheels, you'll recognize many of the places mentioned in this story. Although it's not as gritty and bloodthirsty as that series, Walls of the Wind still evokes the lawlessness and temporary nature of the lives of the people attached to building the railroad as well as the hardships under which they lived. Kit's straitlaced nature is balanced by Patrick's easy-going attitude. He sees nothing wrong with running a saloon, as long as the men patronizing it obey the rules. Kit sees such a place as a den of lawlessness just waiting to explode into violence. Her problems with her "children," specifically the two teenagers ready to step into adulthood are carefully detailed as are the concerns she has for the little brother and sister she's determined to keep together.

If I have any complaints about this novel, it's that the unnamed gambler, the villain, doesn't play a large enough part in the story, and his reason for his hatred of Patrick isn't immediately explained. There were also some grammatical and editing errors which should've been caught before publication...but that won't spoil the story for the reader.

There's a great deal of description and historical fact in this story, both in the section taking place in New York, as well as on the trail through Nebraska and Colorado. This is an enjoyable story, both for its historical significance as well as its sweet romance. If you like historical romances, you should enjoy Walls for the Wind.

This novel was supplied by the publisher and no remuneration was involved in the writing of this review.

Cathy Brockman says

Walls for the wind is a lovely, poignant story. Kit is an orphan raised in a children's Asylum, that after reaching 18 went to school and felt called to come back to work with the reverend who is like a father to her. As his assistant and working for food and board she soon finds that she wants more of her life, a husband and children of her own. Circumstances land her on an orphan train west to place a load of older children in homes to work and learn to farm in exchange for food, clothing and shelter. She has an 8-year-old and 2 year old she is set on keeping together in one-home and a 15 year old boy that is headstrong that she doesn't want to find back out on the streets. Her friend Connie from the Asylum that is a few months from 18 that wants to go west to find her future husband and setup her own sewing shop convinces Kit to take her along also.. Not able to find suitable homes for these four children and news of the passing of the Reverend, Kit finds herself stuck in the wild west with four children she had to adopt, faced with the weather, little money, a handsome

shop manager and a scary mysterious Gambler.

I will say for me the story started out a bit slow while Kit was learning her way in the orphanage but once they hit the rails for the west the story picked up and got very interesting. I love a story with good characterisation. I loved both Kit and Connie. They are both strong women. Connie knows exactly what she wants, Kit is learning as she goes as fate forces her hand along the way.

The gambler is mysterious. He gave me the chills. The story does switch views a lot from character to character, but it was easy to follow .

EXTRA.

I have this in paperback and my husband read it. Here is his comments. He says he really liked the story. It was interesting. He liked the characters and the settings were very realistic. He also rates it a four.

If you like stories of the old west, strong female leads, Orphans, gamblers, and a budding romance this is for you!

* I received a copy of this book free-of-charge from the author in exchange for my honest opinion. All opinions expressed are my own*

Steve Bender says

I got Walls for the Wind by Alethea Williams as a Goodreads Giveaway. It was a terrific story about the immigrant orphans in New York City just after the Civil War and how the problem was treated by various civic groups. In this story a former orphan grows up to help a religious group that is trying to help them and then follows her story as she ends up taking orphans west to be "placed". She eventually ends up adopting 4 of the orphans and follows her as she goes west to rails end with them. Lots of details that I didn't know about the placing of the orphans from the "orphan trains". Really enjoyed this book.

Sandra Nachlinger says

When I read the description of WALLS FOR THE WIND and discovered the book took place in the time after the Civil War, plus it started in New York City, continued to Wyoming, and included Orphan Trains, I knew I had to read it.

Alethea Williams did a great job of describing the harsh conditions that immigrants and the orphans of immigrants endured in the slums of New York City during this era. No wonder so many of them decided to head west! I also came to understand why Orphan Trains were seen as a good solution for the problem of so many abandoned and orphaned children. Her portrayal of the frontier towns that sprang up along the railroads gave me a new appreciation for the difficulties those settlers and workers had to endure. Women were especially vulnerable in those lawless times. Williams painted a vivid picture of her protagonist Katharine ("Kit"), making me hope she'd be able to overcome all the challenges she faced. Sometimes Kit seemed too good to be true, but I could see how her background would lead her to adhere to her code of behavior so strictly. Her inflexibility was both her strength and her weakness.

Although I felt that the writing would benefit from some tightening and the pacing seemed to be a little off at

times, the story kept me interested. The book takes place during the 1860s, and anyone who is interested in learning more about the day-to-day reality of life during that period would definitely enjoy this story. I did.

Ron says

Alethea Williams' orphan train novel steers a course between history and romance, while telling a story that explores the subject of gender in the frontier West.

Her central character, Kit Calhoun, is true to stereotype in ways driven in part by the genre and more interestingly by the social expectations of the time. She lacks agency, by being not just female but reared without family in a children's asylum in New York. There she is the assistant to the asylum's director, rescuing homeless immigrant children from the streets...

More at my blog.

Andrea Downing says

When Katherine Calhoun is given the job of placing orphans from the institution where she, herself, was raised, into God-fearing homes out west, she is somewhat hesitant at leaving New York and her beloved mentor, Reverend Howe. But Katherine, or Kit as she is called, has had duty drummed into her, along with a strong sense of morality and a hatred of lasciviousness and strong liquor. Heading west with a bunch of children may not be right up her proverbial alley, but she accepts the job despite her reservations. Unfortunately, events conspire against her, and she finds herself with four of her charges at a point where she, alone, must decide to either to take them forward via Hell on Wheels or return to New York. What is the lesser of the two evils? Her one wish is to find a decent man and get married, but does either place offer the opportunity, especially to a woman tethered to four children?

Williams' research into the era is incisive and complete; the stench of the Five Points section of Old New York is right there for the reader, along with the slush and mud of Cheyenne, Wyoming, and the sound of gunshots blasting and ricocheting through the tent town of Hell on Wheels. Her characters are well drawn—Kit herself trying to throw off the shackles of her sheltered life, Connie who teeters on the verge of womanhood, Thomas who yearns to be a wage-earning man, and Patrick Kelley who has no less desire than to care for Kit and her strange brood. While at times I found some of Ms. Williams sentences somewhat lumbering and slowing the pace of the novel, I assure you that there's excitement to be had, and the book reaches a most satisfying conclusion.

I was given this book in return for an honest review.

Kathleen Denly says

For my full review, you can visit my blog at www.KathleenDenly.com.

The Bullet Points:

- * Skip the prologue and start with Chapter 1
- * Not all the characters fully met my expectations but they still engaged my emotions, which is what I really want from them anyway.
- * The ending isn't perfect, but it still satisfies and I'm glad to have read it.
- * The book stands out in its willingness to vividly tackle sensitive and controversial subjects.
- * The historical aspects are presented with authority and feel organic, even essential, to the story.
- * Trauma victims should beware of possible triggers.
- * Recommended for readers of historical fiction.

I give this book 3.5 out of 5 stars.

P.S. Winn says

This is a beautiful novel that delves into the past. meet hit Calhoun who is no stranger to hard work and the struggles of life. As she brings children west for a new life Kit finds you can't always leave a hard life behind, but she also finds a few magical moments and special people as she tries to start over not just for herself but for the children. Althea Williams tells a wonderfully poignant story. this is the second book I have read by this author and I admit I am a fan!

Pam Mooney says

This is a wonderfully written story with endearing characters and lots of heart. I enjoyed that Williams captures the harshness of the time while still preserving the underlying story that each individual has to offer. It was nice that this book gives context to the historical events that we learn in history books - these were real people just trying to survive. Certainly an author to follow and a good read.

Kerry says

Received Walls For The Wind by Alethea Williams free for a honest review . (Good reads win)

Not sure what the title means but the book was easy to read and the characters were developed nicely so that the book flowed. The ending held no surprises but did have finality to it which lately seems to be lacking in so many books.

I enjoyed the little snippets of historical facts concerning the time period where rail roads and settlers were heading West to start new lives and the fact that Williams was able to weave just enough of the historical facts around fiction not to have long boring sections of reading.

Lydia Granda says

Walls for the Wind is a vivid account of the orphan trains and a harsh time in our past. It takes the reader from the stench of the New York tenements to the mud and slush in the West of Cheyenne Wyoming. You dive into this book with Kit, our main character and the four children she takes out west to find homes for these orphans. Althea Williams vividly details an account of an unhappy time when the children of

immigrants in this book are the subjects of abuse and neglect. It's a rich story of a painful, historic time that is hard to put down or forget. The story is enhanced with a dashing hero, Patrick Kelley and a villainous gambler who really make the story fascinating.

I'm happy to have found a new author to follow and will definitely be reading more from her.

Diana says

A copy received from Reading Addiction Virtual Tour for an honest review

four stars

This was my first time reading Alethea Williams and what a treat! I loved this story! This book was all heart and soul! The author captured both my imagination and my heart with her main character Kit Calhoun. Kit was a fantastic character. She grew up in a children's asylum and has many demons to battle. I loved reading about this character and this time period. This is a fantastic book! I highly recommend it and really enjoyed it!
