



The Horseman's Promise

Cathryn Hein

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A father with something to hide, a jockey with a taste for blackmail, a man with an agonising secret . . . and a young woman in love, defying them all.

Sophie Dixon is determined to leave her tragic past behind and forge a bright future on her beloved farm. While looking to buy a new horse, she is drawn into her neighbour Aaron's Laidlaw's orbit, despite the bad blood between their families.

As the racing season unfolds, Sophie and Aaron's feelings for each other deepen. But Aaron is torn, haunted by a dark secret he fears can never be forgiven - especially by Sophie.

Sophie believes herself strong, but the truth behind her mother's death will test her strength, and her love, to the limit. She's been broken once. No one wants to see her broken again. Least of all the man who has grown to love her.

An emotional small-town romance about love, loyalty and forgiveness.

Originally published in Australia and New Zealand as PROMISES.

The Horseman's Promise Details

Date : Published July 14th 2017 by Cathryn Hein (first published August 23rd 2011)

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Author : Cathryn Hein

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From Reader Review The Horseman's Promise for online ebook

Bronwyn says

I enjoyed this so much that when asked to provide a cover quote, I was very happy to! So, there on the cover, I say: 'Moving... an uplifting emotional journey towards forgiveness and hope.'

Jenny Schwartz says

Promises by Cathryn Hein opens with a perfect balance between an absorbing portrayal of the world of horse training and the slow reveal of secrets. The tension sustains beautifully and becomes the emotional journey to maturity of the heroine, Sophie. There's drama in the journey, but I could believe the ending. And I have to confess, I sniffled at times. I do love a story that engages me to that extent—though only when I trust the author to deliver a happy ending!

A wonderful Australian romance.

Fiona Lowe says

If you love horses you're going to really enjoy this book.

Paula Beavan says

Another great read by Cathryn Hein, this lady is one to watch out for. Love her style and her characters.

Kel says

This was a pretty good read even though I am not a horse mad person. Really easy to read and interesting enough to keep me going.

D.B. Tait says

Excellent, feel good romance with a horsy setting. Lot of angst which is sometimes just perfect.

Keziah says

Excellent, feel good romance with a horsy setting. Lot of angst which is sometimes just perfect.

Sandy May says

Great read very good story line enjoyed the book very much I didn't want it to end.
Great work again Cathryn look forward to reading more.

Stacey Houllis says

Promises by Cathryn Hein is a moving emotional story, the portrayal of the world of horse racing, and the secrets that lie hidden for 10 years. Sophie Dixon never recovered from her mother death when she was 12 years old, Her father a politician moves to Canberra, Leaving Sophie in the care her Aunt Tess who has her own issues as well and distances herself from Sophie. Sophie finds comfort in riding her horses in equestrian events and looking after the farm.

Until one day a deal is struck between her and neighbour Aaron for her to strapping and help him train his horses and in return, she gets the purchase of a horse she wants that he has as he is a horse trainer. Sophie shows him the love she for horses and the changes he sees in them through her help. Sophie slowly starts to have feelings for Aaron when she tells him of this he responds by telling her it is no good for her to love him as he has a secret and once she knows it she will hate him. Sophie doesn't like secrets and lies and there is something that Aaron is keeping from her. Promises are the secrets of the past between the two families that have being hidden for so long until Sophie begins to work for Aaron that that the are revealed to Sophie. The shock if this brings forgiveness and love for Sophie and Aaron.

Amanda - Mrs B's Book Reviews says

Promises, is Aussie rural romance author Cathryn Hein's first novel. Having read the majority of Cathryn's novels, this one has sat on my shelf for awhile waiting to be read. Watching the recent Melbourne Cup, the race that stops the nation, I was prompted me to dust this one off the shelf. I'm glad I did, Promises was a fine mix of romance and the professional horse racing circuit. It focuses on heroine Sophie Dixon, a young woman who suffers from a family tragedy but is determined to make her future on the family farm bright. Sophie wants to purchase a new horse for her farm, but this delivers her straight into the arms of her handsome neighbour, Aaron Laidlaw. Sparks fly and Sophie thinks she just may be in love. However, Aaron and Sophie's new found love is haunted by the past shared by their respective parents. Under the backdrop of an exciting racing season, Aaron and Sophie battle their feelings for one another, but the secret of their parent's past might just tear them apart.

Promises is a book that I really enjoyed. Although it fits neatly into the Australian rural romance genre, it offered the reader just a little more with the focus on horse racing. Hein is clearly knowledgeable in this area, her background in this industry shines through. I felt more in tune to the Australian horse racing industry after reading Promises. Romance is also a big feature in Promises. The love between the heroine Sophie and hero Aaron is fraught with plenty of drama and angst. The secret shared by their parents and the tragedy that ensues made Promises an emotional read. Promises features a typically Australian setting, which was painted vividly for the reader. The combination of characters you genuinely care for, an interesting subject matter and stunning backdrop of the South Australian landscape make Promises a must read.

After reading Promises I was reminded why I enjoy Hein's books. Hein knows how to deliver a great Australian yarn. If you haven't read Hein's debut book I would encourage you to do so soon.

Natalie says

Loved it! I loved the long tortured will-they-or-won't-they, the Australian setting, the horses, the secrets, the breath-holding suspense on the outcome of a race or a challenging jump. If you like your romance with many layered, flawed but likeable characters, unique settings and complex conflicts, this is for you.

Helen Lacey says

I loved this book! For any reader who loves horses and romance, this book is a must. The characters were real and compelling. I'm looking forward to Cathryn Hein's next release.

Bettina says

Loved this book. Couldn't put it down!

Bree T says

Sophie Dixon has never really recovered from her mother's suicide when she was just 12 years old. Her politician father retreated almost immediately to Canberra, leaving Sophie in the care of her distant aunt Tess. Sophie's only comfort has been her horses and she works them every day, competing in local events, determined to rise through the equestrian ranks. A deal one day with local trainer, her neighbour Aaron Laidlaw sees her strapping his racehorses for him in exchange for potentially buying one of Aaron's steeplechasers should he not win his race.

There has always been bad blood between the Laidlaws and the Dixons for as long as Sophie can remember. Aaron's father was warned off for doping racehorses and Sophie has always been told by her father that the Laidlaw's are bad business and she should stay away. But Sophie can't help but want to get to know Aaron a little more – and she gets the opportunity when his stable jockey Danny falls in a jumps race and is injured, leaving Aaron and his cash strapped stable down a morning worker/rider. Sophie offers herself for the position, bargaining her services in exchange for taking possession of the horse she wants to train for her equestrian eventing at the end of his race preparation. Aaron is forced to accept the deal, especially when Sophie sweetens it by purchasing a racehorse bound for the knackery and working out a deal on training fees, offering him lucerne from her property. Although in possession of a beautiful property, it's held in trust for her until she turns 25 and she's almost as cash-strapped as Aaron. This way they both get what they want.

The attraction simmers between them and Sophie is keen to act on it, despite the fact that she knows that it will anger her already distant and disapproving father. She is lonely and looking for some happiness but even though the two families have been at odds, she doesn't expect Aaron to distance himself from her in the way he does, especially as she feels that he is interested too. What Sophie doesn't realise is that Aaron is hiding a terrible secret from her – more than one actually – and is bound by a crippling guilt to always do as right as he can by Sophie, believing himself responsible for something that happened in the past. He's sure that if

Sophie were to learn the truth about him, she would only hate him and her fragile state of mind wouldn't be able to cope with the truth of her tragic past.

Promises is Australian rural romance author Cathryn Hein's first novel. I read her second novel, *Heart Of The Valley* earlier this year and immediately added this one to my TBR list. I picked it up for my Kindle and deliberately kept it for my holiday to visit my family as my poor Kindle tends to get neglected in favour of shiny print books. I knew I was going to love it, because it's about horse racing, which has always been a part of my family and my life growing up. I immediately loved Sophie, because although she'd had her problems with a mother that had committed suicide when she was at a very vulnerable age, a father that had basically disappeared from her life and an aunt who resented her existence, it was clear to see from the very beginning how passionate she was about her horses and her eventing and how they were really her strength. She was still young, only 22 years old and making the best go of her inheritance that she could, learning about pastures, crops and cattle. She still attempted to have decent relationships with her father and her aunt, even though a lot of the time it had been thrown back in her face, particularly by her aunt who brought up Sophie's lowest moment every time. When she begins working with Aaron, it's like it's the first time that she's ever really had someone to talk to, to be friends with. They share a common interest in horses and both have the same wishes and hopes for their lives.

Aaron is caught between a rock and a very hard place. When he was 16 he made a promise to himself but now he's finding it extremely hard to keep that promise. The guilt that weighs on him is terrible and there were times that Aaron's obvious self-torturing of himself made me choke up a little. He's so sure that Sophie won't be able to forgive him his secrets and he's also terrified of upsetting her and stirring up what would be considerable pain for her, especially as he believes that Sophie is not as strong mentally as he first thought. Instead he punishes himself and Sophie by alternately getting close to her because it's what he desperately wants, and then distancing himself from her as the guilt over takes him. I loved the chemistry between them and the fact that once again, this romance was a very slow burn – they are friends first, very good friends, spending long hours working together and talking on the phone. I think these romances are probably harder to write, because it's a delicate balance maintaining that push-pull factor of attraction/distancing and keeping the chemistry strong and consistent.

Promises is a fabulous story encompassing Australia's wonderful country horse racing circuit and containing strong, likable characters who work their way into your heart and stay there. I find myself thinking of Aaron and Sophie still and hope they've made their lives together combining their properties and their individual horse-related careers. Their love story is a Romeo & Juliet style one where they must both need to overcome the horrors of their past and move forward together.

Juanita Kees says

Here is an excerpt from my review: Read the full review at <http://www.mission-romance.blogspot.c...>

Not since my introduction to Nora Roberts, has an author had me so completely and utterly spellbound. I forgot to cook, the laundry piled up and the dust bunnies swirled, forgotten because I could not put the book down. I sincerely hope Ms Hein considers selling movie rights if approached. It would be an amazing movie!

Cathryn has an exceptional way with words. As I read, I could hear the beat of hooves, smell the turf, feel the excitement. I even found myself liking the horses. I cried and celebrated with Sophie and Aaron, increasing

my shares in Kleenex tenfold. Her well-defined characters came alive on each page and kept me so entertained I only stopped twice to reach for chocolate.
