



Before the Scarlet Dawn

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In 1775, Hayward Morgan, a young gentleman destined to inherit his father's estate in Derbyshire, England, captures the heart of the local vicar's daughter, Eliza Bloome. Her dark beauty and spirited ways are not enough to win him, due to her station in life.

Circumstances throw Eliza in Hayward's path, and they flee to America to escape the family conflicts. But as war looms, it's a temporary reprieve. Hayward joins the revolutionary forces and what follows is a struggle for survival, a test of faith, and the quest to find lasting love in an unforgiving wilderness.

Before the Scarlet Dawn Details

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Author : Rita Gerlach

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From Reader Review Before the Scarlet Dawn for online ebook

Kim says

Horrible! The book is set during the Revolutionary War. The women in the story go through a long period of trials and heartache. Without giving away plot, the lead male character is arrogant and cruel, not to mention very emotionally abusive to the lead female character. It started out good, by the end, I was furious with the characters. It is a Christian romance, and whatever torture the male throws at her, the lead female says it must be God's will. Fight back, show some backbone that you did the entire time he was gone!

Sandi *~The Pirate Wench~* says

Re-read book one to start next book two...feelings & rating the same on this one.

Book One of the Potomac trilogy:

This was a hard book to gather my thoughts to review.

Don't let the cover fool you for what you think is inside.

What a attention grabbing-heart-breaking drama!

It's 1775 and Hayward Morgan is destined to inherit his fathers Estate in Derbyshire England.

Even though a Vicar's daughter catches his attention, Eliza's beauty and spirited ways aren't enough because of her station in life.

Hayward's father would disinherit him if he took a notion to her.

But circumstances throw these two together, as Hayward needs to take a wife back with him to America where he owns a home and land.

And as none of these English ladies would cope there, and Eliza's father just passed away as well as her brother she has no where to go.

So she offers herself to be his wife, as she has fallen in love with him and believes they are meant to be together.

After she convinces him, he lets her know right off he does not love her and never will, but she believes her love will be enough for them both.

So off they go to start a new life, Hayward is also disinherited but is well off in his own right.

III pause right here.. to mention a "wee quibble."

Eliza's "sudden-instant-love forever" right at the beginning just didn't work for me personally, but what made up for it (sorta) was Eliza's faith and determination in loving a man that didn't love her back.

And points go to Hayward for being upfront and honest of his feelings (which rang more true)

As they settle into life in America, and we watch as Hayward's feelings for Eliza grow and a happy future seems to bloom for them.

But as War looms, Hayward joins the Revolutionary and for Eliza what follows in his absence is a struggle for survival until he returns.

Another pause here for a "wee quibble" again, as while I admired Eliza's strength, courage, and faith, for me personally again.. I felt her talks to "above" to bring Hayward home safely were a tad overdone but not enough to put the book down.

Now at this point in the story certain events happen to Eliza when upon learning Hayward has been hung, and "devoted" readers may not condone her actions throughout this time in the story but for me it really added the raw "realness" of things that happen in life.

And now alas...Hayward is alive and returns to his wife and small daughter.

Ok...this is where the story gets "gritty" and as I kinda had a "love-hate" reaction to these characters at certain points in their story, this is where they really show their courage and faith if you will.

At first I thought Hayward was coming around at the first part of the story, but upon his return home and seeing there was certain situations that occurred while at War and how he handled it...I just wanted him OUT of the story!

He did some jaw dropping moments here and I hated him for it.

I abhorred him! Why? sorry no spoiler here you'll need to find out and read for yourself :)

Is there a HEA here? No..and maybe.

I'm not sure just how the author will work out this situation in the next book and if she can change Hayward enough for me to re-like him, but this book really kept me sucked in and I need to find out in book two (which is daughter Darcy's story) just how this will all come about.

So despite my few quibbles, which may not work for others I really enjoyed this author's well written story of strength, courage, and faith in a time period of uncertainty.

Deborah says

Sneak preview: Pre-release review~

I cried all through this novel. It reminded me so much of "Gone With the Wind," and many of the best in historical novels. The thing that set this one apart from historical novels published today was its purity of writing and the base of honor it conveyed. How refreshing it was to read a book about the finest qualities of a woman, wife, mother and friend. I know we are out there today, and it was so touching to read us praised for a change in literature!

A story written about a young daughter of a rector in England who marries the disinherited son of an aristocrat, joins him in the colonies of Maryland to build a life and experiences the hardships that accompany the American Revolution; this novel is more about the heart's blood and feelings of its protagonist Eliza than anything.

I laughed at her spunk and determination. But, I spent a lot of time crying at her strength and powerful love for her husband and family.

This is a must read for anyone with a woman's heart.

I loved this book more than I can say. A surprise read for me, and one I simply took a chance on. So glad I did.

One thing only, that bothered me was that on occasion the author waxed a little old-fashioned in her character's verbal responses at the end of the book which was off-putting and "sounded" contrived. Otherwise, a 5 star book.

Katie says

First posted on my blog, Legacy of a Writer.

Rita Gerlach is back with more heart-breaking drama in Before the Scarlet Dawn. While I wasn't crazy about her previous book (Surrender the Wind) I found her writing style and story plot much improved and attention-grabbing in her newest release! Be forewarned—the story within is not what you would expect from the cover! (And I mean that in a good way!)

It was easy for me to like and sympathize with Eliza Bloome and all her troubles and heartache. Not only does she lose all close relatives, but she leaves her homeland to start a new life with a man she loves...but who doesn't love her back. I really admired Eliza's courage to love him anyways, no matter if he refused to love her back. At first, I liked Hayward—and hoped he would come around in the end. But, in the end, I hated him. Abhorred him! What a total jerk! (Want to know why? Sorry, no spoilers here—read the book! ;-)

I didn't care too much for the romance, and that's what mainly kept me from giving it any more stars. It just felt too...sudden and fake. Eliza just suddenly knows she's in love with Hayward 'forever and ever'. For me, personally, I like to see more of the 'growing to love each other' stage, instead of just skipping that to dive directly into being in love.

Before the Scarlet Dawn is one of those books that I ended up having a very strong "love-hate" reaction to it. Honestly, when I finished the book I was determined to give it 3 stars and throw it across the room for good measure. But, in the end, the story grew on me—even after I had finished reading it. It has one of those memorable plots that stays with you long after you finish the last page.

So, in the end, I am giving Before the Scarlet Dawn 4 stars for a well-written story and a hopeful continuation. I don't know how Rita will work this sticky situation out, or even if she can change Hayward enough for me to even remotely like him...but I have faith in the writer! Can't wait for the next book to come out—Eliza needs a ray of sunshine to pierce her world after all she's been through.

April says

This was really bad.

The main character, Eliza, is completely annoying. She is supposed to be a Christian, wanting to follow God's plan for her life, but her actions do not portray that. She marries a complete jerk that she doesn't know and suddenly is in love with. She moves from England to the American Colonies where spends all of her time wanting to hear her husband tell her that he loves her. She has a daughter with him. She has an attraction to another man, who she eventually sleeps with when she believes her husband has been killed in the Revolutionary War. She bears his child. The man later dies, which was kind of a one sentence side note and strange given his presence in the story up until this point. Then her child with him dies. After her husband comes back from the war and figures out what she has done (she had lied to him and told him the child was a servant's), he tricks her into going back to England to care for his mother who is supposedly ill. After arriving in England she finds out that her mother-in-law is fine and she has been sent away from her husband and daughter forever. She ends up living with widowed vicar and his young son as the governess. At the end she accepts her life like it is and decides to stay in England and give up trying to get her daughter back.

This book is supposed to be a Christian-based story, but I find it uninspiring and strange.

Sierra Abrams says

Before the Scarlet Dawn by Rita Gerlach

Pages: 327

Release Date: February 1st, 2012

Date Read: 2012, April 15th-17th

Received: ARC via NetGalley

Rating: 2/5 stars

Recommended to: 14+

SUMMARY -

Eliza's father, a man of humble means, has just passed away, leaving Eliza with no house or money, just the clothes on her back and the housemaid. In an effort to find work, she is reunited with the man she once loved as a girl, and who she still loves as a woman. When she offers to go with him to America as his bride, he refuses... But soon changes his mind for a daring journey in the night. Can they brave through the storms of life in a new country where Eliza must face trial after trial?

MY THOUGHTS -

"This is great, this is great, this is...ahhhh... Nevermind." I'm SO bummed out about this book! It just...flopped. It had loads of potential but did not live up to any sort of goodness.

CHARACTER NOTES -

Oh, Eliza. Why? WHY?! I just don't understand. I really liked you...and now I just don't know what to think. Eliza is one of those characters who just...deteriorated. At least for me. I just couldn't respect any of the decisions she made after she heard the Terrible Awful News. Not even just her lack of judgement - but that lie she told to Hayward about it? GOLLY, so bad. I felt like her relationship with God didn't really go anywhere either. She went through so much hardship but there were no profound faith revelations or anything.

And Hayward... Holy SMOKES - if I ever met that man, I would need someone to restrain me and remind me that murder will land me in a hell of a lot of trouble.

Fiona and the rest were okay, I guess. They served their purposes but were not well-developed.

STORY NOTES -

What. The. Heck. HAAAAPPPEEEENNNEED?! Okay, so I'm all for sad books. A few (The Idiot, Before I Fall, Mockingjay) are my all-time favorites and I read and read and read and cry and cry and cry.

But cruel? Like hardcore cruel, backstabbing, with what did NOT feel like a redemptive ending? Ummmm, not okay with me. Hayward was a full-on cruel, cold-hearted jerk who did horrible things.

I honestly don't remember much else of the story, except Eliza's fall into depression so deep she totally went out of character, and the end where all I could think was, "Why? This is not redemptive." It does not have to be happy - just...redeeming. It was so hard. And sad. And CRUEL. And stupid and unrealistic, if I may say so myself.

SUMMING IT UP -

The word I've been saying over and over again. Cruel. I feel bad giving this kind of review but this book really got to me - in a bad way -ad on vacation no less!

For the Parents -

A few adult situations referenced to. No details. Some minor curse words. Recommended 14+. Actually, not recommended at all, but...if you must...

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Jenny Q says

I love this time period and I had high hopes based on the description, but this is not for me. Twenty-eight pages in and Eliza Bloome has received and rejected a marriage proposal, been rescued from unwanted advances, been rescued from a runaway horse, fallen off a runaway horse, talked treason, thrown herself at her childhood love and been soundly rejected. Oh, and not only have three different men rhapsodized about Eliza's raven hair, violet eyes, and voluptuous figure, but Eliza herself has described her physical attributes in flowing verse. The setting and plot have potential, but the writing style is not for me.

Faye says

A dramactic tale that left me with mixed feelings.

Eliza and her new husband face the hardships of breaking ties in England and making a new life for themselves in America. But tragedy and heart-break are not far behind them, threatening their marriage.

This wasn't exactly what I was expecting. I was told that this was not a romance, but more of a historical. In my opinion it was a lot more like an unending soap opera of emotions, and heartache that would make a good TV mini-series, but not necessarily a gritty historical.

Hayward and Eliza both made their mistakes and suffered the consequences, there were often times when I didn't understand why they did what they did, or rather they took their actions to the extreme or not far enough. I never came to ever really like Eliza, as a character or a person, and Hayward became just horrid! I think he was mentally unstable or something. I did sympathize with their situations, though.

My favorite character was Mr. Brennan, because right from the start I felt that I had a strong sense of who he was and what kind of man he was, and I liked that he'd been through hard times yet came out stronger for it, and he had many admirable qualities to him.

Overall, I did not enjoy this book. And for the most part I think it just frustrated me. I just never felt like I could really connect with the main characters, even though I wanted to. It's not like I expected them to be perfect and honestly I liked that they were deeply flawed, but at times I felt that their reactions were just not realistic. So I guess you could say that this one wasn't for me. I know lots of other people who loved this book, but for me this just wasn't something that I could find enjoyment in reading. Thanks.

I received this book from the publisher in exchange for an honest review.

MaryLu Tyndall says

Another beauty by Rita Gerlach! This author has a way with words. I cannot explain it but she has a literary quality to her writing that just puts you right into the scene. So much so, that you can smell the flowers and feel the wind on your face. Aside from that, her characters are real and deep. And they make mistakes, terrible ones, just like real people. This is a love story set during the tumultuous times of the Revolution in America. But it is not your normal love story. It is about a woman who so desperately wants her husband to love her that she goes to great lengths to please him. Perhaps many women out there can relate. The story brings many questions to one's mind about marriage and commitment.. and it is totally unpredictable! A Christian book through and through, but not your normal Christian romance. How refreshing!

Naomi says

I must say that I was really, really pleasantly surprised by this book. I received it off netgally and was a bit apprehensive that I had made a mistake in requesting it when I found out it was a Christian romance. However, the author wrote this in such a tasteful manner. The Christian aspects don't come off as preachy at all. The romance aspect was done very tastefully and almost has an innocence to it although the two main characters are married. This is def. a series I will continue on with.

Kelly_Instalove says

First impressions: Ugh. About halfway through, I found myself thinking "This isn't working for me on any level." And then it got worse.

I was so intrigued by the colonial setting promised in the blurb, but it played out like a strange conglomeration of Gone with the Wind, The Scarlet Letter and Jane Eyre.

I found the heroine to be wildly inconsistent, veering from naive preacher's daughter to vain seductress to proto-feminist to groveling martyr in such a way that I *never* understood her motivations.

The general consensus among reviewers is that the heroine's husband - who is NOT a hero by any means - is a complete and utter tool. But what annoyed me even more than his despicable deceit near the end was that NO ONE ever called Hayward out for his own significant role in contributing to Eliza's "moment of weakness."

AND the death of a major character in the book was tossed away in a single sentence from a stock character who appeared in only that one scene.

Longer review to come. Received this title free from the publisher via NetGalley.

Holly Renee says

Warning: This review may contain some spoilers.

Before the Scarlet Dawn is a compelling story that is sure to strike a chord with anyone who reads it.

To be honest, I have a "love-hate" feeling for this novel. First of, I have to say that these characters were real. As a result, I want to believe that some of their choices were drastically unbelievable. Yet the unbelievability is the very thing that makes these characters real.

While I struggled to accept the heat-of-the-moment choice that led to the main character's heartache by the end of the story as anything remotely believable, I can truly say that this story paints human nature in a very realistic sense. Again, it's that that very essence that makes these characters real.

I hated the ending. I absolutely hated it! It left me heartbroken and angry. After cooling off for a day, I had to go back and re-read the last portion of the novel again. This time, I could accept the ending. It was truly perfect. It showed redemption and mercy from God.

My initial impression of this novel was that it should only receive three stars. Aside from the fact that I found major choices unbelievable, I didn't like the how the main character didn't put up much of an initial fight for what she wanted. Her actions seemed almost too hopeful, and wishful, and way too trusting in God. She was even too complaint for my taste. While these are great qualities in a real-life person, they aren't ones I want at the outset of a character I'm reading about.

After several days, however, this story, these characters, and the feelings I experienced at the end of my first read, all continued to resonate. Without realizing it, this story had taken up residence in my heart.

This story will make one feel. Much like Liz Curtis Higgs' Lowlands of Scotland series, you are going to feel emotions that you don't like. But, you will feel, and you will feel intensely. For that very reason, this book gets four stars in my eyes. It accomplishes what a book is supposed to do--move the reader. And move me it did.

I do recommend Before the Scarlet Dawn. Just make sure you keep a box of tissues nearby. You'll sure need them. I'm eagerly awaiting the next story in this series.

I received a complimentary copy of this book from Abingdon Press, via NetGalley, in exchange for an honest review.

Rachel Brand says

I just couldn't get into this one. The synopsis made it seem like the sort of thing I'd enjoy but the main character was too much of a Mary Sue for my liking. I'd like to say I'll go back to this someday, but ultimately I just have too much else to read right now! 2*

Melanie says

<http://christianbookshelfreviews.blog...>

I have to say, I did NOT expect to get so emotional while reading Before the Scarlet Dawn. However, I did get teary-eyed a few times and a couple hours after I finished it, I was still somewhat saddened by it.

I loved Before the Scarlet Dawn up until I got about halfway - that is when the story started going downhill for me. It was just too sad.

Aside from the sadness, I did really enjoy the story and found the characters to be great (although I wish something had happened differently).

Forgiveness and mercy play a big part in Before the Scarlet Dawn - and I loved that! It was very well written and that is probably another reason I found this book to be so moving.

In some ways, Before the Scarlet Dawn reminded my of Heiress by Susan May Warren - because that book was also a novel with many highs and lows.

This is only book one in Rita Gerlach's Daughters of the Potomac series and I have high hopes that happiness will be found in book two for certain characters.

A great novel that I recommend as long as you don't mind some sadness.

I received a complimentary 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 expressed are my own.

Pegg says

SPOILER ALERT

This book is hard for me to review and I've let it set for a week thinking about it. I loved it for the first 80% of the book. The characters were real, interesting, they struggled, stumbled and found their footing again. It was shaping up to be a story I might have read a second time. But for me, it fell apart in the end.

If you like a happily-ever-after story, this is certainly not your book. If you like more realistic, hard-life stories, this may be your book. I do actually like a hard-life story, but this one stripped everything from the leading lady. She loses it all and I felt like at the end, she lost herself. That is why it fell apart for me.

I can understand losing the rest, life happens, people disappoint, etc. But to lose the essence of self, to stop striving to reach your goals, to lay down and accept defeat? Not my idea of a good ending. Even Scarlett still had Tara! All the build up, all the time invested rooting for this woman to succeed at some level, only to have her land flat... meh.
