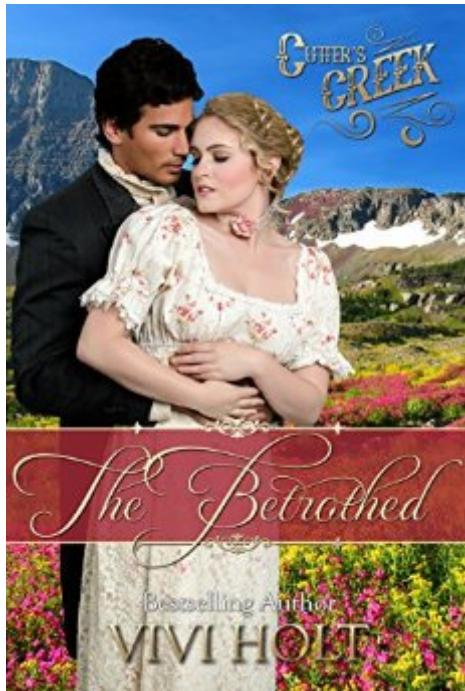


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The Betrothed (Cutter's Creek Book 7)



Synopsis

Lady Charlotte Beaufort of Beaufort Manor, England, is accustomed to the finer things in life. She's used to everything going her way. But it's all about to change. When her parents force her into an engagement with the Duke of Notherington, a man she barely knows, she runs away traveling aboard a steamer to the New World. Harry Brown, a silversmith's apprentice from Greyburn, doesn't stand a chance with the beautiful Charlotte. Then he runs afoul of the local thug, and he and his sister have to leave town. When Charlotte and Harry cross paths, the attraction is undeniable but can they overcome generations of social barriers to admit their true feelings for one another? Take a journey from the beautiful Lakes District of England to untamed Cutter's Creek, Montana Territory, where the rules of love are bound to be broken.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

I love this series and enjoyed this unique story that a set of circumstances set this tale into motion. For Lady Charlotte Beaufort, she was enjoying her single status and did not make her parents happy with some of her antics, the fact that she has turned every suitor away and has shown no

interest in marriage. Her father and mother have helped arrange a marriage with the Duke of Notherington. Charlotte realizes right before the wedding she can't go through with it and during the engagement party, she packs a few belongings and takes off. Harry Brown loves his family but is growing tired of supporting his parents and siblings and has been planning to strike out on his own. He has talked with his sister Camilla, who would also like to start a new life. Harry likes card games and is proficient, winning large pots, but his latest conquest is mad and threatening to hurt Harry, moving up the need to leave. The plot has the two siblings, Harry and Camilla Brown, leaving town at night and by chance, at the same time so is Lady Charlotte. The three decide to head out together, heading towards the docks where they will board a ship to America. The journey to a new land also encompasses the difference in lifestyles, by Lady Charlotte in First Class and Harry and Camilla in Third Class. America brings a wake-up call for Charlotte when she runs out of income and has to take a job along with Harry and Camilla in a meat packing plant. Saving up the money needed to travel to Cutter's Creek in the Montana Territory brings these friends closer as they work towards their goal. Another card game, massive winnings, and an angry man puts their trip ahead of schedule from New York to Montana.

Lady Charlotte Beaufort's aristocratic English parents force their only child to become betrothed to the much older, wealthy, but boring and possibly abusive, Duke of Notherington. In the middle of her engagement party, twenty-year old Charlotte makes an impulsive decision to run away from home. Grabbing some valuable jewelry and a few pieces of the family silver, she hitches her horse to a wagon and flees from the family's estate in the proverbial dead of night. On her way to nowhere in particular, Charlotte meets up with Harry and Camilla Brown, the adult children of her father's poor, alcoholic tenant. Harry is on the lam, and Camilla is along for the ride. Harry and Camilla plan to sail to America and eventually join an uncle in Cutter's Creek, Montana Territory. Having no other plan, Charlotte decides to go to America, too. Charlotte and the Browns go their separate ways during the boat trip (she travels incognito in first class; they travel as themselves in steerage). However, unfortunate circumstances, and Charlotte's attraction to Harry (which is reciprocated), make Charlotte decide to stay close to the siblings in NYC, and later join them on the wagon train trip from Independence, Missouri, to Cutter's Creek. Throughout most of the novel, Charlotte and Harry remain conflicted about their feelings for each other, mostly because of the great differences in their social and economic backgrounds. Will they ever get together, especially after Charlotte becomes involved with another man in Cutter's Creek? Vivi Holt is a wonderful writer who tells a great story. The characters and plot kept me interested until the last chapter. Yes,

there were a few things I questioned.

This book started out as a bit of confusion for me at first: I didn't realize that this starts out as a Regency in England, then makes its way to New York with immigrants, and then crosses the frontier en route to becoming a Western. This is something that I haven't experienced previously, the mixing of two seemingly very different subgenres of historical romance. I will say that the two genres do not overlap, but rather seamlessly morph into the next thanks to the added stop in New York which doesn't really fit either genre except within the greater arc of westward movement. Let me say that I did not love the Regency part of this novel as much as the Western. I strongly feel that Holt's strength lies in her handling of the frontier life and I was ready to move away from England and get there fairly quickly. While this story really follows the movements of three characters, Harry, Charlotte, and Camilla, it is really a story of change and evolution for Charlotte. From beginning to end she transforms from a high-society debutante who is destined to wed a duke to a frontierswoman capable of holding her own. Ordinarily this might not be so believable, however Holt has created a period of transition with the stopover in New York. It is here that Charlotte had a true introduction to the harsh realities of life, is brought very low, and then begins to see what she must do to survive in this new life she has opted for. You see the interplay of the perceptions of the life she grew up living and the new reality required on the frontier, not only from Charlotte's perspective but that of Harry too. It was refreshing to see a heroine who has her damsel in distress moments but then can grow from that into her own person.

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