



## Mansfield Ranch

*Jenni James*

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Does true love really prevail?

All Lilly Price has ever known is living in the shadow of her widely successful foster family. But when a twist of fate deals Lilly the hand of Harrison Crawford, the most popular guy in Bloomfield, NM, everything flips upside down.

Sean Benally is a hard worker, he's funny, he's generous, and he's kind. He's also the most amazing guy Lilly has ever known. And she's totally fallen in love with him. But he's her foster brother...

Now she must choose between the unavailable love of her life—or the guy who promises to be available forever.

## **Mansfield Ranch Details**

Date : Published March 28th 2017 by Serenity Brooke Press (first published December 22nd 2013)

ISBN :

Author : Jenni James

Format : Kindle Edition 210 pages

Genre : Young Adult, Romance, Contemporary, Fiction, Teen



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## From Reader Review Mansfield Ranch for online ebook

### Jessie says

Another great addition to Jenni James' Jane Austen series. Mansfield Ranch is a modern retelling of Mansfield Park. Lilly Price is taken in by another family through the foster care system. Eight years later, Lilly knows her family isn't the perfect accepting family she imagined, but she has a best friend in her foster brother, Sean. And then the Crawford family moves next door. Suddenly Sean is spending time with the beautiful Julia, and Harrison, who was originally a jerk, is now pursuing Lilly with single-minded determination. Is he for real? Or is he still the selfish player he appeared to be originally? Add to that horseback riding, community theater, mean girls, high school rumors, finding one's roots, and finally romance, with the only person who knows the real Lilly Price. When I saw that the book was approximately 140 pages, I was worried, but it didn't feel rushed or incomplete. The characters were love able, and were good counterparts to Jane Austen's originals. While not my favorite book in the series, Mansfield Ranch was still wonderful!

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### Ceri says

This review was first published on Babblings of a Bookworm: <http://babblingsofabookworm.blogspot....>

I am celebrating the bicentenary of Mansfield Park by trying to work in some Mansfield Park themed reads. This isn't the first young adult version I've read; a while ago I read Rosie Rushton's *Whatever Love Is*, which I thought was wonderful read and tied back really nicely to Mansfield Park. I would say Mansfield Ranch by Jenni James is aimed at a slightly younger audience. The heroine is only 16 years old, and it's a very 'clean' read.

Lilly Price (Fanny Price) has been fostered by the Benally family for the past 8 years, since she was 8 years old. Previously to that she lived in a children's home. Lilly doesn't fit in with her snobby foster sisters, Lauren and Alexis, and she's always in trouble with Mr Benally. Mrs Benally doesn't pay her much attention because she's always too busy watching TV. Lilly isn't especially popular at school, but she has one big high point in her life; her foster brother Sean Benally. Sean is a very sweet guy who has always been there for Lilly. She is much closer to him than to her foster sisters.

Sean does have his bad points though; he doesn't always keep his mouth shut when he should. He thinks that Lilly is unappreciated at Mansfield Ranch and she deserves a nice boyfriend. He thinks that the new neighbours' son, Harrison Crawford, would make a good match for her. Unfortunately he tells his sisters this and they spread the untrue news that Lilly is pursuing Harrison. This sets their relationship off on a bad footing, and Lilly soon decides that she doesn't like him. Once Harrison realises that Lilly is serious in her dislike he decides to make her fall in love with him because nobody turns down Harrison Crawford.

This type of book must be hard to write, I think, because it needs to work as a modern book in its own right while still staying true to the original. For me, this one didn't quite push all the right buttons. Firstly, the family situation was odd. Lilly was ignored by Mrs Benally, blamed for everything by Mr Benally, and ignored by the girls. Lilly seemed to be the only one who did chores and her car was much cheaper than her foster sisters and was actually sold as a punishment to her. It reminded me a bit of Cinderella. I wouldn't have thought there would be this level of division in a foster family when the point of a foster family is to

give a child a normal family life.

In Mansfield Park there is difference in the treatment, but Fanny wasn't supposed to be treated like the Bertrams' daughters, and in fact it would have been wrong for them to give her the expectation that her life could be the same as theirs, as she was poorer and lower socially and likely to remain so. These days, that is just not the case, girls are so much freer to make their own way in life. Also, a scenario where a foster brother and sister are romantically involved when they have been living together as siblings since the younger child was 8 is a bit of a grey area, especially when she's only 16 and not an adult at the time of the romance. For me, it has more of an incestuous 'ick' factor than first cousins in Regency times with a larger age gap who were brought up as cousins, particularly given the likelihood that Edmund would have gone to boarding school and so been absent for long periods whereas Sean actually lived with Lilly and saw her every day.

Lilly's personality was very different from Fanny Price – she was feisty, but it went over the line into rude on quite a few occasions and she led on Harrison quite badly, something that Fanny would never have done. Aside from the challenge of a girl who doesn't like him I am not sure what Harrison saw in her. He gave a list of her good qualities but for me they didn't come across very strongly, and he only ever sees her at her worst, so how Harrison picked up on this stuff I don't know.

Lilly doesn't seem bothered about kissing her step-sister's boyfriend, which is very different from Fanny's sense of honour. The whole Lilly/Sean-Fanny/Edmund dynamic and storyline was very different here too – instead of settling for Fanny, which many people complain about in MP, instead here both Sean and Lilly used the Crawford siblings to an extent and I felt greater pity for both of them than I did reading Mansfield Park.

One thing I thought was reflected very well from the original was Lilly's reason for not wanting to pursue a relationship with Harrison. She doesn't feel she can trust him:

*"I'm sure there are lots of girls willing to get burned by you, but frankly, I don't have the time or the inclination to deal with a guy who's just playing games. I want a real guy. A guy who thinks of me first. A guy who's dependable and nice and caring and well, all the things you're not."*

There was a point where I thought that the Crawfords would come out blameless victims, but things weren't changed that much!

There are other books in the series which have already been released – Pride and Popularity, Northanger Alibi, Persuaded and Emmalee. From the notes at the back of Mansfield Ranch I noticed that another four books are planned. These are Sensible and Sensational (Sense & Sensibility) and also Sand & Sun, The Wilsons and Queen Sidney (I am presuming these are Austen's Sanditon, The Watsons and Lady Susan respectively).

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### **Claudia says**

I have mixed feelings about this one. It's a retelling of Mansfield Park by Jane Austen and I felt like she changed the characters a bit too much. The character I wasn't supposed to like, Harrison, I found myself rooting for. He came across like a better match stating about how she deserved better and willingly making an effort. I know that he turned out to be a cad, but, for majority of the book, most things were inside Lilly

Price's head. She was the one saying how people don't change and how she "just couldn't trust him." There was a lot of telling and not a lot of showing.

Sean is set up early on as the guy we're meant to like. But I just couldn't see why... There was nothing overly special about him, in fact during Harrison's attempts to win her heart Sean was rather cruel... Or at least that's how I perceived it. Mind you, this is a difficult story to adapt to a modern high school setting so I give Jenni James points for doing so but I just couldn't make myself like this book. There was just no reasoning behind anything... Like why don't her sisters like her? Why does Sean?

2.5 stars

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### **Mackenzie says**

If you haven't read Jane Austen's Mansfield Park or the previous books in the Jane Austen Diaries series, this review might contain some spoilers.

After reading the rest of the series in March 2013, I became a big fan of Jenni James's Jane Austen contemporary retellings. I waited impatiently for 9 months for Mansfield Ranch wondering how she would fit Mansfield Park into the series. And when it was finally released, I reread the previous books in chronological order (I waited on Northanger Alibi since it comes later chronologically) before finally reading Mansfield Ranch. I have to admit, I was a little disappointed. Part of my disappointment may have stemmed from building the series up too much in my anticipation of this book but that wasn't the whole problem. This book disappointed me for a few reasons.

First: Sean and Lilly were not as likeable as the main characters of previous books. Sean lost some of the playful confidence he had in Persuaded and came off as a little cruel with how he treated Lilly. I had to wonder how much he really loved her if he was willing to repeatedly hurt her so much. And why didn't he ever contact her while she was away, not even after she reached out to him? Lilly was brash and while there's nothing wrong with being frank with people, I guess I would have preferred a bit more grace with her frankness. She just used words like idiot and moron too often for my liking. They weren't unlikable characters. I just had to exercise a bit more patience and forgiveness than usual in order to like them.

Second: Mansfield Ranch wasn't as romantic or satisfying as the others. In all fairness to Jenni James, I felt the same way about Mansfield Park. Too much of the book was spent tearing their romance down and not enough building it up. I started to hope Harrison Crawford won her after a while (even though I knew that wasn't going to happen and ultimately he didn't really deserve her) because I spent so much of the book reading about his love for her and so little reading about Sean's love. And seriously, why didn't Sean contact her while she was away? He didn't even initiate contact at the end of her isolation. And he never explains why he ignored her. That just bugged me. There would have been many reasons his lack of contact would have been forgivable but I needed to hear an explanation from him. Then at the end, I just felt like "that's it?" because the climax and conclusion are too brief, didn't resolve enough, and weren't as romantic as I would have liked.

Third: I'm confused by the continuity. How did this book fit into the series timeline? Was this two years after Persuaded? One? The school year after that summer? It seemed like the only way this story fit was if it was happening at the same time as Emmalee the school year after the summer of Persuaded but even that didn't fit exactly right. I'm sure there's a way to explain away inconsistencies in order to make a timeline fit but it shouldn't be the reader's job to do that. It should be the author's job to make it clear enough that it's a non-

issue. I know I should forget about the timeline and just go with it, but I can't help but be distracted by it.

Four: The previous books did a better job of connecting each book in the series through the characters. Since this book was set in a different town, the only time anyone from the other books showed up was at the very end with Greg and Amanda. In Persuaded, both Lilly and Sean gave the impression that they had a whole lot more contact with Greg than they did in Mansfield Ranch. Greg isn't even mentioned until the end and based on the way Greg and Amanda explained what they had been up to, there hadn't even been contact that the reader wasn't privy to though the book was set over at least 6 months if not more. I know Greg and Amanda had gone off to college but you'd think there would at least be the occasional email or text to or from Greg. I mean, Lilly was lonely enough to begin to overlook her dislike of Harrison while she was away. You'd think she would have reached out to her favorite foster cousin.

Mansfield Ranch was not a bad book. It just didn't hold up to the previous books. Mansfield Park was one of my least favorite of Austen's novels too which probably didn't help Mansfield Ranch's cause. If the complaints that I listed above wouldn't bother you, you'd probably love it as much as the others who gave it 4 and 5 stars. And even if they would bother you, I would still recommend reading it. The series as a whole is good. Especially for those who enjoy a good retelling of Austen's novels. I still definitely look forward to reading the next books in the series. I'm glad she decided to extend the series to include retellings of Austen's less popular works. Here's hoping we won't have to wait another 9 months for Sense and Sensational.

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Update: I read this book a second time when Sense and Sensational came out. I liked it better the second time around but it still isn't as good as the first 3 books but it is better than Northanger Alibi.

## **Norah Una Sumner says**

### **A great example of how a rushed and corny ending can destroy a book.**

I really wanted to like this story, I really did...but I just couldn't. The main character is great, I liked her a lot, but everyone else? Nah. Sean is really creepy, one day he's all like "oh let's make out sistah" and the other day he's like "I don't think this will work out, I'll go and seduce Juliet now".

And then there's Harrison. I actually liked him a lot, but the author presented him in a nice way in one moment, and then the next one he's all creepy and violent. Listen Jenni, if you start describing one character in a certain way, stick to it to the end. Lilly's family is batshit crazy. If you don't want another kid and if you treat her like a moron than why the hell did you even bring her to your home? Idiots. There were a lots of great, funny lines and that's the only reason I'm giving this book 2 stars.

The ending...Jesus Christ.

Favourite quotes:

"For what?", he shouted to the sky, before bringing those hazel eyes back to mine. **"For ruining your life."**

*Oh that.*

"Every girl does what?" My hand was clinched again ready to deck him if he moved any closer.

"Falls for me. It's inevitable. So you might enjoy the game while it lasts"

**"The only thing I'd enjoy right now is your funeral, so don't tempt me."**

"Why not? Let me take you home. It'll be fun."

"For who?" **I could think of ten things I'd rather do than ride home with Harrison Crawford. One involved cutting off my pinky toe.**

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"I've been trying to figure out what about me you don't like."

**"Gee, and you're finished already?"**

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### **Jassa says**

Something about this book made me weepy and glassy eyed. I was just too connected with this character. Wonderful.

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### **June says**

Wow. These stories just get better and better. This is book #5 of The Jane Austen Diaries. Skipped over #4 but will go back to it as soon as I get it from the library. Although the books are intertwined, they work just fine as stand alones.

This authors writing improves with each book. The depth of the story and the characters are great. I loved this story of a young Native American girl who is fostered by a Native American family. She struggles with it also involves over-inflated egos and typical teenage problems. Great story!

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### **Melanie says**

This book wasn't my favorite of hers. It was still a fun read, but I admit it was a bit weird to me. Probably because I have an adoptive brother, and I'm like yeah no. But it's still clean, and an easy read.

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### **Pascale says**

Wow. I think I started crying at the first chapter and didn't stop until the end. This story reminded me of Kelly Oram's Cinder and Ella, in that the girl in this story feels used and unloved. Lots of drama in this story. I really enjoyed the storyline though. It is very well written. Good story.

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## **Marsha says**

Mansfield Ranch by Jenni James

I really love these books by Jenni James. The characters are sweet and the plots are clean and absorbing. I get lost in them every time

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## **E.S. says**

It's been a while since I've read Mansfield Park but I could have sworn that the Mansfield Park version of Harrison was less infatuated with Fanny than Harrison was with Lilly. I don't really know how I feel about this book. I don't think it's as good as some of the others I've read but it's also not necessarily the worst. I felt like Lilly was way too dramatic all the time and I just don't remember Fanny being that intolerable.

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## **Katie W says**

I know this is a modern version of Mansfield Park, yet I also got the feeling that Cinderella was lurking in the story. I haven't ever read the "real" version, much to my surprise, so I'm not sure how much of it follows along with the true storyline, however, even just from reading the synopsis, I could see definite parallels.

I really enjoyed was Lilly's character. She is feisty, speaks her mind, and tries so hard to be good, yet she cannot stand up for herself when it really matters. Her foster family walks all over her and takes advantage of her, seriously treating her like Cinderella, and she takes it, because if she doesn't, she is punished. I know it sounds funny that I liked that, but those characteristics make her seem like a real teenager. I really liked her personality.

I couldn't stand Harrison. What part of NO don't you understand, Harrison?! Seriously. Julia, his sister, seemed so nice, yet sometimes appearances can be deceiving. I just couldn't make up my mind if his changes were for real or just an act.

Sean was such an awesome best friend and foster brother. Lilly really lucked out in that department.

Overall, I really enjoyed the story, especially the CLEAN content.

Content: kissing; no language or violence. Clean.

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## **Kristen says**

[such a jerk. Along with all her foster siblings, and parents, I mean, how cruel does someone need to be. And then Julia does a 180 as well. Even Sean was up there with them sometimes. Yes, obviously he redeemed himself but still. (h

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### **Deborah says**

Jenni James and I are tight. Okay, so she has no clue who I am but I like to think we are tight because her books always speak to me. I will be honest and say that I have never read Jane Austen's Mansfield Park, so I really didn't know what I was getting myself into with this remake. For some odd reason, I just couldn't fall in love with it. Again it might of had something to do with the fact that I didn't know the original story, but I just thought it wasn't up to the same caliber as her other books.

I thought the main characters were good. But I will be honest I had a hard time rooting for the romance here. I know they weren't really Brother and Sister, but they were close enough that I just couldn't get as into the romance which is pretty much why I love these books to begin with. Also, I thought the foster family was just hard to read about. I think they were a perfect example of money can't buy L-O-V-E!

Over all I liked it but I don't see myself reading it again. Which is unlike her other books that I have read a few times each.

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### **Kathy \* Bookworm Nation says**

I was really curious about what the author would do with this one. I never made it through the original Mansfield Park nor did I like the movie adaptation either. I guess I have never been able to overlook the ickyness of the main characters being related. In the original they are first cousins who were practically raised as siblings. I did appreciate that in this version they were not blood related, but they have spent the past eight years being raised as brother and sister and I again could not get over the ickyness of it all.

I was left with a lot of questions as well. Why did they do foster care in the first place? Why did they keep her for so long without adopting her? Why did they keep her if apparently none of them liked her (until she was gone then suddenly realized how much they missed her?) I think I would have enjoyed the story if things had been tweaked a bit. For example, instead of having her live with them for eight years maybe make it a year. Then it wouldn't seem like she had the hots for her older brother. I also didn't think he acted like he was nineteen. He came across more like sixteen or so, IMO. Why was he spending so much time with girls in high school anyway? By time I graduated from HS I was done and wouldn't have dreamed of dating high school guys. I can't imagine guys being that different.

Anyway, I ranted a little more than I intended. Unfortunately, Mansfield Park has just never appealed to me. I did think Ms. James did well with the story and I did like Lilly and if I pretended they weren't bro/sis the romance was cute.

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Content: Clean.