



Healing Hearts

Sarah M. Eden

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Healing Hearts Sarah M. Eden Wyoming Territory, 1876

As the only doctor in the frontier town of Savage Wells, Gideon MacNamara knows his prospects for a bride are limited. The womenfolk in town are either too young, too old, or already spoken for. So, being a practical man, he decides to take advantage of the matchmaking service of the day—mail-order brides—and sends away for a woman with nursing experience.

When Miriam steps off the stagecoach in Savage Wells, she sees a bright future in front of her. But when the town—and Gideon—meets her, ready for a wedding, her excitement quickly turns to horror. Somehow Dr. MacNamara's message had gotten turned around. He didn't want a nurse, he wanted a wife. When she refuses to marry him, she finds herself stranded in Savage Wells with some very unhappy townspeople.

But Gideon is not like the other men Miriam has met. Embarrassed by the misunderstanding, he offers her a job, and the two begin an awkward—and often humorous—dance of getting to know each other as they work to care for the people of their town. Romance blossoms between the two, but when a former medical associate of Miriam's arrives in town, Gideon and the other townsfolk must rally around Miriam to protect her from a dangerous fate. Gideon and Miriam must decide if they are willing to risk their hearts for each other even as buried secrets are brought to light.

Healing Hearts Details

Date : Expected publication: February 5th 2019 by Shadow Mountain

ISBN : 9781629724584

Author : Sarah M. Eden

Format : Paperback 336 pages

Genre : Romance, Historical, Historical Fiction, Clean Romance, Historical Romance, Christian Fiction, Sociology, Abuse

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From Reader Review Healing Hearts for online ebook

Leah says

Wow. This was a good book. Really good.

Cheryl says

Sarah Eden has done it again! This story is breathtaking. I just couldn't put it down. She tackles some very tough subjects with grace and style. She always manages to add some humor too. Miriam and Gideon are both remarkable characters that I was cheering on all the way. I learned more about how mental or not so mental illness was treated in the 1800s. Many of the characters had lots of depth to them. I was particularly impressed with Gideon's family. They seemed so shallow to begin with but grew to mean so much more to me as the story went on. I am hoping there will soon be stories about Hawk and Mr Larsen, the attorney, too. Both characters seem to have more to them than meets the eye.

Amy says

Well, I personally couldn't be happier that Sarah Eden took us back to Savage Wells! 'Sheriffs' was a story full of spunk & fun with that added tender element concerning Paisley's father, and dementia. It was the first time I'd been able to complete a book that touched on this subject. I lost my mum in her mid 60s, to this terrible disease, and usually I can't bear reading about it in a novel. I appreciated so much the sensitivity in which Sarah writes. In fact if you are an avid reader of hers, you will know that she approaches these things just right.

This second time around in Savage Wells is no different. Again, she tackles the real issues of the day with an disease that little was known about, yet treated in such horrific ways. I've read a few books now that centre around Asylums, and the sense of being trapped that many of those living there felt. Women sent there for all kinds of reasons and always their pleas and denials taken by the doctors as a sure sign of their madness. I cannot even abide the thought of how that must have felt to someone with depression, or another ailment that didn't need to be treated in that manner. It seems to be society's scapegoat for these illnesses and disabilities no one understood. Trying to keep that 'perfect' image.

This story is about two people, one physically running from the past and another mentally running from his past. Everything about the way this beautiful story progresses and is enriched by all the other wonderful characters was just such a joy to read. So many moments, leaving you on the edge of your seat. Feeling empathy for Miriam's plight. Hope that she will see the good in Gideon. The concern for the town later on in the story, and the continuing tale of Andrew & Mr Bell. So much goodness in the people of this town and I love the way they all rallied together at the end. Fantastic story, that I could not put down! Please write a story for Hawk! His character is so much fun, and I loved the way he so gracefully bowed out.

I received this complimentary eARC from Netgalley & Shadow Mountain. This is my honest review.

Heather 123 says

A cute story with an interesting twist on marriage. Loved the slow development of feelings between the characters. Miriam's back story was amazing!

** ARC received from Netgalley **

Adrienne says

Gideon MacNamara has been unlucky in love, but as the doctor of Savage Wells and the surrounding areas, he needs help in his medical practice, so he has sent for a mail order bride who is a nurse. When she arrives, however, Miriam becomes the third woman to shy away from marrying him, insisting she was only told about the nursing position, not about the marriage part. His love for the people he serves prompts Gideon to swallow his pride and ask Miriam to stay--as his nurse only. Miriam is a good nurse but she's running from her past--and Savage Wells just might be a place where she can make a home, if she can convince the townspeople, who are fiercely loyal to their doctor, that she isn't a terrible person for not wanting to marry Gideon. As they work together, Gideon is drawn to Miriam, but he also realizes she's hiding something and has to figure out if he can really trust her to help him with his patients.

Gideon is a total sweetheart; I love seeing how he cares for his people and how they care about him in return. Miriam is a sort of prickly, but understandably so, but also really wants to help people, and her backstory is so interesting and opened up some really fascinating (and sad) insights into medical treatment for women in the 1800s. The secondary characters are great, too; I love how Sarah Eden always gives us so many people to care about.

If you've read the first book in the Savage Wells series (which you don't have to do before reading this one; it can stand alone), you might expect a lighter tone than this book has; the first book was funnier and had a lot of banter and stuff. This book still has funny moments but it has a darker tone (which is totally appropriate to the story).

Great plot, snappy dialogue, and realistic, well-developed characters are hallmarks of Sarah Eden's writing, and they're all here. Another great book from a terrific author.

I read an ARC via #NetGalley. All opinions are my own.

Lyssa says

This book was fantastic! The themes of nursing, mental health and asylums in the 1800's are new ones for me. As a woman, it is easy to take for granted the rights and opportunities we have now. And it was horrifying to read and imagine what it would be like to have a medical condition that was unknown or misunderstood... and being at the mercy of male relatives.

The familial relationships were complex and well done. The villain was terrifying in his ability to manipulate and twist things. And the love story was sweet. The story over all was layered and while most of the subplots were intense and serious, there were moments of humor tucked in.

Highly recommend!

Melissa says

This is in classic Eden style. A very sad story for our leading lady which makes the endings so much sweeter. Her Heroines really do get drug threw the 'mud', the poor things. I think this might have been the most beat up Heroine yet. Don't worry all ends happily. This was a sweet romance. I enjoyed going back to Savage Wells. I liked those characters much more as side characters. This is chaste and teens could read it. There is talk of insane asylums and abuse.

Kathy * Bookworm Nation says

When I saw this takes place in Savage Wells I had to grab it. I really enjoyed The Sheriffs of Savage Wells and was eager to return to this charming western town. As always, Ms. Eden has created memorable characters, a fun and unique plot and a well developed story.

This has such a fun start, Miriam arrives in Savage Wells, Wyoming thinking she has found a safe place to hide and is stunned when she is ushered into a church and supposed to marry the town doctor. I felt bad for Miriam, but equally bad for Gideon who once again found himself jilted. Miriam and Gideon were both likable characters, they have their own demons to deal with, but are so good for each other. Miriam's history is pretty sad and realistic for the time period. I don't want to give any spoilers, I know I kept turning the pages to figure out what Miriam's secret was.

I thought this was well written, the pacing was good. It's a tad more serious than I like. I am a mood reader, which for me means what I read can affect my mood so that's why I typically like to read lighter stories. While this does deal with serious topics, I appreciate that it never got too heavy.

Overall, a really enjoyable read. I loved the town of Savage Wells and the people there. They were a little too hard on Miriam at first, but they definitely come around in a great way. The romance was sweet and realistic and you can't help rooting for things to work out. I stayed up waaaay to late to see how everything plays out, but I just couldn't put it down. I'm sure the lack of sleep with catch up with me later, but it was worth it.

Content

Romance: Clean

Language: None

Violence: Mild, nothing graphic or detailed but talk of death and abuse (physical, phycological)

Series: Savage Wells, Book Two - can stand well on its own

Source: Netgalley

Clara says

Leave it to Sarah M. Eden to have me dashing for a box of Kleenex.

“Miriam Bricks sat in the cramped and rancid interior of a rickety stagecoach and contemplated for the hundredth time how fortunate she was to be there.”

Miriam Bricks is sure she's going to finally have a respite from all her troubles only to find out she's been sent as a mail-ordered bride.

If signing up for a wife with a woman he doesn't know wasn't awkward enough, Gideon McNamara will find out that being left at the altar in front of the whole town is just embarrassment enough to keep the otherwise put together doctor scrambling for words.

With her usual astuteness to bring to life a historical setting, Sarah M Eden envelops you at this beginning with many walls to bring down in order to at least a true friendship be born. You'll laugh with the fumbling and gest thrown here and there. But more than an easy read, this book touches a few of the dark sides of history and puts us into contemplation how different our actions and judgments have been in the face of someone with an impairment.

Have we come to the place of limiting all someone can conquer or are we ready to love and support? For deep down we are all broken, we just need to give someone a chance to be their full and the self. Endearing and thought-provoking story!

*many thanks to the publisher for providing a review copy. this is my honest review.

Tessa says

Sarah Eden knocked it out of the park with this one! I absolutely adored Gideon and Miriam's story! From the mistaken mail-order bride, to Miriam's medical issues, to Gideon's compassion. This was a well-rounded love story addressing the lack of rights women had during that time frame. Every member of the town in Savage Wells is lovely and I admire the small town coming together to protect one of their own from a horrendous villain. Beautiful, beautiful story.

Thank you to Shadow Mountain Publishing and NetGalley for an early eARC.

Carol*BeautyandtheBeastlyBooks says**

ARC received in exchange of an honest opinion

ARC received in exchange of an honest opinion

This book was a sweet, light read that I found to be enjoyable, but not really impressive. I was hoping for a bit more, it needs a bit of angst (even sweet reads need that).

The writing was good though, hence the 3 stars.

Kelly says

I liked the twist to this story. It is a unique one, especially to this time period. I wasn't sure how it would end. There were a couple of ways to go and of course my mind took the morbid route to fixing the problem. I also am partial to stories with medicine, since I am a nurse.

I really liked both of these main characters. Gideon is a very caring doctor who loves his work and works himself to the bone in caring for the people in his area. Miriam is very caring and really knows how to connect with people. She is an observer. She also carries secrets. She is closed off to giving people information about herself. She doesn't feel she is of any worth. She has seen horrible things. But to find out what her secrets are and more on what has happened to her, you will have to read the story. It's a good one.

Gideon and Miriam begin to enjoy each other's company and have quite the banter at times! They work easily with each other and Gideon sees her worth! Even though Miriam ran when she was supposed to marry Gideon, she wants to be his nurse and he needs her and well.... She didn't know that she was supposed to marry him when she was told about the job. I would run too! It was all sudden and sort of funny too! The two definitely have chemistry and at times some jealousy!

I haven't read the first book and now I need to rectify that because I want to know more about that couple! A woman law person in that time?!? Definitely intriguing!

If you like stories about medicine, children and diseases, uncovering secrets, women law persons, finding someone that compliments you, finding someone that loves you, finding your worth, books with questions to think about at the end, bad doctors vs good doctors, and the early 1800's this might be for you!

Maureen Timerman says

From the beginning to the end this book pulled me in, and had me cringing at the injustice that was perpetrated at the time.

Once you find out why Miriam is in Savage Wells and why she won't marry Gideon you champion her cause.

Will she win this town over? Will the evil that is brought on her by the law at that time win? I know I was starting to get very angry at the system, but so many souls were lost here, and this went on way into the late 1900's.

There are some really warmhearted events here, and others will rip your heart out, and you will worry about this town losing its children.

Wow! As you can see there is a lot going on here, and innocent telegram has the ability to destroy lives. A quick page-tuner, that will make you think!

I received this book through Net Galley and the Publisher Shadow Mountain, and was not required to give a positive review.

No Apology Book Reviews says

Full of heart and endearing characters but could use more passion

I would like to thank Sarah M. Eden, Shadow Mountain Publishing, and NetGalley for allowing me to read an ARC in exchange for an honest review.

Minor spoilers

This was a great book! It was the right degree of dramatic, it had heaps of heart, and all of the characters were endearing. Well, except the villain, of course, but I even sympathized with Miriam's father to a point, and he was a self-serving jerk. So kudos there, Eden. And when Rupert was so sick... I had tears in my eyes. If he'd died... I don't want to think about it. I kept thinking, "Don't you dare. Don't you dare kill that precious child, Eden, I swear to god." I loved that kid.

Oh, be aware that this book is the second in a series. The first was The Sheriffs of Savage Wells. I didn't realize that when I started Healing Hearts, but as soon as you meet Cade you're hit with a blast of charisma that makes it clear he's a leading man. Then you meet Paisley, and there's another blast of charisma. I'm very interested in their story.

Gideon was awesome. I loved him. He wasn't a macho man oozing testosterone and going around intimidating people. He was quiet, gentle, kind, considerate, and intellectual—but by no means perfect. He had his moments of jealousy and insecurity and inadequacy. And he was a martyr, though he was aware of that. But he was mature and selfless in general.

I liked Miriam, too. Considering what she'd been through, her actions made sense to me. Also considering what she'd been through, she was pretty well-adjusted. Wary and secretive, but still friendly, kind, and selfless. Almost too well-adjusted, but that's arguable. I thought her actions/reactions were appropriate. Maybe she should have been smart enough to change her name the first time...but I understand that the west seemed so far removed from eastern society that she probably thought she'd be well lost out there.

My biggest problem with the book—pretty much my only real problem—was that I didn't feel they'd earned their love at the end. They barely knew anything about each other; for most of the book they tiptoed around each other, and for the rest they were too busy dealing with everything to have a decent conversation. By the end they knew the important superficial information about one another, but most of it had been revealed and discussed by other people, not in earnest conversations between the two of them. This means that some of their intimate gestures also felt unearned, such as when Gideon cupped her face in his hands about halfway through the book. I would have bought it more if Miriam had reacted with startlement or resistance, because at that point she didn't have any idea how much he'd come to care for her, but she acted like it was no big deal.

Speaking of—I was shocked when she had absolutely no reaction the first time Gideon said he loved her at about 77% progress. Just nothing. I remember thinking, "Maybe that was supposed to have been cut," because that's how Miriam reacted—as if it hadn't been said. It was rather bizarre.

Furthermore, I understand that when he declares to her, "None of that matters without you"—referring to all

of his friends and responsibilities, in light of Miriam running for her life—that it was supposed to be a very symbolic gesture on his part. Up to that point, nothing mattered more to him than the town/his patients—he'd already sacrificed the privacy of his music to her—and the moment he says the above, it's supposed to signify that he loves her enough to give all that up. I bought when he gave up his cello secret for her, that was small-time, but as I was saying, I didn't buy their love, so I didn't buy this moment, and I made a doubtful "Seriously?" face when I read it. I wasn't convinced that Miriam meant that much to him.

Why wasn't I convinced? Well, this was a chaste romance, but of course that in itself is not why it didn't work. It didn't work for me because it was chaste to the point that they didn't seem to express any attraction to one other beyond the general thought that he's handsome, on her part, and that her curly red hair is becoming, on his. They never checked each other out that I recall, never wondered what it would be like to kiss passionately, never wondered anything that would suggest they wanted to be more than friends. They came to care about each other, sure, but it didn't seem much different from how they cared about their friends or the children. The only thing that suggested Gideon was falling in love was when he got jealous of Hawk showing interest in Miriam. Yes, Gideon and Miriam were embracing tightly and kissing a little by the end, but that's expected, and it...didn't feel obligatory per se, but kind of like a going-through-the-motions-because-it's-a-romance thing. I just didn't feel any passion between them, so their getting together wasn't as satisfying as I'd hoped it would be.

There was one other line that made me frown in confusion. When Miriam says, "I won't make you my shield. Your life is not worth mine." I know what was meant, but phrasing it that way makes it sound as if Miriam is saying Paisley's life isn't worth as much as Miriam's. It would make more sense to invert it: "My life isn't worth yours," "I'm not worth your life," or something like that.

Other than that, I enjoyed this book very much. I had a hard time putting it down and devoured it within two days. Eden is a very good writer and capable of not only humor but powerful analogies, such as: "To say Mother was, at times, a bit overbearing was like saying the ocean was, at times, a bit wet. And Gideon could feel himself drowning." I liked that line so much I reread it three times before moving on.

If I have one suggestion for Eden, other than the passion thing, is to not be afraid to give her characters dark sides. We want them to be morally upstanding in general, but few readers can relate to saints.

I don't know if Eden plans to continue writing about Savage Wells, but if she did, I'd certainly request those ARCs. I see prime protagonist candidates in Hawk, Tansy, Andrew, and even Mr. Larson. I did get the feeling like I was supposed to already be acquainted with Tansy, so I'm not sure if she played a part in the first book or what. Regardless, I'd like to know her better.

And...*gasp* My library has some of Eden's other books! Yesssss *does happy dance*

noapologybookreviews.com

Hannah says

Whew, a little bit of suspense in this one! Or...a lot. Sarah Eden does a good job of tormenting her characters in general, but I think these go through some of the most impossible situations. I literally couldn't put this down as Gideon meets the woman he'd thought was coming out to marry him and instead is coming out for employment he desperately needs to provide (as a doctor without a nurse and treating an entire region) but

doesn't have much in the way of money to achieve that with. But that's just the first of their troubles!

Miriam's secret can't be kept for long, and soon it's clear how much danger she really is running from. Okay, I didn't think it was going to be quite that tenacious. But Eden quickly convinced me of how desperate Miriam's situation actually is. And then sickness strikes the town and makes it even more dangerous! I loved how much character development took place during that crisis, especially with Gideon's folks.

A delight of a story!

Thanks to NetGalley and the publisher for a free copy to read. A favorable review was not required.
