

The Hostage Heart by Cynthia Harrod-Eagles

3 stars

A romance with a twist

This is a romantic story in the Mills and Boon vein and I have to admit at once to not being a fan of this particular genre.

The author, Cynthia Harrod-Eagles, states in the foreword that this book was originally written early on in her career and has now been re-published with a different title. This would explain why the youthfulness of the writing is so evident. From her vast output she has obviously developed as an author since this book was first launched.

The plot is a predictable one. A young woman, Emma, gives up her work as a teacher, to take the job of governess to a little girl badly in need of attention and care. Her charge, Polly, is the youngest daughter of a wealthy family who live in a stately home, with all the trimmings of an upstairs/downstairs existence. The father is a boorish, self-made man who is seldom at home. It is a dysfunctional family to say the least. His wife, we are told, is genuinely upper class, but shown to be inadequate both as a mother and as a person. There is a spoiled and unpleasant older daughter, twin boys, who are away at school, and then the eldest sibling, Gavin. From the outset he is quite obviously going to be the hero, with all the necessary trappings - very handsome, aloof, and of course drives a smart sports car. As with all romantic novels Emma and Gavin start out hostile towards each other but it is not difficult to guess how things will turn out. Half way through the book there is a kidnapping of Emma and Polly and the rest of the book deals with their rescue. This is by far the best part of the story and keeps you turning the pages to find out whether they will be rescued.

The problem with this type of book is that the characters are stereotypes. Nobody is drawn in any great detail, not even the hero and heroine. This is frustrating. For instance, I would like to have known what turned the mother into such a monster.

There is plenty of dialogue and very little description, which means it is a quick read.

For those who like romantic fiction it will probably prove enjoyable, but I am afraid it is not written well enough to afford more than three stars.

Jane

Breakaway Reviewers received a copy of the book to review.