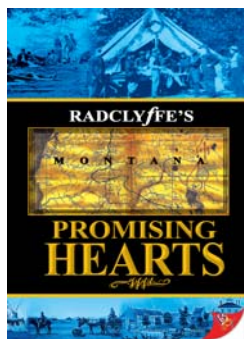


## Book Review: June 2006

by Kathi Isserman (reviewer at [JAW](#))



### Promising Hearts

Radclyffe  
ISBN: 1-933110-44-9  
Trade paper, 296 pp, \$15.95  
June, 2006  
Lesbian Romance  
Bold Strokes Books, Inc.  
[www.boldstrokesbooks.com](http://www.boldstrokesbooks.com)

#### Just About Write

Web site:  
[www.justaboutwrite.com](http://www.justaboutwrite.com)

Nann Dunne  
Editor-in-Chief  
& Publisher

Time after time, Radclyffe's books touch the heart and fill our imaginations. *Promising Hearts* is no exception, and that is what makes this book one of her most compelling and exciting to date.

Set at the end of the bloodiest war on American soil, *Promising Hearts* by Radclyffe gives the reader what she craves most, an inspiring romance filled with more than one heroine. It picks up immediately where *Innocent Hearts* leaves off. It is 1866 in the Montana territory, and Kate Beecher is now living with Jessie Forbes on her ranch outside of New Hope. Mae is still the town's madam, attending to her girls. Dr. Vance Phelps is added to this trio, having just arrived from Philadelphia after spending three of the last four years on the front lines of the Civil War.

Radclyffe's prose persuades the reader to believe in her characters. It doesn't matter whether it is 1866 Montana or 2006 Philadelphia, their stories are realistic, fascinating, and have us hanging onto every word. She has an intuitive sense of who her characters are and does not hesitate to share that with us. In *Promising Hearts*, Vance is battle weary, aloof and broken. She watched her best friend and colleague die on the battlefield during the last days of the war and could not save him because of her own injuries. She travels to Montana to forget the destruction and to possibly salvage her career. She surely does not expect to find much more until she meets the town's madam, Mae, a woman with integrity and a heart of gold. This brave and honorable woman is also alone, fighting the day to day battles of a frontier brothel, until Vance steps into her life. The two seem an unlikely coupling, but through Radclyffe's astute storytelling, we come to understand their similarities and what makes them kindred spirits.

With many romances to choose from each month, *Promising Hearts* is an easy choice. Radclyffe grasps the language of love, its subtleties as well as its potency. With minimal words and a clear strong voice, she captures the emotions of her characters perfectly, and we can imagine the moment. Her restraint fuels the story's passion. The language is authentic; the dialogue revealing. Without the detailed display of the physical aspects of lovemaking, these scenes are tender and filled with devotion and desire. A powerful exchange of love fills the pages of this story.

*Promising Hearts* is more than a western. It is more than a love story. It is a celebration of our history through fiction, making us proud that these are our stories as well.

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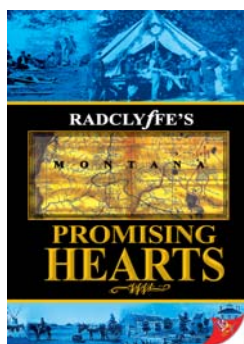
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## Book Review: December 2006

by Anna Furtado, author of *The Heart's Desire* & reviewer at [JAW](#)



### Promising Hearts

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Nann Dunne

Editor-in-Chief

& Publisher

*Promising Hearts* continues the story of some of the inhabitants of New Hope, Montana in the post-Civil War era that began in *Innocent Hearts*. The story continues as Kate Beecher, recently recovered from a near-fatal case of influenza, moves to Jessie Forbes' ranch and the two settle into a period of adjustment.

Mae, the saloon madam and a long-time friend of Jessie's, meets the new doctor in town, Vance Phelps, and is immediately smitten with her. Vance has recently arrived from the east, where she has been recuperating from the devastating injuries she received in the last great battle of the War Between the States, but her physical injuries are small when compared to the trauma to her mind and her soul...

...Vance is a dedicated doctor, who comes to New Hope to escape the pity of her family and friends. All she wants is to be left in peace to live an unfeeling life. However, Mae awakens feelings within her that she never thought she'd experience again...

...These four women overcome great odds as they work toward wholeness for themselves and in their relationships in another great tale given to us by the master of lesbian romance, Radclyffe. This sequel to *Innocent Hearts* continues the enriching experience of life in the Montana Territory as seen through the eyes of these four dynamic women. It is possible to fully enjoy *Promising Hearts* without reading the first book, but who would want to miss the whole experience? There is potential for many more stories of life in New Hope, and this reviewer can only hope that Rad has more in mind for this series. For now, though, take a trip back to the "Old" West when it was new, and lose yourself in the story of the strong, courageous women of *Promising Hearts*, another of Radclyffe's tales not to be missed.

*Excerpt of review from JustAboutWrite.com*



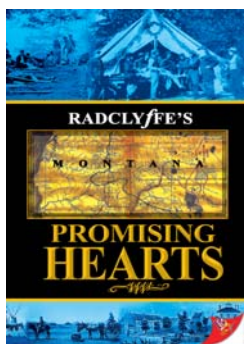
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## Book Review: July 2008

by RLYnne (reviewer at JAW)



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Editor-in-Chief

& Publisher

In *Promising Hearts* Radclyffe has returned to the frontier town of New Hope, Montana. Readers get to see how Jessie and Kate, (from *Innocent Hearts*) are faring, as well as meet an intriguing new character, Dr. Vance Phelps. Vance was severely injured in the battle at Appomattox, losing one of her arms. Coping with post-traumatic-stress syndrome, she's come to New Hope to assist the town doctor. What she finds is acceptance for her medical skill, and warmth in the arms of Mae, a prostitute who manages the girls on the second floor above the saloon.

Radclyffe has deftly and beautifully written of the romance that grows between these two characters, each of whom feels less than worthy. "Does it truly not matter what I am?" "What matters, my dearest Mae, is who you are . . . how tenderly you have taken me into your heart." " As Vance and Mae grow to love and trust, life goes on in the frontier town.

There are rustlers, bullies, and hypocrites in New Hope, along with guns and live ammunition. As Kate says, "It takes a strong will to live in this land. Most people couldn't."

*Promising Hearts* shows the growth and maturing of Jessie and Kate, as well as further developing other previously introduced characters. Radclyffe's medical expertise is there, in how Vance deals with gunshots and birthing babies. She has once again made New Hope, Montana, come alive on the pages. This is an excellent read.

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