



Big Girls Don't Cry

Brenda Novak

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Sometimes Mr. Right couldn't be more wrong...

Thanks to a devastating revelation about her husband, Reenie Holbrook's once-perfect marriage is over. For eleven years she had the life she wanted?and now it's gone.

Sometimes Mr. Wrong couldn't be more right...

Reenie decides that the first step in recovering from her ordeal is to find work; after all, she has three young children to support. She's thrilled when she lands a job at Dundee High teaching history?until Isaac Russell, the man who triggered the unraveling of her marriage, accepts a temporary position teaching science. Then she's tempted to quit. Reenie doesn't care if the whole town admires Isaac...and she won't admit that, secretly, *she* admires him, too. She doesn't want to see him or his sister in "her" town.

Big Girls Don't Cry Details

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Author : Brenda Novak

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From Reader Review Big Girls Don't Cry for online ebook

Suzanne Barrett says

Big Girls Don't Cry is one of Brenda Novak's earlier Dundee series books. I hadn't read it when it came out, but I did just recently and found it hard to put down. She creates well-drawn, realistic characters and the protagonists in Big Girls Don't Cry is no exception.

How do you live through a lie? What happens when you discover the man you love, the husband of your children, is also a husband and father to another family two states away?

When Isaac Russell finds it hard to believe how many business trips his brother-in-law makes to Phoenix and how upsetting it is to his sister Liz, Isaac decides to check into the situation, especially after he spots his brother-in-law Keith O'Connell at an airport headed to Boise, Idaho. Isaac follows, and can't believe his eyes when Keith drives an SUV to the small town of Dundee, parks in the drive of a suburban house and is warmly greeted by another woman and three kids.

Reenie Holbrook married Keith, her high school sweetheart, settled down and began a family, but for the past nine years, her husband's business travel takes him away from home two weeks out of each month. Reenie wants to buy a farm and settle down, but Keith balks. Isaac confronts Reenie with the truth about her marriage and her husband's bigamy. He's hoping Reenie is a typical "other woman", but he finds her as much a victim of the deception as his sister Liz.

When Liz discovers the truth about her marriage, she separates from Keith, who apparently is choosing Reenie over her and moving to Dundee. Liz decided to move to Idaho to allow her children access to their father and Isaac goes along to make sure his sister is protected. He doesn't plan on falling for his sister's rival.

Ms. Novak has penned a sympathetic story showing the devastating impact of an irrational act on many lives. Liz is the hardest hit because she is the outsider, and her brother's interest in Reenie seems another betrayal. It's an adult novel in that bigamy is an adult situation, but Ms. Novak creates an enjoyable story of friendship and redemption in this well-written romance. I look forward to Liz' story, The Other Woman.

Tia says

Well I wanted more drama and this book was drama guaranteed! In this story the heroine is married to a bigamist! When the hero breaks it to her, that her husband has a whole different family that he "married" after her, things change. She takes more controls of her life, divorces her creep of a husband and starts to fall in love with the hero. The catch? The hero is her husbands second wife's brother. If that isn't complicated enough, well I'm not sure what is!

Lynn Hill says

Oh how I love the Dundee, Idaho series and all the people who live there! Even the strange ones and there

are a few. You will meet them when you read this book and read it you must. Brenda I do love your books, thank you for letting me feel my emotions when I read!

Terri says

This book was a little different. It dealt with bigamy. Two women are happily married to a man and have no idea he has another happy wife and family states away. Oh, my! It's very hard to put yourself in their situation. If my husband hurt me like that, would I want him to stay in order to preserve my family and provide my children a relationship with their father? Hard to imagine. It would be a very strange and unique position to be in. The two wives definitely dealt with the situation differently at first. I'm happy to say that both characters turned out to be strong, substantial women.

I listened to the audio version of this book.

Jane Stewart says

Good story telling.

I liked the conflict and story surrounding a guy with two wives and keeping them secret from each other. Really kept my interest and hard to put down. I also liked the romance that happened later in the book.

There was some nice build-up tension toward the sex scenes.

This is book 6 in the 8 book Dundee, Idaho series. Each book can be read as a stand alone but I prefer reading them in order. Various characters have small parts in subsequent stories.

DATA:

Narrative mode: 3rd person. Story length: 304 pages. Swearing language: moderate plus the s*** word but rarely used. Sexual language: mild. Number of sex scenes: 1 ½. Setting: current day mostly Dundee, Idaho plus California. Copyright: 2005. Genre: contemporary romance.

Rebecca says

Another good book from Brenda Novak.

Once again I was transported to Dundee. I like the town and the characters. I like Reenie and Issac. SPOILERS!! I liked that the relationship took time considering her marriage ended at the beginning of the book. I hate when animals die in books and movies. There should be warnings about it.

Vintage says

AAAAARRRRGGGGGGGHHHHHHHHH!!!!

FFFFUUUUUCCCCCKKKKKKKKK!

Brenda Novak ties with Penny Jordan in making her heroineS SUFFER!

I can't even go into the plot except for BIGAMY, BIGAMY, BIGAMY!

The heroines', yes plural, ex is without a doubt one of the worst assholes in fictiondom. Why I wasted time on this book as well as the sequel when I could be reading much more fun trash, I do not know. I was on chapter 3 *Oy vey, to compound my stupid romance fest, I am watching The Bachelorette. Bummer. Boo fucking hoo.* when I decided to check the author. Yep, it's Brenda Novak. Brenda Novak puts her characters though the ringer. Well, her female characters for the most part.

Uh oh, crying bachelor alert. Not only did someone NOT get a final rose from Jojo, but someone tossed their man-card under the limo. Jojo is monologuing as is the ditched bach.

PLEASE DON'T READ IF YOU WANT SURPRISES.

Husband in the middle wants wife #1, but once he figures out she won't take him back decides to settle for wife #2. What a guy. Husband # 1 is without a doubt the worst ass-hat off all time. He is not only willing to ditch wife #2 for wife #1 but his kids from wife #2. No coming back from that.

Wife # 1 ends up falling for wife #2's brother.

And a dog dies.

Sara says

[You had a man with two families in two different states. There was no way that anything romantic can come out of that (hide spoiler)]

Linda says

For a Harlequin this was a pleasant afternoon of reading. Too bad I didn't have the insight to know beforehand that this was book #6 in the Dundee, Idaho series. I think it would be best if you try to read them in order.

A Baby of Her Own #1
A Husband of Her Own #2
A Family of Her Own #3
A Home of Her Own #4
A Stranger in Town #5
Big Girls Don't Cry #6
The Other Woman #7
Coulda Been a Cowboy #8

Keith has a wonderful loving wife Reenie, two kids and a home in the country. So why then does he mess around with Elizabeth and get her pregnant? Oh, and he never tells her he is currently married. His logic is

that he'll marry her also, have another child and buy another house. Of course, now he is stressed and it affects both marriages. For such a smart man he is one brick shy of a load.

Isaac, Elizabeth's brother, suspects that there is something wrong with Keith and he intends on finding out what it is. So he heads to Dundee, ID, thinking that the 'Other Woman' is no good. He soon finds out that not only is Reenie sweet, kind and Keith doesn't deserve her but his sister is the Other Woman. The story builds from there.

This book had me feeling sorry for both women- they each loved Keith so much and neither suspected that he was a bigamist. If nothing else, I was happy that Reenie and Isaac found each other.

Everydayreader1 says

Reenie's marriage is over, thanks to the reckless actions of her husband. And Elizabeth's marriage is over, thanks to the reckless actions of the same man. Now, they have to begin to rebuild their lives, if for no other reason, for the sake of their children. But it isn't so easy, especially in a small town, where everyone knows everyone.

This is a great story. It has so many elements; drama; raw emotion; courage; betrayal; family bonds; and romance. I began the Series with this book, but plan to read the other books as well.

Camille Adams says

This was great. And the beginning - Keith, the bigamist's, character illumination really, really spoke to me. It was needed insight at a needed time. Well done.

Liz irked me in the beginning, but by the end I began to see her a little more compassionately alongside Reeny's evolving understanding of her, as well. I'd actually like to read her story and see if she gets together with Dave.

My concerns with the story:

1. the very, very annoying exoticisation of Africa, which by the way is a continent and not a country so the constant reference to it as this one mystical place was part of the problem.
 2. I'm not totally convince Isaac might not miss his field work. I'm skeptical of him readily icing up his passions, though I do believe love and family and community trumps all.
 3. Why didn't anyone have cell phones?
-

Tina says

Oooh, child. If I were a character in this book, I'd be gossiping about and waiting to hear gossip about these

people every day.

In L.A. we have Isaac Russell and his sister Liz O'Connell. Liz is married to Keith a software developer who travels a lot.

In Dundee, ID we have Reenie O'Connell. Coincidentally, Reenie is also married to a guy named Keith. A software developer. Who travels a lot.

Isaac gets his first tickle of suspicion that something in the milk ain't white when Keith seems oblivious about a big accident in Sacramento where he was supposed to be last week. Isaac gets another tickle of suspicion weeks later when he sees Keith in a place where Keith isn't supposed to be. Isaac follows his spidey senses and discovers Keith's duplicitous life.

Isaac blows up everything in rather spectacular fashion. Reenie finds out her husband is married to another woman and has two kids with her, while Liz finds out she is the second wife and Keith's has three other kids with Reenie! Damn. So this book was messy in a good way.

I was really surprised to find out that this was a Harlequin super romance originally. It had such a women's fict feel since Isaac, Liz, Reenie and Keith all get POVs and so much of the bigamy drama takes center stage as a family issue rather than as a backdrop to romance.

I felt bad for Liz because well, I don't think she was treated well by Keith. But then she made a baller move that surprised me (and made me kinda cringe). But, like I said, this book is messy. And Liz is getting the sequel so they had to set the stage.

One thing I was amazed at was how civilized everyone seemed to be in the end. The five kids didn't act out. Reenie and Liz didn't pull out each others' hair and Keith, although as asshole, wasn't completely vilified.

Even though I liked the soap opera aspects of this book and all the fodder for dishy gossip on this convoluted family, I think it could have gone deeper, been a bit more emotional and fleshed out some of the reactions of the supporting players a bit. For instance, I found it puzzling that Keith's parents (who did not know of Liz's or their other two grandkids' existence) seemed to have no interaction with Liz or her kids. You'd think people who just found out they have two grandkids they never knew about would make some noise about that. But other than the revelation scene, they are curiously absent. I wonder if that'll be addressed in Liz's book (the next one up)?

I guess the fact that this is a HQ romance is the reason why the author couldn't go deeper and get stronger, more emotional beats from the characters.

Notice, I don't talk about the romance much -- between Isaac and Reenie. That is because it feels a little superfluous to all the drama. It doesn't really kick into high gear til about the last third of the book. It was ok but not what I felt was the strength of the story.

Brenda Novak is hit or miss for me but this one worked. I didn't read any of the previous books and didn't feel like I missed anything, but I will most def read the follow up and see Liz get her HEA.

Listened on audio and and Andi Arndt did a great job with narration.

Jacqueline says

Middle of the road read from BN. I typically enjoy her stuff and this one was pleasant. There wasn't a whole lot of romance. In fact this felt much more like something that came from the general/women's fiction shelf than a romance although of course there was a completed love story. It just took second place to the whole trauma of the bigamy. I am interested in reading the other wife's story though.

Kathleen Booker says

Reenie is happily married to Keith and have three beautiful little girls in Dundee.

Liz is happily married to Keith and has two children also in L A Cal.

Keith is happily married to both Reenie and Liz and flies from one home to the other without either one of them suspecting anything.

Liz's brother starts to suspect and follows Keith to Dundee and meets Reenie.

Keith has to go back to LA early and finds out that Issac is in Dundee and leaves Liz to go back to Reenie only to have both women reject him. I would have had him castrated if I had been either one of the wives but I guess that would not be very nice.

Liz, Issac and the kids move to Dundee to be near Keith and Issac falls in love with Reenie.

Keith thinks Reenie should take him back I can't believe him he acts like he is the wronged party.

I hope Liz finds a good man and is able to be happy.

Melissa says

Seventy percent of this book deals with Keith's losing control of his bigamy, the revelation of said bigamy, and the fall out from the dissolution of both marriages. I could not stop reading this totally bonkers part of the story, even though I hated Keith with the fire of a thousand suns and I wasn't connected to Reenie (wife #1) or Liz (wife #2) or Isaac (brother of Liz and the one to discover Keith's secret). Seriously, engrossing in a very soap opera sort of way.

After the last two Novak books I read, I knew going in that this book would include some off-the-wall family dynamics. Liz and Isaac lost their mother in childhood and lived unhappily with their dad and emotionally and verbally abusive step-mom for the rest of their childhood. Isaac went to university, becoming a PhD in biology and working to save the forest elephants of Africa; Liz became a flight attendant, which is how she met Keith, who had already been married to Rena (Reenie as a nickname - and can I say how much I hated this name!) for about 3 years. Rena and Keith live a lower middle class/upper working class lifestyle in the small town of Dundee, ID (about a hour from Boise). Keith's software company had moved headquarters to Los Angeles, so he had to commute every two weeks. Liz got pregnant and Keith married her and settled in LA, leaving for Dundee every two weeks to spend time with Rena and their three daughters.

At the beginning of the book, Rena had been married to Keith for 11 years and Liz had been married to Keith for eight years (and had a second child). Liz and Keith lived an upper class life, with a big house, part time nanny, and a membership to the country club. Keith was struggling to keep both families going and was stressing about someone finding out his secret. Isaac had just returned from Africa and was visiting his sister, when he was called back to his home base of Chicago as Keith was supposedly heading to Phoenix for a business trip; Isaac ended up following Keith through the airport and both landed in Dundee. Isaac started to investigate Keith and the small town and discovered his secret. A phone call home to Liz over heard by Rena

brought Keith's secret to light.

Keith, grade A+ asshole he was, quickly dropped his second family to rush home to Rena and the girls in the hope of rescuing his first family; he left his daughter at gymnastics class with another dad and didn't explain his departure or talked to his son before leaving. Liz would not go quietly into the night and on a whim, decided to move herself, Isaac, and the kids to Dundee. Through plot manipulations, the town found out about the bigamy and the kids of both women found themselves with half-siblings. When Rena decided to go through with the divorce, Keith decided to try (half-heartedly) to make up with Liz, who had begun deepening a relationship with her tennis coach from the country club back in LA through long phone conversations. Liz decides to annul her marriage to Keith, leaving him out in the cold (couldn't happen to a nicer guy). In the end, Rena and Liz form a friendship and the kids grow into a strong friendship with each other, leaving Keith out in the cold again.

In a twist, Rena tries a short term affair with Isaac that blossomed into love complete with a marriage proposal. That was the other 30% of the book and I didn't buy it for a damn nanosecond. It was a slog to get through and included the death of a family pet (due to cancer), because heroines in Novak's books have to suffer heaps of terrible circumstances. The romance killed this book for me, enough to only rate it 1.5 - 2 stars.
