



Redesigning Emma

Diane Owens Prettyman

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Redesigning Emma transports us to the turn of the last century when Five Points gang leader held sway with the criminal element, Emily Post hosted the absurdly wealthy, and the mentally ill were shuttled into archaic asylums. This novel brings an entire era to life. Most vividly it shows us the world of one visionary milliner on the Manhattan Ladies' mile--a spunky, generous-hearted young woman who is torn between her desire for success, her involvement with the 1899 newsboys' strike and two very intriguing men.

Redesigning Emma Details

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Author : Diane Owens Prettyman

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From Reader Review Redesigning Emma for online ebook

Jackie says

an enjoyable read

J says

I won this in a Goodreads Giveaway.

This novel does not bring "an entire era to life."

Jan says

Nice change of pace - a woman not willing to compromise with her position or direction in life. Emma forges ahead on a singular path until she meets Guy who has direction of his own and is willing to following it too. Odd that the feminine character would turn inward when her male counter-part leaves to follow his dream to the West, after all, doesn't she have a dream too? Why would someone so much a feminist be so put off because she's likes someone who goes after what he wants in life? Full of conflicting points and counterpoints, the story is a swift read and the historical tidbits of the story are just that; this novel could have easily been twice the size simply by expounding on secondary characters and allowing the story more depth within its own time period. There was a lot going on in both lives but the story couldn't seem to hold a path when the two collided, which was unfortunate. I loved the story potential and I hope to see more character development in a second book.

June Morgan says

I thoroughly enjoyed this book about the turn of the century New York. Prettyman tells the story of Emma, a hat maker, her brother who is tangled up in the beginnings of the mob, and the good and bad of the rich and famous.

Emma and Anne, her friend, set up this millinery show. Emma is desperately trying to get to the elite women of New York. She has visitors such as Diamond Jim, who may be rich, but whom cannot seem to break into the glass ceiling of the time. However, one person that is in the middle of the elitist life is Paul Kelly. When he wants Emma to design the attire of his sister's wedding party, the upper class ladies are astounded at Emma's talents.

Emma meets Guy, who is a person with a dream of going West to make his fortune. Although he seems to have fallen in love with Emma, he must follow his destiny. Emma also believes that it is her destiny to become New York's millinery ghur.

This book is a swift read, but fun. You doesn't have many turns where the reader has to contemplate reasons why.

Maggie says

I thought it was an okay book. Enjoyed reading it, but it wasn't a "page turner" for me. After I finished the book, I read the author's acknowledgement and found that it was based on real people from her family.

Deb says

Quick read historical fiction set in the late 2800's in New York.

Joyce Terranoa says

I like books about the 19th Century, however, this one was not as good as I expected it to be.

Alayna-Renee says

I thought this book was charming and well-written. I'm not a fan of romance, but I do like historical fiction, and this had enough of the latter to keep me entertained. I also like strong female characters, and the main character appealed to my independent, feminist viewpoints. I did wish that more character development had been done with characters other than Emma; perhaps more back story about the mob, the political climate at the time, and Philip would have made that aspect of the story come to life.

I'd have rated this book more highly, but I'm a stickler for grammar and proper punctuation. It would have had a solid 3.5 rating from me (my typical average), but this book needed an editor. For instance, the habit of not using a comma after someone's name became downright frustrating. The story itself, however, was a surprisingly good one. If the author had worked with a larger team of people to develop and edit it, it would far surpass much of what you see in the "romance" genre and appeal to a larger market.

I also didn't care for the title. In a very pro-feminist work, "Redesigning Emma" made it sound as if the protagonist were simply to be broken down and re-trained into becoming someone new by one or both of the male characters. I understand the title likely comes from the scene where Emma wins notoriety by redesigning a wedding dress and veil on the bride's wedding day, but it is ambiguous.

I'd recommend this to those who like historical fiction, biographies, and learning about other time periods. Perhaps the most fascinating aspect of the story is that the main character is someone in the author's family tree, and great care and research put into this. I'd love to see the story edited, perhaps expanded, and re-published at some point in time. It is an enjoyable, light romance...but it has the potential to be so much more.

Smith Family says

I put this on my "read" list but I'm sorry to say that's not really true. I only got to ch. 12. It started great, Emma had quite a personality. Guy I felt a little under-done, but maybe that was just because I was hoping that he would have more of a sense of humor. Anyway, the historical points were great, didn't know the newsboys went through so much in New York. Definitely a bit of history I'm going to look up. The thing I didn't like about it was Guy and his lustful feelings and actions. It really wasn't needed. It would have been a great book if it hadn't been for that.
