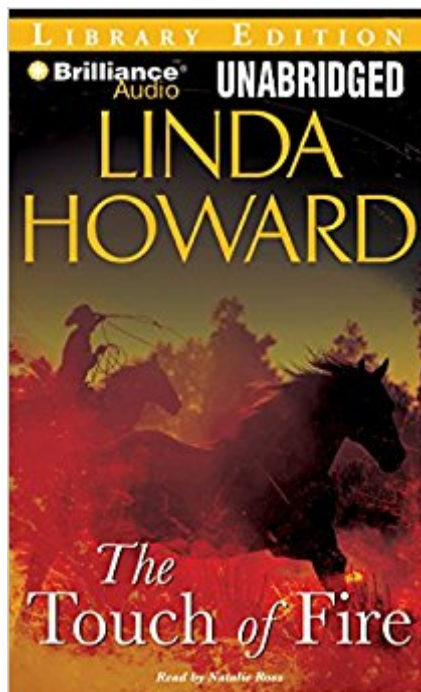


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# The Touch Of Fire



## Synopsis

Rafe McCay has a bullet in his side and a bounty hunter on his tail. Since there are few doctors in the Arizona Territory, he takes what he can get—literally. Pointing a gun at Dr. Annie Parker, he abducts her into the mountains so she can tend his wounds. In this dangerous wilderness world, Rafe awakens in Annie a woman's hungry desire, as Annie finds a man wounded in soul as well as body. Her healing touch brings him new hope, but the secrets of the past still pursue them. The exhilarating journey they must take together teaches both the true meaning of danger—and of enduring love.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

After four years on the run, outlaw Rafferty (Rafe) McCay's face wears "the remote expression of a man who had seen and caused so much death that it no longer touched him." Annie Parker is the lone doctor in boomtown Silver Mesa, a woman with a "worn, weary look" but with "softness in her brown eyes" and healing magic in her hands. An unlikely pair could not be found, yet fate and a gunshot wound throw them together in Howard's ( *Angel Creek* ) new novel, set in Arizona territory in the 1870s . When Rafe forces Annie to come along and tend his gunshot wound, what begins as a kidnapping flowers into passion and love, but Howard's set-up is so obvious that her protagonists' coupling--the only real touch of fire in this book--is never really in doubt. Minimal tension provided by several run-ins with bounty hunters leads to the maximal tension of myriad graphic sexual encounters. Slowed down by redundancy and verbosity, Howard's tale wends its way cross-country towards its rather inevitable happy conclusion, with one truly moving segment wherein Rafe and

Annie risk their lives to treat a settlement of seriously ill Apaches. Copyright 1992 Reed Business Information, Inc. --This text refers to the Audible Audio Edition edition.

Linda Howard is the award-winning author of many New York Times bestsellers, including Drop Dead Gorgeous, Cover of Night, Killing Time, To Die For, Kiss Me While I Sleep, Cry No More, Dying to Please, Open Season, Mr. Perfect, All the Queen's Men, Now You See Her, Kill and Tell, and Son of the Morning. She lives in Alabama with her husband and two golden retrievers.

I loved this book. It is one of my favorite by Linda Howard. This is her old school type books I love. Hero was just the best of the best. I fell in love with him as story progressed. Heroine was just sweet as can be. This is one epic love story that is a must read.\*\*\*\*\*CAUTION POSSIBLE SPOILERS AHEAD> PLEASE STOP NOW IF YOU DON'T WANT READ ANY

SPOILERS>THANKS\*\*\*\*\*The hero is a veteran that lost his whole family in the Civil War. Worst was that he is being framed for a murder he did not commit. The bad guys have set up a bounty for his head to get their hands on some incriminating evidence the hero has. He got this evidence from the man he is being framed for allegedly killing. (If you want to know what this evidence is you will have to read the book. It is mind blowing.) The hero has been through hell and back just to keep alive and has managed to stay a step ahead of those wanting to collect the bounty on his head. I admire the fact he never gave up and gives as much as he gets. So the story starts with the hero getting hurt in a shootout with an unscrupulous bounty hunter. He is in need of medical help and finds a female doctor that can help him. At first look he doesn't give her much notice, but the second she touches him he feels an instant heat from her touch that catches his attention. He is on death's door but amazed he has a hard on. He has never felt this before and finds it addictive. The touch has a supernatural element to it and appears to provide some type of pull that the hero finds heals him both physically and emotionally. He kidnaps her and takes her to a deserted cabin while he heals. He drags returning her home as promised so they would be snowed in for a while. He is so drawn to her touch that he sets out to seduce her. The seduction is not pretty but everything you would expect from a strong, hard, intense man. He starts to fall for the heroine and doesn't want to let her go, unfortunately he lets his guard down and in the process puts their lives in danger. Can't blame him since he can't seem to want to give up the heroine. It is during this event that the hero closes himself off to stop himself from feeling the pain of having to leave the heroine behind. However, she does not make it easy for him to leave her and the hero rationalizes a decision to keep her with him. Instantly he feels relief at

the fact he will not have to be separated from her. This is when you know he is totally in love with her, like head over heels. They make a run for it to Mexico and along the way are in a shootout with some bandits and stop to save a band of Native American's from an unknown disease. These stops get them captured by a marshal out looking for the hero. This is a turning point in the book because the marshal has a good reputation of being hard himself but fair. (Should point out the marshal also has his own sad story of why he even became a marshal.) So the heroine makes a plea for the hero's life and the marshal decides he will give the hero a chance to prove himself. They travel back to where it all started for the hero. The hero is tired of running and wants to clear his name because he wants to make a life with the heroine. He realizes the marshal might be his best chance at clearing his name. I honestly don't think the hero's priority was in clearing his name for himself, since he tried before and failed, but instead it was in being able to claim the heroine without fear of them being separated. The marshal and hero together make an awesome team. The marshal takes a while to trust the hero but he proves himself after an incident that leads to the hero saving the marshal's life. The ending was great and the epilogue was so sweet. People might have seen the hero as hard on the heroine and treated her bad. However, you have to understand what type of hero you are dealing with and the terrible life he was leading before he met the heroine. This man fought in the Civil War and was in a team of gorilla gunfighters. He lost his whole family in this war. He saw the worst the war had to offer a soldier. And for what? He finds out devastating news about the war itself that in bitters him. Worst, what thanks does he get after losing everything he loved in the war? Nothing and instead is hunted like an animal for years. All these experiences have made him the omega of alphas. He fears nothing until he meets the heroine. He is hard. He is Clint Eastwood western heroes on steroids. He is Chuck Norris's father. I mean are you getting it yet? So he might not treat the heroine with roses and sonnets at first, but believe me he goes beyond that as the story progresses. On the other hand, you have the heroine who is sweet and caring. She is trained in a world meant only for men to become a doctor like her father. She has been overlooked all her life but yet pushed hard to prove herself and follow her passion. When these two get together you see how they are perfect for each other. Her beauty is within, and even the hero doesn't appreciate her at first glance, but comes to see her true beauty. Yes, at the beginning the hero is hard on her, but I saw someone desperate for human warmth and stripped of civility in order to survive reaching out for a piece of heaven in the heroine's arms. Even he says he can't remember how he was before he was hunted like an animal. I thought of it like a wild dog, beaten down by life, meeting an owner that showed him kindness and care in an otherwise

miserable life. Yes, I felt the heroine did more than heal him.... she tamed him and brought him back to civility, to humanity. It takes a bit of time for his love to grow but when it does he falls hard. He seems to breathe and live for the heroine as the story progresses. He even rationalizes that everything he has been through, and it has been hell, was meant to be so he could find his sweet Annie. How crazy is that?!?! The heroine blossoms under his love. She is those sweet type of girls that doesn't want to bother anybody or hurt anybody, and tries to please those around her. That is why sometimes she appears as a doormat but to me it went with her caring character. Not every heroine is going to be all tough as nails, don't mess with me types. No the hero needed the heroine just the way she was. He needed her just the way she was to heal the frost that has taken over his soul. It was beautiful written and I bought it on Kindle, even though I have the hard copy, so I can re-read again. I just loved this story and how devoted the hero becomes towards the heroine. He will not be parted from "his Annie" . Highly recommend this read.

Linda Howard was the first romance author I read & I've read a large number of her books. Annie, the heroine in this book is very sweet & caring. She's a pioneer of her time being a female doctor but she lacks the fire/spunk/attitude of some other of Howard's heroines such as Maddie in Duncan's Bride or Jillian in Heart of Fire or Dee in Angel Creek. Having said that I still liked Annie because she was smart & didn't whinge & didn't play coy games. Rafe was a tough survivor (had to be given his experiences) but at least he wasn't so cynical that he treated Annie poorly. He was actually very considerate, loving & protective of her. This was a sweet story with a bit of intrigue surrounding Rafe's past. There wasn't any snappy dialogue or humour like Heart of Fire & no deal-breaking misunderstanding or conflict between the hero & heroine like Lady of the West or Angel Creek but I would recommend this book especially for Howard fans. Much better than her newer stuff some of which is truly awful such as Ice

I was never a "Western" fan but this book is definitely a Western/Romance....and it may be my favorite book of all time. There is a very handsome and dangerous outlaw (who's not actually an outlaw), a plain, worn down young woman (who's not really plain or worn down) and a truly great plot! What's not to love? A few years after the Civil War, Rafe McCay finds himself in a small mining town with a bullet wound that needs attention. It was put there by the latest bounty hunter to track him for the \$10,000.00 reward on his head. Dr Annie Parker is Silver Mesa's doctor, not because she wants to be but because she wants to practice medicine and as a woman doctor, her choices are few. At twenty nine, she considers herself an old maid and since she lost her physician father,

she is all alone in the world. Rafe doesn't yet see her beauty but he feels it because she has a healing touch and he doesn't want to let it or her go. He takes her with him when he rides out of Silver Mesa. Of course, the plot thickens when they fall in love and when another bounty hunter finds them and then, when Annie finally learns why Rafe has been running for his life for four years. The story involves the politics of the Civil War and a very famous tycoon back east who would be branded a traitor if certain documents were ever uncovered. Of course, there's only one man who knows where they are....Rafe McCay. This is Linda Howard at her best!

I really liked this book. Historical romances aren't my favorite, but the characters were well-developed and the story was interesting and suspenseful. There were some terms that were used that I didn't understand and couldn't find in a common dictionary, and I thought some of the development of the relationship was slightly unrealistic or unbelievable. All in all, though, I really enjoyed the book and would read it again.

The story begins in 1871 with Rafe on the run from bounty hunters. He is shot and goes to a doctor's home where Dr. Annie Parker treats his wounds. She tells him his wounds will need medical care for three days, so he kidnaps her to keep her with him while on the run. Most of the story happens while they are on the run together. There are some neat things happening toward the end of the book. The ending was great. AUDIOBOOK NARRATOR: Natalie Ross did a great job. DATA: Narrative mode: 3rd person. Story length: 312 pages. Swearing language: moderate plus s\*\*\* a few times. Sexual language: moderate. Number of sex scenes: eleven. Setting: 1871 Arizona. Copyright: 1992. Genre: historical western romance.

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