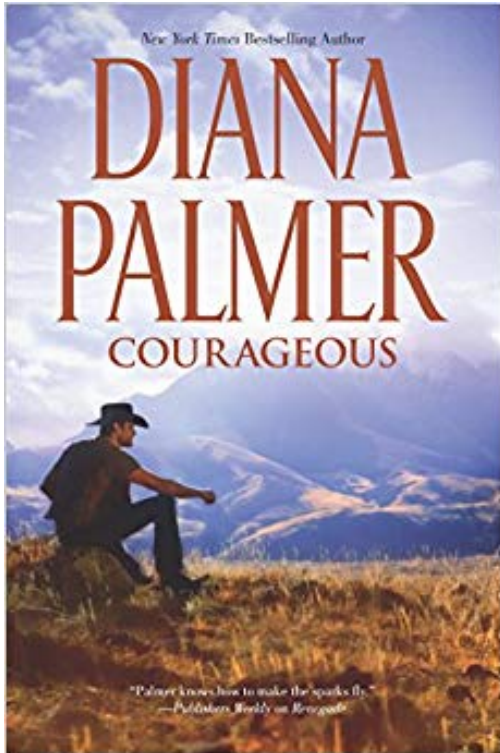


Courageous *by* Diana Palmer



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The life of a paid mercenary makes sense to Special Forces Officer Winslow Grange. The jungles of South America may make his former job as a ranch manager for his friend Jay Pendleton look like a cakewalk, but it's nothing that the former Green Beret can't handle. A woman's heart, however, that's dangerous territory. Back in Texas, Grange's biggest problem was avoiding Peg Larson and all the complications being attracted to the daughter of his foreman would entail. Now Grange will need all his training to help General Emilio Machado gain control of the tiny South American nation of Barrera; when Peg arrives unannounced, she's a distraction he can't avoid. She's determined to show Grange she can be useful on and off the battlefield. Once she breaks through his armor, traversing the wilds of the Amazon will prove an easier task than defending himself against her winning charms.



Reviews of the *Courageous* *by* Diana Palmer

misery

To reward former Special Forces Major Winslow Grange for leading the rescue of his kidnapped wife Gracie, billionaire Jason Pendleton gave him a ranch near Comanche Wells, Texas. Winslow hires Ed Larson as his foreman and the man's daughter Peg as his housekeeper. However, Winslow spends a lot of his time on causes he believes in, but when home he avoids his attraction to Peg who loves him.

His current mission is to help General Emilio Machado regain leadership of Barrera, a tiny nation in the Amazon rainforest. While he is in South America, Peg fears for his life. Photojournalist Clarisse Covington arrives at the ranch and tells her that she just saw Grange and he wants to see her. With Clarisse paying for her flight, Peg travels with the reporter to Barrera where her actions place the women in peril and jeopardize the liberation operation.

The two women are stereotypical of the good and bad girl respectively; while Grange is a unique hero who adheres to his values though it would have helped to better understand his motives with whom and what influenced him in his past. The prime romance is slow to develop while ironically the storyline is at its best when Clarisse and deadly mercenary Roarke are the lead. Diehard fans of Diana Palmer's *Jacobsville* tales (see *Renegade*) will enjoy this entry.

Harriet Klausner

World

I have been a Diana Palmer fan for the past sixteen years, ever since I read my first book by her when I was sixteen. Whether she was writing historical, or modern Texas cowboy romances I was always willing to shell out the money for her latest release, without even reading the book blurb. That has slowly begun to change the last four or five years. Oh, I still buy them but I'm just a bit hesitant, and after reading a couple of reviews on *Courageous*, I decided to borrow it from the library first. Best decision ever!

Courageous is a complete mess. The characters are stereotypes of Diana Palmer characters (Yes, stereotypes of stereotypes of perfect people). There is nothing new in this book other than an epilogue which she rarely includes. So let me break it down.

Peg: shy, quiet, sheltered, virgin, just out of her teens, poor, has 'out of date moral beliefs', cooks and cleans house for a living which she loves to do, mother is dead, lives with father who is as out of date as she is, loves to garden, archeology and reading about ancient history, loves the hero who seems unattainable, thinks wearing her hair in pigtails will make her unattractive to the men she is not interested in, favorite quotes include "Good heavens", "Oh, my goodness", "Gosh, you're...big", and my top quote, "I couldn't believe you really wanted me for keeps. I'm not even pretty. And I'm small, here.(she then proceeds to indicate her 'pert' breasts)"

Hmmm she reminds me of another character, now who was it? Oh yes it was Grace/Winnie/Joceline/Gracie/Rebecca.

Grange: strong and silent, virgin (yes, because his father was a minister), out raged by women flaunting their bodies and at the suggestion of premarital sex, handsome yet not traditionally, gruff, initially ignores heroine, loves history, is a rancher/mercenary on a secret mission (that EVERYBODY and their dog knows about) favorite quotes include "Damn you", "You taste like candy", "I could pull the bodice down", and my top Grange quote is "I lost it, there at the end. I didn't hurt you too much...?"

This book is just completely out of touch. the dialogue is formal, stilted and wrought with vocabulary that no one outside of out of touch books uses, there is the typical Palmer dump of irrelevant historical facts, There is also the constant mention of previous characters that while they do not appear are named, with a mine bio during dialogue, such as "I guess I'm getting contaminated by Barbara Ferguson who owns Barbara's Cafe..." or "he was taking Tellie Madoox out for a while, before she married J.B. Hammock, but they were only friends.." "That was such a sweet thing our local designer, Bess Truman, did (about something that happened in a different book). but the real issue I had is that the two main characters Peg and Grange are barely together. Their whole falling in love phase occurs in the first four chapters, and then he's off on his mission and they don't meet back up into about two thirds of the way into the story. Both of them have more time with other characters than each other.

I really hope that Palmer pulls out what ever magic she had going for her when she wrote *Paper Rose*, *Diamond Spur*, *Midnight Rider*, and some of the first *Long, Tall, Texans*.

TheSuspect

Twenty years ago, Diana's simply western tales were very enjoyable. She kept them simple and they seemed to work. Now her grand plan is to link as many characters from one book to unattached characters who are single, with the idea of hooking up the spare people into their own book in the future. The problem is that the people she writes about are so generic that you forget the book you're reading. She has also decided to write about complex "covert operations" where small town ranchers and lawmen and other miscellaneous people introduced in a previous book pop up. My daughter says Jacobsville must be the safest place in Texas to live, since 98% of its male population is some sort of mercenary soldier.

This book seemed even worse than normal, and it promises one or more sequels that will also be god-awful. I think I've finally learned my lesson. No more nonsensical dialogue for me. No more innocent virgins with some sort of affliction hooking up with a crusy old gent of 30 who has a scarred face and some sort of strange dietary requirement. Insert other names in this, and drop a few dozen from other books, and you've got the first chapter of her next book.

I'll be rereading old ones from now on. I give up.

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