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The Last Woman Standing: A Novel



Synopsis

Two decades after the Civil War, Josephine Marcus, the teenage daughter of Jewish immigrants, is lured west with the promise of marriage to Johnny Behan, one of Arizona's famous lawmen. She leaves her San Francisco home to join Behan in Tombstone, Arizona, a magnet for miners (and outlaws) attracted by the silver boom. Though united by the glint of metal, Tombstone is plagued by divided loyalties: between Confederates and Unionists, Lincoln Republicans and Democrats. But when the silver-tongued Behan proves unreliable, it is legendary frontiersman Wyatt Earp who emerges as Josephine's match. As the couple's romance sparks, Behan's jealousy ignites a rivalry destined for the history books. At once an epic account of an improbable romance and a retelling of an iconic American tale, *The Last Woman Standing* recalls the famed gunfight at the O.K. Corral through the eyes of a spunky heroine who sought her happy ending in a lawless outpost "with a fierce will and an unflagging spirit."

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

First, I actually read this book from beginning to end. I have not had much luck finding good Kindle First books, especially after reading glorious write-ups from reviewers, who appear to me as not having read what they are writing about. At least I have read every page of this book and will try to give a realistic opinion. I would recommend that before you consider this book, google Josephine Earp and read the Wikipedia article about her and other books written about her. It is hard to separate fact from fiction, especially since Josephine herself worked hard at maintaining a fictional history, hiding her not-so-stellar past for her entire life, even suing those who might make a movie or

write a book about what she really was. Having a little background from a google search will help you understand the characters. Based on research, Josephine Sarah Marcus Earp aka Sadie Mansfield left San Francisco in December, 1874, at the age of 14 for Prescott Arizona where she was a "sporting lady" or prostitute. While there she met Yavapai County Sheriff, Johnny Behan. Johnny's wife filed for divorce in 1875 complaining that Behan "openly and notoriously visited houses of ill-fame and prostitution at said town of Prescott." After the divorce, "Sadie" becomes Behan's common-law wife. In 1881, she leaves Behan for the Deputy Sheriff in Tombstone, Wyatt Earp, whom she lived with for the rest of his life. However, in real life, Josephine, aka Sadie, spins the story that she did not come to Arizona until 1879, when she was 19. She vehemently hides her true past. It does not come as a surprise to me that the real Josephine lived her life with two well-known men in law enforcement.

I chose this book as my Kindle First selection this month for a couple of reasons. First, because I have read another work by Thelma Adams called "Playdate" see here: [Playdate ...](#) and second, because I am an avid reader of historical fiction... particularly early American. This book hits both of those qualifications. Thelma Adams is best known for her work around the NY scene, particularly the film scene. She writes (and has written..) for many publications including the NY Post and has chaired the Film Critics Circle. Because of her penchant for writing for publication, you expect that her work should be clean and well edited.... and it is. It is a very welcome relief to find a novel that is exciting and interesting as well as exceedingly well written. There are a few tiny errors (but just a FEW!!), but truthfully you will probably be so absorbed in the story as to make them unnoticeable. This book is a story of a Jewish American woman in the early days of the American west. Our subject, Josephine Marcus, is a comely lass who lives with her family in San Francisco. She decides to throw it all up for a shot at love with a cowboy sheriff, Johnny Behan, from Cochise County, Arizona. Josephine leaves home when she is quite young (possibly as young as fourteen..??) and moves to Arizona where she eventually ends up in Tombstone. Her early "affair" with Johnny Behan turns out to be a mistake and she realizes it when she lays eyes on Wyatt Earp. Josephine is present during the "OK Corral" gunfight and her fate is sealed. Forever locked in a common law marriage with Earp, they stay together until he dies.

The first chapter gripped me with the mood the author set, with this first line: "Tombstone kicked my ass and I kicked back." Josephine Marcus Earp tells her story as she visits her "old town" in 1937. "I was just a woman" "a footnote" "expected to tuck my skirts under my tail and inspire

male bravery when I wasn't baking corn bread or childbearing. •The narrator's feelings are deep and expressed in new ways, through the character of a young woman who decides to forsake her Jewish home for the love of a Tombstone lawman. Looking back at age 80, she sums up: "I know the juice and I drank it." • What is her summation of all those men in her Tombstone days? They strut about and declare: "My balls are bigger than yours, my pistol shoots straighter, my horse faster, and my loving stronger. I'm old but I'm not dead yet." •Gripping first chapter that set me up imaginatively to feel the history of real people. So I expected much of this book. Chapter Two and Three go back to 1880 in Josephine's San Francisco Jewish home. I found parts jarring as the author intrudes with allusions to later times. Having set up the narrator as a sympathetic and feisty character involved with the OK Corral gang, I'd prefer straight chronological storytelling as we go back to 1880 in the second chapter and on. I like historical fiction, especially westerns such as Louis L'Amour and Zane Grey brought us. But if a writer departs too much from the historical character, then for me the credibility of the novel suffers. Sure, an author can throw in a lot of true facts and settings, but the heroes have to align with what we know about them in history as likely true. Josephine is molded into a character too far removed from the historical person she was.

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