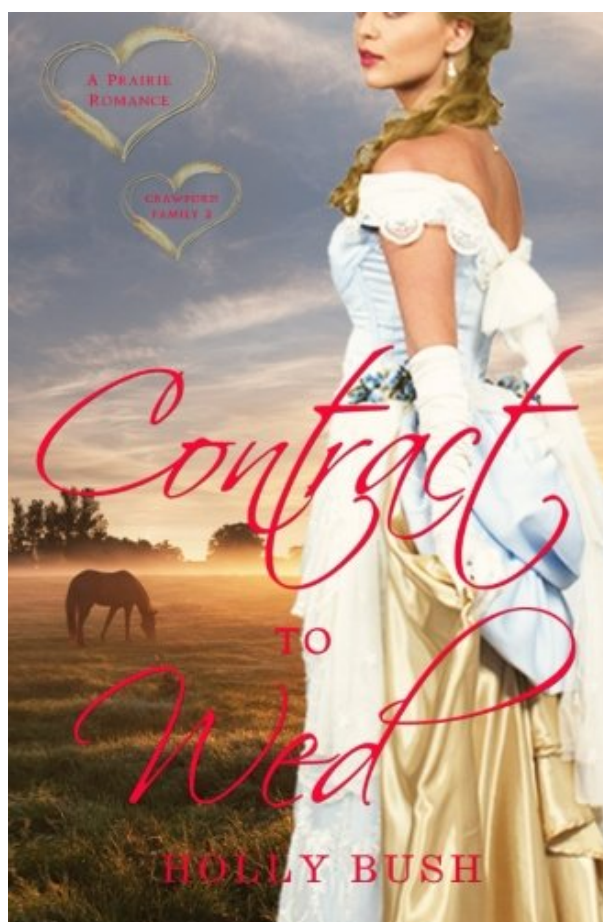
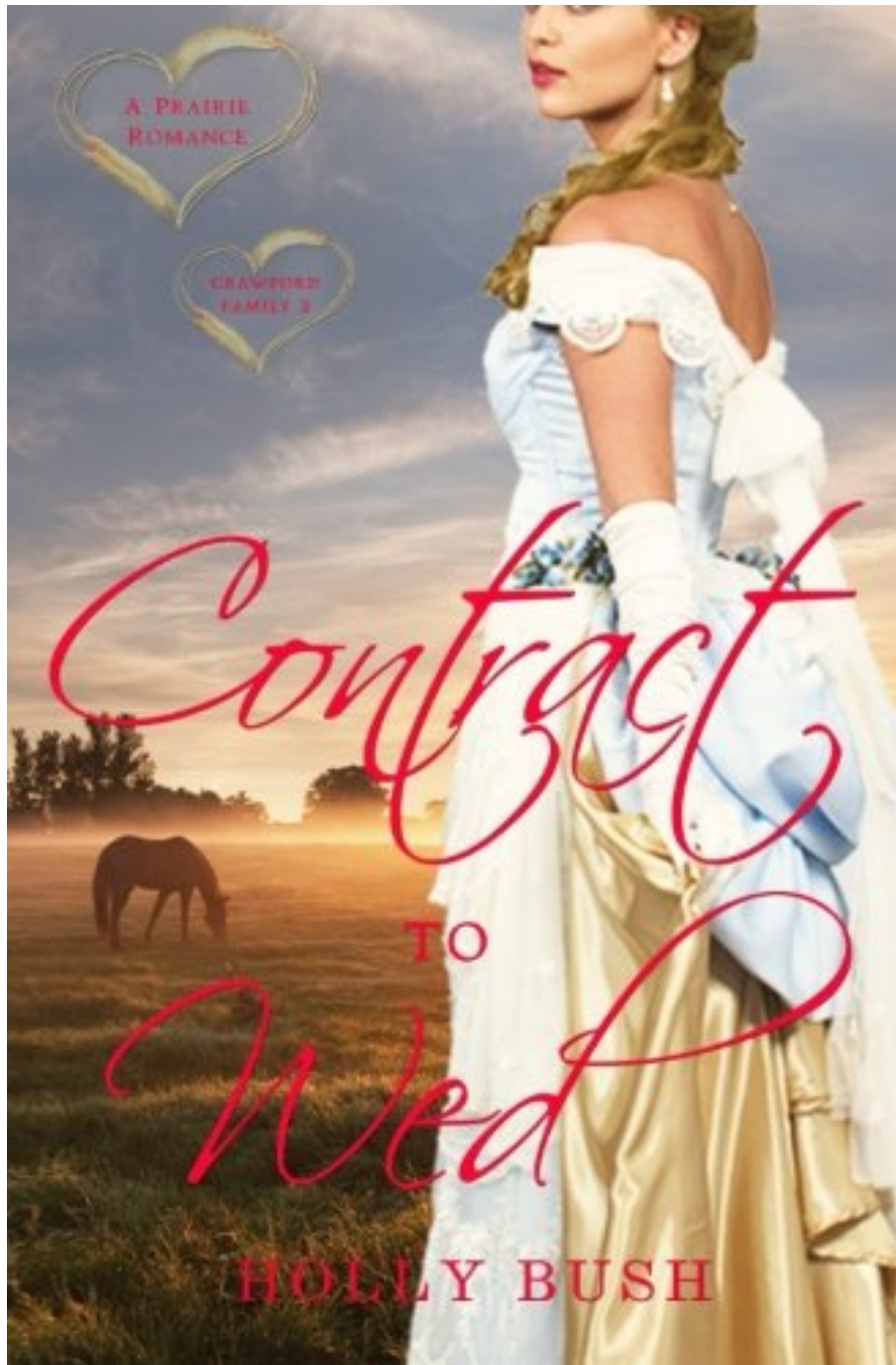


**CONTRACT TO WED: PRAIRIE ROMANCE
(CRAWFORD FAMILY) (VOLUME 2) BY
HOLLY BUSH**



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About the Author

Holly Bush writes historical romance set on the American Prairie, in Victorian England and recently released her first Women's Fiction title. Her books are described as emotional, with heartfelt, sexy romance. She makes her home with her husband in Lancaster County, Pennsylvania. Connect with Holly at www.hollybushbooks.com and on Twitter @hollybushbooks and on Facebook at Holly Bush.

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1891 . . . Jolene Crawford Crenshaw, heiress and Boston socialite, went from her family home directly to Landonmore upon her marriage, the mansion she shared with her handsome and charismatic husband. She'd never in her life worried in the slightest over anything as crass as the dollars required to maintain that home or the lifestyle she'd been born to. Her extensive yearly wardrobe, the stables and the prime horseflesh within it, even the solid silver forks and knives that graced her table, were expected and required to maintain the social standing that she'd cultivated over the years. But suddenly she was a widow with little money and just her pride and her secrets to keep her upright. Max Shelby made his fortune in oil wells and cattle, but lost the love of his life the day his wife died. Now, his happy, carefree daughter needs instruction and guidance as she grows into a young lady and his dream of becoming a Senator from his adopted state of Texas seems out of reach with few political or social connections. The right wife would solve both problems. As it happens, his sister knows of a woman, a recent widow, charming, beautiful and socially astute, but in reduced circumstances, who may want to begin again. Max signed the wedding contract sight unseen. Will Jolene be able to shed her sorrows, anger and fears to begin anew away from the censure and hidden tragedy that marred her life? Is her new husband, confident, strong and capable Max Shelby, the man, the only man, to see past her masks to find the woman beneath?

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Most helpful customer reviews

23 of 25 people found the following review helpful.

It's the money stupid

By kate476

Sorry. I'm a big Holly Bush fan but this story is just dumb. Jolene 's husband has just died and he has left most of his 50 million dollars to his out of wedlock child. Poor Jolene has to struggle by on a mere \$75000 a year. Which for her would have been a comedown it's true but how did he wind up with 50 mil. He had basically been a clerk in her father's bank when he married her. He still worked for her father. She is supposed to be pretty clever. I found it hard to believe that her father didn't have some financial restrictions

in place to protect her.

Then there is the hero who has been widowed 10 years. He wants to be a senator in Texas. He is educated and from a good Boston family but has gone to Texas and made his fortune in oil and cattle. He thinks he should get a wife for political reasons and to help make a lady out of his 12 year old tomboy daughter. So his sister suggests Jolene. Jolene is no dummy . She says she'll do it but wants 20 million dollars up front. So dumbos sends her 20 million and marries her by proxy sight unseen. Doesn't even ask for a picture. Seriously. TWENTY MILLION DOLLARS. Mind you this is in 1891. God only knows what that would be in today's dollars.

Even if Jolene had been likable. Which she isn't. Why would the H do such a thing. I don't care how busy you are you'd want to have a conversation with someone you intended to marry. Especially if your looking for a role model for your daughter. This was not some poor rancher ordering a mail order bride this was a rich Texan with more money then brains. Granted his sister recommended her but how many brothers take their sisters advice about picking a wife. Though if they did it would make holiday dinners a lot more enjoyable.

If snarky heroines who never smile or eye rolling gives you a headache you may want to skip this one.

7 of 7 people found the following review helpful.

Another Winner From Holly Bush

By Kimberly R

We first meet Jolene Crawford Crenshaw in Holly Bush's debut Crawford Family book, Train Station Bride. Jolene was the utterly mean sister to heroine Julia. How does an author take a character who was so disliked and turn her into a heroine? Well, Holly Bush knows the secret, and she does so in the second epic tale of the Crawford Family, Contract to Wed.

It's now Boston, 1891, and socialite Jolene Crawford Crenshaw has become a widow. She has already suffered loss that has made her bitter, but to be insulted further by her deceased husband's will, Jolene must make a choice, stay in Boston and be ridiculed by her malicious mother and by society, or to start over elsewhere.

Wealthy Texas Rancher, Maximilian Shelby has been a widower for sometime, his beloved wife died, leaving him with a small daughter to raise and now that the spitfire, Madeline is almost thirteen, Max needs someone to take his daughter into hand and also assist him in his political aspirations to become Senator. When his sister, Eugenia, who lives in Boston, tells him about the misfortunes that have befallen the widowed Jolene, he marries her by proxy after agreeing to a long list of demands that the irksome Jolene has sent him.

When Jolene arrives in her new town and meets her new husband for the first time, she is pleasantly surprised Max is so amiable and handsome. She is not happy, however, to find that the daughter, who she believed was of a marriageable age, to be only twelve. Jolene has no intention of being a mother again, not after suffering the terrible loss that holds heavily on her heart.

Max sees the beautiful and sophisticated, Jolene and immediately feels a twinge of attraction to her. Even after his pledge to never love again after his Melissa passed away, Max can't help but see the possibilities of growing his relationship with Jolene. But Jolene tries desperately to hold Max to a distance. She is after all, a product of the cold and demeaning Boston upbringing in the Crawford household. Nary a word of praise passed from her mother's lips in the time she spent with her parents. Then she went to her first husband's

home, discovering a betrayal that forever changed the way she felt about him. Even with his death, the joke was on her when he leaves the bulk of his millions to her sister, Julia's child, cementing the betrayal once suffered.

Now, Jolene finally has a chance to start anew, but because of her past, she can't take at face value what is right in front of her. She constantly looks for reasons to dwell on the sorrow and the loss, instead of grasping the good. Max, the ever patient husband, knows Jolene has suffered greatly, although he doesn't know all her secrets, he is willing to put his past behind him and solidify his new family. Will these star-crossed lovers find their way? Read *Contract to Wed*, by Holly Bush to find out.

Well I guess you all can gather from my review, I simply love this book. I can honestly admit that I have never been let down by one word that Holly Bush has ever written. Ms. Bush's writing is solid and fraught with emotion. Taking a much hated character and turning the tides on her is an undertaking that Holly Bush has done with success. Max and the menagerie of colorful characters in his Hacienda, makes *Contract to Wed* a story not to be missed.

6 of 6 people found the following review helpful.

Amazing transformation..

By Jonetta (Ejaygirl)

I have to admit that I wasn't looking forward to this character's story. If you read the first book, you'll know why and by the way...read that first!

Quick summary

At the end of the first book, Boston socialite Jolene was married to Turner Crenshaw and the mother of three-year old William. When this story begins, she's lost both of them, is facing a serious change in her financial situation and is trying to determine her next direction. When she learns Maxmillian Shelby, a wealthy Texas rancher and oilman, is looking for a wife to help him prepare for a political state-wide office run and is willing to pay handsomely, Jolene jumps at the opportunity.

About Jolene

Jolene is beautiful, socially skilled and exceptionally bright. What she isn't is very nice. She's aloof but polite; emotionally barren but fully attentive; and, not interested in a committed relationship with her husband but is committed to his goals. Max is at first a bit unsettled when he meets his new wife but it doesn't take him long to figure out she's been sorely damaged.

What I loved

I loved the journey Max and Jolene took for her to confront her past, accept who she really is, acknowledge her grief and reach out to those who respected and admired her, in spite of her distance. Max is pretty wonderful and his patience with her was admirable. Unraveling Jolene's past was heart-wrenching and once revealed, brought me to tears.

The bottom line

This is a really special story that transformed my opinion of a pretty unpleasant character whose true spirit rose from the ashes. The romance is wonderful, passionate and inspired. I loved this story and the set up for the next book is intriguing.

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