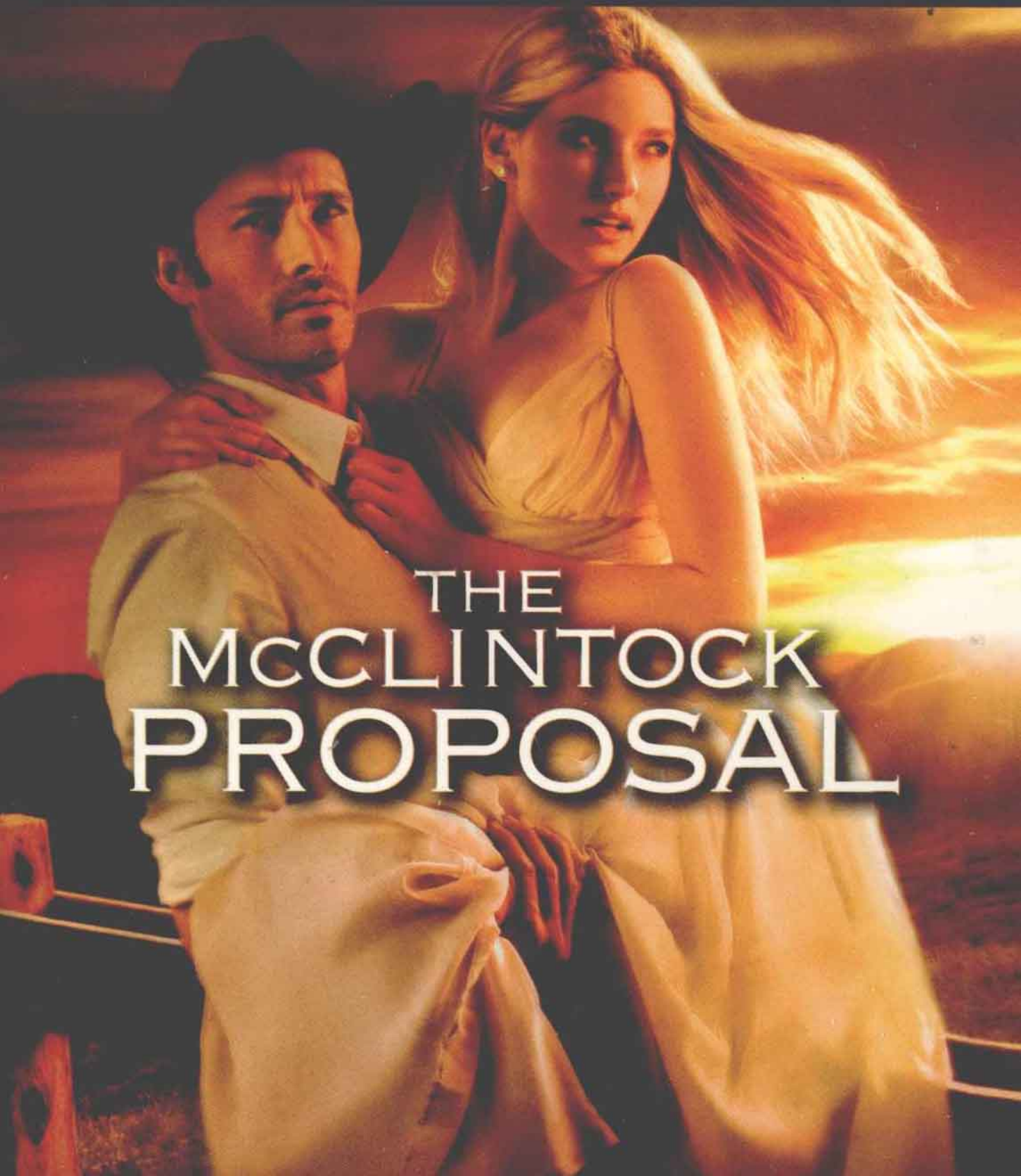




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A man in a dark cowboy hat and a woman with long blonde hair in a white dress are embracing. The man is looking off to the side with a serious expression, while the woman looks towards the camera. They are standing in front of a bright sunset or sunrise over a body of water, with the sun low on the horizon creating a strong orange glow. The scene is romantic and dramatic.

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our inspirational line, Love Inspired®.
Introducing HIS HOLIDAY BRIDE
by bestselling author Jillian Hart*

Autumn Granger gave her horse rein to slide toward the town's new sheriff.

"Hey, there." The man in a brand-new Stetson, black T-shirt, jeans and riding boots held up a hand in greeting. He stepped away from his four-wheel drive with "Sheriff" in black on the doors and waded through the grasses. "I'm new around here."

"I'm Autumn Granger."

"Nice to meet you, Miss Granger. I'm Ford Sherman, from Chicago." He knuckled back his hat, revealing the most handsome face she'd ever seen. Big blue eyes contrasted with his sun-tanned complexion.

"I'm guessing you haven't seen much open land. Out here, you've got to keep an eye on cows or they're going to tear your vehicle apart."

"What?" He whipped around. Sure enough, mammoth black-and-white creatures had started to gnaw on his four-wheel drive. They clustered like a mob, mouths and tongues and teeth bent on destruction. One cow tried to pry the wiper off the windshield, another chewed on the side mirror. Several leaned through the open window, licking the seats.

"Move along, little dogie." He didn't know the first thing about cattle.

The entire herd swiveled their heads to study him curiously. Not a single hoof shifted. The animals soon returned to chewing, licking, digging through his possessions.

Autumn laughed, a warm and wonderful sound. "Thanks,

I needed that.” She then pulled a bag from behind her saddle and waved it at the cows. “Look what I have, guys. Cookies.”

Cows swung in her direction, and dozens of liquid brown eyes brightened with cookie hopes. As she circled the car, the cattle bounded after her. The earth shook with the force of their powerful hooves.

“Next time, you’re on your own, city boy.” She tipped her hat. The cowgirl stayed on his mind, the sweetest thing he had ever seen.

*Will Ford be able to stick it out in the country
to find out more about Autumn?
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AND USA TODAY BESTSELLING AUTHOR
DEBBIE MACOMBER

Mrs. Miracle on 34th Street...

This Christmas, Emily Merkle (just call her Mrs. Miracle) is working in the toy department at Finley's, the last family-owned department store in Manhattan.

Her boss (who happens to be the owner's son) has placed an order for a large number of high-priced robots, which he hopes will give the business a much-needed boost. In fact, Jake Finley's counting on it.

Holly Larson is counting on that robot, too. She's been looking after her eight-year-old nephew, Gabe, ever since her widowed brother was deployed overseas. Holly plans to buy Gabe a robot—which she can't afford—because she's determined to make Christmas special.

But this Christmas will be different—thanks to Mrs. Miracle. Next to bringing children joy, her favorite activity is giving romance a nudge. Fortunately, Jake and Holly are receptive to her "hints." And thanks to Mrs. Miracle, Christmas takes on new meaning for Jake. For all of them!

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THE McCLINTOCK PROPOSAL

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He would marry her and they'd each get what they wanted. Besides, people married every day for far less noble causes than saving two lives.

And when it was all over, she'd go her way. He'd go his.

Maybe fate dropped a woman in a wedding dress on the side of the road for a reason.

To hell with everything.

Dipping his head, he took possession of those sweet lips. She dropped his hands, but he hitched an arm around her waist and dragged her closer, their bodies meeting along every line. She squirmed for a few seconds, slumped against him and then shimmied out of his grasp.

“W-what are you doing?”

“I’m kissing my bride-to-be.”

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Carol Ericson lives with her husband and two sons in Southern California, home of state-of-the-art cosmetic surgery, wild freeway chases, palm trees bending in the Santa Ana winds and a million amazing stories. These stories, along with hordes of virile men and feisty women clamor for release from Carol's head. It makes for some interesting headaches until she sets them free to fulfill their destinies and her readers' fantasies. To find out more about Carol, her books and her strange headaches, please visit her Web site at www.carolericson.com, "where romance flirts with danger."

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CAST OF CHARACTERS

Callie Price—A bride on the run from her criminal fiancé, Callie sets her sights on a temperamental cowboy to rescue her and help her get control of an inheritance from her grandfather. But her simple plan becomes complicated...and dangerous.

Rod McClintock—With his ranch in trouble, Rod agrees to Callie's wild scheme to marry her, but he does so more to protect the free-spirited artist than to benefit himself.

Bobby Jingo—This small-time crook has some big-time plans, and Callie's inheritance figures prominently in his future.

Jonah Price—Unfortunately, Callie's father enjoys wine, women and gambling.

Grady Pierce—He belongs to one of Silverhill's oldest ranching families and isn't happy when Callie comes to town to claim her inheritance, an inheritance that could've fallen into his lap.

Amber Lewis—New in town, Amber seems to want to make Callie her new best friend. Is it just friendship she wants?

Dana McClintock—Rod's sister-in-law may be related to Callie by more than marriage. Callie wants to believe in family, but all hers ever gave her was grief. Will Dana be any different?

Jesse Price—The boy Callie plans to adopt needs a stable home, but Callie worries that making him her son will expose him to the danger that surrounds her.

Chapter One

The crystal beads bounced on the hardwood floor and scattered in all directions. Callie Price hung over the windowsill, her legs, tangled in silk organza, dangling toward the ground. She bicycled her legs, the toes of her white satin pumps grappling for purchase on terra firma.

She tumbled into the flowerbed, the train of her dress burying her beneath layers of white froth. Scrambling to her feet, she jumped out of the flowers, leaving one of the pumps in the moist dirt.

For a scumbag, Bobby Jingo sure liked his flowers.

She slipped off the other shoe and tossed it at its mate. She never could run in heels.

The damp grass squished beneath her feet as she backed away from the window. Then she spun around and took the corner of the house at high speed. She collided with a teenage boy, knocking the cigarette from his lips and a can of beer from his hand.

“Whoa!” He held up his empty hands, his eyes widening as his gaze swept from her veil to her bedraggled train. “Aren’t you the bride?”

Callie glanced at the red vest and pert bow tie, incongruous over a pair of black jeans and motorcycle boots. Her eyes flicked to the can on the ground, spewing foam. “Aren’t you one of the valet parking attendants?”

Shoving his hands in his pockets, the boy squared his shoulders. "C'mon, I had two sips, and I need to get paid for this gig tonight. I owe my friend some money."

"There's a lot of that going around."

"Huh?"

"Tell you what." Callie yanked off the veil and dropped it on top of the smoldering cigarette, then kicked it toward the beer. Starting a fire wouldn't be a great idea right now. "You get me some transportation out of here, and I won't tell anyone you've been drinking on the job."

The teen gulped, his Adam's apple prominent in his pencil-thin neck. "Are you kidding?"

She pointed to her feet encased in shimmering hose and the dirt-smudged train. "Do I look like I'm kidding?"

He shook his head, a smile spreading across his face. "Are you running out on the wedding?"

Real genius, this one, but he just might be her savior. "Yeah, I've got pressing business elsewhere."

"Sweet." He grabbed her arm and pulled her to the back of the house. Pointing to a beat-up motorcycle leaning precariously on its kickstand, he said, "Take it."

"Is—is it yours?" The boy sure seemed eager to part with his bike, or maybe he wanted in on the adventure.

He dug into his pocket and pulled out a key. As it dangled from his finger, it caught the light and winked at her. *No time to analyze his motives*, she knew.

She snatched the key from his hand, lifted up her skirt and rushed toward the bike. She called over her shoulder, "How do I get it back to you?"

He waved an arm. "Leave it on the side of the highway or something. It has a full tank—almost."

Reaching beneath her dress, she peeled off the silk pantyhose and hung them on a cactus. She shoved the key into the ignition and turned back toward the teenager, his