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When Weston Beaudurant's buddy, rodeo clown Cody Goode is killed in a rodeo accident -- gored by the maniacal bull Baby Face that Weston is riding, Weston is consumed with guilt. The day after the accident, while going through Cod's papers, lawyer Wynona Vasquez discovers that he had been secretly engaged to a Thai immigrant who is arriving by train that evening.

Elected by unanimous decision to be the welcoming committee, Weston arrives at the train station prepared for anything but the lovely forlorn creature he finds waiting in the rain. Though appearing waif-like, Song Phan-Rang is anything but fragile. Her mettle quickly rises to the surface in her determination to remain in Y-oh-ming.

Forced together by their circumstances, Weston and Song are explosive. Used to solitude, Weston is driven crazy by the obliging Song. But as Song shows her prowess not only as a housekeeper and cook, but as a rider and rancher as well, Weston discovers that against his best efforts (and damned if he'll ever admit it) -- he's falling in love.

The morning after the Christmas Cotillion, where cowboys by the dozen lined up for a dance with the exotic Song, and Weston wrangled the last one, she discovers her visa has expired. Pledging her Uncle Thieu's farm in Thailand as a dowry, Song asks Weston to marry her. Swearing that this is not a good idea at all -- he does.

Song blossoms in America. Weston's sister Olive, a schoolteacher, helps Song with her English, and introduces her to the ideas of the Founding Fathers, most notably Tom Paine. Firebrand and activist Wynona employs Song in her office. Her first assignment is working with Shoshone shaman MAD BULL and Bull's young assistant, Jack Deerstalker as they fight a referendum that would allow gambling on their reservation. As winter melts into spring, Song and Weston continue to profess their marriage is simply one of convenience, though it is obvious to everybody that the two are in love. Obvious to everyone that is, but Jack Deerstalker who has fallen for her himself.

One night as Weston returns earlier than expected from a rodeo, he finds Jack in his living room, alone with Song. Enraged, Weston explodes, throwing Jack out of the house.

That night a fierce winter storm blows. The creek rises and floods, endangering thirty head of cattle caught on the other side. Song springs into action, riding side by side with Weston. When a baby calf slips into the icy creek, Song plunges in after it. Together, Weston and Song pull the animal free. Weston is knocked speechless by her bravery. Later, as he warms her by a roaring fire, Song and Weston make love for the first time.

A few days later, Wynona and Song are introduced to the case of illegal immigrant Thai workers, forced to toil as slaves in the garment industry in El Segundo, California. Song becomes deeply involved with the workers and their plight -- the search for a desperate promise of freedom. With her work, she discovers the power true freedom holds.

But her work and growing sense of the true power of freedom begins to tear at the budding love between Weston and Song.

Meanwhile, the referendum Jack, Wynona, and Song fought so hard against has been defeated. There will be no gambling on the reservation. Jack organizes a rodeo to raise money for an investment deal for the reservation. Weston agrees to ride -- on one condition. Jack gets the bull, Baby Face that killed Cody.

The night before the rodeo, Weston finds a letter Song has written to the garment workers she is helping.

"We are, every one of us, entitled to a life with dignity. To life with honor. There are those who would attempt to steal our dignity, to seize our honor. But it is only when we allow this deepest core of our being to be ripped from us that we become enslaved. Remember, you, too, have been touched by God."

The next morning, Weston leaves for the rodeo without her.

At the rodeo, in an eerie replay of Cody's accident, the bull throws Weston. Song nurses Weston back to health, but still torn between freedom's power and her growing love, Song knows she must ultimately choose.

Several weeks later, with Weston well on his way to mending, Song and Olive host a dinner party at Snowy Moon to celebrate Weston's recovery. Along with Zeb, Jack Deerstalker and Mad Bull are there to join in the festivities. But in the middle of the revelry, the phone rings: it's Jenny Chang and it's about the case of the immigrant workers.

Song knows she must go.

The next day, Weston drives her to the train station.

Returning to the ranch, Weston, still suffering from his injuries, limps painfully to the corral, and saddles up his horse. He rides across the rolling plains to the waterfall where he and Song had spent so much time in happier times now long gone by. Watching the water tumble by like his lost hope, suddenly, Weston picks up a stone, and fires it into the tumultuous fall. He whistles for his horse, and throws himself into the saddle. Across the plains, the train continues to roll. Inside, an uproar arises among the passengers. Song forces her way to the window.

Outside, riding like hell, is Weston.

Song's heart begins to pound.

And suddenly, she knows...Finally, she knows.

Song grabs her suitcase, and elbows her way through the crowd.

Before the train fully stops, she is bounding from the platform...and rushing into Weston's arms.

Western Song Details

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From Reader Review Western Song for online ebook

Happy Booker says

Western Song is a love story. Under the beautiful skies of the Wyoming sky and accident happens. Cody Goode is killed by a maniacal bull baby that Weston is riding, leaving behind his secretly engaged Tai immigrant who is arriving that evening, for the first time. Song is anything but what you would expect, and that is where the story excels to another level.

I believe the one thing that stood out was the unique character personalities that were created in this story. The story does have some important messages embedded in it which were lovely. The literature standard was very easy to follow and to understand. Song is freeing herself from a harsh situation, coming to a bitter understanding that her move has been for someone she had lost before she even got to be with.

The difference between the two cultures, background, personality was delicately written and plotted together. I felt a subtle elegance in the story which was pleasant since love stories frequently overtake and overuse that aspect, and this one did not.

The one thing that the author could improve on would be its world development. I wasn't expecting a fantasy world setting since the story was not in that genre, but some additional scenery and landscape description could have possibly added to the enjoyment of the beautiful story.

I recommend this book to people that enjoy reading genuine love stories.

Sandy says

A Song for Justice

Western Song is a profound examination of the tragic exploitation of people desperate to escape their third world economies and seek a better life in the United States. At first, the focus is on an admirable young man who feels responsible for the death of his best friend and his dilemma in treating the best friend's mail order bride who arrives unexpectedly from Thailand the day after her fiancée is killed. Gradually, we see the trauma the young woman has endured in her bitter life in Thailand and her legal efforts to help other refugees who are exploited by corrupt smugglers. While this novel is set in the West and its greatest villain is a Brahma bull with the improbable name of Baby Face who defiantly throws any cowboy who dares to ride it in a rodeo, it is, above all, a timely and sympathetic "song" which reveals the hopes and dreams of both Native Americans and those refugees who seek a home in the "land of the free." While Western Song soars with romance, both requited and unrequited, it also reveals the legal efforts to help exploited people brought to this country by immoral men, and the difficulties of life on a ranch in the West. Podgorski's writing is vivid, her characters are dynamic, and her research is extensive. Her literary canon which began with *The Women* Debrowski continues to extend her literary reputation and reveals her expansive literary interests. A fine novel by a fine writer.

A.B. Funkhauser says

LOVE, LOYALTY AND CHANGE

Leigh Podgorski's *WESTERN SONG* delivers everything the cover promises—a modern romance set in the American West—and more. Beyond the central love story, it explores loss of friends, loss of income, loss of landscape, loss of identity. Wes Beaudurant, heir to the Snowy Moon Ranch in Fremont County, Wyoming, faces tough decisions: keep the family legacy as a financially unviable working ranch or turn it into a tourist attraction; support the Shoshone Nation in their campaign to build a casino on tribal land or side with time-honored views on what the landscape should look like; and embrace Song, a Viet-Thai expat on an expiring visitors' Visa who also shares a close bond with one of Wes' closest friends. *WESTERN SONG* remains true to genre by serving up just the right number of heart-breaking obstacles that endeavor to keep the lovers apart. It also draws a fine sketch of the Wyoming countryside that fills in at a calculated pace to keep the pages turning. I, for one, saw the vistas clearly and often felt part of the geography. *WS* also introduces its fair share of heinous villains, chief among them a racist judge stuck in the antebellum period and those motivated by self-interest and greed. Ideal for readers who love romance but have not yet traveled west, I guarantee they will know their way around a barrel race by the time *WESTERN SONG* is done. A solid, fun read. 5 Stars.

Vera mallard says

STORY-LINE *WESTERN SONG* BY LEIGH PODGORSKI:

In *Western Song*, Weston Beaudurant's friend and employee, Cody, seemed a simple man; a rodeo clown with simple needs. However, after his death, Weston finds there's more to Cody than he imagined. Wynona Vasquez, friend and attorney, meets with Weston, his sister Olive, and her husband, Jeb, after the funeral. They are in for a big surprise. Cody has a mail order bride from Thailand coming in on the evening train. No one knew Cody was thinking of marrying nor that he had saved a large amount of money. Weston finds himself meeting Cody's fiancée, Song Phan-Rang at the train station.

A sadder sight no one has ever seen. Water logged and dripping, Song stands waiting for a fiancé who will never show. Weston will find a very determined woman in Song's small body. Determined to live in Cody's small cold cabin, she will not take no for an answer. For Song came to America for freedom from cages which surrounded her in Thailand; wanting more from life than Thailand would allow. So begins the journey of Song and Weston as they forge ahead with life. Song wants freedom, Weston wants to run his ranch and bull ride; but fate has much in store for these two. As well as, a small town in turmoil and controversy.

One an American by birth, the other wants to be an American by choice. Will fate bring together two very different people from diverse backgrounds? An epic drama of conflicts, prejudices, and love. My contemporary romance book review of *Western Song* follows.

CHARACTERS, PLOTTING, AND DEVELOPMENT:

First let me say, my poor skills as a writer and reviewer will not do this heart grabbing, powerful epic, justice. From the first pages I immediately knew this book would tear out my heart. At times so sad I cried,

others so frustrated with Weston I wanted to scream, I couldn't put this book down. Leigh Podgorski created a fast paced tale with many levels and layers, which leaves the reader awed and begging for more.

Filled with yearnings for freedom from prejudice, poverty, and oppression, along with an epic love story, Leigh Podgorski grabs the reader and does not let go. Then add in the guilt Weston carries, the unsung love of another, the drama of the controversy taking over this small town, and the fight to survive, gives you have a story the reader will not quickly forget.

Set in the beautiful state of Wyoming with the back drop of Thailand, Podgorski's writing is vivid, descriptive, and feels authentic to the West and East. I could see the beautiful country side, the streams, rushing rivers, rodeo cowboys, and diverse people. Podgorski's vivid writing of Song's life in Thailand brought tears to my eyes and sorrow to my soul. How glad I am America is my native country; where freedom is free for all to make their own choices and decisions.

So many people with their own agendas, prejudices, misconceptions, and problems, form a powerful story filled with drama, action, and humanity. With secondary characters which added depth to the story line, Leigh Podgorski's characters are believable and realistic. Podgorski's characterization of the West and the people who thrive there, made me yearn for wide open spaces and the twang of the western language. I wanted to interact with the people; who are fighting themselves, each other, and nature to carve out life to the fullest.

With characters having many layers and well-developed, I felt I knew each one personally. I became involved in their lives, rooting and booing as called for in the story-line. With many plot threads to bring together, Podgoski skillfully wove each one into a highly satisfying powerful novel.

Weston's a cowboy, bull rider, and rancher; hardy, tough, level headed, emotionally closed off, and yes, he's needy. He doesn't even realize what he needs until it was almost too late. Raised in an environment where under-laying emotions were ignored, Leigh Podgorski matured and developed Weston throughout the story-line. Song, a gentle spirit, searching for freedom from cages enforced from early childhood, will gladden your heart. Yes, Song's gentle, yet, with a strong backbone and determination. Podgorski developed her personality and understanding of freedom gradually; Song realizes what she thought a cage, is not. Watching her grow wings and fly as she becomes "the more" she wanted, is awesome.

Leigh Podgorsk, with writing which is clear, easy to follow, and with vivid descriptions, turned a standard book into an outstanding novel. Her prose, structure, development, fast pacing, and multi-layered plotting, I gave top marks. Furthermore, Podgorksi created a clean book without the use of sex or fluff to fill the pages; however, still contains intense emotional drama between her characters. Western Song deserves several readings and I plan to reread it again and again. I would not hesitate to buy this book for myself or a friend.
WESTERN SONG RECOMMENDATION: STARS 5

As my subscribers know, I rarely give 5 stars. However, Western Song deserves a 5 star rating which I gladly award for prose, structure, story-line, plotting, pacing and development. Western Song's my featured book for September 2017.

FINALLY, PLEASE NOTE:

Additionally, I borrowed this book from kindle unlimited and received this book from the author. I chose to voluntarily review the book with honest contemporary romance book reviews. Lastly, book reviews of any novel are dependent on the book review author's opinion. Consequently, all book reviews on-line and on my

blog, are my opinions. In addition, no one influences my voluntary contemporary romance book reviews.

Sharon says

A story that I wanted to continue on after the end. Full of tragedy and heartbreak, bigotry, Native American issues and rodeo family it hurts your heart and makes you understand some of the current issues in this country without preaching at you. The love story sneaks up on you.

I hope there is a sequel that, while focusing on one of the secondary characters, also resolves a bit of Song's backstory and his parentage.

Amy Shannon says

Incredible Romance

I like the premise of the story, and how Weston comes to meet Song, and how the relationship progresses. It takes them forever to see about each other what everyone else does. It's a powerful story that's more than just romance, but the fight for freedom. I really enjoyed this story and anyone who likes a romance (with cowboys no less) where there are obstacles and passion, this is one of those stories.

TDCbookreviews says

When Wes loses his best friend Cody in a tragic accident, his friends and him are shocked to find out that Cody's mail-order bride is coming to town. Too late to cancel, Wes invites her into his home and life.

The rest of the book explains the life of all these characters and how they pull together to save the farm Wes lives on.

For me personally, this story was slow when I wanted it fast and vice versa. I skimmed a lot of the descriptions throughout but the dialogue barely held me also. A cute story but the behaviours got repetitive for me. Some trigger warnings for slavery/human trafficking. 3 stars.

Book It Up says

I've read a lot of love stories recently, and perhaps because of this I'm a lot more selective over new titles I pick up. Western Song sounded rather different to the current trend so because of that I decided to give it a go. What I found was a very well written, compelling story that has so much more on offer than just the love element itself. There is tragedy, struggle and other complex issues for the reader to grapple with, and I found myself burning the midnight oil on successive nights as this page-turner kept me utterly enthralled.

Weston and Song are great characters, deeply fleshed out complex, and I'm now eager to read more works from Podgorski.

5 stars and a great find.
