

# Mail Order Regrets: Montana Mail Order Brides Book 1

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She fled Boston to save face, never realizing the danger that waited for her in Montana...

Traveling from Boston, mail order bride Madeline Barstow hopes that Samuel Croft will provide a comfortable, respectable life, far from the prying eyes of her gossiping socialite peers. But when she steps off the train in Helena, Montana, she is appalled to find a stranger waiting for her instead of her husband-to-be.

Widower Clay Porter is tired of everyone trying to match him up. He wants only to be left alone, spending his days off making deliveries and earning money to someday buy the butcher shop he works in. When he is hired to transport a woman to Croft Ranch, he realizes she is completely in the dark about her fiancé's character. Is Clay willing to risk his own dreams--and even his life--to persuade Madeline that she's making a mistake?

Note: Mail Order Regrets is a sweet historical romance novel of 76,331 words, but is not a Christian/inspirational romance.

### Excerpt:

The sky was obscured by the clouds, and the last bit of light was fading as Clay guided the sleigh off the main road and down a long trail to a small cabin nestled in the foothills.

"We'll rest here a while before we go on?" Madeline asked, pulling down the furs and blankets from her face.

He brought the horses to a stop in front of the door. "No. We're not going to make it tonight. We'll have to stay here."

"You can't mean that." She clutched the furs to her bosom. "You said we'd take shelter--not sleep here!"

He hopped out and started unhitching the horses. "It's another two hours to my sister's place, and the visibility is only getting worse. There's nowhere between here and my sister's house to take shelter. This is it. We're lucky I found it--I almost missed the turn-off."

"But--" she stammered, "there's no one else here."

"And we're lucky for that. There are only accommodations for two here. Assuming nobody has made off with one of the two chairs that were here last time."

"You are not funny, Mr. Porter." She stood up in the sleigh and stomped her foot. "I insist you take me to a proper place to stay."

The horses whinnied and jostled the sleigh, and Madeline slipped fell back into her seat with a hard thump. The driver took the horses by their bridles and spoke in soothing tones until they quieted, then he stalked back to the sleigh.

"If you insist on throwing a childish fit," he snarled, "please do it outside the sleigh, before you provoke my horses into bolting by indulging in a tantrum over not having a soft, fancy place to lay your head tonight."

She swallowed her rage at being spoken to with such disrespect, because she realized he was right--she could have caused a dreadful accident. "I'm sorry. I am. But it has nothing to do with a fancy place to lay my head. That--" she pointed at the ramshackle habitation, "is a very small cabin which, according to you, can only sleep two. Two! There is no one here to act as chaperone. What is my future husband to think when he finds out I spent the night alone with the sleigh driver?"

"If he had any sense, he'd be glad that I made a level-headed decision that kept his bride-to-be safe and alive! Not that I'd accuse Croft of having any sense," he muttered as he walked back to his horses.

"What is your problem with Mr. Croft? What has he done to you?"

He kept his eyes on the horse's harness, heaving a sigh. "Nothing. He has always paid me what I earned. He hasn't mistreated me. I have no reason not to like him."

"And yet you don't." She tilted her head, waiting for an answer.

"Get back under your covers, before you let out all the heat."

"What heat?" she grumbled, pulling the covers up to her chin. "You let the coal burn out ages ago."

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