

## A Dangerous Proposition

**Donna Harris Harrison**

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*The narrative fruitfully conveys the pain and suffering that too many women experience in the shadows.*

Donna Harris Harrison's *A Dangerous Proposition* is poignant, disturbing, exciting, and emotionally riveting as it takes on themes of abuse, feminism, and friendship.

Julianne, a driven career woman, is the producer of a successful television news show, *Chicago Sizzle*. Elisa, a woman who survived domestic abuse, suggests a project: a deeper look into Horizons, a halfway house for abused women. Elisa and Julianne become unlikely allies, working together to bring awareness to the horrifying truths about how women become trapped in frightening circumstances. Their relationship is a warm touch in a story filled with bleak realities.

Within the first few chapters, Julianne is already built up as a determined presence, the perfect symbol of women's independence. Elisa is more passive and modest; she comes into her own as her secrets come to excruciating light, and she exemplifies another side of women's strength. Difficult details about her husband's humiliating verbal abuse, her decaying self-esteem, and her changing relationship with her daughter are included.

Julianne and Elisa's friendship develops slowly. Julianne is visiting Horizons and interviews Elisa regarding her history of domestic abuse, and their relationship moves forward from there. Although their friendship is founded upon bleak circumstances, it is believable, and their chemistry is apparent.

Scenes at Horizons add another layer to the book. Women go there seeking safety; their stories are shared throughout the novel, serving to show that domestic abuse is an undeniable crisis. As character backgrounds emerge, the narrative fruitfully conveys the pain and suffering that too many women experience in the shadows.

Although the story is a work of fiction, its powerful examples successfully show that victimization is not a matter of choice. It pushes against the judgement that women face from those who do not understand their circumstances. Still, it is gentle with its points.

Writing is immersive and expressive, with a casual tone that supports its intimate narrative style. Chapters are the perfect length, and the story progresses at an excellent pace. Chapters irresistibly weave between various points of view. Despite its heavy content, the story is easily consumable.

Dialogue is authentic and flowing. Witty banter and realistic conversation create convincing relationships. Characters build dynamic relationships with one another that are ably conveyed. A neat ending proves to be both satisfying and realistic.

*A Dangerous Proposition* weaves important themes on feminism and domestic abuse into a story that is enjoyable and unique.

HANNAH WILLIAMS (March 7, 2018)

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