

DISTANT MOUNTAINS EXCERPT:

Rem stared at Sara Greenwood, unable to take his eyes off this beauty. She was, without a doubt, the most entrancing creature he'd ever seen. With hair and eyes as black as sin and flawless skin like pure porcelain, her face was that of a goddess. A bloom on her cheeks gave her face a vital sheen of good health. How his fingers itched to unpin her silken tresses from their neat coils. He ached to touch that skin to see if it felt as soft and downy as it looked.

She carried her youth and beauty with a proud bearing missing in so many of the young women in the colony; these women brooded and sulked, despairing of their lot in life after being dragged to this awful continent by their fathers against their will. Most had pasty faces they kept well hidden beneath large-brimmed bonnets to shield them from the sun they saw as an enemy to their complexions.

Rem thanked God it was a Sunday, and they allowed him to join the small gathering. The thought he might have missed meeting this goddess made him shudder. Tiger made a habit of inviting all newcomers to the district to his and Bella's home soon after their arrival. The Greenwoods had recently settled here after living in Sydney for five years. Bella met them briefly on a trip into town, and Rem knew by her remarks she wasn't particularly enamored of Edmund Greenwood or his timid wife Eleanor. Rem couldn't give a damn about them, but was already half in love with their daughter.

"So charmed to meet you," Sara was saying to Bella and Tiger, who were decked out in the finery kept solely for such occasions.

Extending her long, slender fingers, Sara took their welcoming outstretched hands one after the other. Turning to Rem, she offered the same delicate hand, and he bowed over it reverently. Her scent filled his nostrils, battered at his senses. Like a garden in full bloom, or a bowl of roses. Not very poetic, he knew, but she would forever remind him of a spring day; an English one, where rosebuds sent out their fragrance to entice the bees, and butterflies were entranced by the colors.

Rem realized his breathing was as uneven as his heartbeat. As he straightened, their eyes met, and for one infinitesimal moment Rem felt sure a message passed between them. Could she be as smitten as he?

"We are delighted to meet you at last," Bella said, and for a moment, Rem wondered what she was talking about. So entranced was he, everything had gone out of his head, except this vision of loveliness.

"How do you find it here in Bathurst?" Bella asked graciously as they all took seats on the porch.

Sara spread the skirt of her blue dress about her knees, her dainty feet clad in black pumps peeped beneath the hem. Those bewitching eyes, filled with a sort of devilment met Rem's as Bella continued, "I'm so glad the weather has seen fit to hold." She looked to the sky, where a weak winter sun tried its damnedest to shine through the gray clouds.

"As I'm mighty glad it's decided not to rain before we've had a chance to settle in our house," Sara's burly father said, as he settled his large frame on a chair, and huffed. "I must say I'm also glad we brought plenty of help with us to this godforsaken neck of the woods." He had a perpetual air of grievance about him, as if the world should have tried harder to do better by him.

"Tis a good life, once you grow used to it, and if you're prepared to work hard for what you wish to attain, it's very rewarding," Tiger said, looking out over his land. It was obvious to Rem his brother-in-law was no more enamored of this man than he was. Edmund Greenwood was brusque to the point of rudeness and loud-mouthed. How did an ugly brutish man manage to sire an angel like Sara? And how did her meek and homely mother ever produce such a beauty? Perhaps she had been adopted. The thought made him smile, and he glanced over at his angel in time to see her watching him, her delicate brows raised.

Turning to Sara's mother, Bella offered, "You must call on me for any help you need. We lean on each other out here where months can go by without us seeing anyone from the other side of the mountains."

The pallid, insignificant woman looked to be about sixty in age, but was more than likely only in her forties. Rem suspected years of living with a boor had etched those deep lines on her face. Her pinched mouth looked forever on the verge of protest. Though, Rem doubted she would ever dare to come forth with a complaint.

"Thank you." The words came out on a thready whisper. Glancing up like a scared hare, Mrs. Greenwood added, "I didn't want to come," earning a wrathful glare from her husband.

"Balderdash!" Edmund waved an arm, his brows beetling, and she seemed to shrivel even more. "You'll soon get used to it. And with kindly ladies like Mrs. Carstairs here" —he gave Bella a sickly, condescending glance—"you'll soon acclimatize."

"I found it very strange when I first arrived in the colony." Bella smiled at Mrs. Greenwood, and Rem thought, for the umpteenth time, what a lovely woman his sister was. "And please call me Bella," she invited. "Everyone does. We don't stand on ceremony here. Being so isolated we have to become friends."

Rem wondered if these people knew his sister and her husband had both been convicts, sent to the colony by the British Government, same as he had. No doubt they did, for news travelled fast despite the great distances. Gossip was rife among the Exclusives and the Emancipists.

"Course you did. We all have to learn to change." Edmund gave his wife a look that said she would have to change, or accept his wrath. Her hands trembled, and she twined them together on her lap.

"And how do you like living so far from the town?" Rem turned to ask the beauty seated beside him.

She shrugged. Her pouting lips were as soft, full, and pink as the rosebuds she smelt of. His insides ached with the desire to see if they tasted half as sweet as they looked. Jesus, he wanted to ravish her, to strip her and taste every part of the delectable body he knew the wool of her garment hid.

Her eyes slid from his dark red curls to the boots he was glad he'd polished for the occasion. Something deep inside him began to shake with his response.

Barely past her seventeenth birthday, so Bella had told him, and already she wore the look of a woman in control of her life and her responses. How he would like to help her lose her cool control. He made up his mind that would be his driving purpose in life from now on; sure in his conceit he would win her no matter what.

"I would have liked to stay in Sydney Town. I have my governess and companion still, who accompanied us over here, so I will have to bear it. For a while." She sounded utterly bored, and Rem wanted to stand up and shout that he would take her wherever she yearned to go.

Reviews:

5 stars "Excellent Read." By Minnie

"I enjoyed the first in this series so much I just had to read Distant Mountains. Tricia McGill's historical detail is spot on. It makes you realize what the early settlers had to go through to create a new life in a fledgling colony."

5 stars cp 56 Great Series

Love It, now reading the rest. ...Enjoyed the follow up book. Love at first sight and continued throughout. Easy read and history includes convicts hard time in early 1800. Worth reading both books Elle

5 stars Dawn Ward

"I would recommend this book to anyone who likes reading about convict days, murder and romance this book has everything Tricia McGill is a pleasure to read a page turner."

5 stars "ahsitan" I fell in love with this story!

"Tricia McGill created a story full of passion, adventure, hope, and lost love. This is much more than a romance or historical novel. It draws you into the lives of two people, Remy (a convict working on his sister's farm) and Sara (the daughter of a wealthy landowner). The story is set in colonial Australia, when England used the continent as a penal colony. Life was hard, and many didn't even make it to the new land.

Remy, short for Jeremy, was one of the lucky ones. His brother-in-law, Tiger, made an arrangement so Remy could work on his farm. Except, Remy destroyed his chance for a timely release from bondage because of his longing for a woman he couldn't dream of having. A foolish mistake plunges him into the most harrowing experience of his life.

The settings and characters are vivid in this story. It's something I'd recommend to anyone who loves romance, historical fiction, and adventure."

5 stars WELL RESEARCHED, GRIPPING STORY SET IN COLONIAL AUSTRALIA Margaret Tanner
“Another amazing, well researched story from the pen of award winning author, Tricia McGill. I have read several of her books, and can honestly say I have never been disappointed. Remy spends time in Bathurst and Sydney, New South Wales. Also the convict settlement of Moreton Bay, where severe punishment and cruelty are rigorously enforced to break not only a convict’s body but also his spirit. Add to the mix, Sara, the daughter of a wealthy but bigoted land owner. Against all odds Remy and Sara fall in love, but can they overcome the many obstacles in their path and get their happily ever after ending?”

5 stars **A BRILLIANT READ** Jean (UK)

“Loved this book, it was a great sequel to book one. I'd love to see more of these books, and they should be made into films.”

5 STARS “**A Keeper for me.**” By icebear s

“This is a good book to read.. over time I read over 1000 books..most Historical and Paranormal Romance books..Most are free from the Kindle store...sometimes it is hard for me to find a good book that will keep my attention ..this book was good..the Author did a great job...”

5 stars By KC book lover

“This is the follow up to Mystic Mountains, following the story of the early settlers in Australia in the 1800s. This book focuses on Jeremy, known as Rem, the brother of Isabella whose story was told in the first book. Like Isabella, Rem is transported to Australia as a convict and his brother-in-law Tiger arranges for him to work out his sentence with him on their farm. However, Rem does not like the quiet life and yearns for the hectic life of the city. Things only get worse when he meets the attractive daughter of their neighbour...”

I loved this book just as much as I did the first. I couldn't guess how the book was going to end there were that many twists and turns on Rem's journey. I notice that a third brother, Carlos, also arrived in Australia as a convict towards the end of the book and I can only hope this means there will be a third book in the series. **Highly recommended.**”

5 stars By F. Anderson

“Very easy reading and good to read about the Australian pioneers for a change and the hardships they had.”

5 stars High recommended By ETP

“A very gripping story of migrant and convict life in Australia. Very moving.”

Barbara M. Hodges eBook Ecstasy ezine 4 stars

“I loved this story. It has everything. Happiness, tears, love, hate. I recommend it highly for all lovers of romantic adventure tales.

Natisha LaPierre

I fell in love with this story the first time I read it. The characters and settings are rich, and the story is heart wrenching. The book has an undercurrent of passion that resonated with me. It's not only a love story set in the past, it's a journey of two lovers who face challenges and hardships in their attempt to be together against all odds. I read this story from beginning to end ten times and loved it each time. I fell in love with this story. The characters and settings are rich, and the story is heart wrenching.

Leanne Shawler for eBook Reviews Weekly

"The author has delivered an accurate and compelling story of a convict's life, touching on those of gold miners and the growing town of Sydney. The evocative writing and the increasingly dire straits that Remy and Sara find themselves in, make for an excellent read."

Rose. HeartStrings Romance at Heart

"Tricia McGill takes us to the Australian colonial period in this rather dark saga of Remy and Sara. I love books where the scenery is vivid, there are characters that "live", and the characters are truly to cheer and boo for. This book has all of that and more. It scores high on the "lost in the story" list... Thanks Tricia, now can I have another?"

Jennifer Macaire A Romance Review five roses

"This story had me riveted from page one. The historical facts ring true and add veracity to Remy's tale. The characters all come alive and the descriptions of places and events and people pulled me into the story and immersed me in their world. Remy is a stunning hero-handsome, kind, intelligent, and witty. I found myself holding my breath to see if he would find his true love, Sara. Once started, I couldn't put this book down. It's by far one of the most enthralling romances I've read in years."

Brett Scott The Romance Studio 4ROSES

"Amidst the sweet romance and tenderness, Ms. McGill adds the excitement of spousal abuse, bushrangers, forced marriage, kidnapping, and Remy's imprisonment and torture. She shows that a talented author can take a romance and turn it into so much more. I couldn't put it down and I bet you won't be able to either. I've become an avid Tricia McGill fan!"

Five Stars By Bridget on 13 November 2015

"Good."

5 stars By Amazon Customer on 18 Nov. 2015

"Loved this thoroughly enjoyed"

Five Stars By mrs maggie on 20 April 2016

"Very good story"

Five Stars By Magpieon 8 March 2016

"Good read"

4 stars A light, easy-to-read author... By ChrisO on 23 Oct. 2016

"A light, easy-to-read author ... with a direct interest to me as I grew up in the Blue Mountains of New South Wales."

4 stars Pure love ele

"Enjoyed the follow up book. Love at first sight and continued throughout. Easy read and history includes convicts hard time in early 1800. Worth reading both books."

4 stars Tough Love By Juliet Waldron on December 23, 2014

"Thwarted love, action, violence and adventure on the Australian frontier, as Distant Mountains, 2nd in the Settlers Series, continues the story of Bella and her brothers and sisters, as they immigrate (and are sometimes transported) from England. Colorful characters, each well-drawn and absolutely believable, though sometimes less than sympathetic. These "star crossed lovers" have years of trouble and trials before they reach their happily ever after--but don't lose faith--it does arrive, just in time and right at the end. Looking forward to book# 3 of this series!"

4 stars By Amazon Customer

"I liked this book. It had plenty of action and suspense. The characters were very clear cut and realistic considering the time and the place. A little more of the story describing a reunion of the families would have been nice."

4 stars **A good adventure book.** By Kindle Customer

"Having read both books in the series I enjoyed them. I read this one in a day. Did not get anything else done and stayed up half the night. The characters introduced in this novel further extended the first story. Do hope there is a #3 Settlers book. I do like books in a series. Gives you a chance to become very involved in the character's lives.