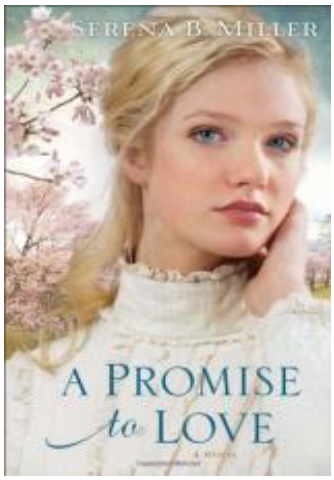
ReadingGroupGuides
The online community for reading groups

A Promise to Love

by Serena B. Miller



About the Book

Can a marriage of convenience ever become one of true love?

Ingrid Larsen arrives in Michigan in 1871 with little more than the clothes on her back and a determination to find her brother, who has disappeared into the dangerous lumber camps. Destitute and barely hanging on to hope, the young Swedish immigrant crosses paths with Joshua Hunter, a newly widowed farmer with eyes the color of the ocean she had crossed and five rambunctious children to raise on his own.

Marriage would solve both of their problems, and Ingrid finds herself proposing in broken English to a man she barely knows. Many difficulties lie ahead --- but the hardest battle of all will be winning the heart of her new husband.

Discussion Guide

1. In your opinion, what are the differences in the way our culture defines love versus the biblical definition? Do you think this is affecting Christian marriages? If so, how?

2. In the beginning of the book, the heroine is not portrayed as a beautiful woman. That is one of the inner struggles Joshua has to overcome in accepting her proposal. At the dance, when Joshua realizes he wants to fight any man who dances with her, do you think he is finally seeing her outward beauty brought about by a new dress and a new hairdo, or is it her inward beauty that has finally captivated him?

3. The model on the front cover is very beautiful. It represents the Ingrid she eventually becomes in Joshua?s eyes. Would you have bought the book had the woman on the cover been portrayed as Ingrid appeared in the beginning chapter?

4. As a reader, did you ?fall in love? with Joshua? If so, was there a specific incident that made that happen?

5. As a reader, did you find yourself admiring Ingrid? If so, was there a specific incident that made that happen?

6. Joshua and Ingrid had a rushed, makeshift wedding that cost nothing, and yet their marriage ultimately went the distance. How much, if anything, do you think the cost or lavishness of a wedding plays into the longevity of a marriage?

7. Were you surprised by the prevalence and ?big business? aspect of abortifacients in the 1800s? What factors do you think contributed to this prevalence?

8. Some people believe that wolves are approximately ten times more intelligent than dogs. Because of that, the crossbreeding of wolves and dogs is becoming more prevalent. Do you approve?

9. She-Wolf?s master is an old woman who lives life exactly on her own terms as long as it does not go against the commands of God. Did you find yourself envying her independent spirit or did you worry about her?

10. The phenomenon of the forest fire portrayed in the story was taken entirely from first-person newspaper accounts and journals of the actual fire of 1871. What, if anything, surprised you about a forest fire of that magnitude?

11. In the end, after struggling for years to get his farm going, Joshua ends up taking a very different career path. Were you pleased or disappointed that he didn?t go back to White Rock and start over?

12. The cherry orchard was meant to represent the dreams we have for ourselves that through no fault of our own sometimes burn up and blow away. Have you ever had that happen to you? Did the Lord show you a different path? Have you seen God?s mercy and wisdom in following that alternate path?

Author Bio

Prior to writing novels, Serena Miller wrote for many periodicals, including *Woman?s World*, *Guideposts*, *Billy Graham?s Decision Magazine*, *Reader?s Digest*, *Focus on the Family*, *Christian Woman* and *The Detroit Free Press Magazine*. She has spent many years partnering with her husband in full-time ministry and lives on a farm in southern Ohio near a thriving Amish community.

Critical Praise

"This is one of the most satisfying, heartwarming novels of the year. Sweet but never sappy, it easily manages to keep a timeworn ?marriage of convenience? plot fresh, believable and intriguing. Each character is so well drawn and memorable. And much like the unforgettable heroine, the writing is unadorned and forthright, but over time is revealed to be as clean and as beautiful as a piece of well-made Shaker furniture."

? RT Book Reviews, 4½ stars, TOP PICK!

"Characters are well developed and very likeable [and] give this historical novel a welcome authenticity..."

? *Publishers Weekly*

"Historical fiction at its finest! Serena Miller writes with an irresistible freshness and honesty, crafting compelling characters that leave you changed. I eagerly anticipate her next novel!"

? Laura Frantz, author of LOVE'S RECKONING

"Serena Miller has done it again. With fascinating history and characters you can?t help but love, she?s written a story that pulls at your heartstrings and keeps you turning pages as fast as you can to see what happens next. And just when you think the story tension can?t get any higher, she turns up the excitement another notch. A story not to be missed!"

? Ann H. Gabhart, author of WORDS SPOKEN TRUE and THE GIFTED

"If you?re searching for novels with both heart and soul, you will love the thoughtful and richly satisfying works of Serena Miller. I do."

? Emilie Richards, author of SUNSET BRIDGE and ONE MOUNTAIN AWAY

A Promise to Love

by Serena B. Miller

Publication Date: October 1, 2012
Genres: Christian, Christian Fiction, Fiction, Historical Fiction, Historical Romance, Romance
Paperback: 332 pages
Publisher: Revell
ISBN-10: 0800721179
ISBN-13: 9780800721176