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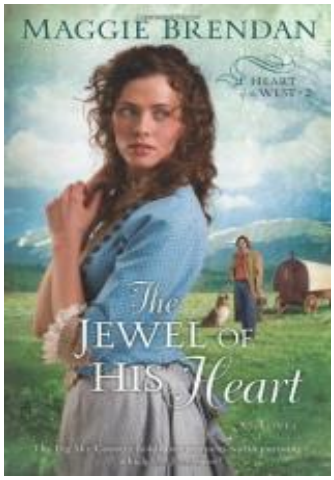
The Jewel of His Heart: Heart of the West Series, Book 2

by Maggie Brendan



About the Book

Their future is as wide open as the Montana sky

Juliana Brady is alone in an 1890s Montana mining town, with few prospects for making a living. But she is determined not to be dependent on the charity of others.

Josh McBride is trying to scrape up a living from his sheep herd while he builds his ranch. But when he discovers some rare stones on his property, he?s tempted by the prospect of fast money.

When their paths cross, Juliana and Josh must make a choice --- the world?s riches and promises, or the eternal value of love.

Discussion Guide

1. The images of jewels and precious stones run throughout this story. Many of the characters struggle with deciding what is really important: wealth and security or love and faith in God. Read Matthew 13:45-46 and discuss this description of heaven. Does this relate to the self-discoveries of any of the characters? Is this struggle between striving for things and sacrificing for heaven present in your life?

2. Juliana has been hurt by the abandonment of her father and the death of her mother. She feels completely alone. In this deep loneliness what does she discover about the nature of God and the true definition of family? Have you ever felt the fear and hurt of loneliness? What did you learn about God, about yourself, or about those around you in that time?

3. Josh thought he had found his life partner back in Colorado but Crystal broke his heart and married Luke. After

moving to Montana and starting a new life Josh begins to understand and accept that God had brought Crystal and Luke together and there is someone else out there for him. How do you know when you have found true love? Is there one or only one perfect match for everyone? What is different for Josh with Juliana that he didn?t feel or experience with Crystal?

4. When her mother dies Juliana is determined to be independent and not rely on anyone. How does this affect her relationship with Josh or her relationship with Marion? Charity is an important theme in the story. What is the difference between giving freely from the heart and giving out of a sense of moral obligation or superiority? Where do you see these two different approaches to charity in the story?

5. Juliana carries around much bitterness, anger, and hurt toward her father through much of the novel because he left and never came back. Have you ever been deeply wounded by someone you trusted? Did you have a moment of confrontation and confession as Juliana and Davin did as he was dying? Did that experience help to heal the wound? Do you still struggle to forgive that person?

6. Josh is concerned about the age difference between Juliana and him. He also marvels at how well he and Andy work together though they are also far apart in age. Marion, Esther, and Cynthia are examples of the role that social and economic class plays in the community. How do these age and social class distinctions keep people apart? How do they impact relationships? Have you ever been surprised by a kinship and connection with someone outside your social circle? What did you discover?

7. The role of women at this period in history is very different from what most women experience today. What does Juliana?s job at the newspaper and her relationship with Albert say about how women were viewed at that time? Does this indicate the status of women was changing? What do you think makes Albert take a chance on hiring Juliana, though she is a woman and very young?

8. Animals in the novel are not merely commodities or property. Discuss Josh?s feelings toward and relationship with Shebe. What makes her special? Have you ever had a special relationship with an animal or a pet? What does this tell us about our commission to care for God?s planet and God?s creatures?

9. Trust is a significant issue for Juliana. Through most of the novel she is hesitant to lean on anyone or ask for anything. Read the last paragraph on page 273. How does this mark a change for Juliana? What is the difference between independence and interdependence? What does Juliana learn about this in the story?

10. Did you have a favorite moment in the story? What was it? Why is it your favorite? Can you relate this to an experience you have had in your own life?

Author Bio

Maggie Brendan is the bestselling author of several books, including the *Heart of the West* series and *The Blue Willow Brides* series. Winner of the 2013 Laurel Wreath Award, she was a 2013 finalist for the Published Maggie Award of

Excellence, a 2013 finalist for the Heart of Excellence Readers' Choice Award, a 2012 finalist for Inspirational Reader's Choice award, and a recipient of the 2004 ACW Persistence Award in Atlanta. She is a member of the Author's Guild; Romance Writers of America; Faith, Hope, and Love; and Georgia Romance Writers. When she's not writing, she enjoys reading, researching for her novels, and spending time with her family.

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