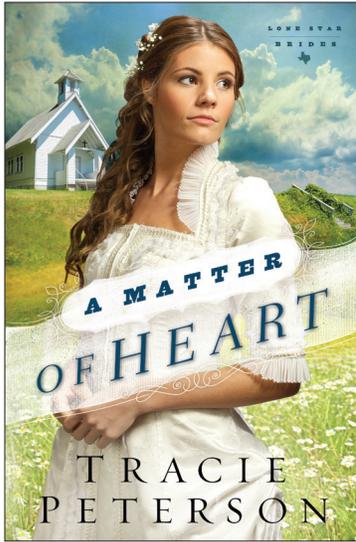




QUESTIONS & ANSWERS WITH TRACIE PETERSON



A Matter of Heart

by Tracie Peterson

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1. Why did you write *A Matter of Heart*?

A Matter of Heart is the third and final book in the LONE STAR BRIDES series. I wrote this book to resolve some of the mystery played out over the series but also to give growth and development to one particular character—Jessica Atherton. As a spoiled only daughter of a cattle rancher she wasn't an overly likeable character in the first two books. I wanted to show her growing up and making a change of heart and growing in spiritual understanding. Of course, there's also romance! I wanted to leave the reader connecting to this character and maybe understanding a little more about people like Jessica.

2. What kinds of problems does Jessica deal with that would relate to the reader?

Jessica has relied on her beauty and popularity all of her life, but as she's gotten more self-focused and opinionated that popularity has waned. I think readers will see a woman who has been grandfathered into her faith but now has to make her faith her own. Not only that, but she has to put aside her selfish ways and seek forgiveness from those she's wronged. It's a complete change of character for her, but Jessica sees the value in that change.

3. Did you do anything special to research this book?

As with all of my books I try to research the details of the time period. This series originated with the financial crisis of 1893 and the subsequent depression that followed. The time period was difficult for all of America, and Texas, the setting of this book, was no exception. I spent time studying information related to Texas during this period and spoke to ranchers about the kinds of things that would be affected, especially with droughts and other livestock issues. I also read local newspaper articles and spoke with historians. My heart is to create a story that is as true to the history of the times as is possible.

4. What else would you like the reader to know about this book?

A Matter of Heart is the conclusion to the LONE STAR BRIDES series; however, some readers won't know that this entire series was birthed out of two other series—STRIKING A MATCH and LAND OF THE LONE STAR. If they want to learn more about some of the characters in this series they can back up and read those series as well. The stories were put together in such a way that it won't matter which series they start with, though within each dependent series the stories build on each other. I tried to make each book stand alone as best it could, but the reader will find it more satisfying to read the books in order.

5. Lastly, what would you like the reader to take away from this book?

As with all of my books I'd like the reader to grow spiritually and find biblical encouragement and hope from the things I share. I have seen via the fan letters that God uses fiction in a powerful way to draw readers closer to Him. In *A Matter of Heart* there is a definite spiritual journey for both the hero and the heroine. Each has issues in life that the reader can readily relate to, such as thinking you're right with God just because you go to church, seeing God as a god who takes and takes but never gives, dealing with the loss of loved ones, and trying to better understand God's purpose for each person's life.