



Deeply Devoted

Maggie Brendan

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When Catharine Olsen leaves Holland for Wyoming as a mail-order bride, she brings some extra baggage with her: two sisters, her mother's set of Blue Willow china, and a tragic past. As she steps off the train, Peter Andersen is glad to see that she is everything her letters showed her to be. But he is a bit perturbed by her unexpected companions. How will he support them all? And what other secrets might Catharine be keeping from him?

Filled with sweet romance and vivid characters, *Deeply Devoted* highlights a clash of cultures as a highborn European and a simple wheat farmer learn to love one another and trust God with the past--and the future.

Deeply Devoted Details

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From Reader Review Deeply Devoted for online ebook

Lauren Homer says

Whenever I feel like I'm in a book rut or I've just read a really good book, I read a book like this one as a palate cleanser. It's just a quick, not too much to think about, comfortable story. It's sort of a guilty pleasure. It's not anything amazing or life changing but it's relaxing and enjoyable.

One of the most strange/interesting parts of this book was the fact that it is Christian romance but also had a surprising amount of fade to black moments. There were suggestive moments but, well, as I described it to my hubby, it was like the most appropriate sexiness. It was between a married couple and they even talked about wanting children. There was a bit more suggestion than you usually see in Christian romance though. Other than that odd juxtaposition, it was a fairly standard romance novel. Some things seemed inaccurate but not glaringly so.

Lisa at Farm Fresh Adventures says

The characters annoyed me. LOL. Liked the brides crotchety mother in law the best. I will read more but only because I am willing to give the next book a try.

Anneliese Dalaba says

Catharine and Peter agree to marry after Peter places an ad in a newspaper. However, Peter's mother is very upset when she finds out her son has married a mail-order-bride instead of the lady she had chosen for him, so she has Catharine investigated. Catharine didn't tell Peter about everything in her past because she was afraid he wouldn't marry her. When Peter finally finds out about some of her past, he's angry that Catharine would withhold such information from him. They both have regrets and must find a way to forgive and begin again because parting at this point would be so much harder, but can they overcome their pride? I like Catharine, who was raised in wealth, but isn't spoiled and wants to learn how to become a good helpmate to Peter. I like Peter, who is strong and tender. He's also very patient. This really is a nice story.

Robin says

When Catherine comes to Wyoming Territory as a mail order bride from Holland she also brings her two younger sisters. Her new husband is hospitable and accepts all three into his home. A six month long correspondence between Catherine and Peter helped them like each other and this quickly grew into love. However, she has not shared about her tragic past and he has a few secrets of his own. Very enjoyable first book in the Blue Willow Brides series.

Kathleen says

This is another Christian historical romance characterized by shoddy historical research. It's the 1880s, and women wear overalls (and think it's cute). Like I've said in previous reviews, women in the 1800s absolutely did not wear overalls. When I read a book set in the 1800s where a woman wears overalls and thinks it's a normal thing to do, the author is immediately discredited.

Catharine, Greta, and Anna are Dutch, but their surname is Olsen. Another Dutch character is named Karl Johnsen. Neither of those surnames are Dutch; they are both Scandinavian. Again, this kind of error discredits the author and makes it look like they couldn't be bothered to do basic research.

Greta is 17, and the other characters make a big deal out of her turning 18, because then she'll be an adult and they can't tell her what to do anymore. First of all, that attitude is very modern, and secondly, the age of majority back then was 21, not 18.

Other annoying things include Peter and Catharine having a "cute" mud fight (this stupid cliche needs to die), characters referring to the "weekend" (I don't think they had weekends back then), the twins calling Catharine "Miss Catharine" instead of "Mrs. Andersen" (wouldn't have happened), Mario offering "refills" at his restaurant (sounded really modern), very modern attitudes towards divorce, Catharine wanting to name a daughter Willow (not impossible, but very implausible), and several over-used plot devices (Big Misunderstanding and Failure to Communicate).

Some things that didn't make sense aren't necessarily related to historical research. For example, Peter is a wheat farmer. He has a nice house, but no servants. Last year's wheat crop got eaten by locusts, and this year's crop is threatened by locusts. So, do Peter and Catharine economize? No, they stay at luxury hotels, go to the opera, and throw Greta a birthday party catered by an Italian restaurant. The scene at the end of the book where Peter gives Catharine the dishes also didn't make any sense. Why is he giving Catharine so many valuable dishes to hold at one time? In real life she would have dropped them.

Finally, how in the world did Peter and Catharine even find each other? Did Catharine subscribe to Wyoming newspapers in Holland? Did Peter place an advertisement in a Dutch newspaper?

Renee says

This spring I read a beautiful mail-order bride story by Catherine Richmond (Spring for Susannah) and I was blown away and figured it would be a long time before I read another on par with it. This fall Maggie Brendan has once again proven that mail-order bride stories can be fresh and exciting. It just goes to show that even if you think there can't possibly be anything that hasn't been written before in a romance the right person with the right kind of talent may come along and blow that thought out of the water. Ms. Brendan is definitely one of those talents.

Catharine Olsen leaves the tragedy of her past behind her as she sails to America to meet her husband Peter Andersen little does he know that Catharine brings more baggage than just her mother's Blue Willow china. Both want their relationship to work but Peter's nosy mother, Clara will go to any length to prove that Catharine has ulterior motives when it comes to marriage. Secrets kept and a drought and pestilence threat could prove to be the straw that breaks their tenuous romance in two.

From the first page I was captivated. I loved seeing a real romance develop between two people who first fell

in love through letters. It seems in most mail-order bride tales the love story unfolds gradually and by the end they're married (predictable) but not so with this book. Ms. Brendan does not shy away from issues like love and intimacy. Everything is tastefully done and not offensive in any way and the story just gets better and better.

The secondary characters are equally as impressive as the main characters. Catharine's little sisters, the nearly grown Greta and the precocious Anna definitely cause their fair share of problems but they support their eldest sibling as any sister would. I'm really looking forward to reading more of Anna and Greta in this series. It will be especially interesting to see what happens between Greta and her beau (who I don't like very much). Don't even get me started on Clara Andersen, oy vey that woman most definitely fits the meddling mother-in-law mold, however she does gain your sympathy by the conclusion of the book.

As far as romance goes Deeply Devoted is one of my favorites this year. If I hadn't already promised this book to someone else it would be going on my keeper shelf. Maggie Brendan has definitely outdone herself with this book, it is by far my favorite of hers to date. If you only read a few romances this year make sure Deeply Devoted is one of them.

Thanks to the author and publisher for my review copy

Olivia says

Catharine has lost her parents in an accident and with no future in Holland, decides to be the mail order bride of Peter, in Wyoming. However, she is in charge of her two younger sisters, ages 17 and 15, and brings them with her. The conflict is being a new bride for Catharine and her new groom not knowing he is to support her sisters, too. There is an interfering mother-in-law, but the whole book is flat and lifeless.

When Catharine and Peter meet for the first time, he goes to her hotel room and introduces himself at the door. I found the whole dialog exchange wooden and boring.

Catharine smoothed her skirts and bolted to the door to swing it open. "Hallo. You must be Peter."
"Good morning, ladies. Yes, I'm Peter Andersen."

Peter shifted his weight in the awkwardness of the moment. "May I come in?"

Greta [[younger sister]] hastily stepped aside. "Pardon, forgive my manners."

Catharine's legs felt as stiff as peppermint candy sticks, but she was finally able to move forward to greet the man who was to become her life partner. "Peter! It's so good to meet you at last," she said, suddenly feeling reticent as she extended her hand.

But Peter stepped closer to her and tightly grasped her hands in his. "My dear Catharine, I'm so glad you've arrived!"

"Oh! Where are my manners? Do have a seat," Catharine said, leading him to the nearest chair.

Now really, would three unmarried women invite a single man into their hotel room? I know Peter and Catharine are to be married, but this just felt wrong to me. It must be okay, since this is an inspirational.

In between the dialog there is some descriptions of Peter looks and Catharine's nervousness, but I still didn't get a feeling for the two young people.

Catharine introduces her sisters and make no mention of their future. Peter thinks they are there to find jobs.

Really? Really? Two young girls who travel from Holland with their older sister and they are expected to find jobs in a strange country the first day they are in town. He is clueless that the sisters will be staying with them? [[insert rolling eyes here]]

The sisters travel the few miles to Peter's farm where they are to live and find a pleasant house, albeit, no servants. The girls have no clue what chores are to be done around the farm, even simple things like cooking dinner. I found that extremely hard to believe. Don't you think Peter would have specified in his mail-order bride ad or during their subsequent correspondence what chores were expected of his bride? Don't you think Catharine would have read up on Wyoming to find out what kind of life there was out in the American West? I know there where newspapers back then.

Peter has no personality. So, all of a sudden, he has a bride. Really? Like he wasn't expecting her or anything? Couldn't he do some discussing about courting before she gets there? He tries to court his new bride and his efforts are touching, but bland.

On the whole, I didn't finish the book. After two chapters, I just didn't care about the characters or the situation. If you want a really good book about a mail order bride, read LaVyrle Spencer's *The Endearment*.

Hannah says

3.5 stars. I picked this up on a whim yesterday in the church library...

This book lost an entire star because of historical flavor. I actually really enjoyed the story and the characters.

The author's local flavor is great. I loved reading about Wyoming in those days. However, while I am quite ready to accept that the young ladies have a fine command of English, since their parents were well-to-do and in shipping, the slang is out of place. Nowadays there is much slang in our language that still mystifies speakers of English as a Second Language (believe me, I taught it for two years), but back then even Peter himself probably wouldn't have known what the terms like "cute" (came into fashion in the early 1900s, as a shortening of "acute", meaning smart; didn't catch on in general society for a while.) meant.

And durable dresses and protective shoes for farm work is a practical thought...but the women would have been thoroughly insulted at thought of overalls...that was scandalous when it came into general use during WW1 when the men were off to war. And a mercantile most likely wouldn't have stocked sizes to fit women, especially not one with such delicious curves as Catharine's!

So, yes, good story...fully authentic, no. But sweet.

Georgianne says

What I liked about this book is the story overall. It was hard to put down, definitely a page turner, very sweet love story with some wonderful and lovable characters.

What bothered me is that Catharine and her sisters just arrived from Holland to Wyoming, they basically spoke perfect English and used American slang terms. There wasn't any mention of how they learned English language. They really didn't seem to have much adjustment to the culture change. Typically when immigrants arrive after weeks/months traveling by ship, they have faced many hardships, illnesses and the trips were difficult. There just didn't seem to be any of this with them other than some broken china. So much just seemed very unrealistic.

Am I glad I purchased and read this book? Yes! Just wish it would have been more realistic.

Cheryl says

Peter Andersen is a farmer in Wyoming. His mother has been pressuring him to get married. Since the ratio of men to women in Wyoming is about five to one, Peter decides to put an ad in the newspaper for a bride. Catherine Olsen answers the ad. Soon she and Peter are communicating with each other by mail. Catherine is about to meet Peter for the first time. And because Catherine is the only caregiver to her sisters, Greta and Anna, she is bringing them along as well. Hopefully, Peter has the room for two extra people.

Deeply Devoted is book one in the Blue Willow Brides series. I like reading about the old West. One of the things I also find fascinating is reading stories about mail order brides. I have only read a handful of these stories but I enjoy them. I thought that Mrs. Brendan did a wonderful job of portraying the West and the characters. I didn't really have a favorite person in this story as I liked them all. Each person was unique in their own way. Out of the three sisters, Catherine was the most reserved. Though, she really did try hard to adapt to being a farmer's wife in the West. Though this book is published by a Christian publisher, it is not preachy in any way. The only thing I would say is that the romance is more on the sweet side than spicy. Deeply Devoted is worthy your money and time.

Jerry says

A charming and touching historical romance.

sherry leetham says

Rounded up

I REALLY appreciate how much the author put into researching and appreciating the community she chose to write about. Unfortunately for me, I reluctantly only give this 2.5 stars. I, personally, do not enjoy whimsical heroines in books who feel it's okay for them to hide secrets and then once revealed and exposed of their deception, blame the man or walk out not giving him a chance to come to terms within two seconds of discovering a truth that the woman has given herself the opportunity to overcome. THEN when the author has the man BEG for forgiveness when it should be the woman asking for forgiveness for her deception, I just can't. I suppose I'm simply not a fan of selfish women... Which also explains my disdain for the book Eat, Pray, Love. As a woman I never want to have a man groveling at my feet begging my forgiveness and a worshipping me for forgiveness especially when I know that I had a hand in doing something wrong. The

idea of that makes me literally sick to my stomach and I simply lose all respect for women who think this type of behavior is acceptable.

Anna says

2.5

I wanted to like this book, the story should have been interesting, but characters felt flat. The story jumps from scene to scene abruptly and without a lot of logic. The description is also fairly thin, I actually felt like I got to know Cheyenne better in the author's note at the end than in the book. Catharine and her sisters are supposed to have come directly from Amsterdam and yet they speak almost flawless English with only a hint of an accent and a few stray Dutch words. They also never seem confused by American ways or customs. Clara seems like a sad clown rather than a dignified lady she is supposed to be. Mac is supposed to be charming, but seems just a creepy schemer. I have read for a long time in books on writing that old mantra "show don't tell" and I never really understood what that meant until this book, which is a good example of the opposite. There are, however, a few well drawn scenes including the cute dénouement at the train station which save this from being all bad, so I will still try the next book of this series.

Michelle says

I can't remember the last time I stayed up into the wee hours of the night to finish a book. I could NOT go to bed last night until I had read the last page and I started in the afternoon. You know it's a fantastic book to hold my attention for over 300 pages, make me skip dinner, and then make me unable to rest until I finished to whole thing. I think it was about 2AM by the time I went to bed. This story was awesome! It started out sweet like any other Christian book but kept intensifying with each chapter. Important elements of the story slowly trickled out over time and made it impossible to put down.

I had not read any books by Maggie Brendan before and figured this would be like any other typical Christian prairie romance, but I decided to give it a try anyway. Boy, was I wrong about that! It was anything but typical. I am so glad I joined the blog tour for this book because this is one of the few Christian fiction titles available that deals with mail order bride issues that doesn't make you wait for the entire book while they "get acquainted," if you know what I mean. I was thrilled about that. I always figured in real life it didn't work that way, only in Christian books, LOL! And unlike many novels that deal with secrets, this one had situations that were believable and worked for me. I absolutely loved the characters. All of them. Even the meddling mother/mother-in-law.

This novel is not only incredibly romantic with a hero that is swoon-worthy, but it makes you think about communication in marriage and makes you want to be a better spouse. Seriously. I loved Peter. Absolutely adored him. And when he got upset I understood it. Rather than getting ticked off at him I just hurt for him. Same for Catherine. She wasn't a petty wife with dumb issues that are supposed to carry an entire story. She was like a real person to me. I loved her and her sisters. I especially loved the scenes with her and Peter and their coming together as husband and wife. Tastefully done, yet enthralling at the same time.

I wish all Christian historicals were this yummy and inspirational. I think more people would switch over from secular fiction if they found more books like these on the inspy shelves. The scriptures all fit perfectly, too, and there was nothing sappy about the faith element. It wasn't heavy-handed, but was clearly present. I

can't say enough good things about the book. The writing was stellar, too. I highly recommend it. It's making my best fiction list for this year!

Maggie says

I wrote this book and hope it's a blessing to others.
