

Love Inspired

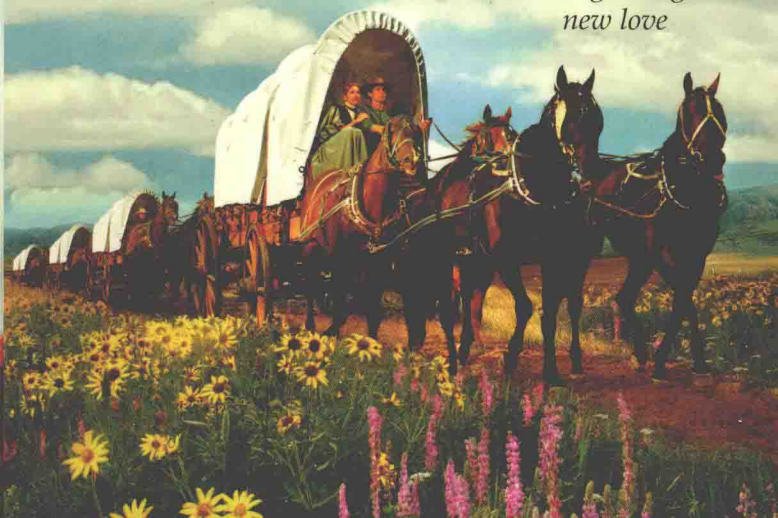
HISTORICAL

INSPIRATIONAL HISTORICAL ROMANCE

DOROTHY CLARK

*Prairie
Courtship*

*New beginnings...
new love*



QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION

1. The characters in *Prairie Courtship* all have a dream they are following—their own or someone else's. Have you ever followed a dream?
2. In 1841, Emma's dream to be a doctor was all but impossible for a woman to attain. Do you believe it was God's intervention in her life that placed her in a position that overcame the era's overriding prejudice against female doctors to make Emma's dream come true?
3. What are the circumstances that led to Emma's being in that place where her dream could come true? Do you believe all that happened was a coincidence? Why or why not?
4. Emma looked on the circumstances that caused her to join the wagon train as God's refusal of her prayers. Do you think that was true?
5. Do you think God can turn the unhappy circumstances of life into good for His children? Did he do that for Emma and those who traveled with her? How?
6. Zach was a strict wagon master, insisting on traveling sometimes when they should have stayed

in one place. Was he right to be so strict with the emigrants? Why or why not?

7. We know very little about Zach's past, except that he was in the army. Do you think he had a family? A sweetheart? What type of past do you think he had that led him to this point in his life?
8. Emma had a double burden of caring for her sister, Anne, and plying medical knowledge for the emigrants. How did she handle the stress?
9. At first, it seems as though Zach didn't like Emma. When did this change? Can you cite the first instance where their relationship changed?
10. Did you ever think that the men on the wagon train would accept Emma as a real doctor? Why or why not?
11. Zach expresses the need to travel and not be tied down in one place. How does this change for him once he meets Emma?
12. Emma's sister, Anne, never overcomes her grief over her lost family. Do you think it was a good idea for Anne to go to the mission without Emma? Why or why not?
13. Did it surprise you that Zach decides to become an orchard farmer? Why or why not?

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*See below for a sneak peek from
our inspirational line, Love Inspired® Suspense*

Enjoy this heart-stopping excerpt from

RUNNING BLIND

*by top author Shirlee McCoy,
available November 2010!*

*The mission trip to Mexico was supposed to be an
adventure. But the thrill turns sour when Jenna Dougherty
and her roommate Magdalena are kidnapped.*

“It’s okay. I’m here to help.” The voice was as deep as the darkness, but Jenna Dougherty didn’t believe the lie. She could do nothing but lie still as hands slid down her arms, felt the rope around her wrists.

“I’m going to use a knife to cut you free, Jenna. Hold still.”

The cold blade of a knife pressed close to her head before her gag fell away.

“I—” she started, but her mouth was dry, and she could do nothing but suck in air.

“Shhh. Whatever needs to be said can be said when we’re out of here.” Nick spoke quietly, his hand gentle on her cheek. There and gone as he sliced through the ropes on her wrists and ankles.

He pulled her upright. “Come on. We may be on borrowed time.”

“I can’t leave my friend,” Jenna rasped out.

“There’s no one here. Just us.”

“She has to be here.” Jenna took a step away.

“There’s no one here. Let’s go before that changes.”

“It’s dark. Maybe if we find a light...”

“What did you say?”

“We need to turn on the light. I can’t leave until I know that—”

“What can you see, Jenna?”

“Nothing.”

“No shadows? No light?”

“No.”

“It’s broad daylight. There’s light spilling in from the window I climbed in through. You can’t see it?”

She went cold at his words.

“I can’t see anything.”

“You’ve got a nasty bruise on your forehead. Maybe that has something to do with it.” His fingers traced the tender flesh on her forehead.

“It doesn’t matter *how* it happened. I’m blind!”

Can Nick help Jenna find her friend or will chasing this trail have Jenna running blindly again into danger?

Find out in RUNNING BLIND, available in November 2010 only from Love Inspired Suspense.

FROM #1 NEW YORK TIMES
AND USA TODAY BESTSELLING AUTHOR
DEBBIE MACOMBER

Mrs. Miracle on 34th Street...

This Christmas, Emily Merkle (just call her Mrs. Miracle) is working in the toy department at Finley's, the last family-owned department store in Manhattan.

Her boss (who happens to be the owner's son) has placed an order for a large number of high-priced robots, which he hopes will give the business a much-needed boost. In fact, Jake Finley's counting on it.

Holly Larson is counting on that robot, too. She's been looking after her eight-year-old nephew, Gabe, ever since her widowed brother was deployed overseas. Holly plans to buy Gabe a robot—which she can't afford—because she's determined to make Christmas special.

But this Christmas will be different—thanks to Mrs. Miracle. Next to bringing children joy, her favorite activity is giving romance a nudge. Fortunately, Jake and Holly are receptive to her "hints." And thanks to Mrs. Miracle, Christmas takes on new meaning for Jake. For all of them!

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IN THESE TWO SUSPENSEFUL STORIES
BY FAN FAVORITES!

Yuletide Sanctuary

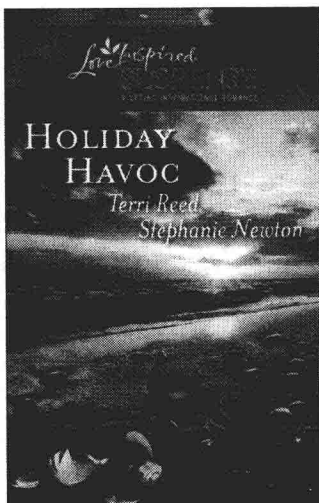
by Terri Reed

A cry for help shatters youth counselor Sean Matthews's quiet Christmas night. He saves Lauren Curtis from her attacker—for now. But the vengeful man on her trail won't be held at bay for long....

Christmas Target

by Stephanie Newton

She hadn't wanted the contest "prize" in the first place. But when police officer Maria Fuentes arrives for the holiday vacation she won, she finds much more than expected....



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Dear Reader,

When I began writing *Prairie Courtship* I knew the story would be based on the scripture: "*Delight thyself also in the Lord; and he shall give thee the desires of thine heart. Commit thy way unto him; trust also in him; and he shall bring it to pass.*" Psalms 37:4–5. But then I realized there is another scripture that is equally appropriate: "*For my thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways, saith the Lord.*" Isaiah. 55:8

Emma's dream was to become a respected doctor, a goal all but impossible for a woman in the year 1841. She prayed that God might answer her prayers. But she was so certain how that should be accomplished she did not recognize that God was answering her prayer all along—just not *her* way.

I have learned that God's answers to our prayers are far better than any our minds or hearts can conceive, and that His will and plan for us is always one of love and blessings.

Thank you, dear reader, for choosing to purchase *Prairie Courtship*. If you would care to contact me, I can be reached at dorothyjclark@hotmail.com or www.dorothyjclark.com.

Until next time, dear reader... May God give you the desires of your heart. And may you recognize and rejoice in His answers to your prayers—however they may come.

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Dorothy Clark". The signature is written in dark ink and is positioned at the bottom of the page.

**“Why have you and your sister
joined this wagon train?”**

Thatcher's eyes were hidden below his hat's wide brim, but Emma was sure he was scowling. She gripped the lantern with both hands. “And how is that your concern, Mr. Thatcher?”

“I am responsible for getting this wagon train to Oregon before winter, Miss Allen. Everything that can endanger that mission is my concern.”

He called **that** endangerment! Emma gave him her haughtiest look. “And how does our presence imperil your mission?”

“If you want me to name all the ways, you'd best let me light that lantern. We will be a while.” He held out his hand.

“I think it would be best for you if I continue to hold the lantern, Mr. Thatcher. At this moment, you would not want my hands to be free.”

Laughter burst from him, deep and full. Surprising. She had thought him quite without humor.

“Seems you might not need quite as much protecting as I figured you would.” He chuckled.

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The Law and Miss Mary

Prairie Courtship

Love Inspired

Hosea's Bride

Lessons from the Heart

Steeple Hill

Beauty for Ashes

Joy for Mourning

DOROTHY CLARK

Critically acclaimed, award-winning author Dorothy Clark lives in rural New York, in a home she designed and helped her husband build (she swings a mean hammer!) with the able assistance of their three children. When she is not writing, she and her husband enjoy traveling throughout the United States doing research and gaining inspiration for future books. Dorothy believes in God, love, family and happy endings, which explains why she feels so at home writing stories for Steeple Hill. Dorothy enjoys hearing from her readers and may be contacted at dorothyjclark@hotmail.com.

DOROTHY CLARK

*Prairie
Courtship*



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PRAIRIE COURTSHIP

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**“Delight thyself also in the Lord; and he shall
give thee the desires of thine heart. Commit thy
way unto him; trust also in him; and he shall
bring it to pass.”**

—*Psalms 37:4–5*



This book is dedicated to my sisters Jo and Marj. My thanks to you both for being so understanding of my time constraints, and for praying me through these last two months. I wouldn't have made it without your help. I love you both.

And to my critique partner, Sam. You stand tall, cowboy. Thank you again for your encouragement and prayers. And for sticking with me through the crunch. I will return the favor when your deadline hovers! And, yes, you may have Comanche—after the next book is written. Blessings.

Chapter One



Independence, Missouri
April, 1841

“Break camp!”

That was not Josiah Blake’s voice. Emma Allen turned in the direction of the barked order, stiffened at the sight of an imposing figure atop a roan with distinctive spots on its hindquarters. So the autocratic Mr. Thatcher had returned to take command. She had hoped his absence since their arrival at Independence had meant he would not be leading the wagon train after all.

Brass buttons on the front of the once dark blue tunic that stretched across the ex-soldier’s shoulders gleamed dully in the early morning light. Pants of lighter blue fabric skimmed over his long legs and disappeared into the knee-high, black boots jammed into his stirrups. He rode forward, began to wend his way through the wagons scattered over the field.

Emma frowned and stepped out of sight at the back of the wagon. Mr. Thatcher did not need to wear the faded