



Beyond the Ashes

Karen Barnett

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Where better to rebuild and face one's fears than in 1906 San Francisco, a city rising from the ashes? Ruby Marshall, a young widow, is certain she'll discover new purpose assisting her brother Robert with his cancer research, but she doesn't anticipate finding new love. Dr. Gerald Larkspur dreams of filling his empty home with family, but he'd always hoped it would be a wife and children. In the aftermath of the great earthquake, the rooms are overflowing with extended family and friends left homeless by the disaster. When Robert's widowed sister arrives, the close quarters seem close indeed. Ruby and Gerald's fledgling romance is put at risk when Gerald develops symptoms of the very disease they're striving to cure. Together they must ask--is it worth a second chance at love when time might be short?

Beyond the Ashes Details

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Author : Karen Barnett

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From Reader Review Beyond the Ashes for online ebook

Lindsey (Books for Christian Girls) says

About this book:

“Young widow Ruby Marshall is certain she’ll discover new purpose assisting her brother, Robert, with his cancer research. And where better to rebuild than in 1906 San Francisco, a city rising from the ashes? Ruby arrives in the city with great hope and determination for a new beginning.

But she doesn't anticipate finding new love.

Dr. Gerald Larkspur had dreamed of filling his empty home, but he'd always hoped it would be with a wife and children. In the aftermath of the great earthquake, the rooms are overflowing with family and friends left homeless by the disaster. As he attends to every need of his patients and friends, Gerald doubts he will ever find true love, especially when he develops symptoms of the very disease he's striving to cure. She's had her love and lost it. He is still missing his heart's desire."

Series: Book #2 in the “*Golden Gate Chronicles*” series. (Book #1’s (old!) review [Here!](#) *This review is on the old rating system, so not as detailed as this review.)

Spiritual Content- Jeremiah 29:11 & Isaiah 61:3b at the beginning; Scriptures are quoted & mentioned; Prayers & Blessings over food; Many Talks about God, His plans & trusting Him; 'H's are capital when referring to God; Mentions of those in the Bible; Ruby is very mad at God for taking her husband and says many times that she's in control of her life (*Spoiler* (view spoiler) *End of Spoiler*); Witnessing to Ruby.

Negative Content- Minor cussing including: a 'blamed', a 'blasted', a 'drat', a 'idiot', a 'sissy'; Blood, Illnesses, Shots, Cancer & Doctor stuff (semi-detailed to detailed); Mentions of drugs and opium; Mentions of brawls, drinkers & cigar smoke.

Sexual Content- four not-detailed kisses, four barely-above-not-detailed kisses, three semi-detailed kisses and a detailed kiss; Two hand kisses; Remembering kisses (up to semi-detailed); Ruby remembers when Charlie would kiss her (barely-above-not-detailed); Engaged couples kiss (barely-above-not-detailed); Wanting to kiss & touch; Noticing (semi-detailed); Touches & Nearness (semi-detailed); Mentions of flirting; A few mentions of working women and girls working in brothels (including a 14yo girl); A few mentions & talks of being pure and desires; A mention of a midnight rendezvous & a mention of rewarding someone's hospitality; A mention of a married woman having many affairs; Love, falling in love, trying not to fall in love, & the emotions.

-Ruby Marshall, age 27

-(Dr.) Gerald Larkspur, age 31

P.O.V. switches between them.

Set in 1906

315 pages

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Pre Teens- One Star

New Teens- One Star

Early High School Teens- Two Stars

Older High School Teens- Two Stars (and a half)

My personal Rating- Two Stars

{ Caution for girls who: have cancer, are close with someone who does, or recently lost someone due to cancer. }

Okay, I'm \*so\* not a medical person—blood, needles, doctors—making this a not-so-fun read. Pretty serious stuff! I cringed at the radiation as I knew what was going to happen. I can't say I really liked Ruby or Gerald at all, both of them got on my nerves with all their kissing, but Karen Barnett is a great author. She has a very unique writing style that's very informative; I do remember liking Book #1 in this series much more. :)

Link to review:

<http://booksforchristiangirls.blogspot...>

\*BFCG may (Read the review to see) recommend this book by this author. It does not mean I recommend all the books by this author.

\*I received this book for free from the Publisher (Abingdon) for this review.

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## **Britney says**

The beauty of *Beyond the Ashes* extends well beyond its lovely cover! I loved this dramatic, emotional story and the spiritual messages that are woven through its tapestry.

Set in 1906 San Francisco, Karen Barnett transports readers to this historic city in the months following a devastating earthquake. I really enjoyed the descriptions of the city and its atmosphere as the community worked to rebuild and recover. I also enjoyed the medical details that were given regarding the research and procedures that were being used to fight cancer. This vivid imagery, coupled with excellent characterization, brought the story to life for me. Barnett deftly expresses the feelings and emotions of her characters, and I loved experiencing their journeys.

*Beyond the Ashes* is a captivating story, and I look forward to reading more of *The Golden Gate Chronicles*!

I received a complimentary copy of *Beyond the Ashes* through Litfuse Publicity in exchange for an unbiased review. I appreciate the opportunity to read this story and share my thoughts.

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## **Amy Bradsher says**

Barnett takes readers on an exciting ride through history in *Beyond the Ashes*! Set in San Francisco immediately after the earthquake of 1905, Barnett spins a fascinating story of loss, love, and rebirth. I thoroughly enjoyed reading about this unique time period, and Barnett's clear descriptions highlight the history of the day.

That historical setting made the story for me, but I became friends with Gerald and Ruby, too. I like the way that Gerald knew what he wanted and went after it. I appreciated his attentiveness and generosity with the people around him, too, and these traits made the story more exciting when they were directed at Ruby. She, too, worked hard to overcome past difficulties and to heal former hurts. Her strength of character and willingness to step outside of her comfort zone make her a slightly unpredictable but extremely likeable main character.

The science involved in the story also makes it stand out. Gerald and his partner spend their days doing cancer research, sure that they're on the verge of curing this horrible disease. Having never thought about the history of cancer treatment, I enjoyed learning about it in such a natural and fascinating way - and the scientific explanations about x-rays and treatments added depth and detail to the story in necessary ways. This attention to detail made the whole book sharper and more realistic.

This is the first book by Karen Barnett that I've read, but I'll definitely be on the lookout for more. Beyond the Ashes is a fantastic historical novel.

I received a free copy of Beyond the Ashes from LitFuse Publicity in exchange for an honest review.

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## **Nicki Olsen says**

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### **\*My Thoughts\***

Wow, wow, wow! Confession time: This cover was such a stunner, I didn't even stop to read the description before signing on for this tour. I'm not a bit sorry I did either!

This was kind of a tough read for me. My dear grandmother passed away from a return battle with cancer when I was 6 months old. Though I never knew her in the sense that some of my cousins had, I've always felt that piece of me is missing. It's like a hole in your heart that you learn to live with but never quite get over. That is the reason this was so near to my heart. It was a hard thing to "witness" in my mind the pain and heartache of losing so many patients to the deadly disease and even harder when it came to Gerald.

Another thing that made it hard to stick with...I made a mistake. Something I call a "rookie reader" mistake. I was reading the ebook, typed in the location to find my spot and...landed at the end pages of the book. You wouldn't think one sentence could change the entire outlook a book. It can. That one deadly sentence kept the guess out of the book but I still loved it! In my minds eye, if I essentially ruin the book for myself and still loved it, starting from the beginning should be a real treat!

Ruby is my kind of girl!! This red haired girl was a can-do spitfire in her finest form! As if being a widow wasn't hard enough, in the midst of her pain, she did her best to help and to heal. One of my favorite "strong women"!

I'm completely impressed with Karen's ability to take horrific tragedies and still show God's light at the end of the tunnel. This first work of art is my first book that I've read of Karen's but it cannot be the last because it is such a gem!

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**\*My overall thoughts\***

Beyond the Ashes by Karen Barnett is a gem among the ashes for sure! Karen takes a hard tragedy and turns it into something of beauty, shining God's light along the way! An intricate web of beautiful characters, a broken city, and enough spunk to keep you on your toes!

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**\*My Rating\***

I give Beyond the Ashes by Karen Barnett...

5 stars!!

\*I received this book from litfuse, the publisher, and the author in exchange for an honest review, which I have given. All thoughts were my own and I was not compensated in any other way.

<http://bookreviewsforchristians.blogs...>

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## **Iola says**

here were a lot of things I liked about Beyond the Ashes. Gerald, Ruby and Patrick all came alive on the page as well-developed characters with real hopes, dreams, and fears. None of them were perfect people (although Patrick came close!). Instead, they had faults and foibles just like we all do, with Gerald being uncertain about his cancer research, and Ruby not wanting to risk her heart again. They were backed up by strong secondary characters, including Robert and Abby from Out of the Ruins. The main characters and the minor characters were all excellent, and I hope we see more of them in future books (especially Patrick).

The writing was good, showing a depth of research and familiarity with early 20th Century medicine and the post-quake rebuilding of San Francisco, but without being intrusive. There were welcome flashes of humor and some seriously thought-provoking lines. I like that, when I have to stop and reread a line simply because the character says something clever or profound, like: "God doesn't owe me answers. My job is to trust." Indeed. "Somewhere along the line, I discovered marriage isn't about the dress. It's about the people." Something too many people (and romance novels?) seem to forget. "Cutting was always the most frightening part of sewing—no going back." I can relate to that!

I was fascinated by the use of x-rays as a method of treating cancer, although that was a bittersweet fascination: time has shown us how dangerous x-rays and other forms of radiation can be, and we still don't have a cure for cancer over a hundred years later. And cigarettes to cure asthma? The mind boggles. I was also interested by Gerald and Robert using Novocaine: who knew it had been around for so long?

The plot, however, was a little uneven. Ruby originally came to San Francisco to watch out for her younger brother, and to work in the hospital. However, she seemed to spend less and less time in the hospital as her relationship with Gerald progressed, which didn't seem like responsible nurse (or doctor) behavior. The pace

slowed in the middle, then increased rapidly before reaching an abrupt end—perhaps too abrupt. It felt like I'd missed something.

There was a minor subplot about Abby and an old friend, and I wondered why that had been included—I thought the word count could have been used more profitably in showing Ruby's inner journey, or ironing out the pacing issues. For example, there were two points where references were made to weeks or months having passed with the problem (first spiritual, then romantic) having been resolved in the time skipped over, which left me feeling as though there were missing pages detailing the resolution. I like to see the character transformation, especially when it's the spiritual transformation. If a character comes to personal faith in God, I want to see the external events or inner journey which prompted that change. That, to me, is one of the strengths of Christian fiction, and I feel a little cheated if it's skipped over.

Despite all that, I did enjoy *Beyond the Ashes*. It has excellent characters, solid writing, a strong Christian thread, plenty of conflict, and oodles of romantic tension. It's made all the more tense because Ruby is a widow and so knows all about passion in marriage, though that never steps over the line into being inappropriate (although there are a couple of potentially awkward/inappropriate scenes as Ruby is living in Gerald's house with his mother, his cousin, and her brother).

While *Beyond the Ashes* is a sequel, it can easily be read and enjoyed as a stand-alone novel. Recommended for those who enjoy historical fiction.

Thanks to NetGalley for providing a free ebook for review.

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### **Sarah Sundin says**

With solid research, Karen Barnett brings 1906 San Francisco to life—the ruins, the refugees, the camps, and the rebuilding. Gerald and Ruby are characters you feel for, burdened by fears and failures—yet reaching for life and hope. *Beyond the Ashes* also explores the fascinating history of the early cancer researchers, and their frustrations and dangers. This is a wonderful, romantic read with a fresh feel and top-notch writing.

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### **Rayleigh says**

I received this book from the author/publisher for the purpose of this review. All comments and opinions are entirely my own.

My very favorite book has a setting much like this one, where the town (Chicago) was completely burned to the ground and the characters worked together to bring restoration back to their home, so I thought that I would give this book a try in hopes that it would be as good as my favorite. I was not disappointed at all with *Beyond the Ashes* and in fact I have a new favorite book as well as a favorite author! Karen Barnett has a beautiful writing style that holds you in place as you read her carefully researched work of art. I absolutely loved her characters and the fact that there is no promise of a "happily-ever-after" just made it that much better. I am going to be (hopefully) buying the first book and can't wait until the next book in this series comes out!

Thank you for reading my review and have a blessed day.

## **Julia says**

Beyond The Ashes by Karen Barnett is the second novel in the Golden Gate Chronicles and I was blessed to receive a copy. The novel continues where the first book Out Of The Ruins left off, in the months following the 1906 San Francisco earthquake.

San Francisco is being rebuilt, with the hope that it will rise like a phoenix from the ashes. Dr Gerald Larkspur still has a house full with his mother, cousins family and his friend Dr Robert King.

Robert's sister Ruby, a young widow, has had enough of weddings in her home town. She escapes to San Francisco to help her brother in the hospital. One more woman in Gerald's home. Unknown to Ruby, she is walking straight into another lot of wedding plans.

Ruby accompanies Gerald and Robert to the hospital, to help nurse the cancer patients in their pioneering new treatment. She also joins Abby (Robert's fiancé and Gerald's cousin) in the displacement camps, helping the people made homeless by the quake.

The novel deals with a great many themes including fear. Ruby has a great fear of automobiles, after her husband was killed by one, two years earlier. Gerald owns an automobile, and Ruby learns to face her fears, as she wishes to learn to drive, so that she can be in control. She equates being in control with strength and not being hurt.

The theme of being in control runs throughout the novel. Ruby knows of God but does not want to place her life in His hands. She wants to literally and figuratively be in the driving seat. Gerald, as a doctor is used to being in control. Each time a patient dies, he feels a failure. He also takes control of his own life, and refuses to ask for help, as he sees it as a sign of weakness and vulnerability.

Surrendering and trusting God is another theme that runs alongside the control issue. Life is hard and cannot be controlled. Surrendering and trusting God does not mean that life suddenly becomes easy, but there will be a peace in life's storms. Both Gerald and Ruby need to hand over the steering wheel of their lives to God. The theme of love runs throughout Beyond The Ashes. Ruby has loved and lost one husband, and is reluctant to open herself up to potentially more hurt. Whilst reading I was reminded of CS Lewis' words on protecting the heart - the only way to prevent a broken heart is to wrap it up and not give it to anyone, but then it will become hard and cold. The characters in the novel are anything but hard and cold. They are all open, friendly and radiating love and hospitality. I love the fact that Gerald's mother always cooks more than is needed, so that anyone can drop in for a meal. There seems to be quite a lot of action set in the kitchen or around the table, which gives the reader a warm, welcoming feeling.

Ruby's dachshund Otto is very much a part of the novel, as he follows her and others around. I found it amusing that he growls at her brother Robert because he doesn't like him!

As in book one, the issue of prejudice is raised. Again it is tackled with sensitivity, as Abby shows her friend is her friend, regardless of race or what others may say.

I enjoyed Beyond The Ashes for many reasons - it's wonderful characters, it's godly themes and that Karen Barnett was not afraid to deal with tough issues of the day - prejudice, cancer, diphtheria, death - all sensitively tackled. Karen Barnett wrote in such a way that I really felt I was there in San Francisco in 1906/7. I am really looking forward to more books in this wonderful series.

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## **Tina says**



Beyond The Ashes,\*\*\*\*\* book 2, Golden Gate Chronicles by Karen Barnett—  
ARC from author and Netgalley

A devastating earthquake has hit 1906 San Francisco, leaving destruction all across town. Bachelor Dr. Gerald Larkspur had dreams of someday filling his home with a wife and children. Since his home was not damaged by the earthquake, his home now overflows with his extended family and friends until their own homes can be rebuilt.

Nurse Ruby Marshall is a young widow grieving the loss of her husband. Her doctor brother Robert invites her to move to San Francisco and stay with him. She is hoping to discover a new purpose by assisting Robert with his cancer research. However, she did not know that she would be staying with Robert in his partner's home, not their own apartment.

As San Francisco is being rebuilt, many are living on the streets in tents until shelter is built to hold them. As with any disaster of this kind, the risk of disease is a great threat to all. An outbreak of a potentially deadly disease breaks out in the tent community. Ruby and the doctors must find enough medicine to treat those who have contracted the disease before more die. Keeping the sick quarantined in such conditions is a great challenge.

Romance blooms even in these trying conditions. Ruby fights her feelings for Gerald, as she had vowed never to fall in love again and suffer more heartache. But her heart decides otherwise. When Gerald develops symptoms of the very disease he and Robert hope to cure, he makes Robert promise not to tell his family or Ruby. His secret doesn't stay a secret long. Should Gerald and Ruby dare to hope for a cure and do they take a chance at love despite the uncertain outcome?

There is much to like about this story. Each of the secondary characters brought added depth to the story line. Ruby's pain and grief of her husband's death was clearly shown. Her moving so far from all she was used to took courage and strength. I like that she didn't shy away from the challenges she faced. Gerald and Robert made a good team in their search to treat and cure cancer. Their heartache was felt when their patient's died as was their determination to find a cure. Being a retired Oncology RN, I enjoyed reading about the medicines of 1906. I found the struggles the doctors' faced, the research and early beginning treatments of cancer to be interesting. Along with struggles and disappointments they each face, the value and importance of friendships and families is evident, hardships, trials, humor, joy, forgiveness, faith and love is woven through the story in a believable way. I thoroughly enjoyed this story.

~~I received an e-book ARC (advanced readers copy) of this book from the author through Netgalley for my honest review~~

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**Tanx says**

Love the medical details in this one!

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**Carole Jarvis says**

Reviewed at The Power of Words: <http://bit.ly/1HlnkNX>

I chose to read *Beyond the Ashes* because I had never read any of Karen Barnett's novels, and I'm very glad that I did. Readers will find a lot of realism in this story, dark themes contrasted with spiritual insight and the promise of hope - all elements that I appreciated. Although a sequel to *Out of the Ruins*, this story can stand alone.

This historical romance, set in 1906 shortly after the San Francisco earthquake, has a lot going for it - one of the main things being the historical detail. The city was coming back stronger than ever, great losses overshadowed with new life. Karen's writing is solid and the depth of her research shows, especially when it comes to the medical knowledge in the early 1900s. From the squalor of refugee camps, to Cliff House's grandeur, to the realism of medical procedures and treatments, Karen did a great job at vividly conveying the realism of the time - even through the humor of Ruby's driving lessons!

It's funny how, once Gerald opened his house up to family members in need, the number of guests keeps growing - Robert and Abby from the previous book, among others, and now Ruby, Robert's sister. The characters are well developed and very human in their weaknesses, fears and hopes, but it took a while for me to warm up to Gerald and Ruby. My favorite character was Patrick, a minister with a pastor's heart for people, who worked in the refugee camps and spread the gospel through serving people's needs. I hope we see more of him in this series.

Another strength is the medical element and I found Gerald and Robert's joint X-ray research into the treatment of cancer fascinating, as they worked with "long hours, limited funds, and dying patients." For me, the best parts of the novel are when Ruby and the other characters were actually working with patients, and the narrative outside of those sections often seemed a little slow. One of my favorite scenes was when Ruby read from the book of Job to the dying Dee, who commented, "That's my God."

I love the truthfulness of this quote: "God doesn't always choose the easy road for us. But He always chooses the best path." Past experience made Ruby strive for control, fearing that God wouldn't answer her prayers for protection if she trusted Him completely - and that is something to which many of us can relate. Eventually, through Gerald's influence, Ruby realizes that her only need is God. A spiritual journey like this is what I love about Christian fiction, but I longed for more insight as to how Ruby reached that point.

At times the plot seemed a little uneven, slow in places, certain things not fully explained or developed. However, the plot picked up speed toward the end. The conclusion was more abrupt than I like, but the way for book #3 is obviously paved. Gerald and Ruby still face trials and their future is uncertain - but isn't that reflective of life? I'm fully invested in their story and look forward to the next book. Recommended to fans of historical fiction.

Thank you to Litfuse Publicity for providing a copy of this book in exchange for my honest review.

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## **Abbie says**

Ruby is the sister of Robert the main male character from book one. After losing her husband and seeing all her friends married and happy she decides to go live with Robert to free herself from all her well-meaning friends and family who want to see her remarry and to also find purpose for her life. What she did not expect was to find her brother engaged and not only living in the same house as his fiancé but also living with his single Doctor friend.

Gerald would be happy to remain a bachelor living alone in his house but due to the earthquake his home is not his own and now his friends single sister makes it even fuller. As much as he tried to ignore her he can't help but find himself attracted to her but when side effects from his research threaten his health he wonders what God has in store for him.

What I liked: I really enjoyed this book. I liked all the characters. Ruby had been dealt a blow with the death of her husband and coming to live and work with her brother is a new start for her. When she starts to have feeling for Gerald she fights it because she is scared to death to lose someone else and by facing this fear she also starts to gain her faith in God again.

Gerald puts all his effort into his work and research but as he and Robert lose more patience's and see possible health issues due to the x-ray machine they are using for research he starts to wonder if what he is doing is really helping people. Plus the more time he spends with Ruby the more he want a wife and family yet he worries his health could be in jeopardy.

I found this very real and down to earth. The post-earthquake setting lets readers see how much changed and how the city is working to rebuild and the conditions some people had to live and work in. The family dynamics with Robert and his fiancé's upcoming wedding add some humor to the sometimes darker story.

What I didn't like: The overall plot of this book was kind of sad. As much as I enjoyed it I just wanted the book to be over as I really don't enjoy reading about sickness. The ending was okay but still left me feeling somewhat sad for the characters.

Overall this was an enjoyable book and a good sequel to the first book in the series. I highly recommend reading the first book as this book follows right after it. I have enjoyed learning about the 1906 earthquake and how the city dealt with and rebuilt after.

<http://abbiesreadingcorner.com/2015/0...>

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### **Tressa (Wishful Endings) says**

Beyond the Ashes brought out lots of different emotions. It was heartfelt, sad, inspirational, humorous, and romantic. It was also full of friendships, family, sacrifice, service, and love.

I loved the setting of post-earthquake San Francisco. It's not an historical setting I've read about before. It's also not one that I had thought much about until now. It was such a terrible catastrophe and yet the city dug in to rebuild, not only structurally, but also many people who never would have befriended each other or been unified in a cause were brought together. It was still a tough situation with illnesses and poor housing for so many.

I also thought the x-ray research for cancer was rather interesting. I hadn't thought of the time and effort that would have gone into that, and, more importantly, the risks and opposition that would be faced for undertaking such research. I felt for these doctors and patients, as well as the old-fashioned doctors who had trouble letting go of the ways they had always known and how they must have felt threatened by young doctors and new research.

Beyond all these details were these characters that I came to love. Ruby with her vivaciousness for facing her

fears, speaking what's on her mind, and wanting to be in control. Abby with her calming presence and simpler wants, while also having her own passion for specific things. Robert and his dreams and friendship. Gerald for his stubbornness, humor, intellect, and open mind. I loved how Ruby and Gerald challenged, attracted, and inspired each other. They were a great couple. I also enjoyed getting to know the other characters. The romance wasn't easy in coming, nor in being resolved. Ruby and Gerald both had a tough road and some things to work through before they could find their happily-ever-after.

If you enjoy Christian historical romance, then I'd definitely recommend *Beyond the Ashes*. The inspiration was nicely woven throughout, I loved the characters, felt immersed in the setting, and the romance was perfect. It was well worth the read.

Content: Clean

Source: I would like to thank Abingdon Press and Litfuse for my complimentary copy, which did not affect my review in any way.

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### **Kristen says**

I thoroughly enjoyed this book. This was my first book by Karen Barnett but it will not be my last. This is the second book in the *Golden Gate Chronicles* series but it stands alone fairly well. I really enjoyed getting to know these characters and I cannot wait to read more about them in the third book. Highly recommended!

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### **Veronica says**

This was a very enjoyable story set right after San Francisco's huge earthquake in the early 1900's. It was fascinating to learn more about what was going on in the city during that time, not only the makeshift homes and camps many people lived in because theirs were destroyed, but also the research being done on the use of x-rays on cancer. It was interesting to learn about their work. I liked revisiting the characters I enjoyed from book one and it was fun getting to know Gerald better and meeting Ruby. I liked both of them and could relate to Ruby's struggle to let God be in control. She'd already lost a husband and didn't know if she could trust God for her future. I admired how both of them were so selfless in caring for people, especially Gerald. I did get frustrated with how he wouldn't take care of himself, though. There were quite a few sweet romantic moments, including some humorous ones. This was a well-written story with a good mixture of history and romance. I'm looking forward to book three. I highly recommend it!

I received this book free from Litfuse Publicity in exchange for an honest review.

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