



An Awakened Heart

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Trying to heal the ache she feels in her empty life, wealthy Christine Pendleton decides to volunteer at Centre Street Chapel. Ministering to one of the most deprived parts of New York City, the chapel aims at making a difference in the lives of the impoverished immigrants flooding the city. After seeing firsthand the hopelessness of the poor women and orphans, Christine is convinced more can be done to help them.

Guy Bedell has been serving at the chapel and pouring his heart out for the people he's grown to care about. When Christine begins to challenge his methods and offers a new vision for reaching out to the community, can he trust that perhaps God has bigger plans in store for him--plans that may include this feisty socialite?

An Awakened Heart Details

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From Reader Review An Awakened Heart for online ebook

Rissi says

Simple introduction novella to Jody's "Orphan Train" series.

This story focuses mostly on Christine and her genuine heart for helping the less fortunate. Elise (*With You Always*) also plays an important role in the story which is a nice segway into her full-length story. (Plus, it helps us understand the danger of Elise and her sister's circumstances, and the friendship Elise has with her neighbor. A plot that is further explored in 'Always'.)

Though not necessary to enjoy *With You Always*, 'Heart' does add context to what comes.

Caitlyn Santi says

This story has some very beautiful moments. I greatly admired how Christine stepped out in faith to follow where God was calling her. I really liked Elise and her sisters, in fact I hadn't been planning to read *With You Always*, but now after meeting Elise in this story I kind of want to read her story at some point! This book was a good one time read.

Maureen Timerman says

A page turner for sure, and then a cliff hanger, but then this is a prequel, and it sure did get my interest, and yes I will be reading *With You Always*, to be published on June 6, 2017.

This story brings to light the conditions of our immigrants in the tenements in New York City, a small community in a jungle of so many. We see the deplorable conditions, and things look so bleak for these people, especially the children. There are so many with no food or housing, and the life on the streets is horrible.

The story focuses on Elise Neumann, a German immigrant who has the responsibility of her younger sisters, as they are orphans. We see the working conditions in what is really small sweatshops set up in people's homes. Deplorable.

Here is the link it is a free read, you don't want to miss!

<https://www.amazon.com/Awakened-Heart...>

Emilee says

Wonderful novella! I highly recommend it!

Andrea Cox says

by Andrea Renee Cox

This series was a highly anticipated one for me. However, it fell short of my expectations.

What I liked:

The theme of discovering and then pursuing God's calling on one's life was beautifully depicted.

Elise was incredibly protective of her sisters and two orphaned children. This mothering spirit is a precious thing, and it was sweetly written.

The heroism a side character showed toward Elise was breathtaking.

What I disliked and content advisory:

The use of an analogy of a drunken man by a Christian character seemed inappropriate to me. Alcohol use and drunks were present in several scenes.

Prostitution was a large theme, though it was handled fairly well. What was hard to swallow about it, though, was that one character told his young niece she should "go sell [herself] like all the other girls" were doing. This was quite appalling behavior.

There was an awkward moment when two people were supposed to be praying over their God-ordained mission. Instead of communing with God about the mission's concerns and future, the lady ogled the man. The man caught her doing this and made the moment even more awkward by quizzing her about it. This was incredibly disrespectful of God, particularly since both characters had seemed to be trying their best to follow God's call and be devoted to His work prior to this moment. It was also disrespectful to the lady (by the man), because he put her in a very awkward situation by asking her if she wanted to kiss him. That seemed really strange for the moment and the era to me. It seemed really inconsistent with the goals of both characters as well, and it was a pivotal moment that switched the focus of the story from following God's call on one's life to pursuing romance before God's call. The shift in perspective did not change back for me from this point forward.

Two extended and passionate kissing scenes disrupted the flow for me. These were also a main reason why the shift in focus seemed to stick around for me.

There was a lewd scene that included the groping of a woman and a subsequent groin shot in self-defense. I found these things unnecessary and inappropriate.

There was a threat of "hacking off" someone's fingers.

There was a mention of the "hardness" of a man's muscles.

Two expletive phrases were used.

What disappointed me the most was that this book had nothing to do with an orphan train. It did not seem to

be placed in the correct series since it did not introduce the idea of an orphan train. I can see how the mission work the leads were doing could possibly eventually lead to the creation of an orphan train, but that possibility had to be completely conjured up in my own imagination, because it was not even hinted at during any of the scenes. I was puzzled as to how it would fit into the series since it didn't seem to be connected other than possibly giving background information on some of the characters that will appear in the first full-length book in the series.

In summary:

Though there were things that hampered my enjoyment of this book, there were reasons to appreciate it as well. I liked the deep faith thread through the first eight or nine chapters. The compassion in the leading lady was wonderful also. I hope others enjoy this book much more than I was able to.

I was not compensated for my honest review.

Heidi Robbins (Heidi Reads...) says

I loved this novella! Such a good introduction to the characters that will be in the author's new Orphan Train series. There is a sweet romance in this story with Christine and Guy who are amazing characters, which made the novella feel complete, while at the same time introducing us to the sisters and children who will become part of their lives. I seriously cannot wait to read the first full-length book in the series, *With You Always*.

Hannah says

A very good introduction to Jody Hedlund's newest series, *Orphan Train*. I loved reading Guy and Christine's story and getting acquainted with the Neumann sisters. The novella is about a dozen chapters and includes the first five chapters of book 1.

Rebecca says

"what we thought as failure was really God moving us on to what He had planned all along."

What exactly has God planned for Christine Pendleton and the Reverend Guy Bedell? A lonely young heiress intent on serving God with her life; an impassioned pastor who feels blocked in his efforts to move his ministry to the impoverished immigrants of New York City even one tiny step forward.

Elise Neumann carries the burden of one much older than her nineteen years, as she tries to care for her younger siblings after the death of their mother. Working tirelessly in her uncle's sweat shop, her circumstances become much more perilous after unscrupulous advances. Where will they go and what will they do, without shelter or employment?

Join Jody Hedlund as she skillfully weaves God's calling and the desperate cry of a young woman into a tapestry of faith, showcasing God's ability to do beyond what we could ask or think. It's an intriguing prequel

to her forthcoming release, "Orphan Train".

Deanne Patterson says

I can not wait to read book 1. I really enjoyed this one!

Joleen says

I had just finished a book where the author chose to use an unfortunate way of expressing romance...by thought bubbles pointing out the other's body parts, or what they want to do with said body parts. Ugh.

Now, in this book *An Awakened Heart* there was mention of noticing broad shoulders, for instance, but they always chastised themselves for thinking those thoughts, or turned those attractive parts into how they minister to her or others. This.... this shows the difference between titillating wording or true heartfelt consideration...

Quote from *An Awakened Heart*:

"However, as he began his prayer, she couldn't think about anything but the warm pressure of his hands against hers. His fingers were strong but also contained a tenderness she'd grown to appreciate about him. In fact, there were many things she'd learned about him that she liked. He was humble, open to her ideas, and yet he wasn't a pushover. He always had insightful suggestions and advice to add to her plans. He was also diligent and hardworking. He arrived at the chapel before her every day and left later. He was kind and merciful to all those he came into contact with, yet he hadn't hesitated to confront a couple of drunken men who'd disrupted the worship service. He was tough and intimidating when he needed to be.

"She peeked up at him, taking a few seconds to study his features as he prayed. She liked the square solidness of his chin, the smile lines next to his eyes, and the peaceful look on his face. She found herself captivated by his mouth and the purposefulness of each word he spoke. Suddenly his lips stopped moving, and she saw that he had one eye half open and was peeking back at her. "I'm sorry," she said. "I was just . . . just . . ."

"You were just praying with your eyes open?"....

You see how much romance is shown without the in-your-face litany of mouth-watering body parts? One goes beyond the surface into the strength and heart of the other person.

Okay, stepping off soapbox. My style, my sort of aaaah factor.

I'm a Jody Hedlund fan. I've heard some aren't as fond of her serious writing, but I find it fascinating. In this book Christine is encouraged by the minister from the Centre Street Chapel, (Guy) who encourages the flock to minister to the immigrants of New York City, whose lives are sinful by choice, or, as in the case of the prostitutes, by little choice, from which they experience crowding, extreme struggles, sadness, filth, and/or starvation.

The question is, do you help them out (better jobs, food, money) and lead them to the Lord by love, or do you show them the error of their ways and tell them of the love of God who can help them live better? Both Guy and Christine have opposite views on this, but Ladies Home Missionary Society has tied Guys hands

with regard to what he's allowed to do for them.

Love the growing attraction between them as they struggle the issues together, she being a 30 year old spinster who feels unattractive and unworthy, he, a 40 year old widower with little income. I also love the cause they both feel passionate about.

How any of this relates to the orphan train is never mentioned...so I'll have to look at the following books.

Loved this book!

Jennifer says

2.5 stars. A nice introduction to the series. This was heavy on the Message and will seem too preachy for non-believers. However, I liked it. I do wish there was a bit more character development, but it was decent for a novella. I hope to see the MCs again in the subsequent books of this series.

Emily says

Darn teaser novellas making me want to read the series. ?

Erin says

Available for Free on Kindle right now!

Pure Hedlund Magic! Jody Hedlund immerses reader's into the world of 1850's New York City while also confronting the conditions of the city's immigrant population. We have German-American sisters, Elise, Marianne, and Sophie, orphaned by the recent deaths of both parents and trying to escape life on the streets. Other characters are spinster, Christine Pendleton and a widowed Reverend, who want to help women end their dependence on prostitution. Although a novella, I felt that Jody Hedlund gave me enough details to feel like this was a full feature story.

I cannot wait to dive into this series!

Staci says

A nice start to the Orphan Train Series. Readers get a glimpse at how children became orphans in late 1800s New York City. I look forward to seeing what happens to Elise and her small "family".

Beth says

I enjoyed this quick novella! Novellas in general tend to feel rushed, but I found this one to be endearing and a great start to Hedlund's new series. This is definitely meant to give readers a peek into the full series, including characters with stories that still need resolution. The main characters of the novella, however, have a complete story, and for such a short space, this one is told well. I also appreciated the realistic look at the bleak life of those living in poverty in New York City in the late 1850's and the desire of people like Christine to move beyond words and put them into action. I'm eager for the Orphan Train series and to see these characters again.
