



Engraved on the Heart

Tara Johnson

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Reluctant debutante Keziah Montgomery lives beneath the weighty expectations of her staunch Confederate family, forced to keep her epilepsy secret for fear of a scandal. As the tensions of the Civil War arrive on their doorstep in Savannah, Keziah sees little cause for balls and courting. Despite her discomfort, she cannot imagine an escape from her familial confines?until her old schoolmate Micah shows her a life-changing truth that sets her feet on a new path . . . as a conductor in the Underground Railroad.

Dr. Micah Greyson never hesitates to answer the call of duty, no matter how dangerous, until the enchanting Keziah walks back into his life and turns his well-ordered plans upside down. Torn between the life he has always known in Savannah and the fight for abolition, Micah struggles to discern God's plan amid such turbulent times.

Battling an angry fiancé, a war-tattered brother, bounty hunters, and their own personal demons, Keziah and Micah must decide if true love is worth the price . . . and if they are strong enough to survive the unyielding pain of war.

Engraved on the Heart Details

Date : Published June 1st 2018 by Tyndale House

ISBN : 9781496428318

Author : Tara Johnson

Format : Paperback 400 pages

Genre : Historical, Historical Fiction, Christian Fiction, Romance, Fiction, Christian, American History, American Civil War, Adult Fiction, Military History, Civil War, Historical Romance

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From Reader Review Engraved on the Heart for online ebook

Amanda Geaney (Christian Shelf-Esteem) says

3.5 Stars

A strong debut from Johnson. I enjoyed the chemistry between Keziah and Dr. Greyson as well as the how the author captured the divisiveness of the war. My favorite secondary character was Hiriam, a slave in Keziah's household. While it is a well-written and compelling story, I felt it was a tad predictable.

Rachael says

The story line in this book grabbed my attention and my heart within the first thirty pages. Once my heart and mind was engaged, I was pulled through this read in one sitting losing sleep. (As I've heard said, " Who ever bragged about how much fun or memories the made sleeping." Sometimes it's overrated!)

I did enjoy the characters we are introduced to in this read. Some with great courage...so much so that it made me wonder what I would do with such circumstances. For Civil War buffs or those interested in the Underground Railroad, this will be a must read.

As usual, I find great reads hard to review and not reveal spoilers so just go buy the book! You will not regret it. This novel will touch your heart. Enjoy the quotes!

"It's plain as plain can be, Doc. That pretty little thing has engraved her name on your heart."

...where man sees limitation, the Almighty gave me a kind family to serve and a sweet girl to watch grow up.."

"Whatever God wills He will accomplish. I give myself to Him, however he would have me serve. " Micah from Engraved on the Heart

I received this book from the publisher. All opinions are my own.

Jocelyn Green says

Through the eyes of pop-off-the-page characters, readers are whisked into turbulent Confederate Savannah, from charming balls to the intrigue and danger of the Underground Railroad. Woven throughout this vibrant tale are strong spiritual threads sure to inspire. Lovers of Civil War fiction will rejoice to add Engraved on the Heart to their collections. I'll be looking for more from Tara Johnson!

Clara says

"Most wisdom comes through trial (...) but there's great peace in surrender"

I am absolutely impressed by Tara Johnson's debut! There heart and care woven throughout this story. The setting just comes alive and it was torture to put this book down when I had to. Obviously there has been an amount of research to bring this story alive, and I believe the author did a splendid job. My heart twisted with sorrow as I pondered on the society's thoughts in the 1800's and if we have truly walked away from these stained thoughts. The fact that history can't be forgotten to not be repeated has never rang so true.

Keziah Montgomery is endearing and brave coming to see her society, her household and her own heart for where it would stand in the light of the only truth. There are some stories that "courageous, beautiful and sweet" characters might seem futile, for from reality, but I never felt that with Keziah, or Kizzie, as her dear friend Micah Greyson calls her.

Coming face to face with hurt can be overwhelming as we question what our part can be. But ignoring is not an option, so faith can be a powerful weapon as we choose to invest on one life at a time, one freedom at a time. And never underestimate the ripples produced afterwards if we cling to faithfulness. The journey is never easy, but let's not "live in the land of what-ifs. God's not there. He is I Am".

Staci says

Solid historical romance debut. Isn't the cover lovely?

Keziah Montgomery has the "falling sickness" and is viewed by her family as an embarrassment. Her parents are eager to find her a husband. Keziah doesn't see her ailment as debilitating as her parents. She wishes to marry for love.

The Montgomery family lives in Savannah, Georgia and support the confederacy. Kezia finds her own view about the war and slavery in particular early in the novel.

The first half of the novel was good and created the background for what was to come. I found the second half of the novel to be stronger due to the increase in action. Overall, this was well done. I look forward to the author's next novel.

Shantelle says

4.5 stars

I have definitely found a new author to watch! My first time reading by Tara Johnson was worth it ... *Engraved on the Heart* was an exciting story with depth and heart.

Set during America's Civil War, it follows the life of Keziah Montgomery, a young woman belonging to a staunchly Confederate family and suffering through seizures. She unexpectedly meets up with a childhood schoolmate, unaware that he's haunted by his father's legacy and a shocking secret. Both get caught up in dangerous endeavors and uncertain matters of the heart.

So I really enjoyed this book. I found it easy to read, though the writing style was a *little* different than what I'm used to. In some ways, it felt like we didn't delve quite as deep into the story and the characters' lives and

personalities, but, in any case, I quite liked Keziah and Micah, and the rest of the people who made up this novel. There was adventure, danger, sweet romance, and unexpected twists. I usually enjoy stories set during the Civil War, and *Engraved on the Heart* didn't disappoint. Also, a big theme of this book was slavery and the Underground Railroad which I found to be both intriguing and utterly heart-wrenching.

Not only that, but the faith theme was simply beautiful. So raw and emotional! I found myself crying near the end of the book, so poignant and soul-touching it was. *Engraved on the Heart* is truly an example of how romance novels can shine God's light and share His love.

There definitely was a lot of emotion in this book. And a tender love story. And a dangerous, raw, but ultimately victorious, journey. For those who enjoy historical fiction, especially set during American wars, you must check out *Engraved on the Heart*!

I received a copy of Engraved on the Heart from Tyndale Publishers blogger program in exchange for my honest review.

Nicole says

This was such an enjoyable read! A simple plot that was made poignant by the setting and circumstances of the individual characters. I loved the unique aspect of Kizzie's falling sickness, and the tender yet bittersweet relationship she shared with Micah. The dramatic peek into such a turbulent era was fascinating as well. Really enjoyed it!

Sarah Sundin says

A truly lovely debut novel. Through the eyes of an unlikely heroine awakening to the injustices of slavery, *Engraved on the Heart* brings Savannah, Georgia during the Civil War to life. Tara Johnson writes with honesty and compassion, undergirded with solid research. The characters are lovingly drawn, and Keziah's growth from sheltered weakness to faithful courage is simply radiant. A book to savor and an author to watch!

Sarah Monzon says

3.5 star but since there aren't any half stars I'm rounding up. Lovers of Civil War era fiction with a light shining on the Underground Railroad will enjoy this book by debut author Tara Johnson. Set in Savannah, Georgia, readers get a feel for sentiments of those living in the south and Confederate states. I especially enjoyed how the author highlighted how those on both sides believed that God was on their side, both citing Scripture to prove their points. While this is a romance, I have to admit that I didn't fall in love with the hero, Micah. Not that there was anything wrong with him, I just didn't find myself wanting to add him to my list of book boyfriends, which was disappointing. Overall, a solid story that you can tell the author put her heart into.

Caitlyn Santi says

This is a very good debut novel! The author has immense talent, but unfortunately I just didn't really connect and engage with this book the way I had hoped, and I don't really know why. I did love main characters Keziah and Micah, and I especially loved Hiriam!

I don't think I've ever before read a book where the main character has epilepsy, and I found it very interesting to read about in a historical novel and get a glimpse of how epilepsy was perceived by people in that time! This book is very historically accurate which makes it tough to read at times, because you know that innumerable African-Americans were denied freedom and treated with unspeakable cruelty, but this book ultimately has an incredibly beautiful message. Even though this wasn't a favorite, I did still enjoy it and am very glad I read it! I recommend this book to anyone who enjoys realistic Civil War fiction, especially those who prefer a story that is lighter on the romance. Tara Johnson is a great writer, and I look forward to trying more of her work in the future.

I received a copy of this book from the publisher, which did not influence my review in any way. All thoughts and opinions are one hundred my own.

Michelle says

I really enjoyed this book. I thought the characters were well developed and the overall story line was pretty well done. I would say a lot of this book was a tad predictable but that isn't necessarily bad. People who really love Civil War fiction and history would enjoy this story as it takes you into the Underground Railroad from a different perspective. My husband has been a Civil War reenactor so you could say that Civil War history is pretty common and read about in our house! There were times in the story that I thought the history side and details about the Underground Railroad could have been more developed. But all that to say it was a decent read and I look forward to reading what Johnson writes next!

Thanks to Tyndale for offering me a free copy. All opinions are my own.

Carrie Turansky says

Tara Johnson's debut novel, Engraved on the Heart, is a powerful story that will touch your heart. The characters are memorable, and I loved both the hero and heroine. There were some surprising twists and turns in the story that kept me reading. Very well done! I'll look forward to Tara Johnson's next book!

Kav says

What an amazing debut novel! I'm definitely a Tara Johnson fan now! She catapulted me back in time and wrangled my emotions into a heap of pulsating fury. Gah! Some of these characters....enraged doesn't begin

to describe the way I feel! I do so love when I can become emotionally engaged in a story and my passions ran high over the course of this read.

Phew! The things Keziah comes up against! The restrictive role forced upon a woman in this time period for one. Added to that are health concerns that have prompted her family to alternately coddle and berate her. And the threat of an arranged marriage to a shudderingly awful man because, of course, she'd never be able to take care of herself. Ha! The people closest to her have no concept of what really lies in Keziah's heart. No understanding of the courage and grit and phenomenal determination that drives Kizzie to follow God's leading in her life. Which charges her into danger and intrigue and even the arms of a childhood friend.

Returning to Savannah after years of study in Philadelphia makes Dr. Micah Greyson an outsider in his hometown. His views have changed, values sharpened and politically -- well, let's just say that living in the South when war is declared becomes challenging. Micah is a quiet man, drawn to a cause that makes him a traitor in the eyes of his Confederate neighbours.

I've had a fascination with the Underground Railroad since I was a kid and I appreciate Johnson's candor as she presents some unique facets of the Southern perspective that sent chills down my spine. How easy it is to bury common decency in the name of right-fighting fanaticism!

A beautiful inspirational thread brings hope and redemption to a story steeped in turmoil and confusion. And the title tie-in is profoundly beautiful. A truly stunning debut novel!

Anne says

I loved most of the story and the main characters, but the plot had some serious holes in it, in my opinion. I did love how the MC had epilepsy. That was a unique and unusual twist that added a lot of interest to the story.

Linda Klager says

Thank you Goodreads for letting me win this book. I loved this story. I thought the author did such a great job of research of the Civil War Era. Although this was a terrible time for people on American soil, I find this era very fascinating.

How must it have felt to have had war so close? How would it have felt to have brothers, sons and sweethearts go off to war knowing the odds of them never coming back or coming back with such horrible war wounds both physically, mentally and emotionally?

The story of Kizzie (real name Keziah) and Micah was a wonderful story full of surprises. I admired Kizzie for being strong even though she had a serious physical ailment. It was also interesting to learn that Keziah was one of the names of Job's children in the Bible.
