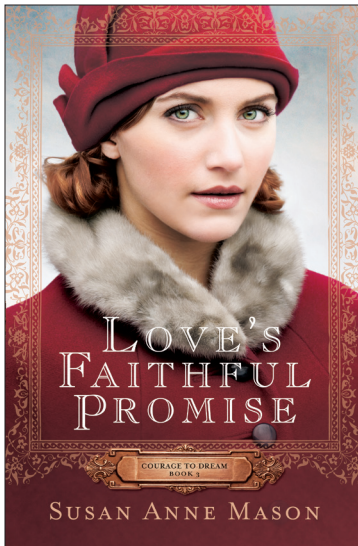




QUESTIONS & ANSWERS WITH SUSAN ANNE MASON



Love's Faithful Promise

COURAGE TO DREAM #3

by Susan Anne Mason

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1. What is *Love's Faithful Promise* about?

This final book in the COURAGE TO DREAM series deals with the two youngest O'Learys: Deirdre and Connor. Deirdre is a medical student, who puts her studies on hold to help nurse her mother back to health after a stroke. She is forced to deal with a rather cantankerous Canadian doctor who comes to Irish Meadows to treat Mrs. O'Leary. Dr. Clayborne, a widower, brings with him his adorable but frail daughter, Phoebe, who adds an extra heartwarming element to the story. Connor O'Leary is following in his father's footsteps at Irish Meadows, but his efforts to prove himself are thwarted by a stable hand—who is hiding a huge secret! I hope this last book in the O'Leary saga wraps up the series in a most sigh-worthy fashion!

2. What is the theme of *Love's Faithful Promise*?

The underlying theme of my story is healing of all kinds—physical, emotional, and spiritual. Dr. Clayborne suffers from guilt over his wife's death, as well as trauma from his time in the war. He is emotionally frozen and unable to help his young daughter, who suffers lingering health issues from tuberculosis, as well as emotional distress from the loss of her mother. While Dr. Clayborne treats Mrs. O'Leary, Deirdre attempts to help Phoebe come out of her shell, and Mrs. O'Leary strives to bring the doctor's faith back to life. Over the course of her mother's therapy, Deirdre comes to admire the honorable doctor and helps heal his emotional wounds (with a few kisses!).

3. Is there a second love story in *Love's Faithful Promise*?

Oh, yes! I couldn't let the series end without the last O'Leary sibling, Connor O'Leary, getting his own "happily ever after." Connor has sworn off women to concentrate on his work with the horses at Irish Meadows. It was a challenge to find a girl who would fit into Connor's world. Somehow I came up with the idea of a girl masquerading as a boy to work on the farm. This stable hand has a definite way with horses, which intrigues Connor, but at the same time threatens to throw his carefully laid out plan for his career into chaos. I hope the readers will be charmed by Connor and Jo's somewhat unconventional romance!

4. Does the story take place at Irish Meadows?

Not all of the story! A good portion of the book takes place in Toronto, Canada, not far from my hometown. Someone suggested having a Canadian character in one of my books, and as I researched physiotherapy around the time of World War I, I learned Toronto had a hospital for wounded veterans, and soon Dr. Clayborne came to life. It was great fun visiting Toronto's Old City Hall, which is now used as a court. The architecture is still mostly original, even down to the washrooms marked "Women's Lavatory." I hope my readers will enjoy the Canadian parts of the story!

5. How did you feel ending the O'Leary saga?

It was actually bittersweet. While I loved getting to show all the siblings with their spouses and their children, it was sad to say goodbye to the family of characters who have become so dear to me. But, as they say, all good things must come to an end. And I think it's a lovely ending indeed!