



Steadfast Heart

BRIDES OF SEATTLE #1
by Tracie Peterson

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Media Contacts

FICTION PUBLICIST: **Amy Green**
952-829-2596
agreen@bethanyhouse.com

CANADIAN MEDIA: **Ellen Graf-Martin**
519-342-3703
ellen@grafmartin.com

Please send tear sheets to:
Amy Green
11400 Hampshire Ave. S.
Bloomington, MN 55438

QUESTIONS & ANSWERS WITH TRACIE PETERSON

1. *Steadfast Heart* is the start of a new series set in Seattle. Why did you choose to use this location?

I wanted to set a series in Seattle because the history there is so rich. I chose to set it in the 1888-1890's because of the historical event of the Great Fire. Many people don't realize that most of downtown Seattle burned to the ground in June of 1889. It made an interesting backdrop for the setting. I also thought it would be fun to bring in the romantic element of a bridal finishing school.

2. What gave you the idea for your bridal school and the characters there?

History tells of a man named Mercer who had the idea to advertise for women in the East to come west to marry in Seattle. Women were scarce, and this seemed a perfect solution. However, it didn't really work out all that well. So I thought it might be fun to have three zany old ladies take up the call a few decades later. These old ladies are quite opinionated and skilled. They're successful in teaching the young women all they need to know to run a household and to be a good wife. Successful, that is, with exception of their young ward, Abrianna. This redheaded hoyden, as she's often called, is anything but bridal material.

3. What's the main plot of *Steadfast Heart*?

Abrianna is a continuing heroine throughout the series, but *Steadfast Heart* is the romantic story of her best friend, Lenore, and a man named Kolbein. Kolbein has come west from Chicago to find his wayward, runaway sister. He has reason to believe she might have come to the school, and that's where he meets Lenore and Abrianna. This is a love at first sight story that has more than one obstacle to overcome. There are also ongoing friendships, intrigue surrounding a rather seedy character, and of course all the trouble and problems Abrianna manages to get herself into.

4. The story has more humor than you are usually known for. Why did you decide to go this route?

The characters themselves are such that humor was just natural. The old ladies are opinionated and often mistakenly so. They have their ideals and ideas for what is and isn't acceptable and believe they know best for all circumstances, including the idea that often grumpy people just need a good purgative to set them straight and restore their spirits. Abrianna is also quite opinionated, stubborn, and determined to serve God by serving the poor and homeless of Seattle. It's a task completely unsuited to a young woman, but she pursues it with great gusto and often finds herself facing hilarious uncertainty because of it. I found the characters a great deal of fun to write.

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5. What about the spiritual message?

Overall, this series is about trusting God through adversity and trials. *SteadfastHeart* focuses on learning to let go and trust God to have the best at heart for His children. It also speaks of learning to listen to your heart and to God's direction.

6. Is there anything in particular that you want people to know about this book and series?

I think readers will be pleased with this book and will enjoy the trials of Abrianna and the romance of Lenore and Kolbein. I worked hard to make the historical details as accurate as possible, hoping that the history of Seattle would come alive in the story and entertain the readers. I also hope the book will encourage readers spiritually and will cause them to reflect on areas of their own lives where trust comes hard and God's direction seems hard to know. God is always faithful to guide us, but sometimes we're not willing to yield our own authority. My characters in *Steadfast Heart* find themselves up against this same spirit.

7. You mention that *Steadfast Heart* is book one in a series. Is this book also a stand alone?

I try to make all of the books stand alone, so if some readers only have the opportunity to read one book of the three, they won't feel cheated or left hanging. There is the ongoing heroine, Abrianna Cunningham, and the old ladies, as well as a few others, but each book will have a different focal romance while also building on the foundational interests and conflicts of the ongoing characters.