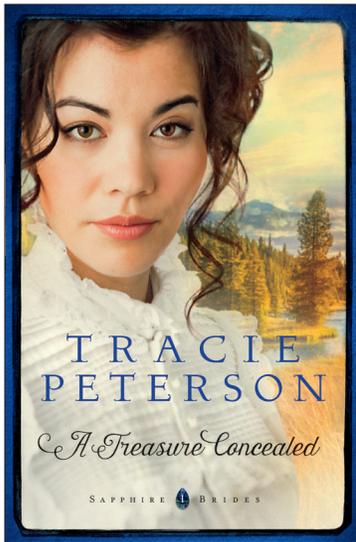


QUESTIONS & ANSWERS WITH TRACIE PETERSON



A Treasure Concealed

SAPPHIRE BRIDES #1
by Tracie Peterson

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1. What can you tell us about *A Treasure Concealed*?

A Treasure Concealed is a story set in the late 1800s in the middle of Montana. Emily Carver cares for her dying mother after both women have spent a lifetime following Emily's father from one gold strike to another. Emily's father is certain he will one day make his fortune and all will be good. All Emily longs for is a permanent home—a house with a picket fence, a husband, and children. Geologist Caeden Thibault, on the other hand, grew up in a family home, but life there was total despair, and he never wants to revisit that kind of life again. So he's taken a job surveying the mineral deposits in Montana for the U.S. government. Doing this, he and Emily come face-to-face. Pesky little blue stones keep clogging up the gold sluices, and Caeden believes them to be sapphires. If so, they will change the lives of everyone in the area. Tragedy strikes when an evil adversary from the past appears for revenge, and Emily and Caeden find themselves growing to depend on and care deeply for each other.

2. Why did you write this story?

I wanted to do a series of stand-alone books that would deal with the discovery of Montana's Yogo Sapphires and the development of those stones becoming much-sought after gemstones. With this particular book, I wanted to show the accidental discovery of the sapphires and how it changed the lives of some of those people involved. I also wanted to write a story about not recognizing the treasure right in front of you, whether because of the scars given by the past or the urgency of the present, and ultimately learning to trust God and rest in Him for the future.

3. Did you do any particular research for this story?

I traveled to the area of Montana where the Yogos were discovered. Sapphires can be found all over the state, but the only place in the world where Yogo sapphires are found is in the central area of Montana. These are particularly beautiful sapphires that generally have a cornflower-blue color, although there have been darker Yogos and even violet colors. The area is all but forgotten now, although there are a handful of die-hard folks who camp out in the area and search for sapphires. There are others who own the actual mines in the area, and they still benefit from mining these gemstones. It was fascinating to me to learn about sapphires and some of the intrigue that took place because of them. I also managed to talk to several people who were very familiar with sapphires and the history of the area, as well as read as many books on the subject as I could find. Research accuracy is very important to me.

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4. Why is the research so important?

For me, even though the story is fiction, it is a type of commitment to the reader. A sort of trust issue. If I am willing to research and be accurate in the simple historical time period and setting, then I believe the reader will trust me with the spiritual issues as well. Writing for me is a ministry to offer biblical encouragement and the Gospel message, so it's important to me that readers know I've done my homework to the best of my ability. It doesn't mean I won't make mistakes or that others might have a different interpretation of the times or even the Scriptures, but I do my best to write the story in such a way that it will be accurate and appeal to many.

5. Is there a particular spiritual message you hope the reader will take away?

As always, my stories deal with elements of forgiveness, but in this story there are also issues of what God expects of us and whether or not we can disappoint Him. For me, believing that God is all-knowing and all-powerful, I don't believe we can disappoint Him. Disappointment implies unrealized expectations, and God, being God, doesn't need to have expectations. God knows the choices we'll make, and while He might be sad because we make bad ones, I don't think He's disappointed in us. I've heard so many people say that God can't possibly love them because they've failed so much—that He has to be far too disappointed in them to forgive them. This story deals with that fear.

6. Is there anything else you would like to tell the readers?

Only that while I usually write books in a series that depend on one another, this series isn't like that. This is an independent series of three stand-alone stories. The only elements they have in common are the Montana setting and the Yogo sapphires. Some readers feel they need to get all three books before they start the series, but in this case that won't be necessary for story or character continuity. I also hope they'll enjoy this little tidbit of history as much as I have.