



With You Always

Jody Hedlund

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A Riveting Look at the Orphan Train from Historical Novelist Jody Hedlund

When a financial crisis in 1850s New York leaves three orphaned sisters nearly destitute, the oldest, Elise Neumann, knows she must take action. She's had experience as a seamstress, and the New York Children's Aid Society has established a special service: placing out seamstresses and trade girls. Even though Elise doesn't want to leave her sisters for a job in Illinois, she realizes this may be their last chance.

The son of one of New York City's wealthiest entrepreneurs, Thornton Quincy faces a dilemma. His father is dying, and in order to decide which of his sons will inherit everything, he is requiring them to do two things in six months: build a sustainable town along the Illinois Central Railroad, and get married. Thornton is tired of standing in his twin brother's shadow and is determined to win his father's challenge. He doesn't plan on meeting a feisty young woman on his way west, though.

With You Always Details

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From Reader Review With You Always for online ebook

Dawn says

I was so excited to see a new series by Jody Hedlund. I remember growing up adoring the Joan Lowry Nixon Orphan Train books. And now to read more about that period of history by one of my favorite authors as an adult, well, let's just say that I was pretty much over the moon.

I knew that the Children's Aid Society placed children, orphans or not, in homes in the west. Yet I didn't know that they also found jobs for women. I also found the idea of building a town around the railroad fascinating.

I loved both Thornton and Elise. I loved how her suggestions were things that he actually took into consideration. I loved how he wanted to protect her and to provide for her. Watching them fight their feelings for each other was fun.

I am looking forward to the rest of this series. I am hoping for both Marianne's and Sophie's stories.

I received a copy of this book for free from the publisher. My thoughts and opinions are my own.

Recommended to fans of Jody Hedlund, Karen Witemeyer, historical fiction, orphan trains

Rating - 4 stars

Dana Michael says

With You Always is a beautifully told story of the hardships of women and orphans in New York City in the mid 19th century. The book is about a young woman named Elise who is the oldest of three sisters trying to keep her orphaned family together. She reluctantly leaves to find work in central Illinois. She catches the eye of a very handsome man named Thornton. It turns out that he will be her employer. There is a lot of fun banter between them as well as a strong attraction between them both. This book shows the hardships of the times, but also shows hope. This story has a wonderful inspirational message as well as a sweet romance. This was a page turner for me. I really enjoyed it and I can't wait for the next book in the series.

*I was given a copy of this book by the publisher via netgalley and was not required to leave a review.

Rane says

With the death of their parents and struggling on the streets while trying to keep her family together, Elise Neumann is lucky to have stumbled upon a place that could offer shelter to her family and her a well needed job. With faith and a bit of luck Elisa finds herself in a building town and finding herself meeting someone again by chance.

Thornton Quincy has lived in the tall shadows of his Father and twin, but with his father's health failing, a contest pits the brothers against one another to build a town and marry in six months time. Thornton's plans

go awry when he meets Elisa again and starts seeing things from a different perspective and who truly sees him...

Jody Hedlund works always show the strength in the human spirit. She never preaches to the reader, she shows the reader the bad and good in life she doesn't stray from the harshness of life, but shows the one can overcome the bad. Elisa and Thornton both show this, Elisa takes a chance to make a living for herself and her family but isn't scared of standing up against injustice and giving someone a push in the right direction and believe.

Through Elisa's eyes, we see how poor immigrant women who came to the US in hope and didn't find nothing but heartache. Elisa may be soft spoken but has a spine of steel and is able to keep her family together the best she can and even help Thornton who she met in a trying time (in the middle of a riot no less) But even Elisa can't stop things, good or bad, from happening. She only has her inner faith and her strength to help her through and love.

Thornton had to find himself, he was a better man but him seeing it took a bit longer. He loved his family and turned a blind eye to even their worse faults. He finally stood as his own man and showed who he truly was with help from Elisa.

Elisa and Thornton love grows slowly as they learn about one another and show and prove something not only to one another but to themselves. By the end you can see together they can face anything and everything with by each other's side.

The only trouble I had with the book was the very rushed ending and while it left it open for the rest of Elisa's family, the ending just went by in a fast and felt a tad jarring.

Hedlund placed the reader in a time not talked about but truly made it vivid with amazing characters and place I look forward to more from this series.

Beth Erin says

Full review on Faithfully Bookish <http://wp.me/p7ngfE-10x>

The danger, destitution, and desperation of New York City's poor immigrants during this period is vividly portrayed and contrasted against the abundant work opportunities available across the fresh, wide open expanses of central Illinois farmland. Elise Neumann and her younger sisters are literally fighting for survival while struggling to care for a pair of young orphans.

Thornton Quincy has the potential to become a great leader. Despite his ignorance of the hardships endured by the working class, his moral compass is true. Thornton has a lot to learn about the cost of a hard day's work and he needs to weigh what he discovers against his father's expectations for his business and future.

This story touched my heart and had me looking up old railroad maps from the time period. I'm eagerly anticipating each new story in this series and highly recommend this book!

I requested the opportunity to read this book through the publisher. The opinions expressed are my own.

Rachel says

Loved this book! Great start to a new series. I can't wait to read about the rest of the sisters! More detailed review to follow.

Thanks to the author & publisher for a complimentary copy of this book. I was not paid or required to write a positive review and all opinions stated are my own.

Maureen Timerman says

I had read a preview for this book in An Awakened Heart, which is a free preview kindle book on Amazon, <https://www.amazon.com/Awakened-Heart...>, and you will not be disappointed.

I was a page turning very quickly and this book is one that will linger with you, a very compelling read and enjoyable.

When we look back to the 1800's in our country and look at a city like New York and its immigrant population, life was far from easy, and people tended to gather in areas from the same ethnicity.

The family we are following, and again I recommend you read the freebee, is from Germany, and although some are grown, they are orphans, and there are no jobs and they can't afford any housing. Desperate, the oldest Elise heads out West hoping to earn enough to send for the others.

A chance meeting on the streets of NY and our Elise already knows a prospective employer whom she meets again on the train to Illinois, Thorton Quincy. You are in for a treat as you catch the banter that these two seem to enjoy.

What Elise doesn't know is that Thorton and his twin brother have been challenged by their wealthy father to establish a self sustaining town and marry for love, and have all accomplished in six months. So while attracted to Elise, Thorton must marry well, or so he thinks.

A book filled with surprises, and not all to my liking, but a story that will keep you up late reading, and you won't be disappointed.

I received this book through Net Galley and the Publisher Bethany House, and was not required to give a positive review.

Julia Wilson says

With You Always by Jody Hedlund is a delightful Christian historical romance. It is the first book in the Orphan Train series which promises to be fabulous. Fact blends with fiction to produce yet another charming feel-good tale.

The novel explores being true to ourselves. We need to be the person God created us to be. It is no good trying to work to be someone else. One size does not fit all. We are all unique.

Poverty was terrible in New York City in 1857. Lack of work, overcrowded tenements and gang warfare made life precarious. Women went west in search of work to avoid falling into the trap of prostitution to feed their families. It was an era of exploration as well as exploitation.

Good leaders are hard to come by. Good leaders must be small enough to serve before they are big enough to lead. They need to know what their workers are doing by experience and walking in their shoes. Good

leaders do not just happen, they are made with respect.

Life and all its burdens can make us bitter if we do not practice a heart that forgives. Carrying guilt will always weigh us down. We need to forgive ourselves as well as others.

In our hurt and pain we may pull away from God and erect walls to keep Him out. She "wished she could draw confidence in God... but a wall stood in the way." God does not cause our troubles but walks alongside us in them. He longs for us to return to Him, until we do, we will not know peace. "God's been there waiting for me."

God is a good Father. We do not have to earn His love, we already have it. He contrasts sharply with some fathers who seem to make their offspring earn their love. Achievement appears to equal love. God's love is freely available to all.

Once again Jody Hedlund has drawn marvellous characters. The two leading characters spar with each other to the amusement of the reader. Poverty of possessions does not equal poverty of love. There are many riches within the story.

I adore all Jody Hedlund's novels. They leave me with a warm heart and a smile on my face.

Absolutely wonderful.

I received this book for free. A favourable review was not required and all views expressed are my own.

Heidi Robbins (Heidi Reads...) says

The plot of this book is not quite what I expected- when I hear "orphan train" I picture the children from the city getting placed in families out West. The author instead focuses on an orphaned family being torn apart as unemployed women are sent on trains to help establish new towns where there are jobs waiting to be filled. Of course, my expectations of the quality of writing were met- I learned so much history, was immersed in the setting, and the characters came to life with emotion and feeling as they navigate complex relationship dynamics and uncertain and desperate circumstances. The main perspectives are Elise and Thorton as they embark on new ventures in Illinois, but we also see some scenes from Elise's family she had to leave behind in New York. While Elise is the strong and stalwart oldest sister who takes on the responsibility of her sisters and the young children they take under their wing, on her journey we see her vulnerability and innocence as well as her fortitude and spunk. Thorton is drawn to her and his protective feelings quickly develop into something more, despite his plan to court and marry a high society lady he believes his father would approve of. Elise challenges his town development methods and unequal treatment of the female employees, and grows to admire him as he meets her challenges and is changed through the experience. There are villains lurking and conflict arises as Thorton's deadline grows closer, and Elise's concern for her sisters is validated. They both struggle with faith but their trials prove to be a refiner's fire that strengthens them as they reconcile with the Lord and turn to Him for guidance. Highly recommend to fans of historical fiction!

(I received a complimentary copy of the book; all opinions in this review are my own)

Beth says

I've said this before in my reviews of several Hedlund novels, and it continues to be true here; she takes women from history and brings them to life in fresh ways, bringing the reader a romantic story, while also being true to the historical context and providing details that fascinate. In Elise Neumann's story, it's the

orphan train, and though it presents a different facet of the orphan train that I was initially thinking, I loved this look into what it would be like for a woman who chooses to travel to a start-up town out west for work. For Elise, more than just her own well-being and future is at stake – her younger sisters and their adopted charges are first and foremost in her mind.

Though our characters Elise and Thornton are from different stations of society, they feel a connection with one another instantly, but fear not, it's not insta-love, but rather a mutual enjoyment of each other's company. They never expect to see each other again but hardship brings them together by way of the New York Children's Aid Society and Elise's desire to help her family. What I liked most is how they challenge each other and bring out different sides of their personalities. Their interactions in the beginning are especially bittersweet, as Thornton fights with himself over his desire to spend more time with her, knowing in the back of his mind that he has a challenge to win – a challenge that has no place for Elise Neumann. While at first it seemed like he was just ignoring the truth of his feelings, he is finally honest with himself - he knows that what he wants and the challenge set before him by his father are two different things. Instead of focusing on the challenge at hand, he finds himself challenged by Elise – to really put himself in his workers shoes, to really think about living life the way they have to do.

I know there were women like Elise who beseeched others to consider the plight of the poor and disregarded. I deeply appreciate the way that Hedlund sheds light on the plight of the poor in New York during this time period leading up to the orphan trains. While it is hard to fathom from today's perspective either giving up your child, or leaving your family to work, for many back then, it was the only option. It really prompted me to remember not to cast judgement on the decisions of others and to remember to look at things from their perspective.

With You Always is another winning romantic historical by Jody Hedlund! Fans of her previous books will not be disappointed. While it doesn't replace my favorite of her novels, I truly loved the look at the plight of orphans and women especially. It is great start to a new series, and a new Hedlund series is such a treat to look forward to. I'm eager to read Marianne and Sophie's stories that are hopefully to come! Oh, and do read the ebook prequel novella if you get the chance - it's short, well-done story that sets up a nice backdrop to Elise's story. Also, can I just say that Bethany House hit it out of the park with this cover and the overall design of the book. It's seriously lovely, and when the story inside is as lovely as the outside, it makes for a wonderful reading experience.

Jennifer says

At 40% percent: I'm having a hard time with this one. I don't find either MC all that likable. The H is in a competition with his brother to fall in love with and marry someone, already has a specific person in mind and has been wooing her. However, he's attracted to h instead and starts taking her out to dinner, paying her compliments, and basically wooing her too, all while hiding his real identity from her. He strings her along, knowing all the while that his father would never approve of her, and his shame and self loathing don't come soon enough.

Upon finishing, my initial reaction stands. Added to my thoughts above, the h turned into a self sacrificing martyr. Er. I enjoyed the historical aspect of this story, as heartbreaking as it was. It was well developed, interesting, and inspired a deep level of gratitude in me. The two stars I give are for the enjoyable storytelling (multiple povs told in the third person), the historical context, and the message of this story. Unfortunately, the MCs left much to be desired. They were complex and developing, but they weren't very likable.

Rebecca says

"Are you sure?"

Elise Neumann has not been sure of anything since her parents died, leaving Elise and her two siblings penniless, and in dire need of safe housing and proper employment. Forced to flee a deplorable situation; Elise, her two younger sisters, and two orphans manage to find Seventh Street Mission, where a previous acquaintance offers a providential, albeit temporary, respite from their desperation. When New York City becomes plagued with riots and rampant bankruptcies, Elise makes the bold decision to leave the city for employment further west, determined to send her earnings back home, never imagining that a chance encounter with a handsome stranger would follow her all the way to Illinois.

Thornton Quincy is in a competition against his twin brother; their dying father having thrown down the gauntlet to determine which of his sons will continue his economic dynasty. Thornton and Bradford have six short months to develop a prosperous community along their west bound rail line; in addition, they must marry for love before Christmas Day. Although sensibly entertained with a beautiful socialite, Thornton finds that his heart is pulling him towards another; one who certainly won't gain him an empire, but who has already made him a better man.

Jody Hedlund never disappoints, and "With You Always" tenderly unwraps an intriguing portion of our nation's history, carrying a poignant reminder that though we may "walk through the valley of the shadow of death" in this life, our gracious Lord is only a hand hold away.

I received a copy of this book from the author. The opinions stated above are entirely my own.

Brittany says

With You Always was such a wonderful novel! I'd been introduced to some of the characters in the free ebook, An Awakened Heart, so I was happy to connect with them again, and to meet some new ones, too. I believe that With You Always could possibly be read without reading the prequel, but I personally recommend reading the prequel because it does such a good job of setting the stage for this novel. The stories in both of these books seamlessly continue from the prequel to book one.

I liked Elise and Thornton so much! Even though they came from extremely different circumstances, they really were made for each other. I loved watching them fall for each other, even as I wondered how anything could ever work out for them to be together.

I loved the setting of the new town of Quincy, Illinois that was being built along the railroad. How hard it must have been for those women and men who had to leave behind their families for the chance of making a living far away from those they loved.

This is a book I enjoyed from start to finish. I am really looking forward to the next novel in the series.

I received a complimentary copy of this book. All opinions are my own.

You can read this review on my blog at:
<https://brittreadsfiction.wordpress.c...>

Haley S says

I specially saved this review for today. Do you know why? Well, today is this book's birthday! You officially can buy it on Amazon and other places like that.

I had the pleasure of being an influencer for this book. So one of the coolest things about being an influencer is you get the book early!

I really enjoyed this story. It was a wonderful historical romance. I mean, some authors cannot pull off adding history into the story without seeing too historical. But, Jody is not one of those authors. She is wonderful at adding history to the story.

I really liked this cover. It immediately set the mood for the book. Before even reading the back synopsis, I knew the basic setting of the story. I am going to give it 5 stars.

I am going to give the book 4 stars because of one thing. The contest was kind of unrealistic. I mean, the father wanting his sons to marry for love in six months was not very smart. Some people don't fall head over heels in just six months. That was the only thing I didn't really like about the story. Other than that, I would definitely recommend this book to any fan of the historical romance genre! I am totally looking forward to the next book in the Orphan Train series!

Title: With You Always

Author: Jody Hedlund

Author's Website: <http://jodyhedlund.com/>

This review is written in my own opinions and words.

Hannah says

I can quite honestly say that this story is one of Jody Hedlund's best to date. Elise is a vibrant character, with a keen sense of honor and a deep love for her family. Each bit of this story unfolded to show a woman brave in adversity, strong enough to put aside love for honor, and ready to make whatever sacrifices needed for her sisters' sake.

I deeply appreciated that there wasn't any smooshy "romance," but instead a true love, shown in a couple of kisses and also a strong regard for each other—as well as a challenge for each to become a better person. Elise is challenged in her faith; Thornton in his views toward humanity around him. Both characters start out nicely and grow through the course of the story into strong adults ready to face the world and change it for the better. What more can I ask?

Rachael says

This book brings to light another amazing woman who is a lost part of history. One of the many things I love about Hedlund's novels.

This book really reached my heart. I began putting myself in the places of some of the women. What would I do in their shoes? How would I act to keep my loved ones alive...to keep them from starving?? The fact that different aspects of this book keep one thinking when the book is closed...is the reason for the five stars. I don't give out many.

I loved the plot as it was different than any other orphan story I've read, the characters are real and believable, and I'm really looking forward to more books in this series.

Many of the other reasons I enjoyed it would be spoilers...so you will just have to read it yourself. However, the brilliant idea of a lowly cook to a wealthy man of what he should do to better understand....and his response was one of my favorite parts of this novel!

" ' I won't let you go.' This time the whisper was God's, and it came from deep in her soul..."

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