



## A Claim of Her Own

*Stephanie Grace Whitson*

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## **A Claim of Her Own** Stephanie Grace Whitson

It's 1876, and 20-year-old Mattie Flynn is determined to make a fresh start after fleeing from her sinister boss in the gambling house where she was employed as a singer. Mattie travels to Deadwood, South Dakota, in search of her younger brother, who went ahead of her in hopes of making a fortune in the gold mines.

All Mattie wants is a safe and respectable life for the two of them, but that doesn't seem to be her destiny as she faces more heartache and trials. Will the suspicious bottles of gold dust from her brother's claim be the key to her future...or does the handsome street preacher, who is always turning the other cheek, truly hold the answers to her deepest longings?

## **A Claim of Her Own Details**

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## **From Reader Review A Claim of Her Own for online ebook**

### **Tamara Tilley says**

A CLAIM OF HER OWN takes place in the mining town of Deadwood, South Dakota. Mattie O'Keefe is fleeing an abusive relationship with her boss while in search of her brother who tells her of the riches he has discovered in the gold fields. Once Mattie arrives in Deadwood, all of Mattie's plans change. She soon finds herself artfully nicknamed Matt the Miner. As she determines to make a go of it on her brother's claim, she finds herself drawn to the people of Deadwood, except for Aron Gallagher, a young preacher. With her skills for sizing people up, she believes Aron is hiding something. She doesn't think that preaching is his only trade and soon finds out her observations are correct. But, she's not the only one who can read a person, and what it is they are hiding. Mattie and Aron agree to keep their impressions of each other between the two of them, and soon Mattie finds herself intrigued by the man of God.

A CLAIM OF HER OWN was a good read, though I felt a little cheated by the lack of interaction between Mattie and Aron. Books that leave romantic discoveries to the final chapters frustrate me. I wanted to enjoy Mattie and Aron as a couple, instead of two single characters ignoring their feelings for each other. The cast of supporting characters Ms. Whitson created were very enjoyable and added dimension to the story.

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### **Kate says**

The book so far is beating around the bush and awful lot.

Page 83: the main guy character (I think it could be him) is introduced.

Page 158: the idea of them getting together is brought up

Page 163: The idea is shot down, never happen, nada cada ....

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### **Nicole says**

I have now read 3 of Stephanie Grace Whitson's books and I have been pleasantly relieved by each one at how the author managed to bring about one or more sweet love stories WITHOUT all the unnecessary junk that goes into so many Christian Fiction novels these days!

I also enjoyed how you never heard all the details about every character, because one point in the story is that people have things in their past that they want to forget...so they just don't talk about it!

Mattie was a sweet character and Aron was sweet too, and Freddie was even sweeter! I loved the comical McKay family and really disliked the villain. I really liked this book :D

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### **Iola says**

I always enjoy Stephanie Grace Whitson's historical novels, and this was no exception. Excellent.

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### **Tressa (Wishful Endings) says**

Mattie has escaped her dancing hall life and goes to join her brother who is gold mining in the west. When she arrives she finds out he has died and decides to take over his claim. She gains friends and a new faith in God as she deals with everyday life in the upstart town and the mining community. I enjoyed this book. A little preachy in parts, but good.

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### **Cricket Muse says**

Twenty year old Mattie O'Keefe is running away from her tyrannical saloon boss to the gold fields of South Dakota. It's 1876 and the west is still full of promise and hard work for those willing to take on the challenge. Stephanie Grace Whitson presents a petite heroine with backbone, in her historical romance, *A Claim of Her Own*. Mattie, disappointed in her hopes to be reunited with her brother once she arrives in Deadwood, must start a new life. With the help of several new friends, Mattie learns all about starting over, and discovers how change sometimes takes place from the inside out.

Whitson provides a historical glance into South Dakota's colorful beginnings in her novel. She has obviously done her research on the gold mining and the early town life of Deadwood. She fills the plot with memorable characters like Swede, the baby-toting freighter, Gallagher, the reformed gambler turned street preacher, running them alongside actual historical figures such as Buffalo Bill and Calamity Jane. Mattie's challenges in becoming a gold miner make for an interesting story, as it is a character driven plot that isn't too heavy-handed in its spiritual message. The climax and denouement seem rushed and a bit contrived, yet the overall story is satisfying.

For those who enjoy strong heroines with plots filled with accurate historical details, *A Claim of Her Own*, will provide an agreeable read.

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### **Joyce says**

Library copy. Stephanie Whitson is one of my top authors. Her writing is consistent, and the faith element in her books is invaluable to the reader. I love to learn about myself and how I can grow closer to God, even from a work of fiction. This author's books do that for me.

The book is a great story, rich in history, strong characters (good and bad), and surprising twists and turns. My favorite character is Freddie. He's not the one I identify with, but he adds so much character to the story by being an integral part of it. The obstacles in this story are many and involve more than the main character, which is true to life, isn't it? The ending is not obvious to the reader, especially from the beginning, which makes the plot truly twist and turn.

I highly recommend this book, and all books by this author. It is cleanly written. Relationships are subtle yet deep with meaning, which goes with the kind of life historically lived in frontier towns where survival was the goal more often than not. Nothing in the story is superficial. I really like this kind of writing. Thought

provoking and rich in meaning. Real qualities with eternal value, not for show.

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### **Hannah says**

At first it took a bit to get into this (including rereading the first two chapters more than once...there's absolutely no indication in chapter one that the bullwhacker Swede is a woman. The writing is vague in many ways.

However, I got interested in the story anyway, and soon was completely engrossed. The writing may not be perfect (at least the grammar is good!) but the story will most definitely tug at your heart. It is deeply Christian, which I love finding in a Christian book...many books that I read and enjoy are more inspirational than Christian, but this one has quite a message. Mattie is a plucky and understated type of heroine...and I loved all the side characters she did, too!

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### **Cathy Daniel says**

SO GOOD! It was a little hard to get into at first and there were a few pages about mining I skipped (made me nervous about the book) but after that I was sucked in and loved it! I love how her books are about life and just everything and the romance doesn't dominate the book unrealistically.

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### **Amanda says**

In one of her best books yet, Stephanie Grace Whitson provides a powerful story of love and redemption, combining real historical figures (Wild Bill Hickock and Calamity Jane) with carefully drawn fictional characters. She hooked me from the first line and, as much as I wanted to see how the story ended, another part of me wanted it to go on forever. Don't miss this wonderfully written, deeply emotional story of the Old West.

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### **Marlene says**

*A Claim of Her Own* by Stephanie Grace Whitson is a historical Christian fiction with a touch of romance. It's set in the gold mining town Deadwood, South Dakota, at around 1875.

Mattie O'Keefe is travelling to Deadwood with Swede, a very strong bullwhacker who regularly drives a team of 20 oxen to bring supplies to Deadwood. Mattie is on her way to join her brother Dillon at his mining camp. Not only does she miss her brother, but she is eager to escape the life that she has had working in a dance hall as a card dealer and singer. Jonas, the employer that she's fleeing refused to give her the wages she earned. And soon after, Mattie needed to flee. While walking such a great distance together next to the freight, she comes to admire Swede, and they become good friends. Mattie does not find what she expects in Deadwood and has to adjust. Her group of caring friends feel more like her family. She is not used to being

cared for or having trustworthy people around her.

What I liked:

\*Possibly my favorite character in this book is Freddie, who had a different way of carrying himself, spoke somewhat slowly, and was not skilled in math. Whitson does such a good job of portraying this character as a valuable, likable person. He sounds like someone I'd like to be friends with, and I admired Mattie for her easy friendship with him when others avoided him. Freddie is aware of this, and observes, "People who treat *me* nice are nice to anybody. Even dogs."

\*I liked the sprinkling of both Christian concepts and the basic salvation message in this book. I felt that it was a very important part of the plot. I don't always feel that way when reading Christian books, even though it's one of my favorite genres. Each chapter was prefaced by a Bible verse that was applicable to the portion of the plot that was about to be doled out.

\*I liked the very natural progression of multiple relationships in this book. At first I was disappointed that this book didn't seem to be a straight-out romance, but I decided to just enjoy the ride, and it was truly a wonderful story.

What I didn't like:

\*I know that some people don't like books to end too neatly. But I like to have all (or nearly all) my questions answered. When I finished reading, I had several minor questions. I think this may have been purposeful, but it is not my preference.

I'd recommend this to fans of the gold rush, historical fiction, and Christian historical fiction. This book was extremely well written, and I want to revisit this author. I plan to read Sixteen Brides!

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### **Joleen says**

***A Claim of Her Own* by Stephanie Grace Whitson**

*Time Frame:* 1876

*Location:* Deadwood, SD

*Main Characters:*

*Mattie O'Keefe:* Looking for her brother Dillon in a gold-mining town

*Swede:* Strong, freight hauling, woman bullwhacker who takes Mattie under her wing

*Freddie:* Swede's slow but sweet 16 year old son

*Tom English:* Hand lost in Civil War, started the first store in Deadwood

*Aron Gallagher :* Gospel sharing street preacher

*Aunt Lou:* Wise elderly cook for local Inn

*Jonas :* Evil man bent on finding Mattie and exacting revenge

As pretty as the young girl is on this cover, I put off reading this **because** of the cover. What I envisioned was a lightweight piece of fluff about a teenager. I just didn't want to go into another one of those. However, covers can be deceiving. This was anything but a piece of fluff. The plot had one seriously unsavory man out for revenge who was quite possibly deranged. Few people in Deadwood were left unscathed by him. There were friends made, contracts agreed upon, fear, protection, resentment, mistrust, wisdom, preaching

and jeering. This was anything but a piece of fluff. (4.5 stars)

Synopsis for my benefit when I need to look back on it later...

(view spoiler)

Fun characters like sweet simple Freddie and wisdom dispensing black cook, Aunt Lou really made this book. You can't help but fall in love with Freddie when all he wants is to protect those he loves, and be as helpful as he can. Aron Gallager had his winning ways, even though Mattie knew there was something under that façade, she was just sure of it. Swede was a self-effacing, large woman who felt like the one love of her life for two years was all the love she'd ever know. But people all around her knew what a treasure she was.

This was a very good book, with elements in it unlike many in this genre. This was no Silhouette Romance, although there were some romance within. It was a story of revelation, new beginnings, learning trust, but best of all, people coming to know the story of Christ never presented to them before.

Among my favorite quotes in this gold fever town:

*"Humans were created for a life beyond this one. For a relationship with God. Some of us murder, some of us lie, some of us are pretty good people who only do little things that are wrong. But every wrong breaks the relationship we were meant to have with God, and we end up trying to fill the resulting emptiness with other things. Here in Deadwood, it's gold."*

*"...when all money does is help them cover over the real problem."*

*"But the emptiness won't go away unless we ask the man on the cross to bridge the gap for us."*

And when after months of pondering much of what the street preacher shared regularly, and as Mattie is softening her negative stance on preachers and truths she's questioned...

*"Something amazing leaped out at her as she read. Jesus prayed for the people who were killing him. 'Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do.' The idea that anyone could be dying like that and care about the very people who were torturing him was unfathomable. What kind of man did that? It was a kind of forgiveness Mattie had never seen..."*

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### **Victor Gentile says**

I had the pleasure of interviewing Stephanie Grace Whitson on my radio show "Kingdom Highlights" regarding her new book, "A Claim Of Her Own" published by Bethany House. Maggie O'Keefe, the heroine, is on the run, having left Abilene in a hurry and has come to the town of Deadwood to join with her younger brother on his gold claim. A crisis occurs and Maggie has to tend the claim of her brother or lose

everything.

This is a wonderful, fun book. I think this is one of the hardest stories to write as it is all character driven and takes a steady hand to guide the characters through the story while remaining true to each character and these characters are memorable. There is Swede, a woman Bullwhacker, A person who hauls freight by walking thousands of miles whacking a bullwhip over the heads of oxen hauling 3 freight covered wagons and who wants to be a storekeeper. There is Tom, a Civil War veteran who lost his right hand and now has a hook and has come to Deadwood and opened a store. There is Aron, a street preacher, who has come to Deadwood to bring the Gospel to men who live for gold, alcohol and loose women. And there is Freddie, Swede's son, the hunter and protector, who is simple but, probably, the most complex of them all. All these characters play an important part in Maggie's life in Deadwood.

This is a story of the past and how we let it determine our present and future. All of us have a past and some of us let it limit and hinder our growth in our present which, of course, adversely affects our future. All these characters have a past and the only way for their emotional healing is by the Lord through contact with each other. The Bible tells us, "Iron sharpens Iron" and that is shown through the pages of this book; not in a preachy manner but in day to day displays of friendship, caring and understanding of one another. You come to love these characters as if they were alive (and they are within the pages of this book) and it is a thrill to watch them interact, grow and put aside their distrust, fear and the hurts of their pasts and find peace in their present.

Peter tells us we are "lively stones jointly fitted together". I looked at a stone wall and found that each stone touched 6 other stones, 2 on top, 2 on each side and 2 on the bottom. Ms. Whitson, in her book, shows us how we come in contact with each other and what our relationship with each other can do. None of these characters can accomplish their dreams apart from the others and this is all demonstrated quite clearly by the deft hand of a master storyteller, Stephanie Grace Whitson.

Many kudos to Ms. Whitson for a truly memorable book, I was sorry to see it end. Perhaps one day MS. Whitson will write a sequel and we will return to Deadwood to see what new adventures these characters will encounter. In the meantime we take solace that next year there will be a new book with new characters that will entertain us and give us new insights into our God and ourselves.

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### **Marcy says**

I really enjoyed this story!

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### **Lindsey says**

I just finished this - really enjoyed it! Especially the fact that it takes place in the wild West and Wild Bill Hickok and Calamity Jane make a showing (it sounds corny but it wasn't at all). I thought Mattie's struggles were very real-to-life and felt drawn into her world, and found myself wanting to know more about many of the minor characters as well. I do feel that Mattie's romance was kind of contrived sometimes (I didn't ever really know Aron or understand why Mattie would be attracted to him), but the storyline was exciting and interesting enough that I didn't care. The message of God's grace was moving and totally effective. Satisfying read!

