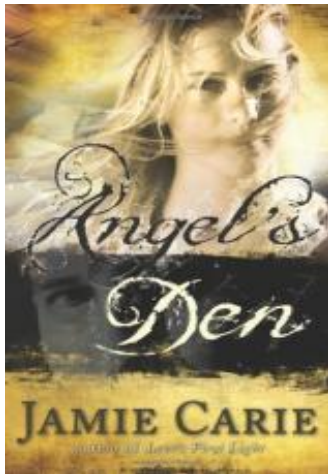


# Angel's Den

by Jamie Carie

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## About the Book

In 1808, when Emma meets and marries Eric Montclair (the famed "most handsome man west of the Appalachians"), this young daughter of prominent St. Louis citizens believes a fairy tale has just begun. Instead, her husband's angelic looks quickly prove only to mask a monstrous soul all too capable of possessive emotions and physical abuse. Praying for mercy, she is devastated when Eric insists on her joining his yearlong group expedition to the Pacific Ocean, following the trail Lewis and Clark blazed just a few years earlier. By the time cartographer Luke Bowen realizes Emma's plight, it's too late to easily untangle what has become an epic web of lies, theft, murder, courtroom drama, and a deep longing for love. Only God can show them the way out.

## Discussion Guide

1. In the beginning of the story Emma allows herself and her decisions to flow from unfolding events and other people's opinions (her parents included). Caught up in what looks like such a wonderful thing (marriage to Eric) she doesn't stop and seek out God's will for her life. Have you ever been swept away on a tide of wonderful events only to find out later that you made a mistake? What happened?
2. Luke is doing the responsible thing in taking care of his family after his father's death. But the grass is greener on the other side, and he is filled with discontent. Have you been bound by responsibilities because of loss or lack that cornered you into life choices that were not what you wished? How did it turn out? What did you learn?
3. One of Emma's weaknesses is clumsiness --- especially when she is nervous. Do you have a trait that plagues you that you wish you could change? (i.e. speaking before thinking, a pessimistic nature, judgmentalism or even overly optimistic, etc.). How have you tried to overcome this "natural tendency?" What Scripture verses have helped you?
4. Emma learns that pleasing her new husband means she must become what he needs at the moment to keep his

emotions safe. Do you think this is emotional abuse? How do you feel about men like Eric? What do the Scriptures tell us about how husbands should treat their wives? Consider Colossians 3:19; 1 Peter 3:8-12; Ephesians 5:1-2; 15-33.

**5.** What would you do if you discovered you had married a man like Eric?

**6.** Do you believe it's easier for women today, when caught in abusive relationships, to ask for help than it was back in 1808? What keeps women from asking for help from family? From friends? From church? How can we as Christians, and the church as a whole, make it clear we are a haven for those caught in these situations?

**7.** What is the biblical view on abusive marriages? Discuss Proverbs 22:24, Proverbs 29:22 and Psalm 34:18 and compare with Ephesians 5:22. Are there degrees of abuse that are acceptable (such as emotional but not physical)? Is it ever acceptable in God's eyes to leave an abusive relationship and seek help?

**8.** Have you ever had to take on another person's emotional pain/rage/despair so that they could cope or so that conflict was avoided? The Bible says we are to lay down our lives for each other. Does that include peacemaking at any cost? Discuss Romans 12:14-21.

**9.** Eric's childhood was filled with the pain of an abusive father. Does that excuse him carrying the pattern into his own marriage? Did your feelings toward Eric change when you discovered his past? Why or why not?

**10.** Emma's parents suspect something is terribly wrong with their daughter's marriage long before they discover the truth and yet they say nothing. Have you ever allowed yourself to be blind to a situation --- to bury your head in the sand, so to speak? What happened? What did you learn?

**11.** Luke falls in love with a married woman and wrestles with his desire to save her and have her as his own. How do you think Luke handled the situation? Have you ever been torn by your emotions, pulled toward something you knew was wrong but for seemingly right reasons? If so, what happened? How did God help you resolve your struggle? Discuss what Deut. 5:21 means to you.

**12.** God provides an unexpected "landing place" in Judge Littleton. Has God ever saved you from an impossible situation through an unexpected source? What happened? Did your faith in Him grow through the experience? How so?

**13.** Read 1 Corinthians 10:13 (Amplified Bible) *"For no temptation (no trial regarded as enticing to sin), [no matter how it comes or where it leads] has overtaken you and laid hold on you that is not common to man [that is, no temptation or trial has come to you that is beyond human resistance and that is not [a]adjusted and [b]adapted and belonging to human experience, and such as man can bear]. But God is faithful [to His Word and to His compassionate nature], and He [can be trusted] not to let you be tempted and tried and assayed beyond your ability and strength of resistance and power to endure, but with the temptation He will [always] also provide the way out (the means of escape to a landing place), that you may be capable and strong and powerful to bear up under it patiently."* What does this mean to you?

**14.** Emma and Luke are forced to testify and reveal the truth of everything that has happened, but the truth is twisted to make them look guilty. Have you ever been falsely accused of something or in a situation that looked impossible, like Daniel going to the lion's den? How did it turn out? Did God show up for you?

**15.** Eric is given a final chance to forgive his father and then to accept God's forgiveness, but he rejects it. Has this happened to you or someone close to you? Is there someone you need to forgive? Look up Matthew 6:12, Luke 6:37 and Matthew 6:14-15 to discuss forgiveness.

**16.** Luke realizes that he would rather be a farmer and family man like his father was after all. Have you ever discovered that the grass was not greener on the other side of the fence? What happened? How did God bring you back to His purposes?

**17.** Is there someone in your life for whom you are currently praying for salvation? Share what you can about and take the opportunity to pray together.

## **Author Bio**

Jamie Carie was born and raised in the small, historical town of Vincennes, Indiana. Her parents accepted Christ as their Savior when she was six and her dad subsequently quit his job as a welder and started a church. After marrying and deciding to homeschool her boys, she began writing skits, poems and articles for her church and school. When her oldest son turned five, she began to write novels in earnest.

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