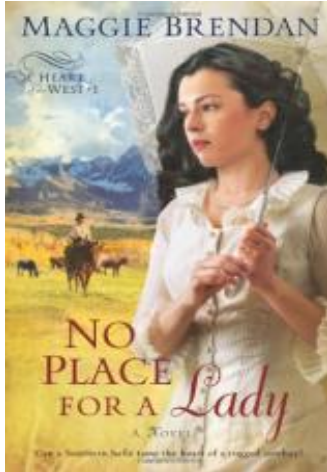


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# No Place for a Lady: Heart of the West Series, Book 1

by Maggie Brendan

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## About the Book

Can a Southern belle tame the heart of a rugged cowboy? Readers will fall in love with **No Place for a Lady's** Colorado setting and the spunky heroine who wants to claim it as her own.

Crystal Clark arrives in Colorado's Yampa Valley amid the splendor of a high country June in 1892. After the death of her father, Crystal is relieved to be leaving the troubles of her Georgia life behind to visit her aunt Kate's cattle ranch. Despite being raised as a proper Southern belle, Crystal is determined to hold her own in this wild land --- even if a certain handsome foreman doubts her abilities.

Just when she thinks she's getting a handle on the constant male attention from the cowhands and the catty barbs from some of the local young women, tragedy strikes the ranch. Crystal will have to tap all of her resolve to save the ranch from a greedy neighboring landowner. Can she rise to the challenge? Or will she head back to Georgia defeated?

Book one in the *Heart of the West* series, **No Place for a Lady** is full of adventure, romance and the indomitable human spirit.

## Discussion Guide

1. When Crystal arrives from Georgia, she is still grieving from the death of her parents and is questioning her relationship with Drew. She has left behind everything she has ever known, and is starting over in a new and very unfamiliar place. Have you ever faced a similar adventure? What did it feel like, and how did you face it? How did Crystal's faith in God affect her choices and decisions?

2. Aunt Kate welcomes Crystal with open arms, as do some of the older neighbors like Rusty and Sarah. Luke and some

of the younger women are suspicious of her at first. Why do you think that is? How did Crystal begin to win them over? Have you every felt alone in an unfriendly environment? What did you do?

**3.** Sins of pride, jealousy and judgment run throughout this story. How does Crystal?s pride affect her relationships, especially with Luke? Why do Crystal and Luke have difficulty speaking honestly to one another and examining their pre-judgments of each other? How does the question of who makes the pies --- Carmen or Crystal --- play into their misunderstanding of one another and speak to their pride?

**4.** The beautiful, open, mountainous and dry land of Colorado, with all of its beautiful flora and fauna, plays an important role in the story. How do the land and climate differences between Georgia and Colorado affect Crystal? Why does the beauty of her surroundings come to be so important to her?

**5.** What do you think drives Crystal to assume leadership of the ranch after Aunt Kate dies? How does she overcome her uncertainty and fear to save the ranch and participate in the cattle drive? She learns many things very quickly from both Rusty and Carmen. Where does she find the desire and the strength to seek their guidance and to ?grow where she is planted??

**6.** Crystal and Luke have very different experiences with their faith in God. Crystal seems to have always known God and had a personal relationship with Jesus. Luke, though he has been attending church with Kate every Sunday since he was fourteen, has a specific moment of decision when he reaches out and asks God to help and guide him. Has your faith experience been more like Crystal?s or more like Luke?s? Did you have a moment of decision, of acceptance of God? What was that experience like?

**7.** Crystal and her friends and neighbors suffer many moments of loss in this story. How do they approach and begin to work through the grief they experience? What is the significance of community in the story? How does Crystal build and nurture communities around her, and how do they affect the way she copes with the loss of Aunt Kate, Curly and Emily?s baby?

**8.** The relationship between April and Crystal is contentious from the moment they meet in Steamboat Springs. Why is April immediately antagonistic to Crystal? Why does Crystal have such a hard time remaining friendly and polite with April? Have you ever met someone to whom you took an instant dislike, or who took an instant dislike to you? What was that experience like? How did you handle it? Were you able to become friends? Do you think Crystal and April will eventually become friends?

**9.** Many people find love and companionship in the story. Why is finding that special someone so important to these people? Luke and Crystal have feelings for one another right away, though they do not realize it. Do you believe in love at first sight? Do you believe that God created a specific special someone for everyone?

**10.** What do you think will happen to the characters in the next book? If you could choose the characters the next story would focus on, whom would you choose, and why?

## **Author Bio**

Maggie Brendan is the bestselling author of several books, including the *Heart of the West* series and *The Blue Willow Brides* series. Winner of the 2013 Laurel Wreath Award, she was a 2013 finalist for the Published Maggie Award of Excellence, a 2013 finalist for the Heart of Excellence Readers' Choice Award, a 2012 finalist for Inspirational Reader's Choice award, and a recipient of the 2004 ACW Persistence Award in Atlanta. She is a member of the Author's Guild; Romance Writers of America; Faith, Hope, and Love; and Georgia Romance Writers. When she's not writing, she enjoys reading, researching for her novels, and spending time with her family.

## Critical Praise

"Grab your hat and hold on to the reins for an exciting ride! An exciting historical novel by a rising new author."

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