



The Key on the Quilt

Stephanie Grace Whitson

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Enter a historic Nebraskan prison where three women find betrayal, love, and ultimate truth. Jane Prescott is serving a ten-year sentence for murder. Can a broken spirit be healed behind bars? Matron Mamie Dawson feels called to help the wounded women in her charge. Will a guard's attentions keep her from her mission? Warden's wife Ellen Sullivan has changed her preconceptions about these female prisoners. Will it be enough to save her from a life-or-death situation? Will the cryptic quilt connecting their lives expose the truth of one woman's past and ensure a better future for them all?

The Key on the Quilt Details

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Author : Stephanie Grace Whitson

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From Reader Review The Key on the Quilt for online ebook

Melmac MacDonald says

I was immediately hooked the minute I opened this book. You could not ask for a more unique story in the most unlikely setting. Taking place in woman's prison Whitson weaves her tale delightfully. The characters all have incredible depth and you immediately feel like they are friends. I found the setting absolutely fascinating and I appreciate all the research the author does for her books. While one might think this story revolves around a quilt that could almost be deceiving. The quilt plays a small but important role but this is not your typical "quilt book".

Whitson is an excellent author and I rarely read anything from her that I'm not completely taken with. She writes about people and places that she knows and she does so with effortless ability. Due in March this excellent read can be pre-ordered on Amazon.

God's Plan Revealed. . .Stitch by Stitch

From a distance, the building may resemble a castle, but it's the last place Jane Prescott, Mamie Dawson, and Ellen Sullivan thought they'd be, and the last place they expected to see love grow.

Broken in spirit and wondering if God has abandoned her, Jane is serving a ten-year sentence at the Nebraska State Penitentiary, even as she hides a startling secret. How will one caring physician help unravel the hidden meaning behind Jane's courthouse steps quilt?

Mamie told God she'd go anywhere, never dreaming He'd send her to nurture women the world had forgotten. But while helping those around her, will she stubbornly keep the attentions of a kind guard at arm's length?

Ellen was never going to leave Kentucky, but then marriage made her a Nebraska warden's wife. Can she reach past uncertainty and fear to find God's purpose in it all?

Together, these three women form an unlikely friendship that takes them to the end of themselves and, ultimately, on a journey that proves prison walls can neither frustrate God's plans nor keep love out.

Thank you to Netgalley and Barbour Publishing for providing me with a free digital copy of this book in exchange for my honest review.

Wendy says

Jane Prescott is serving a 10 year sentence for a murder believed to have been committed by Jane Marquis. Jane Prescott and Jane Marquis are the same person, but she went back to using her first married name after being convicted of murdering her husband Owen Marquis.

She has a nine year old daughter, Rose Prescott, who went to live with Jane's sister Flora after the murder. Jane didn't give any reason for murdering Owen, a good man as far as anyone knew, except when he was

drinking, then he became very abusive to Jane and that was never in public. He never hurt Rose, except for the fact that she heard and saw the abusiveness.

Jane had one person in town who tried to fight for her at the trial, but she wouldn't let him and she wouldn't say anything in defense of herself as to why she shot Owen. Dr Max Zimmer had seen the bruises and broken ribs as he watched her go to a silent obedient wife. He also treated Rose when she received an injury while Owen was teaching her to shoot a gun.

During her time in prison, Jane wrote to Rose and waited for Flora to bring her for a visit. After she'd been in there for a while she received a short note from her sister to quit writing to Rose because it was too upsetting to her and if she tried to continue there was a chance she'd move so Jane wouldn't know where they were.

Dr Zimmer continued to fight to get her out as he didn't think she was capable of committing the crime she'd been convicted of. When he went to visit her after she'd served a few years one of the prisoners, Pearl Brand, attacked another prisoner who was pregnant, along with the warden. Dr Zimmer, being on site, treated the prisoner and delivered her baby. Jane was the prisoner selected to go with Vestal to be treated at the wardens house, but she and Max did not speak even one word to each other as that was not allowed. The next day, after visiting with the warden about the reason for coming to see him, to request a letter to take to the governor so Jane could be released, he got to see Jane and explain what he was doing. She told him to forget it and to not bother her again.

Jane had found a way to get through her ten year sentence by not thinking about the future when she would be free to see Rose again and have her daughter back. If she allowed Max to get her hopes up, she would have to start the process of forgetting where she was all over again, she just couldn't allow that to happen.

After the prison dust up, Pearl was not held with the other women and the warden's wife started helping out and would guard the women on Sunday's. After services one Sunday, the preacher's wife lost a necklace so that night Ellen took Jane to help her search for it and clean as they were looking. They didn't know that Pearl had escaped her cell with the help of a guard and had a homemade weapon. Ellen sent Jane to get a broom and when she returned Pearl had Ellen held hostage and now she would have Jane also. All the women were afraid of Pearl so Jane knew not to even talk to her but Ellen didn't, which worked out for them, she ended up finding out what the whole plan was. Max decided it was taking his wife an awful long time so he went looking for her, when Pearl saw him she jumped to stab Ellen, but Jane jumped up and diverted the attack to save the warden's wife and got stabbed instead.

Yep, that's it, you have to read it now! Stephanie did a great job with this book and holding your interest throughout. This is a must read! I just can't say enough good about this book. I am really anxious for the second book in this series, Shadow of a Name, to come out this September.

Disclosure of Material Connection: I received this book free from the publisher through the NetGalley book review program. I was not required to write a positive review. The opinions I have expressed are my own. I am disclosing this in accordance with the Federal Trade Commission's 16 CFR, Part 255 : "Guides Concerning the Use of Endorsements and Testimonials in Advertising."

Rambling Readers says

The Key on the Quilt is the first novel in Stephanie Grace Whitson's new series The Quilt Chronicles. As the

debut book, we are introduced to a range of characters who will likely make appearances in the upcoming novels. The primary focus of *The Key On the Quilt* is Jane Prescott, an imprisoned mother with a tragic past. Her acquaintances in prison (inmates and free women) offer additional plots, particularly Mamie Dawson and Ellen Sullivan. The story is told from several different perspectives, which allows us to see 19th century prison life from a variety of angles. Interestingly, the second half of the novel suddenly introduces Jane's daughter Rose as a main character. The glimpse into Rose's emotions and life added extra depth to the novel, and I would have enjoyed more opportunities to read the story from her perspective.

The setting of *The Key on the Quilt* is the most notable element of the novel. Whitson demonstrates skill in relaying historical details through her description of the women's ward and the depiction of prison life. The backdrop of a prison sounds reminiscent of Dickens, but the plot is much more heartwarming and ultimately uplifting. Whitson introduces some difficult topics, but illustrates the power of faith and love in overcoming seemingly insurmountable obstacles. Jane Prescott is truly an inspiring character from the beginning of the novel to the end. Hopefully future novels will feature Jane's continuing story. I would have been more satisfied with the ending if it had featured a short epilogue or at least a few more pages.

I also enjoyed Mamie's character and her story, which was like a charming novella integrated into the pages of a full novel. Ellen Sullivan is an integral part of the novel, but I did not feel impacted by reading her point-of-view. Some of her interactions with her husband were a bit "mushy" for my taste; there were some scenes that I feel were unnecessary. Despite feeling distracted by multiple perspectives, I would recommend this novel to fans of historical fiction. *The Key on the Quilt* is an enjoyable and worthwhile read with a memorable plot.

The Key on the Quilt will be released on March 1, 2012. For now, you can read a chapter [Here](#).

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Iola says

Widow Jane Prescott soon realised she had made a mistake in marrying Owen Marquis in order to give her daughter a father. Owen was an abuser, and one night, after an innocent dance with the local doctor, the fight went too far and Jane found herself serving ten years for his manslaughter. Dr Max Zimmer feels responsible for Jane's imprisonment, as he alone knows of the injuries Jane suffered at the hands of her second husband, and he wonders if dancing with Jane at the town social might have caused the fatal argument.

The loss of her daughter affects Jane more than the loss of her freedom. To manage this loss, she withdraws herself, including from Dr Max Zimmer. As Christians we seek freedom in Christ for ourselves and for others, but we don't realise that some people are so bound up in their personal prisons that they are afraid of being free. That fear must be broken before they can be whole, before they can be free. Jane is one of these people.

The Key on the Quilt is an original story, well-written with strong supporting characters, interesting sub-plots and a strong Christian theme, although it slowed a bit towards the end. It is a story of 'grace notes', healing and redemption in Christ. Grace, in Christianity, is sometimes defined as the unmerited favour of

God. In music, grace notes are extra notes added as an embellishment. They are not needed for the melody or the harmony, but are simply to enhance the overall sound. So Christian grace notes are those extra things God gives us that we don't deserve, but which make life so much more than it could be.

One of the problems with having read a large number of books is that I don't often find a truly original plot, so it was a pleasure to discover *The Key on the Quilt*. Perhaps most gratifying for a history junkie like me is the note from the author at the end, explaining the inspiration behind the story, her research and the (very few) liberties she has taken with the facts. One of my pet hates is a historical novel that gets its facts wrong, so Stephanie Grace Whitson scores highly in this regard. Overall, a novel that is well worth reading.

Thanks to Barbour Publishing and NetGalley for providing a free ebook for review.

This review also appears on my blog, www.christianreads.blogspot.com.

? Briansgirl (Book Sale Queen)? says

Dearly loved this. I saw it at the library on the new release shelf and it looked intriguing. (In fact, they had 2 copies.) It takes place in Nebraska in 1887 at the Nebraska State Penitentiary's Woman's ward. It's 3 intersecting stories about 3 different women, the new warden's wife, the matron, and a woman incarcerated for murdering her husband. The author did a lot of research into the archaic Nebraska penal system and it's prison. I was quite surprised that she got street names in Lincoln, NE correct as well. (I live not that far from there.) If I didn't have to sleep, I would have read the book straight through and cried near the end. That makes it a 5 star read to me.

Christy says

This was not one of my favorite reads. Had this book not said that it was in the late 1800's I'm not sure I would have been able to distinguish this book as historical; other than Max getting his horse at the livery. At times I thought jail life came off a bit quaint. I never really connected to Jane; I did find Martin Underhill to be the most genuine and sincere and he was just a side character; a guard. This is the first Stephanie Grace Whitson book I've read and maybe it was just the whole book surrounded around the jailhouse that I thought I might like but turns out I needed more. I think it was just the story I didn't care for and not the writer.

Kathleen E. says

Thursday, May 3, 2012

The Key on the Quilt by Stephanie Grace Whitson c2012

Historical Fiction! My very favorite genre. *The Key on the Quilt* is Book 1 of *The Quilt Chronicles* by Stephanie Grace Whitson. Visit the blog she co-authors at www.footnotesfromhistory.blogspot.com to follow "Footnotes: Novel Inspirations from History."

Enter a historic Nebraskan prison where three women find betrayal, love, and ultimate truth. Jane Prescott is serving a ten-year sentence for murder. Can a broken spirit be healed behind bars? Matron Mamie Dawson

feels called to help the wounded women in her charge. Will a guard's attentions keep her from her mission? Warden's wife Ellen Sullivan has changed her preconceptions about these female prisoners. Will it be enough to save her from a life-or-death situation? Will the cryptic quilt connecting their lives expose the truth of one woman's past and ensure a better future for them all?

Author Stephanie Grace Whitson

Read Chapter 1 here:

<http://www.barbourbooks.com/product/K...>

My Review:

This story follows three main characters, Jane Prescott, Mamie Dawson, and Ellen Sullivan, as they find friendship goes beyond circumstance.

I liked this story of forgiveness and acceptance as each learned their value beyond what was seen. I had two favorite minor characters. The first kept popping up throughout the story to be the reconciliator and clarifier of truth in the person of Dr. Max Zimmer. He opens the story, closes it, and fills it in in-between. Definitely, Jane's sweet daughter Rose deserves her own story! She has shown maturity beyond her years as she grows to love within revealed truth that will change her life forever.

The monotony of sameness of every day is strengthened by the resolve of each person as they enrich each other just by being who they are. Can we do this and set differences aside? I liked the writing of the author and look forward to the continued stories in this Chronicle series. Being a quilter myself drew me to this story. I received this book in the mail just before my husband and I were on our way to our family in another state. We stopped at an antique store and I bought an old quilting magazine. Getting back in the car to continue on our long day's drive, I opened the magazine and... the exact same quilt pattern on the back of the book was inside!

I want to thank Barbour Publishing for sending me a print copy of *The Key on the Quilt* that I was able to take with me on our trip. This review is in my own words. I enjoyed this book and will think on it and its principles long after reading the last page.

Joyce says

Public library copy. Interlibrary loan.

To be honest, I did not like the beginning of this book, but by midway through I was hooked to the end. Looking back, I think it was the story's dark beginning that bothered me, not the writing. I was reading a large print copy, which did not make for easy reading at first.

I really love this author! Her stories are all different, well researched, and so beautifully woven around the faith of one or more of the characters. This is never a nominal faith, but a daily relationship with, or growing toward such, with the God Who created us and loves us, and His Word, the Bible. This is core to every book, and I love it because it helps me grow in my relationship with God.

What else can I say? I highly recommend this book for anyone interested in American history, women, quilting, faith, spousal abuse, or simply a good character story with multiple threads of romance woven in.

Joleen says

Key on the Quilt by **Stephanie Grace Whitson**

Genre: Historical Fiction

Format: E-Book

Timeframe: 1876 –

Location: Nebraska

Characters:

Jane Prescott: Convicted of murder

Rose Prescott: Jane's daughter

Mamie Dawson: Guard on women's floor

Minnie Dawson: Mamie's funny twin, clothing store owner

Ian McKenna: Warden

Ellen McKenna: Warden's wife

Max Zimmer: Doctor, Jane's friend

Martin Underhill: Guard in love with Mamie

I thoroughly enjoyed this book. So different. I don't think I've read other historical fiction books about a female inmate in a penitentiary.

Such was the situation for Jane Prescott. Convicted of manslaughter (killing her abusive husband) Rose is serving a 10 year sentence, leaving her 9 year old daughter with her childless sister Flora who becomes like a mother to Rose. But in the background there is Max Zimmer who is working hard to get her released on the premise that the trial and sentence were a sham.

The only female guard is Mamie Dawson, a lovely Christian woman who considers her female inmates her "lambs" and wants to let them know God's love and grace. Also assisting on the women's floor is Martin Underhill, a guard with integrity, unlike other guards who leer and say untoward things to and about the female prisoners. Martin is what you'd call deformed. Misshapen head and other abnormal features. But he is a man the women trust, and shows his loyalty and consideration for the prisoners, and especially to Mamie. You can't help but love Martin!

Jane wants to serve her time, then return to be a part of her daughter's life again. When Max Zimmer comes to see her with his goal to get her released, she tells him to stop trying, to leave her alone and never to come see her again. Other than the fact that she is just trying to survive one day at a time, and her debilitating fear of hope denied, why Jane would insist Dr. Zimmer quit seeking her release is a story to be revealed later.

On this floor are women of all kinds and imprisoned for a variety of reasons, including stealing just to have food so her children don't starve. Most are docile, all but one. Intense scenes around this woman.

After an emergency medical situation, the warden's wife gets involved in the quality of life and rehabilitation of the women inmates.

What a story; intelligent, well thought out and superbly executed. Wonderful morals that weren't preachy entered through conversation. Loved it! A theme I enjoyed was what can be done to accomplish much, even with such diverse people. Goal, cooperation, church and community donations, and commitment. Very well done!

There's an unusual romance story running throughout, and a possibility of another, plus an inspiring marriage. Even after years of being together they are still so much in love. Sweet and extremely clean. I am so glad I discovered this series. Next up, *Shadow on the Quilt*, which I'll be starting tonight. I've become an avid Stephanie Grace Whitson fan.

Melanie says

3.5 stars

The Key On The Quilt was an interesting book that I really enjoyed reading. I thought the characters were great and I loved how the story was set around a prison, particularly a women's prison - I don't think I've ever read a historical book with that being the main location in the story.

I wasn't surprised by much, if anything, in The Key On The Quilt and definitely saw the big reveal coming. I loved the message of sacrifice and love in this book. It was also neat how Miss Dawson had a habit of listing/counting what she was thankful for.

Overall, The Key On The Quilt was a good read and better than I expected. While not the best historical romance I've read, I did still enjoy it quite a bit. :) If you typically like these types of novels, you'll probably enjoy this book too.

This review is my honest opinion. All thoughts and opinions expressed are solely my own.

Cathy Daniel says

I LOVED THIS BOOK SO MUCH! I'm making it my favorite of 2016, though it came out in 2013. I thought it would be too sad and while it was sad at times it wasn't overwhelmingly depressing. It was touching with grace notes :) you have to read it to understand! Such a beautiful story and examples of God using ALL things for our good! Magnificent

Victor Gentile says

Stephanie Grace Whitson in her new book, "The Key on the Quilt" Book One in The Quilt Chronicles published by Barbour Publishing, Inc. takes us to Nebraska in 1876.

From the back cover: God's plan revealed...stitch by stitch

From a distance, the building may resemble a castle, but it's the last place Jane Prescott, Mamie Dawson and Ellen Sullivan thought they'd be, and the last place they expected to see love grow.

Broken in spirit and wondering if God has abandoned her, Jane is serving a ten-year sentence at the Nebraska State Penitentiary, even as she hides a startling secret. How will one caring physician help unravel the hidden meaning behind Jane's courthouse steps quilt?

Mamie told God she'd go anywhere, never dreaming that He'd send her to nurture women the world had forgotten as a prison matron. But while helping those around her, will she stubbornly keep the attention of a kind guard at arm's length?

Ellen was never going to leave Kentucky but then marriage made her a Nebraska warden's wife. Can she reach past uncertainty and fear to find God's purpose in it all?

Together, these three women form an unlikely friendship that takes them to the end of themselves and, ultimately, on a journey that proves prison walls can neither frustrate God's plans nor keep love out.

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. Jane, Mamie and Ellen are central to the book and each one has an important part in each others lives.

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. The good news is Book Two in this series is not far away. That means soon there will be a new book with new characters that will entertain us and give us new insights into our God and ourselves.

If you missed the interview for "A Claim Of Her Own", another novel by Ms. Whitson, and would like to listen to it and/or interviews with other authors and professionals please go to www.kingdomhighlights.org where they are available On Demand.

To listen to 24 hours non-stop, commercial free Christian music please visit our internet radio station www.kingdomairwaves.org

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Bess says

While several of my GRs friends enjoyed this one, it was not my cup of tea. Some funny and cute parts but overall not to my enjoyment. But I did finish it!

Faye says

4.5

Injustices are fought in a Nebraska prison.

Jane Prescott is a woman sentenced to ten years for man slaughter, but while in jail she forms friendships and longs for the day when she will see her daughter again. Max Zimmer is the man who has never doubted Jane's innocence and will do anything to set her free.

Three women are brought together under usual situations, and face unexpected obstacles.

A jail is definitely an interesting setting for a novel, if I do say so myself. Since I've been a long time Stephanie Grace Whitson fan, I knew I had to give it a try and I wasn't disappointed. The characters were well developed and there was plenty of action, with escape attempts and more.

I especially liked the character of Jane because of how throughout the book she really came out of her shell and she was complex character who had many layers, and it was wonderful to see them fall away. And of course Max was quite the gallant hero, and he fought admirably for Jane. I think out of the other side characters I really liked Mamie Dawson, who was a sort of mothering figure to the ladies.

Overall, I would say that this is an excellent read, and I loved the freshness of the setting. This book moved along steadily, at a good pace, and I really liked how much action this book surprised me with :) This is a book that I would definitely recommend. Thanks!

I received this as an ebook from the publisher in exchange for an honest review. Thank you!

Charlene Intriago says

Not my normal genre of book, but it was a good read. Set in a state prison in Nebraska in the 1870s, it's historical fiction with some romance and a little bit of religion thrown in. The author gives us three women whose lives intersect, the men who love and support them, plus a whole cast of supporting characters in addition to a pretty good description of life during that time. We see the good, the bad and the ugly. The new warden asks "What would you say is the purpose of the penal system in America?". I think we're still asking ourselves that question still today. A lot of food for thought as a few people try to make a difference in the lives of others.
