



Touching the Sky

Tracie Peterson

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When Laura Marquardt first meets Brandon Reid, their encounter is anything but pleasant. But when the two are seated together at a dinner party, they soon find that they share similar interests--Laura desires to educate blacks, and Brandon, as a white officer over colored troops, eagerly supports her cause.

When Laura's sister, Carissa, marries her Confederate beau, Laura finds herself in a difficult situation when she overhears plots to kill Union soldiers. Though in her heart she feels she should share this information with Brandon, Laura fears she will betray her sister's trust and possibly endanger her sister's life. And when Brandon's motives for pursuing her come into question, her heart is even more conflicted. Where is God leading her?

Touching the Sky Details

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From Reader Review Touching the Sky for online ebook

Cindy Nipper says

Brilliantly frightening and delightful, this romantic suspense will keep you on the edge of your seat! I took every opportunity I could to listen to this audiobook! The narration was perfect with a Southern draw for the post civil war women of Texas, as well as both Yankee and Rebel accents for the soldiers and sympathizers! Not to mention the wonderful voices of the ex slaves and the Mexican employees! Now on to book 3 in this captivating series!!

Patricia Kemp Blackmon says

1865 in Corpus Christi, Texas you would think that people were glad the war between the North and South was over. Some were glad although they were still suffering the after effects of the war.

Laura Marquardt hurried along the street when she was confronted by some scruffy looking Confederate soldiers. She recognized one of the men. She thought if she was polite they would not see her fear. But they cursed her for being a Union supporter and a traitor to the South and accosted her. A couple of Union soldiers came upon them and ordered them to release the lady. The rebels did not cotton to taking orders from Black Union soldiers so they just laughed and ran. A White Union officer by the name of Captain Reid approached and boldly took matters in his hands. Without any further ado he dismissed the soldiers and proceeded to reprimand Laura sending her on her way not even allowing her a chance to explain the situation.

Laura and Captain Reid crossed each others paths again at a social gathering for Local Union Supporters. It became very clear to the Captain that he had wrongly misjudged Laura Marquardt as being a disgruntled Confederate sympathizer. Laura in a rather playful and straightforward manner set him straight about which side she supported. Finding they have the same goal which is to bring the North and the South together as one peaceful nation. Then there is a spark between the two of them that refuses not be ignored.

They come together to bring to justice several renegade Confederates one in particular a suspected murderer.

This is a story filled with intrigue and romance. Women had to be courageous back then and that is exactly how the author portrayed Laura and her sister in this novel.

I loved what the author wrote about the meaning of the books title, TOUCHING THE SKY.

I have read book one in the LAND OF THE LONE STAR series, CHASING THE SUN. Now that I have read book two I am anxious to read book three, TAMING THE WIND, expected publication date September 1st 2012 by Bethany House Publishers.

I highly recommend Touching The Sky.

I rated this book 5 out of 5.

Disclosure

I received a free copy of this book from Bethany House Publishers for review. I was in no way compensated for this review. It is my own opinion.

Natasha Polak says

In keeping with the Land of the Lonestar series, *Touching the Sky* continues to depict a glimpse of what it was like to be on opposing sides with how many Texans in the 1860's despised Yankee supporters. Such were the times that shaped the nation and nearly caused its undoing. In the midst of such tension, the lives of sisters Laura and Clarissa Marquardt face drastic changes in the aftermath of war. Corpus Christi and its people are not the same, and knowing who they can trust becomes hard for the women to do, especially for Laura - who worries about her sister's impending marriage, while finding herself drawn to the army officer Brandon Reid's charms, despite not seeing eye-to-eye with him initially, and they form an unlikely friendship.

I liked this second book, because the characters' faith was balanced in proportion to their actions, so it was not overly preachy, and was thus more natural. I do like a good Christian fiction, but not to the risk of making characters have less of a personality. Fortunately, Tracie does make these sisters have some spunk! It was also neat to hear about another major city in Texas during the same time era as the previous book, so you get a varied perspective. It also weaves in the previous plot with the reintroduction to some old characters, and keep you guessing on what book 3 has in store! This was a good read that transports you back through time and I recommend it!

Robin says

Touching the Sky (Land of the Lone Star Book #2)

Tracie Peterson

Book Summary: Her heart is caught between the man she loves and the sister she's desperate to protect. Though their first encounter is hardly auspicious, Laura Marquardt soon discovers herself drawn to the dashing Captain Brandon Reid. As an officer over the colored troops, he eagerly supports her desire to educate blacks and seek harmony in a town where the defeat of the South is a bitter reality. When Laura's sister marries her Confederate beau, Laura finds herself in a difficult situation after overhearing a discussion with frightening consequences. In her heart she feels she should confide in Brandon, but Laura fears to do so may endanger her sister's life. Yet as the stakes continue to rise and Brandon's motives for pursuing her come into doubt, Laura questions where to turn...and wonders if her own dreams of love may be forsaken.

Book Review: I really enjoyed this story the best. The female lead was most enjoyable for me. The younger sister and the dilemma with her husband. The entry of the confederate officer was fun to watch knowing that he was the good guy. The drama with Laura's sister was realistic and intense. You could taste the dust of Texas and the challenges of the west in 1860's. From the opening intensity to all the drama with Laura's sister it was a page turner. I really enjoy the crafting of the story by Tracie Peterson. The development of characters, even secondary characters and the entire plot are pure enjoyment. I am always anticipating the next book before I finish the one I am in.

I would like to thank Bethany House Publishing for allowing me to read and review this book in return for a free copy and I was never asked to write a favorable review by anyone.

Wendy says

It's June of 1865 in Corpus Christi, Texas, the war is over and life here would forever be changed. Laura Marquardt and her family were Union supporters during a war that pit family against family and neighbor against neighbor. Now that the war is over they would like to put their differences behind them and get on with life. The Union military had a unit of black soldiers to try to help keep the peace because there's a group of former Confederate soldiers who have a vendetta against the Union and their supporters.

Captain Brandon Reid finds Laura in an alley and accuses her of being up to no good and tells her to be on her way. He is in for a surprise when he attends a party at the Marquardt home and who should the angel be that is playing the piano and singing beautifully but Laura Marquardt, a strong Union supporter.

Laura has a sister, Carissa, who is the real social butterfly of the family and has drawn the attention of Malcolm Lowe. Malcolm has a secret reason for courting Carissa, he's the leader of the group trying to restart the war because he's mad that they lost. Laura is concerned about Carissa when she announces that they will be married and soon, she doesn't think Malcolm is the man that he pretends to be. Carissa refuses to be talked into waiting until she knows him better so they get married with her parents blessing.

Events cause Laura to wonder what Malcolm is up to so she watches and listens closely when he's around. After the wedding Malcolm seems to keep Carissa hidden, there are no visits, they don't go to church, etc. When Laura and her Mother finally see Carissa after a couple of weeks, Laura notices bruises on her arm. Carissa claims it's from moving furniture. Several weeks later, after not seeing Carissa again and being told to leave them, the newlyweds, alone by Malcolm, Laura takes her Mother and goes to visit Carissa. There is no answer and the front door won't budge, they go to the back door where there is still no answer to the knocking but the door is unlocked so they enter. As they are walking through the house calling to Carissa Laura notices there is a steel bar bolted on the inside of the front door. When they get no answer from Carissa, they threaten to come upstairs looking for her. Carissa comes out and her whole body is covered with bruises. She says she fell down the stairs, Laura doesn't fall for that story, so they take her home to recover.

Captain Reid officially retires from the military but silently continues to work with them to try and find out who's behind the murders of the black soldiers and Union officers. As he's doing this he starts seeing Laura, without telling her about the army's suspicions of Malcolm Lowe and his role in the investigation.

Just what is going on in the Lowe marriage and how will it involve Laura? Will Captain Reid ever confide in Laura what he suspects and what he is doing? What will happen to the Lowe's, will their marriage survive?

This is a view of what life was like for one family after the war and how it affected people living in the same town that shared two different views. Tracie really held my interest and did a great job with this story. It's about sister helping sister and finding faith in God when you think he won't help you because you did too much wrong in your past.

Thank you to Bethany House for providing this book for review. 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

Lisa Johnson says

Title: Touching the Sky, Land of the Lone Star Book 2

Author: Tracie Peterson

Pages: 336

Year: 2012

Publisher: Bethany House

Note: I received a complimentary copy for an honest review of this book. The opinions shared in this review are solely my responsibility. Other reviews can be read at <http://seekingwithallyurheart.blogspot...> . Also follow me on Twitter @lcjohnson1988

Whether the Civil War Era is a favorite time period or not, Tracie Peterson's ability to write a wonderful story makes this work of fiction a must read! As the reader progresses through the novel, the author reveals through one of her many characters the origin of the title of this fictional work. Touching the Sky covers the historical period after the Civil War in the state of Texas.

The Marquardt family has lived in the state of Texas throughout the War, suffering various shortages of even basic needs. Though living in the southern part of the nation, they are Unionists at heart. The Marquardt family includes two daughters, the oldest being Laura who is known to be the level-headed, strong daughter. She knows her mind, yet submits to her father. Laura has a strong faith in God as well as a very generous, compassionate heart. She is very different from her younger sister.

Carrisa is very immature and spontaneous in ways that eventually land her in a very difficult and dangerous position. Though the sisters are different, they are very close and loving toward each other. Later on in the story we see how well their differences help each other to enjoy life and stand faithfully in dangerous times. Carrisa is the first to marry, believing she is madly in love with a man named Malcolm Lowe. Since times in Corpus Christi, where the family resides, have been depressing, the thought of a celebration brings joy to the town and church. Laura is very concerned about this marriage as she believes her sister is not prepared for the duties of being a wife to anyone let alone a man who is as devious as Malcolm. There are definite tensions in the small town and many hurt feelings between people with different sympathies. Another cause of tension is the manning of a fort with a colored troop led by Captain Reid.

At first glance, Captain Reid is smitten with Laura though their first encounter is anything less than spectacular. Both Laura and Reid have let first impressions color their view of each other until later on in the story when they are introduced properly. The captain, as well as his commanding officer, has heard reports of Mr. Lowe's activities, which raise red flags for them to take serious action. What should they do? The commanding officer convinces Reid to undertake a covert operation shortly before he is to retire from the Army. Brandon, Captain Reid's first name, is reluctant to continue in keeping Laura in the dark for fear that she may misunderstand his true feelings for her.

The novel is filled with mystery, suspense, love, forgiveness, and action. As with the first book in the series, this is a wonderful and enjoyable story. A third book in this series is due to come out in the fall of 2012 titled, Taming the Wind.

My rating is five stars.

Mom says

Another fine book by Traci Peterson - the way she depicts the results of the war between the North and South and the effect it had on Texas makes one really stop and think what hard times those must have been. Texas didn't want to be in the war but it saw things rationed. Now that the war is over, many bitter feelings still exist between people. Laura and Brandon's romance is a fairy tale ending. But Carissa's part of the story was very engaging. Abuse at the hand of your husband was not talked about in those days (and is hidden even nowadays) but Laura puts two and two together and figures out that Malcolm is beating Carissa. When they go to get Carissa's belongings so she can move back home and Malcolm shows up before they can leave, things become intense. He is doing illegal things and takes Laura and Carissa as his hostages. Brandon and Tyler are hot on the trail but when Malcolm leaves in the boats you wonder how they will catch him. The women are tossed overboard and both Brandon and Tyler do an amazing job of rescuing both women before they drown. Malcolm is killed when he tries to escape. All is well with Carissa and she doesn't lose the baby for now. Lots of good Christian advice on dealing with fear and letting God handle things, turning things over to him. Life is a risk but God is always with us and will never forsake us.

Linda says

Tracie Peterson's Land of the Lone Star series is quickly becoming one of my all-time favorites of hers. Touching the Sky follows the March release of Chasing the Sun but they are essentially stand-alone novels, although a character from the first book does make a brief appearance in this one. Once again, Peterson has created a heroine who is strong, spunky, and smart--a very good thing, since Laura Marquardt's sister is the complete opposite! The setting fascinated me: not many books are set in Texas around the Civil War; this novel demonstrates what a powderkeg of emotions filled the days immediately following its end in cities such as Corpus Christi where both Union and Confederate soldiers returned home, many unable or unwilling to lay aside their disdain for the opposing side. A contingent of "colored troops" charged with keeping peace, a society whose economy has been upended by the emancipation of the slave labor on which it depended, and the debate over the proper "place" for that newly freed population all contribute to the hotbed of emotions and are smoothly woven throughout the story without the book reading like a dry documentary. On the contrary, this is an absolutely captivating novel, and I read most of it in a day. (And the part where the title is made clear is absolutely beautiful!) I'm so glad this is a quick-release series; I'm already eagerly anticipating Taming the Wind, which will be available September 1! You don't have to be a Texan to enjoy this book and this series; don't miss it!

Disclosure of Material Connection: I received this book free from Bethany House Publishers. 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."

Kathleen (Kat) Smith says

Laura Marquardt soon learns that being a strong, smart and independent woman will win her the attention of two very different men and for two very different reasons in the historical fiction, Touching the Sky by Tracie Peterson. Set in the mid 1800's at the end of the civil war between the states, hostilities still run high between the North and South and those who remain loyal to either side. The Marquardt household even

though residing the Texas maintain loyalties with the North with the Ironclad Oath. It seems however that some animosity still resides among their own citizens in Texas to the Marquardt family.

Most of their friends and family believed that the Emancipation Proclamation wasn't such a good idea and now will Lincoln dead, many feel that the war needs to rise up once again in the South. So when Malcolm Lowe arrives to begin courting Carissa Marquardt and eventually marry her, he has more on his mind than just wedding plans. Malcolm Lowe served in the Southern army and isn't so happy to have people like Captain Brandon Reid living among them as well as most of colored troops that he served over from the North. Now Malcolm is making plans with other men who feel the same as he does to make sure that the South will rise up and claim what they feel is their just reward and to take as many of the Yankees and colored with them.

Captain Reid is assigned to find out information about Malcolm whom the Northern Army feels is up to no good in Texas, so when he is asked to attend a party at the Marquardt's, he doesn't plan on falling for Laura in the process. Yet trying to keep both of his obligations separate, he struggles with wanting to tell her the truth about his actions so she doesn't believe that he is using her to get close to Malcolm. So when an opportunity presents itself that Laura finds out information about Malcolm that she believes he is planning to murder innocent people, it provides an open door for Brandon to help her without telling her everything. But will he have the opportunity to be completely honest with her before Malcolm's plans have a chance to be carried out, or will Laura find herself in danger without an opportunity to know just how Brandon feels?

I received *Touching the Sky* by Tracie Peterson compliments of Christian Fiction Blog Alliance for my honest review and found this story captivating. On one end you have the building tension between Malcolm and his hate for the Northern supporters and on the other side, the romance building between Brandon and Laura which keeps you wondering just where this will all end. This is the second book in the Land of the Lone Star series and I can't wait to see where this one will conclude. If you haven't read the first book in this series, this book can be enjoyed as a stand alone. However, being a huge fan of Tracie Peterson's novels, I know you will want to go back and enjoy the first one as well. She writes so well and is noticeable of her time periods. I think this is the draw readers enjoy as they immerse themselves into the story. For that I rate this book a 4.5 out of 5 stars.

Bailey says

Touching the Sky was an excellent read. I loved the theme of "touching the sky" woven into the story. It brought everything together beautifully by being both dreamy and adventurous. Laura was a great main character with Brandon being a great example of a worthy man. There were so many layers of drama with the end of the Civil War. This made for an explosive setting in the story. The trials in this story are hard and real, but it is beautifully balanced by the heartwarming romance and loving family relationships. There is action and danger. The ending is a pulse-pounding ride. I did not like the way they "escaped" together at the end. Considering what had just happened, the scene didn't fit the flow of the book. I can't wait to read the next book and see what else happens in this story.

Kate says

I didn't enjoy this one as much as *Chasing the Sun*, but the land of the Lonestar is one of my favorite series

by Peterson that I have read so far. I look forward to reading the third book from the series!

Kelli says

Bethany house was gracious enough to send me this copy for review.

I thought this story was so 'god's and generals'. Its the Civil War era, and the fluffiness of the dialog is very fake Civil War speech. Kind of a cross between Southern bell and a celebration of a miss manners study. I think this time period is incredibly nostalgic, but the way it is written kind of comes across as very stiff and over-polite in the way the characters speak to one another.

The flow of this just seems off. One minute Laura, the main character, is fighting against almost being raped by confederate soldiers, a Union Captain (who is also a main character and obvious love interest) comes and yells at her, and of course she gets mad. However, later in the chapter she is fighting with her sister being jealous of the attention of that same Captain. When did her affection change?? And why? Little things like that need to be written in or its not going to make sense. Its very confusing in how split up the story starts out. Plus Laura is a very strict, stuck up character. The way she treats her sister, even when her sister is acting immature, is really annoying. It seems more a character flaw in Laura, than one in the rest of her family.

The two love interests, at one point halfway thru the book, talk about the weather for like a page!!! Its all much to perfunctory!

I think the research is good, especially learning about the Civil war after effects. However, I just couldn't get past the super politeness of the characters. It just was not realistic at all. The whole book remains chopped up in sections. Its like a story the author has formulated in her head doesn't fully compute on the page. This could have been written better.

Liddy says

The main character reminds me of Abe Lincoln's wife in a certain way. Mary Todd didn't have any friends because she was a southerner living in the north during the war. Laura didn't have any friends because she is a girl who hates slavery while living in the south. This is a tough stand to take in a lot of ways.

I admire what she is looking for in a husband compared to her sister. She is looking for a Christian man. This is hard to find but she is trusting God to do that. Clarissa who is her sister hardly even knows the man she is getting engaged to. This is going to back fire on her eventually.

I didn't like how the author made it seem that it doesn't matter how fast you marry someone just as long as they share your values. I think it is better to go slow than to be sorry about it later. I think Laura wouldn't have regretted it if she had gotten to know more about him.

Another thing that puzzles me is how Laura is going to obey and honor her husband when she is so bossy.

I loved that Laura was teaching former slaves to read but I hated that she did it without her parents knowledge. Though she showed great courage to say sorry to them for being so under handed.

Virginia Campbell says

Author Tracie Peterson is quite adept at including more than one side of an issue in her historical romance works. While the romance is always poignant and appealing, the characters often face conflicts due to their beliefs and their chosen path in life. Faith and loyalties are challenged by the behavior of others and the era in which they live. "Touching the Sky" is the second book in Tracie Peterson's the "Land of the Lone Star" series, and it vividly captures the turmoil of Civil War Era Texas. Set just as the war officially ends, it focuses on the split sentiments of Texans--those who were Union supporters, and those who were committed to the Confederacy. The mid to late 1800's were a period in time in which the world changed radically in a relatively short number of years, and many of the themes in "Touching the Sky" reflect what was to come before the end of the century. Laura Marquardt and her family were Union supporters, and when she meets soon-to-decommission Union Captain Brandon Reid, she is immediately drawn to his quiet strength and deep faith. Brandon is captivated by Laura's beauty, intelligence, and her desire to educate and assist freed slaves. When Laura's somewhat frivolous younger sister Carissa marries a Confederate suitor, all of their lives are forever changed. Carissa's new husband is not what he seems, and his cruelty and subversive behavior threaten all that Laura holds dear. Brandon is not quite through with his service to the Union, as he begins working undercover to bring down a murderous group of renegades. When Laura confides in him about the truth of her sister's abusive marriage and her suspicions about her brother-in-law's real nature, then Brandon must follow through with his last mission, even if it costs him the love of his life. A very involving historical romance, both touching and thought-provoking.

Review Copy Gratis Bethany House Books

Karen says

Laura Marquardt's family, though residents of Corpus Christi, Texas, are staunch supporters of the Union. The Civil War is over, yet unrest simmers just below society's surface. Laura is thankful that strong ties in the north have kept their family finances intact. She is not pleased however, with the "spinster" label that some, including her younger spoiled sister Carissa, pin on her. At 21, Laura is anything but a spinster.

Union Army Captain Brandon Reid oversees troops stationed in Corpus Christi. A chance encounter with Miss Marquardt leaves both Brandon and Laura with unfavorable opinions of the other. Shortly after their unpleasant meeting, they speak again and discover that their terse introduction was due to a simple misunderstanding.

Brandon's tour of duty with the Army is finished, but he agrees to stay in Texas to quietly investigate a series of mysterious crimes. He seeks Mr. Marquardt's permission to court Laura and their courtship begins just prior to Carissa's marriage to former confederate soldier Malcolm Lowe. Unfortunately, Lowe is Brandon's key suspect, but he cannot divulge this info to Laura. In addition to a tricky undercover investigation, Brandon is concerned that Laura will misinterpret his courtship motives. He truly cares for her, but will she understand when everything comes to light?

Touching the Sky is Book Two in the Land of the Lone Star series, but it can stand alone. I prefer this, as I am not a fan of cliffhangers or trying to get up to speed on a previous book. This post Civil War tale has

enough strife, intrigue, love, and forgiveness to satisfy historical and other fiction fans. I've long enjoyed Ms. Peterson's stories, and this one is no exception. I thoroughly enjoyed this book!
