



Seeds of Hope: The Gold Rush Diary of Susanna Fairchild

Kristiana Gregory

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Susanna Fairchild and her family are on board a ship sailing from New York to the West, where they plan to start a new life in Oregon. But tragedy strikes when Susanna's mother is lost to the sea. Hearing stories of great wealth, Susanna's physician father decides he wants to join the hordes of men rushing to California to mine for gold.

Seeds of Hope: The Gold Rush Diary of Susanna Fairchild Details

Date : Published June 1st 2001 by Scholastic

ISBN : 9780590511575

Author : Kristiana Gregory

Format : Hardcover 186 pages

Genre : Historical, Historical Fiction, Fiction, Young Adult, Childrens

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Claire says

I loved Kristiana Gregory's other two Dear America books, so I was surprised that I didn't enjoy this one as much. It wasn't bad. But it wasn't great either.

(Also—the father leaving his two teenage daughters alone for weeks surrounded by sketchy mining men?? He totally would NOT have done that in real life, if he were the good father the author portrayed him as. Anyway. Just had to get that off my chest.)

Elizabeth says

While I wouldn't call Seeds of Hope a sequel to Across the Wide and Lonesome Prairie, Gregory does connect the two books together by having the Fairchilds be related to the Campbells. It isn't necessary to have read Prairie, of course. The inclusion of the Campbells is more of a bonus to readers who have read Gregory's Oregon Trail entry first.

This is another of my favorite Dear America books (I really am a fan of Gregory), partly because of the purple cover, partly because it's well-written and goes into a lot of historical detail. I learned more about the Gold Rush in this book than I did in Rae Carson's Walk on Earth a Stranger, which is also about the Gold Rush. The book definitely doesn't pull any punches; it opens with a death, and includes amputation, hangings, betrayal, and theft, as well as veiled clues about prostitution. What I like most about the Dear America series is that it does not sugar-coat or hide anything that could have happened in that time period, it merely mentions it in ways that are appropriate for children.

The novel also conveys how atypical and dangerous it was for two young women to be on their own during the Gold Rush, yet also takes the time to describe not only the kindness of strangers, but also the steps Susanna and Clara took to protect themselves. And there's never any underlying threat that makes one worry about their safety throughout the book; again, this is a book for children, so while it's mentioned what Susanna and Clara do to protect themselves from prowlers and thieves, there's never anything too dark that is hinted at.

I have a feeling that Gregory's Dear America books will be the stand-outs for me in this series; she seems to have achieved the knack of writing memorable characters and conveying the historical time period accurately and interestingly. Seeds of Hope is another great addition to Dear America, one I remember fondly.

Jade Deceit says

Hello, All.

This book was one of my favorites in the Dear America franchise, although I have read or owned almost all the books in the series. I own like almost all of them, or want to own the rest I don't own.

I gave this a 5-star rating (like a restaurant!) because of the dialogue, the setting, character development, the fact that I usually like all DA books, especially the KG (Kristiana Gregory) Dear America (or DA) books! I have read it maybe 3 or 4 times since getting it maybe 3 or 2 years ago.

Nguy?n Ng?c says

Susanna Fairchild and her family embark on a journey with the hope of a better life. However, everything had turned to quite terrible when her mother died. Susanna and her sister Clara suffered a variety of trouble like murder without her mother. Fortunately, it got a happy ending.

Innocence, attractive description sightseeings of Susanna quite interested me. I love the way she had been maturing rapidly as well.

This book also illustrates the facts of gold fever and consequently, people seem to earn nothing but loose.

Diane says

A doctor and his two daughters, on the way to Oregon, stop in California because of the gold rush.

Elizabeth says

I did not know a lot of the story of the gold rush and the abandoned ships.

Kristal says

Got through this one quickly! This story is about a family that decided to go out west to California after the gold rush.

I liked this better than the Dear Canada book on the same topic; the Dear Canada book made the men who went out for gold look like they were 100% fools whereas this story shows that the miners did indeed find fortunes. However, it was the circumstances surrounding them that made them lose them (like extremely high grocery prices, addiction, thieves, and dangerous working conditions). This book did a great job explaining the gold rush.

Kristiana Gregory is an excellent writer and she really builds the characters well. She also does her research- I loved hearing about the bull and bear markets in the notes!

hamptonenglish10 says

Erik Steinmetz

Mrs. Brooks

Academic English 10

Due: Monday, January 7, 2013

Susanna Fairchild, a fourteen year old girl, is the first person speaker of the book. It is January 1849, and her, her father and sister Clara are on a ship about to finish their long voyage from New York to Oregon. Susanna is writing journal entries in her mother's old journal. After the death of their mother her dad lost a lot of money and they are pretty much broke, so when Susanna's dad hears about a gold strike in California They decide to go and mine instead of setting up a medical practice in Oregon. Susanna tells about the struggles they faced between being just her and her sister alone together having to fend for themselves with bad weather, threatening men, and dangerous animals. With all of the trouble that Susanna and Clara went through they became closer and grew to be best friends.

The Genre of this book would be autobiography because Susanna Fairchild is writing about her personal life in her journal that she kept. Autobiographies are written by a person about their personal life. The book dealt with the gold rush mostly and I felt it very interesting that the girls dad would just leave them for weeks at a time to go and work especially with how dangerous the places that they were left were. They had to deal and worry about animals like grizzly bears and at being the age of fourteen and Clara being even younger these would be major hurdles to overcome. Another interesting thing is that the family being poor you can learn more about the lives of the people that were mining for gold, the girls had to use a shovel as a skillet to make their food, they just found the shovel so this shows that they had to make do with what they had. I also found it interesting that back in this time sailors on ships used to use tar to slick back their hair to keep it out of their eyes, because of this people used to call them "tarheads."

I would recommend this book to people because it is a fun and enjoyable book as well as informational. The adventures that Susanna and Clara go through are very exciting and adventurous Anybody who likes action and adventure as well as history should really read this book. This book is very interesting because the adventures that they went through were like old wild west situations. I would say that if you like the gold rush history you should definitely read this book.

Paul says

4.2 stars because, this book had a lot of cliffhangers when we had to reach out goal and couldn't go on. A lot of fears and there's a lot going on, like murders. But overall, it was pretty decent.

Ana Mardoll says

Seeds of Hope (California Gold Rush) / 0-590-51157-2

Once again, the Dear America formula has rendered complex and difficult history into an entertaining and personal portrayal. When Susanna's mother dies en route to Oregon, her grieving father turns to gold fever to dull his loss and Susanna and family turn gold miners. In this way, Susanna is able to note carefully the follies of those stricken with gold fever and is able to describe, in detail, how the only people who reliably struck it rich were those who provided services and goods to these fever-struck hopefuls.

My favorite aspect of the Dear America books - their even-handedness - is displayed beautifully here, with Susanna distressed by the fact that immigrants and Mexicans are discriminated against and murdered for

their gold claims, with no legal recourse. A fine line is walked with the treatment of the narrator's father - although he is clearly very foolish to run after a goose chase and drag his daughters along after him into danger (they are the only two women in a mining camp of hundreds of lonely men!), nevertheless his love for his daughters is clear and he is portrayed as a good, kind man who learns when enough gold is enough.

Several hangings and murders occur here, including the hanging of a "dancing lady" from town. Although it's abundantly clear that the lady is a local prostitute, the book is careful to define her only as a dancer and entertainer. Children may wonder what money was to be had in dancing on the frontier... Also be aware that the narrator's love interest loses his leg in a mining explosion, and has to have the bone sawed through by her physician father. The scene is rushed through fairly quickly, but may be disturbing for small children.

~ Ana Mardoll

halle says

all the dear Americas are amazing they give you a good outlook on what it was to live like back then. you will love them if you love historical fiction!

Hasvita says

I think this book was alright I wasn't hooked in the beginning but after reading further on I read about the interesting things that have happened to Susanna. This book takes place in the 1800s during the oh so famous Gold Rush in California. In the beginning, Susanna has written in her diary about the voyages and what happened during the trip on the ship. It was quite boring at this point, but the best part of the book, in my opinion, was when all the exciting stuff like the murders have got loose. I gave this book 3 stars because it wasn't a bad book just not the best one. Some of the problems I've had with this book is that the hook wasn't there until a bit far into the book.

Leslie Hayden says

This book I gave 4 stars as it was entertaining and while reading I could picture the scenes. It was thorough regarding life during the gold Rush, affect and effect if the gold Rush on society, business, and people. I felt emotions of worry, pity, pride, and relief and when a book can do that it means the author did their job well.

Megan says

I always find these books interesting. Even when I have no interest in the period that the book is about I will pick it up anyway and fall in love with whatever the topic happens to be. This particular book is about the gold rush in California and a family's experience during six months of panning for gold. The Fairchild family sail from New York to Oregon City around the Horn and along the way they lose both their beloved mother and their life savings. So when they reach San Francisco Bay and learn of all the money to be had in gold they decide to stay and try their luck. I can't believe the girls' dad would leave them for a month on their own in a mining town. Anything could have happened to them and had this not been a young adult novel then

something probably would have happened. I also liked that this author always puts a little love story into a tale of hardships. Also enjoyed the fact that this Susanna is the cousin that Hattie Campbell talks about in her book about the Oregon Trail.

Amelia says

I really liked this book because it was very interesting and pulled me into the book right away. And this book was those kind of books where there was a murder on the loose and they have to try to find it and those kind of books pull me in right away and gets me interested. But, the thing I did not like about this book is that I did not really know what the setting really was because it never really said it but eventually I got the hang of it but it started jumping to one setting to another setting before I knew what was going on. (The setting in the beginning was they were on a ship). Anyway, so I gave this book 4 STARS!
