



## A Heart For Any Fate: Westward To Oregon, 1845

*Linda Crew*

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## **A Heart For Any Fate: Westward To Oregon, 1845** Linda Crew

This work is the winner of the 2004 Stevens Literary Prize. West. The sound of a wish in a single word. That's how seventeen-year-old Lovisa King put it that spring of 1845 as she set off with her parents, eleven of her siblings, and their assorted spouses and children for Oregon Country, the promised land. From the opening lines, the reader is immersed in the excitement, challenges, exhaustion and elation, triumphs and tragedies of the journey, as an oft-told tale takes on a new freshness, seen through the eyes and the heart of this gritty young woman. Lovisa King is a flesh-and-blood teenager-feisty, funny, and wise beyond her years. With the crossing as catalyst, we watch her mature from a headstrong girl to a young woman beginning her adult life in the Kings Valley of western Oregon, a goal attained only through the harshest of sacrifices. The importance of this novel's historical terrain--the Oregon Trail--cannot be disputed. Neither can the importance of its human terrain--loss of innocence, alteration of long-held attitudes toward the other, emerging concepts of love and family. dramatic, personal, and gripping way.

## **A Heart For Any Fate: Westward To Oregon, 1845 Details**

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Author : Linda Crew

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## **From Reader Review A Heart For Any Fate: Westward To Oregon, 1845 for online ebook**

### **Mary Montgomery says**

AWESOME! A true story, fictionalized, of the Oregon Trail. The family about which this was written settled near Corvallis, my current home. I can't wait to go see some of the sites. A bonus was the photos of the family in later days included at the end of the book.

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### **Linda says**

Excellent fictionalized account of a true story (based on the King Family). During our three-week trip in Oregon, we've visited several history museums and read numerous accounts of the westward expansion made by people with true grit. Although this is listed as Young Adult, it's a good book for all ages.

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### **Stephanie says**

I can't say I'm particularly aware of what young adults are reading anymore—but I can say what I would have enjoyed reading between the ages of 12 and 14, and it would most certainly include Linda Crew's A Heart for Any Fate. As a young woman, I would have deeply identified with the thoughts, trials and heartbreak that Lovisa King encountered on her journey to Oregon. The plot moves quickly, and I really did have a hard time tearing myself away from finding out what would happen next to Lovisa and her family and community. In addition to an engaging plot line, there are complex matters of romantic love, faith and death interspersed throughout the book that were deftly and carefully handled by the author. Despite the very real horrors of famine and disease (or getting lost in what truly was the middle of nowhere), Crew deals with very frightening scenarios delicately and clearly considered her younger audience.

As an adult, I was very entertained by the story, and impressed by the thoughtful attention to detail that went into every aspect of re-creating this world of 150 years ago. I can see why it has been used in school curriculum's as it is a vivid testimony to the immensity of westward expansion on the part of thousands of average people. The reader gets a clear and intimate view of how truly incredible this journey was. When I learned about the Oregon trail as a child, it was often through romantic images like Little House on the Prairie—A Heart for Any Fate is a much more realistic and full portrayal of early pioneers, and one that I believe would inspire young and older reader's alike to find out more about the Oregon Trail and Pacific NW history.

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### **Julie says**

Great Historically based account of the King family coming across the Oregon Trail.

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## Michelle says

I have read a bazillion wagon train stories. But for some reason this one hugely sticks out in my memory. I was expecting kyla at the time and I remember being in a rocking chair for several hours immersed in this story. Curious how it would hold up as a reread.

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## Julien-Pierre Campbell says

The basic summary: Seventeen-year-old Lovisa King, along with three generations of her family, begin the harsh journey to Oregon in 1845. Exhilarated by the prospect of adventure and a chance to escape the group of irritating suitors, headstrong Lovisa is gung-ho from the beginning. That is, until she finds out she will be forced to share a wagon with her stubborn and bossy brother-in-law, the much older and wiser Rowland. Despite the setbacks of some early deaths and Rowland's endless nagging, Lovisa still conquers the trail with endless optimism and hope. As the trail goes on, however, the landscape becomes more and more desolate and people Lovisa loves begin to drop like flies. Eventually, with the death of a beloved sister and her growing attraction for Rowland clouding her mind, Lovisa begins to lose hope. Will the group make it to Oregon? How many more lives will be lost?

My review: Well, I've read this three times now, and I must say that I loved it again. I had problems with the girls just submitting to the men -- in fact, this was what made it hardest to read. Also, the thinly veiled racism towards Native Americans can be summed up as such: :///// Still, though, this is a classic tale of struggle and hope. It's beautifully written and you fall in love with each character. Highly recommend.

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## catherine james says

Lovisa King was just seventeen in the spring of 1845 when her three generations of her family loaded up the green, canvas covered wagons to make the two thousand mile journey from Missouri to Oregon. Born right in the middle of ten brothers and sisters, Lovisa begins their expedition with dauntless optimism and absolute certainty that the her family's superior preparation, will protect them from any hardships the Overland Trail may present. Even a last minute reassignment to her sister Sarah and "bossy" brother-in-law, Rowland Chambers' wagon can't diminish Lovisa's enthusiasm for the future that lies ahead.

But the road west is cruel and indiscriminate, leaving a trail of fallen party members in its wake. The entire wagon train faces days unanswered thirst, weeks of trekking across the barren plains in blistering heat, and storms of prairie sand so acidic the only remedy is axle grease rubbed into raw skin. As death and disease ravage those she loves, with bone-deep weariness chipping away Lovisa's soul, she begins to wonder if this expedition really has a terminus and when it does, how many Kings will be left standing when it ends.

I'm a huge history buff, especially anything pertaining to the Old West. The problem with a lot of us enamored of these tales though is a tendency to romanticize a time and place full of brutal and harsh realities. Linda Crewe effortlessly sidesteps this trap to capture Lovisa's story as it might have been, opening A HEART FOR ANY FATE a general introduction to the US's great expansion, circumstances leading up to the citizen's migration, and life along the trail itself.

Lovisa and her family are the heart of this story; searching, like so many American's at the time, for a more prosperous fate in a new land. Ms. Crewe did such a wonderful job creating this young woman's voice, I had

to continuously reminding myself that I wasn't reading an actual account of her experience; although if the truth be told, I was moved to tears more than once during my reading.

A HEART FOR ANY FATE is a fascinating and moving depiction that immerses the reader into a defining period of American history and definitely shouldn't be missed.

Originally posted at TeensReadToo.com.

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### **Melody says**

I loved this book with all my heart. Lovisa's voice rings so true, and the story is so well-written, that one is simply carried along in the wagon train. The hardships and the little beauties were lovingly delineated throughout. There was no way the King family's wagon train was going to get to Oregon intact, of course. None of them did, and this book brought the sadness home in an especially poignant way without overpowering the whole book with woe. The portrait of the native peoples was historically accurate and nothing at all like the usual scary tall tales from the trail.

Crew based all the interactions of the pioneers and the natives on actual journal entries. In her afterword, she noted wryly that one of the pioneer journals that most stuck with her was one woman's chronicle of innumerable times she was helped with food or river crossings by First Nation peoples, but her entries dwelt upon her fear of the frightful, murderous Indians she was certain were right around the next bend.

Crew has done her homework here, and nearly all the characters in this book were actual people. There is supplemental material that was also interesting- a forward by Jennifer Armstrong, an afterword by one of the King family, and an afterword by Crew, all of which add something positive to the book.

Highly recommended!

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### **Kristin M. says**

I was hooked from the first two lines: "West... The sound of a wish in a single word." It's a beautiful quote, and for me (and very likely many other Americans), it has the ring of truth. I was born and raised in Oregon, and though my own ancestors migrated here during the early part of the 20th century, I have still inherited the cultural legacy of the Oregon Trail and the fascination with unexplored frontiers that enticed so many families to travel that road. Linda Crew's Heart for Any Fate brings the true story of one of those families to life, fleshing out the bare bones of the Kings' tale with memorable, likeable characters, highly quotable prose, and plenty of supplemental material about aspects of the Oregon Trail and the King family history that weren't addressed in the story proper.

The novel's protagonist and POV character, Lovisa, reminded me a bit of Jane Austen's Elizabeth Bennet. She has many of the same character traits: opinionated, headstrong, and a touch proud, yet also loyal and loving, capable and resilient. She even had a sister named Lydia and an abhorrent admirer named Mr. Collins! Her romantic subplot also followed a familiar trajectory – first, decide you simply can't stand the man; second, come to the realization that he has some redeeming qualities after all; third, realize you've fallen in love with him and wallow in angst over your prior treatment of him; last, resolve all silly misunderstandings and get your happy ending after all. All resemblances to other literary heroines aside, I thought Lovisa was a likable and well-written character in her own right, and I loved watching her learn,

suffer, and ultimately mature throughout the novel.

I also enjoyed the characterization of many of the other King family members. So many people with differing opinions and personalities within one family inevitably resulted in drama, and the younger children were wonderfully sassy. I fell in love with Lovisa's younger brother Sol, a precociously capable 12-year-old who won the respect of much older adults; I found myself wishing that Heart for Any Fate had a companion novel from Sol's point of view.

There were a few things about this book that I felt could be improved. Not all of the characters were well-fleshed out – there were some siblings and in-laws that Lovisa just never seemed to interact much with, and I got the feeling she didn't consider them very important to her day-to-day life (granted, it was an obscenely large family...) I also would have liked a bit more development for Lovisa's eventual husband; he was rather opaque for much of the novel. I sometimes felt that Lovisa's opinions about Indians were a bit too enlightened for a young girl from her time period, but it's not improbable that some of the people who traveled the Oregon Trail were indeed ahead of their time in that respect. For the most part, I loved the author's use of language, but there were a couple phrases that felt a little modern.

One last thing: I could see how Lovisa's romantic subplot would work out after only a few chapters in, but I didn't actually mind that. Other readers, however, may dislike such transparency.

Overall, I give this book 4 ½ stars (provided the website allows halvies). A Heart for Any Fate was both informative and engrossing, and ran the emotional gamut from funny to sad to suspenseful to heartwarming. I highly recommend this book to anyone with an interest in Oregon history, and I think it would be an excellent addition to high school reading lists.

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### **Mackenzie Deater says**

I read this book on assignment, with no real prior knowledge about what it was or who it was about, and was pleasantly surprised to find it's an amazing book! A true Oregon trail story, it's based on a real family, but the majority of the story is fictionalized. Though it's fiction, much of what happens in the book happened to many of the Oregon Trail pioneers, which is to say that it comes off as an honest, human account, not some romantic depiction of days gone by. The main character Lovisa is the perfect main character for this story, she's smart, kind, strongwilled, and stubborn; exactly the kind of person you want to read about, and be friends with. While this tale is heartbreaking and difficult, it's also beautiful and truly speaks to the American spirit. If you're looking for a trip back in time, you can't go wrong with this book.

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### **Abbi says**

For a girl who spent the happiest childhood ever in the Willamette Valley, right off Chambers Street, playing with my best friend a King, I feel like this book is partly my heritage, and it makes me swell with pride. It's about a family's experiences on the Oregon Trail, and the author did an incredible job making the pioneer experience come alive in an inspiring, yet authentic, way. I absolutely loved the characters, and that the story was real! Wow. It makes me want to get on a plane to Oregon to honor these people and the land they sacrificed so much for. I'd highly recommend it to anyone.

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## Jennifer Wardrip says

Reviewed by Cat for TeensReadToo.com

Lovisa King was just seventeen in the spring of 1845 when three generations of her family loaded up the green, canvas-covered wagons to make the two-thousand-mile journey from Missouri to Oregon.

Born right in the middle of ten brothers and sisters, Lovisa begins their expedition with dauntless optimism and absolute certainty that her family's superior preparation will protect them from any hardships the Overland Trail may present. Even a last-minute reassignment to her sister Sarah and "bossy" brother-in-law Rowland Chambers' wagon can't diminish Lovisa's enthusiasm for the future that lies ahead.

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## Amanda says

*A Heart For Any Fate* is raw, realistic, heartwarming, and tragic. It is an unforgettable YA novel that thrives; its depiction of life traveling along the Oregon Trail is tremendously powerful and easy-to-read. I found myself ripping through the pages, reading quicker than expected because I was just so invested, as Lovisa's narration was seamless and the event progression strong. I loved Lovisa's strong-willed, independent, feminist attitude, as well as her authentic "teenage" impressions of those around her, particularly Rowland and Mamie Brown. The Oregon Trail and westward expansion are interesting in their own right, but told through her perspective—and in such a well-written manner—I truly found myself captivated. I could not recommend this title any more highly, for readers of any age group. My favorite title of the Ooligan backlist that I have read thus far.

## Courtney says

The historical aspect, the heartache, the drudgery, the anticipation, the hardship of the Oregon Trail was all well researched and well done and I think the author (as far as I know) portrayed a journey West on the Oregon Trail very well.

I just didn't like any of the characters (with the exception of Sol). The whole King family got on my nerves with their elite pride, how much more clever they were than others on the trail, how rosy and robust and desirable all the King girls were, how generous they were to others who did not plan as well as they did, how righteously indignant they were when that kindness was not repaid.

(view spoiler)

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## Christina says

Such a beautiful story.

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