



## **The Blessing**

*Jude Deveraux*

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## **The Blessing** Jude Deveraux

A hard-driving businessman sees love with new eyes when a sweet young widow and her son change his life -- and his heart -- forever.

Wealthy corporate genius Jason Wilding reluctantly takes a break from his high-powered world to visit his hometown of Abernathy, Kentucky. As a favor to his physician brother David, he finds himself spending one week as a live-in baby-sitter in the ramshackle home of Amy Thompkins, who has captured David's heart. Courting the whimsical, artistic Amy has been difficult with her adorable but demanding baby, Max, in tow, and Jason's help is just what David needs.

But stepping into Amy's patched-together world has the most remarkable effect -- on *Jason*....Amy's joy for life, her love for her son, and her sparkling humor are irresistible -- and tiny Max adores Jason beyond reason. Soon, the enigmatic CEO is thawing. And his newfound smile reminds Amy of a Mount Rushmore monument finally cracking up -- in the best possible way.

Their mutual attraction is glowing bright, but what to do about David? In this heart-warming and unforgettable bestseller, Jude Deveraux celebrates the unexpected paths on the heart's journey toward love, and the eternal bond between mother and child.

## **The Blessing Details**

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# From Reader Review The Blessing for online ebook

## Diane says

Loved! witty,enjoyable and quite a humorous love story..well written (paperback!)

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## Ns says

**The Blessing** bring moments of tenderness and openness that make love possible.

We are introduced to Jason Wilding, businessman-extraordinaire and Amy Thompkins, a vulnerable and needy but prideful young widow. They come from completely different worlds, for Jason it is an impersonal but productive world where he is wealthy beyond means yet his life is without substance, without love. Amy's world is one of loneliness, where she does not have much in terms of materialism, but she is blessed with love, in which she finds in her young son Max.

Although a happy ending is expected, that eventual outcome reflect a story chronicled through moments, rather than an involved plot line. Jason and Amy interact, both in words and actions in dialogue form, where a character acts out and the other character respond. This is frequently demonstrated by Jason's attempts to help Amy and her resistance, until he feels left with no choice but to resort to more creative ways of giving. While vulnerable, it is Amy's pride that support her mistrust of Jason's actions. She does not want his pity, she wants his love, whereas for all intents and purposes, ironically Jason's *giving* is how he knows to show his love.

A tug-of-war love and the perils of that love existing between Jason and Amy is through their own making, their own walls and blindness to the other's intent and needs. Jason is used to taking matters into his own hand, and for him a successful love is comparable to a business transaction, an area of competence for him. Therefore, the act of loving, and giving and expecting success is taken for granted and become impersonal and a matter of *fixing* through money. Amy's problem stems from pride and her refusal to understand, much less accept Jason's attempts to help her. She has already taken Jason at face value and when she discovers Jason's "creative ways of giving", for her it is manipulation and a solidification of the person Jason is, thus she runs away.

The interaction between Amy and Jason continue just so throughout the story. The action and response, but in the moments that connect Amy and Jason and their underlying love is Max, Amy's baby son. His presence is the connecting factor, bridging Jason and Amy's love, as well as bringing tenderness appeal. Where sometimes the characters' actions can seem too deliberate, Max's character softens and brings innocence and *feeling* to the story, a blessing in the story.

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## Addie H says

No thank you -not my type of brand.

DNF 14%

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## Kathy says

Setting: small town of Abernathy, Kentucky – its streets, businesses, homes, people; penthouse / business office in New York.

Theme: falling in love; confronting one's own demons; gentle humor

Characters:

Amy Thompkins: young widow with an infant; had married the town drunk (having met him in one of his sober periods), and too prideful to walk away when she realized the truth; living in his rundown house, trying to make ends meet while caring for her baby. Tried various jobs (waitressing, office work, fast food), but none lasted. Is a great mother, and a decent artist, and will not accept charity.... And then too prideful to stay when confronted by Jason's fabrications (of a different kind).

Max Thompkins: Amy's son; into everything; responds to Jason; eventual artist...

Jason Wilding: high powered, rich businessman who buys and sells businesses; called back to Abernathy by his younger brother on the pretext of his father's heart, but finds dad playing poker and drinking beer with his friends; brother wants his help to clear the way for himself to be with Amy – as her son takes up all of her time; brother misleads him into thinking that the son is a teen and throwing a bit of a challenge in – (You can't last a week) – and he agrees to help his brother out before knowing all of the details – including the story his brother told Amy. He is wealthy, good looking, used to 'friends' and girlfriends happy to spend his money; cold; cut off; lonely. After mother died when they were young, and dad 'checked out' – throwing himself into work to ward off his grief - Jason played mother/father for his younger brother – up to and including sending him to college, and resents father a bit.

Dr. David Wilding: town doctor; loved by all, especially the ladies; charming; did not let brother pay for doctorate, though still paying off the loans; he wants time with Amy, and he wants his brother to live \ see more of life, so he contrives to get his brother to come for a visit and help him out. He tells Amy that his cousin (not brother) is gay and broke up with his partner, and has no place to go for Christmas and is temporarily homeless while they fix his house. (In his defense, Jason doesn't confirm- nor does he deny these claims to Amy).

Cherry Parker: Jason's assistant; with a minimum of fuss she takes care of all he assigns – information, purchases, etc. Is installed at Dr. David and his father's house during Jason's time with Amy... she buys the furniture warehouse and negotiates the sales, she buys the clothing shop so as to auction off the Chanel dress – both with rivals from Jason's high school days so they hold out for top dollar.

Doreen Parker: Cherry's sister – gorgeous; not too smart; Cherry asks Jason to hire her, which Jason is eager to do thinking he's getting another Parker – but she is not. Example: she files by what color the paper feels like, but then can't retrieve because she isn't holding the paper. Takes on 2 ¾ year old Max – helping him with his painting, organizing his meals, naps, etc. Jason suggests Max found is intellectual equal in her. Jason won't fire her because Cherry is pregnant, and his brother insists it would hurt Cherry and the baby if he had to worry.

Charles and Co.: Jason's chef – travels everywhere with him; under the guise of starting a new business (so

that Amy will accept the food), he provides interesting baby food for Max (duck ala orange; beef stroganoff, etc) and regular meals for Amy and Jason (often delivered by Mark under the guise of gifts from his patients).

#### Summary:

This is a charming story of a rich, lonely man who responds to the needs of a young woman and her son – falling in love with them. He uses his money to ease her way, trying to do so without her knowing so that she will accept his gifts. They fall in love, but neither trusts themselves or others to be themselves fully.

After he tells her he loves her, and they make love – she gets a package of articles of the real Jason – his wealth, his philanthropy (of which she is convinced she is one of now), his women. Realizing he expects to install them in a house, and to visit as he can, she walks out when he is sleeping rather than staying and fighting for him.

2 years later, he has changed, or perhaps better said, he true self is more to the front – after a year of failed PI reports, and almost marrying a woman just so he isn't so lonely, he gives up his business and returns to Abernathy to help rebuild... he faces the challenges of the townspeople, finally winning most of their acceptance. Challenged by his brother that there are other children besides Max that need help, he finds out that the children of Abernathy have low scores... he hires tutors – actors, retired doctors, scientists, etc. to work with the school for 3 months, and many stayed in Abernathy. And he has offered to help any child with their homework – and when he is painting with Amy, he is interrupted by children that show him papers or ask questions – and a hostile teen comes in, he takes him into the office for an hour, and the boy leaves with a smile. He finances Charlie's baby food company,(even though it means he loses him as his personal chef) putting the plant and the advertising in Abernathy.

And Amy's mother-in-law manipulates things so that the artist Jason hired for the library refurbishment wasn't available, and when Jason comes to her (after all the president will be there in 6 weeks), she calls Amy and asks her to take the job.

She puts up barriers when she sees him, telling him about her boyfriend... and then Doreen, thinking she is helping, pretends they are engaged; he insists he will be her assistant and they spend 6 weeks together. The first day, when a restless Max won't stay with grandma, he asks Max if he'd like to paint the children's reading room – and agrees to leave him to it, letting him lock the door, and to have Doreen as his assistant.

And after the opening (where the president came) and Amy's work is praised (it's good, but not unique) – Max's room is opened up... a shadow jungle with monkeys peaking out... and an artist is born to high acclaim. A party that includes many of the townspeople... and when the party winds down, all leave but Amy and Jason... and in a bit of nervousness, Amy mentions all of his women, and he throws his glass, and snatches her in a passionate kiss... and he tells her he has always loved her, and she admits there is no boyfriend... and they make love, and they talk and share, with the goal of understanding... and the story ends with Max returning (with Doreen of course), jumping on mom... and then dad thinking about adult privacy, when Max jumps on his stomach and jumps on it while saying monkeys, monkeys... a life of many blessings.

#### Memorable scenes:

2 ¾ year old Max locking out everyone from the reading room he is painting – even his mother.

The ease with which high powered exec Jason responds to and cares for 6 month old and then 2-3/4 year old Max – with firmness, with laughter, with love, with practicality.

Jason – multitasking while on the phone – taking paper out of Max’s mouth, taking the electrical plug out of his hand, catching him when he is sliding off the couch, getting him a bottle of juice.

To save Amy’s pride, he arranges for baby furniture to be bought for \$250 (from a warehouse he ended up purchasing) with a single advertisement added to her newspaper... but she calls friends and there are a dozen families at the warehouse for the same deal.

Amelia Bedelia-like Doreen – who orders water colors in they trays with circles of colors instead of the gallons the artist will need (every child in Kentucky got a set : ), or when ordering an overhead projector purchased 9, but when she turned them overhead, the slides fell out; or ordering red paper clips (her favorite) from office stores around the state, and they are all the same and from the same company...

Jason Wilding - who left Abernathy with a distaste for small town, gossip life, that spread rumors that his mom was fooling around when in fact she was staying over in the town 30 miles away at a motel during medical treatment she didn’t want her husband/family to know about – and her husband going out trolling when he heard the rumors... and Jason following mom to learn the truth, and then her swearing not to tell anyone, because life was for living, not dealing with dying – returning years later, once a big business success, and dealing with the criticism of the townspeople as he pushed/funded changes and his staying because they related to him, not to his money.

Jason arranges for a Chanel gown to be auctioned off at the mall when he realizes Amy needs a dress for the dance his brother invited her to – and when she hears about the contest and before she wins it, she agrees to give the dress to her friend if she should happen to win it... and then has to borrow it when she gets invited out.

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### **Cathia says**

She used to be a decent author, but so many of her books she puts out now are subpar.

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### **Wendy says**

I picked this book up at the used book store and I'm kind of glad that I didn't buy it at full price. The story started out good and was cute in a lot of places. But it seemed to lose steam in the middle. I liked the aspect of a man being conned into staying at a womans house to care for her child so that his brother can date her and get her to fall in love with him. But the twist is that he starts to fall for the woman and her baby. Wanting to solve her problems he buys her things and fixes things but ends up pushing her away with too much generosity. the road getting them back together is long and to drawn out. Not one of my favorites.

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### **Marianne Jay says**

Come on people really??????????

If you buy a book by Jude Deveraux or Danielle Steel, you know what your going to get - so why give it one or two stars. This book was really, really good. In fact, it was so good, I read it in one sitting.

Yes, it's fluff. Yes, it's a Cinderella story - but it's FICTION. It's that kind of book - so please be fair. I love, love, love Jude Deveraux. Her books make me smile, they make me feel good, they make me feel warm and cozy.

If you want to read "literature" read an Oprah book.

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## **Shirlene says**

David Wilding had told his brother, Jason, that their father was dying in order to get him to return to his hometown of Abernathy, Kentucky. Jason was an overworked multimillionaire businessman who now resided in New York. David was a hometown doctor. David told Jason that he had fallen for the widow of the town drunk and drug addict, Amy Thompkins. He had told Amy that Jason was his gay cousin who had recently broken up with his boyfriend and he needed a place to stay during Christmas week while his place was being renovated. In actuality, David wanted Jason available to babysit her 6 month old son, Max, while he took Amy out.

Max didn't like strangers but he took to Jason right away. Amy was attracted to Jason and would never have let him stay with her if he wouldn't have been told he was gay. The house she lived in was falling in around her. Jason used the week to make things better for Amy like buying a baby furniture business and telling her they were having a sale and needed to get rid of some furniture really cheaply. She won a drawing for a new Dior gown from a dress company that was changing owners. Amy felt really lucky. Jason took her shopping and bought lots of clothes and toys for Max. By the end of the week, Jason had decided that he was going to marry Amy. He told her that he loved her and he wasn't gay. They slept together and a package was delivered on Christmas morning telling her about Jason's business and how wealthy he was. She told him that she knew that he had plans for her and they involved them getting married and moving to NY. She would be put in an expensive house and be waiting on him to come home when time allowed. He agreed that was what he had in mind. Amy felt like she deserved more than that. She didn't want to be bought. She wanted to prove her independence and provide for Max so she packed her and Max's belongings and left Jason while he was asleep at her house.

Jason worked the next year and hired numerous private detectives to find Amy and Max. They had no luck. At the end of the year, he realized that he had been trying to buy Amy and that wasn't what she wanted. She didn't want herself and Max to end up as his possessions. He realized that was what he had been trying to do. His secretary had left him and three months later had married his brother, David.

After Christmas, Jason left New York and went back to Kentucky to work on building his hometown. He invested in his former chef's business of making gourmet baby food and it was now doing well. Abernathy was once again a growing town. Cherry Parker had convinced him to hire her sister as his secretary and she was inefficient as Cherry had been proficient. She kept getting things messed up and her way of thinking was crazy. Jason couldn't wait for Cherry to have her baby so she could fire Doreen without worrying about upsetting Cherry.

Amy's former mother-in-law arranged for a painter that Jason thought he had hired delivered a note saying that he had a broken arm and couldn't come to town to paint a mural in the library. Jason called Mildred to ask for help and Mildred took the opportunity to contact Amy. She had left Kentucky to go live with a friend in NY. She had gotten a job illustrating children's books and had become successful during the past 2 years. She agreed to return to Abernathy to paint the mural in the library. She knew that she would see Jason again and wondered how he would feel about that.

She arrived in town and saw Jason at the library. She made up a fictitious boyfriend and Doreen, Cherry's sister, pretended to be his fiancée. She was nearly crying when she arrived at her former mother-in-law's house. Mildred was trying hard not to laugh and explained that Doreen would never be Jason's fiancée. She told Amy about Jason asking Doreen to order some duck a l'orange for the new municipal pool backers. Doreen thought he wanted orange ducks so she filled the pool with 200 lbs of orange jello. She then had a chicken farmer bring in 400 ducks for the building and thought that Jason was upset at her because she couldn't find ducks and had ordered the chickens instead. She filed paperwork by how the color feels when she touches it. No one can figure out how her brain works so no one can interpret her filing system. Amy came back and worked on the murals in the library. Max trusted Jason again as he did when he was a baby. He also liked Doreen. Amy worked with Doreen to get Jason to buy her a house before he fired her. Cherry had a baby girl. Doreen took Max into a room in the library and took care of him while Amy worked on the mural. Max had told them all that he wanted monkeys so that's what was painted in the room where Max took his naps. Amy watched Jason and learned that he had changed. He was helping the town for their sakes rather for his own.

After the mural was done and the president came to visit the town, the townsfolk all came to the library to celebrate and they all stayed late. Amy and Jason were the last to leave. They talked and kissed and made love. Jason asked Amy to marry him and she agreed. He also realized that she could take care of herself by doing children's book illustrations. She wasn't as needy as she was when they first met and that was okay with him. Amy also told Jason that she was alright with having more children.

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## **MountainKat says**

\*High 2/Low 3 Stars\*

There was nothing really special about this book and you really had to suspend your belief in reality to read it. So much of the story was improbable, only to be topped at the end by a 2 1/2 year old bossing people around and turning out to be a spectacular artist... The couple repeatedly lied to each other - that was hard to stomach. But I still rooted for them. I'm a sucker, I know. The story had potential, but the characters needed to stop manipulating each other to realize it. I read this for the March 2012 FAC challenge and was new to this author, I'm not opposed to reading more of her work, but I will not be rushing to do so.

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## **Nicole says**

Don't go there! One of the worst plots ever.

The H is a multi millionaire and moves in with a widowed mother and her toddler because his younger brother has a crush on her. Makes sense. He falls in love with her in the course of three days (surprise!) and does all kind of funny things to help her out because she is dirt poor and does not accept charity. She finds out about this and vanishes (the reason why she is mad because he helped her is still not fully clear to me).

He hires detectives to find her but no luck. He gives up his business, moves back to his hometown and starts a new life by using his money to help the people and businesses there. He even helps the kids with their homework ( oh, c'mon!).

When he is renovating the library, the artist who should do the walls falls ill. But as the president (of the



United States!) has announced his visit to the new opening of the library, he is in urgent need of a new artist. Guess who it is.

If you think that I'm drunk while I'm writing this review, just let me say that it's eight in the morning and I'm wide awake. This really is the plot of the book. I don't know what JD was thinking. Even her book with the lice was better.

One and a half star. The half star is because there were some funny moments in the beginning of the book.

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### **Maria says**

Amy, the widow of the town drunk, struggles to raise her six-month-old son on a pittance from her husband's life insurance. Jason, the town's success story who has gone off to New York and made his fortune, is talked into dealing with Max so his mother can find a job and date his younger brother David, the doctor in the town that is slowly dying. No one in the town quite trusts Jason, although they grew up with him. Amy is not the only one struggling as Jason tries to find ways to get her the things she needs without her knowing. Many of them backfire in one way or another, but Amy gets what she most needs. I really enjoyed the story up to the point where Jason and Amy part. It went off into LaLa Land a bit after that, and as usual, the ending was too abrupt. Ms. Deveraux is much better at getting the reader involved at the beginning of the story than she is at closing.

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### **Tanya says**

This was an audio book. I loved it.

This is not a review. Just a tidbit into my learning to enjoy audiobooks.

I hate to drive. A year in half ago, I moved from Houston, TX, to a super small rural town of Franklinton, La. I went from living with populations in the millions to population 3,781. The entire state of Louisiana has less people than the city of Houston. The closet convince store is 7 miles away. The closet actual town is 12 miles away. Everything closes by 10 pm. The side walks just roll up. To go to a decent sized town it's 21 miles away, but with traffic on these two lane roads, it takes anywhere from 45 minutes to an hour. Someone who knows my love for reading suggested audio books as a way to cope with my disdain for the long commutes to getting things done. I no longer hate driving.

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### **Julie P says**

There's a reason why I can't read novels of this ilk anymore. This is not real life! Now really, I do believe that certain novels from the romance genre have their place, and I will admit that I have read many of Ms. Deveraux's books, and enjoyed them. This one, however, I did not. Romance novels are often imbued with a sense of reality, so that the reader thinks - hey, this could happen to me too! The Blessing is not one of those novels. Too much happens too quickly when a wealthy man almost instantly falls in love with a poor widowed single mother that the story becomes too fantastical to be believed. And don't even get me started about the precocious savant-like son of this poor, but honest widow. I struggled to get through this book, and

quite frankly it was not a quick, easy read. There are better books out there. Pass this one by, and keep looking.

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### **Cindy says**

Copyright 1999. I read this one once back in the day & to tell the truth I remember none of it. Why I kept it I have no idea. This is a book JD wrote on autopilot. If I read this without knowing who the author was - I would guess JD. This is a stand alone with no connection to the Montgomery-Taggerts.

So, the H is JD's typical workaholic, handsome, built, rich guy who has forgotten his Kentucky roots. The h is a dimwitted young thing who married an alcoholic drug user & is left with a baby. She's also is dirt poor. The rich guy's brother is the town Dr & he tricks rich guy into coming home & living with the dimwit. The Dr tells the dimwit that rich guy is gay & brokenhearted. This is supposed to be funny. Haha. Of course rich guy falls in love with dimwit & buys her all kinds of stuff & they have sex. He tells her he wants to marry her, so she waits until he's asleep & runs off with her baby on Christmas morning. With no money. He can't find her for TWO YEARS!

This whole book is a crock of crap! I HATED IT!! Has to be the worst book JD EVER WROTE!

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### **Slaveia Georgieva says**

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