



Undaunted Hope

Jody Hedlund

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Undaunted Hope Jody Hedlund Readers Await This Dramatic Conclusion to the Beacons of Hope Series

Tessa Taylor arrives in 1870s Upper Peninsula, Michigan, planning to serve as a new teacher to the town. Much to her dismay, however, she immediately learns that there was a mistake, that the town had requested a male teacher. Percival Updegraff, superintendent and chief mine clerk, says she can stay through winter since they won't be able to locate a new teacher before then, and Tessa can't help but say she is in his debt. Little does she know that Percival will indeed keep track of all that she owes him.

Determined to become indispensable, Tessa throws herself into teaching, and soon the children of the widowed lighthouse keeper have decided she's the right match for their grieving father. Their uncle and assistant light keeper, Alex Bjorklund, has his own feelings for Tessa. As the two brothers begin competing for her hand, Tessa increasingly feels that someone is tracking her every move, and she may not be able to escape the trap that has been laid for her.

Undaunted Hope Details

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From Reader Review Undaunted Hope for online ebook

Amanda Tero says

After reading about 1/4 of the book, I decided not to finish it. I am not a big romance fan, and from chapter one, Tessa was engrossed with Alex's rippling muscles and drowning in his cobalt blue eyes. Just mentioning that doesn't quite bother me, but when it goes on and on, chapter after chapter, her clearly lusting after this man, it just was too much (one quote that is very mild, "He was a beautiful specimen of manhood. She honestly had no desire to take her eyes off of him, even though she knew she was ogling inappropriately in front of the children.").

I thought about finishing the book and skimming the parts between her and Alex...but then Alex's brother Michael came onto the scene. And I just don't like love triangles. So, while I would have enjoyed the school situation, discover what Mr. Updegraff would say when Tessa started an adult school without his knowledge, I just could not in good conscience finish it.

So, while people who enjoy "swoon worthy" material may enjoy it, those who are trying to monitor the amount of romance they read will probably want to avoid this book.

I received this book from Bethany House in exchange for my honest review

Heidi Robbins (Heidi Reads...) says

I loved this rugged setting for Tessa's story. The landscape and harsh weather is a huge element in the book and I was able to picture it vividly. Tessa is a proud and opinionated young woman, but with a kind heart as she strives to help not only the children, but the men of the town as well, further their education to improve their life situation. Although the living conditions are not ideal, she quickly connects with several children and members of the community. One family in particular she is drawn to is the adult brothers Alex and Michael, along with Michael's children. I loved the chemistry between her and Alex and the fun banter they shared. A sense of humor is something I find very attractive in a hero ;) She feels conflicted throughout the story since she has a deep aversion to lighthouses and the sacrifices it takes to run them, but she can't help feeling like a part of the family and coming to their aid as often as they come to hers. I felt that the secrets she's hiding from her past didn't match the characteristics she portrays in this book; to fully understand the situation I think reading the previous book in the series, *Hearts Made Whole*, would be helpful. However her past does come into play during the climax of the plot so it needed to be included. And talk about an evil villain! The injustices and tragedies he is responsible for as he preys on the members of the community made me so mad. In the afterword of the book the author shared that Mr. Updegraff was based on a real person in history- that makes it even worse! (Although that guy's ending was different and more violent than in the book). I don't often find afterwords interesting but this one is filled with fascinating information about which characters and landmarks are inspired by real history. You won't want to miss it!

(Thank you to the author and Bethany House Publishing for a copy of the book in exchange for my honest review)

Vera Godley says

As I have read each of the books in Jody Hedlund's "Beacons of Hope Series" I have been amazed at the lives of the characters who lived during the mid to late 1800s and who manned the light houses in and around the Michigan and Great Lakes area. Living in North Carolina as I do, I know some of the history and necessity of light houses for the safe sailing of ships throughout history. Hidden shoals or rocky shores are treacherous and make such areas burial sites for many a ship and sailor.

But I am amazed, too, at how these persons managed to grapple with life as presented to them during these bygone days. It was hard. It was unjust. It was unrelenting. And Jody Hedlund brings it all to bear as she writes her well constructed characters into the events fleshed out so well historically.

To travel alone in 1870 to secure a teaching position was perilous enough. But to arrive and you're a woman but they they were expecting a man really places the lady at risk. Endeavoring to brave it and forge ahead, Tessa Taylor succeeds in beginning her work as the sole teacher in this forlorn and forsaken place. She soon sees the need for opportunities for the adults to also receive an education and makes plans to make this happen for them. She also tutors and helps those who have need of more than usual instruction. But especially does she learn to love a young crippled girl and her strong uncle.

As the story unfolds a villain is exposed and the people seem helpless against this person. But hope sustains and in the end hope prevails.

Kav says

Well hello, Alex Bjorkhund, my name is Kav and I fell in love with you on page 20 (she confesses, blushing furiously.) Brash, determined, a tease and a flirt with a great sense of humour that matches Tessa's. Phew! Is that steam rising off the pages? Because whenever Tessa and Alex are in the same scene sparks do fly.

Alas Tessa is intent on a teaching career and not romance -- especially with a lighthouse keeper. She comes from a lighthouse keeping family and the tragic memories still haunt her. She hates the isolation, the danger and the 24/7 commitment. But try telling that to Alex. My, but that man knows what he wants and he isn't afraid to go after it. Cue fainting couch. Thud.

Naturally, the course of true love never runs smooth and Tessa finds herself the recipient of two enamoured suitors...not to mention the unwelcome advances of a truly diabolical villain. Shudder. And if all that wasn't enough to complicate her life, Tessa soon discovers that there's something not right about this small mining town she has come to call home. It takes all her courage and ingenuity to stand up to the sinister force that holds the town captive. In the end, Tessa becomes the catalyst for change in the entire community.

Captivating from cover to cover.

Carole Jarvis says

Reviewed at The Power of Words: <http://bit.ly/1nLzHOe>

I've been blessed to have read enough of Jody Hedlund's books to know that she is consistent in all that she delivers – captivating storytelling combined with rich characterization, romantic tension, vivid sense of place, and a wealth of historical details drawing from actual eras and people. Rather than saying that this or that book is my favorite, I think that with Jody's writing, the book I am currently reading becomes my favorite. However, I will say that several themes in *Undaunted Hope* instantly drew me in – such as Tessa's school teaching, Alex's breeding of Norwegian Elkhounds (I loved Bear and Wolfie!), Michael's children, and the plights of the copper mining community.

Tessa is a wonderful lead character who inspired me throughout. Those who have read the previous novel, *Hearts Made Whole*, will remember that she hasn't always been all that likeable. But five years have passed and it's now 1871, when Tessa comes to Eagle Harbor on Michigan's Upper Peninsula to teach school. She is a tireless worker, determined, strong willed, and opinionated – but most of all, caring. The normal romantic tension is heightened by the fact that two brothers, Alex and Michael, both care for Tessa. Romance fans will love the opening scene where Alex rescues her from the waters of Lake Superior. Also, Jody's skill at vividly conveying historical elements, like ice fishing and copper mining, added much richness and pulled me right into the characters' lives.

Tessa's growth and maturity from a questionable past reflects one of the best things about Christian fiction - journeying with a character and finding much that applies to our lives. Grace, redemption, courage, and trusting God for the necessary strength to confront fears are a few themes that touched me.

This series has been special to me because I've always been drawn to lighthouses, for they symbolize the human condition of danger, lostness, rescue, hope, and the safety that comes through Jesus. There's a literal contrast between light and dark in *Undaunted Hope* – the lighthouse's shining beam with the darkness deep within the mining shaft – but a spiritual one as well. Tessa's wanting to be a shining light for change within the community made me think of Jesus' words in Matthew 5:16, "Let your light shine before others, that they may see your good deeds and glorify your Father in heaven."

Undaunted Hope arrives at a very satisfying conclusion. Starting with the novella that begins this series, *Out of the Storm*, a connecting factor has been the passing on of a letter and a hope-filled cross carved from driftwood. I am intrigued with the character who received the cross toward the end of this story and am eager to see how Jody brings the *Beacons of Hope* series full circle.

Recommended to all who enjoy historical romance.

Thank you to Jody Hedlund and Bethany House for providing a copy of this book in exchange for my honest review.

Carrie Schmidt (Reading is My SuperPower) says

Jody Hedlund is one of those authors who is just consistently GOOD. I know whenever I pick up one of her books that I will be swept away by the writing, the history, the characters, the romance (blissful sigh!!), and the message of faith. Every single time. Including her latest release, *Undaunted Hope*.

Up until I began *Undaunted Hope*, my favorite romantic hero of Jody's has been Carl from *A Noble Groom*. But now ... I don't know, y'all... Alex is giving him some serious competition. I cannot resist an incorrigible flirt, especially one who is so great with kids. In fact, even before all the flirtatious goodness

started, I knew Alex had a solid chance of toppling Carl from his first place ranking. Right from chapter one, as a matter of fact, when my romantic heart swooned over something as simple as Alex acting like he was merely fishing when in fact he was aware of everything going on with Tessa in the background. Yeah, I know – it doesn't take much lol.

Tessa was – in a word – all kinds of awesome. Ok, so that was four words but one general idea. She's fierce when she needs to be, tender in the meantime, and as Jamie over at BooksandBeverages said, "she's been keeping things sassy since 1871, so she's what we call... MY PEOPLE." Yes. Tessa's sass + Alex's Alex-ness = romance reader heaven. But then there was Michael and his kids ... and oh my heart. I almost had to put the book in the freezer at one point. And then at other times, I almost had to put myself there. ;)

Besides the characters, one of the things I adore most about Jody Hedlund's books is her mastery of the setting. In a matter of words, she immerses her readers in the world of her story – the sights, the sounds, the smells, the sensations. In the case of *Undaunted Hope*, I almost had to go grab another blanket to battle the harsh Michigan winter. (I adore winter and cold and snow... but I think that would have been a bit much even for me!) Tessa's living conditions were a whole handful of #nope as far as I was concerned, and I admit to shivering a time or two at Jody's vivid descriptions.

But perhaps the thing I loved most about *Undaunted Hope* was the theme that swirled through Tessa's story: Whatever your past mistakes, who you are now is all that matters. Whatever your past fears, what you do now is all that matters. Perhaps you, like me, needed to hear that today too.

Bottom Line: Jody Hedlund has once again crafted a beautiful story of love and hope set against an exquisitely-researched backdrop of history. Nearly all of your emotions will be engaged while you read *Undaunted Hope*, and you may even need to invest in a good fainting couch to survive some of the kissing scenes! (What a way to go!) It's sassy. It's sweet. It's swoon-worthy. It needs to be in your collection.

(I received a copy of this book in exchange for only my honest review.)

Rachel Brand says

I love it when an author takes a previously unlikable character and gives them the chance to redeem themselves and turn to their life around, especially when they devote an entire book to this journey! Tessa was definitely an annoying character in the previous *Beacons of Hope* novel, manipulating her family members and situations to get what she wanted. She wasn't your stereotypical villain, just a misunderstood teenage girl searching for love in all the wrong places. Tessa's actions might have been a bit outlandish at times (trying to trick her older sister's beau into marrying her, in particular) but what teenage girl hasn't felt the same as Tessa—overlooked, unloved, out of place? Tessa did make me want to bang my head against a wall in frustration in *Hearts Made Whole*, but I was also intrigued by her, and hoped that the third book in the series might be devoted to her.

After all that hoping and waiting, did this book live up to my expectations? Mostly! I absolutely loved the first two books in the *Beacons of Hope* series and wasn't sure if Jody could keep up her fantastic streak. Often in a series, there is one book that doesn't quite live up to the others. It's not a sign of a bad writer, just that the reader likes one character more than another, or one situation appeals to them more. From the start of this novel, Tessa's situation intrigued me. Even if I didn't know her backstory (and I think you could probably read this book as a standalone), the strange situation she finds herself in makes for an interesting

opening. She's a teacher in a town that's basically a dictatorship run by the mining superintendent, who is desperate to get rid of her. The lighthouse link felt a bit shaky at times, but does become more present as the story develops.

I'll admit straight off that I'm not really a fan of love triangles. I always have to fight the urge to roll my eyes when two men are in love with the same woman. Maybe it's just because no one's ever fought for my affections, but it always feels a bit unrealistic. In this case, it didn't feel quite so unbelievable—Alex does genuinely have feelings for Tessa, while Michael is pushed into the situation by his children and the desire to find a mother for them. Tessa is basically the first single woman he's met since the death of his wife, so it's not like there are a lot of options out there. I appreciated that Tessa struck up friendships with both men, so it wasn't a case of them both pining for her from a distance and just being infatuated with her beauty, or anything annoying like that. They both like her, just in different ways. If the thought of a love-triangle puts you off, I'd recommend giving this book a shot anyway. This isn't *Twilight* with lighthouses, trust me.

The details about the mining industry and the corruption in the town were really interesting. I've said it before, but it's worth repeating—I love how Jody Hedlund finds the gritty and previously overlooked parts of history and brings them to life and makes you realise just how interesting they really are. I know a bit about mining as I went to school in a former mining town in Scotland, but *Undaunted Hope* really highlighted how bleak and dangerous the mining life was. I hurt for Tessa as she attempted to help break families out of the cycle of poverty and death associated with the mining life. There is a lot of sadness in this book. Jody doesn't shy away from the real struggles of the miners.

From the beginning of the novel, Tessa is worried about the townsfolk discovering the reputation that she made for herself back home, and she makes a lot of fuss about her actions not being misconstrued, especially when she spends time with Michael and Alex. I was initially concerned about this story thread, as one of my pet peeves in Christian Fiction is the infatuation with how others perceive our actions. Sometimes it doesn't matter how well you act, someone somewhere will find fault with what you do, or misinterpret something they see or overhear! Thankfully, it turned out that this was the lesson Tessa had to learn, as well as letting go of her fear of what others thought and just focusing on doing what she knew was right. I think Jody managed to get a good balance between the historical ideals of respectability and presenting a valuable lesson having freedom from fear and anxiety. This is a hard line to tread in historical fiction, especially with a character who has a “reputation” linked to (perceived) sexual sin. I've always found that Jody writes about sexuality from a historical viewpoint very well, and this book is no exception to that rule.

Although I'm not a big fan of love-triangles, this didn't stop me from thoroughly enjoying Tessa's story arc and cheering her on as she fought for the rights of the miners in *Undaunted Hope*. There is a lot of bleakness in this book, but there's plenty of encouragement too. I've really enjoyed this series and was pleasantly surprised to see that a fourth book is due to release in the summer, featuring a character who was briefly introduced at the end of this book. Here's hoping it's just as good as its predecessors!

Review title provided by Bethany House.

Carissa says

The lighthouse was lovely, as always. That's the single most outstanding setting in Ms. Hedlund's *Beacons of Hope* series that I continue to enjoy. I grew up on the Oregon coast, with countless lighthouses, so it's always fun and nostalgic to read a novel that includes a lighthouse.

I think it's time to speak life to Christian historic romance writers. You can do this.

Ms. Hedlund, I have read some amazing stories by you. *The Preacher's Bride*? Oh my gosh, that is the best book ever, one of my top favorites because it is so authentic and REAL. You are a talented and skilled writer. So I know that you can create fiction of lasting quality, that really means something to your readers.

Don't give up. Don't just assume that you can't offer depth to a story or that you have to work with a cookie-cutter formula of romance. Be brave. Be different. Make the relationships and characters real because I've seen you do it before.

Undaunted Hope was not the book for me. But I don't want to go into the reason because I am now trying to speak life to brothers and sisters in Christ instead of judging harshly.

Ms. Hedlund, keep trying. Do something different than what you have been for the last couple of years. Maybe try returning to the story and characterization you designed back when you wrote *The Preacher's Bride*. Because where you're going now is not a good use of your remarkable talents and abilities. Prove me right. I know you can do it.

Be authentic. Be genuine. Write characters that put the Lord first and themselves second, whose thoughts aren't all wrapped up in themselves and their romantic entanglements. Be the cut above the rest that I know you are.

*I received this book free from Bethany House in exchange for an honest review, which I have given.

Brittany says

Undaunted Hope stands alone if you have not read the rest of the series. However, those who have read book two, *Hearts Made Whole*, will recognize that the main character in this novel comes from that story. The leading lady is Tessa, who caused all kinds of heartache in the previous book. She has grown into a very upstanding young lady, who deeply regrets her past actions that hurt her family.

I truly liked Tessa throughout this whole novel. She was a character who could be a bit stubborn at times and held strong opinions about things such as menial labor, level of education people should try to achieve, and she had an intense dislike of lighthouses. I appreciated seeing Tessa learn many things in this book.

The interactions between Tessa and the children in *Undaunted Hope* were very well written. The different personalities and situations that arose were very believable. The romantic tension that bloomed between Tessa and two brothers was wonderful. I loved seeing the differences in the ways Alex and Michael related to Tessa. It was clear to me who Tessa truly loved and it was a pleasure to watch her slowly come to the realization of it herself.

This book was very romantic and had quite a bit of danger and uncertainty in it. I enjoyed it from beginning to end and definitely recommend it for fans of historical fiction.

I received a complimentary copy of this book in exchange for an honest review.

You can read this review on my blog at:

Beth says

I am always intrigued by a story that highlights a character that was not well-loved in a previous book. If you've read *Hearts Made Whole*, then you know Tessa wasn't the most likeable secondary character. It made me so eager to read her story in *Undaunted Hope*, and the wait was certainly worth it. Tessa has matured and realized the error of her old ways. However, she still has a certain sass and isn't afraid to step out in a profession that had traditionally been held by men. For me her character is what made this novel shine, along with the vibrant setting and rich historical detail.

Tessa is one of my favorite heroines that Jody has written thus far. She's got spunk that comes across in a realistic way. Her limitations as a woman are true to the time period, when reputation was everything for a woman. This story also portrays an important truth about the consequences of past mistakes. Even after you make the decision to become a different kind of person, the effects of those old choices are hard to overcome. However, with time, effort and God's help, it can be done. Tessa's journey as she strives to overcome the mistakes of her past is one that had my complete empathy and admiration.

The secondary characters really stand out in this story. Brothers Alex and Michael, the children, and even prickly Nadine create such an endearing group of people. I really enjoyed the development of these relationships and the genuine feeling that is upheld throughout the entire story. The plot is especially well-paced. Everything flows naturally and realistically throughout the story. Though the romance for me isn't the highlight of this story, it is still Jody's trademark style, with a dramatic rescue and several tender moments.

It seems that I gush about this with every novel of Jody's, but the historical detail here is so well-done. These people had such a hard life, full of back-breaking, dangerous work. I could imagine the bone-deep cold of the coastal breeze and the helplessness of the miners as they bowed to the whims of selfish boss. That he was based on a real-life historical figure brought even more depth to the story. The setting and time period quickly come to life and stay strong throughout the story's entirety.

I don't want to give too much away, but it's so neat that Jody brought back characters from the novella that starts the *Beacons of Hope* series – it gives the feeling of completion within that storyline, and also provides a little bit of set-up for the next book in the series. I'm always a little sad when I finish one of Jody's novels because it means another wait for her new release – thankfully the next book is set to come out in June of this year, so we don't have to wait too long – but it's also neat to get a glimpse of a character that readers will get to meet soon. If you haven't read this series yet, definitely do. Though this book could be read as a stand-alone, the story felt even richer having experienced Tessa's past in the previous book. I highly recommend *Undaunted Hope* for fans of romantic inspirational historical fiction.

Hannah says

4.5 stars

There's some tough reading stuff in this one (has elements of man-against-man and man-against-nature types of plots, which really put me on the edge of my seat), as an upper-Michigan mining town struggles against

the climate and the local despot. Tessa is determined to make a new, independent start, despite a less than welcoming beginning in the new town where she intends to teach. But soon she comes to realize that unfriendliness is the least of her worries.

I loved her relationship with the Bjorklund family at the lighthouse. In many ways they are the only people in the area with any real degree of autonomy, though the beast Updegraff is ready for any reason to bring them too under his thumb. How much must these characters endure before winter breaks? And who will find true love in the bleak circumstances?

Counting the weeks to book four...

Staci says

The lighthouse backdrop continues in the third book of the Beacons of Hope Series. Two things in particular I am enjoying about the series. First, the hand made cross that was introduced in the first novel continues to make its way through lighthouse territory. Second, the author's note at the end that details her research and the parts of the novel is based upon fact add to the overall appeal of the novel.

Undaunted Hope is about Tessa. Tessa was not a likeable character in book two so it was great to see her character growth after leaving her family and training as a teacher. The setting for the story is Eagle Harbor, Michigan, which for purposes of the novel was a mining town. The detail about the profession and the living conditions (bed bugs, lice and limited food stores as examples) were educational. Tessa's passion for teaching was clear and I loved that about her.

Alex and Michael were admirable characters. I didn't find some of the banter between Tessa and Alex to be realistic though. Perhaps it was, but some of it seemed rather forward for the time.

All in all it was another stellar Hedlund historical romance. I look forward to reading the conclusion to the series soon.

Jamie says

If you read the previous novel in Jody Hedlund's Beacons of Hope series, you remember Tessa. I have been eagerly awaiting her own novel since I turned the last page of Hearts Made Whole, because well, you'll just have to read that book :).

I think Tessa was my favorite – she's a solid lead and knowing her past, Jody did a wonderful job showing her growth and maturity. It's such a reminder that we are not our past mistakes. Plus she's been keeping things sassy since 1871, so she's what we call... MY PEOPLE. We both speak the love language of sass.

I also really liked Alex and the children. Again, her character development is excellent! Another area she truly shines in this novel is revealing what life was like for the people in this era. Not only surviving the cold (which sidenote: #nope), but the circumstances they survived. These people were survivors!

One of my other favorite things about Jody's novels is discovering the true historical details of her novels. It

makes me appreciate the story even more and makes it all the more real. One fact that was surprising was that Percival was based on a guy that really lived. There's more interesting details to that, but I'll let you read the story first.

Also, stay tuned...next week is a fun interview and giveaway from Jody. WOOT!

What's a recent fiction book you've recently loved?

(Thank you to Bethany House for a copy of the book in exchange for my honest review)

Originally posted at: <http://booksandbeverages.org/2016/01/...>

Amy says

A beautiful conclusion to the Beacons of Hope trilogy that even wraps up the story from its prequel novella! An absolute must-read and keeper -- I couldn't put it down! Full review will be posted closer to publication date.

Dawn says

Tessa Taylor is looking forward to starting over in Michigan's Upper Peninsula as a teacher. She's hoping to escape her past. Upon her arrival, she's dismayed to discover that there was a mistake. The town requested a male teacher. Homeless, jobless, and with winter setting in, Percival Updegraff agrees to let her remain as the teacher until spring which then places Tessa into his debt. A debt that he won't hesitate to collect upon. Determined to not be replaced come spring, Tessa throws herself into teaching the town's children and soon two adorable children feel she's the perfect match for their widowed father, the lighthouse keeper. Yet their uncle, the assistant keeper, has his own feelings for Tessa. Tessa soon finds both brothers competing for her hand, and begins to feel that someone is tracking her every move.

When Tessa was first introduced in *Hearts Made Whole*, I didn't like her at all. It takes a really talented author to take a character that I didn't like and turn that character into one that has me rooting for her. Jody Hedlund is one such author. While this book wasn't my favorite in the series, that privilege belongs to *Hearts Made Whole* and *Ryan Chambers*, it was a very gripping read.

First, I love how Tessa has learned what grace is and how to give it. Even when her past comes back to haunt her, she still shows grace to those who are set at ruining her. She's not the spoiled child any longer. She's grown up and it shows.

I liked Alex from the moment he stepped into the story. I loved how supportive he was of his brother. And the children were adorable! I really think that his niece and nephew were my favorite characters in the book.

Like her other books, Jody has done a fabulous job with crating her story around a remote lighthouse in Michigan. I love the way that she brilliantly brings to life her settings and her characters. I think that alone is one of the reason she's become one of my favorite authors. Because whenever I pick up a Jody Hedlund book, I know I'm in for a rich story with complex characters.

I received the book for free from the author to help promote it. My thoughts and opinions are my own.

Recommended to fans of Jody Hedlund, historical fiction, Elizabeth Camden, Kristi Anne Hunter

Rating - 4 stars
