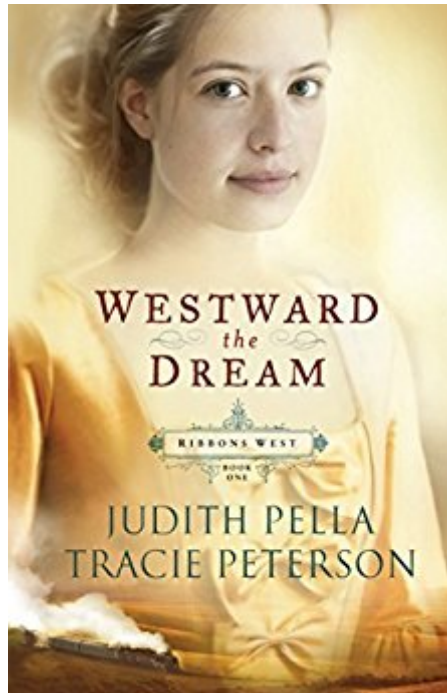


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# Westward The Dream (Ribbons West Book #1)



## Synopsis

As the U.S. descends into the Civil War, photographer Brenton Baldwin travels west with his sister Jordana, taking pictures of the developing lands and in search of their sister. Along for the trip is young Caitlan O'Connor, who has just arrived from Ireland. Will they make it to California to find their family despite the danger that looms ahead? And can early romance grow into love in the face of trials and tragedy?

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

The biggest surprise in this book was that it didn't end! Oh, there were no more pages to read . . . but none of the plot lines were resolved. It "ended" in the middle. I don't like being taken advantage of in this way and for this reason alone, I won't read any more in the series. Normally, I love a series because I fall in love with the characters as I did with this book. But I expect each book to also stand on its own. This one doesn't. So it's done . . . and I'm done.

I'm a big fan of both authors, so I was hugely disappointed with this book. It was both the characters

& the ending that I did not like. Instead of finding Jordana to be an exciting, independent woman for the time period, I thought she was manipulative and self-serving in her actions, never considering the repercussions of her actions on other people. She had a singlemindedness about her that was not admirable because of the way she went about getting what she wanted, while confessing God's leading & protection. Her bullying of her older brother came off as disrespectful & mean, which was disturbing. The story of her older sister in CA drug on endlessly with both husband & wife repeating the same litany of complaints, without trusting God or each other with their burdens. I got tired of reading about them. I did enjoy & respect Jordana's brother & their new friend, Caitlyn. Adding to my dissatisfaction with the book, was getting to the end, only to find NO resolution to any of the main characters stories! Rarely do I remove a book from my device, but this one is now gone.

I have read and enjoyed books by both authors, so I had high hopes for this novel. I found this volume disappointing on many fronts. The action took place across the US, with subjects ranging from the Civil War, the Transcontinental Railroad, Westward expansion, and the photographic processes of the time period. I thought the pacing was uneven, and sluggish for the most part. The characters were fairly engaging, but I felt that none of them were really well developed. All seemed to have major trouble with communicating their needs and feelings. There were multiple plot lines and NONE were fully resolved at the conclusion of this novel. Even so, the ending felt contrived and I had a hard time believing that parents in that time period would be supportive of the choices their children made at the conclusion. (This comment is vague intentionally so as not to be a spoiler) I felt that the authors would have served their characters (and readers ) better had they chosen to focus on one set of characters at a time, and had at least one plot line reach a satisfying conclusion in each novel. The choices they have made impel the reader to buy multiple volumes in order to have any resolution. This strategy failed in my case, as I just don't care what happens next to any of these characters. Content Review: Sex: none Cursing: none Violence: fistfights and gunshots Religion : prayer and trust in God mentioned often, but no strong statements of faith in Christ or Salvation message.

Judith Pella and Tracie Peterson have done a wonderful job collaborating on this Christian western romance. We are introduced to the Baldwin family and their adventures in the building of the West in connection with the transpacific railroad. In this book we learn to love each of the members of the Baldwin family as well as their extended family. The female protagonist that stands out for me is Jordana. We see her emerge from an adolescent into a woman. The authors did a superb job in her

character development. I like the way they used the literary tool of foreshadowing to building the plot line rising action. For example, when discussing Victoria's life (the eldest of the Baldwin siblings) in California there is references to the Donner Pass. Needless to say, if you are a history buff you are aware of the significance of the Donner Pass and the Donner Party. Tapping into this knowledge makes the reader curious if Victoria's husband gets caught in this situation. This is an excellent example of the authors' writing skills in keeping and maintaining the reader's interest. In addition, the author's end the story at the correct point as now the reader wants to read more about each of these strong and determined characters. You can't help but root for their success but you are left with a big question as to what happens next. Well done.

The book started out rather stilted and improbable, and I almost quit reading it. But then, suddenly, it came alive and I was caught up into the edge-of-my-chair adventure along with the compelling, completely believable characters and could not put the book down. I liked the ending, and look forward to discovering where the story goes in the next book. It is so good to find clean books that sweep me along on fascinating journeys.

Way too many unanswered questions.

After reading a couple of completely amateur freebie Westerns, tucking into this one proved to be pure delight. It brilliantly brings to life the early days of the Civil War from the viewpoint of young New Yorkers. A highlight was the young man's struggle with complex issues of enlisting. The plot treats the reader to a look inside the home of the Vanderbilts and high New York Society and the challenges and thrills of traveling West in wartime. A less engaging subplot follows the struggles of a California miner who fritters away his wife's fortune and the repetitive narrative of their marital woes. This was but loosely engaged to the main plot and might better have been saved for a different volume. At times the writing sank toward the pedantic. Many pages are wasted with characters struggling over the same issues in their heads rather than living them in breathtaking action or clever dialog. A great editor should be all over that. Finally, the writers just seemed to pick a spot to stop writing with a small tease for the next volume of the series. If you enjoy a great ride to a breathtaking climax and a settling denouement, you'll not find it here.

This book went back and forth between two stories then it stopped with no ending in either

story...won't be reading the following books.

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