



QUESTIONS & ANSWERS WITH JODY HEDLUND

1. How does *Rebellious Heart* compare to the previous novels you've written?

I was really interested in writing another story inspired by a famous couple from history similar to *The Preacher's Bride* and *The Doctor's Lady*. So I compiled a list of various couples I thought had unique courtships and fascinating lives.

During the course of my research I came across several biographies of John and Abigail Adams. As I read more about them, I realized the stories about how they met and courted would make a wonderful book, especially because they faced numerous obstacles in their quest for love.

As in previous novels, I changed the names of the main characters and fictionalized certain aspects of the story. In *Rebellious Heart*, Susanna Smith plays the role of Abigail Adams, and Ben Ross acts as John Adams.

2. What did you love most about these characters as you were creating them?

I loved getting to explore some of the issues of the Colonial era. Both Susanna and Ben are facing discrimination, though each on a different level. Susanna faces discrimination because she's a woman, and Ben because of his lower social status. It was a challenge for me to wrestle through some of the issues they dealt with as a result of this discrimination.

I also enjoyed delving into the tension surrounding the Pre-Revolutionary War that was beginning to escalate at that time. Ben is already deeply involved in the unrest, while Susanna is determined to obey her God-ordained authorities, even if she doesn't always agree with them.

Of course, as the story unfolds, both are forced to go beyond what they think they can endure, and they both have to make life-threatening choices. It was exciting to see these characters mature throughout the story.

3. Did you have a particular theme in mind while writing *Rebellious Heart*?

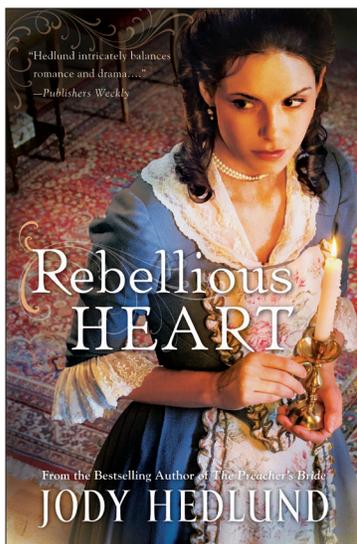
One of the main themes has to do with rebellion. The title really encapsulates the struggle going on internally in the characters' hearts, and the tug to follow man-made laws even when they're flawed versus the call to follow God's ultimate laws of justice and mercy. It's an age-old struggle: Do we follow our earthly leaders when their rules are oppressive, or do we rebel against that authority for God's higher ways?

4. Why do you think the Adamses' story is so relevant to today?

Because it's a love story that portrays the importance of developing a friendship in a relationship. John and Abigail Adams are known for their friendship and the many letters they wrote to each over the years. In fact, at one point Abigail addresses John as "my dearest friend."

While romance is important in any relationship such as theirs, I believe that often our Western culture places an overemphasis on romantic feelings to the detriment of forming a lifelong friendship. Many young people "fall in love" but neglect to develop a solid friendship with their partner first.

The story of John and Abigail Adams is a great example of how couples can make a point of becoming close friends—finding areas in common, having the same interests, and enjoying spending time together as friends—in addition to (or perhaps even before) the romance.



Rebellious Heart

by Jody Hedlund

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Media Contacts

FICTION PUBLICIST: **Noelle Buss**

952-829-2559

noelle.buss@bethanyhouse.com

CANADIAN MEDIA: **Ellen Graf-Martin**

519-342-3703

ellen@grafmartin.com

UK & IRISH MEDIA: **Ian Matthews**

+44 (0) 7939 098337

ian@gardenhousemedia.com

Please send tear sheets to:

Noelle Buss

11400 Hampshire Ave. S.

Bloomington, MN 55438