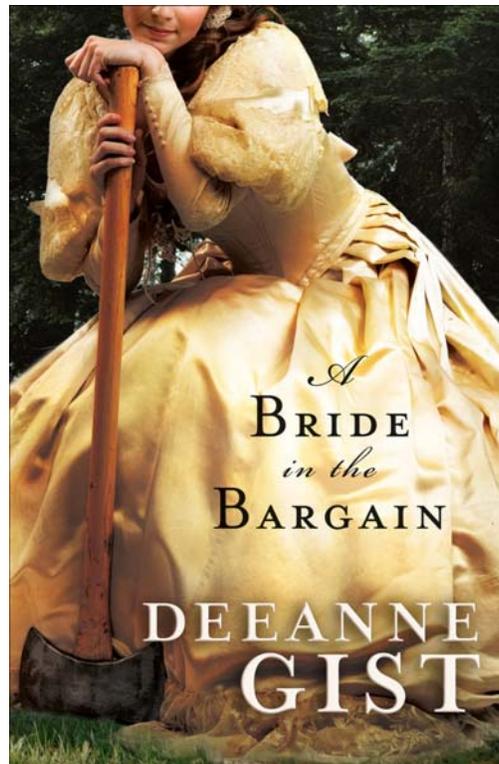


DISCUSSION QUESTIONS FOR **A BRIDE IN THE BARGAIN**

by Deeanne Gist

1. Throughout the book, Anna struggled with guilt. How do you draw the line between a healthy sense of responsibility and an unhealthy sense of guilt?
2. Near the end of the book, Anna was sorely tempted to marry Joe to save his land and the livelihoods of the lumberjacks. Given your answer to Question #1, did she make the right decision by walking away and letting him lose his land?
3. At the beginning of the book, Joe was completely focused on saving his land, even if it meant marrying Mrs. Wrenne. He justified this by noting that Mrs. Wrenne wanted a husband - any husband. Would it have been right for them to marry? How do you think it would have turned out for them?
4. Do you think it is common for women to marry for security or out of a sense of responsibility? Would your answer be different if you came from your mother's generation?
5. Judge Rountree let his children select their own names. Do you think there is significance in a child's name? Can it affect their lives?
6. Anna insisted on seeing Joe the morning of their wedding even though it is supposed to be unlucky. Do you think there is any truth to this superstition? Why are wedding tradition such as "something borrowed," throwing the bouquet, a penny in the shoe, etc. important to us?
7. Red refused to buy Joe's land, realizing he was not cut out to be "in charge." Do you think this was a "cop-out" on his part or are there personality types that are followers rather than leaders?
8. Anna served "bubble-and-squeak" and "toad in the hole." Have you ever eaten either of these dishes? What is the most unusual dish you have ever eaten?
9. Anna treasured the watch pin that belonged to her mother. Do you have a special keepsake that you treasure?



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Additional questions for Christian groups:

10. As a wedding gift, Joe gave Anna a framed Scripture quoting Matthew 13:45. “The kingdom of heaven is like a merchant seeking beautiful pearls, and upon finding one pearl of great value, he went and sold all he had and bought it.” What does this Scripture mean to you?

11. When Doc Maynard quoted Job 38 and 39 to her, Anna realized she had taken God’s responsibility upon herself. She was able to let go of her guilt by realizing each of the people in her life had suffered the natural consequences of their choices. But what about times when no choice is involved, as in the death of an infant or a tragic accident? Does the teaching in Job still apply? Is it enough to believe that God’s ways are above our ways?