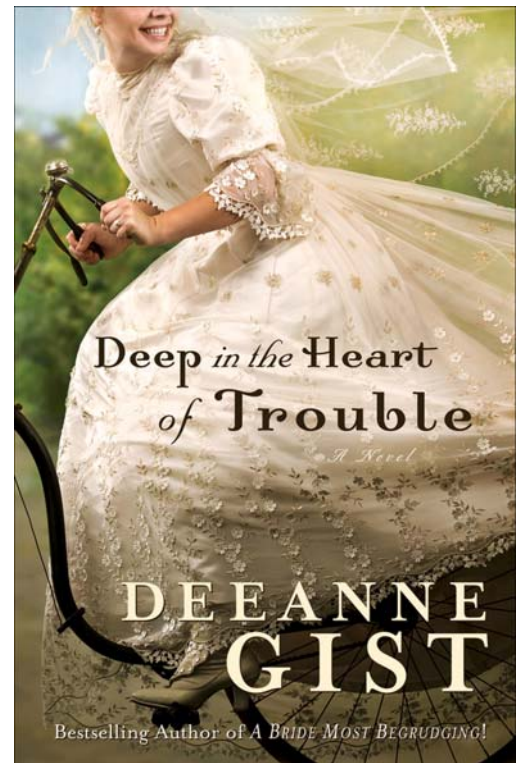


# DISCUSSION QUESTIONS FOR **DEEP IN THE HEART OF TROUBLE**

by Deeanne Gist

1. Tony had a strong sense of entitlement. He became more and more frustrated as each of his “rights” was stripped away - the love of his father, his inheritance, his home and finally the purity of his betrothed. Was it wrong for Tony to feel entitled to these things? Are there things you feel entitled to in your life that you don’t have? How does this affect your attitudes and behaviors? (For Christian groups: Why would the Lord take these things away from him?)
2. The group efforts of the Velocipede Club had the positive result of solving the mystery of Darius’ murder. On the other hand, the outraged citizens clearly came to a negative result in the formation of a lynch mob. In both cases, the sum of the parts was greater than the individual. What made the difference between a positive outcome and a negative outcome?
3. Essie had to be persuaded to take a risk in testing the new rotary drill technology, while Tony could immediately see the benefits and long term implications. Are some people more apt to see the bigger picture or to take risks? Are some people more cautious? Is there a place for both? Which kind are you?
4. Essie taught Harley to hunt frogs and snakes. What unusual past-times did you have as a child?
5. Tony forbid Essie to come out to the drilling site because she was distracting to the men. Was that fair to Essie? Was Tony right to think Essie should have been more sensitive to her effect on the men?
6. In the end, Essie gave up her bicycle business so her husband could continue his own business. In today’s world, how would you handle a choice like this?
7. Essie endured the unwelcome advances of Deputy Howard for a long time before she spoke up. Do you think women are this reticent nowadays? Why might a modern woman refrain from speaking up?
8. For their honeymoon, Tony and Essie bicycled to Enchanted Rock, a popular Texas rock-climbing destination. Share some of your unusual honeymoon locations or activities. (Well ... not *all* your activities!)



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Additional questions for Christian groups:

9. Essie had already been forgiven by the Lord for her past sins. Why did she have to ask Tony's forgiveness?
1. Essie had previously committed herself entirely to the Lord in her life as a single woman. Should she have refused Tony's advances? Can a woman be entirely committed to the Lord and to her husband?
2. Mrs. Lockhart quoted her romance novels as easily as many Christians quote Scripture. What made these secular sources relevant to the situations? Do you think the Lord can speak through secular sources as well as sacred sources?