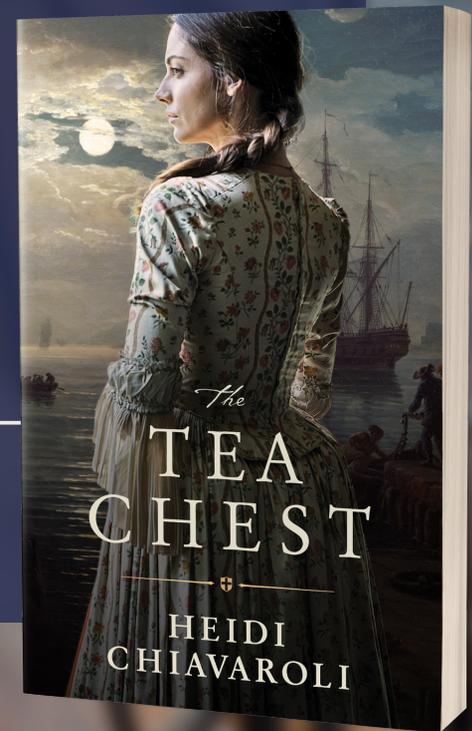


The
TEA
CHEST

Book Club Kit

"An endearing tale of two women separated by centuries who are searching for guidance and strength."

- *Publishers Weekly*



Praise for
The TEA CHEST

"Organic faith elements and Chiavaroli's skillful switching between time lines separate this from similar historical inspirational romances. Fans of Francine Rivers will enjoy this."

Publishers Weekly

"An enthralling story of beauty birthed from sorrow, hope amid ashes, and healing through pain."

Tara Johnson, author of *Where Dandelions Bloom* and *Engraved on the Heart*

Brilliantly researched and executed with passion,
The Tea Chest is timeless and empowering."

Rachel McMillan, author of *Murder in the City of Liberty*

"Captivating from the first page. Steeped in timeless truths and served with skill, *The Tea Chest* is sure to be savored by all who read it."

Jocelyn Green, Christy Award-winning author of *Between Two Shores*

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About Heidi Chiavaroli

Heidi Chiavaroli began writing thirteen years ago, just after Jesus grabbed hold of her heart. She used her two small boys' nap times to pursue what she thought at the time was a foolish dream. Despite a long road to publication, she hasn't stopped writing since!

Her debut novel, *Freedom's Ring*, was a Carol Award winner and a Christy Award finalist, a *Romantic Times* Top Pick, and a *Booklist* Top Ten Romance Debut. *The Tea Chest* is her third novel with Tyndale House Publishers.

Heidi loves exploring places that whisper of historical secrets, especially with her family. She loves hiking, baking, and dates with her high school sweetheart and husband of sixteen years. Heidi makes her home in Massachusetts with her husband and two sons. Visit her online at heidichiavaroli.com.

Heidi Chiavaroli



I closed my eyes, imagined the gold Trident pinned and shining upon my uniform, representing the elite family I was being welcomed into. I'd been sifted, proven strong. Though I told myself it didn't matter, I imagined the press release from the Navy.

**WOMAN MAKES HISTORY
IN BECOMING FIRST FEMALE MEMBER
OF ELITE NAVY SEALS**

The TEA CHEST

Prologue

Historical Note

In July 2017, it was announced that for the first time, a woman would enter the training pipeline to become a Navy SEAL. A couple weeks later, it was reported that she had dropped out. I couldn't help but imagine what this unidentified woman had gone through and what had propelled her to enter such rigorous training. I decided to explore her story in fiction.

While Emma Malcolm is fictitious, her father, the customs official John Malcolm, is not. In actuality John and his wife had five children, two of whom were deaf. Records indicate he was a harsh man, and while I attempted to remain true to what I read of him, I am hopeful the actual John Malcolm was more caring. John was tarred and feathered by a Boston mob and he is said to have taken a hunk of his tarred flesh to King George and requested to be made a "knight of the tar." His brother, Daniel, was revered among the Patriots.

Another true-to-life historical figure I explored was Sarah Bradlee Fulton. Though little is written about her, I based much of my findings on information from the Boston Tea Party Ships and Museum website (Sarah is given credit for the idea of disguising the men as Mohawks) as well as a book written by one of her family members, *A Woman Fearing Nothing* by Brenda Ely Albus. I found this book extremely helpful in aiding this story. And though it seems Sarah helped the "Mohawks" at her brother's Boston home, for the simplicity of the story I have omitted her brother, Nathaniel.

Historical Note

There is not only record that “a paper was handed out in a very confidential manner,” encouraging the men to ready themselves to destroy the tea that December night in 1773, but according to apprentice Joshua Wyeth, the men had “pledged our honor, that we would not reveal our secret.” Another account tells of a group of the men signing their names to a round-robin—my basis for the oath found in the tea chest. Many Tea Party participants kept their secret until death. Not until the nineteenth century did stories begin to come out surrounding the night of the Tea Party, though descendants took great pains to make the destruction of the tea sound honorable. As the participants became celebrated, stories grew until it seems no one could be certain who truly participated and who did not.

Samuel Clarke was modeled after Jonathan Clarke, who was indeed a consignee for the East India tea and did shoot out the window of his home into the mob in the weeks before the Tea Party. There, the similarities end, and I have fictionalized Samuel for the purposes of the story.

I read no evidence of General Gage himself ordering women spies treated with the cruelty Emma endures, though I have come upon other reports of harsh treatment done to women suspected of spying during the Revolution.

Sarah had attested that by my own decisions, I might change the course of my life. Something that sounded so simple but was in fact the most complicated feat I could imagine. Because to find my voice meant to speak against my parents—to speak against my world.

Emma,

The TEA CHEST

Discussion Questions

1.) Hayley longs to prove herself by achieving what no woman has ever achieved. What is the most ambitious thing you've ever attempted? What motivated you to tackle it?

2.) As Emma is torn between her choices, she wonders, "Was not loyalty more honorable than liberty?" Which of these qualities do you find more appealing?

3.) How has Ethan's personal tragedy shaped him? What do you think binds him and Hayley together?

4.) Whether from shame or fear, many Boston Tea Party participants never disclosed their involvement. But today we laud their actions. How can a person determine when a law is unjust enough to warrant breaking? Have you ever had to stand against an established rule or law? Would you make the same decision now?

5.) Did Emma make the right choice in the face of Samuel's blackmail? How would you have responded?

"*The Tea Chest* opens, unleashing an array of fascinating characters and complex circumstances that will have you turning pages fast as your fingers fly till the end. I could not put this novel down."

Laura Frantz, Christy Award-winning author of *The Lacemaker*

Discussion Questions

6.) At the end of chapter 17, Emma realizes that what she thought was for evil, God intended for good. Have you or someone close to you experienced hardship that God reshaped into blessing?

7.) Hayley strives to move beyond her past, but she keeps falling into it—her relationship with her mother, her history with Ethan, and other memories. What are some ways God uses her return home to transform her and help her grow?

8.) Compare the challenges Emma faced in Boston before her marriage to the difficulties she encountered after leaving Boston with Noah. Was she ever tempted to regret her decision? How did she respond to the hardships she dealt with once she left home?

9.) Hayley and Ethan are reunited by their quest to discover the history behind the tea chest. What about the mystery is so enticing to them? How does it help them rebuild their relationship? Have you ever found common ground with someone through a shared experience or interest?

"Chiavaroli proves herself a master at the intersection of history and present day in her new novel, *The Tea Chest*. . . . Bravo!"

Amy K. Sorrells, author of *Before I Saw You*

Discussion Questions

10.) In chapter 33, Emma asks herself, "How did God expect me to keep such an impossible vow to this man who had become a stranger to me? I'd joined him with liberty in mind. Was this—suffering the behavior of a husband—freedom?" How did Noah's change affect Emma? In a situation like his, what is a spouse's responsibility? How can a person know when to fight for their marriage and when it is utterly lost?

11.) Hayley learns that she has distantly related family members she never knew about. How does this revelation impact her? Do you have any ancestors who were involved in historically significant events—and if so, what do you know about them?

12.) Was Hayley's decision to drop out of training a victory or a failure? How did she define it? Do you agree with her assessment?

"A story of America's birth as a nation...that reflects the clamoring in humanity's heart to soar unfettered by the weight of chains that bind."

Jamie Jo Wright, Christy Award-winning author of *The House on Foster Hill* and *The Curse of Misty Wayfair*

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Heidi's website: heidichiavaroli.com

Visit Heidi's website to sign up for her newsletter and receive news and updates delivered directly to your inbox!

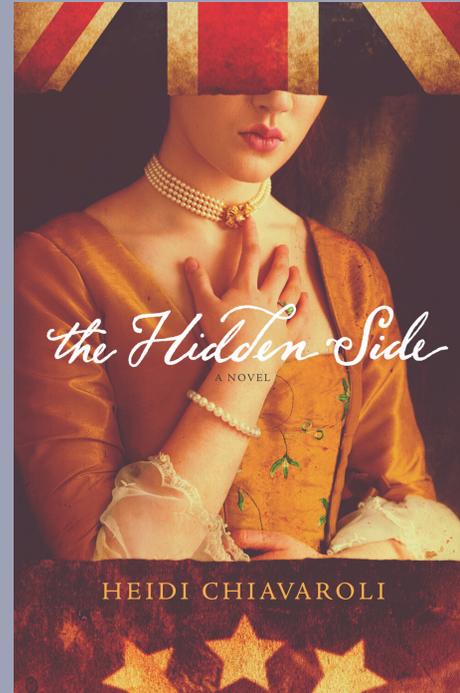
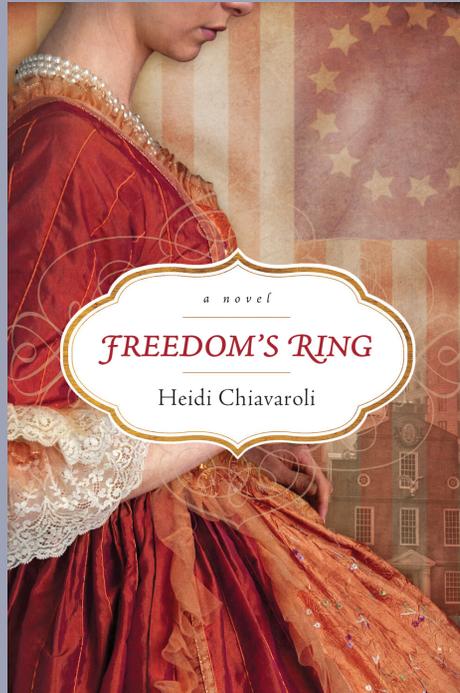
Thanks for choosing

The **TEA CHEST**

as your book club pick!

Keep an eye out for the next novel by Heidi Chiavaroli
coming Spring 2021 from Tyndale House Publishers.

More great fiction by Heidi Chiavaroli



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