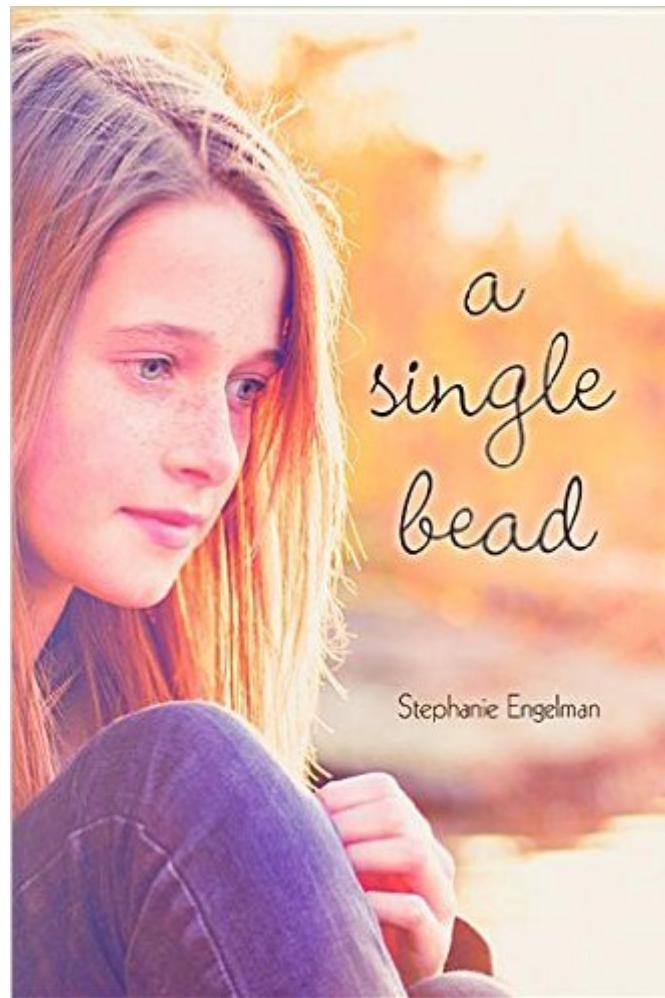


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# A Single Bead



## Synopsis

On the anniversary of the plane crash that took the life of her beloved grandmother and threw her own mother into a deep depression, 16-year-old Katelyn Marie Roberts discovers a single bead from her grandmother's rosary—a rosary lost in the crash. A chance encounter with a stranger, who tells Katelyn that a similar bead saved her friend's life, launches Katelyn and her family on a mysterious journey filled with glimmers of hope, mystical events and unexplained graces.

## Book Information

Paperback: 208 pages

Publisher: Pauline Books & Media (January 1, 2016)

Language: English

ISBN-10: 0819890545

ISBN-13: 978-0819890542

Product Dimensions: 5.4 x 0.5 x 8.2 inches

Shipping Weight: 12.6 ounces (View shipping rates and policies)

Average Customer Review: 4.9 out of 5 stars [See all reviews](#) (29 customer reviews)

Best Sellers Rank: #92,707 in Books (See Top 100 in Books) #1 in [Books > Teens > Literature & Fiction > Religious > Christian > Emotions & Feelings](#) #2 in [Books > Teens > Literature & Fiction > Religious > Christian > Family](#) #182 in [Books > Teens > Literature & Fiction > Social & Family Issues > Death & Dying](#)

## Customer Reviews

Teen fiction novelist Stephanie Engelman encourages the reader to discover (or rediscover) the power of prayer when grieving in her debut book, *A Single Bead*. Her protagonist, Kate, lost her grandmother to a tragic plane crash only a year ago. At the grave site on the one-year anniversary of her death, Kate mysteriously discovers a single bead from her grandmother's rosary with her initials on it. From that point onward, Kate seeks to find the remaining beads that bear initials with her other family members on them. As she puts the pieces of the puzzle together, she realizes that faith is the answer to this unsolved mystery. Kate's mother is in the throes of grief after having lost her own mother, which spirals into clinical depression. As Kate watches her mother's spirit diminish and her physical presence deteriorate, she knows that her mom has been missing something "but what? She soon discovers that faith in God" not in objects, such as the rosary beads "are what bring healing and serenity to one's life after loss. Kate experiences her own grief as her mother is hospitalized for depression. She longs for

her mom's warmth and love, yet her mother has become an empty shell incapable of expressing emotion. Kate journeys with other family members, who offer her solace and encourage her to pray the rosary more often. In turn, Kate's lackluster faith is reawakened, and she clings to it as she courageously offers the same invitation to her mother "to deepen her faith. She doesn't receive all of the answers, but she knows that God does answer prayer. A Single Bead is classified as teen fiction with subcategories in awakening faith, rosary, and trauma/depression. Truly it fits all of these and more. Engelman flawlessly unravels a story "a journey of not one person's life, but several people. She showcases the value of community, especially following illness or loss, and the reader instantly connects to main character Kate's extended family. Engelman's style is warm, inviting, and fluid. The book draws the reader in from the start and entices him or her to desire more in each subsequent chapter. Her character development is detailed but not overly so, and her description of plot and use of dialog is impeccable. I'm not one to recommend (or even frequently read) fiction, but this story changed my heart in such a short time. What makes the book versatile, as well, is that Engelman included several discussion questions at the end in order to facilitate further discussion. This could be used in a family setting, in youth groups or other parish ministries. I believe it is perfect for a teen grief group, as well. For anyone whose faith has wavered because of the question of suffering, pick up A Single Bead. Its nonjudgmental characters will be relevant, as they all are in varying degrees of devotion to or skepticism of a personal God. This book is also a perfect gift for the struggling teen in your life. If you are hurting over trauma or tragedy, or if you know someone who is, purchase A Single Bead. It's a gift that is nonconfrontational, yet provides a gentle and intimate view of life after loss and purpose in the struggle.

This is a thoroughly Catholic story, but the plot is intriguing enough to interest others, as well. The idea of the scattered rosary beads is ingenious, and keeps you wanting to find out what happens next. The young protagonist is convincing enough for preteen and teenage readers to identify with, as she goes through her emotional and intellectual struggles. This is probably a story that will attract more girls than boys, but I'm not a girl, and I enjoyed it! I particularly like the way the author presents the miraculous through the lives of the recipients of the rosary beads. For people who may not realize that genuine miracles occur in this day and age, this story can serve as a tutorial in the efficacy of prayer. Some fundamental values are expressed throughout the story, such as the importance of family, the value of perseverance and forgiveness, and, of course, faith. A very good and inspiring book for kids and adults.

This novel is "teen fiction" in the same way that Harry Potter and Hunger Games are, except that in addition to being written about a teen, it actually contains a great message for teens. As an adult, I found quite a bit of depth to it, and enjoyed it very much. Would love to see a sequel!

In this new YA novel, a teenage girl finds faith in an unlikely way: through the stories of others who have been touched by the prayers of her grandmother, killed in a plane crash a year ago. This compelling story is appropriate for students in grades 5 and up and challenges the reader to lay aside the idea that a prayer or a sacramental can be a "magical" thing. It is refreshing to read about an extended family whose life is centered on faith.

Wonderful book and inspirational story. Stephanie weaves just the right amount of darkness into her story to make it very real but always returns with a wave of light and hope. She is a great storyteller and creates for her readers both a friend and a mentor with her characters. You are giving more than a book to a girl when you choose Stephanie's "A Single Bead." Great work!

Stephanie has written a beautiful exploration of Faith, particularly in that stage that so many young people find themselves in - doubt, struggle, and questioning. This is a "must read" for young women and also for those who are privileged to help accompany young people on their journey to Christ. Well done!

A Single Bead, by Stephanie Engelman, is not only well written: it tells a good story and taps into the heart of the reader. It's good fiction that has Catholic themes. If you're not Catholic, you'll still enjoy it. If you are Catholic, you'll "get" it. The storyline explores death and prayer, but in a completely natural way. It also considers how adults don't have it all together, how families, though imperfect, can pull together through hardship, and ways to pray and not be a total dork about it. This book, while being unabashedly Catholic and Christian, is not unabashedly boring. It explores grief and depression and faces the burden of both. It's also a perspective that feels very real: the teens in this book aren't goody-two-shoes who pray all day, and there's even a scene where there's a "speed rosary" prayed. (That made me laugh.) The characters have their flaws and foibles, just like real people. As someone who's been hanging around teens for the last few years (though not living with them, tis true), it struck me as very spot on.

Stephanie Engelman's debut novel is a delightful tale of a young woman struggling with believing in the power of prayer. Her main character Katelyn seems to be a pretty typical teen who has some faith but hasn't gotten to the point of really making it a part of her everyday existence yet. Stephanie does a nice job of balancing out faith-filled characters with those who struggle with their faith. This could make a great Confirmation present for a teen girl if you're looking for something a little different to give.

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