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JENNY GRANT SERIES PROPOSAL



Series Title: **TIMERLAND ADVENTURES** (unless you can think of something better)

Overview/Rationale: As Andi Carter's good friend (and a major character) in two Circle C Adventures (Books 4 and 5), as well as in two follow-up stories (*More Tales* and *Stranger in the Glade*) Jenny Grant seems like a great spin-off character for her own series. She's a popular character for Andi fans, and the setting—1880 Washington Territory—is far enough removed from the Circle C world to give a Jenny Grant series a completely different flavor. In addition, I envision this series as being more light-hearted and could easily appeal to middle-grade readers as young as eight years old. The original CCAdventures (also middle grade) are much more serious, with a lot more dramatic story arcs, for older middle-graders.

While including some terrifying rescues during a flood, encounters with a stormy Puget Sound, and likewise, many parts of the overall story arcs will include humorous scenes—with Jenny and her close-in-age brothers (like rescuing Jenny's Appaloosa horse out of "livestock jail.") In this way, Jenny and Andi will be two completely different characters. To be honest, my biggest fear in going for a Jenny series was that she would end up being a copycat of Andi. As I've dug into the first story, however, what is emerging is a completely different, more fun-loving and free-range girl than Andi's rich and important family. Up in the middle of a muddy stump town, there is (as Anne of Green Gable would put it) "more scope for the imagination."

Jenny has a lumberman father and a mother, four older brothers and one younger brother. The three younger siblings are close and get in and out of trouble together (I'm remembering one of my favorite characters, Caddie Woodlawn, who was in the middle of her inseparable trio.)

This series, God willing, would include six books, and I'm really stretching my neck out here, as deadlines terrify me. I am confident, however, that book one will be finished by late summer or early fall. Here are possible titles, with a liner summary ideas—subject to change for both titles and summaries.

- 1) Trouble in Tacoma. Too much rain, an early snowpack melt from Mt. Rainier, and unscrupulous logging practices from the Timberland (Grants) logging company's main competitor turn the Puyallup River into a disaster waiting to happen. Jenny and her Appaloosa gelding play a major role in the river rescue of a young teen's desire to be the town hero (which goes sideways).
- 2) Point Defiance Peril. Historically, the Pacific NW (especially Tacoma) is a hotspot for bigfoot sightings. The Salish Indian word is *Sasq'ets* (Sasquatch), and Jenny, Micah, and Gideon stumble onto strange happenings inside the old Point Defiance military reserve (unoccupied). I envision thieves guarding their hideout by creating the Sasq'ets fear, but in the end the prints are made from large, carved boards (yes, really!)
- 3) Vashon Island Venture. The Three Musketeers (their nickname) are excited to try out their new sailing skiff on the Sound. Sailing to Vashon Island, just across from the tip of Tacoma, is a leisurely trip with no apparent danger. They'll see a couple of Orcas and some other fun sea life, and somebody might even fall overboard in a comedy of errors. But the trip to the island goes without a hitch. It's the return voyage that is fraught with sudden peril as a summer storm comes up, and the outgoing tide current takes their skiff off course and straight through the dangerous waters of the Tacoma Narrows (been there, done that. It really was scary! The Coast Guard had to rescue our disabled motorboat). Once they make it to shore, they are a long way from home. The three kids must use their frontier survival skills to find a town/people/or ?? to get back to where they belong.
- 4) Puget Sound Plunder. After another Puget Sound squall, Jenny and Gideon discover something washed ashore (not sure what yet—a wooden box with a map? A wooden box with valuables? Maybe a young woman or boy who had been held captive by smugglers or other bad guys). The main thrust will be the treasure/castaway and the uncovering of a (true-historical) smuggling ring (but they won't be smuggling opium. That's just not for kids. I'll think of something.)
- 5) Logging Camp Chaos. A series of "accidents" is breaking out at the Timberland Lumber Company's logging camp. What's bringing it on? (I have no idea what is causing it, but right now I'm focused on book 1). 😊 The light-hearted action will include a logger's rodeo (Roger used to teach logging at White River high school), competitions with the log rolling (who can stay on) at the boom on the bay (I can see Micah involved with this, LOL), etc. It will end up being caused by (again) the competing company, Dickson Lumber, as they have had a series of real setbacks (their shingle mill catching fire, maybe).
- 6) San Francisco Strangers. Jenny has had one too many "close calls" in the woods. When a tree almost lands on her, Mama (and Grandmother, who is there for a visit) decides it's time Jenny cools her heels and starts learning some ladylike qualities somewhere away from the mud and rough loggers, dock workers, and fishermen. She has run free and wild long enough. She ends up in October 1880 going to Miss Whitaker's Academy, where she

has her own set of adventures before meeting Andi Carter the following February 1881. (I thought it would be a nice end to the series with Jenny and Andi meeting at the school.

Length: Based on your request of making *Other Tales* and *More Tales* about 36,000-38,000 words each, that is my target word count.

The first three chapters of *Trouble in Tacoma* are included in this initial proposal.