

Maggie's Way

Maggie O'Malley is accustomed to living life on her own terms. Born of a proud Irish heritage, Maggie grew up with stories of her mother's struggles and hardships in traveling from her native Ireland to this brave new world across the Atlantic. Her mother's determination and strength gave her the courage to live her life free from many of the societal restraints of her day. Although her mother was eventually forced to work as a servant in order to ensure their survival, Maggie was not content to live under the roofs of the rich men and women who delegated housekeeping jobs out to members of poor immigrant families. Instead, she longed for the freedom and equality to be found out West, where the rules of polite society took a backseat to the practical demands for survival in the untamed wilderness. Intoxicated by the possibilities of a change in lifestyle, Maggie convinces her mother to join her in an arduous journey across the Colorado territory. Acclimating themselves to life in the San Juan Mountains, Maggie and her mother start to feel like their adventure is almost at an end, only to discover that it has only just begun. After arriving in the San Juans, Maggie helps her mother set up a restaurant in Ouray, a small, rustic mining town brimming with gold fever. Before long, Maggie sets her sights on a more ambitious line of work – that of the mule skinner, a male-dominated trade known for being both physically demanding and exceptionally dangerous during the winter. Maggie soon succeeds in securing herself a position in this unconventional line of work and quickly grows to cherish her adventurous treks up into the mountains, despite the township's frank disapproval of such an unladylike endeavor. Then she meets Matthew, a rugged preacher who finds a place in her heart and causes her to reconsider issues of marriage and childrearing. Now, as Maggie is torn between her desire for independence and her longing for companionship, she must decide whether or not she can

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