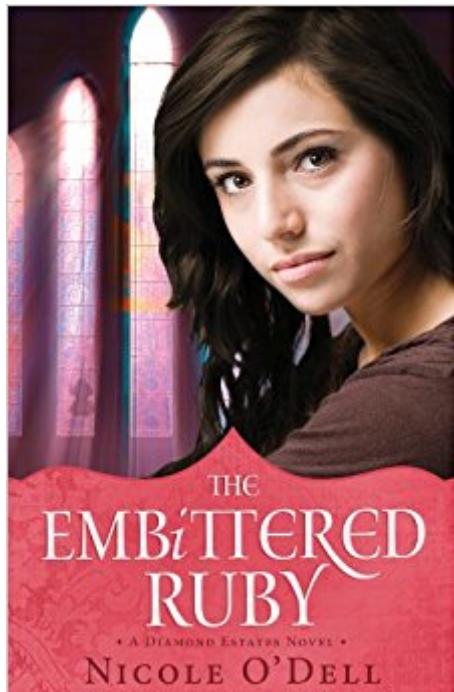


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# The Embittered Ruby (Diamond Estates)



## **Synopsis**

Join embittered sixteen-year-old Carmen Castillo on her journey to hope and healing as she leaves her hurtful world behind and moves into Diamond Estates, a home for troubled teens. This brand-new novel for teen girls will not only entertain, but also promises to capture your heart and challenge your faith.

## **Book Information**

Series: Diamond Estates (Book 2)

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## **Customer Reviews**

Filled with the problems faced in every high school, this book is much better than I had expected. While a little bit choppy in parts, a very fine addition to most Christian High School libraries. There are good discussion questions at the end for each chapter, though just the book itself lends itself well to discussion without the help. (Carol Van Brocklin Missionary Library 2012-01-14)The author helped the character go beyond a 180 turn of attitude. I was pleasantly surprised by this. I found the "realness" of each of the teenage characters so very refreshing and enjoyed learning about their lives! Once I finished this book I found out it was a series, I cannot wait to read the first book "The Wishing Pearl" and I'll be waiting quite impatiently for the next one as well! (Gina Brown Mother Daughter Reading Team 2012-02-20)

Sixteen-year-old Carmen Castillo prays that her parents will patch things up so she can return to her once-lavish life. Trapped by resentment and anger, she heads to Diamond Estates hoping to find some healing for her embittered soul. Desperately homesick, Carmen concludes there is no such thing as ruby slippers. . .but is there still a chance she'll get what her heart longs for?

Something that is often shied away from is the genre of Christian fiction. It seems to be only the "Christians" that go for it as the others believe it will either be not something that they will enjoy or they believe it will be all up in the trying to convert and bible bash you. The thing is that what most people don't realize is that today's Christian Fiction for the YA audience holds an edgy feel to it and reflects issues that go on in the lives of Christian and non-Christian teens. A series that I had first discovered back in January 2013 was Nicole O'Dell's Diamond Estate Novels. I was hooked after reading Book #3 and decided to go back and check out Books #1 and #2. The Embittered Ruby is Book #2 in the series. In this one, we meet sixteen-year-old Carmen Castillo who has a wealthy boyfriend, belongs to a country club and has two loving parents and off to greatness with her tennis and private schooling. That is until her parent's marriage starts to crumble and her dad leaves her mother for his secretary Tiffany. Soon the life Carmen knows will be ripped away from her as they move across town to a poorer area filled with gangs and public schooling. Her parents married originally when Carmen was born, so Carmen concocts a plan to fall pregnant to Nick - her boyfriend and then he will marry her and rescue her from this poor life. Things start to go well and eventually too well as Carmen's plans come into play but what will happen when tragedy strikes and everything Carmen has created has unraveled, and she is back to square one, but this time with no support. When her mom hears about a Christian support type rehab for teenage girls, her mom signs Carmen along, and she is shipped off to the Diamond Estates. During her time here, she will meet a variety of characters - some good influences and others bad? What will Carmen choose to follow when it comes down to her survival? Will she pick the path she was taken before the Estates or will she choose to put her faith and self in God's way? Find out in The Embittered Ruby by Nicole O'Dell, Book #2 in the Diamond Estate series. A series that not only instills a Christian value but also targets Edgy family issues and topics in a Christian manner.

Beautiful powerful story with charismatic characters created by an amazing author. I enjoyed it immensely and believe other people of faith will as well.

Carmen's world is changing. Her parents have split up, and her dad has a new girl friend that's now the focus of all his attention. On top of that, Carmen's mom is forced to move her and her sisters from upscale New York to Hackensack, New Jersey. The move takes Carmen away from her boyfriend, Nate. It also places her in a new school and neighborhood overrun with gangs. These unfair changes overwhelm Carmen, and she wants only to escape back to New York and Nate, so

she devises a plan. Get pregnant. Marry Nate. And live happily ever after. Carmen's plan and the choices she makes send her on a downward spiral of lies, manipulation, a gang shoot-out, and finally a loss she never saw coming. With nowhere else to turn, Carmen moves to a haven called Diamond Estates, hoping to put her life back together. In *The Embittered Ruby*, Nicole O'Dell has written a wonderful story of hope and second chances. The heroine, Carmen, is a well-crafted and realistic character. In fact, I've met several girls just like Carmen--girls who were put in bad situations by the people around them, made things worse with their own bad choices, and then became embittered to life. Carmen's story may seem gritty to some people, but it's an all too real example of the tough situations that today's teens face. I liked that Carmen's journey to healing was true to life. When she arrives at the Diamond Estates ministry, there's no instant, miraculous turn around. She struggles, resists help, and even lashes out at the people trying to help her. Nicole doesn't sugar-coat reality, not even at the story's conclusion. There's no perfect, happily ever after. But there is hope! Carmen's story shows that it takes time to heal. It takes time to learn new habits and break old ones. It takes time to overcome the consequences of bad decisions. It takes time and hard work, but with the grace of God it is possible! You can have a second chance and start again.

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