

FamilyFiction

September 2020



**LOOKING BACK,
PRESSING FORWARD**

ALSO IN THIS ISSUE:

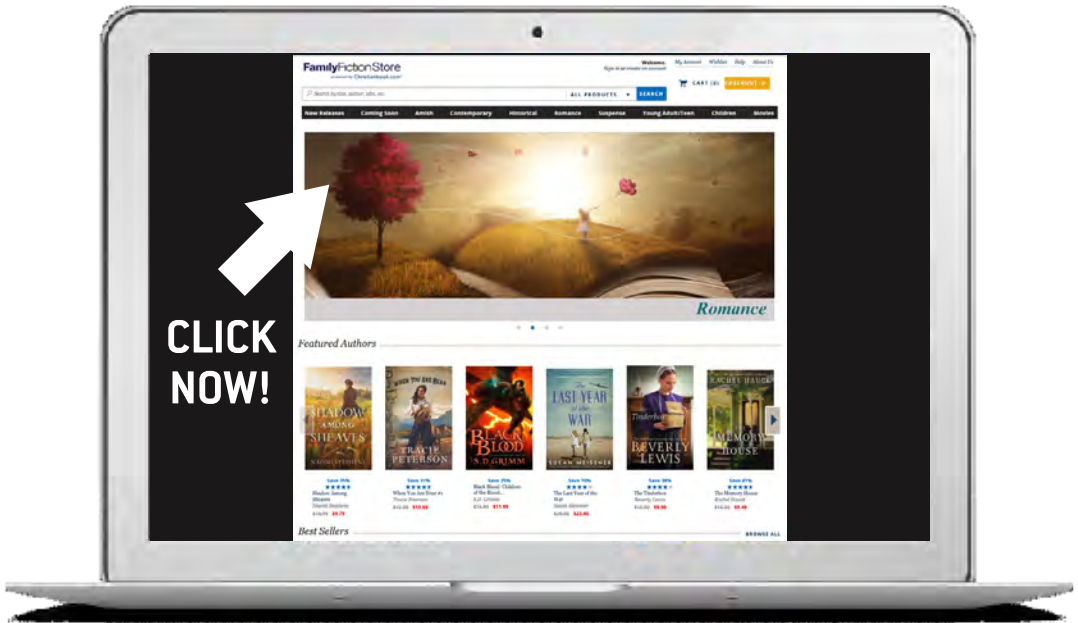
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Features



SUSPENSE

SUSAN MAY WARREN

The suspense author explains how she creates swoon-worthy novels that also keep readers on the edge of their seats.



CONTEMPORARY

KATHERINE REAY

The contemporary author talks about the value of looking through someone else's eyes.



HISTORICAL

SARAH SUNDIN

The historical author talks about how the theme of her latest novel intruded on her own life.

On the Web: Christian Fiction News

- Christian publisher Revell celebrates 150 years in publishing.
- **Kim Vogel Sawyer** talks to *FamilyFiction* about her novel *Unveiling The Past*.
- **Terry Brennan** tells us a little about his new thriller *Persian Betrayal* and reads a scene for *FamilyFiction* readers.

New Releases: More than 30 new books

- **Beverly Lewis, Kim Vogel Sawyer, Colleen Coble, DiAnn Mills, Andrew Peterson**, and more!

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Department Spotlights



AMISH

Q&A with
Leslie Gould



HISTORICAL

Q&A with
Amanda Barratt



ROMANCE

Q&A with
Rachel Hauck



SPECULATIVE

Q&A with
Sandra Fernandez
Rhoads



SUSPENSE

Q&A with
Siri Mitchell



CHILDREN'S

Q&A with
Mary E. Sandford

TRUTH IN FICTION: 10 Years of FamilyFiction

FamilyFiction Celebrates 10 Years of Christian Fiction News and Interviews

FAMILYFICTION ANNOUNCES PODCAST

The Premier Source for News and Interviews from the World of Christian Storytelling Celebrates A Milestone, Looks to the Future



New Releases & Bestsellers

Amish

Contemporary

Historical

Romance

Speculative

Suspense

Children's

YA/Teens

Comics/Animation

Movies/DVDs

NEWS ON THE WEBSITE

Check out these news articles, updates, and other bonus material online at www.FamilyFiction.com

Christian Publisher Revell Celebrates 150 Years

Now fiction makes up 50 percent of Revell's new titles from bestselling and award-winning authors such as Ted Dekker, Jane Kirkpatrick, Suzanne Woods Fisher, Irene Hannon, Ann H. Gabhart, Susan May Warren, and Lynette Eason.

Read more here:

<https://www.familyfiction.com/christian-publisher-revell-celebrates-150-years-publishing>

[VIDEO] Kim Vogel Sawyer | *Unveiling The Past*

Christian fiction author Kim Vogel Sawyer talks to *FamilyFiction* about her novel *Unveiling The Past*.

Read more here:

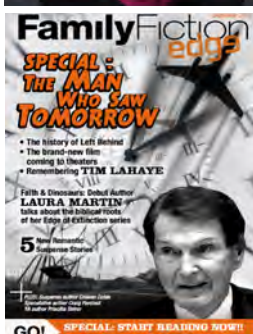
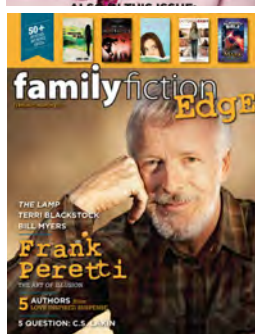
<https://www.familyfiction.com/kim-vogel-sawyer-unveiling-past>

[VIDEO] Terry Brennan | *Persian Betrayal*

Author Terry Brennan tells us a little about his new release *Persian Betrayal* + reads a scene for *FamilyFiction* readers.

Read more here:

<https://www.familyfiction.com/terry-brennan-persian-betrayal>



TRUTH IN FICTION: 10 YEARS OF FAMILYFICTION

FamilyFiction Celebrates 10 Years of Christian Fiction News and Interviews

This issue, ***FamilyFiction*** celebrates 10 years of helping consumers discover the best in Christian storytelling from authors and creators. *FamilyFiction* launched with its September/October 2010 issue, featuring **Karen Kingsbury** on the cover. The magazine has since gone on to feature Christian storytellers in all genres, including **Francine Rivers, Ted Dekker, Priscilla Shirer, Beverly Lewis, Tosca Lee, Jan Karon, Terri Blackstock, Lynn Austin, Dee Henderson, Tamera Alexander, Tim LaHaye, Wanda E. Brunstetter**, and so many more. We've also shared interviews and updates for such popular Christian properties as **VeggieTales, Berenstain Bears**, and **Adventures in Odyssey**.

While there have been some changes over the years, *FamilyFiction's* focus continues to spotlight the breadth of Christian storytelling—including Amish fiction, Historical, Suspense, Speculative, Romance, Contemporary, Young Adult, and Children's titles, as well as Christian stories told through other media, such as comics movies, and animation.

Now, we take a moment to look back on some of the great interviews we've had over the years.

CLICK HERE TO READ MORE ONLINE: <https://www.familyfiction.com>

Karen Kingsbury on the Ministry Value of Christian Fiction

"I really do love my readers, and I enjoy getting to know them and praying for their needs. For me, writing is a ministry first and foremost. You're not just telling a story and walking away. You're telling a story and dialoguing about how that story affected people."

(Karen Kingsbury—Unlocked | September 2010)

<https://www.familyfiction.com/karen-kingsbury-unlocked>

Francine Rivers Compares and Contrasts Her Novel *The Masterpiece* with Her Other Works

"Every story I've written contains a love story. Brokenness, healing, and redemption are consistent themes in my work. This book has that in common with all my others. However, in other stories, I've had one main character be strong in faith. The difference in this novel, both people are broken and struggling. I want readers to know that no matter who you are, where you come from, what you've done, when you accept Jesus, God will make you into His masterpiece."

(Francine Rivers—Seeing God's Handiwork | January 2018)

<https://www.familyfiction.com/francine-rivers-seeing-gods-handiwork>

Priscilla Shirer on How Teaching Her Sons About Spiritual Battles Led to *The Prince Warriors*

"The idea occurred to me to write a story for my own sons that would capture the epic tone of a mysterious and intriguing adventure novel while simultaneously uncovering principles about spiritual warfare and particularly, the armor of God. I wanted to alert my sons to the very real battle that is waging in heavenly places and the victory that they can have in Jesus."

(Priscilla Shirer—Teaching Young Fantasy Readers About the Armor of God | March 2017)

<https://www.familyfiction.com/priscilla-shirer-teaching-young-fantasy-readers-armor-god>

Ted Dekker on Expressing Biblical Truths Through Fantastical Stories

"The Bible is packed to the gills with fantastical, supernatural events, so much so that the supernatural becomes natural. The question that remains for us is how to interpret those many fantastical elements."

(Ted and Rachelle Dekker—*Sea of Fears* | October 2019)

<https://www.familyfiction.com/speculative-author-interview-ted-rachelle-dekker-sea-fears>

Charles Martin on the Pros and Cons of Seeing His Novel Made Into a Movie

The film version of *The Mountain Between Us* turned out quite different in some ways from your book. How did you feel watching it the first time? Although the movie may not reflect what you intended, are there ways you think God may be "working all things out for good" through this situation?

*"Until recently, much of what I learned about production, I learned from the internet—like you. During this process, I learned one simple rule: Selling an intellectual property is like selling a house. How do I feel about this? I was, am, and will remain grateful and totally blown away that a studio like FOX would put my book on the big screen. Even with the changes, sitting in that theatre and staring at images that began somewhere between my head and heart is possibly the most surreal and coolest thing I've ever experienced. *The Mountain Between Us* had been out eight years before they made the movie. It had never hit any bestseller list anywhere. The movie came out and the book has been on the *New York Times* bestseller list since it released. More people have seen and been made aware of that book in the last month than in the last several years combined. Jesus tells us, 'If I be lifted up, I will draw all men to me.' I pray my stories do that. Movies, too."*

(Charles Martin—*Writing for An Audience of One* | April 2018)

<https://www.familyfiction.com/charles-martin-writing-audience-one>

Beverly Lewis on a Great Encounter with a Reader

*"A beautiful young woman shared with me that she was living off the streets when the local pastor's wife gave her my book *The Atonement* to read. The story stopped her in her dead-end tracks and changed her life. She abandoned her old life and gave her heart to Jesus Christ and has recently completed her paramedic training. She is also a faithful church member at the pastor's wife's congregation."*

(Beverly Lewis—*Taking the Long Way Home* | May 2018)

<https://www.familyfiction.com/beverly-lewis-taking-long-way-home>

Terri Blackstock on Whom She Has in Mind When She Writes

"I'm always thinking of the appetite of the suspense reader, even when I'm writing something in a different genre. I want my readers to feel surprise or suspense on every page, and I want them to race to finish a chapter so they can close the book, only to find that they can't close it. They have to start the next chapter to see what's going to happen next. In terms of demographic, I like to think I have readers who are young and old, male and female, believing and unbelieving. There's tremendous power in story, and I want to use whatever power I have to make people think deeply about issues in their lives, and challenge them to see other sides and sift through all the noise to figure out what they believe, and why they believe it."

(Suspense Interview: Terri Blackstock—*Hope In The End* | November 2019)

<https://www.familyfiction.com/suspense-interview-terri-blackstock-hope-end>

Jody Hedlund on How Her Faith Impacts Her Stories

"While I try not to preach at my readers, I do weave faith themes through my books. My faith also motivates me to keep my stories 'clean.' I believe Christian fiction is a much-needed alternative,

especially Christian romance. I got an email from a reader telling me she that she'd picked up several books and been really turned off by the explicitness within them, but that she didn't realize the books contained such content until she started reading them. She wanted to know if there was a rating system or some way that she could tell if the book would be "clean" before she started reading. I was glad that I could point her to inspirational Christian fiction, that she would be guaranteed the sweet romance she desired."

(Historical Q&A: Jody Hedlund—*Together Forever* | July 2018)

<https://www.familyfiction.com/historical-qa-jody-hedlund-together-forever>

Frank Peretti on the Power of Christian Fiction

"What's art for? It's to communicate ideas on an aesthetic level. The best way to understand the human experience is through a Judeo-Christian worldview, because that's where everything falls together and makes sense. I'm a storyteller. My role is to tell a story because a story can give a whole other dimension to a thought."

(Frank Peretti—*Sleight of Hand* | February 2012)

<https://www.familyfiction.com/frank-peretti-sleight-of-hand>

Jan Karon on Why Readers Are Drawn to Her Mitford Series Stories

"They can relax in a Mitford book because they feel safe. And they get to see this universal small town through the same pair of eyes, almost all the time, through fourteen novels. So they build a relationship with Father Tim, and he is nice enough to be with. He has a sense of humor, a genuine ardor for giving of himself, and knows how to be pretty honest with himself and others. There are worse ways to spend reading hours!"

(Jan Karon—*Savoring the Journey* | October 2017)

<https://www.familyfiction.com/jan-karon-savoring-journey>

Mike Nawrocki on the Secret of His VeggieTales Success

"We wanted there to be a mix of earnestness and silliness while telling a story that parents really appreciate with biblical values they want to pass on to their kids," Mike shares. "So from the very beginning, we felt like there was a strong message behind what we wanted to do with our stories. And we felt like there was a real need for stories like that. We never wanted to make something where parents said 'Oh, this is a great lesson about thankfulness, but I have to put it on and run out of the room once it starts.' When parents can sit and laugh right alongside their kids, that's the best feeling."

(VeggieTales—Storytelling That Goes the Distance | July 2011)

<https://www.familyfiction.com/veggietales-storytelling-that-goes-the-distance>

Wanda E. Brunstetter on What Her Amish Friends Think of Amish Fiction

"Some of my Amish friends are surprised by the popularity of the fiction novels being written about their culture. Some may be indifferent and might even see it as a bit humorous. The Amish and other Plain sects are simply living their lives the way their ancestors have done for hundreds of years, and they don't see anything special about it. Many Amish I know personally, or have met along the way, have said they read my books and appreciate the accuracy I portray. Some Amish have even held book signings in their homes so their friends and relatives could meet me and get a book autographed."

(Wanda E. Brunstetter—Six Unlikely Souls Connect Through an Amish Cooking Class | August 2017)

<https://www.familyfiction.com/wanda-brunstetter-blessing>

Jerry B. Jenkins on His Left Behind Series Co-author, the Late Tim LaHaye

"The Tim LaHaye I got to know had a pastor's heart and lived to share his faith," Jenkins says. "He listened to and cared about everyone, regardless of age, gender, or social standing. If Tim was missing from the autograph table or the green room of a network television show, he was likely in a corner praying with someone he'd just met—from a reader to a part-time bookstore stock clerk to a TV network anchorman."

('Left Behind' Co-Creator Tim LaHaye Passes at 90 | July 2016)

<https://www.familyfiction.com/left-behind-co-creator-tim-lahaye-passes-at-90>

Dee Henderson on Her Childhood Dream of Becoming an Author

"When my teachers wanted to punish me, they would take away the book I was reading before I went to recess. Writing has been my first love, and I knew that from a young age; but I was just smart enough to understand the doorway to what I wanted for my life had a two-part answer." In order to eat, she became an engineer to pay the bills. For 10 years, she worked on computer chips and solving hard-ware and software interaction problems in the telecom field. "It gave me time to learn how to write good fiction. I used the savings I gathered [during] a decade to take a risk when I was ready to make the move into writing full-time."

(Dee Henderson—Back with Full Disclosure | September 2012)

<https://www.familyfiction.com/dee-henderson-back-with-full-disclosure>

Mike Berenstain on the Enduring Popularity of the Berenstain Bears

"People are always telling us that they like our books because 'they teach good lessons.' I beg to quibble with this well-meant characterization. I think people actually like our books because 'they teach lessons good.' The ethical messages of our books are not very original. They lean heavily on such standbys as the Golden Rule. Their appeal comes, rather, from the way in which this familiar material is presented. We have worked very hard to make our books funny and visually enriching. We've tried to make our characters fully dimensional and recognizable. And we've tried to tell good stories. Our books actually have plots—not as convoluted as Harry Potter, admittedly—but, still, good for turning a few pages."

(Berenstain Bears – Keeping the Family Tradition | March 2018)

<https://www.familyfiction.com/berenstain-bears-keeping-family-tradition>

Shelley Shepard Gray on Why Fiction is a Powerful Vehicle for Truth

"I've always loved writing fiction because I love writing stories about people that I'd like to know. I enjoy writing inspirational novels because I feel that adding a faith element makes each story richer and the characters more believable. It makes me happy when readers tell me that they were able to relate to my characters. I feel like I'm on my own faith journey. Because of that, I feel that my faith evolves and gets stronger as my characters grow and change. My own journey has given me permission to write about struggling, flawed characters—people just like me."

(Amish Author Interview: Shelley Shepard Gray—Journey of Faith | July 2019)

<https://www.familyfiction.com/amish-author-interview-shelley-shepard-gray-journey-faith>

Tracie Peterson on What She Loves About Writing Historical Romances

"First, I get to shine the light on the love God has for each of us and His never-ending mercy. Fans have written to tell me the way God has used the books to change their lives, bring them back to God or even bring them to God for the first time. They might never have picked up a Bible or walked into a church, but they read a simple fiction novel and God used that to open their eyes to the truth of who He is. Second, I love history and very much enjoy learning about the various places and things that I choose to write about. And last, but not least, I love a happy ending and all of us need love from one another, but ultimately from God. I am so completely blessed to be a writer, but even more so to write for God."

(Tracie Peterson—Bringing Hope and Encouragement | April 2019)

<https://www.familyfiction.com/historical-romance-author-interview-tracie-peterson-bringing-hope-encouragement>

Joel C. Rosenberg on the Opportunities Created by Christian Fiction

"Fiction has a way of unlocking people's imagination in a way nonfiction doesn't. I have found the reaction to my fiction so interesting. The novels have gotten a discussion going, and I'm intrigued with that."

(Joel C. Rosenberg: Truth in Fiction | May 2013)

<http://www.familyfiction.com/joel-c-rosenberg-truth-in-fiction>

Becky Wade on the Challenges—and Benefits—of Writing Romances as a Christian Author

"The challenge: Keeping the story clean while also ensuring that it deals authentically with some of the struggles and temptations Christians face when they fall in love. The benefit: The opportunity to write stories about great love between men and women AND God's great love for us—all wrapped up in a single novel. My faith impacts every facet of my storytelling. I write Christian romance because I want to honor God through my profession. I ask the Lord before every writing session to enable me to tell the story He would have me tell. I work and work to give each character a spiritual arc that illustrates an aspect of God's astonishing grace and love because my faith compels me to celebrate those aspects of His character. My faith helps me survive the difficult seasons of doubt, deadline, and discouragement every writer faces."

(Becky Wade—Romantic At Heart | July 2018)

<https://www.familyfiction.com/becky-wade-romantic-heart>

Melody Carlson on Writing So Many Books

"I felt like I was going to explode (or implode) if I didn't start. As soon as I began to write, it was like a pressure valve was released. I knew that I would continue to write even if no one ever read a single word. I believe it happened like that because God had given me a gift I wasn't fully using, and it was His Spirit compelling me to get with the program. I only wanted to write fiction. I was having success selling short stories, but I wrote so quickly it didn't take long before I had several books written. Back then the Christian publishing industry was barely producing novels. Finally an editor who believed in me asked if I could write a nonfiction book [to get my foot in the door]. I had just closed a successful group home childcare center that I'd run for a few years."

I decided to write about that. The book sold to Thomas Nelson, and shortly thereafter all the other books I'd written sold as well. I was launched."

(Melody Carlson: 200 Books ... And Counting! | November 2011)

<https://www.familyfiction.com/melody-carlson-200-books-and-counting>

Read an expanded version of this article on the website:

<https://www.familyfiction.com/truth-fiction-familyfiction-celebrating-10-years-christian-fiction-news-interviews>



PODCAST

FAMILYFICTION ANNOUNCES PODCAST

The Premier Source for News and Interviews
from the World of Christian Storytelling
Celebrates A Milestone, Looks to the Future

With this issue, ***FamilyFiction*** celebrates 10 years since it released its first digital issue with **Karen Kingsbury** on the cover. Over the years, *FamilyFiction* has served as an important resource for helping consumers discover the best in Christian fiction.

We've served readers through a monthly digital magazine, weekly email newsletter, and comprehensive website—and, beginning October 2020, the new **Christian Romance Book Club Podcast**. The new interview show will spotlight our online book club and Facebook group. Host **Erica Well** has assembled a great lineup for its first season, including **Colleen Coble, Liz Johnson, Wanda E. Brunstetter, Vanessa Riley, DiAnn Mills, Amy Grochowski, Kim Vogel Sawyer, Tammy L. Gray, Lynette Eason, Michelle Shocklee, Dana Becker, Denise Hunter, Kathleen Y'Barbo, and Roseanna M. White.** **FF**

Current and back issues of *FamilyFiction* digital magazine can be found here:

<https://www.familyfiction.com/magazine>

The Christian Romance Book Club can be found here:

<https://www.facebook.com/groups/986896981440636>

CLICK HERE TO READ MORE ONLINE: <https://www.familyfiction.com>

Christian Authors Speak Out on the Impact of *FamilyFiction*

To mark the tenth anniversary of *FamilyFiction*, several beloved Christian novelists expressed their warm wishes and shared what *FamilyFiction* has meant to them over these years.



"I've very much appreciated FamilyFiction for their author articles and book coverage. I've found many new authors this way, but have also heard from readers who are delighted to get further insight into their favorite authors, as well as information about what is new in the market. I've enjoyed those aspects as well. I congratulate FamilyFiction on ten years of quality information and pray that they will have many successful years to come."
—**Tracie Peterson, author of *Forever By Your Side***



"FamilyFiction continues to tower above all other sites as the go-to for writers, readers, movie enthusiasts, and those who are simply curious about Christian fiction. Congratulations to FamilyFiction for continuing to provide outstanding Christian entertainment to readers who expect the best in reading and viewing pleasure. I'm looking forward to where God leads you."
—**DiAnn Mills, author of *Airborne***



"FamilyFiction is a page-turner from beginning to end for me each month. I love FamilyFiction Magazine as an author and reader, because they have a wonderful and talented staff who create exciting, informative, and positive articles I look forward to each month."

**—Molly Jebber, author of the
Amish Charm Bakery Series**



"FamilyFiction has been a bright spot of encouragement in my writing life! I'm grateful for your consistent efforts to support God-honoring novels. Thank you!"

—Becky Wade, author of Stay With Me



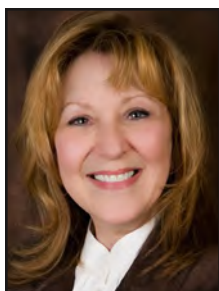
"I love that I can go to FamilyFiction and find all the new book releases, learn about my favorite authors, discover new authors, and get behind-the-scenes insight into some of my favorite stories. FamilyFiction is like a treasure trove of literary riches that delight my book-loving heart!"

**—Natalie Walters, author of
Silent Shadows**



"Happy Anniversary to FamilyFiction Magazine! They have been champions of Christian fiction, and I'm so very grateful to them for their choice to build a magazine around books that honor the Lord."

**—Kathleen Y'Barbo, author of
The Black Midnight**



"Throughout this blessed decade, I've enjoyed everything FamilyFiction has shared with the public. The magazine and website introduced me to new readers, other writers, publishers, and helped me broaden my 'writer's reach'. It's been a great ten years, and I wish everyone at FamilyFiction continued success!"

**—Loree Lough, author of
The Little Child Shall Lead Them Series**



"Thank you, FamilyFiction, for ten years of great reporting. I look forward to your magazine each month as I know it will be filled with interesting articles on the latest releases in safe-for-the-whole-family-to-read fiction books. And as a bonus, the website is brimming with books, interviews, and interesting articles too. Well done!"

—Susan Sleeman, author of Minutes to Die



"For ten years, FamilyFiction has been sparkling reading happiness like gold glitter in a world sorely in need of brilliance. Thanks for sharing the book love!"

**—Michelle Griep, author of
Once Upon a Dickens Christmas**



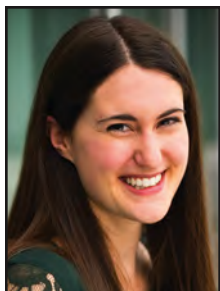
"I've loved FamilyFiction for so many reasons, and most of them have nothing to do with me as an author, so much as me as a reader! They encapsulate the Christian publishing world so well, and their features of various authors, upcoming releases, and other news makes it a must read for me. Not only a must read, but also a must share with other readers so they can benefit from the marvelous world of FamilyFiction!"

—Jaime Jo Wright, author of Echoes Among the Stones



"I always love seeing my books featured in FamilyFiction magazine. The support they give authors is invaluable. Congratulations and thank you for 10 amazing years."

**—Jennifer Beckstrand, author of
The Huckleberry Hill Series**



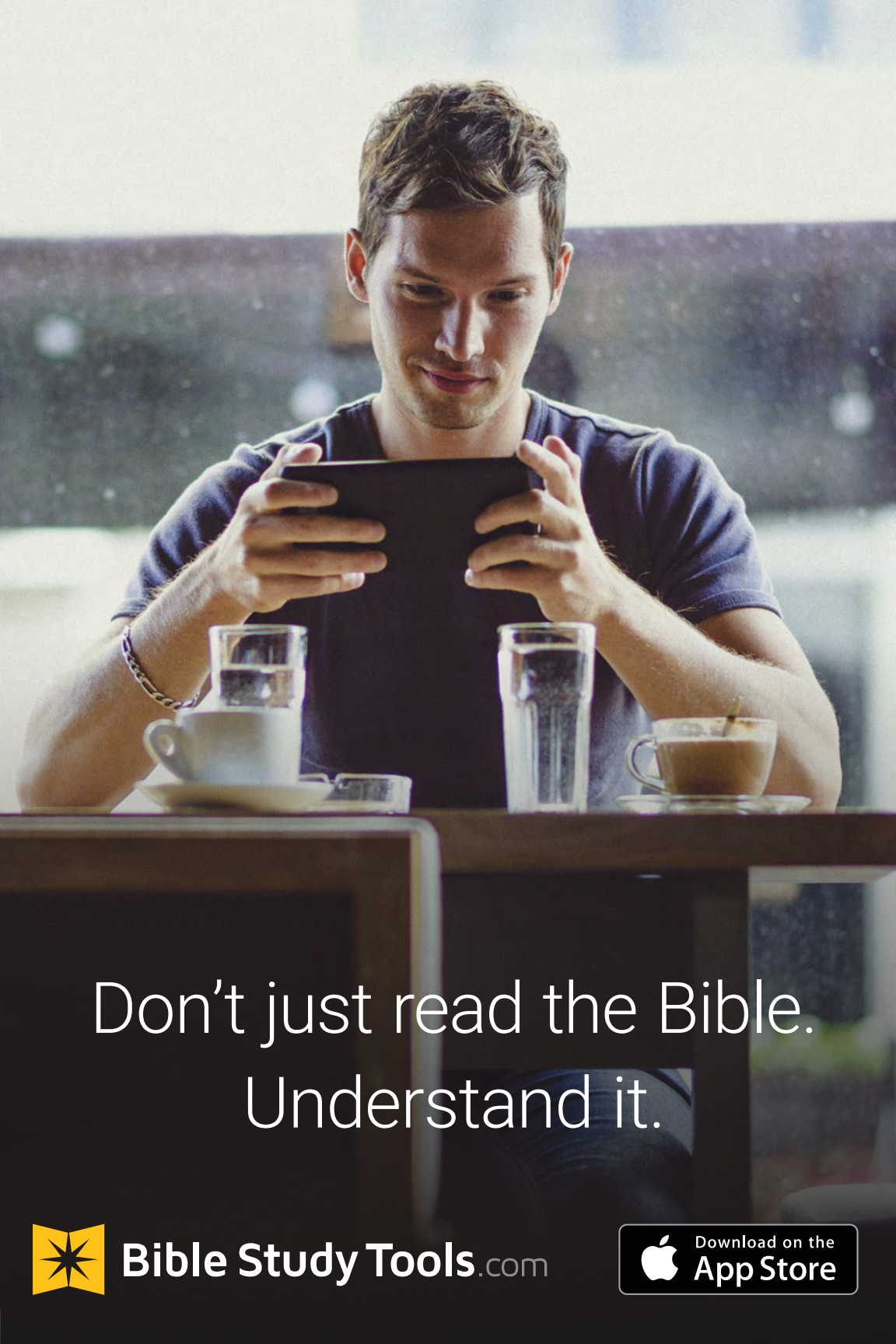
"Back in 2014, I won a FamilyFiction short story contest for a 1000-word piece set just before WWII. The editor at the time asked if I'd ever considered writing a historical fiction novel, which I hadn't. She encouraged me to give it a try because she'd love to hear more from me. After scribbling out five full manuscripts, and each one getting slightly better, my debut historical novel with Bethany House releases this November. FamilyFiction had a huge part in launching me on this journey, and besides that, I've loved getting to know fellow authors and their books within its pages. So thankful for this reader-focused publication!"

—Amy Lynn Green, author of *Things We Didn't Say*



"Wishing FamilyFiction a great big congratulations for ten years of excellent coverage for so many genres of fiction. Your team's the best! Hope your next ten years are even better!"

—Melody Carlson, author of *The Happy Camper*



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SUSPENSE: SUSAN MAY WARREN

ALL ABOUT THE HEART

The author explains how she creates swoon-worthy novels that also keep readers on the edge of their seats.

A suspense author who sets her heroes in high-risk, adventurous situations, **Susan May Warren** is a *USA Today* bestselling author with more than one million books sold, plus multiple awards.

Her *Global Search and Rescue Series* continues with ***The Heart of a Hero*** (Revell): With pediatric heart surgeon Dr. Aria Sinclair and former Navy SEAL Jake Silver trapped in the middle of a category 4 hurricane, can they survive long enough for a second chance at life—and love?

In this interview, Susan explains what draws her to writing high-stakes adventures, reveals the hardest part of the research, and gives us a preview of the final book in the series.

Susan, you're well-known for your action-packed novels full of heroic characters who must overcome tremendous odds. How did you become so skilled at writing these high-stakes adventures?

I love research! I spend hours reading autobiographies and watching documentaries about Denali, or hurricanes (*The Heart of a Hero*) and I have an army of go-to heroes and heroines who help me get my facts right, from firefighters to hotshots to SAR personnel to active military (any mistakes are mine, though!).

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And, frankly, I like to try some of the high-stakes stuff my heroes do, like diving, sailing, hiking, and climbing. (Although I do draw the line at abseiling down the side of Denali, or trying to survive gale force winds . . .)

What drew you to this type of story?

I've always liked suspense and adventure, and I love survival shows. It felt like the right genre for me to dive into epic adventure (and romance). Also, any book with a team of heroes and heroines trying to save lives is one I want to know and spend time with, so creating this series was like hanging around my favorite kind of people—brave, smart, sacrificial, and fun!

Your new series is connected by the members of the Jones, Inc., team, which is comprised of ex-military, former SEALs, and pararescue jumpers. What type of research was required to accurately portray these roles?

Not only did I have to learn how to do the SAR stunts, but I had to dive into military procedures, PTSD, lingo/jargon, and char-

acteristics of spec ops soldiers. Thankfully, I have a son in the Navy, and a number of friends both in and out of the military.

And I'm a junkie of SEAL team books, movies, television, and documentaries. I am sure I got things wrong, but I tried to bring home the realities as well as a few insider moments of former military heroes.

In both the *Montana Rescue Series*, and the *Global Search and Rescue Series*, weather plays a huge role in creating adrenaline-inducing storylines. How did you learn so much about weather and storms?

Annnnd, more research! I started looking into storms when I wrote *A Matter of Trust* (blizzard), and then continued it in *Troubled Waters* (hurricane) and *Storm Front* (tornado). In *Storm Front*, one of my characters was a storm chaser, so I dove deep into that life, which included how to predict and understand storms.

I'm now a very boring person at parties, as I dive into how a storm develops, how to survive a tornado, and what you're looking at when you see the ocean receding (and I may or may not be a weather channel junkie!).

With all the research that goes into these romantic adventures (the weather, the skill sets of the heroes, the locations, etc.!) is there an area you find especially challenging to write?

I do love all the research that goes into writing the novels—especially the setting and challenges that go with that setting. It's important to me for readers to feel as if they are there, so I invest a lot of time into understanding not only the area but

the nuances of the area—the little known facts, nicknames and nuances about the area or activity.

Sometimes that involves traveling to that setting, always it involves reading books and memoirs by people engaged in that activity (e.g. climbing Denali, or living through a hurricane), and often I track down someone with first-hand knowledge who can answer my questions.

The hardest part, however, of the research is getting the medical/rescue element of the story right. I need to understand the severity of their injuries, the complications that could occur, the terrain of the rescue and how a rescue team would function.

Thankfully, I have a number of sources, but I always try and run the scenario by someone with first-hand knowledge, so I get it right!

***The Heart of a Hero* is the second book in the *Global Search and Rescue* series. Tell us about the two protagonists.**

Jake Silver is a sweet guy hiding a bitter past. Not only did he separate from the military because of a terrible mistake he made, but he first ran into the service after a brutal tragedy from his childhood. Of course, he's not about to talk about any of this, so he hides it behind his happy-go-lucky demeanor.

But Jake is also the guy who doesn't give up, and he'll give his life for you, even if you don't want him to...which is the problem with Aria, our heroine. She already had someone give their life for her, and now, her job as a pediatric surgeon is to *save* lives, not cost them. The problem is, Jake and Aria share an—ahem—moment together (and fear not, it's PG-ish, but still, there's issues).

So, when Jake and Aria find themselves trapped together during a hurricane, well, let's just assume it's awkward. And then it's dangerous. And then, when they have to make difficult choices to survive, it just might turn deadly.

Did any of the characters in *The Way of the Brave*, or *The Heart of a Hero* surprise you as you developed their story?

I think Jake surprised me as I got to know him better. I initially envisioned someone who was all play, but when I dug deeper, I found a deeply sensitive, kind man who would give his life for others. I think he might be one of my favorite heroes, despite his mistakes.

The other person who surprised me was one of my supporting characters, Yola, whose wisdom and actions surprised me. She does something in the story I didn't see coming, as if she took control of the story for a moment there and said—this is what needs to happen. She was right. I think, in a way, she's the star of the story.

Give us a peek into the next title of the *Global Search and Rescue Series*.

The third book is called the *Price of Valor*—it's one of my favorite stories, featuring Hamilton Jones, who is searching for someone he thought was dead ... someone who has secrets that could change the nation.

Part of the book takes place in Italy, so it was fun to write about a country I love to visit (and not far from my son's base in Sicily!). It's a little different, but still high stakes, high adventure, high danger ... and lots of delicious romance!

How do you create swoon-worthy novels yet still keep readers right on the edge of their seats?

It's all about the heart, and how the hero and heroine reach inside and heal each other's deep wounds. So first, we need to discover the wounds (half the fun is getting to the heart of the matter!) and then we have to figure out how they heal them. Of course, there is physical attraction, and high-stakes issues, but I think the heart of the matter is the healing they bring to each other.

I've always said that the way a man treats a woman wins her heart, and likewise, the way the woman lets the man be a hero wins his heart, so I just let that play out on the page, and ... swoon!

What would you especially like readers to take away after reading *The Heart of a Hero*?

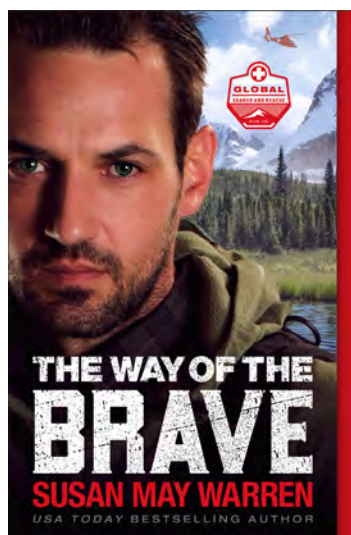
I think we all have a shame, deep inside, that we can't shake. Something from our childhood, maybe, or something more recent. My hope is to shake that shame loose a bit and help readers see that we can't let shame drive our lives.

We are loved, and when we are forgiven, shame has no place in our lives. We are free, with new hearts to become the people God intends for us to be.

In many ways, the hurricane serves as a sort of "stormy baptism" into the new lives Jake and Aria will live, once they are set free from that shame, and I hope it serves to help readers shake free, also. **FF**

Visit Susan May Warren's author page here:

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The Way of the Brave

Global Search and Rescue #1

Susan May Warren

Revell

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Former pararescue jumper Orion Starr is haunted by the memory of a rescue gone wrong. He may be living alone in Alaska now, but the pain of his failure--and his injuries--has followed him there from Afghanistan.

He has no desire to join Hamilton Jones's elite rescue team, but he also can't shirk his duty when the call comes in to rescue three lost climbers on Denali.

Former CIA profiler and psychiatrist Jenny Calhoun's yearly extreme challenge with her best friends is her only escape from the guilt that has sunk its claws into her. As a consultant during a top-secret mission to root out the Taliban, she green-lighted an operation that ended in ambush and lives lost. When her cathartic climb on Denali turns deadly, she'll be forced to trust her life and the lives of her friends to the most dangerous of heroes--the man she nearly killed.

Her skills and his experience are exactly what's needed to prevent another tragedy—but in order to truly set Orion free from his painful past, Jenny will have to reveal hers. They'll have to put their wounds behind them to survive, but at what cost?

Leap into action with this high-octane, breakneck new series from bestselling author Susan May Warren.

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The Heart of a Hero

Global Search and Rescue #2

Susan May Warren

Revell

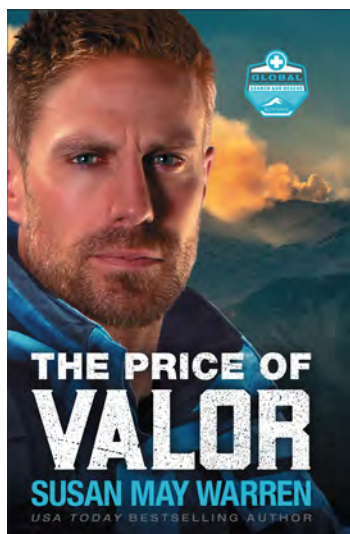
Buy Now

Jake Silver may not be able to put the memories of his time as a sniper and Navy SEAL behind him, but at least he can put his skills to use as a part of the Jones Inc. rescue team. Saving the life of pediatric heart surgeon Dr. Aria Sinclair on Denali

helped too. Now he can't get her out of his head, and when he hears she is in the path of a hurricane down in Key West he can't help but jump on a plane to rescue her.

Aria has dedicated her life to helping children born with defective hearts. After all, she was one of those children. Now driven to succeed, she lives a lonely, stressful life. One she would have lost on Denali if it hadn't been for Jake. Jake is exciting and handsome, but he's also dangerous, and she's already lost one person she loves. She can't bear it again.

It's not until she finds herself trapped in the middle of a category 4 hurricane that she can admit she needs Jake desperately. With their very survival in the balance, can they hope for a second chance at life...and love?



The Price of Valor
Global Search and Rescue #3
Susan May Warren
Revell



Former Navy SEAL Hamilton Jones thought that the love of his life was dead. But when a girl claiming to be his daughter shows up with a dire message from his wife, Ham knows he will stop at nothing to find her and bring her home.

Kidnapped by rebels while serving as an interpreter in Ukraine, Signe Kincaid has spent the past decade secreting out valuable information about Russian assets in the US to her CIA handler. Fearing for her daughter after being discovered as an operative, Signe sends her to Ham for safekeeping. She's ready to give her life for her country, and she can hardly expect Ham to rescue her after breaking his heart over and over.

When Ham discovers the reason Signe has kept her distance, he must choose between love for his wife and love for the nation he has vowed to protect. Will he save the many? Or the few?

USA Today bestselling author Susan May Warren takes you on a global search and rescue mission where the stakes are higher than ever in this final installment of her popular series.



CONTEMPORARY: KATHERINE REAY

GETTING SOME PERSPECTIVE

The author talks about the value of looking through someone else's eyes.

Katherine Reay is a national bestselling and award-winning Christian author whose novels are contemporary stories with a bit of classical flair.

Her latest novel is ***Of Literature and Lattes*** (Thomas Nelson): Return to the cozy and delightful town of Winsome, where two people discover the grace of letting go and the joy found in unexpected change.

In this interview, Katherine talks about why this is her first novel to revisit characters from one of her previous books, explains how she made the book accessible to new readers, and addresses the comparisons some have made between her town of Winsome and Jan Karon's folksy town of Mitford.

Katherine, *Of Literature & Lattes* returns readers to the town of Winsome, and revisits characters from *The Printed Letter Bookshop*. What about this town and these characters made you want to visit them again?

The three women in *The Printed Letter Bookshop* (Janet, Claire, and Madeline) created such wonderful energy and synergy that I wanted to explore their lives and the town further. I had not returned to characters or to a setting in my writing and felt this town and its people from *Printed Letter* made it worth the effort. I was not disappointed—I have come to love Winsome and hope to return there someday.

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***Of Literature & Lattes* is a standalone novel. How did you balance between the needs of a follow-up and making this story work for newcomers who haven't read the other book?**

I have never written a series before so making *Of Literature and Lattes* a standalone, in many ways, was easier for me than continuing the threads from *Printed Letter*. In the end, I found I needed a full and new story for each character that hinted to what came before without regurgitating—I wanted to be very careful that I did not retread ground and slow *Of Literature and Lattes* with too many allusions to *Printed Letter*. That said, I hope what I included works and that the beloved characters from that first story experience new and dynamic change.

Some have compared your folksy town of Winsome to Jan Karon's folksy town of Mitford -- where she returned to so many times. Do you feel that's a fair comparison? How does Winsome stand apart?

I am incredibly honored by that comparison and thank each and every reader who feels that welcome within Winsome. I will certainly admit I have read all the Mitford books and thoroughly enjoy Karon's in-depth and cross-generational approach in Mitford.

I do believe readers will find differences between Winsome and Mitford. We are influenced by our environments and I have firmly situated Winsome in the Midwest right outside Chicago. Its location to the city and those urban influences are vital to the movement I wanted to create within the town.

Additionally, I have created my primary movers within Winsome one to two generations younger than Father Tim and Cynthia. All those details may feel minor, but they do influence story and tone.

Can you see yourself returning to Winsome like Jan Karon kept going back to Mitford? Or are you more likely to want to go to new places in your fiction?

I would love to return to Winsome. What a treat and an honor to have readers invite you back to a beloved community to create and explore more stories.

I will not return to Winsome for at least a couple books. My next novel takes place primarily in London and Paris—and deals with a family secret that leads the heroine to a WWII mystery, discovered through family letters and diaries. I am so excited about this story and hope readers will find it my best yet.

When writing *Of Literature & Lattes*, which characters surprised you the most?

Ah... Such a good question. The relationship between Alyssa and Janet continually surprised me. Mother and daughter relationships are so complex—one generation often has trouble understanding the influences upon and perspectives within another. That “surprise” carried over into Jeremy’s relationship with his daughter, Becca, as well. I had such fun with those dynamics.

George—another smaller character—also surprised me. He was meant to be a “few line” character, but I found he had a lot of life and wisdom to share.

What themes or ideas run through *Of Literature & Lattes*?

There is a quote from John Steinbeck at the novel’s beginning about learning to understand and love each other—that all writing carries that theme. It was definitely true in *Of Litera-*



ture and Lattes. Forgiveness, understanding and growing into one's best self were themes, but the idea of perspective, and learning another's perspective, was one of the primary driving forces for the novel.

What do you hope readers take away after reading *Of Literature & Lattes*?

Hope. For me, it always comes down to that. My goal is to take characters on an organic and authentic journey that readers can relate to and draw hope from. Things can be tough—real life often is—and relationships can be strained, but through mistakes, mishaps, effort, and understanding the characters (and perhaps we too) will end in a better place.

Can you share some examples of how your faith impacts your storytelling?

While story comes first for me, my faith undergirds my writing. We all have a worldview and my faith forms mine. I try to keep those themes running beneath the surface and let my characters tell their own stories. I hope my writing invites readers to ask questions, dig into different perspectives, and find the complexities of real life reflected in each of my novels.

Why is storytelling such a powerful way to communicate truth?

I always say storytelling is powerful because it sneaks truth in sideways. If done right, we don't put up our defenses against it and we let ourselves approach with greater vulnerability. Fiction allows us to "try" on new places, new people and new perspectives. We learn a great deal this way without ever feeling we are "learning" at all. Powerful stuff!

What are the best things readers can do to support their favorite authors?

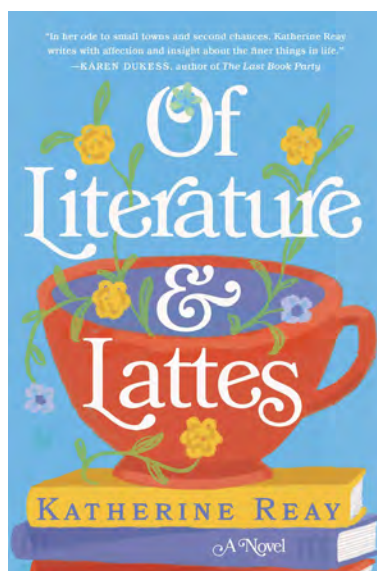
Please share your favorite books with friends. It's so important that we keep the conversations going.

I would ask that we post on social media about books, we rate them at any wonderful places that allow us to rate, we chirp about our bookstores and libraries, and we encourage our friends to do the same. Books create community and conversation—we need that right now.

We also need more good stories. The more we chat, the more all that goodness happens. **FF**

Visit Katherine Reay's author page here:

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Of Literature and Lattes

Katherine Reay
Thomas Nelson

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After fleeing her hometown three years earlier, Alyssa Harrison never planned to return. Then the Silicon Valley start-up she worked for collapsed and turned her world upside down. She is broke, under FBI investigation, and without a place to go. Having exhausted every option, she comes home to

Winsome, Illinois, to regroup and move on as quickly as possible. Yet, as friends and family welcome her back, Alyssa begins to see a place for herself in this small Midwestern community.

Jeremy Mitchell moved from Seattle to Winsome to be near his daughter and to open the coffee shop he's been dreaming of for years. Problem is, the business is bleeding money—and he's not quite sure why. When he meets Alyssa, he senses an immediate connection, but what he needs most is someone to help him save his floundering business. After asking for her help, he wonders if something might grow between them—but forces beyond their control soon complicate their already complex lives, and the future they both hoped for is not at all what they anticipated.

With the help of Winsome's small-town charm and quirky residents, Alyssa and Jeremy discover the beauty and romance of second chances.



HISTORICAL: SARAH SUNDIN

WORKING THROUGH FORGIVENESS

The author talks about how the theme of her latest novel intruded on her own life.

Sarah Sundin is the bestselling author of several popular WWII series, including *Waves of Freedom Series*, *Wings of the Nightingale Series*, and *Wings of Glory Series*. Her novels *Through Waters Deep* and *When Tides Turn* were both named on Booklist's "101 Best Romance Novels of the Last 10 Years."

Sarah continues her *Sunrise at Normandy Series* with the third book, ***The Land Beneath Us*** (Revell). Set during WWII, Private Clay Paxton has only one thing to live for—fulfilling the recurring dream of his death. After he saves librarian Leah Jones' life from a brutal attack, he saves her virtue with a marriage of convenience. When he ships out, can a love strong enough to overcome death grow between them before Clay's recurring dream comes true?

In this interview, the author walks us through the benefits of writing romances from a biblical worldview, shares some examples of how her faith impacts her storytelling, and reveals where she draws the line between history and fiction.

Sarah, tell us about Private Clay Paxton and librarian Leah Jones. What about these characters made you want to build a story around them?

Clay is training as an Army Ranger, hoping to do his best in the upcoming invasion of France. With his future stolen by his brothers' betrayal, Clay feels he has nothing to live for—except

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dying for his country. Leah is fresh out of high school, fresh out of the orphanage where she was raised, and she's longing to make her own way in the world as a librarian.

I was drawn to write their stories because of each character's deep sense of loss and their innate strength.

What inspired you to set *The Land Beneath Us* in this time and place?

Ever since I visited Pointe du Hoc in Normandy, I've wanted to tell the story of the Rangers who scaled the cliffs on D-day. The Rangers trained at Camp Forrest in Tullahoma, Tennessee, a small town that exploded due to this training camp. Many civilians worked at Camp Forrest, so I gave my Leah a job in the camp library.

How does *The Land Beneath Us* fit into the bigger picture of your *Sunrise at Normandy* series?

This is the final book in the series, which has followed three estranged brothers who fight on D-day from the sea, in the air, and on the ground. Clay, the youngest brother, has been seriously wronged by both brothers, so I was able to explore the concept of how do you forgive the unforgiveable? And is reconciliation possible—or even desirable?

How did you research the period where and when your fiction takes place?

For Clay's story, I read a lot of books and documents about the 2nd Ranger Battalion as well as about the bigger story of D-day. For Leah's story, I researched libraries and books in World War II and orphanages during the Depression.

I was also blessed to take research trips to England, Normandy, and Tullahoma to get a feel for each place. My favorite thing was meeting a woman in one of Tullahoma's leading families—and she told me so many stories and showed me wonderful pictures.

Where do you draw the line between being historically accurate and taking license for the sake of the story?

I rarely bend history. I don't find the need to, since history provides so much material for me to work with. Since I use fictional characters, I have to insert them into a real world, which sometimes means "shoving aside" real people to make room for my characters.

For example, I knew the name of the real head librarian at Camp Forrest, but I needed Leah's boss to have some negative

qualities, something I didn't feel comfortable doing to this real-life woman. So, I created a fictional head librarian.

Likewise, all the men in Clay's company are fictional. For their stories, I modified and adapted stories of the real-life Rangers, using my imagination to create their backgrounds and personalities.

What are the challenges (or benefits) of writing “romances” from a biblical worldview?

From my point of view, it's all benefit! I love being able to develop a romance that grows from shared interests, friendship, a mutual cause, and faith. Physical attraction is a part of it, of course, but not as important as character. This provides a more realistic model.

When young ladies email me about how they want to meet a man like Clay, it isn't because he's good-looking, but because he's kind and strong and generous—and he isn't perfect!

Another benefit to romance with a biblical worldview is having each character help the other grow spiritually. Clay and Leah teach each other lessons about forgiveness and belonging, not neat little lessons, but lessons learned the hard way.

What do you hope readers take away after reading *The Land Beneath Us*?

I do hope readers will see the importance of forgiveness and even spot areas of unforgiveness in their lives—I know I did! I also hope readers will come to sense their true belonging in Christ.

Can you share some examples of how your faith impacts your storytelling?

Wouldn't you know the Lord gave me something "big" to forgive while writing this book. Something I didn't want to forgive, and many people would say I didn't have to forgive. So, like Clay I had to work through it.

Why is storytelling such a powerful way to communicate truth?

Jesus could have simply said, "God will forgive you, no matter what you've done." Instead he told the story of the Prodigal Son. God wired our brains to relate to story. As a Bible study teacher, I've taught lessons on forgiveness. I know which verses to cite.

But walking through the process of forgiveness with Clay felt real and raw to me. It was messy. It was painful. He thought he'd done the hard work of forgiving, then something new would pop up and spark resentment all over again. Readers have told me it was a powerful experience for them, and that means a lot to me.

What are the best things readers can do to support their favorite authors?

Buy books. Give books. Write reviews online. Tell people about the books you love, both in person and on social media. And please, pray for your favorite authors—we need that most of all. **FF**

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The Land Beneath Us
Sunrise at Normandy #3
Sarah Sundin
Revell



In 1943, Private Clay Paxton trains hard with the US Army Rangers at Camp Forrest, Tennessee, determined to do his best in the upcoming Allied invasion of France. With his future stolen by his brothers' betrayal, Clay has only one thing to live for--fulfilling the recurring dream of his death.

Leah Jones works as a librarian at Camp Forrest, longing to rise above her orphanage upbringing and belong to the community, even as she uses her spare time to search for her real family--the baby sisters she was separated from so long ago.

After Clay saves Leah's life from a brutal attack, he saves her virtue with a marriage of convenience. When he ships out to train in England for D-day, their letters bind them together over the distance. But can a love strong enough to overcome death grow between them before Clay's recurring dream comes true?

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Christy Award-winning Amish author **Leslie Gould**'s newest set of books is a time-slip series. ***Piecing It Together*** (Plain Patterns #1) Bethany House Publishers finds protagonist Savannah Mast abandoned by her fiancé a week before the wedding. Fleeing to her grandmother's farm to regroup, she becomes unexpectedly involved in the case of a missing local Amish girl, whose disappearance is eerily similar to another case several generations before.



In this interview, Leslie shares with us what ties together the new series, explains why she's chosen a new state to set these stories, and gives us a peek into the next book in the series.

***Piecing It All Together* is the first book in the *Plain Patterns Series*, a dual-time, three-book series. What is a dual-time novel, and what is at the heart of these stories?**

Dual-time novels, sometimes called time-slip or parallel-plot stories, have both a contemporary and a historical thread. At the heart of my Plain Patterns stories is Jane Berger, a sixty-five-year old Amish woman who owns a quilt shop that just happens to be called Plain Patterns.

Jane writes a historical column for a local paper and shares her research and stories with the women in her quilting circle. She is also empathetic, kind, and always looking for women who need to be supported and encouraged.

While Jane is the constant in the series, each story has its own contemporary protagonist who is informed and directed by the historical thread of the novel.

***Piecing It All Together* is set in Indiana. After setting most of your previous stories in Pennsylvania, why did you choose a new setting?**

My previous stories were all set in Lancaster County, Pennsylvania, although a few characters did travel to other Amish communities in those stories. A research trip in 2011 took me to Nappanee, Indiana in Elkhart County for one of those earlier books.

One of my best friends, who now lives in the Pacific Northwest, grew up Amish in the Nappanee area, which also greatly increased my interest in it. I have returned to visit friends, meet new ones, and do more research since that first trip in 2011. I love Lancaster County, but I also really enjoy Elkhart County, too.

Do the Amish settlements in Lancaster County and Elkhart County differ?

Yes, there are several very visible differences. When you first arrive in Elkhart County, it's immediately obvious that the Amish ride bicycles instead of scooters, as the Amish in Lancaster County do. Bicycles are used to commute to jobs, visit friends and relatives, and even do the grocery shopping. Even tandem bicycles are used.

Another difference is that the women in Elkhart County wear rounded Kapps, while the women in Lancaster County wear heart-shaped Kapps. Also, Lancaster County sees far more tourists each year than Elkhart County, although the latter attracts a significant amount of tourists, too.



Farming and small businesses are common ways to earn a living in Lancaster County, while more Amish men work in manufacturing in Elkhart County (although Amish farms are still a mainstay there).

Tell us about your main characters in *Piecing It All Together*.

Savannah Mast is the main character of the contemporary story. As a girl, she spent the summers with her Amish grandmother in Elkhart County. When—as a young adult—her life is turned upside down, she flees her home in California, returns to Indiana, and ends up being befriended by Jane and the quilting circle. Savannah soon finds herself immersed in the mystery of a missing young Amish woman.

Emma Fischer is the main character in the historical thread of the story. She arrives in Elkhart County in the early 1840s, right after most of the Native Americans in the area had been forced west. However, a young Native woman has remained behind and befriends Emma. When the young woman's life is threatened, Emma must choose between her own wishes to return to Pennsylvania and the needs of her new friend.

What can we look forward to in the next book in the series?

A Patchwork Past is the second book in the series and is also set in Indiana. It follows the contemporary story of Sophie Deiner, who returns to the Amish when she falls ill in hopes of finding rest, peace, and healing. Instead, she finds an immigrant family in need of justice.

The historical thread follows a young Amish woman, Mary Landis, who is in Chicago during the Great Fire of 1871. After she flees to safety, she's burdened by the plight of the 100,000 people left homeless and yearns for a way to help them. **FF**

Visit Leslie Gould's author page here:

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Piecing it All Together

Plain Patterns #1

Leslie Gould

Bethany House



To discover more Amish books, CLICK here:

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Historical Amanda Barratt

Historical Romance author **Amanda Barratt** is the ECPA best-selling author of over a dozen novels and novellas including *My Dearest Dietrich: A Novel of Dietrich Bonhoeffer's Lost Love*. Her latest novel, ***The White Rose Resists*** (Kregel Publications), again takes place during WWII, and depicts the students who defied the Third Reich and risked their lives doing so.



In our exclusive interview, the author explains why she wanted to tell this story, reveals her goals in writing it, and shares what she hopes readers will take away on reading the novel.

Your novel is about the students who defied Hitler during WWII. What was it about their story that inspired you to share it?

The White Rose resistance group was formed by a handful of students who attended the University of Munich at the height of WWII. These students wrote and distributed thousands of leaflets exposing the atrocities of Hitler's Reich and urging the German people to resist.

Twenty-one-year-old Sophie Scholl was the only woman who was part of the inner circle of the White Rose and the only woman to face execution for her involvement in the group. When I first heard Sophie's story, this brilliant, courageous woman who risked, and in the end sacrificed, her life for the sake of her convictions caught hold of my heart.



The more I researched and explored, the more compelled I became to bring the stories of these extraordinary men and women to life through the pages of historical fiction.

What were your goals in writing the book?

Though the members of the White Rose are well-known in Germany, they are largely forgotten in America. I wrote *The White Rose Resists* to honor their legacy and illuminate their lives for readers who may be discovering them for the first time. I believe stories like that of the White Rose have great power to speak into our lives today. These men and women stepped from the ranks of the silently complicit to raise their voices against injustice. It's my hope and prayer that the memory of the White Rose will continue to spur on others to do the same.

What was the most challenging part in writing *The White Rose Resists*?

The White Rose Resists was a deeply emotional story to bring to the page. I journeyed alongside the characters as they faced heartbreaking consequences for their resistance and the impos-

sible choices of war, shedding more tears throughout the writing process than any other novel to date.

Staying true to the historical narrative required me to take my characters to very dark places. To write those scenes, I had to walk through the darkness beside them. Though it wasn't an easy novel to write, I'm humbled and thankful for the gift of sharing the story of the White Rose with readers.

Where do you draw the line between presenting historical facts accurately, but also keeping the story compelling?

My novel focuses on the point of view of Sophie Scholl, as well as that of two fictional characters who are composites of real individuals. There were many fascinating “rabbit trails” I would have loved to wander down, but had I done so, the novel would have become several volumes! When faced with a choice between fictional liberty and historical accuracy, I choose historical accuracy almost 100-percent of the time. I felt a deep responsibility to honor these historical players by portraying them authentically and honestly.

To do so, I extensively studied their letters and diaries, read memoirs, listened to interviews with family and friends, and accessed their interrogation transcripts and trial records. This research gave me a solid foundation upon which to fill in the inevitable gaps and omissions in the historical record with my fictional pen.

What would you like your readers to take away after reading *The White Rose Resists*?

Holocaust survivor and Nobel Peace Prize winner Elie Wiesel famously said, “We must take sides. Neutrality helps the oppressor, never the victim. Silence encourages the tormentor, never the tormented.”

At a time when “taking sides” against the Reich meant facing severe consequences, the White Rose boldly spoke truth, exposing the lies of the Nazi government, vocalizing the murder of the Jews, and proclaiming the responsibility of every citizen to act in opposition to the regime. “We will not be silent,” their fourth leaflet declared, “We are your guilty conscience. The White Rose will not leave you in peace.”

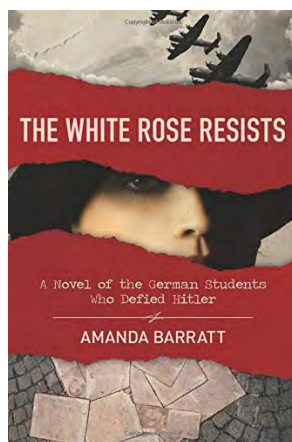
The White Rose was founded by individuals motivated by a deep faith in God and the conviction that they were called to act in opposition to evil. As I wrote the novel, I asked myself, “What would I have done in the time and place?”

This led to a second question, “What am I doing today?” Searching my own heart and realizing how often I choose complacency and how easy it is to remain a silent witness of injustice, challenged me on a personal level. I pray readers are inspired to look within themselves and ask hard questions, then look at the world around them and take action. **FF**

Visit Amanda Barratt's author page here:

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Christy Award-winning and bestselling Romance author **Rachel Hauck** starts a new series True Blue Royal with ***To Love a Prince*** (Hauck House). Daffodil Caron had grown up as a playmate to the princes of the royal house of Laughtenland. Time and circumstances have her now living her adult life in Florida, where one day she unexpectedly finds her best friend, Prince Gus, reconsidering his heritage and place in the royal family.



In our exclusive interview, Rachel Hauck tells us how the new series came about, shares a little more about Daffodil, and reveals her favorite part in writing the story.

Rachel, *To Love a Prince* is the first in your new series, the *True Blue Royal Series*. Tell us what will connect the series.

To Love A Prince was inspired by fans who wanted more royal stories. Also, when I introduced Prince Gus in *The Fifth Avenue Story Society* as the jilted fiancé of the American heiress Coral Winthrop. I felt he needed his own story and a happy ending. There will be at least two more in the series.

Tell us a little about *To Love a Prince*, and your protagonist, Daffodil Caron.

Prince Augustus is of the House of Blue in my made-up North Sea country Laughtenland. He falls for an American heiress, but she leaves him at the altar. Daffodil “Daffy” Caron is the prince’s childhood friend.



Years later as he's leaving his broken heart on a Florida beach, he tosses a Frisbee for his dog and thwack, hit's a beautiful woman on the side of the head. Of course, Daffy recognizes her friend and prince right away.

When they return home to Laughtenland, they wind up together at Gus's brother's wedding. You know the rest if you love romance. Friendship turns to love but not without some bumps and obstacles along the way.

What did you find compelling about Daffodil and Gus' story that made you want to share it?

This is a story of second chances. Almost everyone needs a second chance and I love friends-to-lovers stories. My own happily ever after began with friendship. I also love that this story deals with forgiveness and honesty.

What was your favorite part in writing this story?

I created a unique geographical feature called the Hand of God and I loved how it became a powerful metaphor. But I love royal stories because all of us are princesses and princes in God's kingdom.

What would you like your readers to take away after reading *To Love a Prince*?

A heartwarming, entertaining read but also a sense of their own importance before God. No matter what happens in life, God always has a plan. He's for us! **FF**

Visit Rachel Hauck's author page here:

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Rachel Hauck—*To Love a Prince*

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To Love a Prince *True Blue Royal #1* Rachel Hauck Hauck House



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Sandra Fernandez Rhoads' debut YA novel, ***Mortal Sight*** (Enclave), stars 17-year-old Cera Marlowe, who's tired of her mom endlessly moving them from town to town every time Cera gets a disturbing vision.



In our exclusive interview, Sandra tells us a little about Cera and her mom, shares what inspired the story, and explains the hardest part of developing a story that features visions and monsters.

Tell us a little about *Mortal Sight*. Why do Cera and her mom have to move around so much?

Mortal Sight is about seventeen-year-old Cera Marlowe's discovery of her true identity and need for community. A transient life is the only thing she has ever known. From the time she was seven, Cera has suffered from untreatable "panic" attacks followed by strange hallucinations. Moving to a new location year-after-year has been the only effective solution in curbing her attacks.

Except now that she's turning seventeen, Cera has grown weary of her annual uprooting. When an opportunity comes her way that could provide financial means for her and her mother to stay in Wakefield and possibly pay for treatment, Cera jumps at the chance, but doing so unravels long-kept secrets and turns her world upside down.

Tell us more about Cera Marlowe.

Cera just wants to be a normal teenager and has hopes and dreams of developing lasting friendships. She has a strong desire to do what is right and fight for the underdog, but her impulsive nature and inability to follow directions often gets in the way.

Needless to say, she has a lot of growing to do. When she finds herself thrust into a community for the first time, she is forced to learn how to trust others, navigate combative personalities, explore first love, and bounce back from grievous mistakes.

What inspired this story?

I grew up as an outcast and misfit dreamer who never felt like I fit in (somewhere in a dark corner of the world there are pictures of a red-mohawked teen to prove it :-). Several years ago, as my daughter fast approached her pre-teen years, I saw her wrestle some of the same questions of identity in community that I struggled with—and honestly, still wrestle.

I started writing her a story about a girl who never felt like she belonged because she was never meant to “fit” into the world; she was set apart and created for something bigger than herself and that somehow this girl could see events in a second realm—a layer over our own world. That thought led me to ask what things of our world point to this second realm and how do things of that world affect ours?

The idea then evolved into the current concept where artists, or “Awakened,” create and embed messages in classical art and literature and have for over hundreds of centuries. These hidden messages hold secrets to help fight the unseen war.

***Mortal Sight* is about a teenaged girl and involves visions and monsters. What was the most challenging part of developing your story?**

I'd have to say learning how to write contemporary fantasy. There is so much involved in uncovering the laws behind powers and creatures as well as unearthing the mythology and backstory for world building. To understand the world and how it operates I had to map out how everything began, which meant plotting through a historical event in the Renaissance that started it all.

I drafted pages and pages of notes not included in the story. So much of story isn't on the page but what lies beneath or happened in the past. Another big part of the world building centers around how the events in this story affect the future, which is a new story concept I'm mulling over at the moment.

What spiritual themes are you exploring in *Mortal Sight*?

The strongest spiritual theme is the battle of good versus evil as highlighted by John Milton's epic poem *Paradise Lost* that I weave throughout the story. I explore the struggle of light and shadow in each of us, and how we face a daily choice about who we're going to be and what we believe.

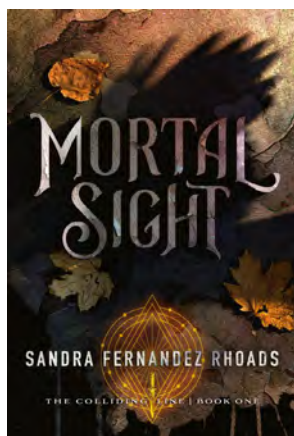
One of the biggest themes of *Mortal Sight* includes identity in community, and how everyone is independently gifted in unique ways but it is our responsibility to use these gifts in community and for the benefit of the greater good; not in isolation and for our own well-being. Community, and knowing what part we play in life's narrative, is important for our growth as well as our ability to fight our daily battles, whether seen or unseen. **FF**

Visit Sandra Fernandez Rhoads' author page here:

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Sandra Fernandez Rhoads—*Mortal Sight*

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Mortal Sight

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Author **Siri Mitchell** has come out with a new suspense title in ***Everywhere to Hide*** (Thomas Nelson), where her protagonist, Whitney Garrison, lives with an unusual neurological condition that puts her in grave danger after she witnesses a murder.



In our exclusive interview, Siri shares with us her goals in writing the new thriller, reveals how her faith influences her writing about crime and danger, and explains her greatest challenge in writing the novel.

What were your goals in writing *Everything to Hide*?

I really wanted my readers to be able to see what it's like to live in a world that's not set up for you. What it feels like to play by rules that seem to work for everyone else but only serve to hold you back. Sometimes a person can do all the right things and still find themselves living on the edge. But, honestly, my overarching goal? To give my readers another page-turning thriller!

Your protagonist, Whitney Garrison, is dealing with a neurological condition. Tell us a little about it.

My protagonist represents the two percent of the population that has a condition called *prosopagnosia* (or face blindness). It affects the part of the brain which maps facial features and then stores those memories. A person with face blindness might remember that someone wears glasses or has a beard or a mustache. Hair color and hairstyles might also be remembered, but the memory of how facial features relate to each other is absent.

A person can be born with this condition or it can be acquired from a head injury or trauma. Some people who think they have trouble remembering names actually have trouble remembering faces.

Face blindness exists on a spectrum. Those with the condition can also have difficulty in mapping geography, noting differences in skin color, and distinguishing within groupings of similar objects such as cars.

As a suspense author, how does your faith influence how you approach writing about crime and danger?

I think a lot of us believe the myth that if you're a good person then bad things won't happen to you. That if you do everything you're supposed to do, then God will like you and everything will work out alright. (The corollary, of course, would be that if bad things happen to you then God doesn't like you. And I don't think any of us believe that.)

Life isn't academic; it's not a decision tree. As it says in Ecclesiastes, time and chance happen to us all. There is evil in this world that causes collateral damage even to nice people. Can God use those situations for some good? Of course. That's His superpower.

But I do believe in justice. In this world or the next, the bad guys will receive consequences for their actions. In the end, God wins. I like to think that my suspense novels end with a glimpse of that hope.

What did you find to be the most challenging part in writing this book?

Because I write from the first-person point of view, I place myself in my character's head when I tell my stories. Since my main character, Whitney, couldn't recognize the villain (due to her face blindness), I couldn't either. I could only see the things that she could see and I only knew the things that she did. Because of this, through most of my drafts of this story, even I didn't know who the villain was!

Careful readers will note that I didn't describe characters by reference to their faces or convey character interactions using facial body language (at least I hope I didn't!). By taking those tools out of my writing toolbox, I realized just how much I had relied on those for character development and to add color and description to my stories in the past. Writing without those tools was a big challenge for me.

What are the spiritual themes you're exploring in *Everywhere to Hide*?

In our society, whether we like to admit it or not, money is how we measure success. (Looked at from another angle, of course, not having money can then be interpreted as a character flaw.) This book looks at what happens when the love of money runs amok and what damage is done to those who get left behind in that pursuit.

At one point, Jesus was specifically asked what he valued. I love that his answer had nothing to do with personal freedoms or material success. Instead, he made us responsible to each other. He challenged us to lift our own sights higher. He asked us to love others as we love ourselves.

Siri Mitchell—*Everywhere to Hide*

If we could do a better job of loving each other then I think our society could work better for all of us. **FF**

Visit Siri Mitchell's author page here:

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Everywhere to Hide

Siri Mitchell

Thomas Nelson



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Children's author **Mary E. Sandford's** Middle Grade novel ***Unwanted*** (Ambassador International) features a seventh grader who has been left in an orphanage, even though she's not an orphan.



In our exclusive interview, author Mary E. Sandford explains what motivated her to write her protagonist's story, what inspired the story itself, and shares her goals in telling it.

Tell us a little about *Unwanted*, and your protagonist, Debbie Spencer.

Unwanted tells the story of 12-year-old Debbie who is mostly an average girl in 1958. She's been taught to put others first, love well, laugh often, and pray every day. But her life takes an unusual turn when she's dumped in an orphanage even though she's not an orphan.

Debbie learns how to cope in spite of her circumstances. Her story, *Unwanted*, proves that no matter how difficult things seem, there's always hope.

What inspired your story?

When I was young, almost every time my mother pushed open a door on a public building in Chicago she would tell me "this door opens out because of that school fire." When I had children of my own, I found myself repeating her words.



The Our Lady of the Angels school fire took the lives of almost 100 children and changed fire safety codes across the country. So, when Debbie invaded my thinking with her story of longing for the perfect family, I knew I could write one story that tied the two ideas together.

What was your goal in telling this story?

I wanted to tell a story that would give readers hope. Hope and trusting God are like peanut butter and jelly—they fit together perfectly. The word “hope” is used many times in *Unwanted* because Debbie depended on hope whenever situations in her life were difficult.

When everything seemed to be hopeless Debbie said, “Because hope was for anyone. No matter where they lived.”

What did you find to be most challenging as you developed this story?

Researching the ‘50s was a lot of work. Some days I’d spend hours finding out what kind of hats and clothes a young man might wear during that time. So staying on track was a challenge.

What would you like your readers to take away after having read *Unwanted*?

I’d like readers to understand how different life was for kids in the ‘50s and yet Debbie’s desires and concerns were similar to what they experience. I hope that knowing Debbie and her story will encourage them to be better people. **FF**

Visit Mary E. Sanford's author page here:

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Mary E. Sandford—*Unwanted*

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Unwanted

Mary E. Sandford

Ambassador International

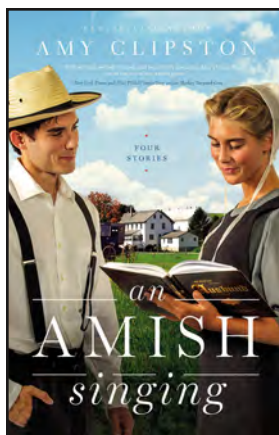
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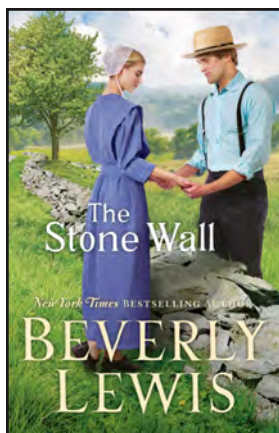
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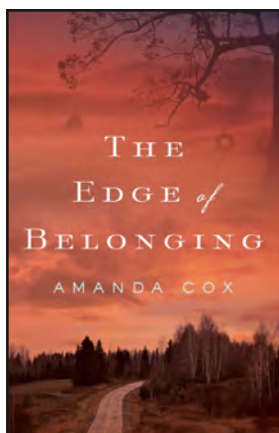
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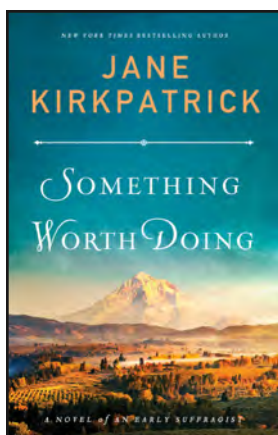
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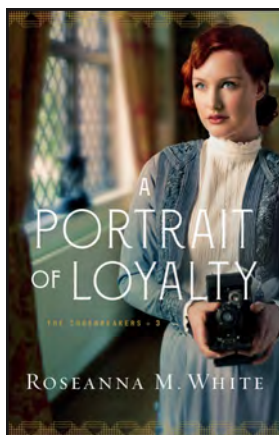
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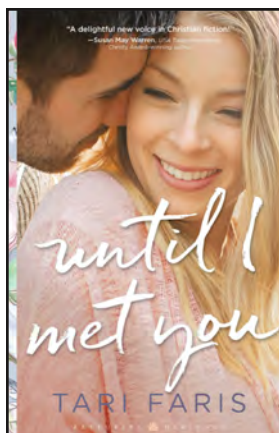
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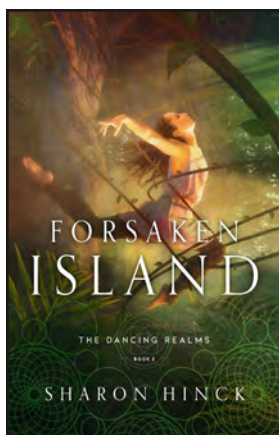
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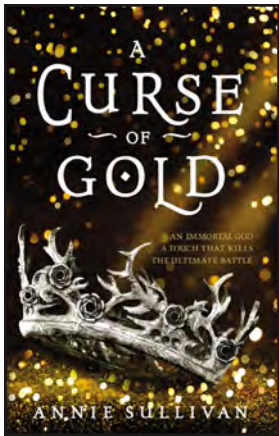
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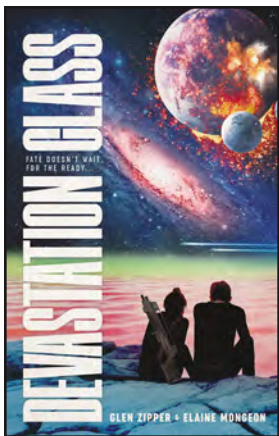


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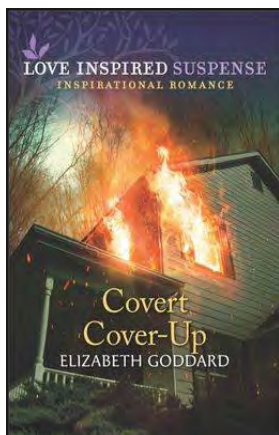
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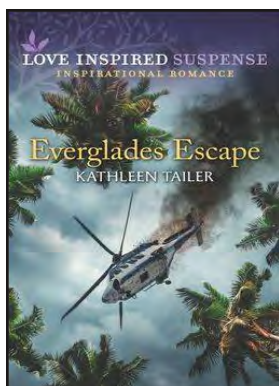
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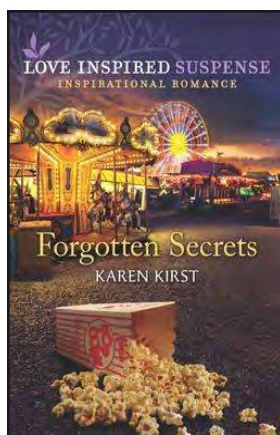
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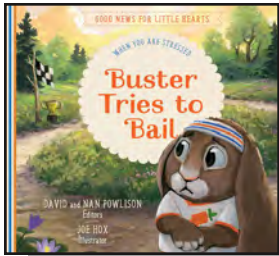
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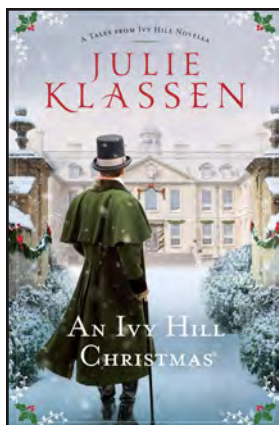
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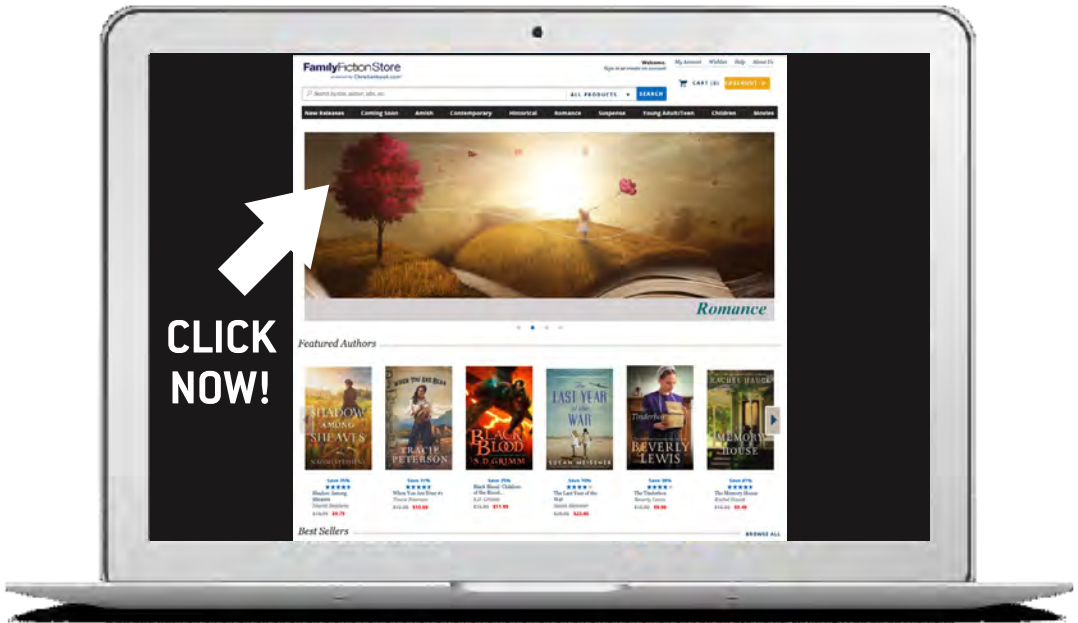
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