

Family Fiction

January 2021

A close-up portrait of an older woman with short, wavy, light-colored hair. She is smiling warmly at the camera. She is wearing small, round, metallic earrings and a necklace with a heart-shaped pendant. The background is dark and out of focus.

Historical Author
CATHY GOHLKE

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Laura Frantz | Erin Bartels

Jody Hedlund | Lynette Eason | Erica Vetsch

30+ New Christian Fiction Releases

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October 2017

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ROBERT WHITLOW

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10th ANNIVERSARY

LOOKING BACK, PRESSING FORWARD

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CHRISTIAN ROMANCE SPECIAL

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tell us their picks

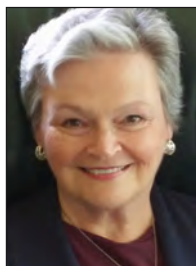
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Features



HISTORICAL

CATHY GOHLKE

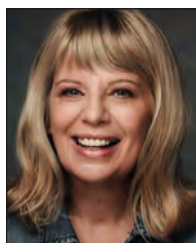
Cathy talks about the inspiration behind her WWII-era novel *Night Bird Calling*, why her novel touches on such difficult topics, and how she hopes her novel will resonate with readers.



CONTEMPORARY

ERIN BARTELS

The contemporary author explains why she used *All That We Carried* to touch on serious themes, what draws her to hiking, and how her characters each deal with grief.



HISTORICAL

LAURA FRANTZ

Laura reveals the deal with "tobacco brides," her inspiration for the novel *Tidewater Bride*, and what keeps her coming back to Colonial Virginia.

On the Web: Christian Fiction News

- Joel C. Rosenberg to release *The Beirut Protocol*
- Children's author Rob Currie draws from the events of WWII for lessons relevant today
- Lisa Washington wins the Author Elite 'Clean Romance' Award

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Department Spotlights



HISTORICAL
Q&A with
Jody Hedlund



HISTORICAL
Q&A with
Erica Vetsch



HISTORICAL
Q&A with
Tara Johnson



SUSPENSE
Q&A with
Lynette Eason



SUSPENSE
Q&A with
Rachel Dylan



YA/TEENS
Q&A with
A.K. Pittman



New Releases & Bestsellers

30+ New Christian fiction books, including titles from **Lynette Eason**, **Shelley Shepard Gray**, **Erin Bartels**, **Tracie Peterson** and **Kimberley Woodhouse**, **Susanne Dietze**, **Carla Laureano**, and more! and more!

Amish

Contemporary

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Romance

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Children's

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NEWS ON THE WEBSITE

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

Joel C. Rosenberg to Release *The Beirut Protocol* Mar 9

In the fourth installment of Rosenberg's gripping new *Marcus Ryker Series*, Ryker finds himself in the most dangerous situation he has ever faced—captured, brutalized, and dragged deep behind enemy lines.

Read more here:

<https://www.familyfiction.com/joel-c-rosenberg-release-beirut-protocol-mar-9>

Psychologist-turned-Children's Author Brings Hope Amid COVID-19 with WWII Novel

Rob Currie's historical novel *Hunger Winter* draws from the events of WWII to drive home lessons relevant for today.

Read more here:

<https://www.familyfiction.com/psychologist-turned-childrens-author-brings-hope-amid-covid-19-wwii-novel>

Lisa Washington Wins Author Elite Clean Romance Award for *Love Lifted Me*

Lisa Washington was given the chance to speak through video call and Washington used the time to thank her family, friends and faith.

Read more here:

<https://www.familyfiction.com/lisa-washington-wins-author-elite-clean-romance-award-love-lifted>



HISTORICAL: CATHY GOHLKE

NIGHT BIRD CALLING

Author **Cathy Gohlke** talks about the surprising way she hopes her latest novel will resonate with readers.

Three-time **Christy** and two-time **Carol** and **INSPY Award**–winning author **Cathy Gohlke** writes novels steeped with inspirational lessons from history. Her stories reveal how people break the chains that bind them and triumph over adversity through faith.

Her novel ***Night Bird Calling*** (Tyndale House) is a historical fiction story of courage and transformation set in rural Appalachia on the eve of WWII. With war brewing for the nation and for her newfound community, Lilliana must overcome a hard truth voiced by her young friend Celia: “Wishing comes easy. Change don’t.”

In this interview, the author talks about the inspiration behind the novel, why her novel touches on such difficult topics, and how she hopes her novel will resonate with readers.

What inspired you to write *Night Bird Calling*?

Years ago, I wrote a number of short stories based on some quirky characters in a fictional North Carolina foothills town called No Creek. I loved those characters, but in order to create a novel I needed an outside character who could see both strengths and foibles in my town folk and still care about them, still want to become part of their community, and who could tie their stories together.

For many years I've also wrestled with the idea of writing about the racial divide and abuse I saw growing up during years of the civil rights movement in the South, as well as domestic abuse and church oppression, things I experienced in my youth and young womanhood. *Night Bird Calling* is the marriage of all those experiences and stories.

***Night Bird Calling* involves some very challenging topics like domestic abuse, racism, and church abuse. What motivated you to write on these topics?**

I grew up mostly in the South during years of the civil rights movement, where I witnessed segregation, desegregation, racial oppression, and abuse but also heroic stands against injustice and some hard-won changes. I learned that attitudes do not change just because laws change. Transformation of the heart is also needed. That is as true today as it was then.

As a young woman, I ran away from an abusive marriage and an oppressive church. My journey toward emotional and spiritual healing took many years. I want women in similar situations to know that they are not alone, that God loves them so very dearly and that the condemnations of their oppressors do not come from Him.

I wrote *Night Bird Calling* not only for victims of abuse, but in the hope that readers might gain insight, sympathy, and empathy for those who've been abused or pushed down, that they might better understand and see creative ways they can help, ways they can be a voice for the voiceless or those needing someone to walk alongside them.

The novel is set in a rural community divided by racism, in a country on the brink of World War II. What prompted you to write about this particular time period and setting?

I see a number of correlations between the years leading up to WWII and our present day. Economic fears, joblessness, uncertainty about where our world is headed, questions about our responsibility and ability to help those who've been abused or are in need, and our serious racial divide are all issues people grappled with in 1941 just as we do today.

Sometimes it's easier to understand our complex difficulties and find creative solutions by viewing them through the lens of a historic time frame rather than the busyness and political divides of modern day. Historical fiction provides that little bit of distance to enhance our objectivity.

How do you expect the novel, especially the struggles of your characters, to resonate with your readers?

We all have ingrained in us a bit of prejudice and a hesitancy to get involved in the troubles of others. We've said or done things we later realized were not honorable or kind and have regretted our words or actions.

Many of us have at one time or another been the victim of abuse or oppression or at least marginalization. Some of us have wondered if God could really love us, forgive us, or if we could possibly be welcomed into the church community.

Sometimes we've stood as lions against injustice and been that needed voice for the voiceless. Sometimes we've been the accuser. Sometimes we've been the accused. Sometimes we've cowered when we know we should have stood strong against injustice.



No Creek is a community that contains all those characters, with their strengths and foibles. At heart they're mostly good people who learn they need to change so they can do better, be better and kinder, wiser. I think we all relate to those characters, for at one time or another we've all been or known them.

I think that seeing ourselves or our loved ones in the shoes of these characters helps us realize that we, like they, can stand against injustice and work for change and growth within ourselves and our communities.

Can you tell us about the historical research that went into writing this novel? Did you learn anything new that surprised you?

Much of my prior WWII writing has focused on foreign shores, but for this story I researched the American home front before and during WWII through books, Internet research, archival film footage on the Great Depression, Jim Crow laws and their results, the history of lynching and the KKK, racism and the great migration, and the work of Eleanor Roosevelt, as well as histories of Wilkes and Surry Counties in North Carolina and the Appalachian home moonshine industry and its culture. I read about and visited lifesaving stations on the Outer Banks.

Legal sources were interviewed for information regarding trusts, wills, and divorce proceedings in 1941. Newspapers archives for Wilkes County were helpful.

I interviewed some wonderful older people who had lived there during those years and pulled some real-life stories from them, my family, and my own life, then enjoyed a trip to the North Carolina foothills and mountains, soaking up its music and a visit to the church and cemetery where some of my ancestors were buried. For the Oswald and Biddy Chambers threads, I found wonderful information in the biography *Mrs. Oswald Chambers* by Michelle Ule and in *Oswald Chambers: Abandoned to God* by David McCasland, as well as pertinent passages in *My Utmost for His Highest*.

I was surprised to learn how close to civilian life the military in North Carolina practiced war games as they trained recruits. I can only imagine it was startling and perhaps frightening to those able to observe.

Stories of racial division and wartime highlight the difficulty of living in uncertainty and dealing with the unexpected. How does faith play into this aspect of the novel and into the novel more generally?

None of us know the future. We don't control the present. Life—our own and the community and nation in which we live—can turn on a dime. We all need a source, a touchstone, a safe place that also presents a moral lens and a high, stable bar.

Jesus Christ and faith in His unfailing love and provision fills all those needs. Lilliana, Celia, Gladys, the McHones, and others to a lesser extent all learn this lesson and grow from it.

***Night Bird Calling* presents intriguing and lovable characters in heartbreaking and challenging situations. Did the journeys of any of the characters surprise you as you wrote their story?**

I loved writing the big personalities of small-town characters in No Creek, especially precocious eleven-year-old Celia Percy. Celia possesses a lion's heart in a small body and is ready to rail against injustice and champion the underdog no matter what. Lilliana, the story's timid young heroine who flees abuse, grows into the woman God intended her to be by relinquishing misguided beliefs, trusting in the Lord's love for her, and reaching outside herself to help others.

The town is peppered with courage, love, and kindness, as well as prejudice, meanness, and oppression. Such a diverse and racially divided town is a microcosm of our world. Only by embracing the worth of others while acknowledging the "beam" in their own eye could change come to No Creek. That is true for each of us. I love the parable in that.

Marshall, the fifteen-year-old nephew of Olney Tate, descendent of slaves, surprised me. Marshall was sent to live with his aunt and uncle, Mercy and Olney Tate, after his father was murdered in Georgia. Though Marshall could barely read or write, he had a keen eye and a thirst for learning.

I knew Marshall was a hard worker and an honorable young man, but I did not anticipate his excelling so quickly or that he would develop a passion for healing and a desire to apprentice himself to Dr. Vishnevsky—a desire cut short due to the dangers of racism in No Creek. But it is in leaving No Creek that Marshall finds his future—a future that will be explored in my next book.

Opening a lending library from their home to everyone in the community, regardless of race, was a radical move in 1941 Appalachia. What inspired this?

Sometime after fleeing my abusive marriage as a young woman, I bought an old trailer in a run-down neighborhood—a far cry from Garden's Gate—but the best I could afford at the time. Children in that neighborhood ran as wild and untended as weeds in a garden run amok.

I befriended many of those children—or they befriended me—bought a used bookcase and books at yard sales, and opened a lending library right there in my trailer. Children came for hours sometimes to color pictures, read or be read to, enjoy glasses of milk and homemade bread with jam, and just talk, asking questions about life and God and prison (where one of their fathers served time)—everything imaginable.



Parents often took advantage of their community's new "free" babysitter, but those were precious and healing days for the children and for me. Years later I remarried and bore my own precious children. When they were old enough, I worked as a children's librarian in a school. Those memories became the inspiration for Aunt Hyacinth's lending library in *Night Bird Calling*.

Is there one character whose experience you especially identify with or one whose story grew out of lessons you learned in your own life?

I identify closely with both Lilliana and Celia, for different reasons. Like Lilliana, I ran away from an abusive marriage and oppressive church as a young woman. It took many years to work through the issues surrounding that and to find healing, to believe that God could really love me.

Helping others in need (by opening the lending library and offering literacy help to the community, opening her home to the Percys, and doing what she could to rescue Ruby Lynne, a girl with similar problems to her own) was important on the path to Lilliana's healing. Reaching out to help others in need has been a help to me, too.

Like Celia, I was the creative child with big ideas, a strong sense of social justice, and a determination to speak out against injustice no matter the consequences that my mother didn't know what to do with.

What did you learn by writing this novel, and what lessons do you hope your readers take away?

Night Bird Calling is fiction, as are its characters, though parts of Lilliana's escape from an abusive marriage and her challenged growth into believing that God really loves her and has a plan for her life were drawn from my own life. I found the dredging up of memories I've wanted to forget and the necessary baring of my soul to write this story emotionally challenging, yet in the end I also found it freeing.

Shame loses its hold once confessed. It is truly a gift if that confession helps free others. Abused women are often told not to tell of their abuse and are threatened with dire consequences to ensure their silence. Often, they are filled with shame that they cannot stop the abuse, cannot change their abuser, and feel helpless to change themselves or their circumstances. They believe their situations are unique, that no one will believe them, that they are truly alone.

I hope that in writing Lilliana's story, other women will realize those things are not true, and that abuse does not come from God, no matter what their abuser or oppressor insists. I hope women realize their value lies in the very life God has given them and that He is above all the Husband who never fails us, never hurts us, the One who loves us and always wants a strong and healthy relationship with us. He wants us to be whole. **FF**

Visit Cathy Gohlke's author page here:

<https://www.familyfiction.com/authors/cathy-gohlke>



Night Bird Calling

Cathy Gohlke
Tyndale House

Buy Now



From award-winning author Cathy Gohlke, whose novels have been called “haunting” (Library Journal on *Saving Amelie*) and “page-turning” (Francine Rivers on *Secrets She Kept*), comes a historical fiction story of courage and transformation set in rural Appalachia on the eve of WWII.

When Lilliana Swope’s beloved mother dies, Lilliana gathers her last ounce of courage and flees her abusive husband for the home of her only living relative in the foothills of No Creek, North Carolina. Though Hyacinth Belvidere hasn’t seen Lilliana since she was five, she offers her cherished great-niece a safe harbor. Their joyful reunion inspires plans to revive Aunt Hyacinth’s estate and open a public library where everyone is welcome, no matter the color of their skin.

Slowly Lilliana finds revival and friendship in No Creek—with precocious eleven-year-old Celia Percy, with kindhearted Reverend Jesse Willard, and with Ruby Lynne Wishon, a young woman whose secrets could destroy both them and the town. When the plans for the library also incite the wrath of the Klan, the dangers of Lilliana’s past and present threaten to topple her before she’s learned to stand.

With war brewing for the nation and for her newfound community, Lilliana must overcome a hard truth voiced by her young friend Celia: “Wishing comes easy. Change don’t.”



CONTEMPORARY: ERIN BARTELS

ALL THAT WE CARRIED

Author **Erin Bartels** talks about the serious themes woven throughout her latest novel.

A publishing professional for 18 years, **Erin Bartels** is the award-winning author of *We Hope for Better Things* (2020 Michigan Notable Book, 2020 WFWA Star Award-winner, 2019 Christy Award finalist) and *The Words between Us* (2020 Christy Award finalist, 2015 WFWA Rising Star Award finalist). Her short story, *This Elegant Ruin*, was a finalist in the *Saturday Evening Post* Great American Fiction Contest in 2014, and her poetry has been published by *The Lyric*. Her new novel is ***All That We Carried***.

In this interview, Erin explains why she used her fiction to touch on serious themes, what draws her to hiking, and how her characters each deal with grief.

Tell us a little about your novel *All That We Carried*.

Ten years ago, sisters Carrie and Melanie Greene were on a hiking trip when their parents were in a fatal car accident. They haven't seen each other since.

Olivia coped with the loss by plunging herself into law school, work, and a materialistic view of the world—what you see is what you get, and that's all you get. Melanie dropped out of college and developed an online life-coaching business around her cafeteria-style spirituality—a little of this, a little of that, whatever makes you happy.

Now, at Melanie's insistence (and against Olivia's better judgement), they are embarking on a hike in the Porcupine Mountains of Michigan's Upper Peninsula. In this remote wilderness they'll face their deepest fears, question their most dearly held beliefs, and begin to see that perhaps the best way to move forward is the one way they had never considered.

**You have based three of your novels in Michigan.
Why this location?**

Despite all being set in Michigan, my novels are set in very different places. An urban center and a rural farmhouse, a small town with an active boating and shipping life, the middle of an old-growth forest.

Michigan is a deceptively large state with incredibly varied landscapes (and lakescapes). It is second only to California in the diversity of its agriculture. It is chock-full of fascinating history—Native American tribes, French fur trading, copper mining, lumberjacks, the auto industry, Motown—and Michiganders have a deep love of the great outdoors in every season.

There's just so much story potential here! I do have plans for some novels outside of Michigan, but as one does as when one travels, I'll always come home again.

What inspired this story?

I've wanted to write a hiking story for a few years, simply because I love hiking Michigan's trails and I have a lot of experience upon which to draw. And I've wanted to write a book featuring sisters who found it difficult to get along, as my sister and I did for so long.

Those two storylines naturally go together in my mind because the longer two people are with each other without distraction or way of escape, the more they can get on each other's nerves, and therefore the more conflict and interest the story will have. Place them on a real-world trail and you impose a particular structure and a particular timeline, and you add physical challenges to the emotional and spiritual ones the characters must deal with. It condenses the action.

After writing books with tons of characters and dual and triple timelines covering decades or even centuries, I wanted to write a story that had few characters and took place over the space of just one week. It was a fun challenge.

In addition to the theme of sisterhood, you also touch on the heavier topics of grief and faith. Can you explain how these three themes weave together?

In my family of origin, we tend to keep our griefs to ourselves. There's a lot of English and German DNA in the bloodline, so we're experts at repressing, putting on a brave face, and getting on with what needs to be done. It doesn't mean you don't feel grief deeply. It just means you do your crying alone.

That's also how many people approach faith. It's private. It's personal. It's no one else's business.

That kind of individualistic approach to faith, which is so common in the West, leads to many people believing a hodgepodge of spiritual things filled with internal contradictions and questions without sure answers. That kind of faith offers no assurance because we've cobbled it together on our own, instead of entering into a community

of faith that stretches back to ancient times and can help us test whether what we believe has any truth to it or power in it.

When we grieve, we shouldn't go it alone. When it comes to our beliefs about God, death, and eternity, again, we shouldn't go it alone. And when it comes to life, these two sisters will discover not only that they shouldn't go it alone but that they don't actually want to.

What draws you to hiking?

Like many people, I find quiet time in the natural world restorative to the soul. I've spent many, many hours walking by myself at nature centers and along trails and lakeshores, and many more hiking Michigan's backcountry with my sister.

It's a time when I can ignore the problems and busyness of regular life, I can revel in God's good creation, and I can remember that the world doesn't center on me or my schedule. It centers on God and His purposes.

Remembering my rather inconsequential place in the world is good for someone whose besetting sin is pride.

Tell us about your protagonists, sisters Olivia and Melanie.

Over the years, they grew apart, each coping with the loss in her own way. Older sister Olivia plunged herself into law school, work, and an atomistic view of the world—what you see is what you get, and that's all you get. Younger sister Melanie dropped out of college and developed an online life-coaching business around her cafeteria-style spirituality—a little of this, a little of that, whatever makes you happy.

In every way possible, these two sisters are polar opposites, except for one thing: they are both missing the same thing.

Both sisters in your novel deal with grief in their own way. Can you please touch on how these sisters tackle their grief and how they come to terms with it?

It's really hard to lose someone we love. It's much harder when we don't have firm beliefs about what happens after death. I think more and more people don't have any solid beliefs about the afterlife—whether there is one and what happens there.

Even [some] Christians have wacky, unbiblical ideas of what happens after we die. I have been to many a funeral where I've come away with the feeling that even the minister wasn't sure what to say. So it's just a string of platitudes with no logical basis for believing any of it is true.

That's the world these sisters are living in—one where they don't have a firm footing in what they believe, so they decide what they believe about death and the nature of existence according to what makes them feel able to move on.

One believes in a little of everything, hoping that because of that she will eventually see her parents again when she dies. The other believes that this life is all there is and her parents' disembodied souls are not living on in some other dimension or place. And neither one is at peace because neither one is truly sure about any of it.

Did you find one of the sisters harder to write about than the other?

No, because I identify with both of them, despite how different they are. In one way, they're representative of the head and the heart—reason and intuition. And they are fairly accurate pictures of the two sides of my own personality.

I am, on the one hand, a driven, practical, achievement-oriented, and skeptical person, just like Olivia. But I am also a dawdler, an observer, a stop-the-car-in-the-middle-of-traffic-to-save-a-turtle kind of person like Melanie.

I probably would have made a good lawyer, like Olivia. But, like Melanie, I feel a close kinship with the natural world, and I want to get along with everybody. And in writing out the spiritual and philosophical arguments the sisters have with each other and with a stranger they meet along the way, I'm simply working out lines of reasoning and arguments I've had in my own mind over the past 30-some years—things I want to believe, things I have trouble believing, things I wish were true, and things I wish weren't true.

What would you like readers to take away after having read *All That We Carried*?

Beyond the outer story of these sisters finding common ground and forgiveness, *All That We Carried* is really about the inner journey each of us takes as we come to terms with what we believe—about God, about what happens after we die, about how we view everything in the world—and most of all why we believe it. I hope readers will be open to honestly examining these things in their own minds and with each other as they discuss the book.

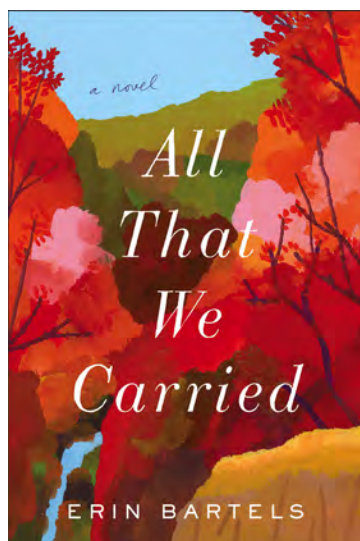
We spend so much time, effort, and money to distract ourselves from boredom. The prospect of even 30 seconds of unoccupied time has us reaching for our phones to quickly check social media.

But filling up every waking moment of our days with distractions keeps us from ever following our thoughts somewhere new and interesting or considering the deeper questions of life, death, and eternity. I hope that readers come away from this book with a desire to get outside, get quiet, and explore the trails of their own thoughts for a while. To not ignore their own questions and doubts about the nature of existence and the nature of God, and instead to humbly work through them, seeking answers that satisfy both the head and the heart.

Above all, I hope that readers see the value of extending grace and forgiveness to those who have wronged them. **FF**

Visit Erin Bartels' author page here:

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All That We Carried

Erin Bartels
Revell

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Ten years ago, sisters Olivia and Melanie Greene were on a backcountry hiking trip when their parents were in a fatal car accident. Over the years, they grew apart, each coping with the loss in her own way.

Olivia plunged herself into law school, work, and a materialist view of the world—what you see is what you get, and that’s all you get.

Melanie dropped out of college and developed an online life-coaching business around her cafeteria-style spirituality—a little of this, a little of that, whatever makes you happy.

Now, at Melanie’s insistence (and against Olivia’s better judgment), they are embarking on a hike in the Porcupine Mountains of Michigan’s Upper Peninsula. In this remote wilderness they’ll face their deepest fears, question their most dearly held beliefs, and begin to see that perhaps the best way to move forward is the one way they had never considered.

Michigan Notable Book Award winner Erin Bartels draws from personal experience hiking backcountry trails with her sister to bring you a story about the complexities of grief, faith, and sisterhood.



HISTORICAL: LAURA FRANTZ

TIDEWATER BRIDE

Author **Laura Frantz** on the real-life history driving her latest historical romance set in Colonial Virginia.

Bestselling and award-winning author **Laura Frantz** takes you to the salty shores of seventeenth-century Virginia in ***Tidewater Bride*** (Revell), an exploration of pride, honor, and the restorative power of true love.

In this interview, the author reveals the deal with “tobacco brides,” her inspiration for the novel, and what keeps her coming back to Colonial Virginia.

Tell us a little about *Tidewater Bride*.

This novel is the equivalent of the colonial American Dating Game and is based on actual Virginia history. “Fair maids” from the Old World arrived in the New World and made matches with Virginia’s most eligible bachelors, which enabled the colony to not only survive but thrive.

I love when novels are based on actual history and real people. *Tidewater Bride* is one of them.

What draws you to write about Colonial Virginia?

I seem to be stuck there, so it must be love. :-) Truly, Virginia was a colony that had a huge impact on the shaping and future of America as we know it today, beginning when Jamestown was first founded in 1607.



Some of my favorite historical figures like George Washington and George Rogers Clark and Pocahontas were Virginians. And Colonial Williamsburg is my favorite historic site in the U.S. Plenty of novel fodder in that one colony alone.

What was the inspiration for your novel?

My love for Virginia history goes deep, given my own family settled there over three hundred years ago. I found it fascinating to leap back to the seventeenth century, which still has a great deal of romanticism and mystery attached, much of it rooted in the legend of Pocahontas, John Smith, and those early founders. Endless inspiration!

What's a "tobacco bride"?

The Virginia Company in England, dedicated to making an American settlement succeed especially after the mystery of Roanoke Colony, brought English women to Virginia in exchange for ship's passage, clothing, and land. Upon arrival each woman had her pick of wealthy bachelors who then reimbursed the Virginia Company for her in so many pounds of tobacco, the leading cash crop at that time. Think of it as the Colonial America dating game!

Selah Hopewell, the female protagonist, is tasked with having to find suitors for an incoming ship of tobacco brides. Expand a little on the process.

Process is truly the right word. The tobacco bride venture began in England, where the "fair maids" were found. Only women with skills thought to benefit the New World were given passage, as the standard was quite high. The bravery of these women to travel across an ocean to a place that was one step shy of extinction deserves attention and praise.

Once landed in Virginia, they picked their husband, who then reimbursed the Virginia Company for the bride's expenses through payment of tobacco. I imagine there were a lot of interesting matchups, though sadly, much is unknown about these women and these couples after that.

Your novels have been applauded for their historical accuracy. What type of research was required to accurately portray seventeenth-century Virginia?

My love of research goes hand in hand with my love of writing. I'm sure I make mistakes, but they're honest ones as I try my best to exhaust everything available to me research-wise.

For *Tidewater Bride*, I relied on those early settlers themselves—their journals, letters, newspapers, and published accounts. This gives me a firsthand feel for the time period. Those published accounts are often embellished but make for fascinating reading and help me develop an ear for the language back then. Of all the sources available to me, that of Pocahontas' own people seemed the most believable and truthful and was what I used most in this particular novel.

The Lord gets all the credit for any historical accuracy, as I always seem to find just what I need to write the story. He inspires to the best of my ability.

Did you find out anything unusual or surprising when you were doing your research of the time period?

Much of what we've been taught about Jamestown and Pocahontas and her people is untrue or has been sugar-coated or revised. The fact is, it was a brutal time period where most did not survive, not even the tobacco brides. Settlement took time and a great many failures and mistakes had to be overcome.

Tell us a little about Selah Hopewell, your main character, and what inspired you to tell her story.

Few women were in Jamestown at first and only the hardest survived. Selah is the embodiment of those women who had to be equally strong in spirit. Having been raised with few women and working alongside her cape merchant father, she is somewhat cynical about the colony's men and knows their many faults. Selah has hardened herself against the prospect of matrimony personally though she is given charge

of bringing the tobacco brides successfully to the colony and seeing them marry well.

**Do you have a favorite character in *Tidewater Bride*?
(And what makes them special to you?)**

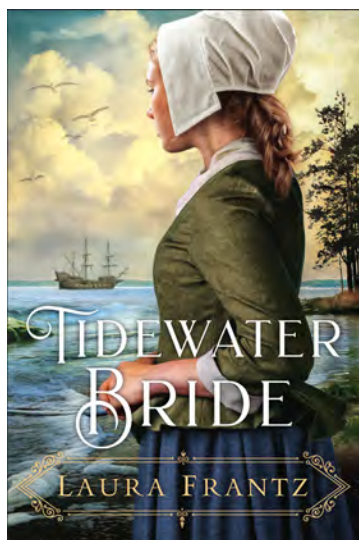
I love Watseka, the little Powhatan girl that comes to live amongst the English in a peace exchange, something that actually happened during that time period. Her innocence, adaptability, and delight in the natural world is charming and enviable.

**What lessons are embedded in the pages of
Tidewater Bride?**

That God was at work in our history, both personally as well as communally, just as He is in our present day. Truly, history is His story. We can take hope and comfort in that during the uncertainty and challenges we are experiencing in this current pandemic. **FF**

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Tidewater Bride

Laura Frantz
Revell

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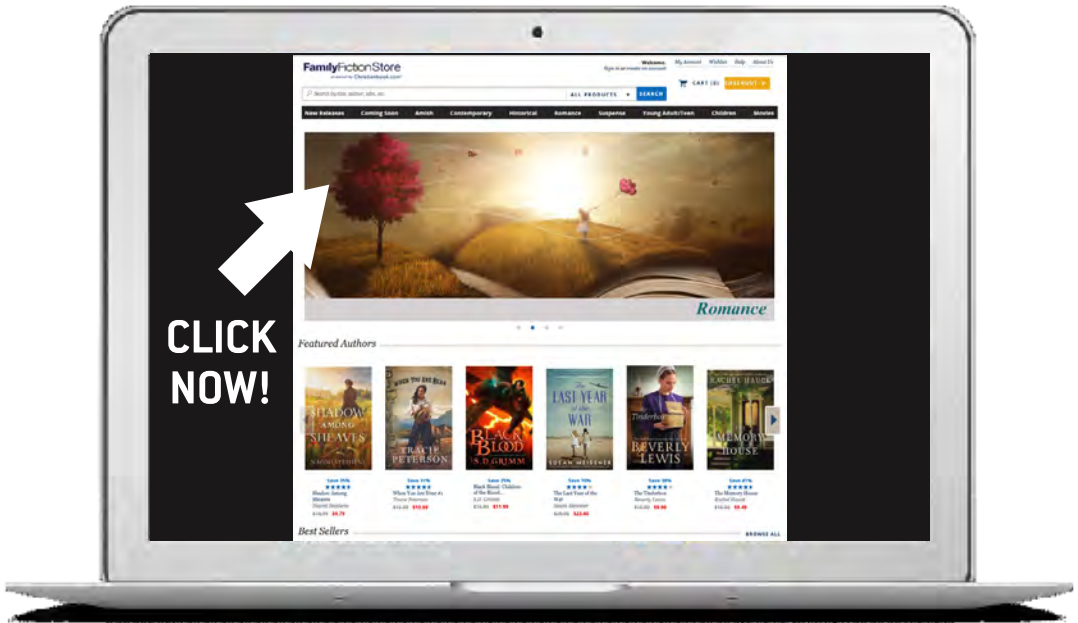
Selah Hopewell seems to be the only woman in the Virginia colony who has no wish to wed. True, there are too many men and far too few women in James Towne. But Selah already has her hands full assisting her father in the family's shop. And now she is in charge of an incoming ship of tobacco brides who must be looked after as they sort through their many suitors.

Xander Renick is perhaps the most eligible tobacco lord in the settlement. His lands are vast, his crops are prized, and his position as a mediator between the colonists and the powerful Powhatan nation surrounding them makes him indispensable. But Xander is already wedded to his business and still grieves the loss of his wife, daughter of the Powhatan chief.

Can two fiercely independent people find happiness and fulfillment on their own? Or will they discover that what they've been missing in life has been right in front of them all along?



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Historical Jody Hedlund

Jody Hedlund is the bestselling author of many historical novels for both adults and teens and is the winner of numerous awards including the Christy Award, Carol Award, and Christian Book Award.



In ***A Bride of Convenience*** (Bethany House), the third book in Jody's ***The Bride Ships Series***, unemployed mill worker Zoe Hart accepts a proposal from a miner of questionable character named Abe Merivale after he promises to help her locate her brother. After a hasty wedding, they soon realize their marriage of convenience is not so convenient after all.

In this interview, the author shares the real-life events fueling the series, why she chose this particular setting, and the real historical figure who inspired one of the characters.

What is the inspiration behind your bride-ship series?

During the course of my research, I came across information regarding bride ships to the Pacific Northwest. While I'd heard stories of bride ships leaving England and sailing to Australia, I'd never heard of efforts to send brides elsewhere.

As I explored the concept further, I discovered that in the 1860s several bride ships left England's shores for Vancouver Island and British Columbia, which at that time were both separate colonies of England and not yet part of Canada.

I was utterly horrified and fascinated by the idea that women would willingly board ships, leave everything they'd ever known behind, and sail to a strange land, all for the purpose of marrying complete strangers. I couldn't help but ask myself what kind of woman would do such a thing and why. This series is my attempt to answer those questions.

Why did you choose Vancouver Island and British Columbia as the setting for this series?

The colony was overflowing with male settlers, primarily because of the 1859 gold rush that had occurred in the Canadian Rockies and lasted for many years. As a result, miners and those hoping to profit from the gold rush swelled into Vancouver Island and British Columbia, creating an influx of male settlers.

An 1861 census showed that females only made up 11-percent of the population there. With so few women available, men who wanted wives had slim pickings. One minister in British Columbia wrote to his supporters, "Dozens of men have told me they would gladly marry if they could."

Who was behind the idea of sending English brides to the colonies?

With the men complaining about the lack of women, an Anglican missionary among the miners of British Columbia—Reverend Lundin Brown—was the one to write a letter to his sponsors in London, asking for Christian wives for the miners. As a result, the Columbia Mission Society formed an emigration committee and soon began arranging for the transportation of reputable women to come and marry the men and, in so doing, create families and bring stability to the wilderness towns.



What kinds of women decided to board the Robert Lowe (the second bride ship)?

In *A Bride of Convenience*, my hope is to show the perspective of one of the brides who came on the second bride ship that sailed to Victoria. This ship, called the Robert Lowe, left approximately four months after the Tynemouth (the bride ship highlighted in the first two books in the series).

While the women aboard the Robert Lowe were also sponsored by the Columbia Emigration Society, a distinct difference existed between the two groups. The group on the first ship came largely from the London area and was comprised of

wealthy middleclass women, as well as the poor plucked from orphanages and slums.

The Robert Lowe women, however, were from the cotton manufacturing districts in Manchester, England. The calamity in the midlands was widespread, and tens of thousands of cotton-mill workers suffered from unemployment as a result of the cotton shortage brought about by the American Civil War.

The women chosen to immigrate aboard the Robert Lowe were among the many who'd lost their jobs. In light of the bleak conditions in their homeland, the three dozen Manchester mill girls were happy to be offered the chance at a better life in the colonies, where work and husbands awaited them.

What was it like for the brides when they finally reached British Columbia?

The Robert Lowe arrived in January after three months without any stops. After spending a weekend of rest and quarantine aboard the Robert Lowe, the women were ferried to Victoria aboard a steamship.

Before they could go to shore, however, two ill women were taken to the hospital with what was believed to be consumption or mill fever, an illness common among mill workers. Since those lung ailments can lie dormant, the women may have already had the disease, and the damp sea voyage may have allowed it to progress. Whatever the case, the two women died shortly after arriving in Victoria.

The rest of the brides came ashore to great fanfare. With the arrival of another bride ship, the excitement of the men

in the colonies was out of control. With not nearly enough women for all the eager men, the women (like those on the Tynemouth) had to run a gauntlet through mobs hoping to find brides. While the heroine of the book, Zoe, isn't based on any real person in particular, I did hope to portray the bride-ship experience through the eyes of a mill woman.

Often your stories are inspired by real people. Is there a character in this book that draws inspiration from a real historical figure?

Yes, the hero of the story—Abraham Merivale—was inspired by a pastor who lived in the colonies during this time period. The Anglican Church sent missionaries to the mining towns and camps with the intention of spreading the gospel and maintaining order and civility among the miners. One such missionary was a tall, well-liked preacher by the name of John Sheepshanks—a highly educated man and the son of an upper-class family who'd chosen to volunteer for a period of five years in the colonies without a salary.

John Sheepshanks was a cheerful and resourceful minister whose compassion made him popular among both the miners and the natives. He spent time building relationships by playing ice hockey, spearfishing for salmon, and teaching reading. I modeled Abe around this beloved missionary who showed God's love wherever he was in the mining districts of British Columbia. **FF**

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Jody Hedlund — *A Bride of Convenience*



A Bride of Convenience

The Bride Ships #3

Jody Hedlund

Bethany House



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Erica Vetsch's favorite books are historical novels and history books—and one of her greatest thrills is stumbling across some obscure historical factoid that makes her imagination leap. When she's not writing, she is the bookkeeper for the family lumber business, mother and wife, and avid museum patron. In her latest book, ***The Gentleman Spy*** (Kregel Publications), her much-anticipated follow-up to ***The Lost Lieutenant***, Erica offers readers a story they won't be able to resist.



A woman who loves reading and everything about books meets a handsome, mysterious duke, gets married, and falls in love in Regency England. He even gives her a library! How can a story get better than that?

For those who haven't read *The Lost Lieutenant*, give us an introduction to Marcus Haverly.

Marcus was such a fun character in *The Lost Lieutenant* because he always seemed to know more than one would think, pop up when he was needed, and be so comfortable in his own skin. He could move in a variety of circles, both high society and those of lower rank. He was mysterious, intriguing. A handsome stranger who always seemed to be in control of his situation.

I knew that in the second book, I wanted to disturb Marcus. He was much too comfortable in his role in *The Lost Lieutenant*, and I knew he would need to be pushed out of that to reveal more about his character. Marcus needed to learn that control

is an illusion, and that when it comes to dealing with people, relationships can be untidy.

Marcus had his life and path pretty much set as the second son of a duke. What happened that shook up his plans? What are his responsibilities now that he is the duke?

Marcus enjoyed being a second son and had come to peace with not being in the limelight. He had reconciled himself to being second in his parents' affections and interests too. But when his father and elder brother are killed, and his brother's child is born a girl, the title falls to Marcus.

He now has the responsibility for an estate, for his father's and brother's widows, for bearing the title and taking his seat in the House of Lords, and for participating in his country's government, in addition to the social obligations that come with being a titleholder.

The trouble is, he doesn't want any of it. He has his work for the Crown (which is now in jeopardy), his freedom (which his mother is anxious to curtail), and his future (which is totally being undone by the women in his life) tidy and organized.

Being the second son and single meant that no one paid much attention to Marcus's comings and goings, which was ideal for his life as a spy for the Crown. What did his work as Crown agent entail?

Marcus is involved in both intelligence and operations for the Crown. With England engaged in a protracted war with France, the need for intelligence was great. And the home front was no different. Marcus keeps tabs on various people's activities.



I created Marcus to be a sort of “eyes and ears” of a fictional branch of the Home Office. He has a network of informants, and he has the ability to go undercover and interact with individuals who are socially distant from the salons and ballrooms of society.

Upon occasion, Marcus has worked as a spy, infiltrating France to gather intelligence, but now that he’s the Duke of Haverly and his actions are scrutinized more closely, he fears his work as a spy is in jeopardy.

Though separated by two hundred years, readers will be sure to relate to your heroine, Lady Charlotte Tiptree.

Can you share with us what her obsession is?

Charlotte loves books. She loves all books, but she has a passion for history books and novels. I guess you could say I patterned her a bit after myself since those are two of my passions. Her most precious possessions are the books in her little library, each one saved for, planned for, and loved. It was a joy to write Charlotte because of her pleasure in books—the look, feel, smell, and the words! Oh, the words!

At the time of *The Gentleman Spy*, Charlotte's interest lies in ancient history, Greek and Roman to be exact. I always envision Charlotte moving from one historical era to the next to learn as much as she can. She has an insatiable curiosity about the past.

She also loves to escape into a good novel. Because her homelife is less than ideal, she feels safest and happiest when she can fall into the pages of a book and get away from her reality.

Why was it so scandalous for a woman to read books, and especially read a newspaper, during this period in history?

Chivalry and the protection of women were a large part of proper English society during the Regency, and it was feared that too much academic work or exposure to the more, shall we say gritty, elements of life were both improper and could be dangerous to the “weaker female mind.”

I'd like to think the men of the era had women's best interests at heart, or at least thought they did, but I suspect it was because they were afraid of just how smart women are!

Of course, Charlotte thinks this notion that reading is dangerous to women is a load of twaddle, and she reads as much as she can, even though she has to hide her books from her father. When she faces a problem, she turns to books to find the answers. And when she marries, she finds joy in being given run of the house library. **FF**

Read the *WHOLE* interview here:

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Erica Vetsch — *The Gentleman Spy*



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Historical Tara Johnson

Tara Johnson is a passionate lover of stories who uses fiction, nonfiction, song, and laughter to share her testimony of how God led her into freedom after spending years living shackled to the expectations of others.



Her latest novel is the Civil War-era romance ***All Through the Night*** (Tyndale House).

What inspired the story and characters found in *All Through the Night*?

The character of Cadence Piper was inspired by real-life Civil War nurse Elida B. Rumsey. Elida desperately wanted to serve as a nurse in the war but was denied by Dorothea Dix because of her young age and beauty. Elida found another way in—by singing to the wounded soldiers. They loved her golden voice and sweet spirit when she visited the hospitals.

She quickly found herself being called upon to help boost their sagging spirits. In time, she was called to nurse at the battlefield. After fainting at the first sight of blood, she was mortified and vowed never to let herself fall apart that way again. She was the first person to ever sing “The Battle Hymn of the Republic.”

Joshua Ivy was created completely from my imagination but was inspired by the heroic abolitionists of the time. Many sacrificed everything for the cause, but even the bravest were not always completely pure in their motivations. While Joshua

knows he is doing the right thing, however dangerous, he also uses the cause as a mask to hide his own wounds and insecurities.

All Through the Night is a weaving of real events, including an evil secret society, with fictional characters, all of whom are grappling with spiritual struggles—the need to be accepted and loved.

What role does faith play in this story?

Faith is an integral part of *All Through the Night*. Cadence has to learn that approval and love are not the same thing. She must ultimately find acceptance in the eyes of God instead of the fickle applause of man. Joshua believes he must keep striving to do more, be more to erase the stigma of his past but finally sees his worth rests in being loved by his family and his Creator.

Who did you write this book for?

This book is written for anyone who has wondered if God sees them. It was birthed for anyone who has wrestled with approval or people-pleasing and been left with a gnawing ache inside. This story is for anyone who longs for freedom.

Tell us about some of the core themes of *All Through the Night*. How do you hope these themes will resonate with and challenge your readers?

Cadence yearns for her father's approval and does anything to seek unconditional love in conditionally minded people. Joshua fights the demons of his past, particularly his battered existence growing up as a street rat in the slums. He seeks to find his worth in saving others.

Cadence seeks her worth in being seen. Themes found in this story are true worth, identity, unconditional love in Christ, how the hurtful things said in our past affect our future, and finally, how to overcome the lie you believed about yourself.

I want the readers to know that whatever lie they have believed—"I am worthless," "I need to be seen," "If only _____ would love me, then I'd be happy . . ."—there is hope and freedom in Jesus. There is nothing we can do to earn his love and nothing we can do to lose his love.

How is the perspective of *All Through the Night* unique compared to other novels in the Civil War genre?

One aspect that is particularly unique is the emergence of the Knights of the Golden Circle. This evil sect played a large role in funding the Confederacy and had big plans to form a new nation, a ring of power, that included the Southern states, Mexico, and the Caribbean islands.

They had powerful men in both the Confederacy and, ironically, the Union and carried out some of the most heinous acts ever committed on American soil.

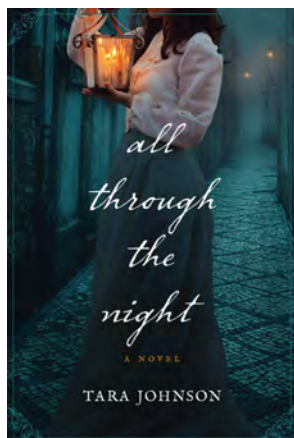
Another unique aspect of *All Through the Night* are the cameo appearances by great historical figures like Fanny Crosby and John Wilkes Booth. I love to bring real men and women to life in a way my readers enjoy. **FF**

Read the *WHOLE* interview here:

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All Through the Night

Tara Johnson
Tyndale House



With her stammering tongue and quiet ways, Cadence Piper has always struggled to be accepted. After the death of her mother, Cadence sets her heart on becoming a nurse, both to erase the stain her brother has left on the family's honor

and to find long-sought approval in the eyes of her father.

When Dorothea Dix turns her away due to her young age and pretty face, Cadence finds another way to serve—singing to the soldiers in Judiciary Square Hospital. Only one stubborn doctor stands in her way.

Joshua Ivy is an intense man with a compassionate heart for the hurting and downtrodden. The one thing he can't have is an idealistic woman destroying the plans he's so carefully laid. When the chaos of war thrusts Cadence into the middle of his clandestine activities, he must decide if the lives at stake, and his own heart, are worth the risk of letting Cadence inside.

Everything changes when Joshua and Cadence unearth the workings of a secret society so vile, the course of their lives, and the war, could be altered forever. If they fight an enemy they cannot see, will the One who sees all show them the way in the darkest night?

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Lynette Eason is the bestselling author of *Collateral Damage* and *Acceptable Risk*, as well as *Protecting Tanner Hollow* and the *Blue Justice*, *Women of Justice*, *Deadly Reunions*, *Hidden Identity*, and *Elite Guardians Series*. She is the winner of three ACFW Carol Awards, the Selah Award, and the Inspirational Reader's Choice Award, among others.



Eason continues her **Danger Never Sleeps Series** with **Active Defense** (Revell). She will have you looking over your shoulder as you dive into this fast-paced, suspense-filled story about losing control and finding something even better.

Lynette, your books often feature strong female characters in a variety of challenging careers. How do you hope your characters will encourage and motivate women?

I hope that the characters will come across as capable and caring. Women who can take care of themselves and others, but ones who are willing to admit they need help sometimes. They're not perfect, they're not indestructible, but they're resilient and strong, and have all the characteristics we sometimes wish we had for ourselves.

I hope they help us see that it's okay to have flaws and weaknesses. What's not okay is allowing those flaws and weaknesses to hold us back or define our future. We can overcome all of that by relying on God and trusting Him to take care of us, to get us through the tough times.

Heather Fontaine, the female protagonist, is a former field surgeon in Afghanistan. What type of research was required to accurately portray her profession?

Fortunately, I have a lot of friends in the medical profession and I have quite a few friends in the military. So, between the two, and a lot of online reading, I believe I was able to capture the essence of the profession in a realistic way for my readers.

***Active Defense* is the third in the *Danger Never Sleeps* Series. How do the books in the series tie together?**

The books tie together through four friends who met while they were in the military. Once they're discharged, they all move to the same area of the country and continue their friendship while teaming up with the men in their lives to fight the bad guys.

Besides providing a fast-paced, suspense-filled entertaining read, what do you hope readers can learn from *Active Defense*?

One of the biggest takeaways in this story is that no matter what your past is, it doesn't define your future.

When your novels juggle elements of faith, romance, and suspense, what do you consider the best recipe for an inspirational romantic suspense story?

I think a definite balance is necessary to create a story that readers want to finish—and hopefully, revisit at some point in the future. From some of the feedback I get, it seems a lot of my readers really enjoy the suspense aspect of the stories more than anything else. They like the romance thread and are happy to have the faith element in there.



I also get a lot of comments about appreciating the clean reads. But, above all, they REALLY like that high-octane suspense. So, that's what I tend to lean toward when I'm working on the stories—making it as suspenseful as possible. **FF**

Visit Lynette Eason's author page here:

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Active Defense

Danger Never Sleeps #3

Lynette Eason

Revell



A former field surgeon in Afghanistan, Heather Fontaine is used to life-or-death situations. She just didn't expect them to follow her home. Travis Walker has been secretly watching out for her for weeks.

As owner of his own security agency, it's what he does. Together, Travis and Heather must figure out who wants her dead—and why—before it's too late.

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Rachel Dylan is an award-winning and bestselling author of legal thrillers and romantic suspense. Rachel has practiced law for over a decade, including being a litigator at one of the nation's top law firms. Her *Atlanta Justice Series* has won the Holt Medallion, the Maggie Award, and the FHL Reader's Choice Award.



Her book *Backlash* (Bethany House) is the second volume of her *Capital Intrigue Series*.

How did you come up with the story for *Backlash*?

They say some books write themselves, and *Backlash* was definitely one of those for me. I had a very clear picture of Layla in my mind from the beginning of *End Game* (Capital Intrigue #1), and I knew I had to make her story the next book in the *Capital Intrigue Series*.

How is the *Capital Intrigue* series different from the *Atlanta Justice Series*?

While the *Atlanta Justice Series* focused on lawyers, *Capital Intrigue* follows three women who all went to law school but chose different career paths.

Tell us a little more about Layla Karam.

Layla works at the CIA as a Middle East analyst, but those in charge at the Agency believe she would be a better asset if she was a CIA officer working in the field.



Even though she resists, she takes on the challenges because she believes she is serving her country. Fun fact: Layla got her undergraduate degree in Arab studies, and I got my Master's degree in Middle Eastern studies.

I poured a lot of myself into Layla's character, but I could never take on dangerous field missions like her. I'm much better sitting behind my computer writing about them!

Backlash involves a second-chance romance. What made you choose to go down that path with Layla and Hunter?

I knew early on when planning these books that Layla and Hunter had a very ugly breakup. But as with a lot of things in life, things aren't always what they seem on the surface. I hope readers will embrace this story of forgiveness and self-sacrifice once they read about what happened between these two characters.

***Backlash* also tackles the very serious topic of sexual assault. Why did you decide to write about that?**

As readers may remember from *End Game*, Izzy Cole was sexually assaulted by her superior when she worked as a police officer. In *Backlash*, when the sergeant who assaulted her is murdered and she is questioned by the authorities, Izzy must grapple with a lot of emotions. She is able to get through such an awful ordeal because she has people around her who support and love her.

She also seeks professional counseling to work through her past, and I wanted to stress the importance of getting help from trained professionals. Last but not least, Izzy relies on her renewed faith to give her strength.

I also wanted to show how difficult it was for her to be questioned by the police about the sergeant's murder because she had to relive her attack. Many victims of sexual assault don't come forward for that very reason.

Izzy's friends stick by her side and step up to the plate to help her navigate the investigation into the sergeant's murder. There is hope and healing even after a devastating assault, but I didn't want to sugarcoat the issue. Izzy has to fight her battles one day at a time, and what happened to her changed her life forever. **FF**

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Backlash

Capital Intrigue #2

Rachel Dylan

Bethany House



CIA analyst Layla Karam is thrust into a dangerous DEA field operation against a cartel, and after one of her team members is murdered because of fallout from the op, Layla is left scrambling to find safety.

At the same time, the CIA opens an internal investigation against her. Out of options, Layla turns to ex-boyfriend and private investigator Hunter McCoy for help finding out who might want to ruin her career.

Layla and Hunter soon discover that a mole inside the DEA has sold out the team's identity to the cartel. She needs to clear her name with the Agency to protect herself and her teammates from cartel retaliation. With threats on all sides, Layla must put her trust in Hunter—the man who broke her heart—and hope they both come out of it alive.

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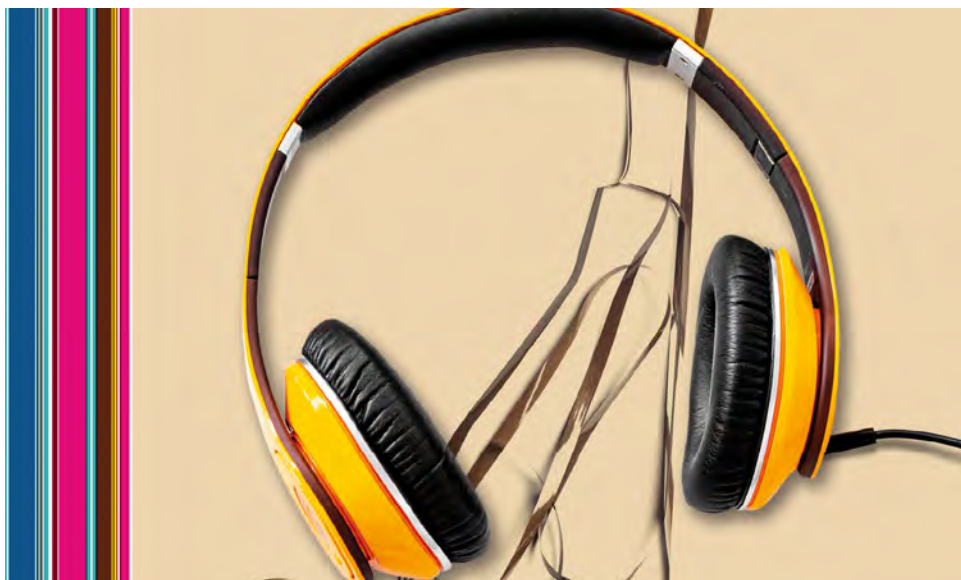
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A.K. Pittman is an award-winning author of thirteen novels, including the Christy-nominated *Sister Wife Series* and the critically acclaimed *The Seamstress*. An enthusiast for all things writing, she leads two different writers' groups, helping to bring new voices to the world of books. When not writing, Allison teaches middle school English, working as a conduit to introduce her students to new, fresh literature.



Pudge and Prejudice (Wander) is an homage to Jane Austen's *Pride and Prejudice*, transported to the fictitious Northfield Texas High School in the year 1984. After moving to Northfield with her family, Elyse Nebbit faces the challenge of finding her place in a new school, one dominated by social status and Friday night football. When Elyse's effortlessly beautiful older sister Jayne starts dating Charlie Bingley, the captain of the school football team, Elyse finds herself curious about Charlie's popular and brooding best friend, Billy Fitz. Elyse's body insecurities eventually complicate her relationship with Billy, leaving Jayne and Elyse's exceedingly blunt friend, Lottie, to step in and help Elyse accept herself for who she is, pant size and all.

In this interview, the author shares her memories of the original book, what inspired her own spin on the tale, and how her experience as a teacher informs her fiction.



Can you tell us about the first time you read *Pride and Prejudice*? What stuck out to you in the story?

To be honest, the first time I read *Pride and Prejudice* was after I watched the 1995 BBC mini-series. I happened to have a “teaching” copy (with vocabulary and guided reading questions), and I was mostly curious about how much of the actual dialogue had been preserved in the screenplay. I would watch, then read, then watch, then read . . . I think the world found a renewed love with Austen thanks to that series.

There are several retellings and renditions of *Pride and Prejudice* set in various decades and locales—what made you want to write one set in 1980s Texas?

The decade (the '80s) was a choice of pure indulgence, so I could immerse myself in memories and nostalgia. And, it worked as a historical setting, too. As for why Texas? Mostly because I knew I wanted the Darcy character to be a football

star, and while I know schools play football everywhere, there's nothing quite like a Texas Friday Night football game.

Did you observe any notable similarities between Austen's era and the '80s?

Pre-social media, if a guy and a girl wanted to talk to each other, they had to . . . talk. Voices on a telephone. Visits on a front porch. Walks to and from school. With the exception of the telephone, the channels for courtship in the 80's were exactly the same as in Austen's time. Right down to the letters. I had a box full of notes my friends (and boyfriends) and I wrote to each other. Extensive and detailed. We've lost that art with social media and texting.

Why did you choose to highlight the theme of body image in your retelling?

I knew I didn't want the initial chasm between Elyse and Billy (my Elizabeth and Darcy) to be one of class. There is a socioeconomic difference, but I knew I had to go beyond that. I've always gotten the idea that the arrival of Bingley and Darcy brought Elizabeth to the realization of her family's financial situation. She knew they weren't by any means wealthy, but it didn't really matter until the idea of marriage was on the table. It's the same with Elyse and her body image—the same as it is, I think, with most girls. It's easy to be accepting of yourself until you're thrust into the world of wanting—maybe needing—others to accept you.

What is Jane Austen's best wisdom for high school girls?

Know your mind and don't be swayed by what others would deem "acceptable" or "polite." Throughout Austen novels we see her women refuse the affections of unsuitable men . . . at

least until they become suitable. An Austen girl doesn't settle for a guy just to have a guy. An Austen girl knows her worth. An Austen girl speaks up and speaks out. An Austen girl is content with her own company. **FF**

Go to the website for an expanded version of this interview:

<https://www.familyfiction.com/ya-qa-k-pittman-pudge-prejudice-expanded>

Visit Allison Pittman's author page here:

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Pudge and Prejudice

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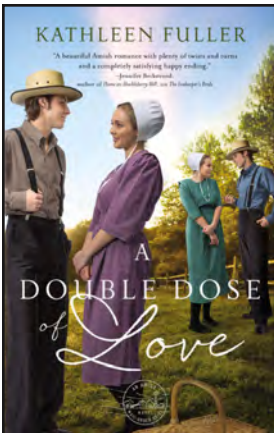
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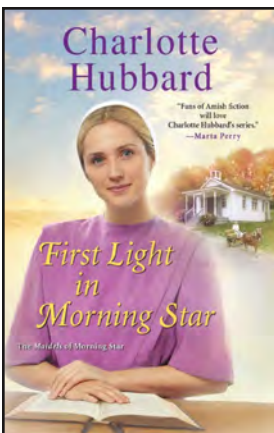
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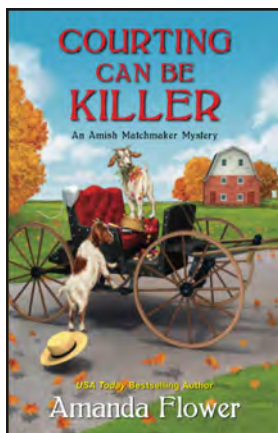
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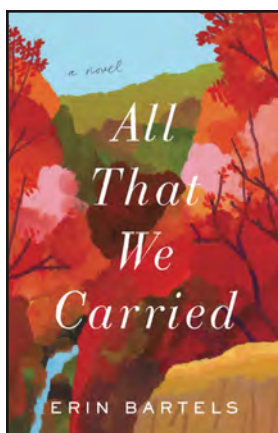
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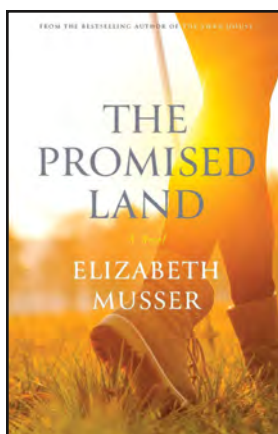
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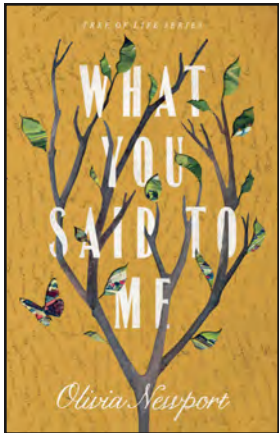
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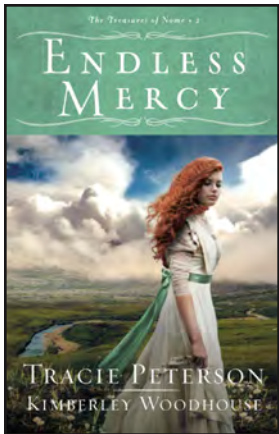
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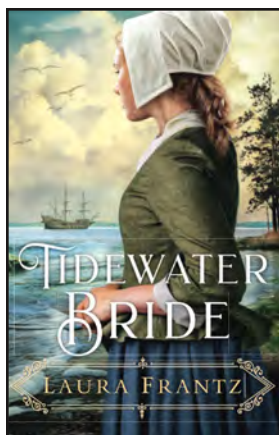
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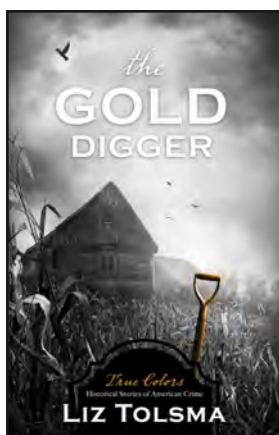
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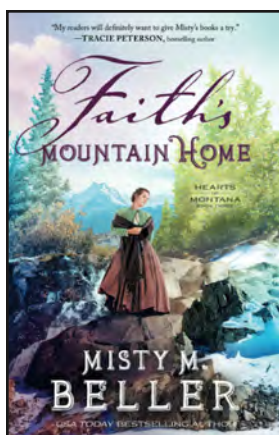
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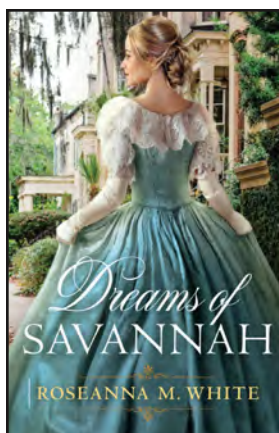
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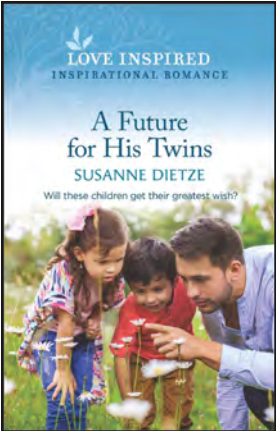
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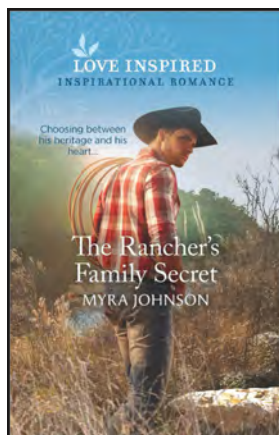
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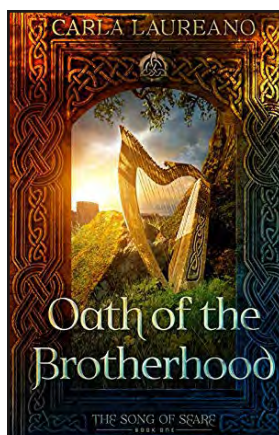
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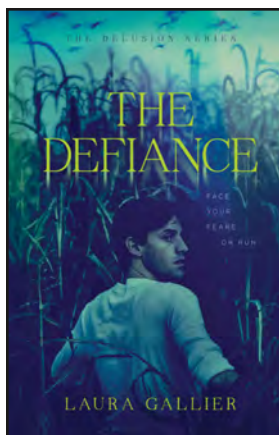
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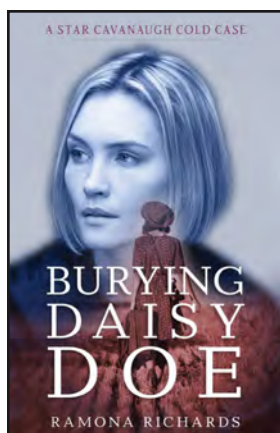
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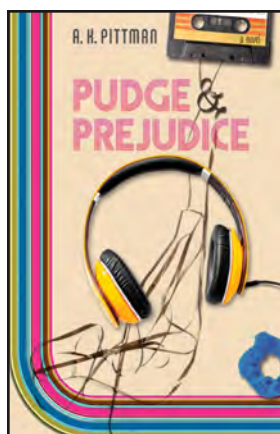
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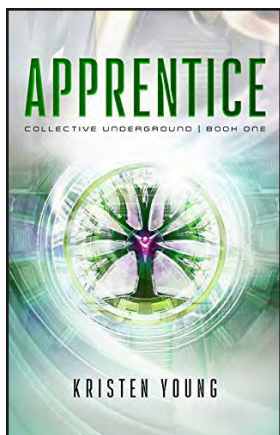
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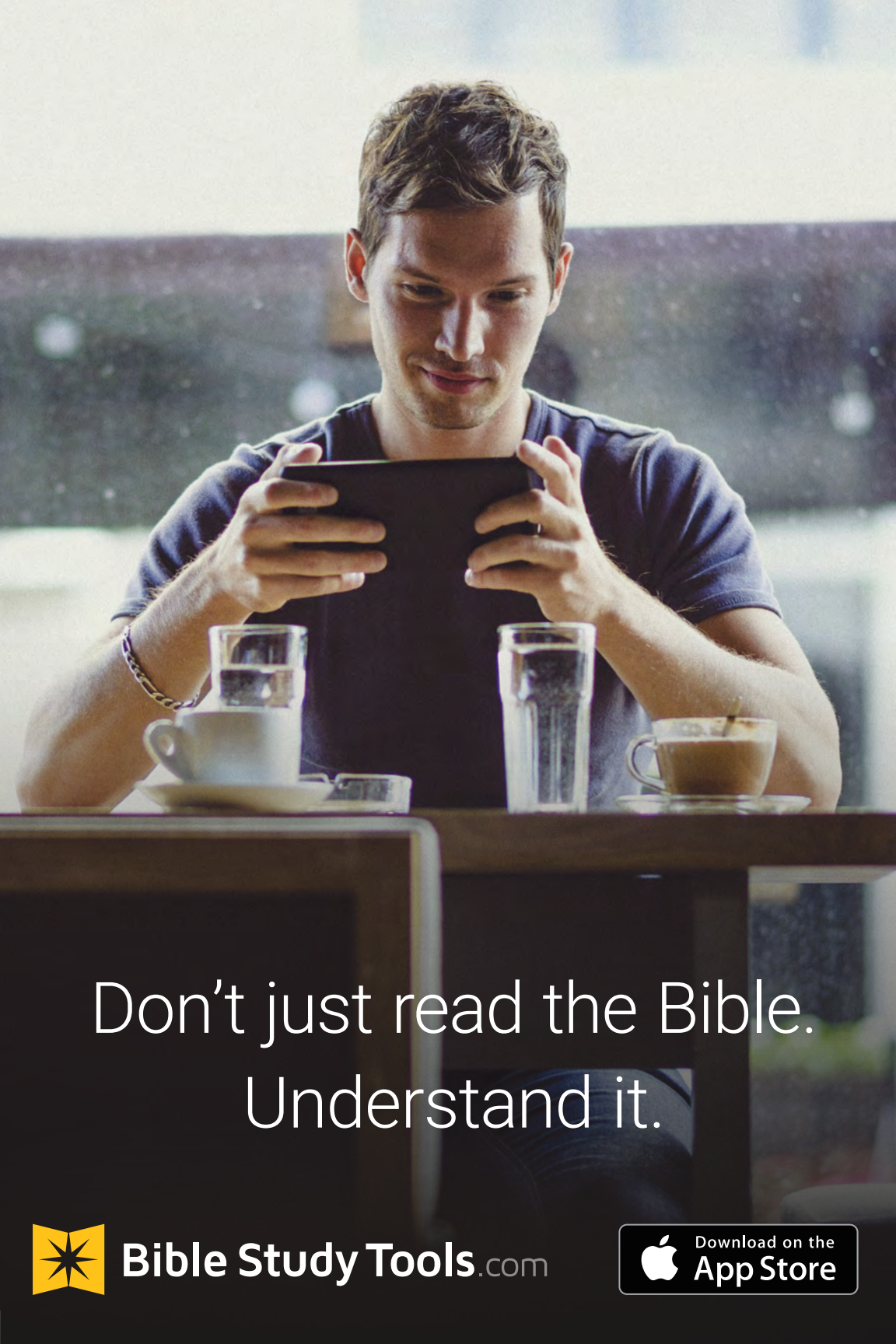
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