

Suspense Author ROBERT WHITLOW

ALSO IN THIS ISSUE:

Beverly Lewis | Brandilyn Collins | Mike Duran Marianne Hering | 30+ New Releases From New York Times Bestselling Author

Wanda & Brunstetter

and Jean & Richelle Brunstetter

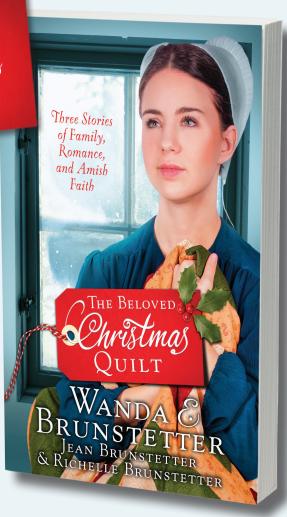
ONE QUILT BINDS

Three Generations

OF AMISH WOMEN

Start celebrating Christmas a little early with this brand-new romance from *New York Times* bestselling author Wanda E. Brunstetter, along with stories by her daughter-in-law and granddaughter. Three generations of Pennsylvania Amish women are bound by an heirloom quilt embroidered with the scripture from Psalm 31:3, as told in three Christmas romances.





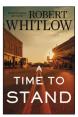
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Features



A Time to Stand, the powerful new release from suspense author ROBERT WHITLOW. explores timely themes of prejudice, justice and faith.



BEVERLY LEWIS looks back on two decades of writing Amish fiction, why her latest novel is set at an Amish bed-and-breakfast, and what she thinks of her status as a best-selling author.

ONE QUESTION:

"How Does Your Faith Influence Your Stories?" See how nine authors answered the question.



Property On the Web: Christian Fiction News Karen Kingsbury, The Hobbit, Because of Gracia, and more.

Genre Spotlights Q&As

AMISH Author Marta Perry HISTORICAL Author Joanna D. Politano **ROMANCE** Author Bethany Turner **SPECULATIVE Author Mike Duran SUSPENSE Author Brandilyn Collins CHILDREN'S Author Marianne Hering**



New Releases & Bestsellers

Amish Contemporary Historical Romance **Speculative**

Suspense Children's **YA/Teens Comics/Animation Movies/DVDs**

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Karen Kingsbury

Karen Kingsbury's Baxter Family returns for In This Moment

A high school principal starts a Bible study to improve the lives of his students, only to become the focus of a lawsuit.

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https://www.familyfiction.com/karen-kingsburys-baxter-family-returns-november-moment

J.R.R. Tolkien

Celebrating 80 Years of The Hobbit

The novel's origins go back to the night when J.R.R Tolkien reached for a sheet of paper and scribbled, "In a hole in the ground there lived a hobbit."

Read more here:

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Because of Gracia

Drama Because of Gracia stars American Idol contestant

As Bobbi and her boyfriend struggle with a life-and-death decision, Gracia gets drawn into a classroom debate about the origins of life.

Read more here:

https://www.familyfiction.com/award-winning-drama-gracia-stars-american-idol-contestant-moriah-peters-chris-massoglia-john-schneider

Patricia Bradley

Patricia Bradley: I kill people nicely

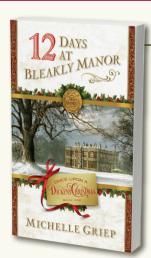
The author talks about her first novel, what she is working on now, and how she got started writing Christian romantic suspense fiction.

Read more here:

https://www.familyfiction.com/patricia-bradley-kill-people-nicely

Gurl Up with a Christmas Romance

Historical and Contemporary Reads to Put You in the Christmas Spirit



12 Days at Bleakly Manor by Michelle Griep

Brought together under mysterious circumstances, Clara and Ben discover that what they've been striving for isn't what ultimately matters. What matters most is what Christmas is all about . . . love.



Colors of Christmas by Olivia Newport

This 2-in-1 story collection from reader favorite author Olivia Newport celebrates the joyful hope of the Christmas season as characters find healing in the midst of heartbreak.





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BESTSELLING ROBERT WITHOR WHITLOW



OCTOBER 2017 | FAMILYFICTION.COM

SUSPENSE: Robert Whitlow

Finding Hope Amid Civil Unrest

The latest novel from **Robert Whitlow** is the legal drama **A Time to Stand** (Thomas Nelson). This ripped-from-the-headlines story challenges ideas of faith and justice. In this interview, the author shares why he wrote a novel that deals with racial prejudice, how he feels about being compared to John Grisham, and how his Christian faith impacts his fiction.

Robert Whitlow's A Time to Stand (Thomas Nelson) is a relevant and gripping novel which challenges readers to ask what it means to forgive while seeking justice. The story was sparked by racially charged incidents in Ferguson, Missouri, in the summer of 2014, and many additional instances across the nation have continued the conversation. Realizing that such topics are often taboo, yet always needed in the social dialogue, Whitlow does not choose sides, but expresses how faith and justice can thrive alongside each other in our world.

"Before writing this book, I looked in the mirror and saw a 61-year-old white man raised in the South. I come from an enlightened home, but that doesn't qualify me to lift my voice above a whisper. Nevertheless, I decided to try and I found out we all have a responsibility to pursue reconciliation while loving others as we love ourselves."

Whitlow's experience as a lawyer in Georgia beginning in the late 1970s seeps into the book in profound ways. Whitlow received his J.D. from the University of Georgia School of Law and served on the staff of the Georgia Law Review. He is a

Robert Whitlow

Southerner who speaks from personal knowledge with a redemptive message of hope.

Set in a small Georgia town, the novel begins as lines are drawn and tensions mount when a young African American lawyer, Adisa, is tapped to defend a Caucasian police officer accused of shooting an unarmed African American teen, who is left fighting for his life. As the case unfolds, everyone must confront their own prejudices. For Adisa, it means seeking counsel from those older and wiser, as well as standing tall to find justice, no matter the price.

"We should always be willing to speak the truth and give every man a good answer when given the chance," said Whitlow. "I hope this book gives readers the courage to do just that."

Robert Whitlow is the best-selling author and director of legal novels and films set in the South and winner of the prestigious Christy Award for Contemporary Fiction. A Furman University graduate, Whitlow received his J.D. with honors from the University of Georgia School of Law where he served on the staff of the Georgia Law Review. A practicing attorney, Whitlow and his wife, Kathy, have four children. They make their home in North Carolina.

Even in this day and age, America still has a long way to go regarding race relations. What inspired you to write a legal novel that deals with racial prejudice?

The ongoing need for racial reconciliation in America subsequent to the events in Ferguson, Missouri. in August of 2014 motivated me to write *A Time to Stand*. The storyline came to me in 2015, while participating in a statewide prayer meeting

Robert Whitlow

in my hometown of Charlotte, North Carolina. For six hours I was surrounded by rich ethnic diversity as thousands of Christians came together to pray and intercede for our city, state and country. The unity present and the respect I felt for those at the rally showed me clearly that the best, deepest and most practical form of racial reconciliation is only possible among believers in Jesus Christ. Pairing a white police officer with a black female attorney in a novel would be a powerful way to communicate this truth.

As a lawyer who writes legal novels, there have always been comparisons with John Grisham. How do you feel when reviewers and readers bring up "John Grisham" when discussing your fiction?

I'm honored by any comparison to John Grisham. I've never met Grisham, but his success caused many publishers to establish a legal fiction writer niche. I'm a beneficiary of that response. Also, it always helps sales when an author is favorably compared with another wildly successful novelist!

What parts of the novel were inspired by real life (either research or experience)?

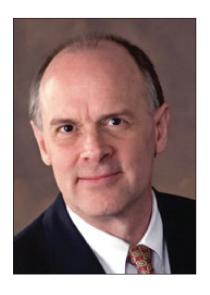
I am a lifelong Southerner who has practiced law for almost forty years in Georgia and North Carolina. Southerners, black and white, are my people. I know them and can hopefully portray them with depth and credibility. I've paid attention to my surroundings throughout my life and draw from many people as inspiration for characters and conduct. Those are my roots. Not much research was necessary.

What do you want readers to take away after reading A Time to Stand?

I want readers to be entertained and encouraged. I want the influence I have on others through my writings to be positive, not negative. I believe without reservation or apology in the power of the gospel to bring genuine peace and reconciliation.

How does your Christian faith impact how you write fiction?

My Christian faith impacts my writing because it's at the core of who I am as a person. Fiction is like a personal testimony. The characters don't argue with the reader, they simply reveal in story form who they are and how what they believe effects the way they live. The characters aren't real; the truth they portray is. **FF**



Robert Whitlow is the bestselling author of legal novels set in the South and winner of the Christy Award for Contemporary Fiction. He received his J.D. with honors from the University of Georgia School of Law where he served on the staff of the Georgia Law Review.

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AMISH: Beverly Lewis

The bestselling author looks back on two decades of writing Amish fiction.

Renowned **Amish** fiction author **Beverly Lewis** has more than 17 million books in print. Her latest novel is *The Proving* (Bethany House). After five years as an Englisher, Amanda Dienner is shocked to learn her mother has passed away and left her Lancaster County's most popular Amish bedand-breakfast. Can Mandy fulfill the terms of her inheritance—or will this prove a dreadful mistake?

In this interview, Lewis looks back on two decades of writing Amish fiction, why her latest novel is set at an Amish bed-and-breakfast, and what she thinks of her status as a bestselling author.

Two decades have passed since you published *The Shunning* (Bethany House), your first Amish novel, and established an amazingly popular genre of fiction. What have the years since taught you?

The reception for my writing has truly exceeded my every hope, and it's humbling to see how popular *The Shunning* remains to this day. Every book I write is for God's glory, as well as about lifting the spirit and stirring the heart. The value of friendship, faith and family; the need for community—these things are universal, and despite their obvious differences, readers from all walks of life relate to my Plain characters.

The Proving is your first novel set in a bed-and-breakfast, and a more charming location than the Butterfly Meadows Amish Inn would be hard to imagine! Are you a frequent guest at B&Bs?

Oh, there's nothing like a peaceful bed-and-breakfast in an out-of-the-way place—the more rural, the better! Setting a novel in a fictional Lancaster County B&B has long held a great deal of appeal to me. And once I conceived of the idea of a daughter deciding to return from the English world to run her mother's cherished inn ... well, I knew I had a real story to tell.

Can you share a little more about the plot?

Twenty-three-year-old Amanda Dienner has lived in the English world for five years, so she is shocked to learn her mother has passed away and left her Lancaster County's most popular Amish bed-and-breakfast. What's more, the inn will only truly be hers if Mandy can successfully run it for twelve months. Despite misgivings, Mandy accepts the challenge, no matter that it means facing the family and the Old Order community she left behind—or that the inn's clientele expect an Amish hostess!

Your stories often feature faith themes. Are there any that stand out to you from *The Proving*?

Forgiveness and reconciliation have been a thread throughout many of my books, and this one is no exception. The need to move beyond a difficult past to find healing and hope is a theme that resonates with so many readers at the heart level.

Another strong theme in this book is the need for courage. Both Mandy and my secondary protagonist, Englisher Trina Sutton, find themselves in a place where they need to step

outside of their comfort zones. When it comes down to it, it's their willingness to do so that sets the story in motion!

Your name makes frequent appearances on bestseller lists like the *New York Times*, and your books have been published worldwide in twelve languages. What do you think of the widespread appeal of your fiction?

Honestly, I still pinch myself! I'm ever grateful for how God has blessed me with the opportunity to share His love through my books; only He could have orchestrated all I've experienced as a writer. Every day I am touched to hear from wonderful reader-friends from around the world. As a storyteller at heart, it's a blessing to have such faithful readers! **FF**



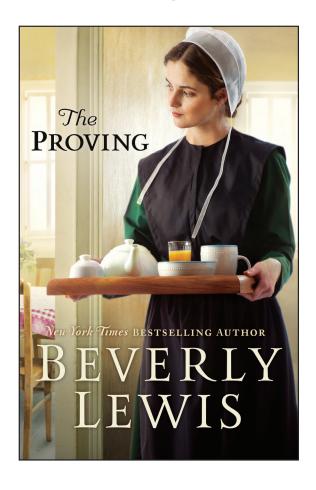
Beverly Lewis is the New York
Times bestselling author of more
than 80 books, with over 17 million
titles in print. Her award-winning
stories have been published in
12 languages. Beverly and her
husband David live in Colorado.

About The Proving

"Mandy, you are to inherit the farm-house, including the business of the inn."

She could scarcely find her voice to respond. "Ach, this must be a mistake," she told him, shaking her head as she talked into the phone, feeling befuddled. "The house... and everything related to the inn... shouldn't that go to Arie Mae?"

After five years as an Englisher, Amanda Dienner is shocked when



her mother passes away, leaving her the Butterfly Meadows Amish Inn. However, she will only inherit the bed-and-breakfast if she can successfully run it for a year. Can Mandy rise to the challenge and fulfill the terms of her inheritance, or will this prove to be a dreadful mistake?

The **PROVING**



BEVERLY LEWIS



a division of Baker Publishing Group Minneapolis, Minnesota

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How does your faith influence how you approach writing your stories?



Billy Coffey [Contemporary]

The choice every writer has going into a book is to tell a good story about how we're all different, or a great story about how we're all the same. My faith tells me that deep down, we're all the same. That's why so many of my characters are ones lost looking to be found and ones broken looking to be made whole, because that's

all of us at some point. The grace they find is the grace available to us all.



Carrie Turansky [Historical Romance]
My faith is central in my life, and I hope it shines through in my writing. I like to give my characters issues and struggles that are common to many of us, and then I ask how God would help them overcome those challenges. I hope people will enjoy reading Shine Like the Dawn and feel as though they've been swept away to

Edwardian England, but I also hope they will be challenged to explore what it means to forgive and reflect God's mercy to those who have hurt them in the past. Those are lessons that touched my heart as I wrote this story, and I trust they will touch my reading friends too.

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Barbara Cameron [Amish]

I like writing Christian fiction that inspires and gives hope. I don't like reading a story that does what I call *Bible thumping*, so my message is quiet but I hope meaningful. I am most influenced by a message that doesn't hit me over the head, so I try to write a story that way.



Mary Manz Simon [Children's]
My personal mission is to put Godhonoring products into the hands of children and their families. I am thrilled God opened the door to create Where Does Love Hide? with the Tyndale team. I love this book and hope others do too!



Carolyne Aarsen [Romance]

Every story I write is about a character's growth. They start out in a position that is not healthy. They need to change but either they can't or don't know how or don't have the support system in place to facilitate that change. At any rate, the events of the story will force that to happen. And often, a huge part of that transformation has to do with their relationship with God. It's broken

and needs to be fixed. The story is as much a journey of their faith as it is a journey of their growth as it is a romance. I'm always very thankful that writing for Love Inspired, I've been able to and am encouraged to incorporate my faith into the stories I write.



Angel Moore [Historical Romance]
My faith is such a part of me that it flows
naturally onto the page in all of my books.
I write stories of faith and hope. My faith
doesn't keep me from having problems;
it gets me through them. I want to share
that with readers.



Samuel Parker [Suspense]
I think as a writer, you need to employ all aspects of your thought process to execute a good story. Nothing should be held back or reserved whether that is memory, ambition, beliefs or doubts.

I also think those same thought processes are constantly growing and changing, evolving and eroding, and so to be conscious of that constant flux

and to infuse that into a story brings it to greater life. My beliefs as a child are different than where I am now, just as assuredly as my 80-year-old self will be different. Being comfortable with that idea allows me to pose bizarre questions and carry them to what are, hopefully, interesting and suspenseful conclusions.



Carol J. Post [Romantic Suspense]
I know there is evil all around us, and I try to portray these elements realistically, but without unnecessary violence. I've read some things that are too graphic and disturbing (in secular books), and that is something I avoid in my own writing. I want to give my readers an engaging, tense read, not nightmares!

In writing Christian characters who face these dangerous situations, I know fear is a natural response, in spite of faith. When the killer is creeping ever closer to my heroine's hiding place, her heart is pounding (and mine is too). A silent *God help me* is realistic. I've even had a non-Christian or backslidden character bargain with God.



Brenda Minton [Romance]
My faith is an integral part of who I am and how I live my life. In my stories I want the faith aspect to be organic and not preachy. I hope it shows in how the characters approach even their fictional lives, the way they treat others and how they overcome obstacles.

Amish Marta Perry

The latest **Amish** romance from **Marta Perry** is **Second Chance Amish Bride** (Love Inspired). Caring for her late cousin's young kinder is Jessie Miller's duty—even if it means seeing their father again. In this Q&A, the author shares how she approaches writing about the Amish, and the most challenging part of writing the story...



What were your goals writing Second Chance Amish Bride? When I began writing Second Chance Amish Bride, I wanted to tell a story about forgiving, especially about the need to accept God's forgiveness for past mistakes. Since the Amish take very seriously the duty of forgiving others, I thought it would be touching to explore how an Amish person might deal with the idea of accepting forgiveness for oneself. It seems to me that many of us find it easier to forgive others than to forgive ourselves.

How do you approach writing about the Plain people in a way that's accurate to their way of life?

Because I am of Pennsylvania Dutch descent and grew up knowing a number of Plain people, I feel I have a head start on understanding the Plain sects. I've always lived in areas where there were either Old Order Mennonites or Amish, so I've developed my stories along the lines of the specific groups I know best.

Pennsylvania Amish can be different from Ohio Amish or the Amish in other states, and they can also be different from one group to another, so all of my stories are set in the kind of communities I know best—those that have grown primarily as

daughter settlements of the Lancaster County Amish but have developed some customs of their own. When I'm writing in the voice of an Amish person, I try very hard to look at everything in the story world as that person would, not as I would.

What can you tell us about the main characters?

Both Jessie and Caleb in my story are confronted with issues of forgiveness and trust, though in very different ways. In a sense, each of them is the only person who is really fitted to push the other into recognizing and changing the flaw in his or her inner self. To me, that is what makes a strong love story—the sense that this is the one person God created who can bring about the other's change.

What was the most challenging part of writing the story?

I found it very challenging to find a way to present Caleb's initial reactions to Jessie in a way that wouldn't lose the reader's sympathy for him. I hope I succeeded in showing the reader that although he appears to be angry with and rejecting of Jessie, it's really himself that he's blaming. He's just not ready to accept that until God uses Jessie to show him the truth!

What do you want readers to take away after reading Second Chance Amish Bride?

I hope the readers will take away the recognition that in painful relationships, it's not only necessary to forgive others but to accept God's forgiveness for ourselves. **FF**

Romance Bethany Turner

Turner explodes onto the scene with her debut novel, *The Secret Life of Sarah Hollenbeck* (Revell). Romance novelist Sarah Hollenbeck finds that now that she's a Christian, she can't write the same kinds of books anymore—and the fact that she's falling in love with her pastor doesn't make things any easier.



In this Q&A, the author shares why she wrote about an author, her favorite part of the book to write, and what she hopes readers get out of it...

Tell us a little about The Secret Life of Sarah Hollenbeck.

Sarah is the author of some bestselling romance books that are so provocative and steamy, her name becomes synonymous with the genre. But when Sarah becomes a Christ follower, she must try and maneuver away from her scandalous reputation—easier said than done since the books are still selling like wild-fire, and she's being hounded for the film rights.

Sarah is determined to start a new life in which she can actually spread good and light to the world, but of course the darkness of the past isn't going to go away easily. Things get even more complicated when she begins falling in love with Ben Delaney, who happens to be her new pastor.

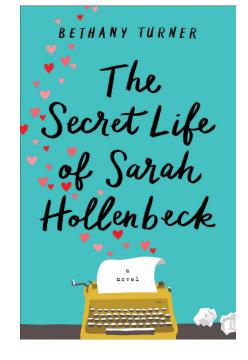
Why did you decide to write about an author?

Writing a book is not an insignificant thing for most people. It's a labor of love, and in most cases authors put so much of themselves into the creation of their work. And then for that

Bethany Turner

work to go on and become a cultural phenomenon—that's a major thing!

I was fascinated by the idea of an author putting in all of that blood, sweat and tears only to undergo a heart-level change that turns the work and all it stands for into an obstacle for the author as she tries to live the life she believes God is calling her to live.



Do you see yourself in Sarah's character?

I do! In so many ways. For one

thing, we can both be counted on to contribute an applicable film or television reference to every situation. And we both believe that almost all things worth knowing can be gleaned from *The Sound of Music*.

But more seriously, although Sarah is a brand-new Christ follower and I accepted Jesus into my heart thirty years ago, we share many of the same struggles in our faith—most notably when it comes to letting go of our hard-won control and letting the Lord take the lead.

What inspired the relationship between Sarah and her pastor? Are you a romantic?

As far as the world is concerned, Sarah's and Ben's careers are on opposite ends of the morality spectrum. I was intrigued by the

Bethany Turner

possibilities that existed as they each attempted to understand the world the other had lived in. In Ben's world, people don't think Sarah is worthy of him; in Sarah's world, it's difficult for anyone to think their relationship isn't either (a) illicit or (b) dull.

I loved creating a relationship that is sexier than you might expect for the pastor and much more innocent and pure than anyone would see coming for the steamy romance novelist. And yes! I am absolutely a romantic! Too much Jane Austen throughout my life has seen to that. (Though is there really any such thing as too much Jane Austen?)

What was your favorite part of this book to write?

I feel okay saying this because my husband is aware of my feelings for my fictional characters . . . I fell madly, deeply in love with Ben Delaney, more than any other leading man I've ever written, and my favorite part of writing this book was watching Sarah fall in love with him as well. Sarah is such a goofball in so many ways, and she just couldn't help but get herself into embarrassing situations and say embarrassing things she didn't mean to say. So that was fun!

But what really made it so great was helping Sarah realize that, with Ben, she didn't have to be embarrassed. He gives her a confidence she's not used to feeling, and it was very powerful for me to watch Sarah grow as a person and in her faith, there in the safe place Ben provided.

What lesson(s) do you hope readers will take away from reading your book?

One thing that was really important for me to communicate was that just because a man and a woman in a romantic relationship have chosen to put their faith and their relationships with the Lord above all else doesn't mean it will always be easy to honor those beliefs and commitments. Ben and Sarah face temptation and find themselves in situations they should have tried harder to avoid.

And I thought it was important that it be reflected every bit as much in Ben's spiritual journey as it is in Sarah's. Sarah's faith is new, but Ben's is not. Not only is he a longtime Christ follower... he's a professional Christ follower! But he's every bit as human and flawed as she is—and as we all are. I believe Christians do a disservice to our faith when we act as if we've got it all under control, rather than keeping our focus on the Savior who wants nothing more than for us to relinquish control to him.

In what way would you say your faith is worked into the book? Sarah is in her mid-30s when she becomes a Christian, and she really does feel as if she's experiencing a rebirth—which makes it all the more jarring for her when her pre-salvation past doesn't go away the moment she says, "Amen."

As I was writing Sarah's story, the Lord was allowing me to experience a bit of a rebirth as well. He led me to give up the career I had devoted my entire adult life to, and in addition to putting wind in the sails of my career as an author, he guided me toward full-time vocational ministry. Though my faith is not nearly as new as Sarah's, I feel like I was given the opportunity to fall in love with Jesus all over again, through Sarah's eyes and my own.

Bethany Turner

This is your first novel.

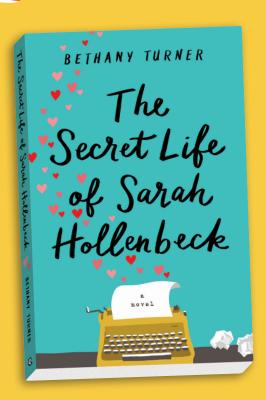
What did you learn about the publishing process as you went along?
I learned that I don't know half of what I thought I knew, but that's okay because publishing is such a collaborative effort.

Whatever I don't know, someone else does!
I also learned that you should never, ever complain (even to yourself) about the moments in the process when you have nothing to dobecause before you know it, the whirlwind will take over!

(I also learned that I love the whirlwind.) FF



Becoming a Christian was the **Gest** and **Worst** thing to happen to Sarah Hollenbeck.



Steamy romance writer Sarah Hollenbeck's career is at its peak, but reconciling her writing with her newfound faith proves more difficult than she imagined—and falling for her handsome pastor doesn't make things any easier.

With a powerful voice, penetrating insight, and plenty of wit, Bethany Turner captivates readers with a debut that isn't afraid to deal with the thorny realities of living the Christian life.

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Historical Joanna D. Politano

Debut novelist **Joanna Davidson** Politano's engaging Victorian mystery, Lady Jayne Disappears (Revell), will delight readers with its highly original plot, lush setting, vibrant characters and reluctant romance. In this Q&A. the author shares how her Christian faith impacted the story, the process of creating the novel's setting, and the



most intriguing thing she learned during her research...

Tell us a little about Lady Jayne Disappears.

This book is the result of asking, "What if an overlooked girl happened to secretly write her family into novels and publish them under a pen name?" Aurelie Harcourt has always created stories, and it's the way she handles life in a home where she does not belong. She is writing the story of her mother, Lady Jayne, and the family that knew her before she disappeared. Aurelie begins digging into secrets and long-ago love stories to understand the people around her, but more than that, to discover what happened to the mother she's never met.

Why did you decide to write about serial fiction? Why do you think it had such a great appeal?

Serial fiction resembles those addictive television shows we all anxiously await each week and then discuss passionately with friends. We become attached to characters and eagerly follow their struggles and victories to a grand conclusion, and workingclass Victorians felt the same way about their serialized novels. Writing about serial fiction allowed me to delve into a charmingly vintage world while also presenting attitudes and circumstances that resemble our modern world, making the story relatable and relevant to our modern faith walks.

How did you develop the setting of the story? Did you visit a mansion that inspired you?

Big old houses are like characters to me. Each has a distinct personality and backstory just waiting for someone to unravel and understand. I've toured, stayed in, and climbed among the ruins of old houses throughout Great Britain, and many of my story ideas come from some unique aspect of a house I saw. I'm deeply fascinated with the people who have resided in these places, and their stories are so full of shadows and interesting corners with dark hallways just beyond. Lynhurst is based on a few different country houses I saw, but most of the layout and character are taken from Tyntesfield in Somerset. It's a lovely old house with a wealth of stories.

What was the most interesting thing you learned while doing research for this book?

Debtor's prison fascinates me. Charles Dickens spent time there when his father was a debtor, and his experiences made it into several of his books. It's such an odd system, jailing people and keeping them from working until they can pay a debt, and my heart just ached for some of the individual stories I read of debtors. The place was run as a business, designed to scrape up anything of value the prisoners had or acquired from visiting relatives, and that still baffles me.

I'm also enchanted by the idea of pen names, which is an element of my heroine's story. The Brontë sisters were famous for using them, and I loved the image of them revealing themselves to their publisher in person, as my heroine does in the opening of this novel. There's also something so captivating to me about a seemingly nondescript person having a sort of secret super power.

Do you relate to Aurelie in any way? Did you have real people that inspired your characters?

Oh yes! Aurelie's writer heart mirrors my own in so many ways. It was easy to create her struggles through writing and everything that hinders it, because they are problems I've walked through countless times. Stories have been a part of my heart and a lens for viewing the world as long as I can remember, just like Aurelie. Her inability to overlook hurting people, her desire to help, and her love of beautiful words are all pages torn out of my own life story. The most similar aspect of her nature, however, is the daughter-heart that looks up to her father as larger than life, painting over all his flaws and embracing him and everything he values. My father is a storyteller and book lover like Aurelie's, and although he does not struggle with the vices that gripped Aurelie's father, he has cultivated a strong father-daughter bond with me. It was easy to wring her heart when it came to her father, because mine is just as dear to me as hers is to her.

What lesson(s) do you hope readers will take away from reading your book?

There is one lesson my own heart has had a hard time learning over the years, and it's the one Aurelie struggles with—if the world fits, you're the wrong size. Just as Aurelie tries in vain to become a part of her wealthy socialite family, most of us have experienced the desire to belong somewhere, even if it was as unhealthy and broken as Aurelie's family.

There's a book I found in college that impacted me on this topic, and years later the truths from it remain with me. It convinced me that if we sometimes didn't fit in to our earthly surroundings, that was all right. In fact, it was a sign we were doing things well. We all know this world is broken and sinful and

messy, so why should we strive to fit into it? The more we resemble Christ, the more we feel at odds in this world. God designed us for a completely different environment that was ruined by sin, and now nothing will ever quite feel right until we're reunited with God and saturated in His presence for eternity.

In what way would you say your faith is worked into the book? As I wrote the book, I wrestled with how comfortable I should be in this world. Was it OK to be bothered by certain things, to be rejected by certain people? Should I seek to be content with what was in reach, or was a certain amount of discontent healthy? As my writer mind walked through this story with Aurelie, my Jesus-seeking spirit was working on realigning my motives and efforts with a larger focus than the here-and-now.

I began to appreciate and even embrace some of the countercultural parts of my personality and thinking as I reminded myself that Jesus was the most countercultural thinker ever! Jesus's answers on success, wealth, priorities and the value of certain people turned His listeners' expectations upside down. The biggest one for me is that last one—the value of people. Why does the world automatically write off certain people? The elderly. The introverted. The homeless. Those who messed up in some way.

I'm infinitely content to be countercultural in this respect, and it's been a passion of mine to reveal hidden value in the people the world so easily sidelines. I bring that into the book through Aurelie—not only does she see value in the debtors, but she herself is written off by her own family and comes to understand how Christ values her. **FF**

Speculative Mike Duran

Christian author **Mike Duran**'s new dystopian thriller **Requiem 4** (Blue Crescent Press) details a war-torn future where scientific exorcists sweep cemeteries of "latent soul energy." However, there's a lot more than just ghosts in Graviton. Can the faith of military chaplain Father Aguste Lax prevail against an evil this ancient? In



this exclusive Q&A, Mike shares why the horror genre is ideal for Christian storytelling, why his novel includes PG-13 content, and how he built the world of his story...

What inspired the story in Requiem 4?

Our culture's continued fascination with ghosts has always interested me, especially in light of our drift towards a secular, materialistic worldview. How does one jibe the belief that everything is just a byproduct of chemical, material processes with a belief that something (or someone) is possibly out there?

Requiem 4 is a take-off of the contemporary "ghost hunter" phenomenon in which I attempt to mesh those two ideas—a materialistic worldview and the possibility of paranormal phenomenon. At bottom, it's a tale about how disbelief in the devil plays right into his hands.

This book includes PG-13 content that would make some Christian readers uncomfortable. (Of course, there are parts of the Bible that are way past "PG-13.") Why did you feel it was necessary to wrap *Requiem 4*'s biblical themes in an "edgier" presentation?

For one, the story is told from the point of view of a military unit and I didn't envision them using the exclamations "darn!" and "golly!" But more than that, I'm aiming the story at mainstream genre readers of horror and military sci-fi, not your typical Christian reader. Readers of those genres are not on the lookout for bad language. Honestly, I believe the realism is necessary to sell the religious themes of the story.

Historically, "horror" fiction is actually a very religious genre. What are the challenges of writing "Christian horror fiction" for an audience that doesn't understand the genre's roots? My going theory is that the most overlooked demographic of Christian reader is also the biggest one—Christians who don't read Christian fiction. In other words, they like stories that contain spiritual and religious themes but they don't require the typical content restrictions.

With that said, I think there's a larger bloc of Christians who DO read and appreciate the horror genre. Personally, I'm not trying to convince Christians to like the horror genre. My hope is that, before we start putting forth blanket condemnations, we take time to understand the religious roots of the genre, biblical themes within it, and the use of horror and grotesque by Christian artists and writers throughout the centuries.

How did you go about building the world of your story?

The story is essentially dystopian. At its heart, I conceived a global network (UniGlobe) that is scrubbing society of religion, class and dissenting discourse. As part of that global indoctrination, I fancied a division of the military called "sciocists," short for "scientific exorcists." The sciocists sweep graveyards to remove latent soul energy, or what UniGlobe labels the particulate quantum residue of a departed person. The graveyards are then plowed under for the Sprawl.

I based many of the components of the science team on existing theories. For example, there has been some speculation that ghosts are explainable via quantum entanglement, that they are actually energy echoes left behind by the deceased. From this, I conjectured devices that both recognize such entanglements and vacuate, or disentangle them.

What do you want readers to take away after reading Requiem 4?

R4 is an extremely cautionary tale about the dangers of embracing a purely materialistic, atheistic worldview. In fact, I open the book with this quote from Cotton Mather: "That there is a Devil, is a thing doubted by none but such as are under the influences of the Devil." That about sums up the gist of this tale. It is a call to arms and a warning about spiritual lethargy.

When it comes to the topic of "horror fiction" with a Christian worldview, you literally wrote the book. What kinds of conversations has your book *Christian Horror: On the Compatibility of a Biblical Worldview and the Horror Genre* (Blue Crescent Press) led to?

Oh, wow. I've received more feedback and encouragement from *Christian Horror* than probably anything I've written. Most of the

feedback comes in the form of Christian writers and readers who feel alienated for being fans of the horror genre. Others have been looking for a solid defense of the genre from a balanced evangelical perspective. Really, the response has been surprisingly refreshing.

What is it about storytelling that makes it such a powerful way to share bigger truths?

I recently finished Professor Holly Ordway's new book, Apologetics and the Christian Imagination (Emmaus Road Publishing). Ordway was an atheist who experienced a surprising conversion, in large part, from reading Tolkien's Lord of the Rings and Lewis' Chronicles of Narnia.

She wrote, "...although I was not interested in Christianity, I had, without knowing it, been experiencing the work of grace through my imagination. As a child and young adult, I read fantasy, fairy tales and myths, and especially fell in love with the Chronicles of Narnia and the Lord of the Rings. I didn't know that I was encountering God's grace through those books, but in fact I was." (p. 9)

Truth is, stories can go places preaching can't. Storytelling is powerful because it engages the reader at a narrative level, allowing truths and images to sneak in past all our censors and self-defenses. Maybe that's why Jesus told so many stories, huh? **FF**

Suspense Brandilyn Collins

The latest thriller from Christian Suspense author Brandilyn Collins is **Plummet** (Stonewater Books). A desperate woman is forced to decide how far she's willing to go to protect her daughter. In this exclusive Q&A, the author explains what inspired this nail-biter, how she creates her characters, and the best way to support your favorite authors



Your thriller Plummet is about a woman who's asked to do a horrible thing—cover up a murder—to protect the life of her daughter. What inspired *Plummet*?

My Seatbelt Suspense® novels typically portray a likable heroine—the "woman next door"—in some serious trouble. In the case of plotting *Plummet*, I had the original idea of a woman forced to help her boss hide the body of someone he's murdered. If she does that, then what? She's trapped with this lie and deed for life

Once I had that basic premise, I built upon it, asking such questions as: What kind of woman would be most vulnerable to this predicament? What would be going on in her life that would compel her to go along with such a terrible thing?

From there I built the character of Cara, a new divorcee who was abused by her father in childhood and then her husband. She's a victim, used to being a victim. Hasn't known how to fight back. Then I upped the ante by giving her a thirteenyear-old daughter who's being bullied and has been suicidal. Now Cara must protect her daughter and teach her how to be

Brandilyn Collins

strong—when she, herself, is anything but strong. Especially after she's allowed her boss to force her into this terrible criminal act. It's a compelling dichotomy.

It's also a tricky premise, because many readers would immediately think, "Well, I would never allow some man to force me to hide a body." But the reader who would think that isn't Cara. I needed to create a character so vulnerable in this situation that she sees no other choice. A character who is believable and empathetic to the reader.

The whole thrust of the book then becomes—what now? There is no good way out of this situation for Cara. And then, of course, being a Seatbelt Suspense® novel, things get worse from there.

As a Christian who writes pulse-pounding suspense, what are the challenges of writing crime fiction from a Christian worldview?

The four-point brand promise of my Seatbelt Suspense® novels is: fast-paced, character-driven, with myriad twists and an interwoven thread of faith. Notice that the faith thread is last. I never sit down to write a Christian suspense around some theme. I want to write a fast-paced, gripping story.

As I write that story, the message of God and His love and mercy begins to emerge, based on whatever the main character is going through. In that way, the theme is not forced upon the story but is "interwoven" into it—a natural progression of what the character learns through her struggles.

Do you base your characters on real people, or are they all made up from scratch?

They are created in my mind. As noted above, they are typically created after I think of the basic premise. I then set out to build characters—especially the protagonist—who would be the most overwhelmed in that particular situation. This creates the highest of stakes for the main character—which then leads to high tension in the story.

What do you want readers to take away after reading Plummet?

There are numerous themes touched on that I'd like readers to think about. One is the vulnerability of someone who's been abused (as in the case of Cara) or bullied (her daughter). Those people have been deeply hurt and need time and God's help to find their strength. The rest of us should help them along, not judge them for what we consider "weakness."

Another theme is God's mercy in all circumstances. I want readers to know they cannot "plummet" farther than God can reach.

What do you consider the best way(s) for readers to support their favorite authors?

Simple. Buy the book—and understand its worth. A novel is a product available after months of very hard and stressful labor. People might buy a \$5 latte and think little of it. And yet they think twice about putting down \$5 for a book that will give them hours of entertainment.

I'd far rather talk about the creative aspect of writing, but the reality is that the author needs to make an income in order to continue those creations. I'm so grateful for my readers, who allow me to keep creating! **FF**



Children's Marianne Hering

Children's author Marianne Hering returns to the world of Imagination Station with Inferno in Tokyo (Tyndale House). Patrick and Beth must help others and survive dangers as they travel through time and space and get caught up in the 1923 earthquake, tsunami and fire that devastated Tokyo, Japan. In this



exclusive Q&A, the author shares what inspired the story's unique setting, the research she conducted, and how she continues to find new adventures for the series...

What inspired you to set this adventure in 1923 Tokyo? I'd been a Toyohiko Kagawa fan for some years. I wanted an exciting setting, so this book came together as Missionary Meets Massive Disaster.

What are the challenges of writing contemporary characters who travel back to a historical event like this?

The only real challenge is the research. Historical writing is difficult. And finding ways young children can interact with adults in other cultures.

What kind of research did you have to conduct for *Inferno in Tokyo*?

A lot. I read several books written by Kagawa. I read entire books about the earthquake. I got floor plans of the Imperial Hotel from a library.

What do you hope readers will get out of *Inferno in Tokyo*? That a person of great compassion can have great influence.

The Adventures in Odyssey series—including all the extensions and spinoffs—has so many stories now. How difficult is it to find something new to write about in this world?

Not difficult at all. With each book I research, I think of several more to do! There's a lot hidden in history that has merit and is worthy of being published. **FF**



A PLAIN LEAVING

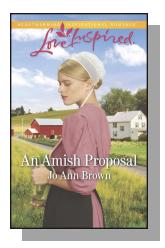
SISTERS OF LANCASTER COUNTY, BOOK 1

Leslie Gould

Bethany House

Amish





AN AMISH PROPOSAL

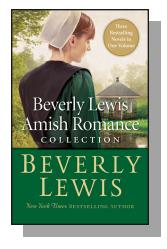
AMISH HEARTS, BOOK 6

Jo Ann Brown

Love Inspired

Amish





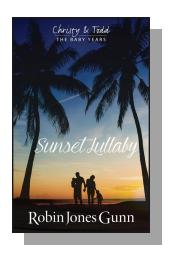
BEVERLY LEWIS AMISH ROMANCE COLLECTION

Beverly Lewis

Baker Books

Amish





SUNSET LULLABY

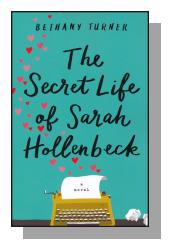
CHRISTY & TODD: THE BABY YEARS, BOOK 3

Robin Jones Gunn

Robins Nest Productions

Contemporary





THE SECRET LIFE OF SARAH HOLLENBECK Bethany Turner

Revell

Contemporary





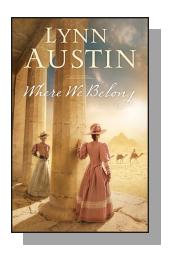
HOMETOWN GIRL

Courtney Walsh

Waterfall Press

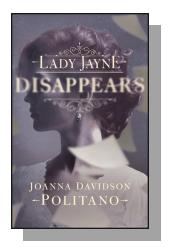
Contemporary





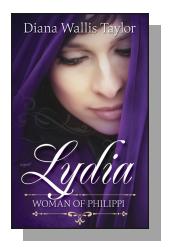
WHERE WE BELONG Lynn Austin Bethany House Historical





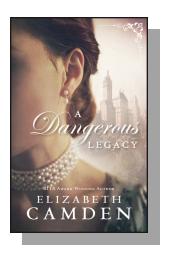
LADY JAYNE DISAPPEARS Joanna Davidson Politano Revell Historical





LYDIA, WOMAN OF PHILIPPI Diana Wallis Taylor Whitaker House Historical



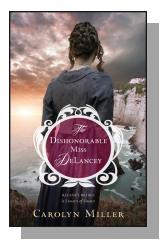


A DANGEROUS LEGACY Elizabeth Camden

Bethany House

Romance





THE DISHONORABLE MISS DELANCEY

REGENCY BRIDES: A LEGACY OF GRACE, BOOK 3

Carolyn Miller

Kregel Publications

Romance





LOVE HELD CAPTIVE

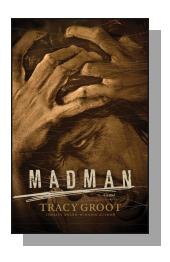
Lone Star Hero Series, Book 3

Shelley Shepard Gray

Zondervan

Romance





MADMAN Tracy Groot

Tyndale House

Speculative





HEIRS OF TIRRAGYL

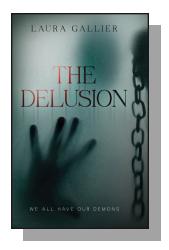
THE POISON TREE PATH CHRONICLES, BOOK 2

Joan Campbell

Enclave

Speculative





THE DELUSION

THE DELUSION SERIES, BOOK 1

Laura Gallier

Tyndale House

Speculative





DANGEROUS ILLUSIONS

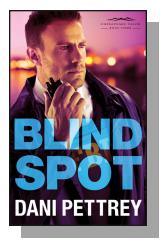
CODE OF HONOR, BOOK 1

Irene Hannon

Revell

Suspense





BLIND SPOT

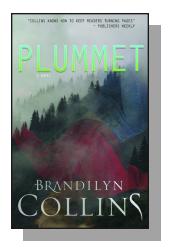
CHESAPEAKE VALOR, BOOK 3

Dani Pettrey

Bethany House

Suspense





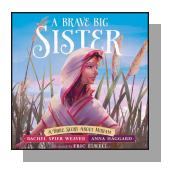
PLUMMET

Brandilyn Collins

Stonewater Books

Suspense





A BRAVE BIG SISTER:

A BIBLE STORY ABOUT MIRIAM

CALLED AND COURAGEOUS GIRLS

Rachel Spier Weaver, Anna Haggard,

Eric Elwell

Harvest House

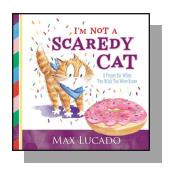
Children's





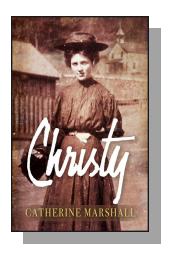
THE MARVELOUS MUD HOUSE: A
STORY OF FINDING FULLNESS AND JOY
April Graney, Alida Massari
B&H Kids
Children's





I'M NOT A SCAREDY-CAT: A PRAYER FOR WHEN YOU WISH YOU WERE BRAVE Max Lucado, Shirley Ng-Benitez Thomas Nelson Children's





CHRISTY 50[™] ANNIVERSARY EDITION Catherine Marshall

Evergreen Farm

YA/Teens





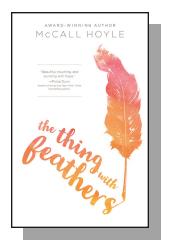
BECAUSE OF GRACIA

Tom Simes

Dexterity

YA/Teens



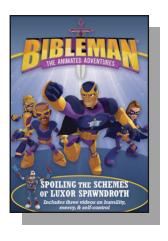


THE THING WITH FEATHERS McCall Hoyle

Blink

YA/Teens



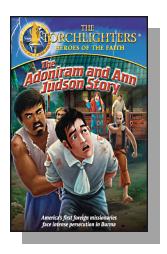


SPOILING THE SCHEMES OF LUXOR SPAWNDROTH: AN ADVENTURE IN SELF-CONTROL (DVD)

BIBLEMAN, ANIMATED ADVENTURES B&H Kids

Comics/Animation





THE ADONIRAM AND ANN JUDSON STORY

TORCHLIGHTERS SERIES Vision Video

Comics/Animation





THE PRODIGAL SON

Charisma House

Comics/Animation





DEBBIE MACOMBER'S MR. MIRACLE

Cinedigm

Movies/DVDs





TWO STEPS FROM HOPE

Bridgestone Multimedia Group Movies/DVDs



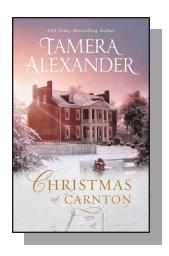


THE UNMIRACLE

Cinedigm

Movies/DVDs





CHRISTMAS AT CARNTON: A NOVELLA

Tamera Alexander

Thomas Nelson Christmas





THE GIFT OF CHRISTMAS PAST Cindy Woodsmall, Erin Woodsmall Stonewater Books Christmas





THE BELOVED CHRISTMAS QUILT: THREE STORIES OF FAMILY, ROMANCE AND AMISH FAITH

Wanda, Jean and Richelle Brunstetter Shiloh Run Press

Christmas

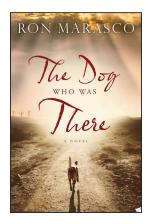


A QUICK LOOK AT SOME OF THE BESTSELLING TITLES FOR AUGUST 2017

HISTORICAL FICTION

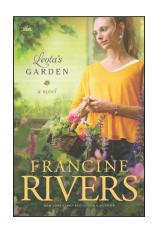
- 1 The Dog Who Was There Ron Marasco Thomas Nelson Publishers
- 2 Bridge to Haven Francine Rivers Tyndale House Publishers
- 3 Ben-Hur Carol Wallace Tyndale House Publishers
- 4 The Advocate Randy Singer Tyndale House Publishers
- 5 The Innkeeper of Ivy Hill Julie Klassen Baker Publishing Group





CONTEMPORARY

- 1 Leota's Garden Francine Rivers Tyndale House Publishers
- 2 And the Shofar Blew Francine Rivers Tyndale House Publishers
- 3 The Shack
 William P. Young
 Hachette Book Group



- **4** Barefoot: A Story of Surrendering to God Sharon Garlough Brown Intervarsity Press
- 5 Chasing Sunsets
 Karen Kingsbury
 Howard Books/Simon & Schuster

ROMANCE

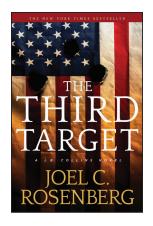
- 1 Love Story Karen Kingsbury Howard Books/ Simon & Schuster
- The Farmers' Market Mishap
 Wanda E. Brunstetter
 Barbour Publishing



- 3 Drawing Fire Janice Cantore Tyndale House Publishers
- **4** Twilight at Blueberry Barrens
 Colleen Coble
 Thomas Nelson Publisher
- **5** Ebb Tide
 Beverly Lewis
 Baker Publishing Group

SUSPENSE/MYSTERY

- 1 The Third Target Joel C. Rosenberg Tyndale House Publishers
- **2** If I'm Found Terri Blackstock Zondervan
- Threads of Suspicion
 Dee Henderson
 Baker Publishing Group
- **4** The Book of Mysteries
 Jonathan Cahn
 Charisma
- 5 Traces of Guilt
 Dee Henderson
 Baker Publishing Group



SPECULATIVE/FANTASY/SCI-FI

- The Screwtape Letters
 C. S. Lewis
 7ondervan
- **2** Hinds' Feet on High Place Hannah Hurnard Tyndale House
- 3 Stepping Heavenward
 Elizabeth Prentiss
 Solid Ground Christian Books
- **4** The Great Divorce
 C. S. Lewis
 7 ondervan
- 5 The Returning Rachelle Dekker Tyndale House

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