

Christmas Author MELODY CARLSON

ALSO IN THIS ISSUE:

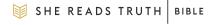
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Features



MELODY CARLSON

Exclusive: Melody Carlson shares about her latest book **The Christmas Blessing**, what she enjoys most about Christmas, and what keeps her inspired as a writer....



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In the mood for some season's readings? Check out more than 30 brand-new Christian books and DVDs that celebrate the joy of Christmas!



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Christian fiction was celebrated in style at the Christy Award Gala. Find out the winners and check out our photo gallery!



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2017 ANNUAL CHRISTMAS GIFT GUIDE

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Author Q&A with
Alena Pitts



YA/TEENS
Author Q&A with
Sara Ella



COMICS/ANIMATION
Author Q&A with
Kingstone Comics'
Art Ayris



MOVIES/DVD Author Q&A with Jonah: The Musical's Katie Miller



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MELODY CARLSON

AUTHOR OF THE CHRISTMAS BUS

THE

CHRISTMAS BLESSING



DECEMBER 2017 | FAMILYFICTION.COM

CHRISTMAS: Melody Carlson

A Yearly Yuletide Treat

Award-winning author **Melody Carlson** has written more than 200 books for teens, women, and children, some of which have even been optioned for TV and film. Her YA novels appeal to teens around the world, and her annual Christmas novellas grow more popular with each passing year. This holiday season, Melody delights readers with **The Christmas Blessing**, a moving World War II-era story about a young woman who finds herself in trouble after her baby's father is shot down in the South Pacific.

In this interview, Melody shares more about *The Christmas Blessing*, what she enjoys most about Christmas, and what keeps her inspired as a writer....

As a child, did you want to be a writer? What is the first thing you remember writing?

I actually was a "writer" as a child. At least I thought I was . . . because from the earliest ages, I attempted to write and illustrate stories. The first thing I recall writing (probably because my mom saved it) was a story about a cat named Muzette that loved to play the piano by running up and down the keyboard in the middle of the night. I typed the story on the old Underwood typewriter that sits on my desk now and illustrated it with pencil drawings, then stapled it together with a foil wrapping-paper cover. I was about 7.



You have been such a prolific author, writing in different genres and for different age groups. What keeps the ideas coming for you? Where do you find inspiration, and what do you do if you are not feeling inspired?

It takes very little to get a story percolating in me. It can be a scene that makes me wonder, a sentence from the newspaper, a vivid dream, a childhood memory . . . and so on. I find inspiration all around me and the challenge is to not try to make

everything into a book. But sometimes, if I've been crunching on a deadline, or life is a challenge, I will take a break and clear my head . . . usually spending some time in nature . . . and wait until I feel inspired. Thankfully, it never takes very long.

What advice would you offer a young writer?

First of all, just write and write—every chance you get. Nothing is lost or wasted (even if it goes into the dumpster). And don't "edit" yourself while you're writing. Just let the story flow from beginning to middle to end. Then when you're done, you can go back and edit. It's much easier to edit a finished story. Also, don't be too hard on yourself. Allow yourself to make mistakes, to take chances, and then keep pressing ahead. Also, keep reading. Study the authors who are already doing it, see what you can learn from them. And don't give up!

What made you decide to do an annual Christmas novella, and what year did you begin?

My first Christmas novella, *Angels in the Snow*, came out in 2002. It was a story about an artist who'd lost her husband and son and was trying to get back to her art . . . and her life. For some reason, it really seemed to connect with readers. At the time, few publishers were releasing holiday novellas, but because it worked, I've done them ever since. I think that makes about 16 books.

Many of your other Christmas novellas are in contemporary settings, but this year's story is set in the WWII era, like your wonderful Mulligan Sisters series. What has inspired you lately to write stories in this period?

You're right, most of my other novellas are contemporary (although *The Christmas Pony* is in the 1930s and *An Irish Christmas* is set in the 1960s). But because I was having such a great time writing The Mulligan Sisters series, I was probably obsessed with the 1940s (an era I wouldn't mind living in). Also, the story I wanted to tell really lent itself to that era. It's amazing the freedom you can have writing a story that has no cell phones or internet interference. Of course, it requires more historical research, but that's the fun part.

Would you tell us a little about The Christmas Blessing?

A young woman is caught in a hard place—she has an infant whose father was shot down in the Pacific in WWII. Jobless and without family support, she seeks out her son's paternal grandparents in Montana, hoping they can help. But they know nothing of her... and her presence isn't exactly welcomed. She makes some difficult choices... and miracles happen.

What do you enjoy personally about Christmas? Do you have any favorite traditions with your family?

I love the general ambiance of Christmas—decorating, music, food, gatherings . . . and I used to "do it all." But as I get older, I feel that the best part is just being with family and friends. I've learned to let some traditions and expectations go and try to just go with the flow. Everyone is much happier (and less stressed) that way. And I remind myself that the first Christmas was relatively "simple."

Can you give our readers any hints about what you are working on now?

I just finished the final Mulligan Sisters book (When We Meet Again) and am now starting a new historical and slightly suspenseful series called Legacy of Sunset Cove that's set in the Prohibition era on the Oregon Coast. I guess I'm still into historical writing.

What are some of your favorite ways to spend time when you are not working?

Besides just kicking back with a good book or enjoying the beautiful outdoors, I love going out in our motor home. Our goal is to travel across the U.S. and meet readers and drop off books in libraries ... hopefully in the not-too-distant future.

What are you most looking forward to in 2018?

I really hope that our life can slow down. We recently "downsized" and it feels like it's taking forever to get settled in, probably because we immediately realized our "downsize" was too extreme and we've been adding on to it. Hopefully we'll get it figured out in the next year. Warning to downsizers: it's more work than you think.

Is there anything I have not asked about that you would like to share with our readers?

They can find out more about me and my books on my FamilyFiction author page (link listed below) or my website—although like all things in my life, it needs updating.

Thank you! FF

Visit her author page at: https://www.familyfiction.com/authors/melody-carlson

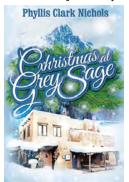


CHRISTMASTIME IS HERE: Christian Books and Movies for the Holidays

By Deb Patterson

This year's holiday season brings a bounty of books and movies ready to bring some yuletide cheer your way. There's something for everyone—romance, suspense, Amish, historical—and even some for the kiddos!

Contemporary



For an inspiring contemporary story, try *Christmas at Grey Sage* (Gilead Publishing) by Phyllis Clark Nichols. A sprawling inn nestled among snow-covered mountains in Santa Fe is the setting of this engaging tale about a group of weary travelers stranded by a snowstorm. Tensions mount as the storm worsens, but as the trapped strangers begin to share stories and secrets, friendships are

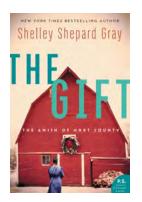
forged and hearts find healing.

Amish

If Amish fiction is your cup of tea, check out these heartwarming holiday reads....



The Beloved Christmas Quilt (Shiloh Run Press) is a collection of three stories written by Wanda E. Brunstetter, her daughter-in-law Jean, and Wanda's granddaughter Richelle. The common thread among the stories is an heirloom quilt with an embroidered Bible verse that brings hope to three generations of Pennsylvania Amish women at Christmastime. New York Times bestselling author Shelley



Shepard Gray gifts readers with a suspenseful Christmastime story in *The Gift* (Avon Inspire), the third book in her Amish of Hart County series. When a series of dangerous "accidents" occurs at the Schwartz family's new farm, it becomes clear that someone wants them gone—could it be the farm's former owners, the Vances? Neil Vance and Susanna Schwartz are drawn together as

they try to uncover the truth before someone gets hurt—or worse.



In Linda Byler's A Dog for Christmas (Good Books), young Amish twins Harvey and Henry adopt a black Newfoundland dog on Christmas day. When tragedy strikes, one twin is left alone and finds comfort in his canine companion. Eventually, Lucky passes away, and the growing young man wonders if he will ever find another friend as faithful and loving.

Even more Amish Christmas goodies...

An Amish Winter (Zondervan)
Amish Triplets for Christmas (Love Inspired)
An Amish Christmas Love: Four Novellas (Thomas Nelson)

Romance

If your taste runs to romance, you might fall in love with one of these....



For suspense at sea, there's *Christmas Captive* (Love Inspired Suspense) by Liz Johnson. When a Christmas cruise wedding is interrupted by kidnappers, Navy SEAL Jordan Somerton and DEA agent Amy Delgado band together to protect the passengers and thwart the criminals' dangerous plot.



Historical romance fans will enjoy Tamera Alexander's Civil War-era *Christmas at Carnton: A Novella* (Thomas Nelson). Recovering from a head wound, Captain Jake Winston reluctantly follows an order to assist with a women's relief society auction. He soon discovers that this bunch of ladies—one in particular—is more than he bargained for.



Dana Mentink brings a little western flair with *Cowboy Christmas Guardian* (Love Inspired Suspense). Widowed cowboy Barrett Thorn feels protective toward Shelby Arroyo after rescuing her from an attack, but will his feelings change after he discovers her secret?



Finally, New York Times bestselling author Cindy Woodsmall teamed up with her daughter-in-law Erin to write The Gift of Christmas Past (Stonewater Books). The romance between teens Hadley and Monroe is shattered when lies and manipulation lead to one of them being arrested. Ten years later, the former sweethearts are thrown together to help a traumatized child.

Will they be able to overcome past heartache and trust each other again?

More romantic holiday reads....

Classified K-9 Unit Christmas (Love Inspired Suspense) A Child's Christmas Wish (Love Inspired Historical) Secret Christmas Twins (Love Inspired) Christmas Ranch Rescue (Love Inspired Suspense) An Alaskan Christmas (Love Inspired) Christmas Bodyguard (Love Inspired Suspense) Mail-Order Christmas Baby (Love Inspired Historical)

Children's

Don't forget the kids! These brand-new titles are full of Christmas cheer:



New from VeggieTales is We Wish You A Merry Christmas! (WorthyKids), perfect for ages 2–5. Larry and the Veggies are having a great time decorating the village Christmas tree. Just when they think they have finished, Madame Blue points out what's missing—a star at the top to remind them

of the night Jesus was born. This book also features a button

kids can press to hear the Veggies sing, "We Wish You a Merry Christmas."



Children aged 4–8 will enjoy *The Legends* of Christmas Treasury (ZonderKidz), a trio of uplifting tales from authors Dandi Daley Mackall and Lori Walburg with illustrator Richard Cowdrey. In *The Legend* of the Christmas Cookie, a boy named Jack

learns to be a cheerful giver. The Legend of St. Nicholas tells of a young man who is moved by the plight of the poor. And The Legend of the Candy Cane reveals the symbolism behind the sweet striped treat.



Based on the animated movie *The Star* from Sony Pictures, *The Star Deluxe Junior Novelization* (Simon Spotlight) will entertain readers aged 8–12. A small but brave donkey and his animal friends tell the nativity story from their own point of view in this charming look at the very first Christmas.

More holiday fun for the little ones....

Snuggle Time Christmas Stories (ZonderKidz) One Christmas Bear (Tommy Nelson) My Merry Christmas (B&H Kids) A Birthday Party for Jesus (Good Books) The Stable Cat's Christmas (WorthyKid/Ideals)

Movies

If you can't get enough Hallmark movies, grab a cup of cocoa and enjoy one of these family-friendly Christmas DVDs:



Based on the same-titled novel by Donna VanLiere, *The Christmas Note* brings a touching story of forgiveness, hope, and redemption. A stressed mom (Jamie-Lynn Sigler) finds a new friend and a renewed purpose in her life when she helps a neighbor solve a mystery.



In *Operation Christmas*, a single mom (Tricia Helfer) is disappointed when her boyfriend (Marc Lucas) is deployed just before Christmas. When she and her children decide to spend the holidays giving back to the struggling families on his military base, they are rewarded in ways they never imagined.



Also worth a mention is the release of the Gold Crown Collector's Edition of November Christmas, starring Sam Elliot and John Corbett. As 8-year-old Vanessa (Emily Alyn Lind) battles a serious illness, her family and the community join forces to give the young girl a holiday season she will never forget.

And a few more heartwarming holiday flicks...

One Christmas Eve (Hallmark)
Faith Filled Christmas (Manifest Pictures)
A December Bride (Hallmark)
Finding Father Christmas (Hallmark)
Debbie Macomber's Mr. Miracle (Hallmark)

Find more Christmas books and DVDs here:

the https://www.familyfiction.com/genre/christmas

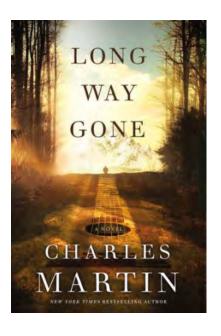


2017 Christy Awards

Charles Martin's novel Long Way Gone (Thomas Nelson) was honored as the Book of the Year at the 2017 Christy Award Gala, Christian fiction's premier awards ceremony. The event, presented by the Evangelical Christian Publishers Association (ECPA), and hosted by New York Times bestselling author Karen Kingsbury, author and singer/songwriter Andrew Peterson, and author and radio host Chris Fabry, was held November 8 at Lipscomb University in Nashville, Tennessee.

Chris Fabry also took home Christy Awards in two categories: Short Form for *Looking Into You* (Tyndale House) and General Fiction for *The Promise of Jesse Woods* (Tyndale House).

Here is the full list of awards handed out at the ceremony:



Book of The Year Long Way Gone Charles Martin (Thomas Nelson)

Historical Romance (TIE)

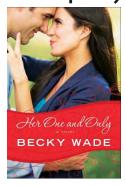




A Note Yet Unsung Tamera Alexander (Bethany House)

The Lady and the Lionheart Joanne Bischof (Mason Jar Books)

Contemporary Romance



Her One and Only Becky Wade (Bethany House)

Short Form



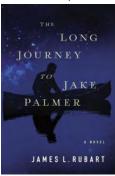
Looking Into You Chris Fabry (Tyndale House)

Historical Fiction



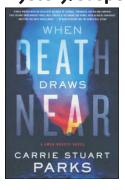
The Mark of the King Jocelyn Green (Bethany House)

Visionary



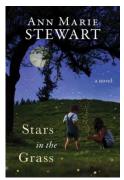
The Long Journey to Jake Palmer James L. Rubart (Thomas Nelson)

Mystery/Suspense/Thriller



When Death Draws Near Carrie Stuart Parks (Thomas Nelson)

First Novel

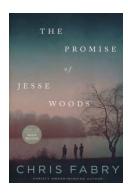


Stars in the Grass Ann Marie Stewart (Barbour Publishing)

Young Adult



The Silent Songbird Melanie Dickerson (Thomas Nelson)



General FictionThe Promise of Jesse Woods

Chris Fabry
(Tyndale House)

The Christy Award Gala also celebrated the 50th anniversary of the novel *Christy*, the award's namesake, which has just been re-released through Evergreen Farm, an

imprint of Gilead Publishing. The evening capped off two days of events that helped inspire, train, and encourage those established in the publishing industry as well as those aspiring to break into the market as writers or business leaders.

PubU: The Art of Curation was held as a training and networking event for Christian publishing professionals.

The Art of Writing Conference was created to build community and explore the leading questions and pressing issues facing creators and curators.

"We are thrilled with the tremendous response we received to these three writing and publishing events," said Stan Jantz, executive director of ECPA. "So many talented writers, along with members of the professional publishing community, have reinforced our belief that the art of storytelling is more important than ever. We congratulate this year's ten Christy Award winners and look forward to another year of incredible storytelling."

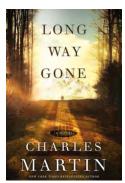
Sign up for award and event updates for the 2018 program at ChristyAwards.com, where complete information can be found. **FF**

Photos courtesy of Kristen Fields & the ECPA



Chris Fabry accepting for his two wins: General Fiction, *The Promise of Jesse Woods* and Short Form, *Looking Into You*

"I was surprised and overjoyed that both books were chosen for the Christy Awards. I was so happy for the team at Tyndale who helped me craft the stories. Honestly, because the characters are so real to me, I felt so happy for them—Matt and Dickie and Jesse and Treha. As a writer you want your stories to be 'seen' and winning a Christy helps in that process."



Charles Martin, author of Long Way Gone

"I'm honored The Christy Awards graciously declared Long Way Gone their '2017 Book of the Year.' When my editor called to tell me, I scratched my head and I thought, 'Look what God did!""



Ann Marie Stewart accepting her First Novel win, Stars in the Grass

"In even being nominated, I felt my agent, publisher, and editors had been validated. I was encouraged as an author to continue writing words that tell a story of grace, redemption, and reconciliation. Mostly, it thrills me to bring glory to God and comfort to those who might find their lives turned upside down and need to see stars in the grass. God can do so much more with our words than we can ever imagine.""



Jocelyn Green accepting her Historical win, The Mark of the King

"I was utterly surprised and so honored to receive the Christy Award for The Mark of the King. All of the finalists in every category are so deserving. It was a joy to be present at the Gala not just for the awards, but to be part of a community that celebrates and contributes to excellence in Christian fiction."

Photos courtesy of Kristen Fields & the ECPA



Tamera Alexander accepting for her Historical Romance win, A Note Yet Unsung

"Winning the Christy Award for A Note Yet Unsung, a Belmont Mansion novel, is especially meaningful because the novel contains two very special 'threads' for me. First, as I wrote A Note Yet Unsung, I included an Appalachian subplot as a kind of "ode" to Catherine Marshall's Christy—a novel I first read over thirty years ago. A novel that had a profound effect on me. So it was deeply gratifying for A Note Yet Unsung to win the award named after the author who so influenced my writing early on. And that we celebrated the 50th Anniversary of that renowned novel on the night of the Christy Awards was special too! In addition, I included a poem—'The Last Load'—in this novel that was written by my dear late father-in-law, Dr. Fred Alexander, in honor of his own father. Fred and I always talked about writing something together, yet never quite found the right opportunity. Fred went home to Christ in January 2016. But as I was writing A Note Yet Unsung (and when a character's father asks him to retrieve a piece of paper from a top dresser drawer), Fred's poem is what that character withdrew. I didn't see it coming. But I'm betting Fred did! The poem is included in the novel, the same poem that my husband, Joe, read at Fred's memorial service. As I said when I held the first author copy of A Note Yet Unsung... "Well, Fred, we finally wrote something together!"



Melanie Dickerson accepting her Young Adult win, The Silent Songbird

"I was so thrilled to win the Christy Award for The Silent Songbird. It was a highlight moment and something I'd dreamed of for a long time. It was extra special to have several of my best friends there, the Thomas Nelson team, and Beth Moore, since I've been through at least ten of her very intense Bible studies, which have meant so much to me in my walk with the Lord."



Joanne Bischof, author of *The Lady* and the LionHeart

> "It was an overwhelming joy to win a Christy Award and all the more thrilling to get to tie alongside Tamera Alexander. To have my new editor at Thomas **Nelson** accept the award on my behalf, and on the behalf of a book that was independently published, was an honor that I'll never forget."

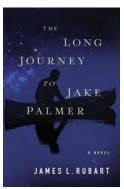
Christy Awards

Photos courtesy of Kristen Fields & the ECPA



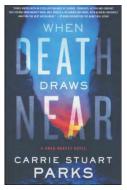
Becky Wade accepting her Contemporary Romance win, Her One and Only

"At the Christy Awards ceremony, they read the opening line of each winning book before announcing the book's title and author. That's such a fun way to present the award, because as soon as Mesu Andrews began reading Her One and Only's first line, I recognized it. While she was finishing the sentence, I was sitting in my seat thinking, Oh my goodness! That's my book! I was surprised and delighted to win a Christy. To have my work recognized by people involved in the business of Christian publishing is a huge encouragement."



James Rubart, author of The Long Journey to Jake Palmer

"Winning a Christy? Wonderful.
Surreal. Affirming.
All at the same
time. To realize my
novels affect readers at a deep heart
level is incredibly
rewarding."



Carrie Stuart Parks, author of When Death Draws Near

"Winning the prestigious Christy Award was a shining moment in time that I'll always treasure. With such awesomely talented authors in the mystery, thriller, and suspense category, I am humbled, honored, and blessed to have won."



Chris Fabry with Stan Jantz, Executive Director, ECPA

ON THE WEBSITE

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Lord of the Rings

Tolkien's son retires, opening door to Amazon's 'Lord of the Rings' TV series

Television adaptation to explore new storylines preceding J.R.R. Tolkien's *The Fellowship of the Ring*.

Read more here:

https://www.familyfiction.com/tokiens-son-retires-opening-door-amazons-lord-rings-tv-series

Karen Kingsbury

Liberty University announces Karen Kingsbury Center for Creative Writing

In Kingsbury's interactive courses, students are trained to cultivate their gifts as writers and to express their faith in creative and original ways.

Read more here:

https://www.familyfiction.com/liberty-university-announces-karen-kingsbury-center-creative-writing

Netflix "Messiah"

Netflix partners with Roma Downey, Mark Burnett for "Messiah"

New series will detail the world's reaction to a man who claims to be the Messiah...

Read more here:

https://www.family fiction.com/netflix-partners-roma-downey-mark-burnett-messiah

JellyTelly

JellyTelly creates new children's book imprint

JellyTelly Press will offer a range of children's books, Bibles, and family devotionals for a variety of ages.

Read more here:

https://www.familyfiction.com/jellytelly-creates-new-childrens-book-imprint-faithwords

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FAVORITE THINGS

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SPECIAL ADVERTISING SECTION

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The She Reads Truth Bible lives at the intersection of beauty, goodness, and Truth. Featuring devotionals by the She Reads Truth writing team, and Scripture reading plans that include supplemental passages for deeper understanding, this Bible invites every woman to count herself among the She Reads Truth community of "Woman in the Word of God every day." The She Reads Truth Bible also features 66 key verses, artfully lettered to aid in Scripture memorization, exclusively designed maps and charts as well as five beautifully designed cover options. Watch videos and learn more at SheReadsTruthBible.com

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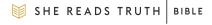
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- 66 illustrated key verses
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- Twenty sermon outlines both in Spurgeon's own handwriting and typed out
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2017 CHRISTMAS GIFT GUIDE



Books That Celebrate Christ's Love

From Tommy Nelson • www.TommyNelson.com

My Christmas Prayer

By: Amy Parker

9780718099527 - **\$8.99**

New from award-winning author Amy Parker, My Christmas Prayer is a shiny, foil-embellished board book shaped like a Christmas gift that features playful puppies getting into the holiday spirit. Boys and girls will love the playful art and the simple message that Jesus is God's gift to us.

One Christmas Bear

By: Anne Vittur Kennedy

9780718090142 - \$8.99

Count the joys of Christmas with Christmas Bear and his arctic friends in *One Christmas Bear*, the new holiday-shaped board book for toddlers and preschoolers by Anne Vittur Kennedy.

Really Woolly Christmas Blessing

By: Bonnie Rickner Iensen

9780718097417 - **\$9.99**

Christmastime is full of God's wonder and blessings! Celebrate all the excitement of the season with our favorite lamb, Really Woolly. Sweet rhyming text, prayers, and Scripture about the greatest gift of all, the birth of Jesus, make this the perfect Christmas gift for your favorite little one.

Jesus Always: 365 Devotions for Kids

By: Sarah Young

9780718096885 - **\$15.99**

From the bestselling author of Jesus Calling® Embrace the true meaning of Joy with the young believers in your life in Sarah Young's newest 365-day devotional, Jesus Always: 365 Devotions for Kids.

I'm Not a Scaredy-Cat (Picture Book)

By: Max Lucado

9780718074913 - **\$16.99**

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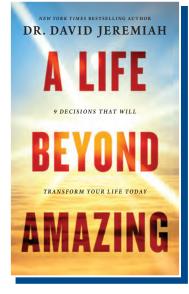
A LIFE BEYOND AMAZING Dr. David Jeremiah

How would you describe your life? Good? Great? How about amazing?

A Life Beyond Amazing uncovers God's strategy for change and challenges you to make nine important decisions that will transform your heart, your life, and your world.

Bestselling author Dr. David Jeremiah presents the case that God calls us to a life of love and joy and peace. God's definition of a life beyond amazing also includes a life of endurance, compassion, generosity, integrity, humility, and self-discipline.

If you read the New Testament, it becomes very evident that God's intention for His Children is that they not only live a good and godly life, but a life full of meaning.



Dr. David Jeremiah is greatly burdened for people who live below the joy and fulfillment God intends. He believes an unfulfilled life is no way to exist. It was this concern that led him to write A Life Beyond Amazing: 9 Decisions That Will Transform Your Life Today.

In his book, study guide, and subsequent teaching series, he points us to Scripture promising us a life of blessings beyond our comprehension—a life beyond what we think might be possible.

He says, "A life beyond amazing doesn't have to start when we step into heaven. A life beyond amazing can be lived right here on earth!"

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NEW FROM DR. DAVID JEREMIAH

LIVE LIFE BEYOND WHAT YOU THINK IS POSSIBLE

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In A Life Beyond Amazing, Dr. David Jeremiah focuses on nine qualities that compose a life-beyond-amazing. He unpacks what it means to become the people God wants us to be and explores how the Holy Spirit helps us to develop these qualities in our lives.

"A life beyond amazing doesn't have to start when we step into heaven," says Dr. Jeremiah. "A life beyond amazing can be lived right here on earth."

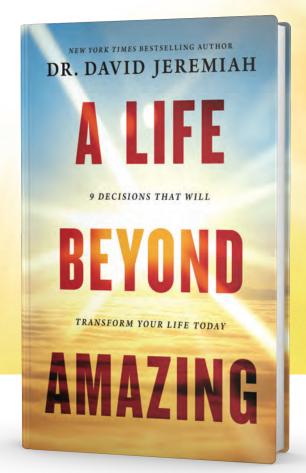
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Amish Kate Lloyd

A Letter from Lancaster County

(Harvest House) is the first release in Amish author **Kate Lloyd**'s **Lancaster Discoveries** series. Two very different sisters, each dealing with personal challenges and regrets, struggle to find hope and reconciliation. In this exclusive Q&A, Kate gives the inside scoop on her study of Plain people,



traits she shares with her characters, and what she hopes her readers will gain from this engaging story.....

What were your goals writing A Letter from Lancaster County?

As a fiction author, I strive to entertain and inspire my readers. Without an investment in the story and characters, my reader is apt to skim through to the last page or maybe even close the book. I do so love a novel with a satisfying ending—my objective from the first page. Although sometimes my characters seem to have minds of their own and take the story on a new track, which is fun. I am intrigued with relationships and family dynamics. This story of two sisters begged to be written!

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

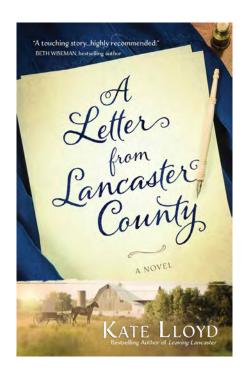
The main characters in this novel are English or Mennonite rather than Amish, although several Amish play important roles. I've done extensive research on the Amish, including traveling to Lancaster County, Pennsylvania, often. I have visited Young Center for Anabaptist and Pietist Studies at Elizabeth College, I correspond with the generous staff, and regularly read Amish-written publications. My husband and I enjoy seeing Mennonite relatives, and I am a member of the Lancaster Mennonite Historical Society.



I've been told by Amish readers that they enjoy my books. Before turning in my first Amish manuscript to my former publisher, I prayed to meet Amish people who would read it first. God answered my prayers in the form of an Amish couple and a lovely Mennonite woman. Each gave me the thumbs up, and the Amish couple has become close friends. We pray for each other daily and my husband and I visit them whenever in Lancaster County.

What can you tell us about the main characters?

My two main characters are English sisters from Seattle on a roller-coaster journey toward reconciliation. Both of them could tell you plenty about what's wrong with the other, and they often wonder how they got saddled with spending this time together in Lancaster County. One character trait they share in common is that their faith lies shallow. I didn't become a Christian until age 30, and I enjoy writing about people's journey to know Him as their heavenly Father.



What was the most challenging part of writing the story?

My biggest challenge was keeping the tension between the two sisters without annoying my readers. And also, to give each sister a unique voice. They are purely fictional, yet all of the characters embody some of my personality traits. Even the men.

What do you want readers to take away after reading A Letter from Lancaster County?

I would be thrilled if my readers take away the knowledge that no matter the obstacles, fam-

ily members can forgive each other. Healing is possible through forgiveness. Also, that the Lord is merciful and available for a relationship the moment we reach out to Him. **FF**

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Contemporary Katherine Reay

INPSY winner Katherine Reav has just released her new novel, **The Austen Escape** (Thomas Nelson). After years of following her best friend's lead, Mary Davies finds her future changed forever after a whimsical trip back to Jane Austen's Regency England. In this exclusive interview, Reay discusses her admiration for Austen's



work, the inspiration behind The Austen Escape, and how the story's main characters challenged her.

What fascinates you about Jane Austen's work and the Regency era?

I think Austen was brilliant. One may like her writing or not enjoy it at all, but there is an undeniable brilliance to her work. She pinpoints human nature with unerring accuracy and gets to the measure of a person in a single line. Consider Darcy's statement in Pride and Prejudice: "I was given good principles, but left to follow them in pride and conceit..." She lays out, on deep level, Darcy's childhood and perception of his place in the world. Or take a look at Austen's opening to Persuasion: "Vanity was the beginning and the end of Sir Walter Elliot." She summed up that poor man in single sentence.

In fact, Austen's writings remain so influential that a 2013 study found her works to have the greatest influence on modern authors, and another study found her word choice to be outside the general selection used in literature during her lifetime and in ours. She wrote in gradations, often employing words like very,

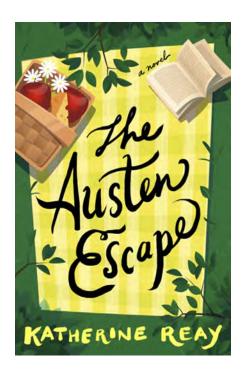


muchly, and most. We aren't trained to write that way, but we do think that way. We often think in comparisons, even subconscious ones. I also love how she moves her characters through their story. Seismic shifts happen in small spaces. All in all ... brilliant.

You ask about the Regency era too ... Oddly, the Regency era has not gripped me as it has captivated others. Austen wrote contemporary novels, examining the culture and socio-political landscape around her. I like thinking of her novels in that context and only turned to the Regency era as the ideal form of escape for Mary and Isabel. I also loved how transitioning these two women to that era played into our modern appropriation of Austen and the world in which she lived.

What inspired the story in The Austen Escape?

Inspiration from *The Austen Escape* came from many places. One primary source was a C.S. Lewis novel and the other was



a nonfiction book positing on how we become our best selves. The latter book was a mathematical study of Christianity's growth worldwide and the unique set of attributes of those who said they were most fulfilled in their faith.

It started me thinking about what a search for one's "best self" might look like. How do we become our best selves? Mary emerged in my imagination as a young woman who had so much going for her, yet had allowed others to define her—

and yet there was something more, something new, in store for her if she could just reach for it. And once I had Mary, Isabel soon followed....

How is *The Austen Escape* similar to or different from your previous work?

The Austen Escape, for me, is the capstone for my first five novels. Each is a unique story with no crossover, but—as I say—they sit well on a shelf together. They all make overt allusions to classic literature as a common language, both between the characters and between the book and the reader.

My next novel's heroines will be a little older (though not older than *The Bronte Plot*'s 85-year-old Helen) and there will be more subtle literary references. I'm excited for the next phase

Katherine Reay

and so delighted that *The Austen Escape* provides a wonderful conclusion to the first.

What was the most challenging part of writing this story?

Isabel. She has such depth to her and a complexity that I had to lay out without letting her steal Mary's show. You want to dislike her—and she deserves your ire. She does some horrible stuff to Mary, her supposed best friend. But she's so hurt and so vulnerable, that you begin to understand why Mary makes allowances for her and why you, the reader, need to as well. And yet.... She too must take responsibility and step out of old patterns if she's to find her "best self."

What do you hope readers will take away after reading *The Austen Escape*?

The story presents a fun fresh way to look at one's woman journey for self-definition, love, and her best future—with lots of winks to classic literature and Dr. Seuss. My hope is that within this fun atmosphere, readers to find a sense of hope and an excitement for what may lay ahead for them. I think we often let outsiders—work, friends, family, history, and experiences—define us. But "something new" is waiting if we have the courage to leap.

I also hope readers enjoy a journey outside their own lives and their own towns—to come away, as if from a lovely vacation, fully believing that one such as Mary exists and that an imaginary visit to Regency England was just the thing to do for a few hours. **FF**

Historical Jane Kirkpatrick

The latest historical novel from *New York Times* bestselling author **Jane Kirkpatrick** is *All She Left Behind* (Revell), based on true events. In late 19th-century Oregon, young mother Jennie Pickett faces an uphill battle as she pursues her dream of becoming a doctor. In this exclusive Q&A, Jane shares fascinating facts from the true



story that inspired the novel, why she loves writing about strong women, and how her own faith is reflected in this intriguing drama....

Tell us a little about All She Left Behind.

It's a book I've been thinking about for 20 years. Jennie is so little known, in part because her husband was so prominent, but she made a difference in her own right. She wanted to be a doctor but it was a long journey of overcoming challenges before she hung out her shingle, working with women and children.

Why did you decide to write about the life of Jennie Pickett? When I learned that she was one of the first women to graduate from a medical college in Oregon I was intrigued. As I explored more, I realized she attended college after she was the mother of three children! This was highly unusual for a woman, let alone a wife and mother. I wondered how that dream was nurtured through the years and how she overcame the barriers.

You generally write stories about strong women of the West. Why and when did you decide to start writing about these women?

Way back in 1995! I always loved biographies but there weren't many written about women. Then I learned about this fascinat-

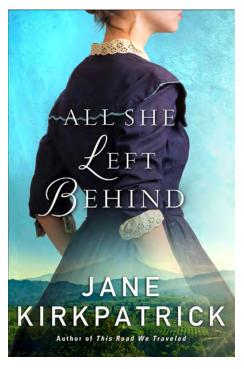


ing woman who lived and worked with an Indian tribe that I also lived and worked with. I couldn't find information about her—only her husband, brother, and father, and if she had sons, I know I'd have learned of them too. But women's history is often lost.

Because I couldn't find letters or journals or newspaper accounts, I thought of her life as "reflected" in the lives of the men who surrounded her. I interviewed descendants of both the tribe and her and began to piece together a remarkable life. I knew I'd need fiction to discover who she really was—and who so many women were whose history must be as Virginia Woolf said, "both invented and made up." It turns out these lost women were both strong and courageous in their ordinary days and are inspirational for our lives today.

What was the most interesting thing you learned while researching Jennie Pickett's life?

The degree to which alcohol use and abuse damaged the lives of settlers, and how women and children were especially nega-



tively affected. I also found it interesting that medical students usually "read" with a physician for a year or more before attempting to enroll in medical school, which was usually two years long followed by a year of surgery study, usually back east. Becoming a pastor—which Jennie's husband was—took six or seven years, but perhaps work with the soul is more complicated than work with the body. At least Jennie thought so.

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

That some things are worth doing regardless of how they turn out. And also that even though we may not heal the troubles in our own family, that should not deter us from following God's call in our lives to work to heal the lives of others.

In what way would you say your faith is worked into the book?

As a former mental health professional whose family struggled with substance abuse and other family challenges, I often thought I "should" be able to fix things; after all, I'm trained! But my faith tells me that I can only do what I'm called to do, and God provides the healing. I think Jennie came to understand that as well.

A second insight came with the realization that Jennie didn't practice very long, but that does not negate the power of the influence she had in part because she listened to that call and followed it. In my own life, I took a risk because I thought God was asking me to do something that didn't seem realistic. And my life changed forever because I trusted. It was stepping out onto a cloud of faith believing I wouldn't fall through. Jennie's journey reminds me of that faith.

What are you working on next?

It's the story of yet another fascinating woman, Carrie Strahorn. She came from a wealthy family and married a printer who then took her from Illinois to the wilds of the West. Together they traveled fifteen thousand miles by stage on behalf of the railroad to identify potential town sites and promote land buying to populate those seemingly remote places.

She wrote a memoir, and it was the happy-happy presentation of those adventures that intrigued me because there must have been some rough times. I've ridden in a stage, and it is not pleasant! So, what was really going on between the lines? That's my working title: Between the Lines. I wanted to explore their relationship and what eventually was the triumph of her life.

How can readers connect with you?

Visit me on my website and contact me there. Also, please sign up for my monthly e-newsletter, called "Story Sparks," which contains words of encouragement. I'm also on Facebook and Twitter, though I confess I'm more active on the former than the latter. I also lead retreats, speak at various events around the country, and would love to meet readers face to face. My schedule on the website will tell people where I'll be next. Thank you so much for your interest! **FF**

Romance Sarah Loudin Thomas

The latest from Christian author Sarah Loudin Thomas is the nostalaic historical romance, The Sound of Rain (Bethany House). Drawn together in the wake of a hurricane that changes Myrtle Beach forever, Judd and Larkin come to realize that it may take a miracle to keep them together.



Here, Sarah reveals why she chose her

story's dramatic backdrop, how a frightening real-life incident inspired her opening scene, and an exciting collection coming in 2018....

After wrapping up the Appalachian Blessings series, how did vou decide what would come next?

I thought it was time to add a little variety to my Appalachian setting. I lived near the coast of South Carolina for ten years and loved the idea of taking a mountain man and dropping him into that hot, sandy landscape. It let me use my own experience of trying to adjust to a different climate and way of life. Neither Judd nor I ever got used to how hot it would stay all summer, even in the middle of the night. We also share a deep appreciation for Southern cooking!

The Sound of Rain begins with your hero nearly dying in a mine cave-in. What was it like writing that scene?

The first pages of the story are drawn directly from my greatuncle Harry's experience as a coal miner. He would often tell the story of being trapped in a mine with that boot pressed against his cheek—although his language was more colorful than Judd's. Hearing him talk about his brush with death certainly captured my imagination when I was a child. It also convinced me that I never wanted to step foot in a mine myself!



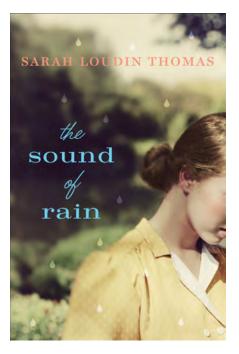
Hurricane Hazel provides a turning point in the novel. Why did you include this catastrophic event?

My first job out of college was doing public relations for the Myrtle Beach Area Chamber of Commerce. I learned a fair amount of coastal history and was impressed with the way Myrtle Beach came to be the tourist destination it is today, largely because Hurricane Hazel wiped the slate clean in 1954. Prior to that, Myrtle Beach was a relatively quiet seaside community. After Hazel, there was literally nothing left to hinder beachfront development. Except for the Pavilion, of course, which fit right in with hotels, restaurants, and shops. This beach music mecca weathered the storm—much as Judd does in the story—a little the worse for wear but still standing.

Larkin is somewhat naïve in her notion about helping the "backward" people of Appalachia. What attitudes do you run into about the region?

I hear a lot of West Virginia jokes when I tell people where I'm from and where I set my stories. Of course, the best defense is to know more—and funnier—jokes than anyone else. I'm well

Sarah Loudin Thomas



aware that much of Appalachia faces serious challenges and has for generations. I hope my books highlight some of what's wonderful and special about the region: the strength and perseverance of the people, their willingness to lend a helping hand, their pride (which can also be a shortcoming), and their love for the land. I don't want to paint an unrealistic picture, but I do want to shine a light on the beauty of the people and the place itself.

What's next for you?

In 2018, I'll be partnering with three Bethany House authors to put together a novella collection that will trace a century or so of one particular family. A piece of jewelry links all the stories together, and each author is focusing on the generation that ties into her genre. Kristi Ann Hunter will start us out in 1827 England, with Karen Witemeyer tackling Texas in 1890. My story is set in 1950s West Virginia, and Becky Wade will close us out with a contemporary tale in Washington. It's the first time I've collaborated with other authors, and it's been so much fun. Writing can be solitary, so having others invested in my story has been a delightful experience. **FF**

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Speculative Nadine Brandes

A Time to Rise (Enclave) is the conclusion to speculative author Nadine Brandes' exciting dystopian trilogy, Out of Time. Battling the corrupt and powerful Council, a one-handed Radical and a scarred ex-Enforcer seek to destroy the projected Wall once and for all and bring peace to their world. In this Q&A, Nadine discusses her goals



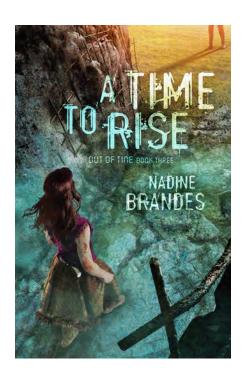
for this trilogy, her world-building process, and the challenge of writing fantasy stories with a biblical worldview....

What can you tell us about the world of the Out of Time series?

Well, since I invented it, I can tell you whatever you want to know...down to the tree species and technology behind medibots. (wink) But I'll spare you for now and just say that the Out of Time Series is set in a world where everyone has a Clock telling them exactly how long they have to live. It digs into this idea of whether or not we'd live any differently if we knew the day we'd die.

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

A lot of my world is built off of advanced technology, so I basically devoured Ted Talks, research articles, and newspapers for every breakfast when writing this book. With each new location or city, I had to ask myself what their technological strength (or weakness) was, and then built their culture off of that.



What were your goals writing this trilogy?

I started writing this trilogy as a personal journey—to challenge myself to live with intentionality and awareness that my time is not in my hands. I guess God wanted the rest of the world to be challenged, too, because He took me on this road of publishing.

What are the challenges of writing something "fantastical" while keeping it within a biblical worldview?

My biblical worldview will make m writing. My writing process is

its way naturally into anything I'm writing. My writing process is too centered around my relationship with Christ and my faith for it to come out without a reflection of that worldview. But sometimes it can come off forced or "preachy," and the challenge is adapting that worldview so that it stays true to Christ, but also so it flows naturally with a new setting.

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

Hope. With so many dystopian series that I've read in the past, I set down the final book feeling hopeless and heavy. That inspired me to write a dystopian series that showed how hope can still exist even in dark times. So my prayer is that everyone walks away from A Time to Rise feeling hopeful and inspired to live with deeper intentionality and with a deeper pursuit of Christ. **FF**

Suspense Dani Pettrey

The latest romantic thriller from Christian author **Dani Pettrey** is *Blind Spot* (Bethany House). Sparks fly between an FBI agent and a beautiful FBI crisis counselor as they race to stop a terrorist plot. In this exclusive Q&A, Dani shares the theme of this gripping novel, what she admires about her hero and heroine, and the exciting projects she is working on now....



Can you share a little about yourself?

My husband Mike and I have been married 25 years. We have two beautiful daughters, two adorable grandsons, an awesome son-in-law, and a 120-pound Newfoundland puppy that looks more like a bear than a dog, but has the sweetest temperament ever.

I've been writing for 14 years, published for seven, and my 10th book will release in July 2018. I love hiking, kayaking, traveling, and the beach, and I am always in search of the world's best iced mocha. I love connecting with readers, so please drop by my website and say hi!

Can you tell us a little about Blind Spot?

Blind Spot features federal agent Declan Grey and crisis counselor Tanner Shaw as they face one of the greatest terrorist threats to America since 9/11.

What do you love most about Declan and Tanner?

I love their passion for fighting injustice, their desire to help those hurting and in need, and their deep-rooted faith in God.

Dani Pettrey



They are people of character trying to make a difference in a world where they face fierce opposition, and it's only through the Lord that they are able to overcome and prevail.

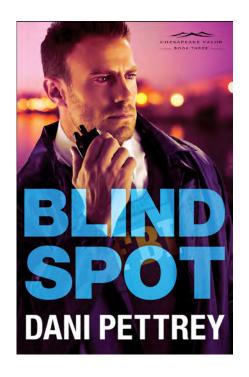
What's the theme of Blind Spot?

I don't set out to write a story with a particular theme in mind. Rather, I sit down and write the story the Lord lays on my heart, and then I look back and discover the common theme running throughout the characters' journeys. Hope is the theme of *Blind Spot*. Hope in friendships, family, loved ones, and, most important, hope in Christ and all that we have in and through Him and His constant presence and love.

Your heroine, Tanner Shaw, works to combat human trafficking and continues to help victims make new lives for themselves in the aftermath. How does she handle such darkness and evil in the world?

Tanner's hope and faith in God, and in His calling on her life, equips her to break the atrocious chains of bondage for victims

Dani Pettrey



of human and sex trafficking. Her faith sustains her through the darkness, and the battle is worth every scary situation she encounters, even if just to help set one woman free.

What are you working on now? What can readers look forward to next from you? I'm currently working on two projects. I'm in the revision process for book four of the Chesapeake Valor series, Dead Drift, which will release in July 2018. I'm also extremely excited to be partnering again

with Dee Henderson and Lynette Eason on a novella collection.

When those projects are complete, I will dive into my new series, Coastal Guardians, which features Coast Guard Investigative Service special agents and is set in coastal North Carolina. I'm thrilled to be able to bring new characters and new settings to my readers in the coming year. **FF**

NEW FROM DR. DAVID JEREMIAH

LIVE LIFE BEYOND WHAT YOU THINK IS POSSIBLE

Each of us has just one life to live. Our lives should count. They should matter, have purpose, and, frankly, they should be amazing. But as we look around, we see people living in defeat, in disarray, and deeply disheartened.

In A Life Beyond Amazing, Dr. David Jeremiah focuses on nine qualities that compose a life-beyond-amazing. He unpacks what it means to become the people God wants us to be and explores how the Holy Spirit helps us to develop these qualities in our lives.

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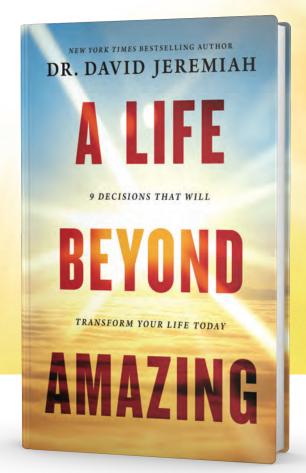
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Genre Alena Pitts

At just 13 years old, **Alena Pitts** already has quite the resume as a model, actress (War Room), and published author. She and her mother Wynter (founder of the ministry For Girls Like You) co-wrote the Lena in the Spotlight series, part of Zondervan's **Faithgirlz** line. In this exclusive interview, Alena reveals the inspiration behind the



popular series, why it was fun to work with Mom, and what she hopes readers will take away from book three,

Day Dreams & Movie Screens

What inspired you to start writing stories at such a young age?

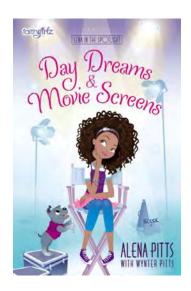
I've always loved to inspire and encourage, specifically young people my age. I have a great imagination and make up stories all the time. So after praying about it with my family for a couple months, I got an offer to write a trilogy! It really was just a huge example of how God hears your prayers and knows your wildest dreams. He often has a much bigger plan than you can ever imagine!

Where did you get the idea for the Lena in the Spotlight series?

I got the idea for the Lena in the Spotlight series from my life. The series is really just a fictionalized version of my life.

What do you hope readers will get out of your book Day Dreams & Movie Screens?

What I hope readers will retain from reading *Day Dreams & Movie Screens* is: Allow God to take control! He's got you in his hands.





Sometimes that means you have to adjust and step out of your comfort zone, but in the end it is all worth it. God knows exactly what He's doing and just asks you to trust him. All He needs is your obedience!

What is the best thing about co-writing the series with your mom?

I really feel like I got to learn more about my mom while writing this series with her. My mom is a published author also, so I got to see what she does day in and day out and how she comes up with ideas to write about. I got to see how much hard work it takes but how amazing it turns out in the end. She is a big role model for me, for sure.

How do you manage to juggle being a published author, a model and an actress with school and a regular life?

I get this question a lot and lately I've really realized ... I don't! I have

amazing parents who guide me through it. It definitely gets really busy, but I rely on God. I want to follow his will for me—no matter where that leads me! **FF**

Genre Sara Ella

Sara Ella burst onto the YA scene in October 2016 with her debut novel Unblemished (Thomas Nelson), the first book in The Unblemished Trilogy. Nominated for a 2017 Christy Award, Unblemished is a suspenseful urban fantasy that explores themes of self-image, good vs. evil, and the power of the marginalized to change the world.



Book two, Unraveling, released in July 2017, and book three, *Unbreakable*, releases in May 2018. Here, Sara shares her thoughts on the power of storytelling, why her heroine's story needed to be told, and what readers can expect next....

How do you get into the mindset to write for the YA audience?

I'm a reader. I love young adult stories. All my favorite books are about young adults. I think that's where it started. Stories about teens are highly relatable. Those are the years I remember most. Trying to fit in and figure out who I was and who I wanted to become.

For me, getting into the YA mindset is sometimes easier than fitting into the adult mindset. All the emotions and struggles and questions from those years are still clear in my heart and mind. I write about those experiences because I think they're still relevant to all ages, which is probably why the YA audience isn't comprised of teens alone.

What inspired you to write a character like Eliyana, and why do you think it's important to tell her story?

In today's culture, social media is flooded with the filtered and

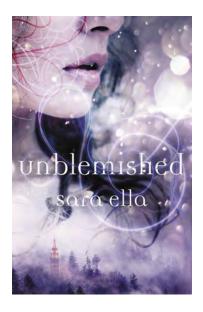


the photoshopped. I've struggled with self-image issues my entire life. My skin was never clear enough. My hair was never the right shade of blonde or brown. I'm too short. Too sensitive. Too everything I didn't want to be.

I think, now more than ever, we're constantly bombarded with images we compare ourselves to. We feel the need to use apps to get clearer skin or a more enhanced makeup look. Eliyana is the worst and best version of myself. Everything she feels about herself—ugly, worthless, nothing—are things I have felt. And everything she desires to become is all I hope to be. I wrote her story because I wanted to inspire myself and others to realize that who they already are is amazing. Other's words don't define us, and, sometimes, our greatest flaws can actually turn into our greatest strengths.

Which character surprised you the most as you wrote *Unblemished*, and how?

Oh, that would definitely be Ky. He certainly took over in a way I never expected. I tried to keep him in the neat little villain-



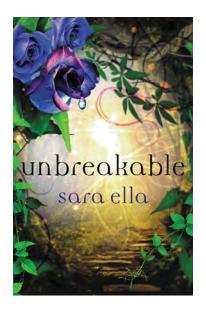


sidekick corner I created for him, but he just wouldn't stay put. Writing Ky taught me what it means to have a truly character-driven story. While plot is important, I believe no plot could ever stand without real and relatable characters. Ky broke out of his planned mold and took over, and I'm so glad he did. The series wouldn't be the same without him as he is now!

Why do you think that storytelling is such a powerful way to communicate truth?

Reading is one way many people cope with real-life situations, and storytelling is very much the same for a writer. *Unblemished* isn't just some random story I came up with for the fun of it, or even because I thought it would sell. Eliyana's journey is the story of my heart. All the emotions she feels are my own. Grief, heartbreak, first love, overcoming fear—these are truths and experiences I have faced.

Storytelling is a way of working out my own feelings, while also relating to others on a deeper level. It's a way to say, "Hey, I get it. I've been there. I understand." I hope the truths I have discovered in my own life and put on the page will come through and touch



the lives of my readers. Their letters and notes encourage me every day to keep writing stories like Eliyana's.

What do you hope readers take away from Unblemished and from The Unblemished Trilogy as a whole?

I would love for readers to come away with an understanding of selfacceptance. It's okay to be different. We're all unique, and each of us has beauty and talent to share with the world. The flaws we see in ourselves

may just be the things about us others wish they had. You never know who you might inspire by just being you. Don't be afraid of who you are. Because who you are is beautiful.

Could you tell us what readers can expect from book three, *Unbreakable*, without giving away any spoilers?

Readers can expect more of the girl we love to hate, Ebony Archer. They can also expect to travel to the Sixth and Seventh Reflections (and beyond). Without giving too much away, I'd say you can look forward to some healthy sibling rivalry between our favorite guys, battles with light and darkness, and some super fun twists I'm hoping will make your jaw drop

Will you give our readers a hint about what you are working on now?

What a fun question! Let's just say it involves all the things I love—fairy tales, plot twists, swoony boys, strong heroines, and, of course, happily ever after! **FF**

Comics/Animation Art Ayris/Kingstone

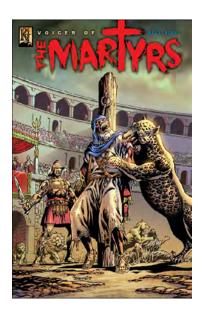
Art Ayris is the founder of **Kingstone**, a multimedia company known for its top-quality Christian comics and graphic novels, as well as animation and film. Last year, the company released the hugely popular Kingstone Bible, a 2000-plus page fully illustrated Bible trilogy. In this exclusive Q&A, Ayris discusses three new Kingstone publica-



tions—Help Me Say Goodbye, a comic book for children dealing with the loss of a loved one; the graphic novel Voices of the Martyrs: A.D.34-A.D.203; and the comic book **Hell**—and reveals some exciting developments happening with the Kingstone Bible....

The topic of Help Me Say Goodbye might seem like a somber topic for a comic book. What inspired the idea to create this comic, and what kind of response is it getting now?

Every comic has a story. Literally. A man who owned six funeral homes and who is a big fan of Kingstone had been pestering me for several years about doing a grief comic, because there was nothing like it for kids he had seen in the funeral industry. As a pastor and a former children's pastor, I knew that grief was something that parents often struggled on how to communicate with their children. He said he would fund it if we would just do it, and we did. It has been very well received in both secular and sacred markets. In fact, they are developing a special insert to put into the comic for funeral homes to use for families.



Moving on to *Voices of the*Martyrs: A.D. 34 - A.D. 203.... Why this anthology? Why do you believe it is important for these stories to be revisited at this time?

I think most modern Christians have a lack of understand of the times around Justin Martyr, Perpetua, and others. Personally, it really helped me with perspective. We felt very humbled to tell their stories.

Is there anything you learned while researching this anthology that particularly affected you?

They honestly were ordinary people who did extraordinary things. Their steadfastness and humility in living for Christ were very inspirational.

Comics are such a visual medium; what are the challenges of tackling an abstract topic in a way that still takes advantage of what's special about the format?

One of the beautiful aspects of comics is the efficiency of the format. You can tell a lot of story in a few panels as the reader seams in and fills in the information between panels. The truncated writing mixed with action describes a lot in a short period of time. Plus, there is a little edge to the whole comic and graphic novel format that plays well into these stories that really do have an edge to them.



Kingstone Comics is one of the only publishers that makes original comics with Christian themes. Why do you think there aren't more publishers making Christian comic books?

That is a good question. I guess they deeply value their sanity. It is a very niche market, so I guess they feel they want to focus on other publishing products. Also, the metrics on comics and graphic novels are tough. They are typically much more expensive to produce than a

traditional print book so the margin of error is pretty slim.

When Kingstone creates new titles, is there a particular reader you have in mind? Or do you just start with what you'd like to see in print and go from there?

Our target market is really boys 12–15 but our spectrum goes far beyond that. Some of our comics (like "Help Me Say Goodbye") are geared to younger children. Our logline is "Ordinary People, Extraordinary Stories," so we like to show what can make us ordinary people extraordinary. We also recently did a comic book called "Hell," aimed toward middle and high school ages, that has been pretty popular. We brought on a guy that had been a top horror artist with Marvel, and he smashed it for us. None of us really like to talk about hell, but the Bible sure doesn't flinch from it, so we tried to address it in a meaningful and memorable way without being way over the top. Some name Christian leaders have shied away from the biblical stance so we thought we would take a swing. I guess if we are anything, we are unconventional.



What else is happening in the Kingstone world these days?

Interesting you should ask! We have been inundated with languages all over the world wanting the *Kingstone Bible* in their language to explain the Bible. So we started a non-profit, www.comicbiblesociety.org, which offers translated languages free of charge on www.superbible.tv.

I spoke at the Eurasia Media and Distribution Consultation in Europe this year as well as the Global Media

Summit for the largest Bible translation agency, and we keep seeing our language partnerships growing. If you read the "Why Comics" tab at comicbiblesociety.org, you can understand one reason we are passionate about comic book story telling. We also signed an animation agreement on the *Kingstone Bible* with an animation studio. Just as we have produced the most complete graphic adaptation of the Bible ever done, they are producing the most complete animation of the Bible ever done.

And we have some new projects in the pipeline—as always. **FF**

Help Me Say Goodbye was created by Art Ayris (Author), Roger Beyers (Editor), Kelly Ayris (Editor), Rich Bonk (Illustrator), Chris Ivy (Illustrator), Ben Prenevost (Illustrator)

Voices of the Martyrs was created by Art A. Ayris (Author), Kelly Ayris (Editor), Danny Bulanadi (Illustrator), Kyle Hotz (Illustrator), Ben Prenevost(Illustrator), Rich Bonk (Illustrator), Chris Ivy (Illustrator), Mark McNabb (Illustrator), plus Ben Avery (Writer) and Randy Alcorn (Writer)

Hell was created by Art A. Ayris (Author), Kelly Ayris (Editor), Kyle Hotz (Illustrator), Jason Moore (Illustrator), Mark McNabb (Illustrator)

Movies/DVDs Jonah: The Musical

Katie Miller discusses Jonah: The Musical

New on DVD is Jonah: The Musical, the first filmed version of a Sight & Sound Theatres® biblical stage epic. Filmed live in Lancaster, Pennsylvania, this spectacular stage production packs humor, cinematic music, amazing costumes, massive sets—and a breathtaking underwater scene featuring a 40-foot whale with an appetite! In this Q&A, Sight & Sound's Corporate Communications Manager, Katie Miller, fills us in on what it takes to stage such a monumental show and why it has all been worth it

What are the challenges of creating a musical stage production around something as epic as the biblical account of Jonah and the whale?

So many Bible stories have key elements that are huge in scope—a giant whale, the Red Sea parting, Samson's epic collapse of the temple. Creating these effects becomes a challenge for our creative teams—and they love it! The collaboration of our talented employees combined with the integration of cutting-edge technology makes the production of a new show an exciting process!

What all goes into staging something this big?

We have 650 employees between our two locations [Lancaster, Pennsylvania and Branson, Missouri]. Part of what makes Sight & Sound unique is having all the production elements—from initial story concept to final product—right under one roof. Our



productions take about three and a half years from the time our Story Team kicks off researching and writing to the final rehearsals and opening day.

Sight & Sound has been bringing the *Bible* to the stage for 40 years (!). How do you manage to keep the experience fresh for both yourselves and also for an audience that may already know these stories?

The *Bible* is still the best-selling book of all time, and its stories are so engaging and full of adventure and intrigue. There is nothing more energizing to our creative teams than looking at a significant moment and asking themselves "how are we going to do that?" We are thrilled at the opportunity to take a cherished and known story, and highlight pieces that may be surprising to our audiences.

Having Jonah available to watch at home is amazing, but it gives only a taste of the live theatrical event. What is the normal cycle for one of your live shows? Will Jonah continue to be part of your presentation?



Shows premiere for the first time in Lancaster, then travel to Branson and eventually return back to Lancaster. Our hope is to continue to add new shows into our repertoire while continuing to bring the beloved returning shows back to our stages.

What's the most exciting part about retelling the account of Jonah through a musical stage production?

Scenes like the giant ship in the epic storm or going underwater and experiencing the whale are always favorites. But more than that, presenting the message of the story in a way that is meaningful and relevant to our guests is what gets us the most excited. When we hear about families coming together for this shared experience and then going home to read the Scriptures for themselves, we couldn't be more thrilled. **FF**

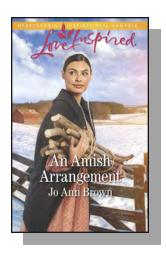
It's not enough to publish a book.

You still need to tell people about it.



Helping You Build Your Author Platform.

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AN AMISH ARRANGEMENT

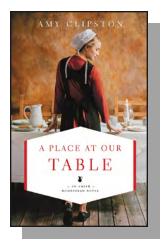
AMISH HEARTS #7

Jo Ann Brown

Love Inspired

Amish





A PLACE AT OUR TABLE

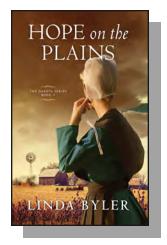
AMISH HOMESTEAD #1

Amy Clipston

Zondervan

Amish





HOPE ON THE PLAINS

THE DAKOTA SERIES #2

Linda Byler

Good Books

Amish





IN THIS MOMENT: A NOVEL

THE BAXTER FAMILY #2

Karen Kingsbury

Howard Books

Contemporary





WELCOME TO WISHING BRIDGE

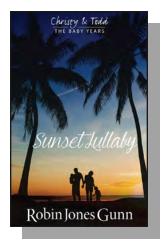
WISHING BRIDGE #1

Ruth Logan Herne

Waterfall Press

Contemporary





SUNSET LULLABY: CHRISTY & TODD THE BABY YEARS

CHRISTY & TODD THE BABY YEARS #3

Robin Jones Gunn

Robins Nest Productions

Contemporary





A SONG OF HOME: A NOVEL OF THE SWING ERA PEARL SPENCE NOVELS #3 Susie Finkbeiner Kregel Publications Historical



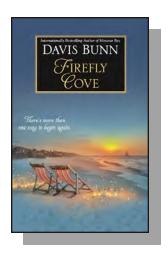


HOLDING THE FORT FORT RENO #1 Regina Jennings Bethany House Historical Romance





THE LADIES OF IVY COTTAGE TALES FROM IVY HILL #2 Julie Klassen Bethany House Historical Romance



FIREFLY COVE

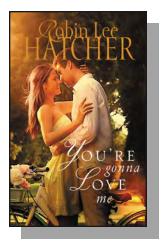
MIRAMAR BAY #2

Davis Bunn

Kensington

Romance





YOU'RE GONNA LOVE ME

Robin Lee Hatcher

Thomas Nelson

Romance





PROBING

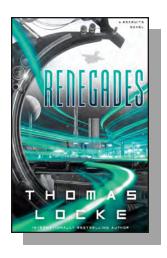
HARBINGERS #3

Frank Peretti, Angela Hunt, Bill Myers, Alton Gansky

Bethany House

Speculative





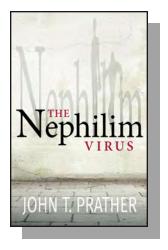
RENEGADESRECRUITS #2

Thomas Locke

Revell

Speculative





THE NEPHILIM VIRUS

John T. Prather

Deep River Books

Speculative





IMPERFECT JUSTICE

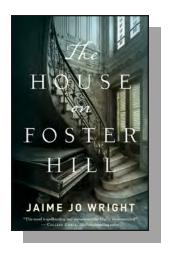
HIDDEN JUSTICE #2

Cara C. Putman

Thomas Nelson

Suspense





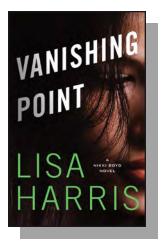
THE HOUSE ON FOSTER HILL

Jaime Jo Wright

Bethany House

Suspense





VANISHING POINT

Lisa Harris

Revell

Suspense





TORA FRIGHT PATCHES THINGS UP: A STORY ABOUT FORGIVENESS

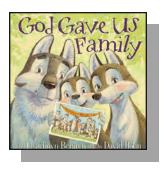
Prayer Monsters

Tracey Madder, Bonnie Pang

Tyndale House

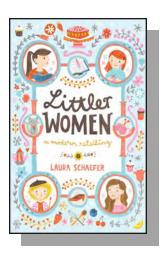
Children's





GOD GAVE US FAMILY Lisa Tawn Bergren, David Hohn WaterBrook Children's





LITTLER WOMEN

Laura Schaefer
Simon & Schuster/
Paula Wiseman Books
Children's





AWAKENED

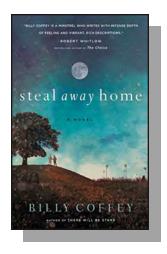
THE SOUL CHRONICLES #2

Morgan L. Busse

Enclave

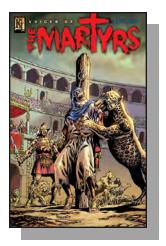
YA/Teen





STEAL AWAY HOME Billy Coffey Thomas Nelson YA/Teen





VOICES OF THE MARTYRS: AD 34-AD 203

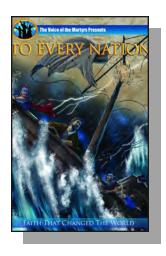
Art Ayris
Kingstone Comics
Comics/Animation





HELP ME SAY GOODBYE
Art Ayris, Rich Bonk,
Chris Ivy, Ben Prenevost
Kingstone Comics
Comics/Animation





TO EVERY NATION

THE WITNESSES TRILOGY #3
Vision Video

Comics/Animation

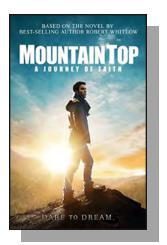




ON WINGS OF EAGLES

Sony Pictures Home Entertainment Movies/DVDs





MOUNTAIN TOP

Cinedigm

Movies/DVDs

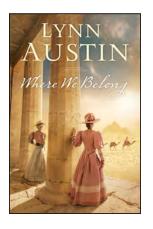




A QUICK LOOK AT SOME OF THE BESTSELLING TITLES - OCTOBER 2017

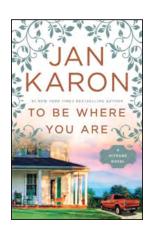
HISTORICAL FICTION

- 1 Where We Belong Lynn N. Austin Baker Publishing Group
- To Wager Her Heart Tamera Alexander Zondervan
- 3 Cherished Mercy
 Tracie Peterson
 Baker Publishing Group
- **4** Christmas at Carnton
 Tamera Alexander
 Thomas Nelson Publishers
- 5 The Promise of Dawn Lauraine Snelling Baker Publishing Group



CONTEMPORARY

- 1 To Be Where You Are Jan Karon Penguin/Putnam
- **2** Loving LutherAllison PittmanTyndale House Publishers
- 3 A Time to Stand Robert Whitlow Thomas Nelson Publishers



- **4** Bringing Maggie Home
 Kim Vogel Sawyer
 WaterBrook Press
- 5 The Undoing of Saint Silvanus
 Beth Moore
 Tyndale House Publishers

ROMANCE

- Blind SpotDani PettreyBaker Publishing Group
- The Proving
 Beverly Lewis
 Baker Publishing Group
- 3 Beneath Copper Falls Colleen Coble Thomas Nelson Publishers



- **4** The Writing Desk Rachel Hauck 7ondervan
- The Beloved Christmas Quilt Wanda E. Brunstetter Barbour Publishing

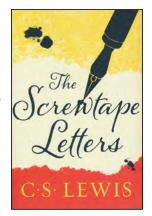
SUSPENSE/MYSTERY

- 1 Dangerous Illusions Irene Hannon Baker Publishing Group
- The Harbinger Jonathan Cahn Charisma
- **3** The Book of Mysteries
 Jonathan Cahn
 Charisma
- **4** If I Run
 Terri Blackstock
 Zondervan
- **5** If I'm Found
 Terri Blackstock
 7 ondervan



SPECULATIVE/FANTASY/SCI-FI

- The Screwtape Letters
 C. S. Lewis
 Zondervan
- **2** Hinds' Feet on High Places
 Hannah Hurnard
 Tyndale House
- **3** This Present Darkness
 Frank Peretti
 Crossway Books
- **4** The Great Divorce
 C. S. Lewis
 Zondervan
- **5** The Returning
 Rachelle Dekker
 Tyndale House



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