

FamilyFiction

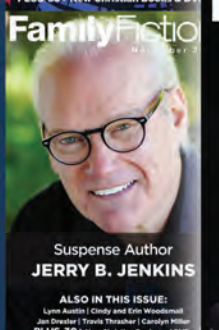
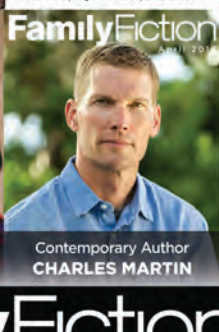
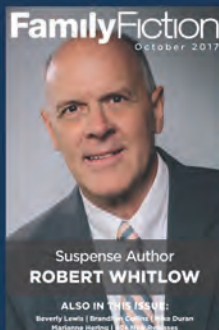
March 2023



Amish Romance Author **KELLY IRVIN**

ALSO IN THIS ISSUE:

**Jody Hedlund | Tricia Goyer | James R. Hannibal
Rachel Scott McDaniel | Kimberly Duffy | Jen Turano
New Christian Fiction Book Releases**



FamilyFiction.com

CELEBRATING 10 YEARS OF CHRISTIAN FICTION BOOKS & AUTHORS

#JesusToldStories

Features



AMISH ROMANCE

KELLY IRVIN

In this interview, Kelly talks with us about her latest book, *Every Good Gift*.



COWBOY ROMANCE

JODY HEDLUND

In this interview, Jody talks about book five in her *Colorado Cowboys Series* titled *The Last Chance Cowboy*.



AMISH ROMANCE

TRICIA GOYER

In this interview, Tricia discusses *Beyond the Gray Mountains*, which is a continuation of her beloved series that takes place in West Kootenai, Montana.



SCI-FI/FANTASY

JAMES R. HANNIBAL

In this interview, James talks with us about book two in his *Lightraider Academy Series*, titled *Bear Knight*.

2023 FAVORITE AMISH AUTHORS— READER'S POLL RESULTS

FamilyFiction is owned and published by FamilyFiction Publishing in partnership with Salem Publishing & Salem Media Group

Publisher/GM/Editor

Ross Cluver

Ross@FamilyFiction.com

Proofreader

Michele Thompson

Design & Digital Production

Ross Cluver

National Account Executive Salem Media Group

DeDe Donatelli-Tarrant

805.987.5072

DeDe@salempublishing.com

Web Ad Traffic Coordinator Web & Social Media Support

Brandon Woolum

BWoolum@salempublishing.com

**DOWNLOAD THE
FAMILYFICTION
MEDIA KIT...**

CLICK HERE

FIND US ONLINE

FamilyFiction.com

[Twitter.com/FamilyFiction](https://twitter.com/FamilyFiction)

[YouTube.com/user/FamilyFiction](https://www.youtube.com/user/FamilyFiction)

FamilyFiction

Features



HISTORICAL ROMANCE

RACHEL SCOTT MCDANIEL

In this interview, Rachel talks with us about her latest book, *In Spotlight and Shadow*.



SOUTHERN FICTION

SUSANNAH B. LEWIS

In this interview, Susannah shares some of her insights into her latest novel, *Della and Darby*.



HISTORICAL ROMANCE

KIMBERLY DUFFY

In this interview, Kimberly shares some of her thoughts on her latest novel, *The Weight of Air*.



HISTORICAL ROMANCE

JEN TURANO

Jen kickstarts a new series centering on a matchmaking company with all the humor and mischief that readers have come to expect from her novels. Let's see what Jen has to say about *A Match in the Making*.



New Releases & Bestsellers

New Christian fiction books from **Mary Connealy, Jennifer Deibel, Jen Turano, Shelley Shepard Gray, Jody Hedlund, James R. Hannibal, Elizabeth Goddard, Patricia Raybon, Pepper Basham, Rachel Scott McDaniel** and more!

Amish
Contemporary
Historical
Romance

Sci-Fi/Speculative
Suspense
Children's
YA/Teens

Middle Grade Kids
Comics/Animation
Movies/DVDs

A woman wearing a traditional white Amish bonnet and a purple dress is shown from the back, looking out over a field of trees with vibrant autumn foliage in shades of orange, red, and yellow. The text "2023 CHRISTIAN AMISH READERS POLL" is overlaid in white on the lower half of the image.

2023 CHRISTIAN AMISH READERS POLL

20 ESSENTIAL CHRISTIAN AMISH AUTHORS AS CHOSEN BY *FAMILYFICTION* READERS

We asked our readers to name their five favorite Christian romance authors, and these 40 talented writers earned the most votes.



1. Beverly Lewis

<https://www.familyfiction.com/authors/beverly-lewis>

Beverly Lewis, raised in Pennsylvania Amish country, is an award-winning author of more than 80 books, many of which have appeared on various bestseller lists. Her novel *The Brethren* won a 2007 Christy Award for excellence in Christian fiction.



2. Wanda E. Brunstetter

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

New York Times bestselling and award-winning author, Wanda E. Brunstetter is one of the founders of the Amish fiction genre. She has written more than 100 books, with more than 11 million copies sold, Wanda's stories consistently earn spots on the nation's most prestigious bestseller lists and have received numerous awards.



3. Suzanne Woods Fisher

<https://www.familyfiction.com/authors/Suzanne-Woods-Fisher>

Suzanne Woods Fisher is an award-winning, bestselling author of more than two dozen novels, including novels in the *Amish Beginnings Series*, *The Bishop's Family Series*, and *The Inn at Eagle Hill Series*, as well as nonfiction books about the Amish.



4. Amy Clipston

<https://www.familyfiction.com/authors/Amy-Clipston>

Amy Clipston is the author of the bestselling *Kauffman Amish Bakery Series*. She has a degree in communications from Virginia Wesleyan College and currently works for the city of Charlotte, North Carolina.



5. Shelley Shepard Gray (tie)

<https://www.familyfiction.com/authors/Shelley-Shepard-Gray>

Shelley Shepard Gray lives in southern Ohio and writes full-time. A busy wife and mother, she spends her days writing and keeping track of her two teens. She enjoys visiting and writing about the Amish.



5. Beth Wiseman (tie)

<https://www.familyfiction.com/authors/Beth-Wiseman>

Beth Wiseman is the award-winning and bestselling author of the *Daughters of the Promise*, *Land of Canaan*, and *Amish Secrets Series*, as well as novellas that have been included in many bestselling collections.



7. Cindy Woodsmall

<https://www.familyfiction.com/authors/Cindy-Woodsmall>

Cindy Woodsmall is a *New York Times*, CBA, and *USA Today* best-selling author. Her connection to the Amish community has been featured on ABC Nightline and the front page of the *Wall Street Journal*.



8. Vannetta Chapman

<https://www.familyfiction.com/authors/Vannetta-Chapman>

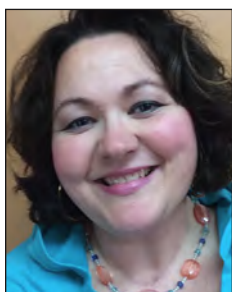
Vannetta Chapman writes inspirational fiction full of grace, including romantic suspense and Amish romance novels. Chapman was a teacher for 15 years and currently writes full-time.



9. Linda Byler

<https://www.familyfiction.com/authors/Linda-Byler>

Linda Byler grew up Amish and is an active member of the Amish church. Growing up, Linda loved to read and write. She is well known within the Amish community as a columnist for a weekly Amish newspaper.



10. Kathleen Fuller

<https://www.familyfiction.com/authors/Kathleen-Fuller>

Kathleen Fuller is the author of several bestselling novels, including the *Hearts of Middlefield Series*, the *Middlefield Family Series*, the *Amish of Birch Creek Series*, and the *Amish Letters Series*.



11. Marta Perry

<https://www.familyfiction.com/authors/Marta-Perry>

Marta Perry first wanted to be a writer at age eight, when she read her first Nancy Drew novel. A lifetime in rural Pennsylvania and her Pennsylvania Dutch roots led Marta to the books she writes now about the Amish.



12. Jennifer Beckstrand

<https://www.familyfiction.com/authors/Jennifer-Beckstrand>

Jennifer Beckstrand began writing when her fourth daughter was born. No matter the setting, she hopes to pen deliriously romantic stories with captivating characters and soar-to-the-sky happy endings.



13. Charlotte Hubbard (tie)

<https://www.familyfiction.com/authors/Charlotte-Hubbard>

Drawing upon her experiences in the largest Old Order Amish community west of the Mississippi, Charlotte Hubbard writes of simpler times and a faith-based lifestyle. She's a deacon and choir member in her church.



14. Kelly Irvin

<https://www.familyfiction.com/authors/Kelly-Irvin>

Kelly Irvin is an author who writes in the Amish and suspense genres. She has been writing nonfiction professionally for more than thirty years. She is a member of ACFW and Alamo City Christian Fiction Writers.



15. Rachel J. Good

<https://www.familyfiction.com/authors/Rachel-J-Good>

Rachel J. Good grew up near Lancaster, PA, the setting for her novels. A former teacher and librarian, she completed her master of art from Vermont College. She has published more than 2,000 articles and 20 books.



16. Patricia Davids

<https://www.familyfiction.com/authors/Patricia-Davids>

Born in north central Kansas, Pat grew up a farmer's daughter. After attending K-State University she became a nurse, then a wife, then a mother, a grandmother and finally an author.



17. Mary Alford (tie)

<https://www.familyfiction.com/authors/Mary-Alford>

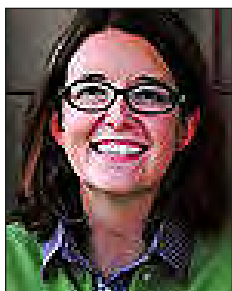
As a teen, Mary Alford wrote her first novel. She never pursued her writing career until a few years later when she wrote her first inspirational romantic suspense and was hooked.



17. Leslie Gould (tie)

<https://www.familyfiction.com/authors/Leslie-Gould>

Leslie Gould is the co-author of the #1 bestselling books *The Amish Midwife* and *The Amish Nanny*. She is also the author of numerous novels including two different Lancaster Amish series.



19. Amanda Flower (tie)

<https://www.familyfiction.com/authors/Amanda-Flower>

Amanda Flower started her writing career in elementary school when she read a story to her sixth grade class and had them in stitches with her tale of being stuck on the top of a Ferris wheel. She knew it was her calling.



19. Kelly Long (tie)

<https://www.familyfiction.com/authors/Kelly Long>

Kelly Long is the author of the *Patch of Heaven Series*. She was born and raised in the mountains of Northern Pennsylvania.



AMISH ROMANCE

Kelly Irvin

Every Good Gift

Kelly Irvin is a bestselling, award-winning author of over twenty novels and stories. A retired public relations professional, Kelly lives with her husband, Tim, in San Antonio.

In this interview, Kelly talks with us about her latest book, *Every Good Gift*.

FF: What inspired the story in your book?

The *Amish Blessings Series* was born out of a blurb in the Amish newspaper *The Budget*, in which a scribe wrote about a young Amish couple who planned to adopt a baby being given up by a non-Amish mother. The mother changed her mind at the last moment. The couple was grieving the loss of the family they'd planned to start. The scribe said their community was reaching out to support them in their loss. I began thinking about adoption in the Amish world and how it might be different and/or the same as we see in the mainstream world. *Every Good Gift* is the third book in the series. It focuses on a young unwed teenager who faces the repercussions of having a baby fathered by a non-Amish man. There are a few similarities to our mainstream world, but far more differences in the way the situation is treated. The story delves into her dilemma and how she's treated by her family and community as she tries to redeem herself.



FF: What can you tell us about the main characters in your book?

I do love these characters—I don't know if authors are supposed to say that, but Joshua and Maisy are two special characters. Maisy is young and in some ways still very innocent, despite her predicament. She reads inspirational romances. She loves words and collects them in a notebook so she can practice them. She loves animals, flowers, and gardening. She's trying hard to understand how God can make good come from all things—including her "mistake." Joshua has his own difficult past with which he hasn't made peace. He's stuck and he doesn't know how to move forward. He keeps his pain hidden behind a uncommunicative façade. Then Maisy comes along and he can't help himself, he feels responsible for her after he finds her sitting alone in a train station in Hutchinson, Kansas. He helps her out and an unlikely friendship is born.

FF: Which character surprised you the most?

Joshua, without a doubt. The way he steps up and supports Maisy when others are keeping her at arm's length says so much about his strong, noble character. As the story developed, I discovered he has a sense of humor and he's good with children. He'll make a good daddy someday. But most importantly, he's a good friend. He does for Maisy what few men would do—Amish or English. In the process, he confronts his own issues and grows as a person. One worthy of respect and love.

FF: Why do you think storytelling is such a powerful way to share truth?

From very young, people love to be told stories. Some of my most lovely childhood memories are storytime at the public library and my elementary school teachers reading to us in class. While entertaining through our stories, we are able to reflect important truths and gently ask readers to ponder those truths even after they close the book. We can wrap hard lessons in powerful stories of bravery and strength.

FF: What can you tell us about your next book?

The Heart's Bidding is the first book in a new series, *The Amish Calling*, set in Virginia. The men in this series belong to a family of auctioneers. Each young man has his own challenge in the world of auctioneering that impacts on his love life. With the heroines, I explore how Amish families deal with a higher incidence of inherited genetic disorders or diseases caused by the closed nature of their communities. Amish have a small group of founders, large families, and they rarely marry outside their communities. As a consequence they have a greater incidence of diseases or disorders such as Down syndrome, Limb Girdle

Muscular Dystrophy and other less common inherited genetic diseases. How a young school teacher educates her students with physical and development disabilities in a one-room schoolhouse serves as a jumping off point for *The Heart's Bidding*. This first book debuts in November.

FF: What kind of research did you do for this book?

I started with a trip to Kansas where the story takes place in the tiny Amish communities of Yoder and Haven. I set each of my series in new locations, and I liked Yoder and Haven because the Amish there use tractors. This is uncommon for the Amish and gives the stories a unique flavor. The towns are about 90 minutes from my hometown of Abilene so my mother and two sisters drove with me on my research trip. It's extremely rare for all four of us to be in the same place at the same time! We really enjoyed eating at the Carriage Crossing Restaurant and Bakery. We browsed in the gift shop and dropped into the Amish-owned Yoder Furniture Store. These and other stores, fictionalized, appear in the series. I also did a lot of online research. Amazingly, the Women's Birth and Heath Center in Yoder has a website that includes a virtual tour of the center and videos of natural childbirths occurring there. This served as a great way to gather information and paint a realistic picture of Maisy's experience in a fictionalized birthing center. Research is fun and it's so important to help get the details right.

FF: What do you want readers to take away after reading your book?

There's always a way forward no matter how bad they mess up. God forgives. He redeems us. The truth of Scripture is reflected in the story. Every baby, every child, is a gift from God, no mat-

ter the circumstances. God can and will bring good from every situation. When we mess up, He adjusts his plan accordingly. I want them to be happy for Maisy and Joshua and for Vicky and Isaac. I hope the readers won't sit in judgement of Maisy or of the people who believe what she has done (with Nate) is wrong. The world's standards are very different from those set by the Amish for their communities. They are based in Scripture. They may seem overly strict or "old fashioned" to some readers, but the situation hopefully will give readers food for thought.

FF: What are the biggest challenges for you as an author writing in your specific genre?

I have to be supremely careful to be as true as I possibly can to the authentic Amish worldview. It would be easy to let my own beliefs and experiences color the way my characters respond to situations. The Amish adhere strictly to Scripture in matters such as premarital sex and the sanctity of marriage. In my new series *Amish Calling* I'm walking a careful line between how the Amish view children with disabilities "as special gifts from God" and how the mainstream disabled community feels about these "labels." As a Christian woman with a disability I can see both sides of the issue, but my goal is to always be respectful of all viewpoints.

FF: What authors or books have inspired you as an author?

So many. It probably depends on what day you ask me! I love William Krueger Kent's standalone books *No Ordinary Grace* and *This Tender Land*. I'm working my way through Charles Martin's books. I tend to read in many genres, including mystery, suspense, women's fiction, historical fiction, literary fiction, and even young adult fiction. I like to stretch and be challenged by new authors.

FF: How has your faith or world view impacted the way you tell stories?

My ability to write stories is a gift from God. Everything about these stories is impacted by that knowledge. I always wanted to be a novelist, but life kept getting in the way. I realize now that I couldn't have written these stories without having experienced life first. I didn't publish my first book until I was 52 years old. That's a lot of living that serves as building blocks for stories that I hope resonate with my readers. They too have had similar experiences. They may be seeking escape or solace or understanding. I hope they find all three in my books. I don't always know what the underlying theme or truth or spiritual thread is when I start writing, but it always becomes clear to me in the end. God is teaching me as I write and readers as they read. At least that's my hope! **FF**

Visit Kelly Irvin's author page here:

<https://familyfiction.com/authors/kelly-irvin>



Every Good Gift

Amish Blessings Series #3

Kelly Irvin

Zondervan



Book Summary:

During the most difficult season of her life, how could she know whether their meeting was a gift from God—or another temptation?

Maisy never expected that a Plain girl like her could have her heart stolen by an Englisch boy. But when her rumspringa ends and Maisy realizes she's pregnant, the reality of their choices—and their differences—sets in.

Maisy knows she will never leave her faith to marry her baby's father. But she also knows the road to acceptance as an unwed mother in an Amish community will be long and hard. To protect her family from the scandal, she goes to live with her cousin in Haven, Kansas, where she will have some solitude to figure out what kind of future she might have.

In Haven, Maisy begins to find her way—thanks in no small part to Joshua Lapp, a Plain man who's made it clear he isn't bothered by her situation or ashamed to be seen with her, despite the bishop's warnings. But Joshua has struggled with his faith ever since the death of his twin brother, leaving Maisy to wonder: How can two people who are so lost ever help each other discover God's plans for their future?



COWBOY ROMANCE

Jody Hedlund

The Last Chance Cowboy

Jody Hedlund is the bestselling author of over 40 historical novels for both adults and teens and is the winner of numerous awards, including the **Christy, Carol, and Christian Book Awards**. Jody lives in Michigan with her husband, busy family, and five spoiled cats.

In this interview, Jody talks about book five in her *Colorado Cowboys Series* titled ***The Last Chance Cowboy***.

FF: Please provide a brief summary of your new novel, *The Last Chance Cowboy*.

Prodigal Dylan McQuaid has returned home to Fairplay, Colorado, after years away. As the temporary sheriff, he hopes to prove he's a changed man with good morals and an upstanding life. When a woman shows up with a baby she claims is his illegitimate son, Dylan makes a quick decision to marry the woman to provide his son with both a pa and ma, and in the process head off more trouble for himself. What he doesn't count on is the trouble that is chasing his bride—trouble that could destroy the new family and life he's growing to love.

FF: What ties the books in this series together?

Each book focuses on one of the five McQuaid siblings, showing how they overcome hardships and, in the end, find true love.



FF: You explore the stories of four of the McQuaid siblings in the previous *Colorado Cowboys Series* books. What is it about Dylan McQuaid—the hero of this book—and his story that made you especially excited to write *The Last Chance Cowboy*?

In the previous books, Dylan is portrayed as a ladies' man as well as reckless and rebellious. After being forced to flee Colorado, Dylan is now finally able to come back. I was excited to reunite him with his family, but also to show the struggle in his relationship with them and the guilt he wrestles with from his past mistakes.

FF: Describe your heroine, Catherine, in three words.
Capable, compassionate, courageous.

FF: What are some of the selling points or features of this novel that you think will compel readers to pick it up?
This novel has a couple of popular tropes—surprise baby and marriage of convenience. Readers will love watching Dylan

McQuaid's reaction to learning he has a baby from his days of wild living. They'll also love seeing Dylan try to do the right thing by offering to marry Catherine in an effort to right his past mistakes and provide for his baby.

FF: As you researched the setting for the story, did anything spark a plot point for you?

I learned that as the high country of Colorado became more settled and ranching boomed, cattle rustling soon became a big problem. Thieves moved there specifically to prey on ranchers. I decided that would make an interesting problem for my hero to deal with, so I gave him a badge and threw the rustling problem right at him.

FF: What aspect of the story did you most enjoy writing?

I often enjoy writing minor characters, and this story was no exception. Dylan's deputy and his wife really came to life and were a hoot to write about with all their quirks but also their deep love and devotion to Dylan.

FF: What themes or lessons do you hope readers pick up on while reading *The Last Chance Cowboy*?

As Dylan works to rebuild his life and reputation, I hope readers will learn, like Dylan, that they don't have to hang on to their mistakes. Yes, we will face the consequences of those mistakes (like Dylan did with having a baby), but God is willing and waiting to cut loose the burdens of guilt that we too often hang on to. He wants to set us free to move forward without living under the shadows of sin and instead walk in the beauty of His grace. **FF**

Visit Jody Hedlund's author page here:

<https://familyfiction.com/authors/jody-hedlund>



The Last Chance Cowboy

Colorado Cowboys Series #5

Jody Hedlund

Bethany House

Buy Now



Book Summary:

As a midwife, Catherine Remington is successful in bringing new life into the world, but she's failed one too many times in finding true love. When she's accused of a murder she didn't commit, she's forced to flee and decides to run away to Colorado

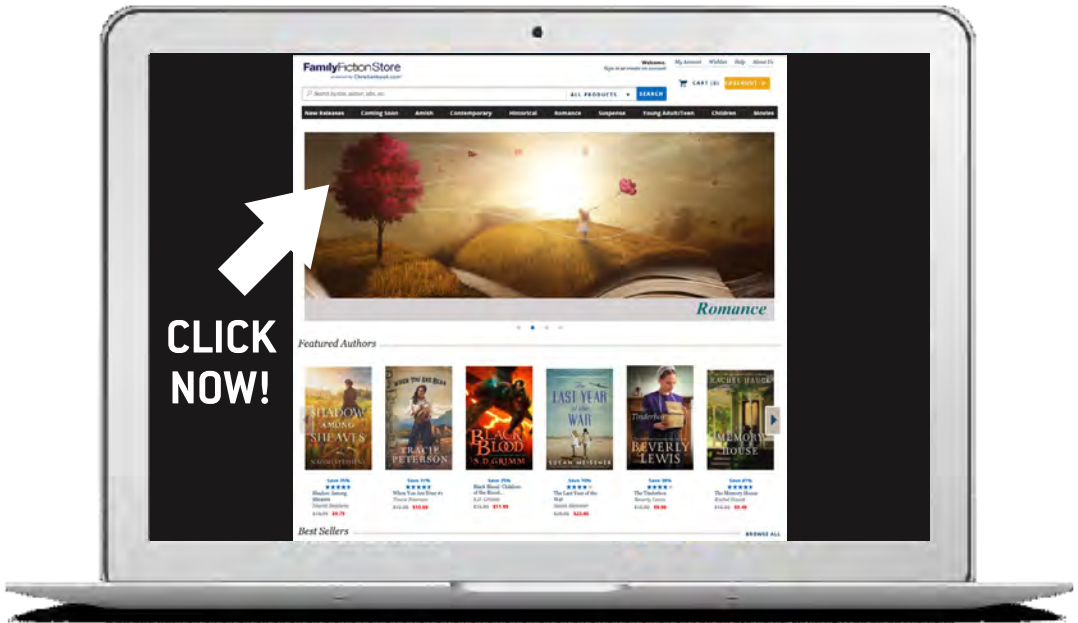
to honor a patient's dying wish to deliver a newborn infant to his father.

The repentant prodigal Dylan McQuaid is finally back in Fairplay. Elected as sheriff, he's doing his best to prove to the town he's a changed man and worthy of their trust. But when a woman shows up with an infant son he didn't know he had, Dylan is left with only complicated choices on what to do next.

Having grown attached to Dylan's son, Catherine doesn't want to part ways with the infant, but what she hadn't bargained for is how easily she'd fall for the charming rogue, or how quickly her past would catch up with her and put their love and lives in danger.



Find ALL of Your Favorite Christian Fiction & Authors on the NEW www.FamilyFictionStore.com



ALL Your Christian Products in 1 Simple Site

Shop by Your Favorite Genre:

- Amish Fiction
- Contemporary Fiction
- Historical Fiction
- Romance Fiction
- Fantasy & Science Fiction
- End Times Fiction
- Suspense Fiction
- Children's Books
- Young Adult Fiction

Shop by Your Favorite Author:

Terri Blackstock, Wanda E. Brunstetter, Melody Carlson, Ted Dekker, Lynette Eason, Chris Fabry, Suzanne Woods Fisher, Karen Kingsbury, Beverly Lewis, C.S. Lewis, Charles Martin, DiAnn Mills, Tracie Peterson, Dani Pettrey, Francine Rivers, Joel C. Rosenberg, Kim Vogel Sawyer, Lauraine Snelling, Cindy Woodsmall & 100s more!

Shop Other Christian Products:

- Bibles & Bible Accessories
- Bible Studies & Curriculum
- Clothing & Accessories
- DVDs
- Gift & Home
- Homeschool
- Music
- Sunday School
- VBS



AMISH ROMANCE

Tricia Goyer

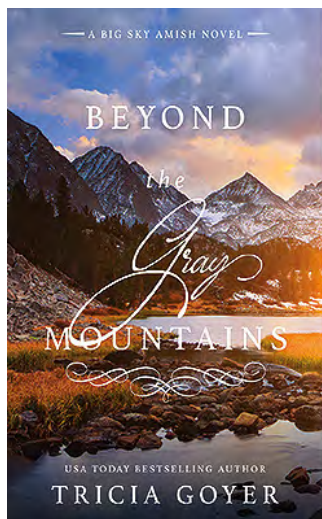
Beyond the Gray Mountains

Tricia Goyer writes out of her passion for God and her love for family and others. The author of more than 70 books, she writes both historical fiction and nonfiction related to family and parenting. This *USA Today* best-selling author has won a two **Carol Awards** and a **Retailer's Best Award**. She was also an ECPA Gold-Medallion nominee and a **Christy Award** nominee. Whether for fiction or nonfiction, Tricia's writing style is vivid and heartwarming, allowing readers to take home more than engaging stories, but also messages that inspire faith and hope. Her goal is to write stories that matter.

In this interview, Tricia discusses ***Beyond the Gray Mountains***, the first book in her ***Big Sky Amish Series***, which is a continuation of her beloved romance series that takes place in West Kootenai, Montana.

FF: What has it been like to re-enter the world of the *Big Sky Amish Series*?

Have you ever had a close friend you haven't seen in a while, but as soon as you're together, you hit it off, and it's as if you've never been apart? That's precisely how it felt to return to the world of *Big Sky Amish* in West Kootenai, Montana. I loved spending time with Marianna, Ben, their family members, and the variety of people within the community. It was like going home!



FF: Which of your characters were the most fun to write, and why?

What a tricky question! Marianna is learning what it's like to expand her view beyond longstanding Amish traditions. Ben is pretty fun because he is a musician (aka "a rock star") who has settled in Montana. He's great because, while he loves Montana, he sometimes doesn't fit in. For example, there's the one time he shows up to prepare for an outfitting trip in ripped skinny jeans and a tight black t-shirt! I also love Annie because she is 100% based on my friend Rebecca Ondov, who was an outfitter in Montana for twenty years. I just have to think, "What would Rebecca do now?" And what Annie does is SO different from what I do. Annie finds her home in the wilderness, and I'm a Holiday Inn type of gal.

FF: Tell us about your trip to Amish country as you prepared for this series. What was that experience like, and how did it shape your story?

I lived in Montana for fifteen years, and I've been to the West

Kootenai area dozens of times. I currently have friends who live there who also keep me updated. I also did some virtual visits, watching more recent YouTube videos. Also, a big chunk of the story occurs in the Bob Marshall Wilderness. I watched documentaries, looked at maps, and talked daily with my friend, Rebecca. So while I didn't visit specifically for this book, it felt like I did! Once, I even texted Rebecca a question, and five minutes later she called me and said, "So I called the sheriff and this is what he said ..." Now, that's a great friend to have!

FF: You've written the first book in this series, *Beyond the Gray Mountains*, but you've handed the next two to other authors. Was putting the *Big Sky Amish* storyworld into Christen Krumm's and Elly Gilbert's hands challenging?

What a great question! Both Christen and Elly auditioned for this series. Then, before we got started with the writing, we brainstormed with Susan May Warren, Sunrise's Publishing Director. So from the beginning, I knew they understood the community and characters. Once I started working with them, Christen and Elly were wonderful about making changes to fit with my storyworld and my characters. It was fun because we all journeyed into West Kootenai together!

FF: What has excited you most about Christen and Elly's contribution to the *Big Sky* collection?

Christen and Elly have come up with some fantastic characters and swoon-worthy romances. Each has a unique voice, yet they also fit perfectly in the *Big Sky* world. Christen loves writing young adult books, and her character is a social media influencer. So there is a lot of humor and fun in her story, *On the Golden Cliffs*!

Elly has a sweet tenderness to her writing. She wanted characters who weren't perfect and who had struggles. In *Under the Blue Skies*, Elly's main character, Lovina, has a noticeable limp and a facial scar. Yet, she's also such a helpful, caring person that I was cheering for her from the beginning—and I know readers will be, too. Every community has various people from different backgrounds. I love how their contributions just give us more characters to love.

FF: You're known for writing stories of faith and hope. What do you hope readers will take away from *Big Sky Amish Series*?

I love this question! In this story, Ben and Marianna love each other but they each have concerns about their upcoming marriage. Ben worries that the media attention will be too much for Marianna. Marianna worries that she won't fit into Ben's life as a popular musician. Through the unexpected challenges they face in this story, they must each step out of their comfort zones for the sake of love. I pushed both of my characters to their limits. Each had to depend on God in new ways. I hope readers will walk away with a deeper understanding of how it's possible to turn to God for strength even during the hardest, darkest moments of their lives. We have moments when we question why hardship comes into our lives. While we still may have questions, I hope that after reading this novel, readers will better understand God's presence and provision in beautiful ways. **FF**

Visit Tricia Goyer's author page here:

<https://familyfiction.com/authors/tricia-goyer>



Beyond the Gray Mountains

Big Sky Amish Series #1

Tricia Goyer

Sunrise Publishing

Buy Now

Book Summary:

Marianna Sommer always dreamed of a simple Amish wedding, but there's nothing simple about marrying rock star Ben Stone. She loves him—but what about her traditions? Worse, suddenly Ben has questions—the kind that have him putting

their wedding on hold.

Ben loves Marianna, but he has regrets—and fears—that are suddenly getting in the way of his happy ending. He doubts he's going to “hear from God” in the high mountains like Marianna's father suggests. But sure, he'll go...But he might not return. Because high on the continental divide, trouble finds them. Now, it'll take a miracle for Ben, Abe, and Abe's brother, Ike, to make it down alive. Maybe Ben will hear from God after all... but if he does, can he become the man he needs to be to save them...and keep Marianna's heart?

When a runaway horse with a bloody saddle shows up, not only is the media alerted, but Marianna fears she'll lose them all—her uncle, her father, and her beloved Ben. Suddenly she doesn't care what the wedding looks like...as long as Ben makes it home. But is there more to Ben than she knows? And when she discovers his secrets, what sacrifices will she make to save...and marry...the man she loves?



SCI-FI/FANTASY

James R. Hannibal

Bear Knight

Former stealth pilot **James R. Hannibal** is no stranger to secrets and adventure. He has been shot at, locked up by surface to air missiles, has hunted insurgents with drones, and was once chased by an armed terrorist down a winding German road. James is the **Carol Award** winning author of the *Clandestine Service Series* and a three-time winner of the **Silver Falchion Award for Juvenile Fiction** for his Section 13 Series.

In this interview, James talks with us about book two in his *Lightraider Academy Series*, titled ***Bear Knight***.

FF: What inspired the story in your book *Bear Knight*?

As a pastor's kid in the 1980s, I had the opportunity to "guinea-pig" every new youth discipleship program from a range of Christian organizations. The one that stuck with me (the one that is still part of who I am) was DragonRaid, an "adventure learning system" that works like a cross between a choose-your-adventure and a roleplaying game set in the fantasy realm of Talania. Thirty-five years later, Dick Wulf, the creator of that realm, has passed the torch to me. *Bear Knight* is the second novel in a whole family of interconnected games and stories set in that realm of Talania. *Bear Knight* takes a look at courage in the face of a range of fears, from physical danger to the fear of failing our friends and loved ones.



FF: What can you tell us about the main characters in your book?

Connor Entrain and Kara Orso are cadets at Lightraider Academy, nearing a big promotion to the rank of cadet scout. Kara, having started later than the rest, is fighting to catch up to the class. Meanwhile, dark creatures are entering the land, and the cadets at the newly revived academy, led by Connor, are at the forefront of the battle to stop an invasion. As if this isn't enough, Kara's brother remains trapped in the Dragon Lands of Tanelethar. Her struggle to do it all—be the cadet she wants to be, be the friend Connor wants her to be, serve her homeland, and rescue her brother—places a great burden on her shoulders.

FF: Which character surprised you the most?

Tiran surprised me most. Tiran is a friend to both Connor and Kara who suffered greatly (due to his own hubris) in the first book of the series. His ability to bounce back and become the comrade-in-arms that Kara needed truly surprised me.

FF: Why do you think storytelling is such a powerful way to share truth?

A core principle of DragonRaid (and the upcoming Lightraiders Adventure Bible System) is “learning through story.” Allegory and storytelling help us see truths from a different angle or perspective. Dick Wulf knew this when he created the realm of Talania. I’m excited about the future of Lightraiders, since the system deepens that potential for learning and understanding by placing players inside the story and giving them control over the action and emotion.

FF: What can readers expect from the rest of this series?

Readers can expect to see the Lightraider Academy cadets grow together and experience new dangers and challenges. They can expect to see the mists peeled back and more of the fantastical realm of Talania revealed. And they can expect more opportunities to take part in the realm through additional games and stories from Lightraiders. In fact, they can participate in an online reader-directed origin story growing chapter by chapter right now on the blog at Woodridge.org.

FF: What kind of research did you do for *Bear Knight*?

I lived in the realm of Talania as a teen. And when I grew up, I wrote new adventures so my children, nieces, and nephews could spend some time there as well (that’s how Dick Wulf and I connected). I know every vine in Dayspring Forest, every smooth rock in the stream running past the gates of Lightraider Academy. I know them because I grew up there. I’ve been preparing to write this series of stories since I was twelve years old. To broaden that experience for *Bear Knight*, I dug into geography (for the strange canyon Tagamoor), linguistics (for the fantasy language in which the characters speak Scripture

before translating key concepts for the reader), and the Word (for Biblical answers to fear).

FF: What do you want readers to take away after reading your book?

I want readers to understand that Christ is the first person to seek when they are frightened in any form. I want them to understand the hope and peace they'll find in the Breastplate of Righteousness and the Helmet of Salvation. No matter what the world throws at us, our eternal hope is in Him.

FF: What are the biggest challenges for you as an author writing in your specific genre?

There are many competing voices here, and not all of them are shouting the truth. More and more, big publishers are sacrificing Biblical truth for world conformity and sales. I'm grateful to Enclave Escape for the opportunity to get the Lightraiders message out. Another challenge is creating something new out of the old. It's no easy task to build a realm from a 1980s foundation for a 2023 audience, creating something unique that bridges the divide between the original game and the new system.

FF: What authors or books have inspired you as an author?

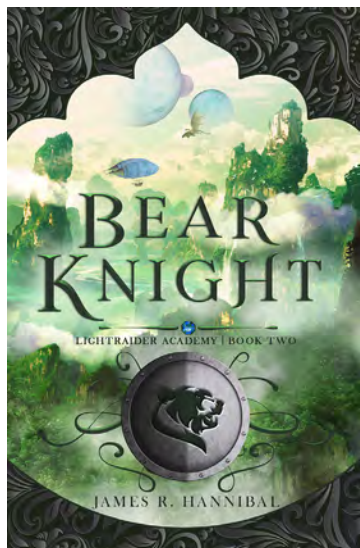
Obviously, Dick Wulf inspired me (NavPress author, Christian counselor, Focus on the Family contributor, and DragonRaid creator). Also on the list are Calvin Miller (*The Singer Trilogy*, *The Valiant Papers*), C.S. Lewis, and Tolkien.

FF: How has your faith or world view impacted the way you tell stories?

My faith defines the way I tell stories. I write to encourage or edify others and to honor Christ. I hope that one day He'll tell me I've done well in that endeavor. **FF**

Visit James R. Hannibal's author page here:

<https://familyfiction.com/authors/james-r-hannibal>



Bear Knight

Lightraider Academy Series #2

James R. Hannibal

Enclave Escape

Buy Now

Book Summary:

Darkness Looms in the Dragon Lands

War is brewing. New threats have emerged in Keledev. The watchmen of Thousand Falls and the Windhold find goblin tunnels in the slopes of the mountain barrier that may hold many dangerous creatures. At the same time, scouting missions into the Dragon Lands confirm that the dragons are building an army of tortured Aladoth villagers to destroy the Liberated Land.

To protect Kara Orso, the young woman Connor and Lee rescued, the headmaster sends them to the Second Hall to face the intrigues of the Assembly in her place. Far to the south, the two cadets learn of an old weapon designed to end the war between the dragons and the Liberated Land forever. To restore the honor of his family and renew the hope of his people, Connor believes he must find the weapon and use it to destroy the dragon leader.

While Connor, Lee, and an assemblyman's daughter scour the Dragon Lands for the weapon, Kara and Tiran are drawn north into the Forest of Horrors on a mission of their own—to find and save one tortured man. To succeed, both parties must face their fears and lean on the peace and strength of the Rescuer.



HISTORICAL ROMANCE

Rachel Scott McDaniel

In Spotlight and Shadow

Rachel Scott McDaniel is an award-winning author of historical romance. Winner of the **ACFW Genesis Award** and the **RWA Touched By Love Award**, Rachel infuses faith and heart into each story.

In this interview, Rachel talks with us about her latest book, ***In Spotlight and Shadow***.

FF: What inspired the story in your book?

I've always loved old theaters! There's just something about those old-timey cinema palaces that dazzled the bygone eras. So when Barbour proposed a series based on historical landmarks, I thought it would be fun to revolve a story around Heinz Hall—an almost century-old theater once billed as the “Temple of Cinema.”

FF: What can you tell us about the main characters in your book?

Both my heroines, Sophie and Elise, have big dreams and even bigger secrets. Though separated by a hundred years, their journeys intertwine as they strive to break free from the shame of their past.

FF: Which character surprised you the most?

Hmm. I would say Elise. When I started writing the novel, I thought I had her story arc figured out, but the further I dug into her backstory, the more character layers emerged.



FF: Why do you think storytelling is such a powerful way to share truth?

I love this question because I firmly believe in the power of story. It's a game-changer! So often, we can relate to the characters' struggles, identify with their hopes, and immerse our hearts within the safety of the pages.

FF: What can you tell us about your next book?

My next story, *The Starlet Spy*, comes out this August and is part of the *WWII Heroines Series* with Barbour. This book is about a Hollywood star recruited by the OSS to spy on her homeland of Sweden. Her mission includes recovering lost documents of atomic proportions.

FF: What kind of research did you do for this book?

This story was fun to research! Having been born and raised outside of Pittsburgh, it was interesting to uncover new things about such a familiar place. I relied a lot on historical websites, but my favorite part of research was taking trips into the city.

FF: What do you want readers to take away after reading your book?

One of the main themes of this story is identity. Too often, we find our worth in transient things like our success, talent, career, etc. But no matter failure or victory, it's God's love that defines us.

FF: What are the biggest challenges for you as an author writing in your specific genre?

When crafting this book, since it's a split-time, I had to plot the eras almost as a puzzle. Each chapter from each timeline served as a piece that fits into the story. The end result is (hopefully!) a complete picture of the beauty that came with second chances.

FF: What authors or books have inspired you as an author?

What a great question! The Christian fiction world is a wonderful network of authors who have supported and encouraged me and my writing. As for an inspiring book, I would say *Echo in the Darkness* by Francine Rivers. With such moving prose, along with the powerful message of forgiveness, that story has stuck with me for years.

FF: How has your faith or world view impacted the way you tell stories?

My faith is a huge part of who I am. It's what has shaped, challenged, and inspired me to be the best version of myself. I pray whoever picks up my book will also be strengthened and encouraged by the words within. **FF**

Visit Rachel Scott McDaniel's author page here:

<https://familyfiction.com/authors/%e2%80%8brachel-scott-mcdaniel>



In Spotlight and Shadow

Doors to the Past Series #11

Rachel Scott McDaniel

Barbour Publishing

Buy Now

Book Summary:

A Gem of a Mystery Takes Center Stage

Walk through Doors to the Past via a new series of historical stories of romance and adventure.

Elise Malvern has a habit of letting people down. Her former boyfriend who hoped she'd be his bride. Her grandfather who hoped she'd take over the family's auction company. But mostly she's disappointed herself. What's the point of pursuing her passion as a violinist, if she is too scared to audition for a seat in the Pittsburgh Symphony? Her internship at the elegant Heinz Hall places her in the wings of the stage, but never on it. By accident, she discovers an old stage prop. Her instincts tell her there's more to the paste necklace than meets the eye. Whether a good idea or not, she accepts help from a childhood friend, who happens to be country music megastar—Peirson Brooks. Peirson and Elise share a history; one she doesn't care to repeat. The more involved they become in the mystery, the more things get tangled, including her heart.

A century earlier...

Sophie Walters longs for center stage, her name on the marquee, and all that jazz, but climbing her way into an acting career is more difficult than she imagined. Having spoiled all her chances in Hollywood, she returns to Pittsburgh, accepting an insignificant role in a popular production. She watches her dreams pass by from behind the curtain at the illustrious Loew's Penn Theatre. She finally gets the coveted spotlight, but not for her talent. No, her surge to fame is all one terrible mistake. Somehow, she's suspected to be a notorious jewel thief known around Pittsburgh as The Mirage. The man she pleads for help from is none other than the man she jilted at the altar five years before, Sterling Monroe.



SOUTHERN FICTION

Susannah B. Lewis

Della and Darby

Susannah B. Lewis is a humorist, a blogger for *Whoa! Susannah*, and freelance writer whose work has appeared in numerous publications. The author of *Can't Make This Stuff Up!* and *Bless Your Heart, Rae Sutton*, Lewis studied creative writing at Jackson State Community College and earned her bachelor's degree in business management from Bethel College.

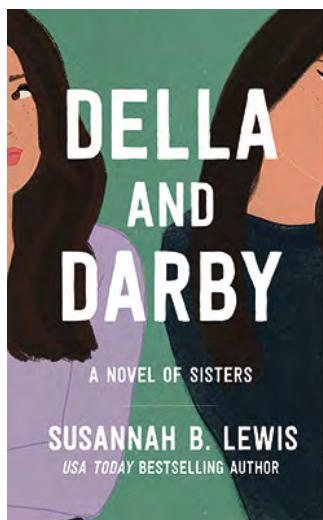
In this interview, Susannah shares some of her insights into her latest novel, *Della and Darby*.

FF: What inspired the story in your book?

I wanted to explore how we oftentimes allow our past to impact our present. We're told in Scripture to forget the past and strive toward what lies ahead, but many times we so foolishly ignore that wisdom. The main characters in this book do hang onto the troubling parts of their childhood, and it prohibits them from knowing their true worth and living in joy.

FF: What can you tell us about the main characters in your book?

Twins Della and Darby Redd may be identical in appearance, but they couldn't be more different. Della is outspoken, obsessed with purple, and desperate to be accepted by her peers. Darby is introverted, creative, and sees no need to speak to anyone besides her sister and grandmother, Birdie. Due to a tragedy from years ago, all three women's lives have been blanketed in judgment, scandal, and rumor, preventing



them from experiencing true peace and contentment in their small town of Clay Station, Mississippi.

FF: Which character surprised you the most?

Dr. Faulkner actually surprised me the most. In the original draft, his character was much different than what was sent to print. When I started this book, I had no intention of him being so sinister.

FF: Why do you think storytelling is such a powerful way to share truth?

There is power in the story. I think we have a yearning to be transported to some other place with vivid imagery that is all our own. We can see, so clearly, the setting, the characters. I find it wild that while reading a work of fiction, we all envision the main character in a different way—in our own way.

FF: What can you tell us about your next book?

I have several stories swimming in my head at the moment and am in the process of picking which one I will pursue next.

FF: How do you get into the right frame of mind to write for your genre/audience?

I have always preferred writing late at night when my family is asleep and the house is quiet. My music playlists clear my mind and give me inspiration, as well.

FF: What do you want readers to take away after reading your book?

God has a beautiful way of healing our insecurities and changing our hearts and actions. What people said about me in high school—and what I said about them—doesn't mean squat in the grand scheme of things. Our worth is found in Him alone.

FF: What are the biggest challenges for you as an author writing in your specific genre?

My biggest challenge in writing Christian Fiction is to not dabble too much on the secular side of things. I want my books to be relatable to those who aren't followers of Christ, but I also want it to be evident Who I serve.

FF: What authors or books have inspired you as an author?

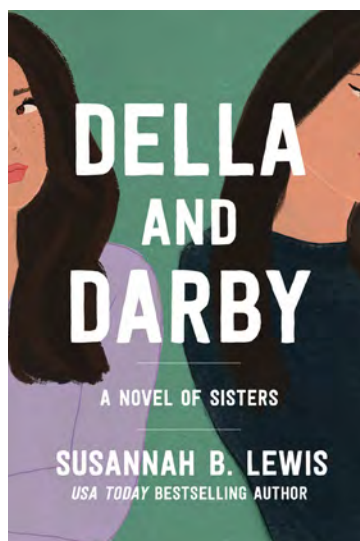
I have always been a fan of the classics—Steinbeck, Hemingway, Faulkner. Hemingway said, "All you have to do is write one true sentence. Write the truest sentence you know." It's proven to be the best advice I've heard when working on a book.

FF: How has your faith or world view impacted the way you tell stories?

The moral, lesson, point of my work always goes back to my faith and what the Lord has shown me. His truth is the main takeaway in my life. And in my books. **FF**

Visit Susannah B. Lewis's author page here:

<https://familyfiction.com/authors/susannah-b-lewis>



Della and Darby

A Novel of Sisters

Susannah B. Lewis

Thomas Nelson

Buy Now



Book Summary:

Della and Darby Redd are twins, but they couldn't be more different. Della is outspoken and eccentric, and Darby is introverted and avoids conversation when possible. As they approach their 30th birthday, they're single and living with their grand-

mother, Birdie. Della wants nothing more than to find love and be accepted by her former schoolmates in Clay Station, Mississippi, but Darby couldn't care less. She is content coming home from her factory job each day to curl up on the couch and watch *Murder, She Wrote* with Birdie and write poems in her journal.

Della falls in love with her boss, Dr. Brian Faulkner, and Darby finds unexpected friendship in her goofy coworker, Cliff Waters. Because of her friendship with Cliff, Darby uncovers terrible truths about Della's crush. Will Dr. Brian Faulkner's secrets push the different sisters even further apart or bring them closer together? The sisters will both need to face difficult questions about who they are...and who they want to be.



HISTORICAL ROMANCE

Kimberly Duffy

The Weight of Air

Named an “author to watch” by *Library Journal*, **Kimberly Duffy** has made a name for herself through her thoughtful novels that address women’s issues within a historical context. When she’s not homeschooling her four kids, she writes historical fiction that takes her readers back in time and across oceans. She loves trips that require a passport, recipe books, and practicing kissing scenes with her husband of twenty-three years.

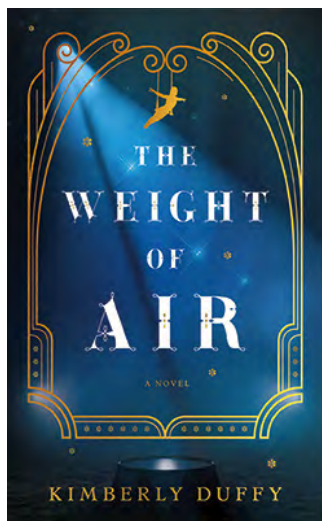
In this interview, Kimberly shares some of her thoughts on her latest novel, ***The Weight of Air***.

FF: Can you please share a bit of what this book is about?

The Weight of Air is mostly about a mother and daughter who, long separated, take on the complex dance of rebuilding their relationship, healing old hurts, and discovering who they are individually and in relation to each other. It’s about strength and forgiveness, sprinkled with a marriage of convenience and atmospheric circus magic.

FF: Can you tell us a little more about the characters of Mabel and Isabella? What is important for readers to know about each of these women?

Mabel has always relied on others for strength, and Isabella is fiercely independent. Both women struggle with others’ mistaken perceptions of them. Mabel is a bit of a dichotomy—her strength housing a sweet spirit—and Isabella finds that her failing body is the impetus for the strengthening of her spirit. Both of their struggles hang on the axis of the great strong-



man Bram MacGinnis, Mabel's father and the person who broke Isabella's heart.

FF: The story starts in Europe, but the setting switches as Mabel heads to America. Can you share what led you to choose a 1900s circus in New York as the backdrop for this story?

I knew I would set the story in the circus—I just love all that big-top glamour and excitement—but when I began researching, I learned that Barnum & Bailey used to open their season at Madison Square Garden every year. I'm from New York and loved the idea of setting one of my books there (I haven't been since *A Mosaic of Wings*, which is partially set in Ithaca). I wanted to show the vibrancy of Little Italy, where my grandmother grew up, and the youthful, brash chaos of that city heaving into the world.

FF: Mabel makes her living by being the strongest woman in Europe, a unique pursuit for a woman at that time. How do Mabel's struggles with body image and society's perception of her translate to challenges modern women face?

Women have faced pressure to conform to certain beauty standards forever. That's nothing new. And even when we do conform, we have a habit of comparing and diminishing ourselves so that we may as well not. Mabel's story is set during a time when women were meant to be lovely and fragile and feminine. Well-developed muscles and height weren't de rigueur. She constantly compares herself to the late wife of the man she loves, who was a slight, graceful, adored aerialist. Even when society deems her the world's perfect woman (based on the experience of a real-life strongwoman), she still struggles with accepting her strength and size. I don't think that's an uncommon story. Most women I know have struggled in one way or another with the bodies they've been gifted. I have. I hope my daughters don't.

FF: What research was required to write this book? Did you learn anything interesting along the way?

Of course, I had to research the turn-of-the century circus, which was really interesting. I read up on various strongwomen over the years, and there were more than I had thought! Katie Sandwina is now a favorite of mine. I just love her mix of strength and femininity. She was equally comfortable wrestling men and bending metal as she was in a ball gown or painting her nails.

I also read some books on NYC during the time *The Weight of Air* is set. My grandmother, from an Italian immigrant family, was born only a few years after Mabel walks around Little Italy,

so it was fun imagining all my grandmother saw and experienced. I have a scene set in Coney Island (and another one planned that I didn't get to write) and what a fun place that was! I wish I could have seen it during its heyday. I was surprised by the long (and somewhat torrid) history of Madison Square Garden. I hadn't realized how many iterations of it were built. The second one, which is where this book is set, had a rooftop cabaret and a naked statue of Diana that caused a bit of an uproar and made it NYC's tallest building, and it hosted dog shows, sports events, and, of course, the circus.

FF: Are there any elements of the story that were influenced by struggles you yourself have faced?

I always put a bit of myself in my books. If sharing my struggles through my characters touches even one reader, it's worth it. Some of my darkest times have been post-partum—when you're supposed to be filled with buoyant joy and the hope of new life. It just never worked that way for me. I had post-partum OCD after my first two children and post-partum depression after my second two. I'd never even heard of post-partum OCD (and really, for me, it was a flare up of my well-established OCD), and no one talked about post-partum depression much when I was bearing children. It felt like such a shameful thing.

I wanted to explore what it would have been like to experience it a hundred years before anti-depressants and the understanding we now have of hormones and how sleep deprivation and isolation can collude with them to create this really awful spiral. How would women have found hope in the midst of all that?

FF: What lessons do you hope readers take away from reading this book?

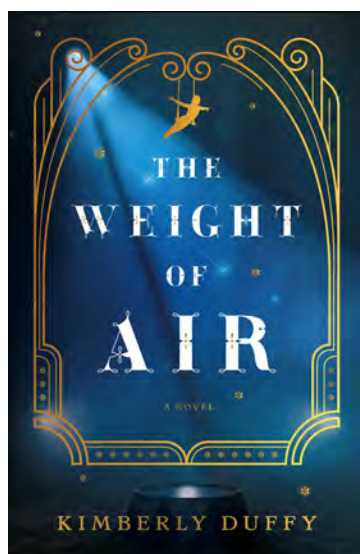
Our self-worth is not based on how we look or what we are capable of, and it is not dictated by our past. There are so many different kinds of strength, and the one that never fails is the one that comes from above.

FF: What are you working on next?

I'm currently working on a story that has a much different structure than anything I've done before, and it's a heart project. I'm not sure what will happen with it, but I'm having fun with these two characters—friends in the interwar period who chase big dreams and learn a bit about themselves and each other. **FF**

Visit Kimberly Duffy's author page here:

<https://familyfiction.com/authors/kimberly-duffy>



The Weight of Air

Kimberly Duffy

Bethany House

Buy Now



Book Summary:

Two women—bound by blood, torn apart by circumstance—find together that true strength comes in many forms.

In 1911, Mabel MacGinnis is Europe's strongest woman and has performed beside her father in the Manzo Brothers Circus her entire life. When he dies unexpectedly, she loses everything she's ever known and sets off in the company of acrobat Jake Cunningham in hope of finding the mother she thought was dead.

Isabella Moreau, America's most feted aerialist, has given everything to the circus. But age and injury now threaten her security, and Isabella, stalked by old fears, makes a choice that risks everything. Then her daughter Mabel appears alongside the man who never wanted to see Isabella again, and she is forced to face the truth of where, and in what, she derives her worth.

As Mabel and Isabella's lives become entangled beneath the glittering lights and flying trapeze of Madison Square Garden, their resiliency and resolve are tested as they learn the truth of what it means to be strong.



HISTORICAL ROMANCE

Jen Turano

A Match in the Making

A pillar of the **Christian Romance** genre, *USA Today* bestselling author **Jen Turano** has long been a fan favorite for her highly satisfying romantic comedies. Her books have earned *Publishers Weekly* and **Booklist** starred reviews, top picks from **RT Book Reviews**, and praise from *Library Journal*. She's been a finalist twice for the **RT Reviewers' Choice Awards**.

Now Turano kickstarts a new series centering on a match-making company with all the spunky humor and mischief that readers have come to expect from a Jen Turano novel. Gilded Age high society takes center stage in Turano's latest hilarious romp, ***A Match in the Making***, book one in *The Matchmakers Series*. Let's see what Jen has to say about this new book and series.

FF: *A Match in the Making* is book one in your new *The Matchmakers Series*. Can you please tell us a little bit about this book?

This story centers around Miss Gwendolyn Brinley, who finds herself in the most unlikely of situations—that being an unexpected assistant matchmaker. When Mr. Walter Townsend, an annoying gentleman if there ever was one, decides he needs the services of a matchmaker to handle all the young ladies who've decided their greatest desire in life is to become the next Mrs. Townsend, Gwendolyn finds herself responsible for sorting out his love life, a feat that's more daunting than she ever imagined.



FF: Can you dig a little deeper in the character of Gwendolyn for us? What about her is most important for readers to know?

She's a lady who embraces an unconventional attitude for her time, and one who doesn't stand back when she feels injustices are being leveled against those in vulnerable positions. She doesn't hesitate to insert herself into contentious situations, which takes the New York Four Hundred aback, especially the young ladies Gwendolyn takes to task over their unbecoming behavior.

FF: Were there really employers dedicated to matchmaking services during the Gilded Age?

Yes, there were, but it was a very discreet business. Word of mouth was the only way a mother learned who was in the matchmaking business, and compensation was always discussed in a most careful manner because women of that day were not allowed to dabble in what was considered trade if they wanted to maintain their respectable reputations.

FF: What inspired the idea for this series?

I have a box where I toss in ideas for books that come to me at the oddest of times. Doing research stokes a lot of ideas, as does movies, other books, and life in general. For this series, I was watching a movie and there was a matchmaker in a scene, and the idea for a series began formulating from there—but not a normal series. One where the matchmakers are a little peculiar and, of course, land themselves in the most unlikely of situations. I just happened to pull that note out of the box when I was finishing up a different series and thought... Hmm. Maybe I should do a matchmaking series next.

FF: *A Match in the Making* addresses themes such as rising to unanticipated challenges. Can you tell us a little more about how this idea comes into play in the lives of your characters and how that might translate to readers today?

Right from the very beginning of the book, it's clear that Gwendolyn is faced with dealing with what we'd call mean girls today. Society knows she's in Newport as Mrs. Parker's paid companion, information young ladies use to slight Gwendolyn every chance they get. She's not usually one to suffer slights in silence but feels it's not her place, as Mrs. Parker's employee, to react to their inappropriate behavior—until they turn their attention to a wallflower by the name of Miss Adelaide Duveen. That's when Gwendolyn's true personality comes out and she points out the errors of these young ladies' ways, something no one has ever had the audacity to do within the hallowed midst of the upper crust. My hope in writing about what amounts to different cases of bullying is to encourage people to stand up to injustices and to step in and assist anyone who is being bullied, no matter if it causes unpleasant conversations or sets a person against people they consider friends.

FF: Was there anything that you found particularly interesting in your research that you included in the book?

I was fascinated by Trinity Church located in Newport, which has enclosed pews that families buy and use for the summer Season. It's gorgeous and has a cemetery right beside it where many a prominent Newport resident was laid to rest. I also included the Newport Casino into the story, which is this fabulous—not gambling den like you'd imagine—but almost along the lines of a country club, complete with tennis courts, glamorous dining rooms, and ballrooms where many a dance has been held.

FF: With the rise of franchises like the *Bridgerton* books and streaming series, what do you think is most alluring to fans about storylines featuring the marriage mart of high society?

I think it's the glamour that attracts fans, and all the rules of etiquette, paired with the most glorious clothing, because who wouldn't long to be dressed to the nines and then enjoy the delights of an extravagant ball? It also might be the lifestyle, because it's difficult for us to imagine having a lady's maid at one's disposal, or a cook who prepares gourmet meals every day.

FF: What do you hope readers take away from this story?

One of the things Gwendolyn comes to realize is that the life she thought she was meant to live wasn't a life that was going to satisfy her, and that it was okay for her to change course and embrace something she never considered.

FF: Can you share what you're working on next?

I have just written the end on the second book in the series, *To Spark a Match*. It's Miss Adelaide Duveen's story—the wallflower in book one. It's still a hot mess, so I'll be fluffing it up, and then I'll move on to writing the third and final book of *The Matchmakers Series Series*—which I can't release the title of that one just yet—but it's Camilla Pierpont's story, who's a confirmed spinster who dabbles in making matches of the affectionate kind. **FF**

Visit Jen Turano's author page here:

<https://familyfiction.com/authors/jen-turano>



A Match in the Making

The Matchmakers Series Series #1

Jen Turano

Bethany House

Buy Now



Book Summary:

Miss Gwendolyn Brinley accepted a temporary paid companion position for the Newport summer season, excited to spend the summer in America's most exclusive town. She suddenly finds her summer

turning anything but amusing when her employer expects her to step into the role of an assistant matchmaker. Tasked with the daunting prospect of attaining advantageous matches for her clients, Gwendolyn soon finds herself in the employ of Mr. Walter Townsend, the catch of the Season, but a gentleman Gwendolyn finds beyond irritating.

Walter Townsend is in search of a wife for the sake of his unruly children—without a mother of their own, the Townsend family can't seem to keep the same governess for long. What he wasn't expecting was Miss Brinley, an amateur matchmaker who turns his quest for a new wife into a complete and utter debacle. Constantly besieged by society ladies on a mission to win his affection, Walter must find a way to overcome their inundating attention—and his unexpected attraction toward Gwendolyn.

The more time they spend together throughout the Newport Season, the harder it is for Gwendolyn to find Walter a wife when she realizes his perfect match might be...her.

New Releases: March 2023



Forged in Love

Wyoming Sunrise Series #1

Mary Connealy

Bethany House

Genres: Historical Romance,
Western Romance

Release Date: February 28, 2023

Buy Now



Beyond the Gray Mountains

Big Sky Amish Series #1

Tricia Goyer

Sunrise Publishing

Genres: Amish Romance

Release Date: February 25, 2023

Buy Now



Greenlee is Growing

Anthony DeStefano

Convergent Books

Genres: Children's, Devotional

Release Date: February 28, 2023

Buy Now





The Maid of Ballymacool

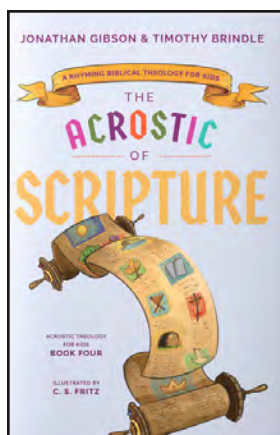
Jennifer Deibel

Revell

Genres: Historical Romance

Release Date: February 21, 2023

Buy Now 



The Acrostic of Scripture

A Rhyming Biblical Theology for Kids

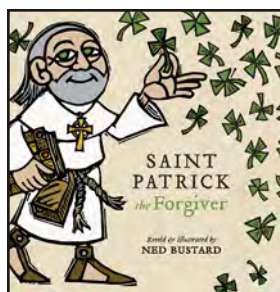
Jonathan Gibson and Timothy Brindle

New Growth Press

Genres: Children's, Middle School Kids

Release Date: February 23, 2023

Buy Now 



Saint Patrick the Forgiver

The History and Legends of Ireland's Bishop

Ned Bustard

IVP Kids

Genres: Children's

Release Date: February 21, 2023

Buy Now 

New Releases: March 2023



The Best Worst Day Ever

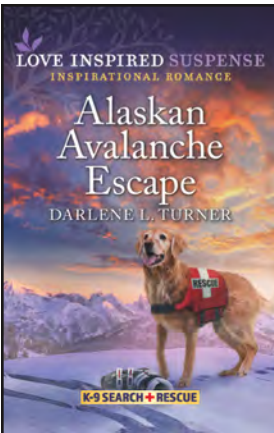
Mark Batterson

Multnomah

Genres: Children's

Release Date: February 21, 2023

Buy Now



Alaskan Avalanche Escape

K-9 Search and Rescue Series #9

Darlene L. Turner

Harlequin

Genres: Romance, Romantic Suspense

Release Date: February 21, 2023

Buy Now



A Match in the Making

The Matchmakers Series #1

Jen Turano

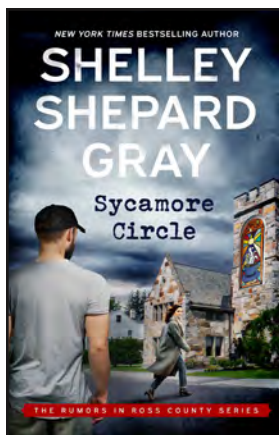
Bethany House

Genres: Historical Romance

Release Date: February 21, 2023

Buy Now





Sycamore Circle

The Rumors in Ross County Series #2

Shelley Shepard Gray

Blackstone Publishing

Genres: Small Town Romance,
Romance

Release Date: February 7, 2023

Buy Now



Daughter of Eden

Eve's Story

Jill Eileen Smith

Revell

Genres: Historical Romance

Release Date: February 14, 2023

Buy Now



The Last Chance Cowboy

Colorado Cowboys Series #5

Jody Hedlund

Bethany House

Genres: Historical Romance,
Cowboy Romance

Release Date: February 14, 2023

Buy Now





Bear Knight

Lightraider Academy Series #2

James R. Hannibal

Enclave Escape

Genres: YA/Teen, Sci-Fi/Fantasy

Release Date: February 14, 2023

Buy Now 



Cold Light of Day

Missing in Alaska Series #1

Elizabeth Goddard

Revell

Genres: Mystery/Suspense,
Romantic Suspense

Release Date: February 7, 2023

Buy Now 



Your Brave Song

*An Inspirational Children's Picture Book
That Shows How Faith in Jesus Can Help
Kids Overcome Fear, Worry, & Anxiety*

Ann Voskamp

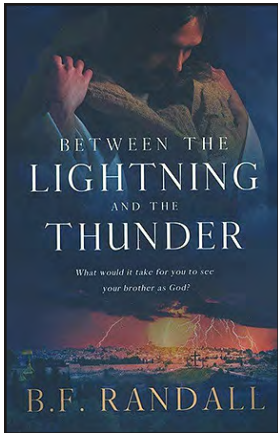
Tyndale Kids

Genres: Children's

Release Date: February 7, 2023

Buy Now 

New Releases: March 2023



Between the Lightning and the Thunder

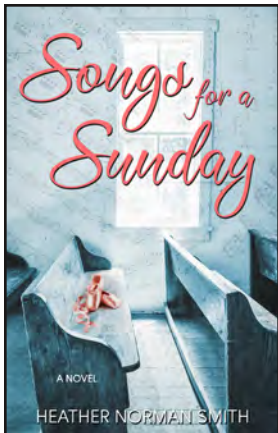
What Would It Take for You to See Your Brother as God?

B.F. Randall

Brookstone Publishing

Genres: Historical, Biblical Fiction

Release Date: February 7, 2023



Songs for a Sunday

Heather Norman Smith

Iron Stream Fiction

Genres: Southern Fiction

Release Date: February 7, 2023



Double the Lies

Annalee Spain Mystery Series #2

Patricia Raybon

Tyndale House

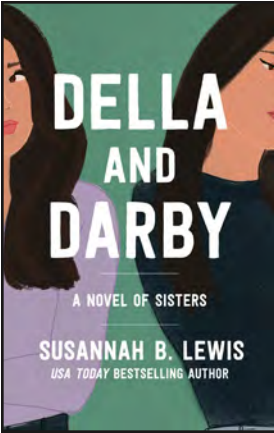
Genres: African American History, Suspense

Release Date: February 7, 2023



New Releases: March 2023

<https://familyfiction.christianbook.com/della-and-darby-novel-of-sisters/9780785248286/pd/248284?event=ESRCG>



Della and Darby

A Novel of Sisters

Susannah B. Lewis

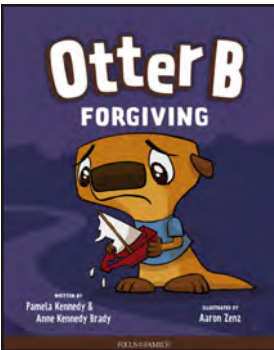
Thomas Nelson

Genres: Southern Fiction

Release Date: February 7, 2023

Buy Now 

<https://familyfiction.christianbook.com/otter-b-forgiving/9781646070428/pd/070429?event=ESRCG>



Otter B Forgiving

Otter B Series #11

Pamela Kennedy and

Anne Kennedy Brady

Focus on the Family

Genres: Children's

Release Date: February 7, 2023

Buy Now 

<https://familyfiction.christianbook.com/every-good-gift/9780310364559/pd/364556?event=ESRCG>



Every Good Gift

Amish Blessings Series #3

Kelly Irvin

Zondervan

Genres: Amish Romance

Release Date: February 7, 2023

Buy Now 

New Releases: March 2023



The Weight of Air

Kimberly Duffy

Bethany House

Genres: Historical Romance

Release Date: February 7, 2023

Buy Now 



The Wayward

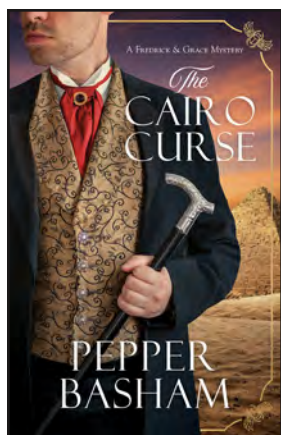
Tabitha Caplinger

Blue Ink Press

Genres: SCI-FI, Dystopian

Release Date: February 4, 2023

Buy Now 



The Cairo Curse

A Freddie and Grace Mystery #2

Pepper Basham

Barbour Publishing

Genres: Historical Romance,
Romantic Suspense

Release Date: February 1, 2023

Buy Now 



Sylvia's Journey Betrayals & Beginnings

Seeds of Faith Series #2

Leah Brewer

Independent

Genres: Romance, Mystery/Suspense

Release Date: November 24, 2022

Buy Now 



Explosive Christmas Showdown

Crisis Rescue Team Series #2

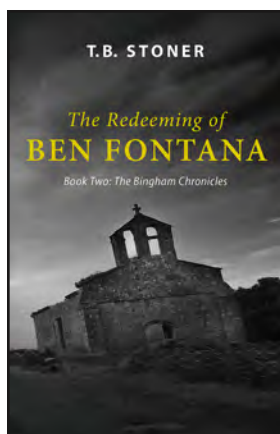
Darlene L. Turner

Harlequin

Genres: Mystery/Suspense,
Romantic Suspense

Release Date: October 25, 2022

Buy Now 



The Redeeming of Ben Fontana

The Bingham Chronicles Series #2

T.B. Stoner

Luminare Press

Genres: Contemporary, Romance,
Suspense

Release Date: January 30, 2023

Buy Now 



In Spotlight and Shadow

Doors to the Past Series #11

Rachel Scott McDaniel

Barbour Publishing

Genres: Historical Romance

Release Date: February 1, 2023



The Genesis 6 Project

Michael Ferguson

Shock Rock

Genres: Sci-Fi/Fantasy, Suspense,
Biblical Fiction

Release Date: November 22, 2022

