

# FamilyFiction

February 2018



## Romance Author **FRANCINE RIVERS**

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**James L. Rubart | Colleen Coble | Wanda E. Brunstetter**

**Samuel Parker | The film 'Extraordinary'**

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### **FRANCINE RIVERS**

With her latest inspirational romance, *The Masterpiece*, Francine Rivers shows how God can work in even the most broken people.

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### **JAMES L. RUBART**

The award-winning author talks about the biblical roots of a classic tale of terror—and his modern-day take on the story.



### **COLLEEN COBLE**

Deadly secrets lurk beneath the beautiful setting of Colleen Coble's new series.

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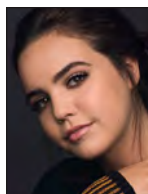
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# ROMANCE: Francine Rivers

## Seeing God's Handiwork

With her latest inspirational romance, ***The Masterpiece***, **Francine Rivers** shows how God can work in even the most broken people...

*Francine Rivers was already a successful romance novelist when she rewrote one of her novels into her first Christian novel, the blockbuster Redeeming Love (Multnomah)—which went on to sell more than a million copies, and cement Francine as a fixture in Christian fiction. In the more than 25 years since then, Francine has been inducted into the Romance Writers of America Hall of Fame, and was given the Lifetime Achievement Award from American Christian Fiction Writers.*

*Francine now introduces The Masterpiece (Tyndale House), a redemptive love story with the message that mercy can shape even the most broken among us into an imperfect, yet stunning, masterpiece. In this interview, Francine reveals the question that inspired The Masterpiece, the challenge of creating a protagonist unlike any she's ever written, and the common thread woven through all her work.*

### **You say each of your novels is prompted by a faith-related question. What question inspired *The Masterpiece*?**

The question that came up for me was whether two people from severely dysfunctional backgrounds could have a healthy relationship. Grace and Roman both come from abusive childhood experiences and have developed different coping mechanisms to survive. The past often intrudes and sometimes blocks people from moving forward, but we are all ultimately responsible for the choices we make.

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Each of us must decide who Jesus is. That choice decides where we spend eternity. It also makes a difference in our life in the here and now.

When abuse occurs, a child's view of God is twisted. That raises other questions. What might need to happen to open the door to the true God and faith in Him? What if someone grows up knowing nothing of God other than as a curse?

I had questions enough for several books, and wallowed around in the mire through several drafts. Hence, so did my characters. Grace and Roman are each on different journeys. What brings them together and what keeps them apart?

I was well into the project before I knew which Scripture God was showing me—Ephesians 2:10: *For we are God's masterpiece. He has created us anew in Christ Jesus, so we can do the good things he planned for us long ago.* This is the heart of the book.

### **What kind of research did you do for this novel? Did any findings particularly surprise you?**

Most of my research had to do with the patterns and psychology of victims of abuse. It wasn't pleasant reading. It's heart-wrenching. I didn't want to misrepresent survivors of abuse.

I talked with a friend who is a strong Christian, highly educated, and a certified family counselor. She suggested I present my characters to a group of counselors who meet once a week. When we all gathered, I explained my dilemma and presented my "case studies." One gentleman cried and said he'd worked with young men exactly like Roman Velasco. Grace's emotional trauma and means of coping are also common.



I also needed to learn about graffiti artists. I started with online searches and then met a young man who had been a gang tagger in the Bay Area. We talked about his motivations, experiences, and the dangers he faced, not the least of which was leaving the gang.

I found a website with terms and definitions regarding graffiti. I also read some books about the young man's idol, Banksy. No one knows the identity of Banksy, but his work is known around the world. I liked the mystery element and employed it.

The surprise came after the book was written and I had the opportunity to meet Cameron Moberg, a Christian graffiti artist in San Francisco. He does work around the world, as well. He reaffirmed what I saw happening in Roman Velasco's life. Cameron's art is also on the cover of *The Masterpiece*.

Many of his works are of spectacular, imagined birds. How could I not see God chuckling at how He brings things together?

**Your novels look deeply into your characters' motivations and emotions. What do you hope readers will learn delving into the inner thoughts of these characters?**

Sometimes the hardest-hearted person you know is the most broken inside. All too often, we judge by the outward appearance, but God knows the heart.

Also, even when we don't see God at work, He is working. Never give up on anyone. Just keep praying and walking the walk. You never really know what's going on inside someone. The blessing is you may witness the creation of a new God-ordained masterpiece.

**God draws our hearts to Him in many different ways. Without revealing too much, what are some ways He does this for the characters in *The Masterpiece*?**

Pain tends to turn us to God. So does despair that comes from unanswered questions. What is the purpose of life? Why am I here? Why doesn't anything the world has to offer bring satisfaction and contentment? What's missing? Roman wrestles with these questions.

Grace knows the answers, but struggles with walking by faith and trusting God to work things out. The human heart is deceitful. We can so easily justify and rationalize behavior we know is wrong. It takes strength that only God can give to overcome the battles every one of us faces every day in this world.

Many of us turn to Christ as Savior, but still want to remain lord of our life. It's a paradox, but full surrender is the only way to a victorious life. We only feel God's indwelling, ever-abiding presence when we decide to make Him Lord of all aspects of ourselves. It isn't easy to live that way because it brings suffering. It also brings purpose and joy.

**The main characters of *The Masterpiece* might not receive a warm welcome in every church across the country. What do you want readers to see in these characters—and in themselves?**

Never judge by outward appearances. It takes courage for people to come into a new church—or enter a church for the first time. Christians are, after all, “aliens,” very different from the world—or should be.

Visitors and newcomers may look different than we do. They may come from different places. If people seem unapproachable, offer a smile and nod of greeting. Give them space. Give them time. Extend courtesy and welcome to all. And when the door opens, talk with them about Jesus—not just inside the walls of a church, but anywhere.

**Roman Velasco is unlike any other male character you've written. What was most challenging about crafting the character of a rebel graffiti artist? Why did you choose this character?**

I thought the hardest part in writing about Bobby Ray Dean/the Bird/Roman Velasco was going to be learning about the art form, challenges in doing it and getting away with it, terms and materials.

But the real challenge was figuring out what drove this boy/man to paint graffiti—and the kind of graffiti pieces he did. We have crews in town that go out and buff (cover) graffiti as soon as possible.

Many times, graffiti is a territorial marker, a challenge, evidence of war going on in your community. I wanted Bobby Ray Dean to have other motivations which evolve as he grows up and into the persona of Roman Velasco. He feels illegitimate as the Bird, but strives for legitimacy through Roman Velasco. The graffiti and the canvas work he does show the war going on inside him.

It takes God to bring the two sides together and blend the mediums into a new, unique art quest and passion.



## **What does *The Masterpiece* have in common with your other novels, and how is it unique?**

Every story I've written contains a love story. Brokenness, healing, and redemption are consistent themes in my work. This book has that in common with all my others.

However, in other stories, I've had one main character be strong in faith. The difference in this novel is that both people are broken and struggling.

Grace is the Christian, but she has fallen several times, and suffered greatly for it. Her faith is an uphill, arduous climb. Roman adds to that battle. They both come from traumatic childhood experiences that have shaped their lives.

The strong Christian voices in this story come from secondary characters.

## **What do you hope your readers come to know about God through this story?**

I want readers to know that no matter who you are, where you come from, or what you've done, when you accept Jesus, God will make you into His masterpiece.

## **Why do you believe storytelling is such a powerful way to communicate truth?**

I know many people who won't touch a Bible. You even mention reading one, and they raise their hands in protest. Those same people will read a novel.

For some, it's just a form of entertainment. They enjoy the characters and what happens to them and move on. But others feel a seed being planted and it begins to grow.

Jesus used parables. Some never asked questions after He spoke. They just listened, were briefly entertained, possibly perplexed, and moved on.

But the disciples and those willing to admit their hunger and thirst came to Him and asked: *What do you mean by that?* And He told them.

Readers sometimes ask me questions about my stories. That gives me an opportunity to point to Jesus. It gives me a chance to tell them what I've learned. When you go into the Bible with an open heart and mind and ask God to speak to you, He does. He meets you right where you are.

### **How has your mission as a writer changed over the years?**

My mission as a writer changed drastically when I became a Christian. My first book as a believer was *Redeeming Love*, and my goal was to show readers who had followed my career what had happened to my life. I'd been writing steamy historical romances where the focus was on a man-woman relationship....eros.

I sensed God directing me to write another historical romance in the same genre, but showing real love—His love for each of us. It was all about a man-God-woman relationship that brought redemption, healing, restoration, and purpose to a damaged soul.

Every story I've written since has been about God and how He works in the lives of broken, sinful people.

In *Redeeming Love*, God is literally speaking to the main character, Michael, and later, to Angel. In *The Masterpiece*,

Grace continually seeks out God's voice for direction and guidance in living her life. And while some things seem clear to her, she also finds that sometimes you have to look back to see His hand at work.

I find that in my own life. When I look back, I can see the Lord was always there, right from the beginning. It goes back to Scripture and how God knows us before we're born. He has a plan already in motion. He knits us in our mother's womb. That's what I want to show readers in my stories: the height, depth, and width of God's love for us. **FF**

**Visit Francine Rivers' author page here:**

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## ***The Masterpiece***

Francine Rivers

Tyndale House

*New York Times* bestselling author Francine Rivers returns to her romance roots with this unexpected and redemptive love story, a probing tale that reminds us that mercy can shape even the most broken among us into an imperfect yet stunning masterpiece.

A successful L.A. artist, Roman Velasco appears to have everything he could possibly want—money, women, fame. Only Grace Moore, his reluctant, newly hired personal assistant, knows how little he truly has. The demons of Roman's past seem to echo through the halls of his empty mansion and out across his breathtaking Topanga Canyon view. But Grace doesn't know how her boss secretly wrestles with those demons: by tagging buildings as the Bird, a notorious but unidentified graffiti artist—an alter ego that could destroy his career and land him in prison.

Like Roman, Grace is wrestling with ghosts and secrets of her own. After a disastrous marriage threw her life completely off course, she vowed never to let love steal her dreams again. But as she gets to know the enigmatic man behind the reputation, it's as if the jagged pieces of both of their pasts slowly begin to fit together ... until something so unexpected happens that it changes the course of their relationship—and both their lives—forever.



# SPECULATIVE: James L. Rubart

## The War Inside

The award-winning author talks about the biblical roots of a classic tale of terror—and his modern-day take on the story.

*Bestselling speculative author James L. Rubart offers his modern take on Robert Louis Stevenson's classic novella The Strange Case of Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde with The Man He Never Was (Thomas Nelson). Eight months after he vanished, Toren Daniels shows up on his family's doorstep a radically different man. There's no hint of the raging temper they'd endured. He's oddly patient and kind—but then the real battle begins.*

*In this exclusive interview, James discusses why he writes supernatural fiction, how he relates to his conflicted main character, and the unusual inspiration for his next novel.*

### **How did you first get interested in supernatural fiction, and what appeals to you about the genre?**

Such a great question! Growing up I was a voracious reader of all kinds of fiction, but loved most of all the stories where the unexpected and fantastical happened. As I got older and my faith developed, I realized not only is the Bible a collection of fantastical stories, but the stories actually happened. So when I began to tell my own stories, I suppose it was natural to combine my faith with the kind of tales I loved reading.

### **How would you describe your stories?**

It's always been tough to describe my genre, but let's take a shot.

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Contemporary stories set in the real world, where fantastical things happen. Or, psychological soul-searching thrillers with a supernatural bent based on a Christian world view.

Or simply, supernatural suspense.

### **Where do your ideas come from?**

My brilliant wife, seeing a journal laying on the side of the road soaking in the rain (the idea for my novel coming out in 2019), an offhand comment from a friend, questions I'm wrestling with in my own life—it's never the same way twice. They find me much more often than I find them.

### **Have you found it challenging to write supernatural fiction and incorporate biblical truth?**

I realized a while ago that I'm not consciously trying to write supernatural fiction, and I'm not consciously trying to incorporate biblical truth. I'm simply writing the stories that won't get out of my head till I write them down.

Because my belief system is Judeo-Christian, the way I see the world is biblically based and that comes out in my writing. With regard to the fantastical/supernatural elements, I'm just following Toni Morrison's advice: "If there's a book that you want to read, but it hasn't been written yet, then you must write it."

### **Who are some writers that you enjoy, and what do you like about their work?**

C.S. Lewis has always been—and likely always will be—my favorite author. I like Ted Dekker and Stephen Lawhead a great deal as well. All three take me away to other worlds, but wrestle with life issues that are right here, right now.

I want my novels to wildly entertain readers, but also make them freer when they finish my stories than when they started. These three authors do that for me.

**Let's talk about your new book, *The Man He Never Was*. How were you first exposed to the story of Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde? What inspired you to create a modern take on it?**

When I got the idea, I hadn't seen the movies or read the novella! (I did read the novella after I got the story idea.)

I was working out, listening to a sermon by Tim Keller. During the talk, he mentioned that Robert Louis Stevenson got his inspiration for Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde from Romans chapter 7. I had no idea, but it instantly made sense to me.

Romans 7 is about the civil war inside us. That's what Stevenson's novella is about. Bing! In that moment, *The Man He Never Was* came to life.

**Your main character struggles with anger management issues stemming from a strained relationship with his father. Why did you choose to characterize him as a believer?**

Because I'm Toren Daniels, and I'm a believer. I don't wrestle with anger. Having a temper is not one of my issues.

But I do have other struggles, issues I fight against. Over the past few years, I've been finding a way out. I've found more freedom from "the things I do, but hate that I do," than ever before.

So this story—like all my stories—is taking my personal journey and putting it into a story in a way I hope can set others free as well.

**Are there any passages of Scripture you can share that speak to people who may struggle with a “Jekyll and Hyde” issue in their own lives?**

There are many, but here are a few. Galatians 2:20: “I have been crucified with Christ and I no longer live, but Christ lives in me.”

We’re not alive any longer. I don’t think we grasp that. We’re dead! The good man in Romans 7? Dead. The bad man? Dead. There’s a new being inside us now, called Christ. We are now one with Him.

We have His power, His glory, His grace at our disposal. God has made us complete in Christ. Once we start to embrace that, wow ... chains start to fall away.

Ephesians 2:6: “And God raised us up with Christ and seated us with him in the heavenly realms in Christ Jesus ...” This verse is not talking about what will happen, but what has already happened. “Raised.” Past tense.

I don’t think anyone reading this right now thinks their physical body will live forever. Yet we live like it. We concentrate on it. We live out our days focused on the physical realm, where in contrast, the apostle Paul suggests, “Focus not on the seen (the physical realm) but the unseen ...” (the spiritual realm).

When we follow Paul's leading, and focus on the unseen, our priorities change. Everything about us changes. And we realize the war talked about in Romans 7 has been won. Once we truly believe that, and embrace that, we start to live it out.

### **What do you hope readers will take away after reading this book?**

I hope they experience more freedom than they ever have before. I hope the ideas in the novel soak down deep in them and they realize they are loved far beyond imagination. I hope all their worries fall away as they realize who they truly are in Christ.

### **Can you give us a hint about what you're working on now?**

Sure! Just yesterday I finished the story I hinted at earlier, called *The Pages of Her Life*, about a journal sitting on the side of a road getting soaked by Seattle rain.

Last March, I was in my car, and saw a journal sitting on the on ramp just before I got on the freeway. For some reason I got out, picked up the journal and took it home.

And I thought, "What if like on the walls at Belshazzar's feast in the book of Daniel, writing from heaven started showing up on the pages of the journal?" It comes out in 2019. I think you'll like it.

Thanks so much for having me! **FF**

**Visit James L. Rubart's author page here:**

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## ***The Man He Never Was***

James L. Rubart

Thomas Nelson

*What if You Woke up One Morning  
and the Darkest Parts of Yourself  
Were Gone?*

Toren Daniels vanished eight months back, and his wife and kids have moved on—with more than a little relief. Toren was a good man but carried a rag-

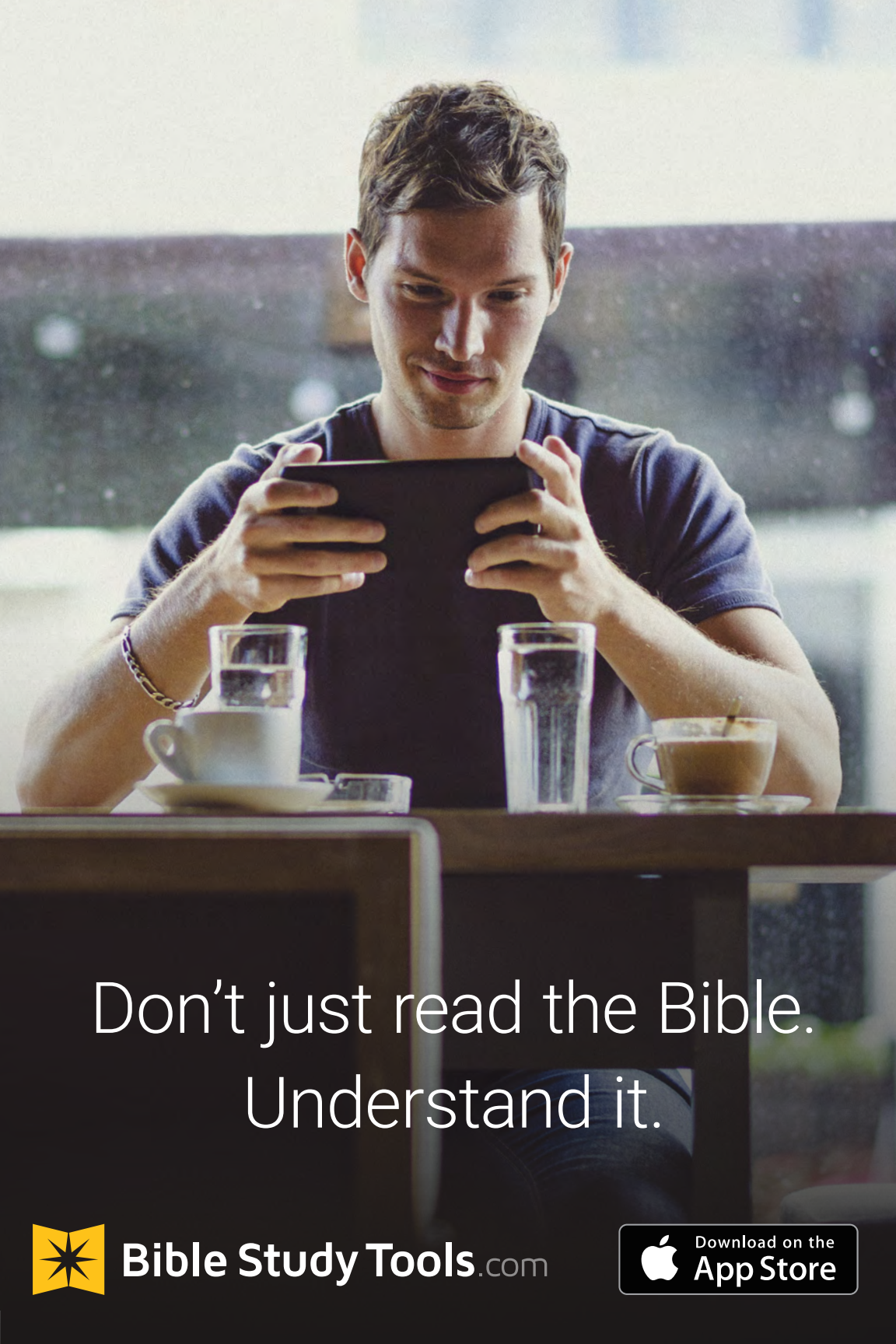
ing temper that often exploded without warning. So when he shows up on their doorstep out of the blue, they're shocked to see him alive. But more shocked to see he's changed. Radically.

His anger is gone. He's oddly patient. Kind. Fun. The man he always wanted to be. Toren has no clue where he's been but knows he's been utterly transformed. He focuses on three things: Finding out where he's been. Finding out how it happened. And winning back his family.

But then shards of his old self start to rise from deep inside—like the man kicked out of the NFL for his fury—and Toren must face the supreme battle of his life.

In this fresh take on the classic Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde, James L. Rubart explores the war between the good and evil within each of us—and one man's only chance to overcome the greatest divide of the soul.





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# ROMANTIC SUSPENSE: Colleen Coble

## The Mystery of Rainshadow Bay

Deadly secrets lurk beneath the beautiful setting of **Colleen Coble's** new series

*USA Today bestselling romantic suspense author Colleen Coble draws readers into a heart-pounding adventure with The View from Rainshadow Bay (Thomas Nelson), the first book in her Lavender Tides series. The story takes place amid the fragrant lavender fields of Washington state—but the beautiful scenery masks dangerous secrets.*

*In this interview, Colleen reveals why she scouts her locations, her longtime love of suspense and mystery stories, and why a great suspense story doesn't require objectionable content.*

### **What was the genesis behind your new book, *The View from Rainshadow Bay*?**

Strangely enough, I always start with setting. I saw a picture of the lavender fields of Sequim, Washington, and I was hooked. While researching that area, I stumbled across something about the area expecting a big earthquake one of these days, and in researching earthquakes I ran across the fracking angle.

So this is how coming up with story always works for me. Setting leads to a kernel of an idea which leads to another kernel and so on!

**When we meet them, the protagonists have this wedge between them: she blames him for the death of her husband, and it seems like he agrees with her. What inspired such a dynamic point of friction between them?**

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I wondered what would happen when someone really is to blame for the death of his best friend. So that led to thinking about how that would all play out. There are surprises in this area of the story, though!

### **What was it about these characters that made you want to tell their story?**

I loved Shauna's strength and her love for her little boy. And I loved Zach's steadfastness no matter what.

### **Like so many of your novels, location is also an important component of *The View from Rainshadow Bay*. How important is it to find the right setting for a story?**

This is the way I always come at story. Every single series first started with setting. I never want a story to be able to be dropped into another setting and still make sense. Setting adds so much depth and layering to a story when it's integrated into the plot and characters.

### **Do you ever do "location scouting" for your books?**

Oh yes, I scout them out! We went to the Gulf Shores for the first time over spring break last year, and I loved it. What really got my creative juices flowing was having dinner with friends and hearing about adventures aboard a shrimp boat from their teenage boy. The opening scene of the first book in that series dropped into my head. That will be my next series!

When we were in the Upper Peninsula of Michigan researching *Beyond a Doubt*, it was the dead of winter. My husband looked at me and said, "How about next time you set a series in Hawaii?" That's how the Aloha Reef series was born. The setting is *the* most important thing for me when I come at story.



**You've said that suspense is your favorite genre. What it about suspense that keeps you coming back?**

I have a strong streak of justice. I can't stand to read about someone being arrested and going to jail for a crime she didn't commit, for example. I can't write that kind of story either because my characters must have justice! Crazy, I know, but that's my quirk!

I grew up on Nancy Drew and learned to love mystery at an early age. I love the puzzle and the adrenaline rush of that kind of story.

**Your general market counterparts can't seem to write a story without including objectionable content. What are the challenges of writing romantic suspense as a Christian author?**

Great story never used to include those objectionable things—and stories still don't need them. I hear from many readers who love the fact they don't have to skip over parts of my novels.

There's a real desire out there for great story that doesn't leave the reader needing to take a shower. So basically, I just leave out the parts readers skip!

Story is all about conflict and character. You don't have to include colorful language even when writing someone with a penchant for swearing. Saying, "he swore" is enough. And it's the same thing with sex scenes. My characters are Christian, so while they can still have temptations in that area, their faith is important to them.



I read a lot of general market fiction, but I skip those parts myself when reading. It always makes me wonder why an author thinks it's even important to have something like that in there.

Mary Higgins Clark doesn't write sex scenes, and she sells millions of books. Those scenes aren't necessary for good story. Conflict and emotion are what sell books.

**So many of your plots have the pulse-pounding setup of a movie (in the good way). Is your fiction more influenced by books or movies—and in what ways?**

Oh, always books! I'm not a movie girl—though I'd love to have one of my books make the big screen. Books carry a much richer experience than movies. There are very few movies that are life changing the way books are.

**How has your faith impacted the way you tell stories?**

My faith impacts everything I do. My characters are Christians who are learning something just like I am. None of us ever arrive, and there is always something God is teaching us.

I never know what that something is when I first start out writing a story. My characters have to tell me what they're struggling with, and together we go from there.

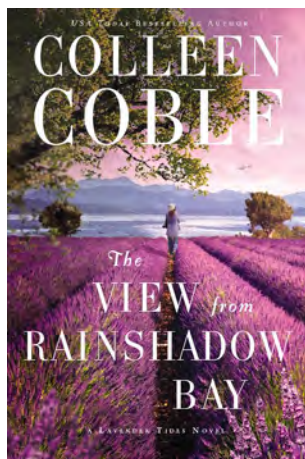
**What do you hope readers will take away after reading *The View from Rainshadow Bay*?**

I hope the book helps readers remember how God works all things together for our good when we love Him. **FF**

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***The View from Rainshadow Bay***

Lavender Tides

Colleen Coble

Thomas Nelson

After her husband, Jack, dies in a climbing incident, Shauna has only her five-year-old son and her helicopter charter business to live for. Every day is a struggle to make ends meet and she lives in constant fear of losing even more than she already has.

When her business partner is murdered, his final words convince Shauna that she's in danger too. But where can she turn? Zach Bannister was her husband's best friend and is the person she blames for his death. She's barely spoken to him since. But right now he seems her only hope for protecting her son.

Zach is only too happy to assuage his guilt over Jack's death by helping Shauna any way he can. But there are secrets involved dating back to Shauna's childhood that more than one person would prefer to stay hidden.

In *The View from Rainshadow Bay*, suspense, danger, and a longing to love again ignite amid the gorgeous lavender fields of Washington State.

Bestselling Amish author **Wanda Brunstetter** invites readers to return to Holmes County, Ohio, with ***The Celebration*** (Shiloh Run Press), the third and final installment in her Amish Cooking Class series. Also releasing this month is ***The Amish Cooking Class Cookbook*** (Shiloh Run Press), featuring more than 200 recipes related to the



Amish Cooking Class series. In this exclusive Q&A, Wanda shares about life lessons in *The Celebration*, her favorite recipes from the cookbook, and the brand-new series she's working on now.

### **What are some of the main themes in *The Celebration*, and what new challenges do the Troyers face?**

Some of the main themes in *The Celebration* are developing closer family ties; dealing with a lack of self-esteem; and acceptance of others. One of the biggest challenges Heidi and Lyle Troyer face is helping their foster children adjust to the loss of their parents.

### **What are a couple of the biggest life lessons that readers will find in *The Celebration*?**

Two of the life lessons readers will find in *The Celebration* are the importance of family and the benefits of working together with others who might be different from you.

### **Did you learn anything interesting in your research for the Amish Cooking Class series?**

I learned some interesting facts about adoption and foster care—particularly within the state of Ohio, where this series is set.



**What was the most challenging part of writing the series?**

The most challenging, yet enjoyable part of writing this series was in having so many characters with different storylines and problems they had to deal with.

**Tell us a little about *The Amish Cooking Class Cookbook* and how it relates to the series. What are a couple of your favorite recipes from the book?**

*The Amish Cooking Class Cookbook* includes all of the recipes Heidi Troyer taught her students in each of the three books that make up the Amish Cooking Class series. It also includes favorite recipes from each of the students who attended the class. Two of my favorite recipes from this cookbook are: Amish Friendship Bread and Chicken in a Crumb Basket.

**What can readers expect next from you?**

My next release is *The Hawaiian Discovery*, which I co-authored with my daughter-in-law, Jean. It's a sequel to *The Hawaiian Quilt* and will be published in June 2018. And, I am currently working on the first book of a brand-new three-book series entitled *The Prayer Jars*. Book One, *The Hope Jar*, will release in August 2018. **FF**

**Visit Wanda E. Brunstetter's author page here:**

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

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**Sharon Garlough Brown** is the author of the Sensible Shoes series, a unique collection of contemporary novels that traces the lives of four women who meet at a spiritual retreat center. In the fourth and final installment, ***An Extra Mile*** (InterVarsity Press), four friends cheer each other on as they struggle to follow God's calling and navigate through times of deep joy and devastating loss. In this interview, Sharon describes the real-life inspiration behind the series, the stealthy ways stories impart insight, and how readers can use the novels to enliven their own walk with God....



## How did the Sensible Shoes series come into being?

In September of 2008 I began leading a weekly group for 12 women at our church. I wanted to introduce some spiritual disciplines that have deeply impacted my life with God, practices that have helped me pay attention to the presence of God and to the movement of the Spirit in transformative ways.

Each week we explored an ancient Christian practice like prayerfully reading the Word (*lectio divina*), the prayer of examen, and praying with imagination. We practiced silence, journaled, and listened prayerfully to one another's stories.

The women grew to trust each other deeply, confessing sins and naming sorrows. We watched God work in profound ways to bring about healing, transformation, and freedom.



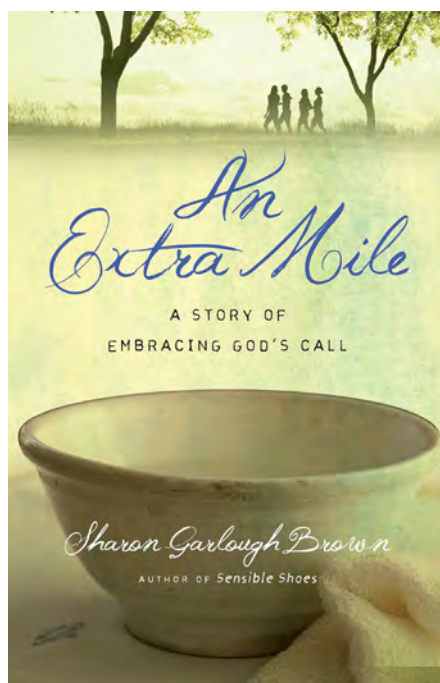


In one of our first meetings, one of the women in the group looked around the circle and commented, “Everybody here is wearing really cute, but sensible shoes!”

The phrase stuck, and we began to refer to ourselves as the “Sensible Shoes Club.” God was leading us through the unpredictable and sometimes treacherous terrain of the inner life, and we needed sensible shoes for the journey. We also needed one another.

As we walked together, I sensed there was a story to tell—not a story about our particular journeys, but a story about the power of the Spirit to conform us into the image of Christ. I began to wonder what would happen if I created four characters who meet at a retreat center in order to learn ways to walk more closely with God.

And so Meg, Hannah, Mara, and Charissa emerged from my imagination.



**You impart a lot of spiritual truth through the lives of your four main characters. Why do you think that storytelling is such a powerful way to communicate truth?**

We tend to read fiction differently than nonfiction. Our defenses are down when we read fiction, and so we're open to being drawn into the lives of characters, to inhabit their worlds, to journey with them. Good characters can become mirrors for seeing ourselves more clearly—that's part of the joy of reading stories.

Stories are stealthy. They can stir us, confront us, comfort us, inspire us, and penetrate us when we're least expecting it. Jesus understood the power of imagination and used story to reveal the kingdom of God in profound ways.

The beauty of storytelling is that it's invitational, so it can pursue us long after we've read—or heard—the last word.

**What kinds of challenges do your four main characters face throughout the series?**

Throughout the series the characters are wrestling with common issues: letting go of control, trusting God, people-pleasing, perfectionism, hiding behind busyness, fear, regret, guilt, and shame.

In the midst of all of these challenges, they're discovering ways to grow in their confidence in God's love and grace, and they're deepening bonds in community. But spiritual growth is never linear.

Transformation isn't quick or easy. And their lives are messy. They each experience significant loss and heartaches along the way. They're challenged to love others well, especially those who make life difficult for them. And they're each invited to learn what it means to die to self and live in Christ.

**Without revealing too much, tell us a little about the final book, *An Extra Mile*. What are a few ways your characters have grown and changed?**

*An Extra Mile* is a book about grieving with hope. When the book opens, the characters are trying to process a devastating loss which threatens to unravel their newfound community.

The story takes place during the seasons of Lent and Easter, and the themes in the book point both to the suffering of Christ and the glory of His resurrection.

The characters are growing in grace. They're growing in authenticity and courage. They're awakening to the presence of God in the ordinary circumstances of life. They're being enlarged in their capacity to love God and love others.

They're learning to let go of control and to trust that God is with them and for them, even when life doesn't go as planned.

## **What do you hope readers will take away after reading the series?**

The series is about being transformed and healed by the love of God. My hope is that readers will say yes to the invitation to travel deeper into God's heart, to experience His grace, mercy, compassion, and forgiveness, and to do this in community. We're not meant to travel alone.

I also hope readers will discover some new, life-giving ways of keeping company with Jesus through the practice of spiritual disciplines.

I often hear from readers who long to experience a retreat like the characters in *Sensible Shoes*. To help facilitate that, there's a 12-week study guide designed for both individuals and groups. The guide is essentially a primer in spiritual formation and includes daily Scripture readings, reflection questions, and prayer practices.

The other books in the series also have accompanying companion guides for prayer and reflection at the back of each book. I hope each book in the series facilitates a reader's encounter with God. **FF**

**Visit Sharon Garlough Brown's author page here:**

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# Historical Mesu Andrews

Biblical fiction author **Mesu Andrews** explores the life of Isaiah and his captivating daughter in her new novel, *Isaiah's Daughter: A Novel of Prophets and Kings* (WaterBrook). In this epic biblical narrative, Ishma (renamed Zibah), a young girl adopted by the prophet Isaiah, grows up to capture the heart of their nation's future king.



In this exclusive Q&A, Mesu tells why she loves writing biblical fiction, what inspired her to write Zibah's story, and the research behind her compelling novels.

## **You are known for writing wonderful biblical fiction. What drew you to this genre, and what keeps it interesting for you?**

You are so kind. Thank you. I grew up as a spiritual mutt—Mom, charismatic; Dad, Quaker; grandparents, Wesleyan—and I rebelled against everything that had to do with God or the Bible in my teen years.

At age 19, I finally saw the reality of Jesus Christ in a high school friend's changed life and knew I needed to read and understand the Bible for myself. I'm still on that journey.

Reading and writing biblical novels gives me an "excuse" to research the Scriptures that intrigue me. Before I was published, I still researched the original languages, archaeology, and commentaries. The only difference now is that I get to share all that cool stuff with others.

## **Would you give us a brief synopsis of this story?**

Ishma comes to the prophet Isaiah's home as a 5-year-old orphan, devastated after watching her family destroyed and living



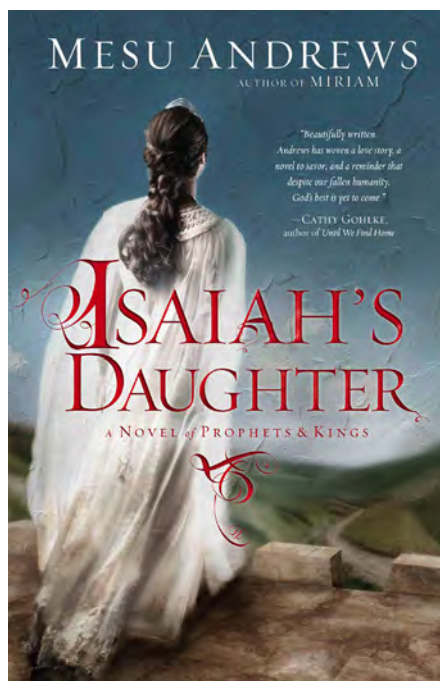
as a captive. With tenderness and care, her lively spirit is revived, and the prophet and his wife adopt Ishma, giving her a new name—Zibah, delight of the Lord.

As the years pass, Zibah wins Prince Hezekiah's favor, a boy determined to rebuild the kingdom his father has nearly destroyed. But loving this man awakens Zibah's painful past and calls into question the very foundation of her father's prophecies.

Can she learn to rely on only Yahweh, who gives life, calms fear, and conquers nations?

### **What inspired you to write Zibah's story? Why was this novel begging to be written?**

"Hephzibah," Zibah's full name, has been my favorite name in Scripture since I first learned its meaning: the Lord's delight is in her. I want to be Hephzibah every day of my life. I was also intrigued by Hephzibah because she was married to the most righteous king in Judah (Hezekiah) and yet was mother to the most wicked king in Judah (Manasseh).



I discovered this conundrum about the time my daughters were entering their adult years and breaking free of my control. My girls weren't wicked like Manasseh, but as adults they've made choices their dad and I haven't always agreed with. I wanted to know more about Hephzibah, who watched her son destroy her husband's legacy while remaining a delight to her God.

Early in my research, I also discovered the Jewish tradition that Zibah may have been Isaiah's daughter, adding still more intrigue to this complex and fascinating web of royal relationships.

A series of questions began to haunt me, but most important of all: What lessons can we learn today from the clues this family left us?

### **What was the research process like? Do you enjoy doing the research for your books?**

I began researching Hephzibah (Zibah) and her life six years before I signed a publishing contract to write the book. Judah/Israel was a patriarchal society, meaning history was passed down through men and from men's perspectives, so studying Zibah meant studying the men's lives around her.

I studied Isaiah's lineage, Assyria's siege on Jerusalem, and Hezekiah's mortal illness. Then I asked, "How would these facts and details affect Isaiah's daughter, Hezekiah's wife?"

During the research process, I find additional characters recorded in Jewish traditions and add those to the biblical story, trying to maintain historical accuracy with biblical authenticity.

Do I enjoy research? Absolutely LOVE it. I'm a Bible geek and proud of it!

### **What will readers find relatable to their own lives in the story of *Isaiah's Daughter*?**

Readers often find different things than I expect, which is part of the joy I find in writing. But I'll share a couple of things I learned while writing. Zibah seeks security and peace throughout the book, hoping to find it in a place, a thing, a person, a role.

Ultimately, she reaches the conclusion that many of us spend our whole lives seeking: Our only peace comes by focusing on eternal things rather than this temporary life we lead. Hezekiah struggles to understand God and His Word.

I think anyone who has asked God, "Why?" or struggled with a particular passage of Scripture will relate to Hezekiah's journey. **FF**

**Visit Mesu Andrews' author page here:**

<https://www.familyfiction.com/authors/mesu-andrews>

## ***The Saturday Night Supper Club***

(Tyndale House) is the latest release from **Carla Laureano**, author of contemporary inspirational romance and Celtic fantasy (as C.E. Laureano).

When a targeted smear campaign dashes chef Rachel's dreams, she vows to do whatever it takes to get her life back—even if she has to join forces

with the man who inadvertently caused the disaster. In this interview, Carla discusses the real-life controversies behind the plot, the common ground shared by writers and foodies, and the power of social media.



## **What inspired you to write *The Saturday Night Supper Club*?**

I knew from the start that I wanted to write a book about three friends who started a supper club in my hometown of Denver, and the title came almost immediately.

Some of the other elements, like the double-edged nature of social media and the challenges of women in business, came from the media I was consuming at the time.

I'd been reading acclaimed chef Dominique Crenn's interviews about gender bias in the food industry, and I'd followed both Gamergate and the 2015 Hugo Awards controversies from a distance.

Everyone was taking very strong stances on one side or the other, but what about those who fell somewhere in the middle? Women who want to be acknowledged for their talents and not for their gender, but don't want to be outspoken feminist cru-





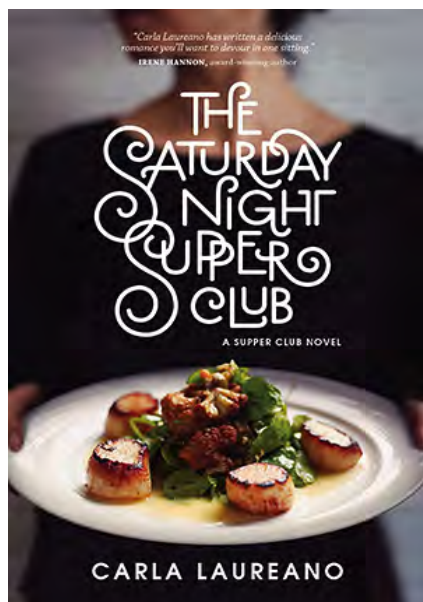
saders? Artists who want to be free to create their work without it having to make a cultural statement?

There are a lot of serious issues that play into the book's plot, but I was conscious of not making it into an "issue book." At its heart, I wanted *The Saturday Night Supper Club* to be a realistic look at what it means to be a modern Christian woman pursuing both love and career, with all the joy and heartache that entails.

**How do you expect the novel to resonate with your audience? What are you most excited for your readers to experience through reading this story?**

Anyone who likes food is going to find a lot to love in *The Saturday Night Supper Club*. Denver has such a unique feel and a particularly distinct food scene, and I'm excited for my audience to experience my home city like I do.

More importantly, I've always had an affinity for "food people"—I've found that my professional cook friends and acquaintances definitely have artistic temperaments, much like writers.



People in both professions tend to be driven, dedicated, and more than a little neurotic ... which means that Rachel as a chef and Alex as a writer have much more in common than it might seem at first.

I think readers will love seeing behind the scenes of their worlds, which are both far more interesting and far less glamorous than they seem from the outside.

### **What role does faith play in this story?**

The faith element in this story is subtle but particularly meaningful to me. Rachel's past experiences have damaged her view of God (and men) and left her with deep scars.

In the end, the story is really about how God uses circumstances to guide her back to Him, even while she thinks she's having to go it alone. It's taken me decades to fully understand how God has been present in my own life; only now with the benefit of hindsight do I see how He was working all things for my good.

### **What lessons or truths do you hope people take away from *The Saturday Night Supper Club*?**

I hope they realize that small heartfelt offerings, like cooking a meal for a friend, are just as important as grand gestures. I hope they are inspired to build strong friendships like the one Rachel has with Ana and Melody; in my opinion, they are an absolute necessity to buffer us from the hardships of modern life.

Most of all, I hope readers realize that however distant they might feel from God, it's never too late to come back to Him.

**This story holds a great example of the power of social media in our culture today. How do you hope this influences readers?**

Rachel loses her dream restaurant because of social media bullying and the online mob mentality, but it also becomes an instrument of her redemption as Alex uses it to write a new and kinder narrative.

I hope that readers are reminded that virtual actions have real-life repercussions, and that there are actual people on the other end of the computer.

Everything we read, particularly on social media, has a slant. It's our responsibility as decent human beings, but particularly as Christians, to find out the truth before we judge and share.

***The Saturday Night Supper Club* is the debut novel in a three-book series. Can you give readers a taste of what to expect in the novels to come?**

Melody and Ana will get their chance at love and pursue new career avenues, beginning with Melody in book two, *Brunch at Bittersweet Cafe*. We'll also see a lot more of Rachel and Alex as the series goes on. Plus food. Lots of delicious food....

It's probably a good idea not to read any of these hungry! **FF**

**Visit Carla Laureano's author page here:**

<https://www.familyfiction.com/authors/carla-laureano>

**S.D. Grimm** continues her Children of the Blood Moon series with *Amber Eyes* (Enclave Publishing). In the fantasy world of Soleden, Jayden is a 17-year-old, dagger-wielding orphan with special powers. She's the only one who can save her countrymen from a powerful enemy—but the wrong choice could cost her everyone she loves. In this exclusive interview, S.D. reveals more about the mysterious realm of Soleden and what her young protagonist is up against.



**Tell us a bit about the world you created in your Children of the Blood Moon series?**

Sure! Soleden is a place where magic is real, and blade and bow reign as weapons for those who don't have it. Magic mostly manifested through abilities that certain people are born with.



For example, the main character, Jayden, has the ability to predict storms. She knows where lightning will strike, how long the rain will last, and when the heart of the storm is at its strongest. She can also feel people's emotions to the point where she can temporarily make them her own.

Feravolk are the people who have magic in their blood. Many of them can bond with animals, giving them and their animals a way to communicate with one another telepathically.

### **Do you and Jayden share any traits?**

Jayden has a tender heart. It's a great strength, even though at times she sees her insight into emotion as draining and difficult to deal with. I share this trait with her.

I tend to feel other people's emotions deeply, and while it can be a blessing, it can also be draining. But she is learning how to focus on the blessing part of this kind of tenderness throughout *Scarlet Moon*. She isn't one to give up, she looks for the best in others, and she's really good with daggers.

### **Can you give us a hint about what Jayden faces in *Amber Eyes*? Has she grown since the previous book, *Scarlet Moon*?**

She will face her fears again—an enemy she fears, and a threat that broke her in the past.

Since *Scarlet Moon*, she has learned that fear doesn't need to control her. But as all humans tend to slip back into old habits, as the stakes get higher and scarier, she will struggle to keep from slipping back into her old cocoon of fear.

### **When did you first become interested in writing fantasy? Why do you love it?**

Ever since I could write. I've always been drawn to stories in this genre. I love the possibilities that magic and science that's not yet explained bring to the table.

### **What do you hope readers will take away from this series?**

Mostly the power of real love. Love always protects, always hopes, always trusts, always perseveres. Love never fails. **FF**

**Visit S.D. Grimm's author page here:**

<https://www.familyfiction.com/authors/s-d-grimm>

The latest thriller from **Samuel Parker** is the pulse-pounding *Coldwater* (Revell). Just out of prison, Michael moves back to his hometown—a town that’s always hated him—and finds himself on the run from those who tried to kill him once before. In this interview, Samuel talks about this tale of vengeance and justice, the familiar setting he chose, and how he hopes readers will respond.



## **Would you tell us a bit about your newest book?**

*Coldwater* tells the story of an ex-con who moves back to his hometown after being released from prison. He committed a horrendous act as a child and the townsfolk are not excited to have him back. They take it on themselves to try to get rid of him. This story is a classic chase tale culminating in a final showdown between the ex-con and the townies.

## **How did you come up with the plot for *Coldwater*?**

I have always liked the simple story construct of “a chase through the woods.” *Hunted Past Reason* by Richard Matheson is one of these types of stories that is one of my favorites. Also, a local story about a child committing a crime and the public’s reaction to him gave me a lot of ideas to work with.

## **How did you choose the setting?**

My hometown provided the basis for the setting. I grew up in a town of 1,200 people, and so I was able to dig into a lot of locations from my childhood for scenes in the book. I would like to





add that I love where I grew up, but for the story, I had to paint a more sinister feel for small-town life.

### **How would you describe your writing style?**

I would describe my style of writing as fast-paced and to the point. I am not a fan of filler in novels, and so I am especially conscious about that in my writing. Short chapters, brisk pace, plot over character.

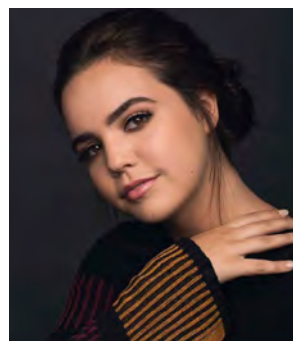
### **What do you hope readers will take away from *Coldwater*?**

I hope that they would, at least for a moment, consider the human element of a crime—not only the victims but the perpetrators as well. If people actually believe in the power of redemption, then it pertains to criminals just as much as everyone else. **FF**

### **Visit Samuel Parker's author page here:**

<https://www.familyfiction.com/authors/samuel-parker>

Award-winning actress **Bailee Madison** (*Bridge to Terabithia*, *Parental Guidance*) and Reader's Choice Award finalist Stefne Miller joined forces to write the compelling YA/teen novel ***Losing Brave*** (Blink). Seventeen-year-old Payton struggles to hold it together in the aftermath of her twin sister's disappearance.



In this exclusive interview, Bailee tells FamilyFiction about the challenges of a long-distance collaboration, what it means to be “living brave,” and her hope for the future of this story...

**Tell us a little about the plot of *Losing Brave* and your main character, Payton Brave.**

Payton Brave's life has completely unraveled, but she's trying not to show it. One year ago her sister Dylan disappeared, and authorities have come to a dead end in all efforts to find her. While those around Payton are trying to move on, Payton is stuck. She isn't sure if she should grieve for a loss or continue to hope for her sister's return. Finally, instead of trying to keep it all together, she decides to stop pretending and start being authentic. Payton's decision to be true to herself and her struggles causes many to distance themselves from her, but she is shocked to see who her authenticity draws into her life.



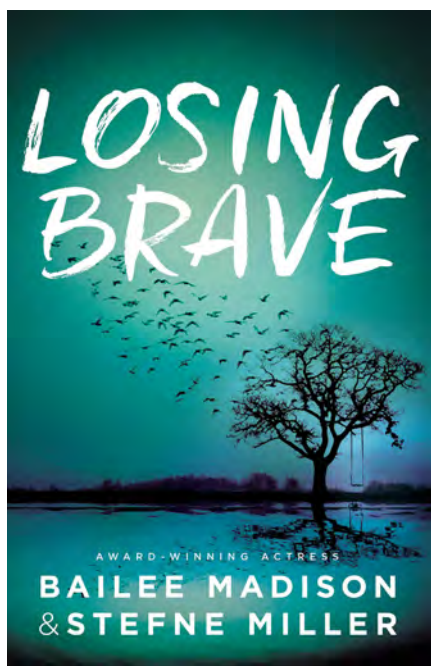
***Losing Brave* tackles some pretty heavy issues.**

**What inspired this story?**

Many things inspired this story, but most of it boils down to what it means to be brave. Living brave is different for every person, but it requires honesty, authenticity, and a lot of self-reflection. Being brave requires you to let go and we found that inspiring. Freeing, even. We wanted to create a strong female lead who wasn't afraid to be true to herself no matter what it cost, and we believe Payton's struggle is universal and speaks to a lot of people and their own fight to be true to self.

**Bailee, this is your debut novel. What was the experience like for you? Was your background in acting helpful?**

The experience was unforgettable and will always remain a very important chapter (pun intended) of my life. Writing a book is very different than acting; however, it was very important to both Stefne and me to allow this book to be easily adapted into



a screenplay. The big dream is for readers to fall in love with our characters and story, and for us to get to transform the world of *Losing Brave* onto a screen. With acting, you're given a character with guidelines to help you bring the role to life. With writing, you create the guidelines yourself. It's so fulfilling and exciting!

**What was the most challenging part of writing this novel?**

The logistics were a big issue. We live in completely different places and were forced to have a long-distance writing relationship. We spent a lot of time on FaceTime, texting, or on the phone, but finally found a system that worked for us. Additionally, whether in writing or acting, it is challenging because you share so much of yourself—even if it is through a fictional character and story. The characters were created out of some of the deepest places within ourselves—personal experiences, fears, and hopes. It's a raw but beautiful process to pour yourself out through story, and we hope the novel touches the hearts of those who read it.

### **What role does faith play in this story?**

We are both people of faith, so whether it's obvious within the story or not, faith weaves its way through the entire novel. Finding comfort in the midst of grief. Finding hope in the darkest moments. Faith that all things will work together for good—they are all truths that are intricately tied into the story of Payton Brave.

### **What do you hope your readers will take away after reading *Losing Brave*?**

We truly hope that readers will be inspired to be true to themselves and trust that when they need to let go of something, a new and better gift will be given. Life is messy and often hurts but when we choose to live brave, we will walk out the other side in a place of strength. **FF**

### **Visit Bailee Madison's author page here:**

<https://www.familyfiction.com/authors/bailee-madison>



Illustrator **Brenna Thummler** teamed up with writer **Mariah Marsden** to create ***Anne of Green Gables: A Graphic Novel*** (Andrews McMeel Publishing), adapted from Lucy Maud Montgomery's timeless classic. Readers of all ages can explore the violet vales and lush greens of Avonlea as the mischievous red-headed orphan springs to life in this crisp adaptation. In this interview, Brenna explains what she loves about Anne, the challenges of collaborating on such a large project, and why this story of a young girl living in the late 1800s is still relevant today.



## **What inspired you and Mariah to translate this iconic book into a graphic novel?**

If given the choice of any classic to illustrate in graphic novel form, *Anne of Green Gables* was my first. I grew up with the story of Anne, and related to her wild imagination and eccentricities.

I know Mariah reacted in a similar stunned and ecstatic manner—we were unbelievably fortunate to be paired on this project, alongside our editors who grew up loving the story as well. We still refer to ourselves as “Team Anne.”

## **Obviously, the world has changed a lot since the novel was first published in 1908. In what ways do you think Anne's story is still important and relevant today?**

Anne Shirley's personality is as fiery as her hair. She is inquisitive, tenacious, and captivating, and above all, isn't afraid to dream. She pulls everyone into her own stories—invites them to her world—rather than adapting to the world around her.

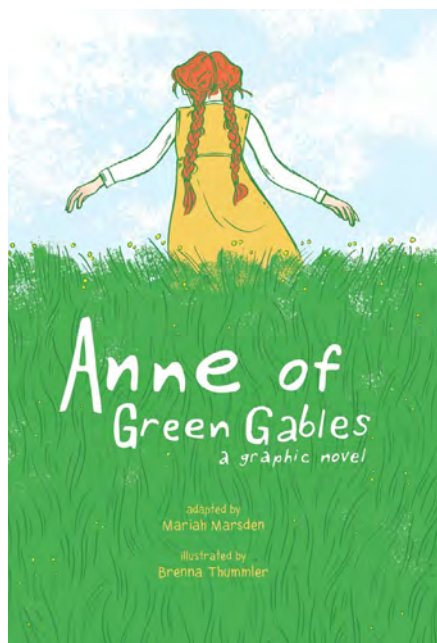


Everyone, especially kids, should look to Anne as someone who celebrates her differences and her own self-worth. Sure, she struggles with her red hair and freckles, but she is still fierce against obstacles. She works hard to rise to the top, even in a male-dominated society.

Women's rights have improved since the original novel was published in 1908, but inequality is still an issue. Anne is the strong, intelligent heroine that today's women can look up to.

**Can you tell us a little about the process of creating this version? What was involved in translating this novel into sequential art?**

First of all, I was fortunate to have Mariah in such close proximity. Not only is she a dear friend and talented writer, but we were able to collaborate from the very beginning. This made the process less intimidating, especially as this was the first graphic novel for both of us.



Collaborating on a graphic novel is a huge challenge. You have a writer doing her own thing and an artist doing her own thing, but somehow they have to come together and create a perfect whole.

Because graphic novels are visually driven, I wanted to give Mariah an idea of what was developing inside my head—an artistic language that was foreign to her. I created a written list of story events based on my mental sequencing, sug-

gesting where I felt dialogue was needed, and let her run free.

As she adapted the story into a graphic novel script, I story-boarded, or roughly sketched the entire layout of the book (after I had conducted a great deal of time period research, of course!).

Graphic novels are kind of like movies, but in book form. Each panel is like another piece of the scene, and you get to watch the story come to life before your eyes. So I sort of thought of myself as a filmmaker as I was creating the storyboards. So much goes into this stage.

You have to consider how many pages to spend per scene, how many panels you'll need per scene, the size and composition of every panel, where to zoom in and out, which scenes to make active or calm, where to turn the page to make the story flow—the list goes on.

Most people don't realize how much planning goes into this very early step, before you even begin the final drawings.

The final line art took me about eight solid months of work to complete, during which I questioned whether I was an artist or Dracula, because sunlight did not exist in my world.

I work traditionally with pencil on Bristol board, then scan the drawings into Photoshop and add color and text digitally.

These digitized illustrations eventually become the artwork you see in the book.

### **What were the biggest challenges of adapting this story to this format?**

I don't think there were any challenges of adapting this *particular* story to a graphic novel format. L.M. Montgomery created such a visually stimulating piece that I feel it naturally translated to sequential art.

I think most of the challenges came from the fact that this was my first ever graphic novel, an overwhelming task that began with me staring blankly at blank paper and asking myself, "What now?" and "How could you say yes to this, are you insane?"

I had around a year to create a 232-page book—hundreds of illustrations—and it was terrifying. It was also one of the best decisions of my life.

Because of the bulk of a graphic novel project, crammed inside a tight schedule, you don't have time to go back and make massive changes when you finish.

For example, if you reach the end and decide a different color scheme or drawing style would have been better, you're out of luck. You have to settle with your gut instinct at the very beginning, and accept the fact that you might regret some of these decisions at the end.

Thus, another challenge was improvement over time. I've never learned so much about drawing, story, composition—you name it—and when I finished the project, I was so much better than when I started.

I immediately wanted to start over again with the newly acquired knowledge, but regrettably, I can't keep creating updated versions of *Anne of Green Gables* for the rest of my existence. I sort of had to view this as a learning experience and preparation for my next book.

### **How much did you love working on *Anne of Green Gables*?**

To recreate a classic is to tell one of your favorite stories your own way, and it's a tremendous gift. Thousands of hours went into creating the art, and I have grown so much as an artist and as a person.

I hope children, as well as adults, become increasingly interested in graphic novels, because visual language is unique and enriching and impactful. **FF**

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Now available on DVD, the movie **Extraordinary** tells the amazing true story of ultra-marathon runner David Horton, whose dream to complete a 3,000-mile run takes a toll on his body and his marriage. The movie features Leland Klassen (*Altar Egos*), Shari Rigby (*October Baby*), Karen Abercrombie (*War Room*), and Kirk Cameron (*Fireproof*).



In this interview, director and producer **Scotty Curlee** talks about why this story needed to be told, and how making it has changed his own outlook on life.

## **Tell us how the making of this film came about and why you wanted to be involved.**

Dave was one of my professors in college. He impacted my life and inspired me to dream big dreams and to go after them with a lot of hard work and perseverance.

As I dug into his story, I began to understand the importance of his wife Nancy and how she contributed to his incredible journey. The fact that Dave is this inspirational guy who held all these world records and ran enough miles to circle the Earth 4.5 times is unprecedented, but the marriage journey—wow, that's the legacy part of this story. That's why I wanted to be involved.

## **Why do you think David and Nancy's story is important?**

The movie deals with the importance of having our identities in Christ and by doing so, we become less reliant on finding validation in a job title or our accomplishments. We also become less self-focused and more others-focused.



We get a firsthand look into the incredible contributions our spouses make in our lives that we often take for granted. Contributions that affect us on a personal level, our family members and the people around us.

Another important theme is that of perseverance in marriage and not just starting well, but more importantly, finishing well.

**What were some of the highlight moments during filming?  
And did you have any unusual challenges during the process?**

Two things come to mind. Filming at the Hoover Dam when officials actually shut down traffic for nearly three hours for us to film *Extraordinary*. Secondly, filming the opening scene in the Nevada desert.

It was amazing coming through the clouds with a drone getting that shot in one single take all the way down to the ground. As for challenges, the hardest part was filming at all the major landmarks across America from Huntington Beach, California,



to Central Park, New York, in less than two weeks. That was incredibly difficult.

**What do you hope viewers will take away when they watch *Extraordinary*?**

We live in a culture of instant gratification and quick fixes. If you don't like something, quit. If you find that a commitment is too hard to stick to, then give up. It's a quick-fix approach to everything and that's why it's so easy for couples to give up on each other.

That's why the message of this movie is so impactful and I hope in the end that people view the marriage commitment as a sacred commitment that should be honored. If the Hortons can do it, it gives us hope.

**How did directing this movie change or impact you?**

It's challenged me to take a closer look at my own life ambitions and the motives behind them while striving for a meaningful work/life balance. It's also helped me to be more appreciative of my wife and the incredible sacrifices she has made in our marriage and continues to make each day. It's something I don't verbalize enough.

The most important message for me personally, however, is that of having my identity in Christ. As a competitive athlete, it's something I've struggled with in the past. I think we've all dealt with it, especially us men. We find validation in job titles or athletic accomplishments, but what happens when we lose that job or in Dave's case, can no longer run? That's why identity in Christ is so important.

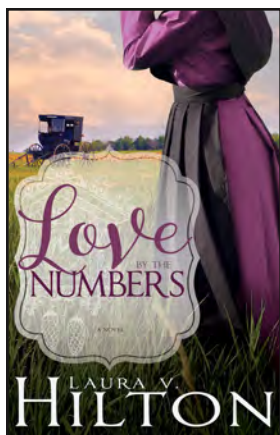
We can't get caught up trying to find validation in anything or anyone else. It's got to be in Christ. **FF**

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## New Releases: February 2018 Checklist



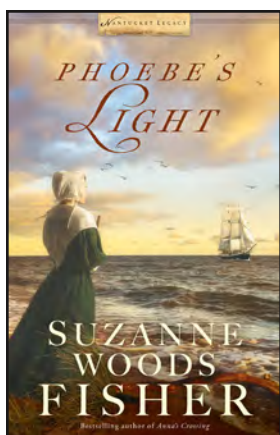
### **LOVE BY THE NUMBERS**

**Laura V. Hilton**

Whitaker House

**Genres:** Amish, Romance

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### **PHOEBE'S LIGHT**

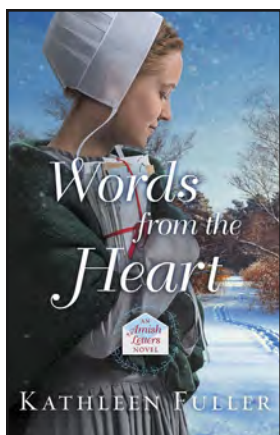
NANTUCKET LEGACY #1

**Suzanne Woods Fisher**

Revell

**Genres:** Amish, Romance

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### **WORDS FROM THE HEART**

AMISH LETTERS #3

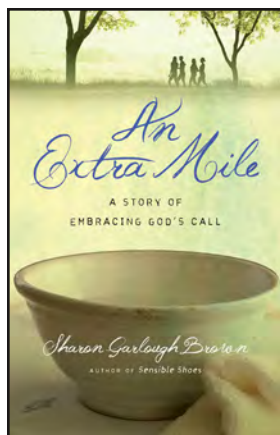
**Kathleen Fuller**

Thomas Nelson

**Genres:** Amish, Romance

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### ***AN EXTRA MILE: A STORY OF EMBRACING GOD'S CALL***

SENSIBLE SHOES #4

***Sharon Garlough Brown***

IVP Press

**Genre:** Contemporary

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### ***A LIGHT ON THE HILL***

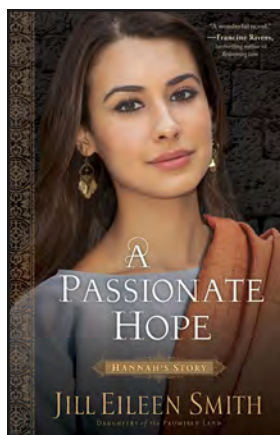
CITIES OF REFUGE #1

***Connilyn Cossette***

Bethany House

**Genres:** Historical, Romance

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### ***A PASSIONATE HOPE: HANNAH'S STORY***

DAUGHTERS OF THE PROMISED LAND #4

***Jill Eileen Smith***

Revell

**Genres:** Historical, Romance

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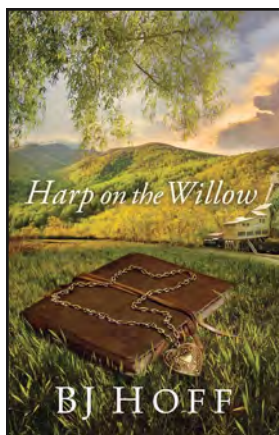
### **ACROSS THE BLUE**

**Carrie Turansky**

Multnomah

**Genres:** Historical, Romance

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### **HARP ON THE WILLOW**

MT. LAUREL MEMORIES #1

**BJ Hoff**

Harvest House

**Genres:** Historical, Romance

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### **KETURAH**

THE SUGAR BARON'S DAUGHTERS #1

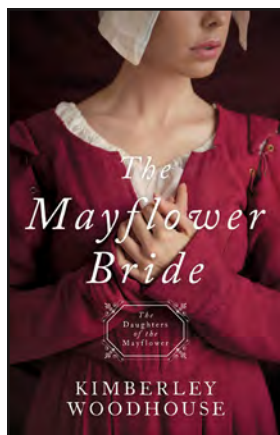
**Lisa T. Bergren**

Bethany House

**Genres:** Historical, Romance

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### **THE MAYFLOWER BRIDE**

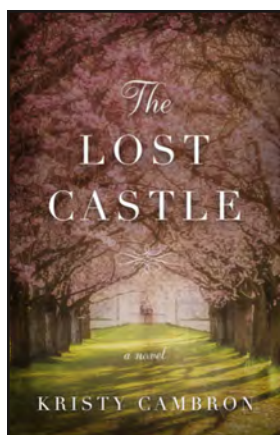
DAUGHTERS OF THE MAYFLOWER #1

**Kimberley Woodhouse**

Barbour Publishing

**Genres:** Historical, Romance

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### **THE LOST CASTLE:**

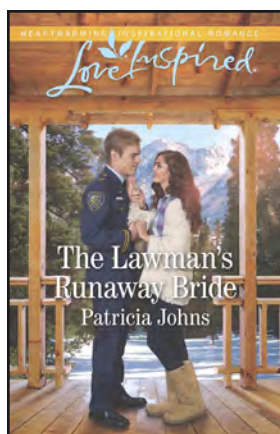
**A SPLIT-TIME ROMANCE**

**Kristy Cambron**

Thomas Nelson

**Genres:** Historical, Romance,  
Contemporary

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### **THE LAWMAN'S RUNAWAY BRIDE**

COMFORT CREEK LAWMEN #2

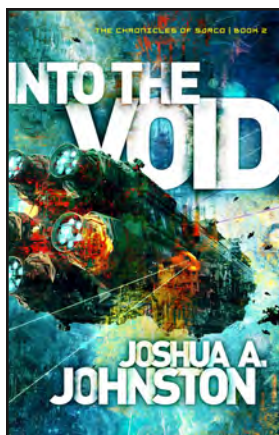
**Patricia Johns**

Love Inspired

**Genre:** Romance

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### ***INTO THE VOID***

CHRONICLES OF SARCO #2

***Joshua Johnston***

Enclave

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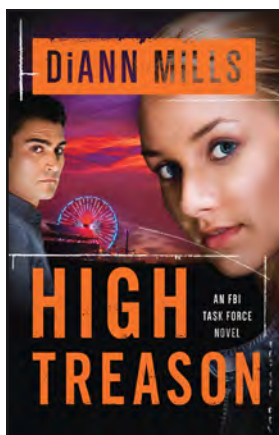
### ***THE MAN HE NEVER WAS: A MODERN REIMAGINING OF JEKYLL AND HYDE***

***James L. Rubart***

Thomas Nelson

**Genre:** Speculative

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### ***HIGH TREASON***

FBI TASK FORCE #3

***DiAnn Mills***

Tyndale House

**Genres:** Suspense, Romance

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### ***KILL SHOT***

WHITE KNIGHTS #2

***Susan Sleeman***

FaithWords

**Genres:** Suspense, Romance

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### ***BABY ON THE RUN***

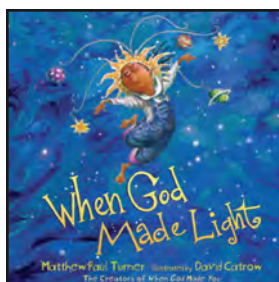
THE BABY PROTECTORS #2

***Hope White***

Love Inspired Suspense

**Genres:** Suspense, Romance

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### ***WHEN GOD MADE LIGHT***

***Matthew Paul Turner, David Catrow***

WaterBrook

**Genre:** Children's

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### ***ALLIE'S BAYOU RESCUE***

FAITHGIRLZ/PRINCESS IN CAMO #2

***Missy Robertson, Mia Robertson***

Zonderkidz

**Genre:** Children's

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### ***BIBLEMAN AND THE WISH-A-PRAYER MACHINE***

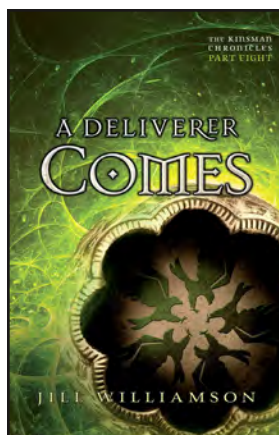
BIBLEMAN SERIES

***Mike Nappa, Dennis Edwards***

B&H Kids

**Genre:** Children's

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### ***A DELIVERER COMES*** (e-book)

THE KINSMAN CHRONICLES #8

***Jill Williamson***

Bethany House

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BLACKBURN CHRONICLES #2

***Raquel Byrnes***

Pelican Book Group

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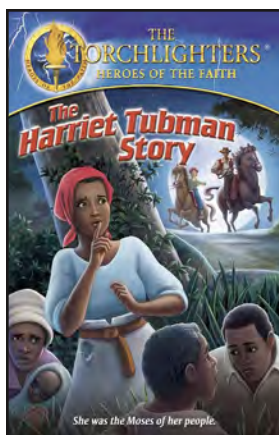
### ***SUPERHEROES OF THE BIBLE***

***Cara J. Stevens, Amanda Brack***

Good Books

**Genres:** Comics/Animation, Children's

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### ***TORCHLIGHTERS:***

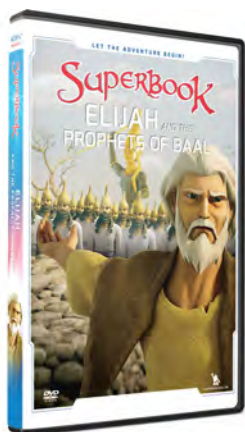
### ***THE HARRIET TUBMAN STORY***

Vision Video

**Genres:** Comics/Animation, Children's

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## New Releases: February 2018 Checklist



### ***ELIJAH AND THE PROPHETS OF BAAL***

SUPERBOOK SERIES

Charisma House

**Genres:** Comics/Animation, Children's

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### ***THE STRAY***

Universal Studios Home Ent.

**Genre:** Movies

**Actors:** Sarah Lancaster,  
Michael Cassidy, Connor Corum

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### ***SAME KIND OF DIFFERENT AS ME***

Paramount

**Genre:** Movies

**Actors:** Djimon Hounsou, Jon Voight

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**New Releases:** February 2018 Checklist



***AN UNCOMMON GRACE***

Hallmark

**Genre:** Movies

**Actors:** Jes Macallan, Sean Faris,  
Kelly McGillis



***WHERE LOVE FOUND ME***

Sony Pictures

**Genre:** Movies

**Actors:** Kaitlin Cheung, Andrew  
Cheney, James Kyson



# A QUICK LOOK AT SOME OF THE BESTSELLING TITLES FOR NOVEMBER 2017

## HISTORICAL FICTION

- 1**     ***Treasured Grace***  
Tracie Peterson  
Baker Publishing Group
- 2**     ***Beloved Hope***  
Tracie Peterson  
Baker Publishing Group
- 3**     ***Cherished Mercy***  
Tracie Peterson  
Baker Publishing Group
- 4**     ***Where We Belong***  
Lynn N. Austin  
Baker Publishing Group
- 5**     ***A Song of Home***  
Susie Finkbeiner  
Kregel Publications

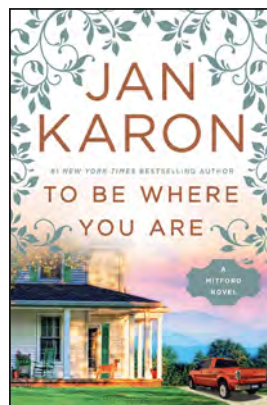


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## CONTEMPORARY

- 1**     *To Be Where You Are*  
Jan Karon  
Penguin/Putnam
- 2**     *The Undoing of Saint Silvanus*  
Beth Moore  
Tyndale House
- 3**     *A Time to Stand*  
Robert Whitlow  
Thomas Nelson
- 4**     *The Christmas Blessing*  
Melody Carlson  
Baker Publishing Group
- 5**     *When Crickets Cry*  
Charles Martin  
Thomas Nelson

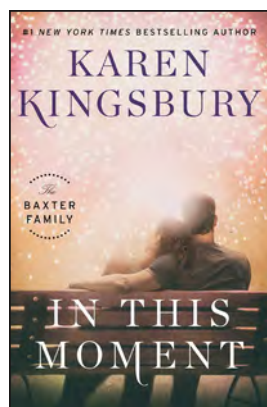


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## ROMANCE

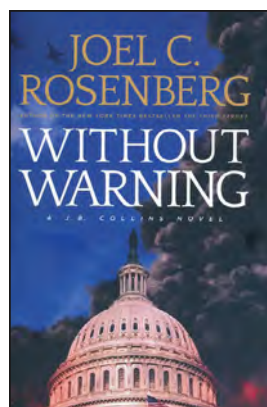
- 1**     ***In This Moment***  
Karen Kingsbury  
Howard Books/  
Simon & Schuster
- 2**     ***The Proving***  
Beverly Lewis  
Baker Publishing Group
- 3**     ***Finding Father Christmas  
& Engaging Father Christmas***  
Robin Jones Gunn  
Hachette Book Group
- 4**     ***The Beloved Christmas Quilt***  
Wanda E. Brunstetter  
Barbour Publishing
- 5**     ***The Elusive Miss Ellison***  
Carolyn Miller  
Kregel Publications



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## SUSPENSE/MYSTERY

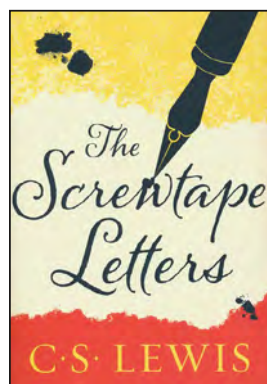
- 1**     *Without Warning*  
Joel C. Rosenberg  
Tyndale House
- 2**     *The Book of Mysteries*  
Jonathan Cahn  
Charisma
- 3**     *The Harbinger*  
Jonathan Cahn  
Charisma
- 4**     *Dangerous Illusions*  
Irene Hannon  
Baker Publishing Group
- 5**     *If I Run*  
Terri Blackstock  
Zondervan



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SPECULATIVE/FANTASY/SCI-FI

- 1**     *The Screwtape Letters*  
C. S. Lewis  
Zondervan
- 2**     *The Beautiful Pretender*  
Melanie Dickerson  
Thomas Nelson
- 3**     *Hinds' Feet on High Places*  
Hannah Hurnard  
Tyndale House
- 4**     *The Great Divorce*  
C. S. Lewis  
Zondervan
- 5**     *This Present Darkness*  
Frank Peretti  
Crossway Books



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