

FamilyFiction

April 2018



Contemporary Author **CHARLES MARTIN**

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5 Historical Romance Authors

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Features



CHARLES MARTIN

The popular author talks about winning the Christy Award for Book of the Year, how a movie version of your book can be a mixed blessing, and why his latest novel is the best thing he's ever written.



DAUGHTERS OF THE MAYFLOWER

A new series of linked novels follows one family tree across American history. Five authors tell us how the series works and what readers can expect.



DAVID KITZ

Bible dramatist, author, and minister David Kitz tells us about the one-man play—and the novel—that retells the events of the Passion from a unique perspective.



FEATURED GENRE AUTHOR

New York Times bestselling author, **Beverly Lewis**, releases her latest book, *The Road Home*.

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ON THE WEBSITE

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Eva Marie Everson signs with New Hope Publishers

Everson's first novella with New Hope, *The Ornament Keeper*, uses memory-filled ornaments to demonstrate the power of forgiveness to heal a family.

Read more here:

<https://www.familyfiction.com/eva-marie-everson-signs-new-hope-publishers>

Jerry B. Jenkins to Release New Fiction Series with Worthy Publishing Fall 2018

New series Dead Sea Chronicles promises captivating stories combining provocative current events with ancient adventure, spiritual warfare, and biblical archeology with Da Vinci Code-like flair.

Read more here:

<https://www.familyfiction.com/jerry-jenkins-release-new-fiction-series-worthy-publishing-fall-2018>

Myst at 25: Something New Coming?

With the 25th anniversary of computer puzzle game *Myst* coming in September, developer Cyan has teased on Twitter that the company has something planned.

Read more here:

<https://www.familyfiction.com/myst-25-something-new-coming>

L'Engle biography to explore faith and spiritual legacy of *Wrinkle in Time* author

Available August 2018, Following Release of Disney Movie *Wrinkle in Time*.

Read more here:

<https://www.familyfiction.com/lengle-biography-explore-faith-spiritual-legacy-wrinkle-time-author>



CONTEMPORARY: Charles Martin

Writing for An Audience of One

Charles Martin is having quite a run right now: His 2010 novel *The Mountain Between Us* (Broadway Books) was adapted into a film last October that starred Idris Elba and Kate Winslet, his 2016 novel *Long Way Gone* (Thomas Nelson) was honored last November with a **Christy Award as Book of the Year**, and he has a brand-new novel in May, *Send Down the Rain* (Thomas Nelson). In this exclusive interview, Charles talks about the breakthrough that led to his Christy Award-winning book, how a movie version of your book can be a mixed blessing, and why his latest novel is the best thing he's ever written.

Last year was a big one for you, with one of your books being adapted as a motion picture, and another novel winning the Christy Award for Book of the Year. Obviously, people are responding to your work. Why do you think storytelling is such a powerful way to share truth?

I'm not sure I can answer this other than to say I think it's wired into our DNA. I think the Lord made us to receive and understand the world through story. Several years ago, I latched onto the idea that His story, revealed through Scripture, is really just one big love story. And, it's the best love story ever told.

I realize this is not new, but it's the story of a rescue mission in which all is helpless, lost, and things aren't looking too good. Then, the hero appears, saves everyone, and dies in the process—only to be brought back to life by the Father who sent Him on the mission. Story, in my opinion, is the only method that comes close to communicating the three-dimensional reality of what was at stake, what it cost, and how deep is that love of the Father and the Son.

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How does your faith affect how you approach writing?

Jesus said, “From the abundance of the heart, the mouth speaks.” The Charles Martin translation of that reads: if He’s in here, He will bubble up and out of my fingers at some point. The more I write, the more I hope He increases and I decrease. Psalm 45 has come to mean: my desire is to make His great name known to the nations. Period.

I used to answer this differently but after almost twenty years in a writing career, I’m writing for an audience of one. I don’t mean that to sound arrogant. I just mean, His opinion is the only one that matters.

I’ve said this before, and some don’t know how to take it, but when I get to heaven, provided I make it through judgment—which due to the blood of Jesus I believe I will—I hope The Lord takes me by the hand and walks into His personal library, where He keeps the books stacked on His bedside table. And I hope to find my books there. I hope the pages are worn, yellowed, tattered, dog-eared and if I’m honest, I hope He leans in and whispers, “Look what I’ve been reading to my angels.”

The film version of *The Mountain Between Us* turned out quite different in some ways from your book. How did you feel watching it the first time? Although the movie may not reflect what you intended, are there ways you think God may be “working all things out for good” through this situation?

Until recently, much of what I learned about production, I learned from the internet—like you. During this process, I learned one simple rule: Selling an intellectual property is like selling a house.



How do I feel about this? I was, am, and will remain grateful and totally blown away that a studio like FOX would put my book on the big screen. Even with the changes, sitting in that theatre and staring at images that began somewhere between my head and heart is possibly the most surreal and coolest thing I've ever experienced.

The Mountain Between Us had been out eight years before they made the movie. It had never hit any bestseller list anywhere. The movie came out and the book has been on the *New York Times* bestseller list since it released. More people have seen and been made aware of that book in the last month than in the last several years combined.

Jesus tells us, "If I be lifted up, I will draw all men to me." I pray my stories do that. Movies, too.

Moving on to *Long Way Gone*... What were your goals in writing this story?

My goal was that I don't care what your sin, or how far you've come from where you started, how bad things have gotten, how dirty you feel, or how dark your life seems, there is no place on planet earth where the blood of Jesus can't snatch you back. No gone is too far gone. The blood of Jesus wins. Period.

It ends up being much more difficult for your "prodigal," Cooper, to forgive himself than it was for his father to forgive him. Why do you think that is?

Because I think it's true in life. And if you've betrayed someone you love, who's loved you when you weren't lovable, you understand what I'm talking about.

Music plays a big role in this story. Cooper's dad says, "Music cuts people free. It silences the thing that's trying to kill us." How does music cut each of the characters free in this novel, and is music a freeing thing for you personally?

When David sinned with Bathsheba, their son died. When David got the news, as Bathsheba's sobs echoed down the hall, David climbed up off the floor, bathed, anointed himself, and walked into the Holy tent ... and worshipped. Think about that—he worshipped.

When we worship, we declare across the stratosphere that while we are not holy, He is. That declaration cuts us free. That lifting of the arms. That raising of the voice. That prostrating before the throne. That bowing.

David knew that. I'm working on it.

I love to worship, although I'm not sure you want to stand too close to me in church. My sons tell me I have a tendency to sing just a bit off key. By the way, as I've looked at Scripture, I can find no place in the Bible where the word worship is not accompanied by an action of the body.

You've said that *Long Way Gone* was tough to write, that you experienced some serious writer's block. Would you tell us what it was like, and how you overcame that challenge?

Halfway through the writing of *Long Way Gone*, I discovered I'd written myself into what looked like a dead end. In desperation, I got up out of my chair, grabbed my Bible, and walked out onto the pool deck where I began circling, reading the Psalms out loud. I kept praying, "Lord, Your word is true. More true than my circumstances. My circumstances don't dictate my reality or Yours. Your Word reveals it. Help—please help."

This continued every day. For three weeks....

Somewhere in my fourth week, I had an idea. Just a glimmer. I thought, "What have I got to lose?" So, I walked inside, sat down, and started writing. An hour in, I had to stop typing because I couldn't see the screen. Tears make things blurry. The solution, the work-around, had been there all along. It was as if the Lord had led me by the hand around a blind corner. Ten thousand words later, I closed my laptop. It's the most I've ever written in a single day.

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



What do you hope readers take away after reading *Long Way Gone*?

I want readers to know that no gone is too far gone. That His arm is not so short that it cannot save. That there is no place—and I do mean NO place you can go, where the love of Jesus can't bring you back. This side of the grave, the blood and love of Jesus can reach further than you can fall.

Your brand-new novel, *Send Down the Rain*, also sounds fascinating. Would you tell us a bit about this story?

A 61-year-old Vietnam veteran has been living in hiding for the last 20 years. Circumstances force him to return to his childhood home and wrestle with whether to reveal a secret he has kept for 45 years. Problem is, if he tells it, somebody dies. And if he doesn't tell it, somebody dies. It's a beautiful story. I don't think I've ever written anything better.

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One of the driving forces in *Send Down the Rain* is the consequences of keeping—or sharing—secrets.

What inspired this story?

When I wrote my first *New York Times* bestseller, I was 10 years married and telling my wife I loved her, but a part of me was still questioning what that actually meant or looked like in practice.

I wanted to go deeper into the “big” questions than ever done before with *Send Down the Rain*. I wanted to speak to anyone who has ever asked themselves: what does it mean—and what level of sacrifice does it take—to really, truly love someone forever?

What do you hope readers come away with after reading *Send Down the Rain*?

I hope readers better understand the relationship between sacrifice and love.

What else is coming up that you're excited about?

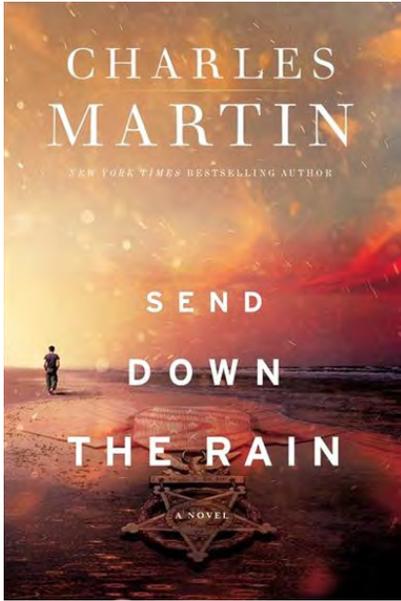
For the last decade or more, I've taught a Bible study to a bunch of broken sinners like me. Men who have become my brothers. We “do life” together. During that time, I've taught much on the life of Jesus. Some of those “teachings” were later turned into blog posts. Often, those posts receive more traffic than my fiction.

With that in mind, I'm writing a nonfiction book titled *What Kind of King—Would Do Such a Thing?* It will be released in early 2019. It's my take—as a storyteller—on some of the events in Jesus' life, what He's revealed to me through them, and how they change me and us. I've never seen anything like it on the shelf. **FF**

Charles Martin

Visit Charles Martin's author page here:

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Send Down the Rain

Charles Martin
Thomas Nelson



From the *New York Times* bestselling author of *The Mountain Between Us* comes a new, spellbinding story of buried secrets, lost love, and the promise of second chances.

Allie is still recovering from the loss of her family's beloved waterfront restaurant on Florida's

Gulf Coast when she loses her second husband to a terrifying highway accident. Devastated and losing hope, she shudders to contemplate the future—until a cherished person from her past returns.

Joseph has been adrift for many years, wounded in both body and spirit and unable to come to terms with the trauma of his Vietnam War experiences. Just as he resolves to abandon his search for peace and live alone at a remote cabin in the Carolina mountains, he discovers a mother and her two small children lost in the forest. A man of character and strength, he instinctively steps in to help them get back to their home in Florida. There he will return to his own hometown—and

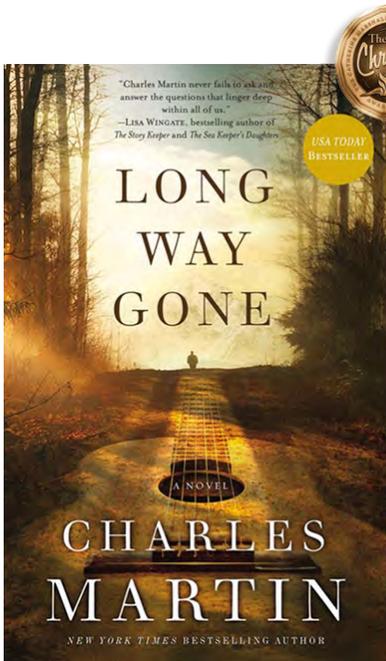
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Charles Martin

witness the accident that launches a bittersweet reunion with his childhood sweetheart, Allie.

When Joseph offers to help Allie rebuild her restaurant, it seems the flame may reignite—until a 45-year-old secret from the past begins to emerge, threatening to destroy all hope for their second chance at love.

In *Send Down the Rain*, Charles Martin proves himself to be a storyteller of great wisdom and compassion who bears witness to the dreams we cherish, the struggles we face, and the courage we must summon when life seems to threaten what we hold most dear. **FF**



Christy Award Book of the Year

Long Way Gone
Charles Martin
Thomas Nelson

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HISTORICAL: Daughters of the Mayflower

Through the Years

Five authors talk about sharing the story of one family tree from the landing of the Mayflower through World War II.

Several Christian authors have joined together for **The Daughters of the Mayflower**, a series of linked novels from Barbour Books that follow one family tree across American history. The 18-book series, set to roll out over three years, blends history, adventure, romance, and family legacy. We reached out to the five authors writing the first six books in the series: **Kimberley Woodhouse**, **Kathleen Y'Barbo**, **Michelle Griep**, **Shannon McNear**, and **MaryLu Tyndall**. Here's what they had to share.

This is such an ambitious series! How did you all become involved in it?

Kimberley Woodhouse: It started with a conversation with publishing friends over dinner while I was on a book tour. When I was asked if I would be interested in writing the first book, I was thrilled. History is such a passion of mine that the idea of following a family line through significant events in our country's history was right up my alley!

Kathleen Y'Barbo: I had to chase down emails all the way back to 2016 to answer this question! The senior editor at Barbour Publishing sent a request for a story proposal for this series through my agent. I've been doing freelance writing for Barbour for almost 20 years, so I was thrilled to be asked and even more thrilled to say yes to writing this book and several more for The Daughters of the Mayflower series. It is a very

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Daughters of the Mayflower Series

ambitious series, but all of the books I have read thus far are amazing. I believe readers are going to love them.

Michelle Griep: Since I've written other historical titles for Barbour, they contacted me and asked if I had an interest in writing a story set during the French and Indian War that involved intrigue. Who could resist that?

Shannon McNear: I got involved quite by accident! My co-author Michelle Griep and I have been close friends for years, and when asked if she had any other story ideas to propose for the series, she recommended me—so I was invited by the editor to send a proposal. One of her suggested ideas, *The Cumberland Bride*, sparked my interest. I guess the rest is history. Ha-ha—no pun intended!

MaryLu Tyndall: I was contacted by Barbour Publishing, through whom I've published several books over the years. They were very excited about the series and asked if I'd like to be involved. And of course, after I heard the specifics, I had to say yes!

Ladies, what can you tell us about how your books fit into the series?

Kimberley Woodhouse: *The Mayflower Bride* is the first book in the Daughters of the Mayflower series. The hero and heroine from this book are the beginning of the lineage for the whole series, so that was a lot of fun for me.

Kathleen Y'Barbo: *Pirate Bride* is the second in the series. Set in 1725, the story features both the daughter and the granddaughter of the original Mayflower settlers, the Lyttons. As the

Daughters of the Mayflower Series



story opens, Mary Lytton—to her parents’ horror—has fled the colonies to elope with a handsome Spanish nobleman. Maribel Cordoba is the daughter of that marriage and thus the great-granddaughter to the Lyttons who arrived on the Mayflower and took center stage in *Mayflower Bride*.

Adventurous Maribel has inherited some of her mother’s fiery spirit, along with her love of the Lord. She spends much of the story, which spans the globe from Spain to the Caribbean to the early days of New Orleans, walking a tight line between the things she wants to do and those things she ought to do. Then along comes a pirate captain—with his own noble but secret heritage—and a chance for adventure.

Michelle Griep: My story is set after *The Pirate Bride*, which is mostly located in New Orleans, and the book following mine, *The Patriot Bride*, takes place in Philadelphia. Sandwiched between these two tales, my adventure takes the reader away from civilized cities and into the wilds of upstate New York on an overland adventure. The settings are a great variety in this series.

Shannon McNear: My girl [Kate Gruener in *The Cumberland Bride*, coming in October] is the grand-niece of Michelle’s character. Overall, the story explores a bit of the next phase of our country’s history after the Revolution—that is, Westward Expansion.

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MaryLu Tyndall: My book, *The Liberty Bride* [coming in December], is set during the War of 1812. My heroine, Emeline Baratt, is the fourth great-granddaughter from the original couple in *The Mayflower Bride*. She is the granddaughter of the couple in *The Captured Bride*.

Kimberly, what's significant about the time and place for *The Mayflower Bride*?

Kimberley Woodhouse: It takes place in 1620 and covers a very interesting period in our history. The Saints and Strangers left Holland and England to start a colony in the New World, and weren't prepared for all that they would face. It's such an important piece of our history because a lot of people think of the Mayflower as the beginning of our country.

What kind of research did you have to do to get the details right?

Kimberley Woodhouse: I have to admit, this was one of the most intense books I've had to research. To write about such a significant piece of our country's history, I wanted to make sure I had all the facts correct. And that proved difficult, since there are several details that differ in the accounts.

As a historical writer, I always look for three sources to line up, but in this case sometimes it was laborious to even find three sources at all. I did find a couple historians who were experts in this field, and they were extremely helpful. Reading the surviving journals of Mayflower passengers was also a huge part of my research. Then I also watched several documentaries.

What do you hope readers come away with after reading *The Mayflower Bride*?

Kimberley Woodhouse: You know, when I was researching this book, I often prayed about how to write an inspirational story when everything that happened was one disaster after another. I wanted to stay true to history, but wanted to show that “happily-ever-after” that most readers look for in a story. I found it in the journals of the real people, and in all the descendants of those passengers: I was amazed by the sacrifice that was made, the passion for religious freedom, and the hope for a better future.

More than anything, I hope that readers can see the same thing, and know that joy and forgiveness are available for all of us. Even in the direst of circumstances.

Kathleen, what’s significant about the time and place for *The Pirate Bride*?

Kathleen Y’Barbo: Unlike the first book in the series, the characters do not live in New England. Rather, Maribel has grown up in Spain and then, through a series of extraordinary circumstances and a brief stint as a member of a pirate crew, ends up growing to adulthood in an orphanage in the Caribbean. The wild setting of the fictional Caribbean island mirrors the child who grows up there.

During this time period, when relations between European kingdoms could turn from friendly to frosty seemingly overnight, men carried letters of marque allowing them to legally become privateers. Depending on what flag a ship was flying, those same men might be termed pirates.

Daughters of the Mayflower Series



Jean-Luc, my privateer, carries such letters along with a strong sense of right and wrong, and yet the French, who rule over his home city of New Orleans, have hurried to appease a new ally in Europe by calling him a pirate.

This story and the political intrigue threaded through it could not have happened in any other era. And I cannot imagine Jean-Luc and Maribel falling in love anywhere other than in these two beautiful locations.

What kind of research did you need to do to get the details right?

Kathleen Y'Barbo: After writing more than a dozen books with New Orleans settings, I began the project thinking I knew pretty much all there was about one of my favorite cities on the planet. However, I had never written a story that went all the way back to its very early years. You see, 2018 marks the 300th anniversary of the founding of New Orleans. What a storied history the city has, pun intended.

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I dug deep into the archives and the history and took copious notes. I also traveled vicariously to the Caribbean—where I haven't actually set foot since the 1990s—and wrote about such varied topics as island trees, 18-century treatments for head injuries, and the various types of riggings on sailing ships, just to name a few.

What do you hope readers come away with after reading *The Pirate Bride*?

Kathleen Y'Barbo: We serve such a creative God. We humans think we know how our lives will turn out and what steps we will need to take along the journey, and we're always surprised when those plans don't turn out as we expect. Oh, but we forget that nothing surprises God.

No storm has battered us that He did not allow and use for His purpose and no plot twist has occurred that was not written by the Author of the greatest story ever written. As readers watch Jean-Luc and Maribel walk their journey toward happily ever after, I hope they will also see that God is taking us on that same journey—only what He has for us is so much greater than any earthly love story.

What was your process of making your books fit into the larger narrative?

Shannon McNear: The five of us collaborated on the family tree. Kimberley, of course, established the baseline with her original couple and their children, and the rest of us chose branches to work off of. We're still early enough in the family history that we didn't have to connect the actual stories—although it would have been so fun to do that!

Daughters of the Mayflower Series

Kimberley Woodhouse: We've gotten pretty close as we share ideas and family trees. We write our individual books alone, but talk to one another along the way. It's been a lot of fun for our group of authors. *The Mayflower Bride* was the first book, so I was able to start from scratch. Then for *The Patriot Bride*—the fourth book in the series—it was a lot of fun to work with them on how it would weave in between other books in the series.

Kathleen Y'Barbo: First and foremost, each book must tie back to the original Mayflower settlers. Our publisher gave us an idea of what time period the story needed to be set in, but other than that we were all free to come up with our own story ideas. Each story adds new members to the chart, so it's very interactive and yet each book stands alone. It's really the best of both worlds.

Michelle Griep: I didn't have too much of a process making my book fit into the larger narrative. If I had a question about an ancestor of one of my characters, I was able to contact the authors before me and ask them about it.

MaryLu Tyndall: Barbour gave me a great deal of leeway in the plot and characters of *The Liberty Bride*. I was only told that the heroine must be a descendant of the original couple who came over on the Mayflower in *The Mayflower Bride*, and that she had to be a spy. Other than that, I could let my creativity flow, which is perfect for me!

However, I did converse frequently with the other five authors of the series. Also, I read the author's book which contained the story of my heroine's grandparents, *The Captured Bride*, so I could incorporate a few details of their lives into my book.

What do you consider the essential qualities of a leading woman and leading man?

Kimberley Woodhouse: They need to be real and they need to be flawed. For me, I want to see them grow and learn—that doesn't mean they necessarily have to do a 180-type-change, but I want to see how the journey through life has made them discover who they really are.

Kathleen Y'Barbo: Honor, resilience, and faith are the first to come to mind because the characters must have a sense of purpose based on a right choice—in Christian fiction that would be the choice to follow where God is leading. Because a choice to follow God's lead is usually met by more than a few obstacles, resilience and faith are essential. I would also add that a good sense of humor takes a character, male or female, a long way in my opinion. And, for that matter, in my books!

What are the pros and cons of writing for a series where you're not the only author?

Kimberley Woodhouse: The pros are definitely getting to work with the other authors. Cons? I don't know all their characters as intimately as my own characters. But I can't say that there's really any other cons. It has truly been a joy to work together.

Kathleen Y'Barbo: Working with other authors isn't for everyone, but I love it. Every one of these women who are writing for Daughters of the Mayflower series are authors I know and admire.

Michelle Griep: The support is the absolute best! Bouncing ideas about the family off other authors is a definite advantage. Another pro is when we promote each other it also brings

Daughters of the Mayflower Series

attention to our own book. The downside was making sure the family bloodline was kept intact and the family tree wasn't veered off of in any way.

Shannon McNear: Pros—the networking factor, and the way Barbour has been wonderful about promoting this series. I knew all these women before we worked together on *Daughters of the Mayflower*, but this has given us a definite sense of sisterhood. They're amazing authors, and I feel so honored to be included among them!

Cons—all I can think of is the constraints of the story itself. The decade I'm writing about was a complete unknown to me, before, and proposing a story felt like a complete stab in the dark. The colonial era, especially the American Revolution, is more my area of expertise, but I found it less difficult than I expected to understand the issues and politics of this one. Oh, and time constraints. I love researching and felt like I could have packed so much more into this story. But we have to stop somewhere, right?

MaryLu Tyndall: There are definitely more pros than cons. In this series, I feel so privileged to be working with some of the best Christian authors out there. We all worked together well, without issues, which I assume is common among so many creative personalities. And it has been great to share ideas with such wonderfully creative minds.

Also, it was a lot of fun writing characters who already had a past developed before I even started my book. I knew their families, where they came from, their personalities, problems, and victories.

Daughters of the Mayflower Series



Plus, I know readers love series that span generations. I'm hopeful these books will do very well and bless many people as they read them. **FF**

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Visit Kathleen Y'Barbo's author page here:

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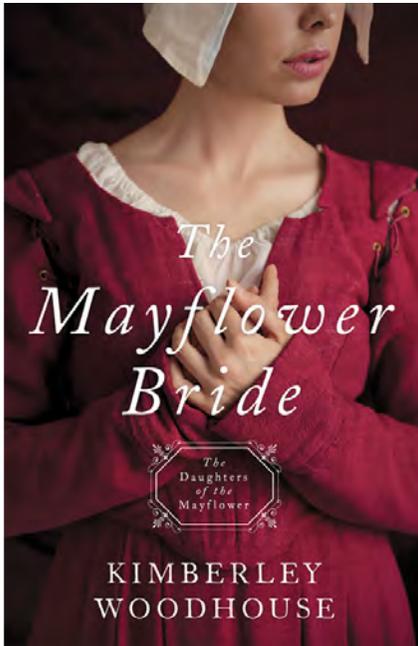
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The Mayflower Bride

Daughters of the Mayflower #1

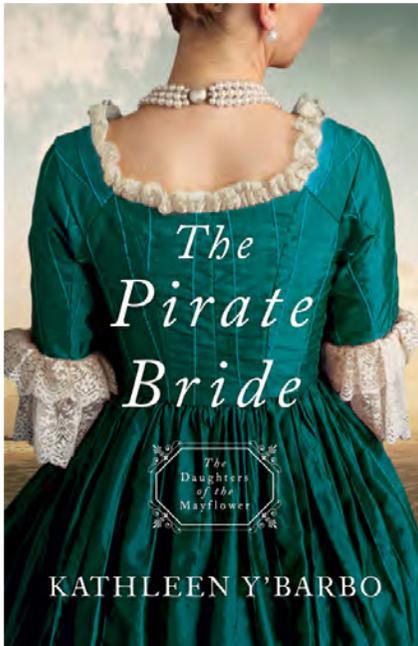
Kimberley Woodhouse

Barbour Books

Buy Now 

Can a religious separatist and an opportunistic spy make it in the New World? Mary Elizabeth Chapman boards the *Speedwell* in 1620 as a Separatist seeking a better life in the New World. William Lytton embarks on the *Mayflower* as a carpenter looking for opportunities to succeed—and he may have

found one when a man from the Virginia Company offers William a hefty sum to keep a stealth eye on company interests in the new colony. The season is far too late for good sailing and storms rage, but reaching land is no better as food is scarce and the people are weak. Will Mary Elizabeth survive to face the spring planting and unknown natives? Will William be branded a traitor and expelled?



The Pirate Bride

Daughters of the Mayflower #2

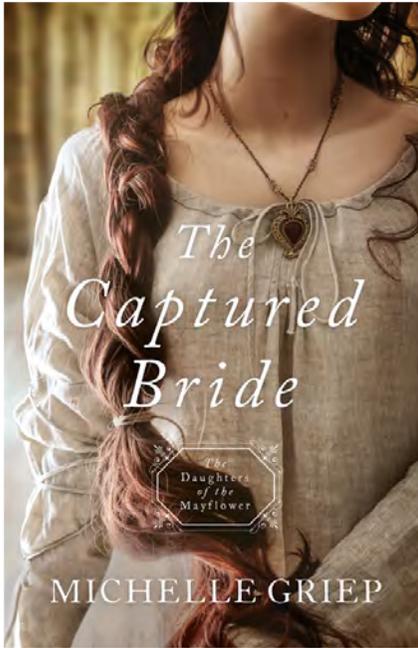
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Can a former privateer and a determined heiress find lost treasure in 1725? The last time New Orleans attorney Jean-Luc Valmont saw Maribel Cordoba, a Spanish nobleman's daughter, she was an 11-year-old orphan perched in the riggings of his privateering vessel proving herself as the best lookout on

his crew—until the day his infamy caught up with them all and innocent lives were lost. Unsure why he survived but vowing to make something of the chance he was given, Jean-Luc has buried his past life so deep that no living person will ever find it—until a very much alive and very grown up Maribel Cordoba arrives on his doorstep and threatens all he now holds dear.



The Captured Bride

Daughters of the Mayflower #3

Michelle Griep

Barbour Books

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Mercy Lytton is a lady like none other. Raised amongst the Mohawks, she straddles two cultures, yet each are united in one cause—to defeat the French. Born with a rare gift of unusually keen eyesight, she is chosen as a scout to accompany a team of men on a dangerous mission. Yet it is not her life that is threatened. It is her heart.

Condemned as a traitor, Elias Dubois faces the gallows. At the last minute, he is offered his freedom if he consents to accompany a stolen shipment of French gold to a nearby fort—but he is the one they stole it from in the first place. It turns out that the real thief is the beguiling woman, Mercy Lytton, for she steals his every waking thought. Can love survive divided loyalties in a backcountry wilderness?

Daughters of the Mayflower Series ... the authors



Kimberley Woodhouse



Kathleen Y'Barbo



Michelle Griep



Shannon McNear



MaryLu Tyndall



HISTORICAL: David Kitz

It's Dramatic, But It All Happened

As a Bible dramatist, author, and minister, **David Kitz** brings a unique perspective to his Christian fiction. His book ***The Soldier Who Killed a King: A True Retelling of the Passion*** (Kregel Publications) was inspired by his traveling one-man show that demonstrates how the Resurrection changed history—one life at a time. In this interview, David explains the background of the original play, how he has now recounted these events in three different forms of media, and how his dramatic flair gives him an advantage writing fiction.

Your book *The Soldier Who Killed a King* was inspired by your one-man play *The Centurion's Report*. What inspired you to write and perform the original play?

Twenty-five years ago, I was the pastor of a small church. For my Christmas message, I had dressed in shepherd's garb and told the story of Jesus' birth from a shepherd's perspective. That message was well received, so I thought I would try something similar for Easter.

But from whose perspective should I tell the Easter story? After reading through the four Gospel accounts, I concluded the most compelling perspective was that of the Roman centurion, who after Jesus took his last breath declared, "Surely he was the Son of God!" See Matthew 27:54. A few hours at the cross led this Gentile unbeliever to make the same declaration that Peter made after following Jesus for more than two years.

What does that tell us? It tells us that time is compressed at the cross. Our humanity is exposed at the cross. Christ's deity

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is exposed there too. When those two things happen, change happens. Repentance happens. Redemption happens.

You've been performing that for years. Is this the kind of production where you set up somewhere for a theatrical run, or do you travel with it? Who do you perform it for? Can you tell our readers what it's like to see the production?

Typically, I travel with this play. Most of my presentations are for local churches spanning the continent from Charleston, South Carolina, to Vancouver, Canada.

Occasionally, churches in a community have come together and rented an arena or community center to host a presentation. I have also presented *The Centurion's Report* for Christian high schools and military chaplaincies.

What led you to write *The Soldier Who Killed a King* as a novel?

In those early days, my confidence grew as I was invited to present my drama at various churches across the country. At the same time another thought was brewing. I came to realize that this four-act, one-man play could form the base for a Passion of Christ novel. In what little spare time I had, I began working on the novel. It took six years to complete.

So, how much is the book an adaptation of the play, as opposed to a different work based on the same events?

To a limited extent the book is an adaptation of the play. The play has four acts, while the book has forty chapters.

Chapter one is drawn directly from act one of the play and it covers Jesus' Palm Sunday entry into Jerusalem. Act two por-



trays Jesus cleansing the temple and healing the lame and the blind. This corresponds to chapter six in the book. Act three deals with the trial and crucifixion of Jesus, which covers chapters 23 through 31. The final act details the guarding of the tomb and the resurrection, and roughly it covers chapters 34, 39, and 40.

The point that needs to be made here is that you can do so much more with a 285-page book versus an hour-long play. The book format allows you to introduce other characters and events as the week progresses. It allows you to go behind the scenes and examine the home life of the centurion, and the culture and political intrigue of that time. In brief, the novel provides a richer, fuller experience.

What were the challenges of switching from drama to writing these events in book form?

A fertile mind loves challenges such as this. I would argue that I am first a dramatist, then an author. Most writers do not come

at their craft from the field of drama. But for me, that's my starting point.

I become the character; I portray the character on stage. After living in that character's skin for a time, I feel I am able to write from his perspective—to see things as he would see them. For me, this is a distinct advantage, not a handicap.

I have done something very similar with the Psalms. I have memorized 14 Psalms and present them as drama. After doing this dramatization for 10 years I wrote a devotional study book entitled *Psalms Alive!*

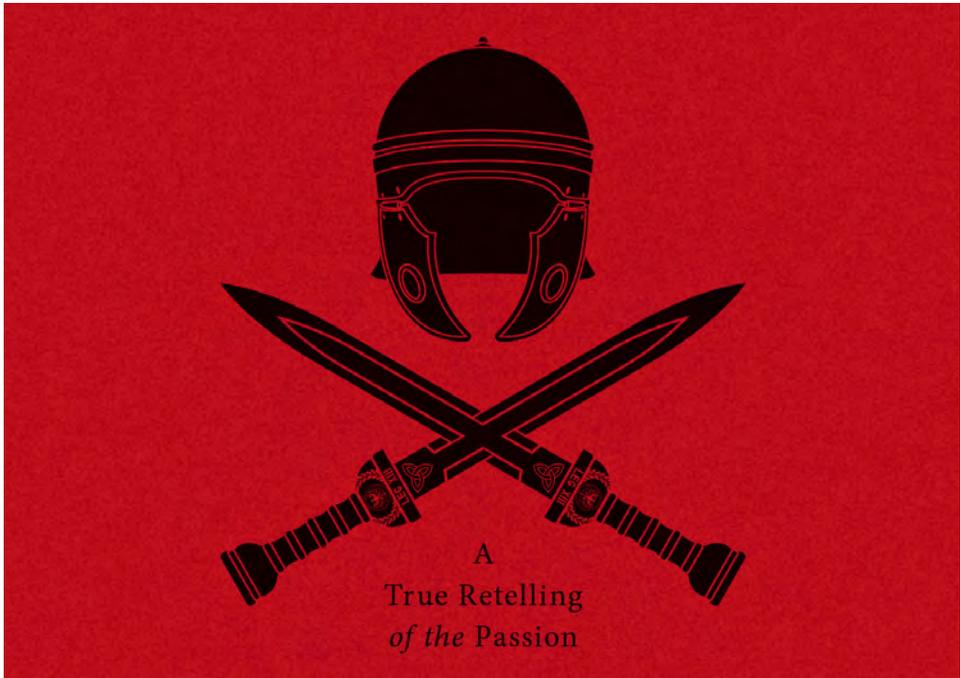
I also do a full, in-costume dramatization of the Epistle of James, which I call *A Visit from James*. Currently, I have an agent working on landing a publishing deal for a manuscript I have written on the life and ministry of James, the brother of Jesus.

There's also a multi-voiced, dramatization of the same events in *The Soldier Who Killed a King*. What was that process like?

This was a project I really loved. I enjoyed working with amateur actors to make this book really come alive.

It's all about transporting the listeners to a different time and place. I had a particularly good recording engineer, Tristan Brake, who worked that magic at our local Christian radio station.

So ... the audio drama is based on a book that's based on another drama. How did that make the process easier or harder?



I think it made it easier. It's a building process, building one block onto another. The next project is the movie. That's the ultimate goal.

How much are these three projects different experiences for the same audience vs. actually reaching three different audiences altogether?

For the most part I think it's reaching three different audiences. Yes, of course, there is some overlap. But there are plenty of men who haven't read a novel since high school, and they're not about to do it now, but they might attend a Passion of Christ drama at their local church. Similarly, there are thousands who have read my novel, but they will never get an opportunity to see the play. In the same way there is a distinct audience for audio books.

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Writing can be such a solitary experience for most authors—but your background includes being a minister, teacher, speaker, and dramatist. How do these other facets play a part when you write books?

We are all multifaceted people with a wide array of skills and experiences. I don't often consciously think about what skill I am using at a particular moment.

When I write, I think it really helps to have a broad range of experiences to draw upon. But most of all, I want to draw on the Holy Spirit for inspiration. There's something special about a thought or piece of writing that's conceived in heaven.

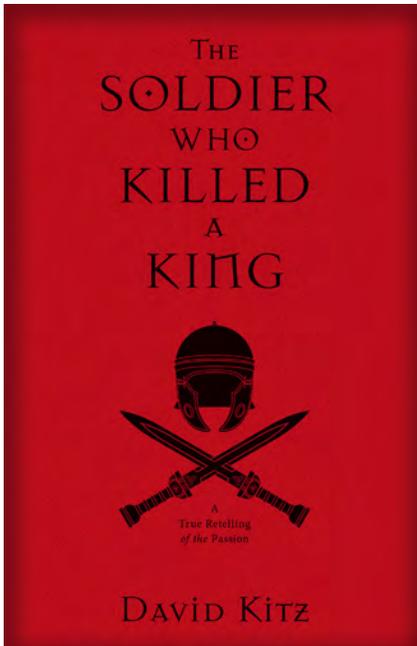
What do you hope readers come away with after reading *The Soldier Who Killed a King*?

We are transformed at the foot of the cross. Readers need to find themselves there. We need to find Jesus there. He is there. Waiting... Are you willing to take that journey?

We need to step into the empty tomb. This needs to become part of our experience. The drama of that week 2,000 years ago needs to grip us at our core. That's when change happens—deep personal change. **FF**

Visit David Kitz's author page here:

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The Soldier Who Killed a King

A True Retelling of the Passion

David Kitz

Kregel Publications



A stunning story of Holy Week through the eyes of a Roman centurion

Watch the triumphal entry of the donkey-riding king through the eyes of Marcus Longinus, the centurion charged with keeping the streets from erupting into open rebellion.

Look behind the scenes at the political plotting of King Herod, known as the Scheming Fox for his ruthless shrewdness.

Get a front-row seat to the confrontation between the Jewish high priest Caiaphas and the Roman governor Pontius Pilate.

Understand as never before the horror of the decision to save a brutal terrorist in order to condemn the peaceful Jew to death.

If you've heard the story of Passion Week so often it's become stale, now is the time to rediscover the terrible events leading from Jesus' humble ride into the city to His crucifixion. *The Soldier Who Killed a King* will stun you afresh with how completely Christ's resurrection changed history, one life at a time.

A woman in a teal dress and black bonnet is kneeling on a wooden porch, adjusting a young boy's bow tie. The boy is wearing a white shirt, dark suspenders, and a dark hat. The background shows a white door and green siding. A broom and a lantern are on the porch.

The ROAD HOME

New York Times BESTSELLING AUTHOR

BEVERLY
LEWIS

Beverly Lewis, the top-selling author of Amish fiction, releases her new novel, ***The Road Home***. This touching story of family, love, and community will delight her devoted fans and please readers new to the genre with its depiction of the nuances of different Amish communities.



With over 17 million books sold, Beverly Lewis is acknowledged by fans and the industry as a whole as the leading author in Amish fiction. Her most recent book, *The Proving*, rose to #1 on the ECPA fiction bestseller list and #19 on the *Publishers Weekly* trade paper bestseller list. Her connections in the Amish community and her own Plain heritage lend an authenticity to her work that is unmatched.

Grieving the death of her Amish parents and the separation from her nine close-knit siblings, Lena Rose Schwartz consoles herself that her new life in Lancaster County won't be forever. Surely someday soon, she will return to her beloved Michigan settlement, including her beau. But even as she holds on to hope for a reunion with those she loves most, she discovers that Lancaster holds charms of its own. Will she find the courage to open her heart to other possibilities?

To support the launch of *The Road Home*, Lewis will be embarking on her biannual book tour, which will include 23 stops, primarily in Indiana. It will also include one stop each in Illinois and Michigan.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR:

Beverly Lewis, born in the heart of Pennsylvania Dutch country, is the *New York Times* bestselling author of more than 100 books. Her stories have been published in twelve languages worldwide. A keen interest in her mother's Plain heritage has inspired Beverly to write many Amish-related novels, beginning with *The Shunning*, which has sold more than one million copies and been made into an Original Hallmark Channel Movie. She has been interviewed by both national and international media, including Time magazine, the Associated Press, and the BBC. Beverly lives with her husband, David, in Colorado. **FF**

Visit M.J. Thomas' author page here:

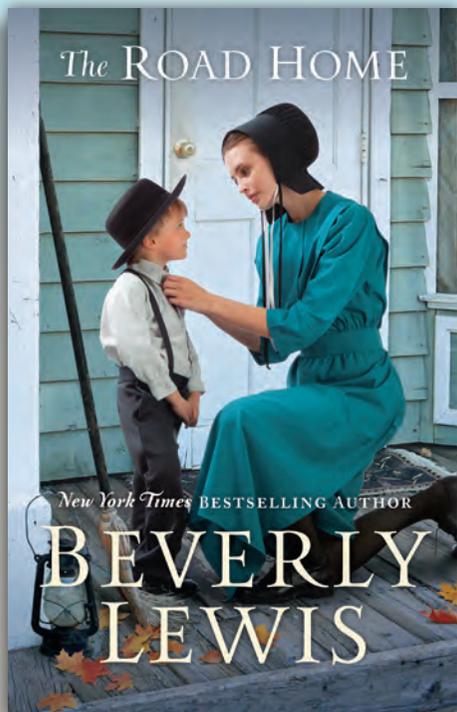
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Amish Jan Drexler

Romance author **Jan Drexler** continues her **Amish Country Brides** series with ***The Amish Nanny's Sweetheart***

(Love Inspired Historical). As nanny, Judith Lapp's finally part of an Amish community. But the more time she spends with Guy Hoover, the more he sparks longing for a home and family of Judith's own. In this interview,

Jan talks to ***FamilyFiction*** about the inspiration for the novel, the research she did to get the details right, and the importance of home.



Jan, what inspired the story in *The Amish Nanny's Sweetheart*?

This story was inspired by my grandfather's story. When his mother died in childbirth when he was 7 years old, his father placed the two boys and newborn daughter in an orphanage. While he signed the papers for the baby to be adopted, he never gave up his parental rights to my grandfather and his younger brother. The hero of my story is loosely based on my grandfather, both in name and personality.

What was your favorite part in writing this story?

Creating a happy ending for Judith and Guy, the heroine and hero in the story. They both grew up in terrible family situations, but with God's help, were able to pave a new way for themselves.

What kind of research did you do to get the details right?

I have temporary custody of my grandfather's diaries. For years, he kept a record of his daily life, and I'm privileged to be tran-



scribing them for the rest of my family to read. He passed away before I was born, but through his diary entries, I've grown to know him.

The other research source I use often is my dad. My Love Inspired Amish stories are all set in the time and place where he grew up. So, if I have a question about anything having to do with life then, I only need to pick up the phone!

What do you hope readers come away with after reading *The Amish Nanny's Sweetheart*?

The importance of home. All that my characters wanted was a home where they were accepted and loved, and that's what we all want. I hope that my readers will not only see the blessing they have in their own home here on earth, no matter what form it takes, but also a glimpse of our future, perfect home in heaven.

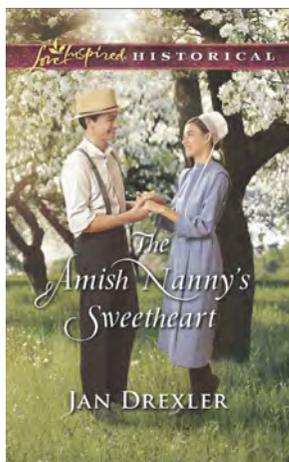
What are the best things readers can do to support their favorite authors?

Tell your friends! If you have read and enjoyed a book, let others know. Giving a ranking or writing a review on a website like Goodreads or Amazon is valuable, but so is talking about your favorite books wherever you are.

And if you can't find my books, or other favorite authors' books in your library, ask the librarian to order them. All libraries are looking for suggestions! **FF**

Visit Jan Drexler's author page here:

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The Amish Nanny's Sweetheart

Amish Country Brides #2

Jan Drexler

Love Inspired Historical



**It's not enough to
publish a book.**

**You still need to
tell people about it.**



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Author **Debby Mayne** kicks off her new Bucklin Family Reunion series with ***High Cotton*** (Gilead Publishing). Some families are filled with so much love they can't help but drive each other crazy. Will Shay find the excitement she's looking for, or realize she prefers her quiet and predictable life? In this interview, Debby shares why her new series revolves around family reunions, the role that etiquette plays in her stories, and what she most loves to hear from readers.



Debby, what inspired the story in *High Cotton*?

I've always enjoyed reunion stories, and my family had some of the best reunions, complete with drama, great Southern food, and lots of hugs. Quite a bit of preparation goes into each reunion. And of course, there's always some trepidation when you're not sure how the family will accept some of the changes in your life.

What can readers expect from the Bucklin Family Reunion series? (Are ALL these books going to be about a family reunion?)

The Bucklin family has reunions twice a year. So yes, all these books will be set during the time leading up to a reunion, during the actual event, and the days afterward. There's so much going on in this family, they can't keep up with each other. All their lives are interesting on their own, but when you put them together, it's



like an explosion—literally an explosion in book one.

What do you hope readers take away after reading *High Cotton*?

Family is important, even when you don't agree with them. It's important to find something to love about each and every person you call your sister, brother, aunt, uncle, and even your second cousin twice removed. You might argue with them, but when you need someone, you should be there for each other. You don't have to agree with them, but if they're related, there's a bond that should never be broken.

Soooo ... you're an etiquette writer? What is that, and how does it inform your fiction?

I've been an etiquette writer for *TheSpruce* (formerly About-dot-com) for many years. I'm a Southern woman and a military brat, so etiquette is something that's been hammered into my head

for as long as I remember. Like my fiction, it's part of who I am, and it comes out in my stories—especially those that are set in the South.

One of the articles I wrote is called “Manners of the Modern Southern Belle.” It pretty much sums up what it's like to be a proper Southern lady in today's world. You're likely to see some examples of these Southern belle rules in most of my fiction.

What are the best things readers can do to support their favorite authors?

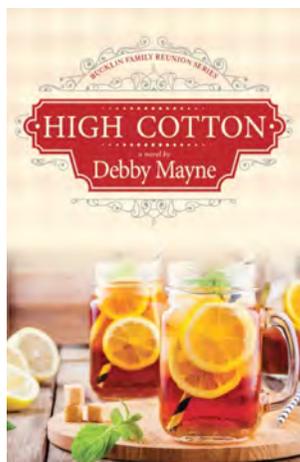
There are so many things readers can do to support authors. The most obvious is to buy our books. I also like to hear that my stories affected someone in a positive way—made them laugh, gave them insight into why certain things happen, or just provided a couple hours of entertainment over a long weekend.

A brief note letting me know is always welcome. And I love hearing that my books were recommended by someone who enjoyed them. **FF**

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Debby Mayne



High Cotton

Bucklin Family Reunion #1

Debby Mayne

Gilead Publishing

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Victorian romance has never been more popular, and **Jennifer Delamere** adds to the genre with her latest novel ***The Heart's Appeal*** (Bethany House). Coming to London to study medicine—a profession now opened up to women—Julia Bernay witnesses a serious accident and saves the life of an ambitious young barrister. But she soon discovers he could be instrumental in destroying her dreams for the future. In this interview, Jennifer explains why her main character wants to study medicine, the real historical figures that populate her fiction, and the historical details that might surprise her readers.



In *The Heart's Appeal*, Julia Bernay comes to London in order to attend medical school. What made you choose this profession for her?

Medicine seemed a natural fit for Julia, due to her love of learning and her desire to help people. In 1881, when this book takes place, England had only recently passed laws allowing women to certify as physicians. Julia is a strong-minded and independent person and a natural groundbreaker, which describes all of the early female doctors.

They faced a lot of initial opposition from many people in the established medical profession, and public opinion wasn't always with them, either. But they persevered.

Julia's choice of career also fits with her background of having been raised in George Müller's orphanage in Bristol, England.



When girls left Müller's orphanage, most went into service (cooks, maids, etc.). However, some became nurses, as did Julia.

It was easy to imagine that Julia would jump at the opportunity to become a physician when that field finally opened up to women. Her Christian upbringing in Müller's orphanage has made her a fervent believer.

She wants to become a licensed physician so that she can be a medical missionary to foreign countries. But she soon learns there are many people in London who also need the physical and spiritual help that she can provide.

Although the main characters in your books are fictional, you often include real people in your books. Is this the case with *The Heart's Appeal*?

Yes! Julia's mentor at the medical school is Elizabeth Garrett Anderson, who in 1865 became the first woman to qualify as a physician in Britain. In 1874, she cofounded the London School of Medicine for Women and was active in its administration as well as teaching.

Her husband, James G.S. Anderson (Jamie), was the joint-owner of a successful shipping line. They were a perfect match for many reasons, not the least of which was because he fervently supported his wife's choice of a career. Jamie Anderson offers advice and help to Michael Stephenson, the book's hero, at a critical time.

Julia also has an inspiring encounter with Dr. Anderson's sister, Millicent Fawcett. Today, Millicent is most remembered for her role in the women's suffrage movement. Both sisters were quite extraordinary, and I enjoyed being able to include them in this book.

Jennifer, *The Heart's Appeal* includes scenes on the London Underground. Do you think this will surprise the reader?

I'm sure the image most people have of transportation in Victorian London is that of hansom cabs—two-wheeled carriages with the driver's seat high in the back. Certainly, there were countless numbers of those.

But the first line of what became known as the London Underground was opened in 1863, so it was well-established by 1881 when Julia gets there. At that time, the trains were powered by big, smoky steam engines.

You might say that London's fog above ground was matched by the smoke-filled tunnels below. The trains were not electrified until the early twentieth century.

Michael and Julia meet because of an accident that occurs while they are riding on the Underground. And yet, in reality there were surprisingly few accidents. The Victorians were excellent engineers, and they figured out not only how to dig

tunnels through the crowded city to build the Underground Railway, but also how to operate the lines safely. It certainly raised my admiration for the ingenuity of the Victorians.

***The Heart's Appeal* is the second book in the London Beginnings series. Are there any themes that you have seen emerging in the series as a whole?**

One interesting theme that I hadn't originally anticipated has to do with family dynamics—how our parents and/or siblings can be not only a tremendous source of strength and solace in bad times, but also how their expectations can add a lot of pressure to our lives and the decisions we make. The tension between being helpful and troublesome is a family dynamic that has been interesting to explore.

Both Julia and Michael are grappling with choices they have made for their lives that run contrary to what their siblings believe is best for them. They must find ways to reconcile that while still remaining true to themselves.

Another theme, which runs through all my books, is that with God there can always be a new beginning. Mistakes or events in the past don't have to prevent us from forging a new future. There are several characters in *The Heart's Appeal* who overcome significant past tragedies and find their way to new and better lives. **FF**

Visit Jennifer Delamere's author page here:

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Jennifer Delamere



The Heart's Appeal

London Beginnings #2

Jennifer Delamere

Bethany House



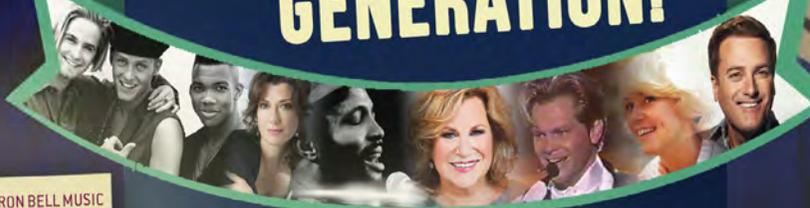
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Julie Lessman is an award-winning author whose tagline of “Passion With a Purpose” underscores her intense passion for both God and romance. Her book ***For Love of Liberty*** is a prequel to her upcoming **Silver Lining Ranch** series. In this interview, she tells what to expect from the series, who inspired her characters, and several ways that readers can support their favorite authors.



What inspired you to write a romance set in this particular time and place?

A friend happened to mention the TV show *Ponderosa*, which aired in the 1960s and 1970s, and instantly I was taken back to one of my favorite TV shows as a kid. In the blink of an eye, I suddenly saw a series set in Virginia City, Nevada, where *Bonanza* took place, set on a similar Ponderosa-style ranch. Thus was born my Western trilogy Silver Lining Ranch series, which is set during the era of the Comstock Lode silver strike and the transcontinental railroad in late-1800s Nevada.

What can you tell us about the series?

The Silver Lining Ranch series is a fun and lighthearted family-saga story about two suffragists from New York in the late 1800s—a godmother and her goddaughter—who fall in love with confirmed bachelor ranchers and their family in Virginia City, Nevada. This is the “Wild West,” so think “*Bonanza* meets *McClintock*” with lots of fireworks going on between two couples during the fascinating era of the transcontinental railroad and the Comstock Lode silver mine upon which Virginia City was built.



Here's the blurb for book one, *Love's Silver Lining*:

A Match Made in Heaven? Or Someplace a Whole Lot Warmer? She's stubborn, educated, and looking to give women the vote. He's bullheaded, successful, and looking to give her a piece of his mind.

But when things heat up, they just may give each other a piece of their hearts.

What is it about Liberty O'Shea and Griffin McShane that inspired you to write a book about them?

Two names: John Wayne and Maureen O'Hara. When those two actors butted heads (and hearts) in the lighthearted Western movie *McLintock*, I fell in love! John Wayne played this calm and no-nonsense rancher married to a feisty redhead with New England airs, and the fireworks that sparked on the screen made me both laugh and sigh. So, I decided to try my own hand at a romance where two polar opposites battle their way to a love that—after a lot of lessons learned—lasts a lifetime.

What do you hope readers come away with after reading *For Love of Liberty*?

The same lesson I actually learned after I wrote this novel, which is also the spiritual theme of the book: *True liberty is doing the right thing.*

You see, I had just finished the manuscript when my husband and I encountered an unfortunate situation where we suspected a neighbor of vandalizing our property. I wanted my husband to tell the police all the details of what we suspected, which clearly pointed to this neighbor, but he didn't want to because he said it wasn't conclusive.

Well, that triggered one of the biggest arguments my husband and I have ever had and as a result, we both went to bed upset. I remember lying there fuming, so angry at the suspected neighbor and the large amount of money we lost that I was getting physically sick. All at once, like an autumn leaf drifting down, the theme of my book floated into my brain: True liberty is doing the right thing.

I silently groaned because I knew the "right thing" was forgiving this neighbor and praying for him, but trust me—I sure didn't want to! God reminded me that my anger and unforgiveness was a prison that stole my freedom to be happy, not only ruining the joy of my home, but the joy of my marriage.

From that point on, every time I thought about that neighbor, I prayed for God to bless him and even took cupcakes to him and his wife. The moment I did that, it was like all the anger siphoned away and all I saw were two people who needed God's love.

We now have a fledgling relationship with these same neighbors. I can't help but think, isn't it just like God to teach you a lesson with your own book?

What can readers do to support their favorite authors?

Oh my goodness—THANK YOU for asking one of the most important questions you can ask an author! I get emails from readers all the time, telling me how my book affected them or how much they liked it, which truly blesses me. But the best way to bless and thank those authors we love is to put those same words in a brief review—it can be as short as one or two lines, stating you liked the book—and post it on Amazon and Goodreads.

All authors need good reviews, but especially on indie books such as my *Isle of Hope* or *Silver Lining Ranch* series because I don't have my publisher promoting these books like I do on the books they published for me. The more good reviews, the more sales, which means that author you love has a better chance of writing more books that you love.

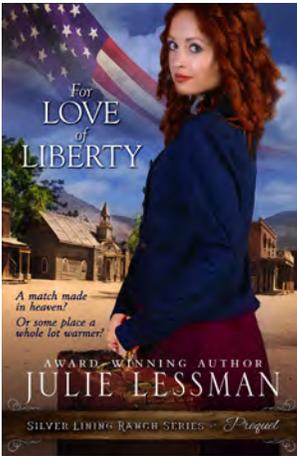
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- Choosing that author's book for your current book club
- Starting a book club just for that author's book
- Sharing and retweeting an author's promotions
- Voting for that author in **FamilyFiction** magazine's readers' polls
- Recommending an author to family, friends, Facebook friends/followers, prayer groups, Bible groups, etc. because word of mouth is key. **FF**

Visit Julie Lessman's author page here:

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Julie Lessman



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Dr. Dennis E. “Doc” Hensley has published five dozen books and more than 150 short stories and 3,500 newspaper and magazine articles. His latest book is ***The Man Who Could Transfuse Time*** (By the Vine Press), a science fiction novel about a fugitive with a gift that will either bless or curse mankind forever. In this interview, Doc shares about the surprising people who inspired the story, how some theologians explain people with amazing abilities, and how he can write in so many different categories.



What inspired the story for *The Man Who Could Transfuse Time*?

Back in the 1980s, I was hired by a large magazine to write an article based on interviews I did with people who were born with extraordinary powers, such as being ambidextrous or hearing with perfect pitch or having a photographic memory. They all told me that they felt they had been blessed and cursed.

For example, the woman with the photographic memory made all A grades in high school and college because when she read her homework assignment, it was locked into her memory. Unfortunately, she could not forget times when people got angry with her and said hurtful things. Most of us forgive and move on, but she could not because she remembered everything.

These people fascinated me, so I made an entry in my journal to wonder what it would be like to have a superpower that was not just rare, but unique—no one else had it. What kind of life would that person have?



Shortly after that, I wrote a book on aspects of time management called *Staying Ahead of Time*. Many people I interviewed told me they wished they could go back and be young again, yet still know all they know now. They said they would certainly make some major changes in their lives.

So, I wrote in my journal that I wondered if that would be a good thing or not. Would someone like that be out of synch with everyone else his or her age? Would it backfire?

Finally, I was listening to a sermon one night in which the pastor shared Paul's words that each Christian has a distinctive spiritual gift. Hearing that made me mentally pull all these other elements together into a plot in which one man had a gift that no one else had—the ability to make the old young and the young old. He could transfuse time between two individuals. And that's how I came up with the plot for the novel.

What did it take to create the world for this story?

Even when writing fiction, the writer has to give the readers a sense of “but this could actually happen.” So, I did a lot of research on progeria, a disorder that causes people to age seven times faster than normal.

I contacted medical experts at the Cleveland Clinic, the Mayo Clinic, and at Johns Hopkins Medical School and got all the information I could find on how the body ages and how aging can be delayed or accelerated. This became part of my novel. It gave a solid scientific element to what was being presented. And I made one of my central characters, Dr. Francis Anderson, a physician who is a geneticist.

Similarly, I interviewed theologians as to why they felt God created certain people with extraordinary abilities. Several told me that they believed Adam and Eve had superior abilities that were lost after the fall. For example, the Bible tells us that Adam gave a specific name to every one of the animals. Wow, what creativity!

It also notes that Adam could work joyously in the Garden of Eden, but it makes no mention of blisters, sore muscles, or sweat. Some theologians speculate that some of those original “super genes” may filter down and “pop up” now and then as reminders of how fearfully and wonderfully we were originally created. I made my primary character, Ian Moore, a man who is very familiar with Scripture, and he shares some of these theories as part of the novel.

What are some of the challenges for a Christian author writing about something fantastical like this? How do you keep it grounded with a biblical worldview?

To begin with, Christians are not baffled or put off by the concept of miracles taking place. Jesus performed miracles, and His disciples were able to raise the dead, give the blind back their sight, and speak in a wide range of languages. So, to offer a story in which God has graced someone with the ability to use special gifts as a way of furthering the kingdom is not something Christians will find silly or unbelievable.

However, it was my task to include enough solid theology and enough genuine science to make a convincing argument for how such a gift could possibly manifest itself in modern times.

What do you hope readers will take away after reading *The Man Who Could Transfuse Time*?

Witnessing to an unbeliever about such abstract concepts as what it is to be “born again” or to be granted “everlasting life” or “to have a new life in Christ” is difficult. My novel helps people wrap their minds around the idea of how time can be altered, how time can be redefined, how time can first be limited and then be eternal.

I want my readers to be entertained, absolutely captivated by the strong narrative drive of the plot. But I also want them to be challenged in their thinking about how they view life and how they wish to fulfill their service to the Lord in whatever amount of time they are given.

You've written a lot of books that fall into different categories. How do you choose what you are going to write each time?

To date, I have written 64 published books, only 10 of which were novels. Usually, when I write a nonfiction book it comes as an assignment from a major publishing house.

For example, I have written 11 textbooks on aspects of professional writing because I have a Ph.D. in English, and I am director of the professional writing major at Taylor University. So, being an authority in this area, I get approached by textbook companies when new books are needed in the areas of journalism, creative writing, or social media.

However, I've also been an active freelance writer for a wide variety of magazines, so I have often compiled my printed short pieces and formed them into a book, such as my collection of devotions in *More Than Meets the Eye* (Kregel) or my articles on motivation found in *The Power of Positive Productivity* (Possibility Press). Additionally, my literary agent, Chip MacGregor, comes up with job offers for me.

However, when writing a novel, I have to spend time germinating concepts and ideas, developing dynamic characters, forging pivotal scenes, and formulating scintillating dialogue. It's a much longer process for me, but I'm always pleased with the end results.

What are the best things readers can do to support their favorite authors?

It's obvious to point out that buying our books and posting reviews helps. Personally, I'm very gratified when my readers attend writers' conferences where I am the keynote speaker, or

Dennis E. Hensley

they suggest to bookstore owners or librarians that my books should be on their shelves.

My biggest joy, however, is when I get a certain kind of “hate mail” that reads something like this:

“Dear Doc Hensley, I started reading your new book at nine last night, and I couldn’t put the crazy thing down until four in the morning—and I still had to get up for work at seven! You’re terrible! Uh, when are you going to write another one?” **FF**

Visit Dr. Hensley’s author page here:

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The Man Who Could Transfuse Time

Dennis E. Hensley

By The Vine Press

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When the body of a wealthy businessman is discovered in Lake Porter, the investigation uncovers a possible serial killer—one with a terrifying connection to a nurse trying to leave her past behind.

Beneath the Surface (Revell), the first volume in the Dive Team Investigations series, is the new romantic suspense novel from

Lynn H. Blackburn. In this interview, Lynn shares how she became interested in underwater investigations, the research to get it right, and when readers can expect to see these characters again.



Can you please tell us about your newest book, *Beneath the Surface*?

Beneath the Surface introduces us to the Carrington County Sheriff's Office dive team—a team made up of volunteers from all areas of the sheriff's office who are trained to perform underwater investigations. Ryan Parker is a homicide investigator who is second-in-command on the dive team.

While on a training exercise, he discovers the body of a businessman at the bottom of the lake. He has no way to know that when he asks to borrow the dock of Leigh Weston—a girl he's known forever who recently returned to the area—he's dragging her straight into the crosshairs of a killer.

Leigh returned to Carrington to start over after being stalked by a patient. She's been struggling to understand how God could have allowed all the horrible things she's endured in the past few years, but she never imagined that the worst was yet to come.



The investigations into the murder of the businessman and the threats against Leigh draw in multiple members of the dive team, and they work together to uncover the truth—and stop a killer—before it’s too late.

How did you become interested in underwater investigations?

I attended the Writers Police Academy (WPA) in 2014, and went to a class taught by a local law enforcement dive team in Guilford County, North Carolina. I was sitting beside a YMCA pool watching them demonstrate evidence recovery techniques, and a few hours later I was telling my mentor about this idea I had for a series.

What type of research was required to accurately write about a dive team?

It started with that class at WPA, then moved to the internet. Then I got in touch with Mike Berry—a Master Underwater Criminal Investigator. His website and book were invaluable. He also answered specific questions about the scenarios I had created for this story.

Lynn H. Blackburn

I also talked to Sergeant Chris Hammett, a former homicide investigator and member of the law enforcement dive team in my community. Their input was critical to making the story as accurate as possible.

What do you hope readers can learn from *Beneath the Surface*?

I hope readers come away with renewed confidence that God is here for them and that He really is working things for their good and His glory, even when it doesn't feel that way.

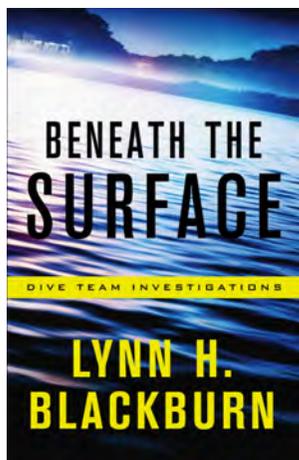
***Beneath the Surface* is the first book in the new Dive Team Investigations series. When can readers expect to see the next books in the series?**

I'm writing the second and third books in this series. Book two is scheduled to release in November 2018, and book three is scheduled to release in July 2019. I love these characters and it's exciting to get to hang out with them again. **FF**

Visit Lynn H. Blackburn's author page here:

<https://www.familyfiction.com/authors/lynn-h-blackburn>

Lynn H. Blackburn



Beneath the Surface

Dive Team Investigations

Lynn H. Blackburn

Revell



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For his children's series *The Secret of the Hidden Scrolls*, author **M.J. Thomas** combines biblical accuracy with adventure, imagination, and characters who are dear to his heart. The latest adventure, ***The Great Escape*** (WorthyKids/Ideals), finds the kids in ancient Egypt, where they witness firsthand the cataclysmic showdown between Moses and the Pharaoh. In this interview, he tells ***FamilyFiction*** about the origins of the series, the challenges of writing for children, and how his characters end up having these amazing adventures.

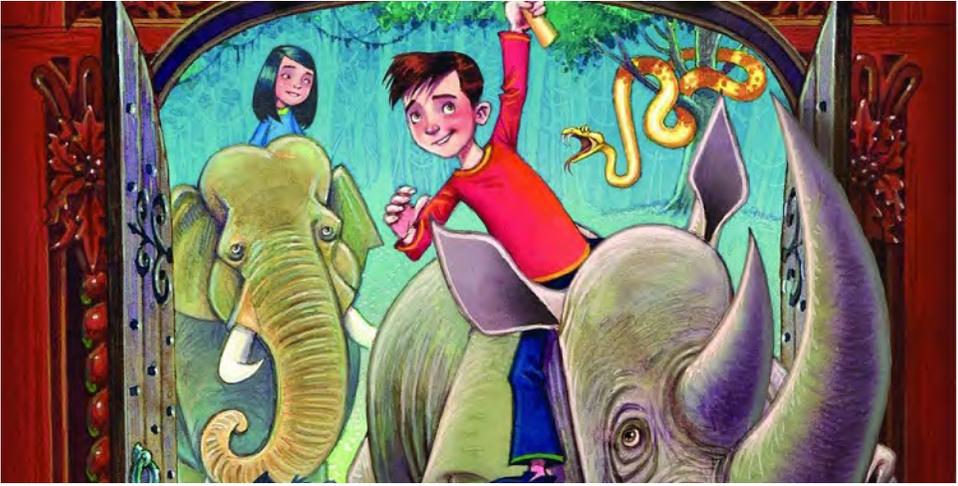


What inspired you to write the *Secret of the Hidden Scrolls* series?

It started with a book report. I went on a search to find something for my 9-year-old son, Peter, to read. As a father and Christ-follower, I wanted a book that would help him discover the Bible and grow in faith. So I did what a lot of parents have done—I browsed through my local Christian bookstore.

I found a trove of story Bibles, but they were too young for Peter. I found several Bible studies and devotionals, but they were too adult.

Next, I looked through Peter's book report list from his Christian school. I found good literature, fiction, and biographies, but I couldn't find anything that had the right balance of faith, adventure, and education. Undeterred, I took my search to Barnes & Noble.



When I made my way to the children’s section, I thought I had hit pay dirt. The shelves were filled with books created with children like Peter in mind. There were books about magic tree houses, funny kids, Greek gods, superheroes in underpants, and wizard schools—anything and everything the imagination could conceive. But none of those books contained the gospel-centered truth I was looking for.

After searching and knowing that Peter wouldn’t be young forever, I talked to him about my dilemma. He simply said, “Why don’t you just write one?”

It was hard to argue with that logic. So, I decided to write the book I was looking for.

How do you get into the right frame of mind to write for this age group?

I read the books to classrooms full of children. I pay attention to their facial expression, their laughter, and sometimes their yawns. I picture those children when I am writing.

My prayer before I write is Psalm 19:14: *Let the words of my mouth and the meditations of my heart be pleasing in your sight, O Lord, my strength and my redeemer.* I want young readers to know God and I don't want my words to get in the way.

Are your characters completely made up, or are they inspired by real people?

The main characters are siblings Peter and Mary and their dog, Hank. Peter is inspired by my youngest son, Peter. Mary is inspired by my niece, Mary. She, like the character in the book, was adopted from China.

Hank is inspired by our family dog named Hank. As you can see, I was really creative in naming the characters.

The other main character is Great-Uncle Solomon. He is a made-up mixture of Indiana Jones, Willy Wonka, and C. S. Lewis.

The rest of the characters are based on the real people in the Bible stories they travel back in time to visit.

Can you tell us a little more about Peter, Mary, and Hank, and how they end up having these amazing adventures?

Peter, Mary, and Hank must stay with their Great-Uncle Solomon for a month while their parents travel to Africa. They think it will be the most boring time ever—until they find out that Great-Uncle Solomon was an archaeologist.

He shows them artifacts and treasures and tells them stories of his travels around the globe. Then he shares his most amazing discovery of all—the Hidden Scrolls! Uncle Solomon tells the kids that an ancient legend says these scrolls can help prove that the Bible is true.

Each scroll that Peter and Mary open takes them back to a different exciting event in Bible history. The kids must race to solve the secret of each scroll, which is always a foundational truth about God, before time runs out and they get stuck in the past forever.

Without revealing too much, would you tell us a bit about what the kids face in *The Great Escape*?

In their third adventure, Peter, Mary, and Hank travel back to the action-packed story of Exodus. They wind up befriending Pharaoh's daughter and witness Moses' repeated petitions to Pharaoh and the many plagues that follow.

As Peter and Mary try to decode the scroll, they face opposition from Pharaoh's cunning advisor the Great Magician, who seems to be up to no good. There's also a panther, a grumpy camel, and frogs aplenty, so there should be lots of funny moments for kids to enjoy.

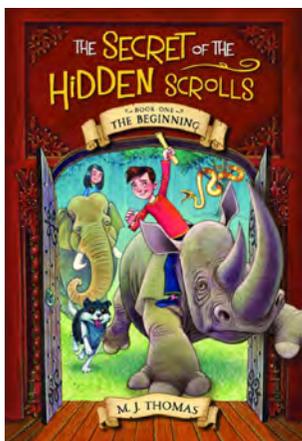
What comes next for the series?

I am currently writing the fourth book in the series. The trio travels back in time to Jericho. The only thing I can tell you now is that there will be spies and secret missions involved. It will release in late summer, and book five won't be far behind. **FF**

Visit M.J. Thomas' author page here:

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M.J. Thomas



The Great Escape

The Secret of the Hidden Scrolls

M.J. Thomas

Worthy Kids/Ideals



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Faith and family film studio **Pure Flix** continues their popular **God's Not Dead** film series with **God's Not Dead: A Light In Darkness**, which hits theaters March 30.

Shot on location in Little Rock, Arkansas, the film stars **David A.R. White** (*God's Not Dead*), **John Corbett** (*My Big Fat Greek Wedding*), **Shane Harper** (*God's Not Dead*), **Ted McGinley** (*Married with Children*), **Jennifer Taylor** (*Two and a Half Men*), and **Tatum O'Neal** (*Paper Moon*).

In the film, a deadly fire rips through St. James Church, devastating the congregation and Pastor Dave. Adjoining Hadleigh University uses the tragedy to kick the congregation off campus. The escalating controversy creates a dilemma for the small church—can Christians fight for their rights and be the light for Christ at the same time?

Facing a court case and his own struggle to see Christ's light in heartbreak, Dave asks for help from Pearce, his estranged brother—a big-city lawyer and an atheist—to fight for the church's right to exist. The family reunion opens old wounds, as the brothers wrestle with the questions that pulled them apart years ago: Is God really good all the time? Where is God when bad things happen? Can Christ really heal the brokenhearted?

"Audiences have continued to show support and interest in the God's Not Dead films and their relatable characters who endure similar challenges in their personal faith and lives," says Michael Scott, Pure Flix founding partner. "Our hope is that these films offer entertainment and encouragement, with a starting point for sharing faith in a respectable and compassionate manner."



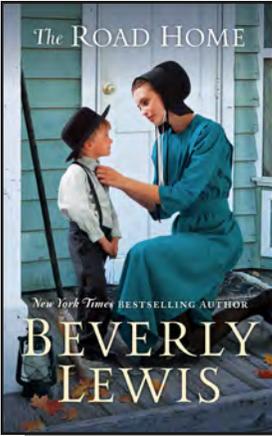
God's Not Dead, released in 2014, earned \$62 million against a budget of \$1.2 million. It is one of the most profitable movies by percentage in cinema history.

Founded in 2005, Pure Flix is an independent faith and family studio. Their releases include: *The Case For Christ*, *God's Not Dead 2*, *God's Not Dead*, *Do You Believe?*, *Woodlawn*, *A Question Of Faith*, and *Same Kind Of Different As Me*. With offices in Los Angeles and Scottsdale, Pure Flix has produced, acquired, marketed and distributed over 100 faith and family-friendly films. The company also features a leading streaming video -on-demand service, with thousands of movies, originals, TV shows and more emphasizing faith, family, and fun. **FF**

Watch the God's Not Dead 3 movie trailer here:

<https://www.familyfiction.com/third-gods-not-dead-series-theaters-march-30>

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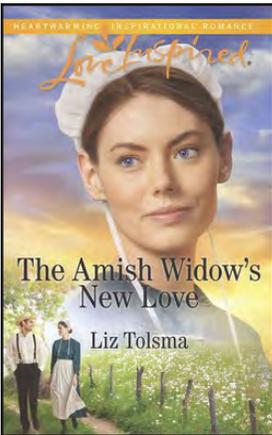
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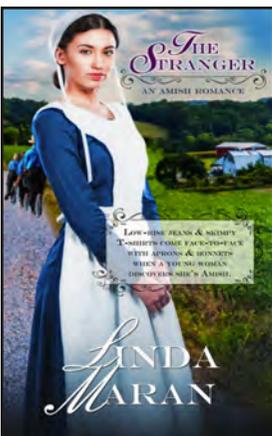
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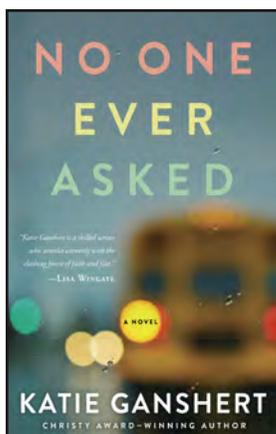
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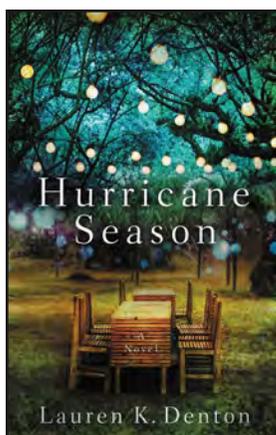
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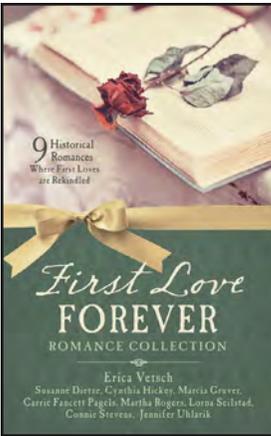
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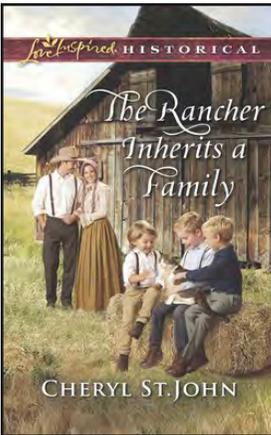
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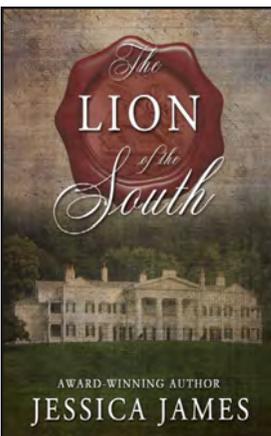
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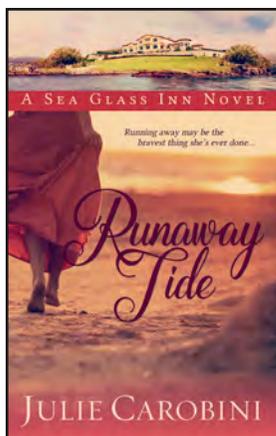
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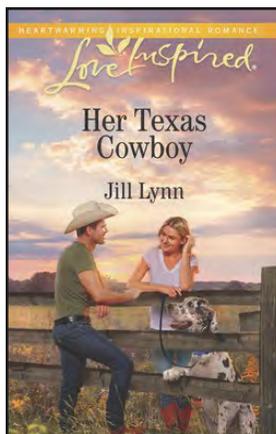
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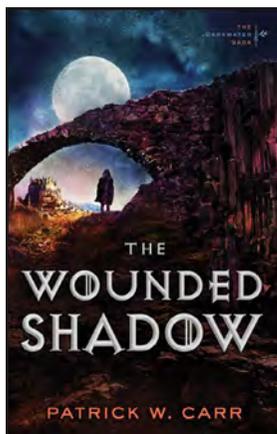
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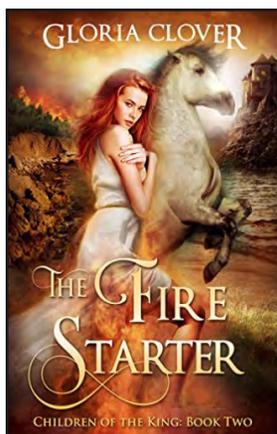
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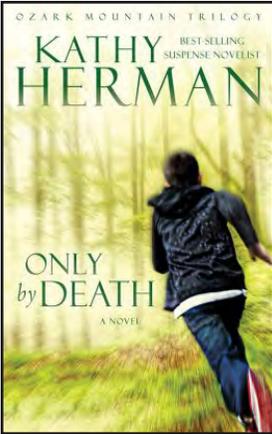
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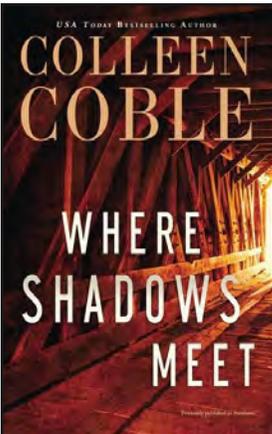
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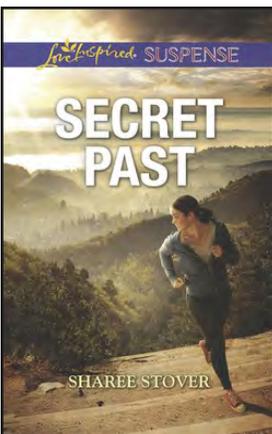
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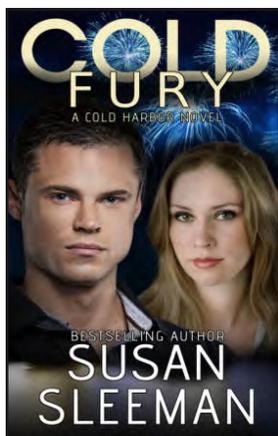
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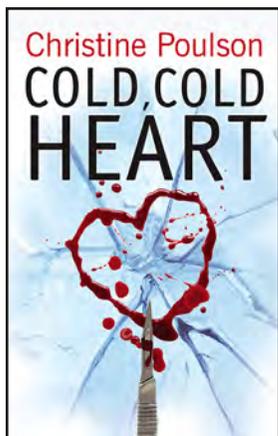
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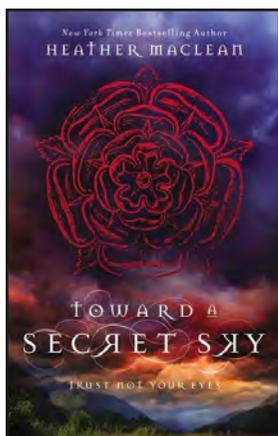
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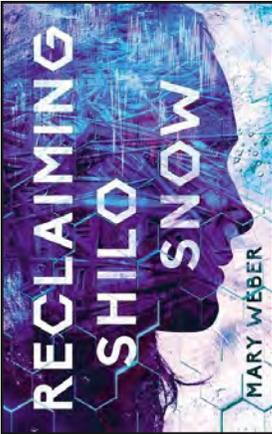
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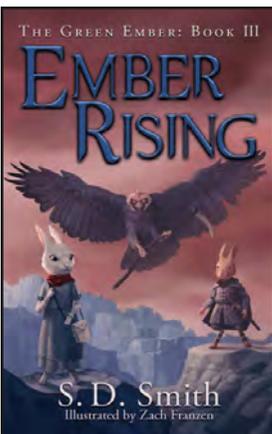
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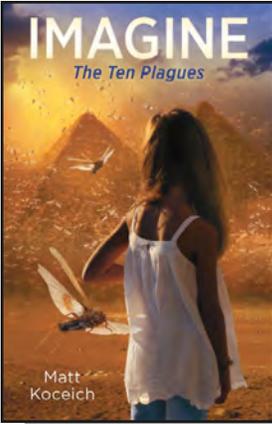
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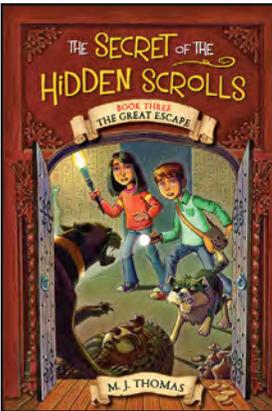
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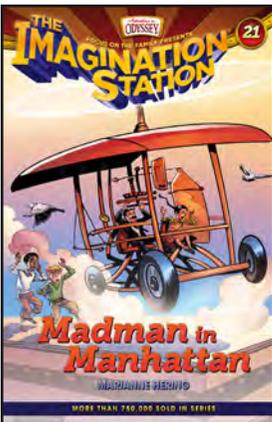
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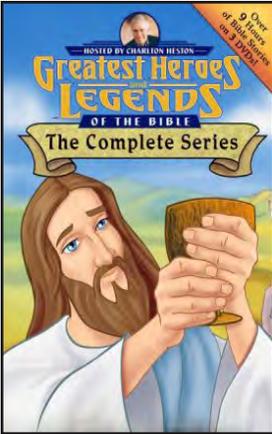
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Genres: Animated, Children's, Movies, Historical

April 2018



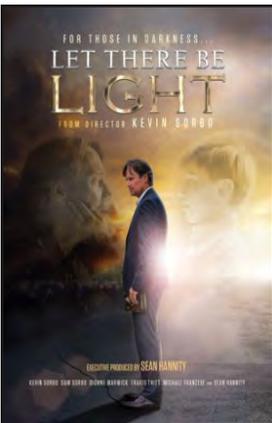
THE STAR

Timothy Reckart (Director)

Sony Pictures Home Entertainment

Genres: Animation, Christmas, Movies, Children's, Speculative

February 2018



LET THERE BE LIGHT

Kevin Sorbo (Actor, Director)

Cinedigm

Genres: Movies, Contemporary, Speculative

February 2018



New Releases: April 2018



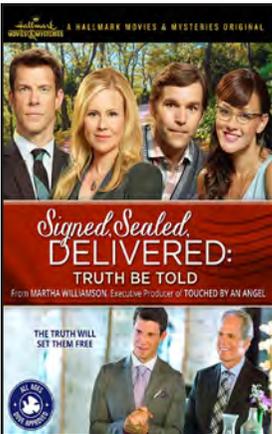
**WHEN CALLS THE HEART:
THE HEART OF HOMECOMING**

Janette Oke

Shout! Factory

Genres: Movies, Historical, Romance

March 2018



**SIGNED, SEALED, DELIVERED:
TRUTH BE TOLD**

Hallmark

Genres: Movies, Romance

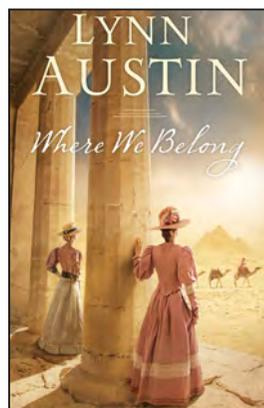
March 2018



A QUICK LOOK AT SOME OF THE BESTSELLING TITLES FOR FEBRUARY 2018

HISTORICAL FICTION

- 1** ***Where We Belong***
Lynn Austin
Baker Publishing Group
- 2** ***Redeeming Love***
Francine Rivers
WaterBrook Press
- 3** ***Lady Jayne Disappears***
Joanna Davidson Politano
Baker Publishing Group
- 4** ***The Ladies of Ivy Cottage***
Julie Klassen
Baker Publishing Group
- 5** ***Light on the Hill***
Connilyn Cossette
Baker Publishing Group



To see the entire list of bestselling books go to:
<http://cbaonline.org/best-sellers>

CLICK HERE TO READ MORE ONLINE: <https://www.familyfiction.com>

CONTEMPORARY

- 1** *The Masterpiece*
Francine Rivers
Tyndale House Publishers
- 2** *An Extra Mile*
Sharon Garlough Brown
InterVarsity Press
- 3** *To Kill a Mockingbird*
Harper Lee
Hachette Book Group
- 4** *A Time to Stand*
Robert Whitlow
Thomas Nelson
- 5** *Barefoot*
Sharon Garlough Brown
InterVarsity Press

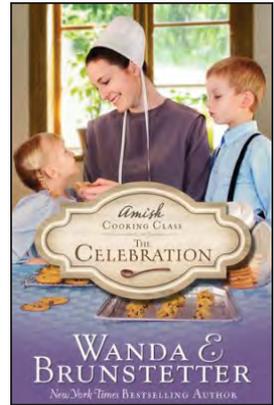


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CLICK HERE TO READ MORE ONLINE: <https://www.familyfiction.com>

ROMANCE

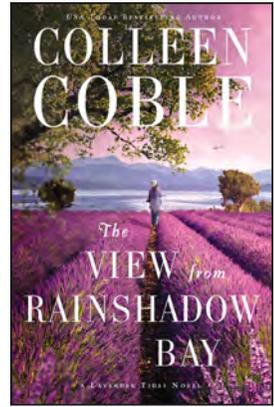
- 1** ***Amish Cooking Class
The Celebration***
Wanda Brunstetter
Barbour Publishing
- 2** ***Love Story***
Karen Kingsbury
Howard Books/
Simon & Schuster
- 3** ***The Proving***
Beverly Lewis
Baker Publishing Group
- 4** ***The Blessing***
Wanda Brunstetter
Barbour Publishing
- 5** ***In This Moment***
Karen Kingsbury
Howard Books/Simon & Schuster



To see the entire list of bestselling books go to:
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SUSPENSE/MYSTERY

- 1** *The View from Rainshadow Bay*
Colleen Coble
Thomas Nelson
- 2** *Oath of Honor*
Lynette Eason
Baker Publishing Group
- 3** *House on Foster Hill*
Jaime Jo Wright
Baker Publishing Group
- 4** *The Book of Mysteries*
Jonathan Cahn
Charisma
- 5** *If I'm Found*
Terri Blackstock
Zondervan

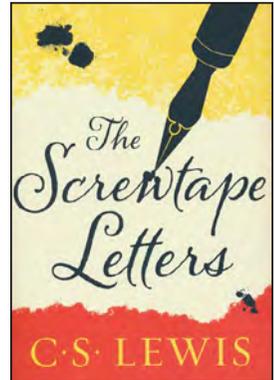


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CLICK HERE TO READ MORE ONLINE: <http://www.familyfiction.com>

SPECULATIVE/FANTASY/SCI-FI

- 1** ***The Screwtape Letters***
C. S. Lewis
Zondervan
- 2** ***Hinds' Feet on High Places***
Hannah Hurnard
Tyndale House
- 3** ***The Great Divorce***
C. S. Lewis
Zondervan
- 4** ***The Beautiful Pretender***
Melanie Dickerson
Thomas Nelson
- 5** ***The Pilgrim's Progress***
John Bunyan
Moody Publishers



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<http://cbaonline.org/best-sellers>