

# familyfiction

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December 2013

# Edge

## THE STEVEN JAMES

### EXPERIENCE

The Suspense Author Talks  
About His New Novel  
*Singularity*

**5** Speculative  
Bestselling eBooks  
**ON SALE**

A Look at Lorie Ann Grover's  
Provocative Young Adult Novel

## FIRSTBORN

**PLUS**

Q&A with Romantic Suspense Author  
*Dee Henderson*

**AND**

A Few of Our Favorite Things  
**Christmas Gift Guide 2013**





# Stephen James

The Jevin Banks Experience continues with his latest installment *Singularity*.

**BOOK REVIEW:**  
*Game, Set and Murder*  
by Elizabeth Flynn

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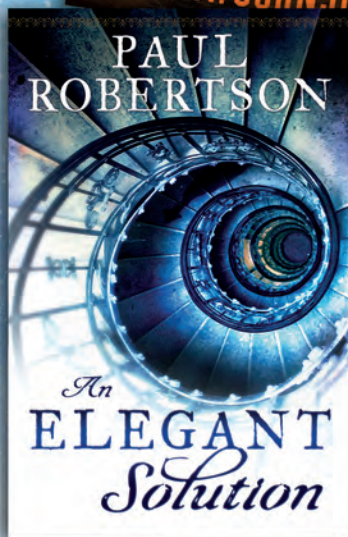
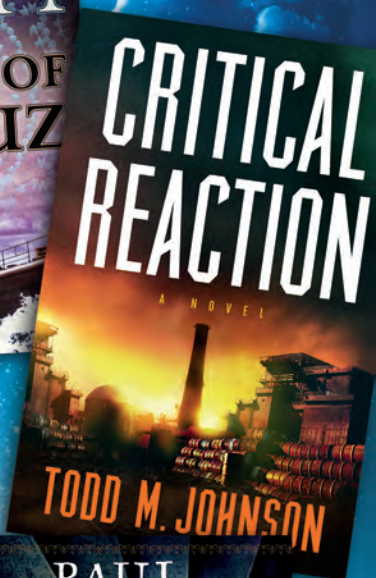
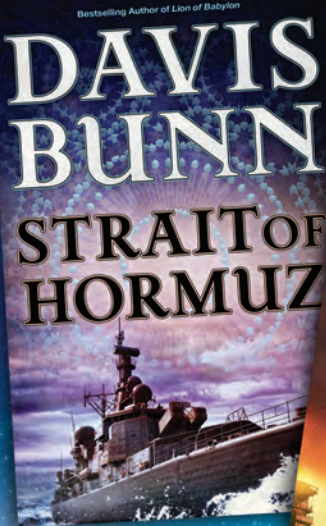
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## SUSPENSE



**Dee Henderson**

*Plus New Releases*

## SPECULATIVE

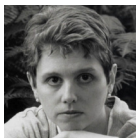


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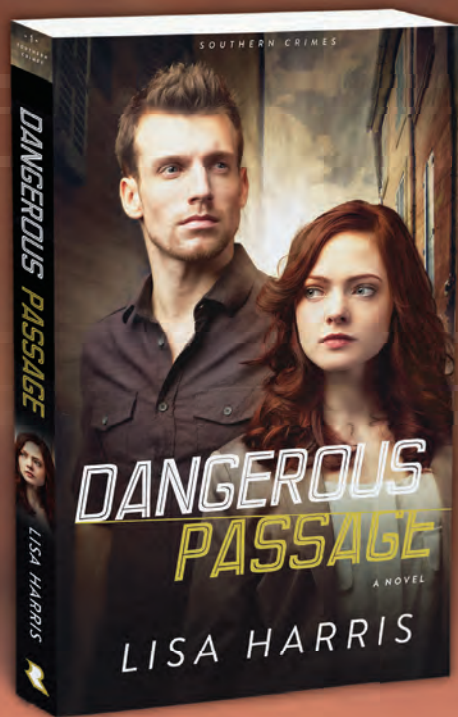
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# WHO WE ARE



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Deidra Romero is a twenty-something blogger and bookworm. She loves good company, good coffee, and a good story.

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# THE STEVEN JAMES EXPERIENCE

Suspenseful Storytelling at Its Best

Deidra Romero



*Singularity* is Steven's tenth novel, but don't try to pigeonhole this writer.

His resume is a lengthy one with years of experience writing everything from Bible curriculum to children's ministry resources.

Most people wouldn't think of an illusionist as a likely literary hero, but in Steven James' latest novel, Jevin Banks proves to be the perfect protagonist. Steven's heart-pounding and fascinating series, *The Jevin Banks Experience*, welcomed its second installment in November. Steven's latest book, *Singularity* (Revell), picks up Jevin's story as he sifts through conspiracy theories and top-secret research to uncover secrets surrounding his friend's murder.

When asked about his unlikely main character, Steven responded, "When I was developing ideas for the book, I wanted this series to be completely different from my Patrick Bowers novels, which feature an FBI agent who assists in tracking serial offenders. So, I wanted someone who wasn't in law enforcement, who wasn't a spy or a CIA agent, and yet still had amazing skills and was fascinating. I've always liked illusions and it seemed like the perfect fit." A perfect fit indeed—Jevin can escape any situation by using his skill set or deceive a threatening villain with a slide of the hand.

Fans of *Placebo*, Steven's initial book in the Jevin Banks series, will be pleased to see a familiar opponent return in *Singularity*. "This story builds on that character's desire to upload his consciousness onto a computer in order to 'live' forever. Just like *Placebo*, this is a science thriller with a broad conspiracy angle. However, in *Singularity* the stakes are higher and there's a bigger twist at the end of the story," comments Steven.

For Steven the most difficult part of writing this novel was knowing when to stop researching the science behind his plotline. "All of the science behind the thought-controlled machines in *Singularity* is true. I wanted the story to stand on its own," says Steven.

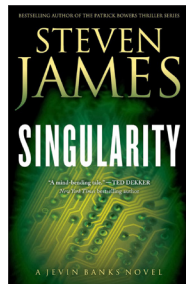
*Singularity* is Steven's tenth novel, but don't try to pigeonhole this writer. His resume is a lengthy one with years of experience writing everything from Bible curriculum to children's ministry resources. Steven began telling stories while working as a camp counselor. "I was looking for a way to bore the kids to sleep at night and started telling them stories to calm them down. Some years later I got a Master's Degree in Storytelling (no joke), and I've been writing and telling stories ever since."

According to Steven, he saw his career progress in baby steps before he finally attempted to write his first novel, *Pawn* (Revell), which launched his career as a suspense author and has become his most well-known book to date. However, *The King*, which also released this year has become a fan favorite.

When asked what's ahead for Steven, he responded, "Currently, I'm working on some other projects—*Blur*, a young adult novel, and *Checkmate*, a psychological thriller. I am hoping to come back to Jevin in a year or so, but there's nothing solid there yet."

Readers can expect a story in *Singularity* that will take them places they didn't imagine. "*Singularity* is full of suspense, quirky characters, UFO conspiracies, and narrow escapes," says Steven. "With recent breaking news about drones, exo-skeletal development, bionic limbs and revelations about Area 51, readers will feel like they're stepping into a world that just might be more real than they expected."

**SINGULARITY**  
THE JEVIN BANKS  
EXPERIENCE  
*Steven James*  
Revell



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# BOOK REVIEW: *GAME, SET AND MURDER* BY ELIZABETH FLYNN

Reviewed by Courtney Clark

*Game, Set and Murder* (Lion Fiction), Elizabeth Flynn's debut novel, is an intriguing mystery set against the backdrop of the famous Wimbledon tennis tournament at the All England Club in London, England. It follows the story of Detective Inspector (D. I.) Angela Costello as she investigates the death of Petar Belic, a veteran tennis pro and coach to the promising tennis star, Stewart Bickerstaff.

Having conquered the tennis realm in his prime, as well as the courts at Wimbledon, Petar Belic is now a much-loved, familiar face in the Club at Wimbledon. His unexpected death, on the very field at Wimbledon where he achieved a victory several years ago, is a mystery. Angela is assigned his case and the investigation



proceeds immediately, coinciding with the Wimbledon tennis tournament.

Angela has a daunting task ahead of her. Many people close to Petar Belic could have had the motive and opportunity to kill him. Possible suspects include the tennis star he was coaching, his friend and business partner, his current girlfriend, his wife, other tennis rivals, and a few other close friends or acquaintances. She and her team must begin piecing together the events that led up to Petar's death, as well as questioning anyone associated with him—before the trail turns cold.

Angela Costello's character has been recently promoted to the Detective Inspector position. While investigating this case, she must contend with adapting to the position and breaking in her new team of Detective Constables and Sergeants. She applies a unique approach to the investigation, incorporating



**GAME, SET AND MURDER**  
A MYSTERY FOR  
D.I. COSTELLO  
Elizabeth Flynn  
Lion Fiction

“Each time a suspect or witness is interviewed, more information is revealed and puzzling facts are disclosed. This adds a new layer to the increasingly complicated mystery surrounding Petar’s death.”

logic and reasoning with her own personal observations. These methods allow her to make swift progress and uncover hidden details surrounding Petar’s death.

Each time a suspect or witness is interviewed, more information is revealed and puzzling facts are disclosed. This adds a new layer to the increasingly complicated mystery surrounding Petar’s death. The author effectively offers gradual insight into the various characters by noting their body language, facial expressions, mood, and attitudes. These revelations build suspense and cause the reader to become suspicious of certain characters through the course of the book.

The novel is told from Angela’s perspective, with the exception of the prologue. Short narratives of her thoughts are spread throughout the story, helping to convey her thought process and reasoning. This perspective affords

understanding of her new responsibilities as a Detective Inspector, as well as a glimpse into her personal life and pleasant marriage.

The British elements of the novel are refreshing and quaint. Small quips and phrases used in the novel add charm to the story and setting. Also, there is a fitting amount of tennis coverage in the book. A few games are observed, and the commentary on one tournament is excitedly given. However, if a reader is not familiar with the game of tennis, he or she will not feel overwhelmed by the presence of sport.

Overall, *Game, Set and Murder* is a brisk, captivating read. It explores the many facets of human nature as well as the consequences of sin, forgiveness, mercy, and reconciliation. Elizabeth Flynn’s debut novel is a promising introduction to D. I. Angela Costello’s character.



*Courtney Clark is a small-town girl from Arkansas who loves Jesus, reading, photography, cooking, crocheting, and hot tea (in any combination). When she’s not doing any of those things, she’s*

*working at her family’s restaurant or teaching at the local community college. Catch up with her at her blog, [thegreenmockingbird.wordpress.com](http://thegreenmockingbird.wordpress.com), or follow her on twitter @CameraCourt.*

**READ MORE ONLINE!**

<http://www.familyfiction.com/authors/elizabeth-flynn/>



## LISA WINGATE

Lisa Wingate's new book *The Prayer Box* (Tyndale House) follows the story of a troubled young mother, Tandi, and her relationship with an elderly woman, Lola. While caring for Lola, Tandi discovers 81 prayer boxes that span Lola's life. What's inside those boxes will transform her forever—teaching her something about grace and redemption.

**Q** Where did you get the idea for this novel—two characters in drastically different stages of their lives, connecting on a very deep level?

*The Prayer Box* is a book that came to be completely by accident...if you believe in accidents. I prefer to think that it was divine intervention. It was an idea that literally gobsmacked me out of the blue one day as I was sketching out some short book ideas at a publisher's request. I looked across the room and saw a prayer box that had been given to me at a speaking event, and thought, What if the prayers of a person's entire lifetime were

recorded in prayer boxes? What would you learn if you opened those boxes, and how might it change you?

The concept came almost fully formed. I knew it would be a story about a young woman whose life is in ruins, and that she'd end up being given the job of cleaning out an old house that's also crumbling. I knew that inside the house she'd find eighty-one carefully decorated prayer boxes that are basically the chronicle of the life of the woman who owned the home. They would literally contain the story of a lifetime.

**Tandi has a troubled past. Can you tell us about her?**

Tandi is a young woman with a difficult and dangerous history. Like so many women who've grown up in chaotic and frightening family situations, she has unwittingly repeated many of the family patterns with which she was raised. She has created a toxic environment for

“Prayer boxes have a long tradition in Jewish history and among early Christians, but other than occasional use or use as a novelty gift, they aren’t used that much in modern Christianity. Honestly, that’s a loss.”



herself, thirteen-year-old Zoey, and nine-year-old J.T. Tandi’s lack of self worth and the absence of support systems have led her to make poor relationship decisions—to validate herself based on who she’s dating. She has no concept of herself as valuable to the world or to God. She loves her children, but has no idea how to raise them. Hatteras Island, where she spent time with her grandparents as a child, is one of the few places she has felt safe in her life, so it is the place she runs to when she flees an abusive marriage to a controlling older man and an addiction to prescription painkillers. The rental cottage behind Iola Anne Poole’s decaying Victorian house is a hiding place, but it quickly becomes a refuge and a place of incredible growth.

**Prayer boxes are not something you hear about or see every day. Can you tell us exactly what a prayer box is?**

Prayer boxes have a long tradition in Jewish history and among early Christians, but other than occasional use or use as a novelty gift, they aren’t used that much in modern Christianity. Honestly, that’s a loss. A prayer box is like a prayer journal, but it’s more flexible and low-pressure. Any scrap of paper you run across any time of the day will do, and you can drop it in

your prayer box whenever you have the chance. Closing the lid is symbolic of giving it over to God and letting it go.

Prayer boxing and the idea of taking the time to record our prayers, hopes, and gratitudes in writing (as Iola did in the book) is so very valuable. Wouldn’t it be wonderful, when a child graduates, to be able to give that child the box of hopes and prayers written by parents and grandparents during the first year of life? Or for a couple on their 25th anniversary to re-open the box from their first year of marriage? For years, I’ve given journals or prayer boxes to couples as wedding gifts and encouraged them to write down their hopes and gratitudes during their first year of life, then keep them. It’s a great exercise while they’re doing it and a precious keepsake for later. It’s also their story, preserved. **FFE**

# ONE QUESTION

C.J. Darlington

What's your favorite Christmas song and what makes it special?



## ERIN HEALY:

At the risk of being unspiritual, I'll say Straight No Chaser's rendition of "The 12 Days of Christmas"—one of the worst holiday songs transformed into something perfectly joyful. Or at least silly! And what other Christmas song includes dreidels and Africa? It makes me happy every time I hear it.

## JANE KIRKPATRICK:

"Rudolph the Red Nosed Reindeer." My grandmother played that song on a 45 record each Christmas. My grandmother and the last line made it special. "You'll go down in history." I thought history was a town and I imagined the twinkling Christmas lights as Rudolph bounded there, accepted, happy and loved. Christmas still means all those good things.



## JODY HEDLUND:

My Favorite Christmas Carol is "Joy to the World." As a little girl, I remember my pastor father singing that carol every Christmas, his voice rising above all the others in the congregation. Now whenever I sing it, I think about my dad, who has gone home to heaven, and I imagine that he's joining in the song, his voice booming with those of angels.



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## What's your favorite Christmas song and what makes it special?



### LYNN AUSTIN:

It would have to be “Joy to the World.” I love the reminder to prepare room in my heart for the Lord and to receive Him as my King. Since I am a nature-lover, I also love the image of heaven and earth and all of nature singing and rejoicing together. Best of all, this triumphant song could be sung to celebrate His first coming or His second. I can’t wait!



### SARAH LADD:

My favorite Christmas song? Bing Crosby’s “White Christmas!” Not only do I have fond memories of listening to it while my family decorated the Christmas tree, but we used to watch the movie *White Christmas* every year. In fact, I still watch it every year! Just the mention of it brings a smile to my face. Such wonderful, precious memories.

### FRANK PERETTI:

“Silent Night” because it was first written to be accompanied by guitar so the chords flow easily. The melody is smooth and devotional and easy to harmonize. Beside all that, it’s a beautiful song. **FFE**





A FEW OF OUR

*Favorite Things*



CHRISTMAS GIFT GUIDE

2013



CHRISTMAS  
GIFT GUIDE  
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**LIVE FOREVER**  
(HERITAGE BUILDERS PUBLISHING)



**THIS BOOK IS THE TRUE STORY OF A SIMPLE UNEDUCATED KID FROM GEORGIA WHOSE DREAMS ALL CAME TRUE.** From his lonely, angry childhood, he wrote and sang music as a way to express his deepest feelings. While in the army, at age 17, Elvis Presley recorded one of his songs which opened doors around the world to castles, stadiums, arenas, movies, TV and other venues. From then on, his life was a

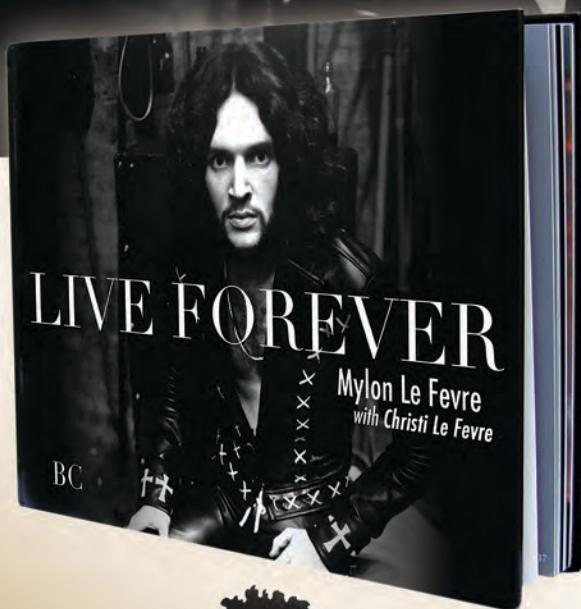
whirlwind of a rock-and-roll fantasy that he couldn't make up if he tried. This is Mylon's story, in its entirety, for the first time in print, with more than 100 photos and lyrics to 15 of his most popular songs. From playing stadiums, coliseums and getting high with some of the biggest rock stars in the world, to being strung out on heroin and cocaine, he was trapped in a seemingly hopeless pit of depression and loneliness. It's all here, the good, bad and the ugly. Mylon finally found what he was looking for, but it wasn't in drugs, money or fame. He found God—not religion—but rather a loving heavenly Father who forgave him and fulfilled him with purpose and hope.

This journey Mylon lays out is not only intriguing, but it could change your life. There are few stories that are so fascinating yet so graphic. You will be enraptured by the simple, easy-to-read writing style that really defines the man. At the least, this book will be a breath of fresh air.

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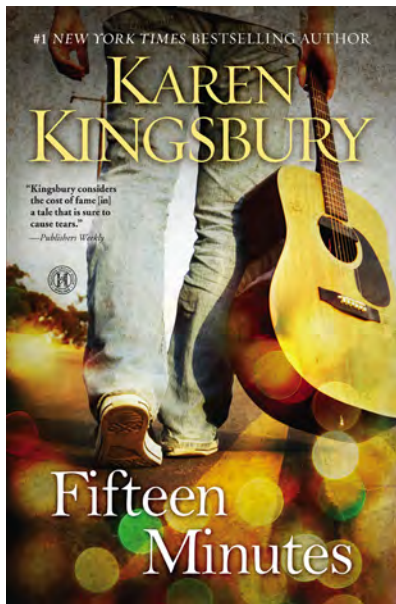


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CHRISTMAS  
GIFT GUIDE  
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## FIFTEEN MINUTES (HOWARD BOOKS)



**ZACK DYLAN MADE A PROMISE TO GOD** and his college sweetheart as he left Kentucky to compete on the popular reality television show “Fifteen Minutes”: If he makes it, fame won’t go to his head.

Overnight, Zack becomes the nation’s most popular contestant, a country singer with the looks and voice of a young Elvis. As his star rises, Zack is asked to compromise and quiet his beliefs, as well as something more.

Something Zack could never have imagined. Just as America is falling in love with Zack, just as he’s on the verge of winning it all, his choices lead him to the brink of personal disaster.

Meanwhile, Reese Weatherly, a therapeutic horse instructor, is no longer sure about her relationship with Zack or the wedding they had dreamed about. While

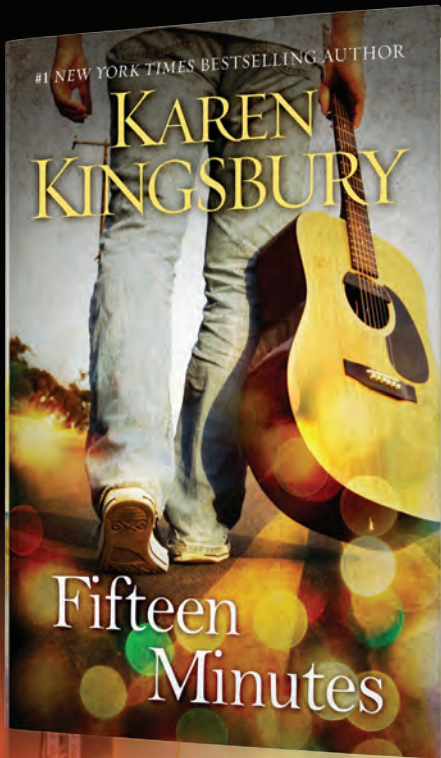
Zack advances from one round of the competition to the next, an offer comes to Reese—one that will take her to a home halfway around the world.

Then Chandra Olson, reigning diva pop star and one of the “Fifteen Minutes” judges, intervenes. Chandra has suffered so much public pain and private agony since her days as a “Fifteen Minutes” contestant. Now she wants just one thing: meaning.

Can Chandra’s private losses help Zack find his way, or will his newfound fame cause him to lose the life he once loved? *Fifteen Minutes* is a story of character, compromise and the cost of having it all, a story that raises the question: Who are the real winners?

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# Who are the *real* winners?



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Zack Dylan travels from his quiet farm in Kentucky to the rush of the big stage on TV's favorite singing competition *Fifteen Minutes*. But will the ride cost him everything—and every one—that matters?



**Karen Kingsbury** has more than 20 million copies of her award-winning books in print, with many under development as major motion pictures. Her most recent bestseller, *The Chance*, is now available in paperback.

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## CHRISTMAS GIFT GUIDE 2013

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Shedding new light on God's Word from an unexpected perspective, it is a precious reminder to the ragamuffin-prodigal in everyone that they are still God's beloved. In addition to the full NIV text, devotions, reflections and quotes from Brennan Manning are scattered throughout this Bible.

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- 250 Reflections help you understand what it means to be a child of God.
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Equally

**An ounce of grace can overcome a world of hurt.** *The NIV Ragamuffin Bible* with notes from Brennan Manning, inspired by his book *The Ragamuffin Gospel*, will help beaten down, bedraggled, and broken Christians rebuild their relationship with God through simple honesty and understanding his furious love for us all. Visit [zondervan.com](http://zondervan.com) to learn more.





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Perfect for students and the whole family, **THE DUCK COMMANDER DEVOTIONAL** is available in Tan

Camo and Pink Camo covers.



Who on your list has a flock to feed? Sassy, country-cookin' **MISS KAY**, matriarch of the Robertson clan, dishes up her fabulous recipes, stories, and photos in **MISS KAY'S DUCK COMMANDER KITCHEN**.



And if you can't decide, don't worry! Just in time for the holidays comes the perfect gift for the die-hard *Duck Dynasty*® fan: a boxed set of all three bestsellers by **PHIL, WILLIE** and **KORIE** and **SI ROBERTSON**. Get yours today!

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### THE DUCK COMMANDER COLLECTION



Just in time for the holidays—the perfect gift for the die-hard *Duck Dynasty*® fan! A boxed set of all 3 bestsellers by Willie and Korie, Phil, and Si Robertson.

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CHRISTMAS  
GIFT GUIDE  
2013

## WHEN CALLS THE HEART (WORD ENTERTAINMENT)



### **WHEN CALLS THE HEART IS THE STORY OF ELIZABETH THATCHER**

(Drayton), a young teacher accustomed to her high-society life, who receives her first classroom post in a prairie town in the western frontier led by headstrong coalminer widows Abigail (Loughlin) and Frances (Smart). She is determined to prove to her family that she is brave enough to live on her own, but struggles with her own fears and doubts. When she discovers her late Aunt Elizabeth's (Grace) secret diary, Elizabeth learns she was a pioneer woman herself, a teacher in the frontier who struggled with prairie life and fell in love with a Royal Canadian Mountie (Amell). Inspired by her aunt's hopeful words and unfaltering

determination, Elizabeth decides to embark on her own adventure, using the diary as her guide, and family friend Edward, another Mountie (Sharman), as her support.

Based on Janette Oke's bestselling Canadian West Series, the film stars three-time Emmy® Award-winner Jean Smart ("Designing Women"), Lori Loughlin ("90210"), Maggie Grace ("Taken 2") Stephen Amell ("Arrow"), Daniel Sharman ("Teen Wolf"), and newcomer Poppy Drayton.

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**W**hen Calls the Heart is the story of Elizabeth Thatcher, a cultured young school teacher in 1910 who, through the discovery of her aunt's secret diary, finds the courage to leave her big city home to accept a teaching position in a frontier coal mining town. And in the process, she also finds the potential for love with a handsome Royal Canadian Mountie

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CHRISTMAS  
GIFT GUIDE  
2013

## DUCK THE HALLS: A ROBERTSON FAMILY CHRISTMAS (UNIVERSAL MUSIC)



The Robertsons, Louisiana's bearded, camouflage-clad entrepreneurial family, not only run the multi-million dollar Duck Commander Sporting Empire but also is a talented musical family. Growing up singing in church, the Robertsons will be showcasing their talents, as well as their special brand of Southern down-home sense of humor, on *Duck The Halls: A Robertson Family Christmas*. Produced by Buddy Cannon, the Christmas album features performances by the Robertson family along with special guests Alison Krauss,

George Strait, Josh Turner and Luke Bryan. Original Christmas songs such as "Hairy Christmas," "Ragin' Cajun Redneck Christmas" and "Duck the Halls" join classics, including "I'll Be Home for Christmas," "Baby, It's Cold Outside" and "Rudolph the Red-Nosed Reindeer" on the 14-track album.

The Robertsons, Louisiana's favorite first family, don't live in the governor's mansion but in the backwoods, where their rags-to-riches story still is unfolding. A homegrown mom-and-pop operation, Duck Commander has become a sporting empire by fabricating top-of-the-line duck calls and decoys from salvaged swamp wood. It's also expanded into a line of products that includes hunting apparel, cooking products, DVDs, CDs and novelty items bearing their brand. In 2012, A&E premiered "Duck Dynasty," which features the lives of the Robertson family and their booming family business.

➤ [CLICK HERE FOR MORE INFORMATION OR TO PURCHASE:  
DUCKTHEHALLS.COM](http://DUCKTHEHALLS.COM)

# Duck *The* Halls

## A Robertson Family Christmas



Special guests include Alison Krauss, George Strait,  
Josh Turner and Luke Bryan



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[www.duckthehalls.com](http://www.duckthehalls.com)

AVAILABLE TUESDAY, OCTOBER 29<sup>TH</sup> IN STORES AND ONLINE

## CHRISTMAS GIFT GUIDE 2013

### INTERNATIONAL JUSTICE MISSION



#### UNWRAP THE GIFT OF FREEDOM THIS HOLIDAY SEASON WITH INTERNATIONAL JUSTICE MISSION

Holiday shoppers can make their spending matter with IJM's 2013 holiday gift catalog.

For everyone on your list, share the spirit of the holiday season and give the gift of freedom via the International Justice Mission.

The *IJM 2013 Holiday Gift Catalog* ([IJM.org/GiftsofFreedom](http://IJM.org/GiftsofFreedom)) features options that directly assist in the rescue and restoration of lives of people around the world. IJM workers tackle cases of sex trafficking, slavery and other forms of violent oppression and injustice by working to ensure immediate victim rescue and aftercare, prosecute perpetrators and ensure public justice systems protect the poor.

With gifts starting at \$20, more than 30 options are available to give in someone's honor. Each gift

comes with a personal story of a client assisted by IJM and a free customizable e-card or mailed gift card.

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Donations go directly toward the category selected. Visit [IJM.org/GiftsofFreedom](http://IJM.org/GiftsofFreedom) to order gifts before Dec. 10, 2013, and receive a free card to personalize and share with gift recipients. E-cards are available until Jan. 10, 2014.

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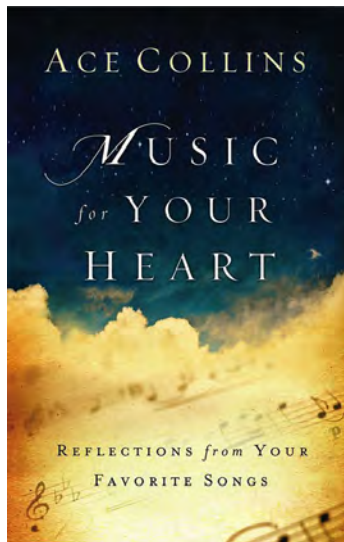




CHRISTMAS  
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## MUSIC FOR YOUR HEART

(ABINGDON PRESS)



### THE STORIES BEHIND THE SONGS THAT STICK IN YOUR MIND AND WARM YOUR HEART

Did you know the classic song “Over the Rainbow” was almost cut from the final edit of *The Wizard of Oz*?

“The Battle Hymn of the Republic”, a song Abraham Lincoln called the most uplifting composition he had ever heard, was adapted from a depressing ballad frequently chanted by Civil War soldiers trudging home from battle.

“Tie a Yellow Ribbon,” which has become a patriotic anthem for military families, originally told the story not of a soldier coming home from war but of a newly released prisoner and his fear regarding whether he would be welcomed upon his return.

Master storyteller and bestselling author Ace Collins takes you behind the lyrics and the notes to show you the people, places and events that brought these songs into being. As you journey through faith, pop culture and history, you’ll cross paths with Dolly Parton, Elvis Presley, Paul McCartney, The Beach Boys, Simon and Garfunkel, and others.

*“Behind every song is a story. Ace Collins’s meticulous research and wonderful writing have shown me how my favorite gospel songs came to be.”*—Joe Bonsall, The Oak Ridge Boys

*“You’ll thrill at the stories behind the songs: who wrote them, when and why. It’s all here and you’re gonna love it.”*—Don Reid, The Statler Brothers

*“Ace Collins is my favorite writer and the best storyteller I have ever known.”*—Louise Mandrell

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## Music for Your Heart

*Reflections from Your Favorite Songs*

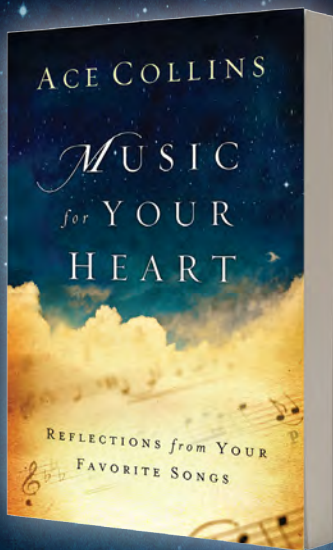
By Ace Collins

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“Behind every song is a story. Ace Collins’s meticulous research and wonderful writing have shown me how my favorite inspirations and gospel songs came to be.”—**Joe Bonsall**, The Oak Ridge Boys

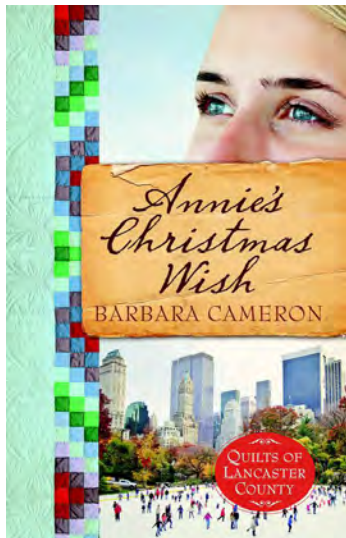
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CHRISTMAS  
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**ANNIE'S CHRISTMAS WISH**  
(ABINGDON PRESS)



**WILL NEW YORK CITY LURE ANNIE AWAY FROM HER HOME...AND THE POSSIBILITY OF LOVE?**

Ever since her step-mom brought her a snow globe of the New York City skyline, Annie has wanted to visit the beautiful, big city. Because it's nearing the time of Annie's rumschpringe—the time when Amish youth experience English life to make a decision whether to live in that world or become baptized into the Amish faith—the family decides a visit is a good idea. They watch the Macy's Christmas Parade, admire the decorated store windows, skate at the Rockefeller Center Rink and—Annie's favorite—get a glimpse of a writer's life while visiting the *New York Times* building.

However, others aren't as thrilled with Annie's lure to the Big Apple. Aaron long has been attracted to Annie and is sure he's in love. As

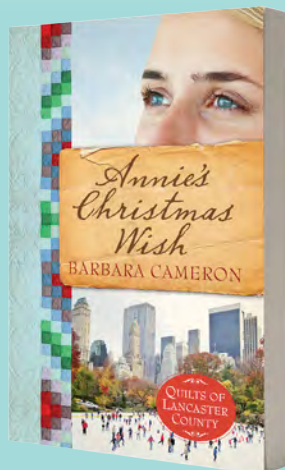
he watches her engage in the big city, he grows concerned that she won't want to return to their quieter life. Will Annie follow Aaron back home, or stay and pursue her dreams? Competing for her attention, Aaron sets out to show Annie that Christmas isn't about the glitz and glamour, but about family, love and the birth of Jesus.

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# The Exciting Conclusion to the Quilts of Lancaster County Series by Popular Amish Author **BARBARA CAMERON**

## Annie's Christmas Wish

Ever since her stepmother brought her a snow globe of the New York City skyline, Annie has wanted to visit the city. With Christmas approaching, now is a good time to visit, to see the sights, to admire the decorated store windows, and to skate at the Rockefeller Center rink. But as Aaron watches Annie's excitement, he grows concerned that the woman he loves won't return to their quieter life, especially after an unexpected offer threatens to change all their lives. Will New York City lure Annie away from her home and family . . . forever?



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# DEE HENDERSON



Romantic suspense writer Dee Henderson is up to it again—thrilling fans with her edge-of-the-seat stories of romance and intrigue! In her newest novel, *Unspoken* (Bethany House), she tells the story of a woman who spent four years at the hands of captors and the mystery that cloaks her life. Dee answered five questions for us about her new release.

## The story is absolutely intriguing. Where did you come up with the plot for this novel?

I wanted to write a story about a woman with a dark past, and the man who fell in love with her. I wanted to explore the dynamics of what it means to love someone so absolutely even the most painful of histories could be overcome. I wanted a story where love can flourish. It became a kidnapping story as an event that would be easily understood without me having to go into many details about what had happened during those four years.

## What was the most difficult part about writing this novel?

The decision to stay in Bryce's

viewpoint through much of the story created some challenges as a writer, but was also the key to having the story work. The opening pages in first person Charlotte's view, and the rest of the book in Bryce's point of view, let me show the dynamics of how the love relationship formed in a way that the reader could be part of the entire journey.

## How do you combine suspense and romance in such a way that entertains fans of each genre?

I'm not certain that I satisfy either romance or suspense fans with my books—I personally tilt much more toward calling these books a straight romance that also has events unfold in their lives where you are not sure what will happen or how the story will move. I experience them that way while writing the story—as a romance, a get-to-know-each-other book, and my characters are having to react to what is going on around them. I have a sense when I start the book the events that will play out for them to deal with, but much of the book is a surprise to the author as it unfolds.



### UNSPOKEN

Dee Henderson  
Bethany House

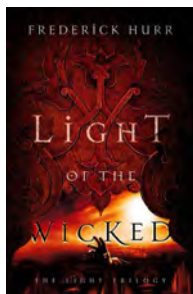
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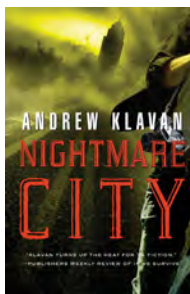
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B&H Books



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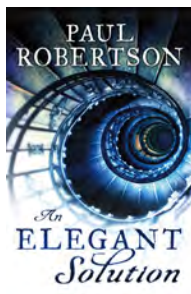
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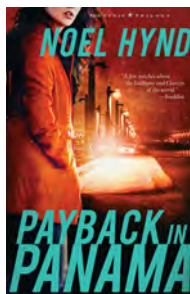
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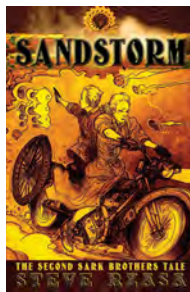
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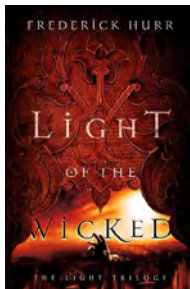
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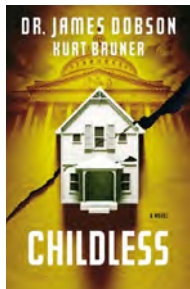
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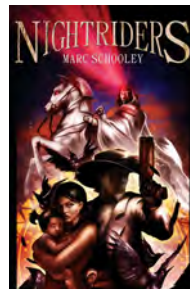
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# LORIE ANN GROVER



What would happen if you were forced to suppress your gender and fulfill the opposite role in society? This fascinating premise is the idea behind Lorie Ann Grover's new book *Firstborn* (Blink). Lorie told us all about her novel and her inspiration.

## How did you come up with the idea?

*Firstborn* sprang from a news article I read concerning gendercide. I was horrified to learn that over 37 million girls are missing in China alone, due to the One Child Policy enacted in 1980. The work of All Girls Allowed and the Global Gendercide Advocacy and Alliance Group provided further chilling information regarding the killing of females at birth. My anger brought my novel to form. I wanted to write a fiction work to bring light to gendercide while declaring the value of our daughters. The dedication of my book is: To firstborn females, may they all be allowed to live.

## Can you tell us about the setting of the novel?

Oh, the setting is a high desert! In Western Washington, it is a short trip over the Cascades to reach high desert sun

and warmth. I have gone on many writing retreats in Eastern Washington, and our family has vacationed in high desert areas, such as Oregon, Utah, and Arizona. I love the starkness, the curving color and line, and the wildlife, especially the birds.

## Did you do much research on gender roles when writing this novel?

I did research on cultures who assign females to work and function as males whenever there is a shortage of men. In various groups, these women perform the role of men their entire lives for the benefit of their society. That fascinated me, and I found it to be a fresh concept for my fiction. My character wouldn't be hiding her sex, but she and her community would be denying its existence.

I also researched ancient Sparta. There I found the practice of removing young boys from families to send them to harsh military camps. That became the perfect life experience to test my female, living as a declared male.

## Can you tell us about your main character and the challenges she faces in her community attempting to pass as a male?

Tiadone is a firstborn female, a first to be declared male by the oppressive, ruling

**“I wanted to write a fiction work to bring light to gendercide while declaring the value of our daughters.”**

Madronians. Her father chose the declaration to avoid being forced to leave his newborn daughter to die in the elements. All believe her femininity is removed by the amulet she wears about her hips. Nearing puberty, Tiadone readies to serve the community by guarding the Perimeter with her bird and other boy patrollers. There she must exhibit all the bravery and strength of a male. She must play the game under the harsh treatment of the rulers and the ostracism of the other patrollers. All the while, her body is maturing

and her femininity is growing harder to suppress. She searches for religious truth, her purpose, her identity, and her worth.

### **What projects are on the horizon for you?**

As a cofounder of readergirlz, we'll be planning the next Operation Teen Book Drop while keeping everyone up to date on the latest and greatest young adult releases. Plus, as a cofounder of readertotz, I'll continue suggesting the best board books for our youngest readers.

I have several novels at different stages of the publishing process waiting to emerge. And because of my life experience with rheumatoid arthritis, lupus, Sjogren's syndrome and cancer, I'm writing an early memoir. But then, I also enjoy writing board books! *A Big Hug for Little Cub* will be released from Scholastic in the first week of January. So many projects waiting to take flight with *Firstborn*!



**FIRSTBORN**  
Lorie Ann Grover  
Blink

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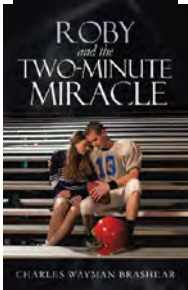
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*Traces of Mercy*

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**KATHLEEN FULLER**  
Her Simply Chic Christmas Decor  
**PICTURES INSIDE!**

An Exclusive Short Story  
by Romance Author  
**JILL URBACH**  
*"The Knight Before Christmas"*

Off the Beaten Path with  
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