

FamilyFiction

October 2018



Contemporary Author **KAREN KINGSBURY**

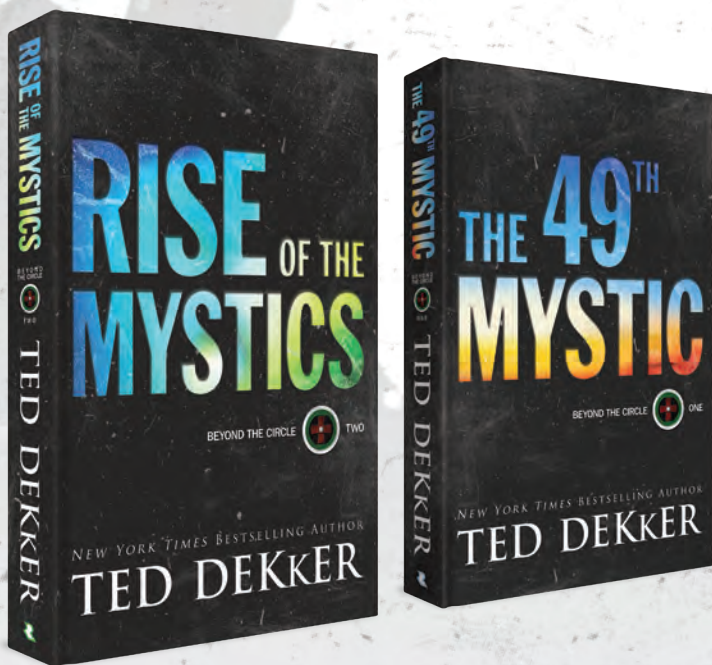
ALSO IN THIS ISSUE:

Tony & Lauren Dungy | Robin Carroll

Ted Dekker | Kim Vogel Sawyer | DiAnn Mills

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Features



CONTEMPORARY **KAREN KINGSBURY**

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Publisher/GM
Ross Cluver
Ross@FamilyFiction.com

Editor
Chris Well
Chris@FamilyFiction.com

Proofreader
Deb Patterson
Deb@FamilyFiction.com

Design & Digital Production
Ross Cluver

**National Account Executive
Salem Media Group**
DeDe Donatelli-Tarrant
805.987.5072
DeDe@salempublishing.com

**Web Ad Traffic Coordinator
Web & Social Media Support**
Brandon Woolum
BWoolum@salempublishing.com

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New Releases & Bestsellers

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ON THE WEBSITE

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Christy Award 2018 Finalists Named

Winners in nine fiction categories to be revealed at **The Christy Award Gala** this November in Nashville.

Read more here:

www.familyfiction.com/christy-award-2018-finalists-named

Celebrating Mister Rogers: Google Doodle Marks Anniversary

Animated video imagines the Presbyterian minister and TV host singing and walking among the miniature town from the opening credits of the original show.

Read more here:

www.familyfiction.com/celebrating-mister-rogers-google-doodle-marks-anniversary

Singer/Songwriter Ellie Holcomb to Release First Children's Book, EP This Fall

Children's EP *Sing: Creation Songs* out in September, children's book *Who Sang the First Song* releases in October.

Read more here:

www.familyfiction.com/singer-songwriter-ellie-holcomb-release-first-childrens-book-ep-fall

New Christian Fiction Series Highlights True Crimes in American History

True Colors will explore true, riveting stories of American criminal activity layered in historical romantic suspense.

Read more here:

www.familyfiction.com/new-fiction-series-highlights-true-crimes-american-history



Karen Kingsbury

Bring On The Baxter Family

The bestselling Christian author talks about the newest additions to the Baxter Family—and their upcoming TV series.

There's always something new to talk about with **Karen Kingsbury**! With more than 25 million copies of her award-winning books in print—several of which have been or will be adapted for the screen—she's lauded by many as America's favorite inspirational storyteller. Her latest projects include the brand-new novel **When We Were Young** with Howard Books, an upcoming **Baxter Family** children's series with Paula Wiseman Books, and the impending **Baxter Family** television series with Roma Downey's company Lightworkers Media. In this interview, Karen shares updates on all of these—and reveals the best thing readers can do to support their favorite authors.

WHEN WE WERE YOUNG: A NOVEL

Karen, what inspired the story for *When We Were Young*?

My son, Tyler, played me a new John Mayer song, "Never on the Day You Leave." The message was haunting. My takeaway was this: *What if you could know today what would happen if you really walked out that door tomorrow?*

Growing up, my favorite Christmas movie was *Scrooge*, the musical, starring Albert Finney. Our family still makes a point of gathering to watch that old classic. I always cry over the fact that *Scrooge* is changed in a single night.

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So—between the song and the movie, I wanted to find a way for Noah to see his future play out the same way—all in a 24-hour period.

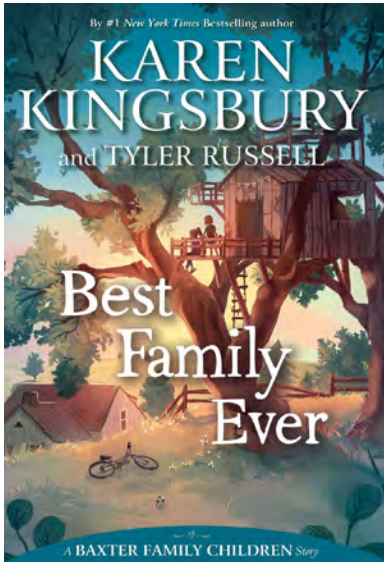
This is part of the Baxter Family series, but sort of adjacent. How does it fit into the bigger picture of your popular series?

When We Were Young is a stand-alone book, honestly. It involves Kari Baxter Blake and her husband, Ryan, as the friends of my main characters. But otherwise it is not a piece to the overall Baxter saga. I want readers to feel comfortable jumping in with this book, even if they've never heard of the Baxters.

The plot of *When We Were Young* seems like it would be perfect to adapt into a movie. Since more than one of your books has been adapted, does that possibility impact how you write one of your novels?

At this point, yes, absolutely. The stories God gives me always come to me like a movie in my head. I laugh and cry and get lost to the world while I'm writing.

But lately, with so much film interest, I do write with an eye on the screen adaptation process. I completely believe that *When We Were Young* will be on the big screen one day soon!



BAXTER FAMILY CHILDREN

You're launching a new children's series that's also about the Baxters. What inspired you to make a children's series?

Too many times to count, readers would ask what life was like for the primary Baxter characters when they were growing up. Since Brooke, Kari, Ashley, Erin, and Luke all grew up before cell phones or cable TV, I began to consider the opportunity. What if the Baxter

Family Children could be like this generation's Little House on the Prairie books?

I read those books when I was little, but they depicted a time far removed from my current cultural reality. The same is true with the Baxter Family Children. No smart phone technology, no social media, no Netflix. These children are precious and spunky and they love each other. They have a lot to teach today's kids.

You're co-writing the books with your son. How does this process—a different format and also working with a co-writer—compare with your regular gig writing novels?

Once I agreed to write the Baxter Family Children, I had realized that time was an issue. I am currently writing two adult novels every year, and each one has its own editing, marketing, and touring schedule.

My son Tyler has been on my staff as a writer of blogs for a few years. He is very talented and sees stories as films in his head—much like I do.

The solution was simple and the process has worked very well so far.

We outline the books together. Then he writes the first draft, careful to hold to our outline and word count—about 2,000 words per chapter.

Next, I go through and edit it to my voice for the final product. After that, we work together on the editing process. So far things are working very well. Tyler catches more of my voice with every book!

How does the Baxter children's series connect to the main series? Is this an extension of the regular series, or does it run on a separate track altogether?

The Baxter Family Children books take us back in time to when the original Baxter characters were much younger. Back when they were in elementary and middle school and just starting out.

Karen Kingsbury

There are fun nods to the adult books. For instance, Ashley ends up working at Sunset Hills Adult Care Home when she's in her late 20s.

In the Baxter Family Children books, the family moves to Bloomington when Ashley is 10 years old. As they drive through town she notices a sign for Sunset Hills, and she's intrigued. Details like that are scattered throughout, giving special moments to readers who already know these characters and are now stepping back in time.

BAXTER FAMILY TV

Can you give us any updates about the Baxter TV series?

Roma Downey's company Lightworkers Media has done a tremendous job putting together the first six episodes of *The Baxters*. I haven't seen the final product, but the buzz is exciting!

Apparently, the leadership at MGM liked what they saw so much that they are working to create additional episodes. Overall there is a tremendous sense that this show will be huge, and that there will be content for many years to come.

At this point we don't have an exact release date or information on the network or platform where it will air. But those details are coming soon!

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What's it like working with folks like Roma Downey and Ted McGinley and all the others involved?

Working with Roma and Ted is a dream come true. When I first started writing about the Baxters, my dad was still alive. He was my biggest fan while I was growing up, and he loved the Baxters.

One afternoon we were sitting by the pool and he said, "I think you should contact that *Touched by an Angel* actress and see if she can get the Baxters on TV!"

I smiled and said, "Sure, Dad. Do you have her number?"

We both laughed and knew that it would take a miracle like the ones that played out on Roma's early hit show for the Baxters to make it to television.

Karen Kingsbury

Now, every day that we're working on this series I'm reminded of that long-ago time, and of God's faithfulness. Roma is kind and genuine and determined that one day soon all the world will know and love the Baxters like she does.

Ted McGinley is—very simply—the quintessential John Baxter. I can't imagine anyone else playing that pivotal patriarchal role. Ted is an excellent actor and the best dad ever on set. My heart is full with the goodness of God and all that is ahead!

How will the series serve the books? Is the plan to adapt the original books, or build on those stories in another direction?

The plan is to create 12 episodes per book, and to march straight through the content the way readers have been doing for more than a decade.

The series will begin with the book *Redemption*—my first Baxter book. Next will be a season on *Remember*, the second book, and so on.

In this way, viewers will experience the dramatic and often intense storylines that carry the books. At the same time, they will be overcome with the faith and love this family has for each other—even in very difficult times.

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BEING A CHRISTIAN AUTHOR

What do you consider the best thing that readers can do to support their favorite authors?

Awww, sweet question. Well, first, I consider my readers to be friends—not fans. I care for them and pray for them, and when I meet readers at a signing event I am moved to think that God put a story on my heart, but He had their hearts in mind. Only He could do that.

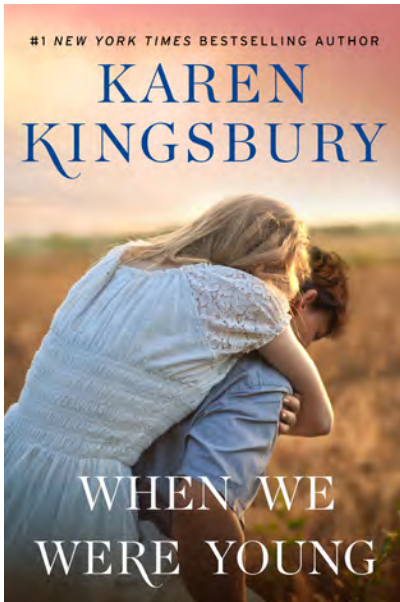
I would love for the readers to pray for me, that I'll stay focused on the stories God has given me to write. And that I'll continue to find the balance that allows me to be a wife and mother and grammy to the family who loves me—all while still writing!

Also, on a practical note, I'd love for them to visit KarenKingsbury.com and sign up for my free newsletter! **FF**

Visit Karen Kingsbury's author page here:

<https://www.familyfiction.com/authors/karen-kingsbury>

Karen Kingsbury



When We Were Young

Karen Kingsbury
Howard Books



What if you could see into the future and know what will happen tomorrow, if you really walk out that door today?

From their first meeting, to their stunning engagement and lavish wedding, Noah and Emily Carter were meant to be together.

Theirs is a special kind of love

and they want the world to know. More than a million adoring fans have followed their lives on Instagram since the day Noah publicly proposed to Emily. But behind the carefully staged photos and encouraging posts, their life is anything but a fairytale, and Noah's obsession with social media has ruined everything.

Distraught, Emily reaches out to her friend Kari Baxter Taylor and tells her the truth: Noah and Emily have decided to call it quits. He is leaving in the morning. But when Noah wakes the next day, everything is different. Emily is gone and the kids are years older. Like Scrooge in *A Christmas Carol*, bizarre and strange events continue throughout the night so that Noah is certain he's 20 years older, and he is desperate for a second chance. Now it would take a miracle to return to yesterday.

When We Were Young is a rare and beautiful love story that takes place in a single day. It's about the gift of knowing what tomorrow will bring. **FF**

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Tony and Lauren Dungy

Coaching Tomorrow's Leaders

NFL star **Tony Dungy** shares the heart behind a new series of children's books.

Tony and **Lauren Dungy** bring powerful qualifications to their new series of children's books. His success in the NFL and her experience as an early childhood educational specialist make them the ideal authors behind the Team Dungy books, which follow a diverse group of friends at an elementary school as they learn life and character-building lessons through sports. The series kicked off this past summer with ***Austin Plays Fair*** and ***Maria Finds Courage*** (Harvest Kids), with a third book scheduled to come out in 2019. In this interview, Tony explains the origins of the Team Dungy children's books, shares how the series fits into the larger vision of their ministry, and reveals their hearts as advocates for adoption.

What inspired you to create a series of children's books about building character?

It really started when Lauren and some of the Buccaneers' wives launched a program to read to elementary school students in Tampa. They had a hard time finding books that had exciting stories but also good messages. It became a mission of ours from that point to try to create some books that kids could enjoy, but that would also promote discussions about issues children go through and ways to build character.

It's fun that you're both in the books, too! When in the process did you decide you were going to do that?

We wanted to have books that showed diversity and include

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children of all races and backgrounds. We also wanted to have adults interacting with those children and helping them grow. In consulting with the people at Harvest House, we decided that having us coach a team might be the best way to do this.

Do you think the sports focus also makes the lessons more accessible because these are games the children have either seen or already played themselves?

Most children can relate to the sports stories because they have had some of those experiences when they've played games. We've also found we can tell life stories very quickly using examples from sports. It helps the children understand the message.

Are these books intended to be read by the children, or read by parents to the children? Do you think they create a conversation starter for parents and their children?

We hope that both things will happen. We want the stories to be engaging and easy enough for the children to read themselves. But, we also want to encourage parents to read to their children. We hope the children who read themselves may even ask their parents about the lessons in the stories. We definitely want to stimulate discussion between parents and their children about issues like integrity, friendship, teamwork, and helping others.

This project seems the ideal intersection of both your professional experiences. What were the challenges to adapt your different professional backgrounds to this series?

Yes, with our backgrounds in elementary education and coaching it did seem like a natural outlet. We wanted to bring our experiences into the books. The biggest challenge was



creating stories and using vocabulary that would connect with young readers.

How do these books fit into—or represent—the larger ministry of the Dungy Family Foundation?

Our foundation really has a heart for young people. One of the pillars of our Mission Statement is our desire to stimulate educational growth, especially with young people. We feel that anything we can do to encourage reading at a young age is beneficial. Our foundation also wants to help people see the love of Christ. We believe that instilling Christian principles and values in our young people is important. While our books are not overtly Christian, they are all written based on biblical principles.

Would you share with us about the ministry of The Dungy Family Foundation?

We started the organization as a way to give back to the communities where our family has lived. We primarily focus



in Pittsburgh, Minneapolis-St Paul, Indianapolis, and Tampa. We have family who live in those cities and we try to help organizations that are already in place. We look to support organizations that are helping meet educational, emotional, and spiritual needs in the community—especially those of young people and the underserved.

You're both also active in the foster parent community. How did that come about?

That has been a special focus of Lauren's for many years. She really has a heart for young people who don't have a stable home life. We did foster parenting in Pittsburgh when we were first married and have always supported the program. When Lauren was invited to speak at an event to bring awareness to the needs of the foster parent care program in the Tampa area, we became aware of the huge need for foster parents here. We decided to get relicensed as foster parents ourselves and it has been a true blessing to be involved once again.

As advocates in the foster parenting community, what do you see as the biggest needs or challenges right now?

There is just a tremendous need for volunteers. The system is overwhelmed because the number of children outweighs the number of people we have helping. Of course, we need more foster parents but the case workers are overloaded too. We need to make more people aware of just how many children are currently in need of a safe, stable place to grow up.

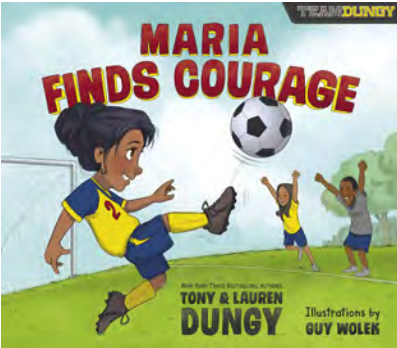
How can people become involved with or support your foundation?

They can go to DungyFamilyFoundation.org to find more information about us and different opportunities to help. **FF**

Visit their author pages here:

<https://www.familyfiction.com/authors/tony-dungy>

<https://www.familyfiction.com/authors/lauren-dungy>



Maria Finds Courage

A Team Dungy Story
About Soccer

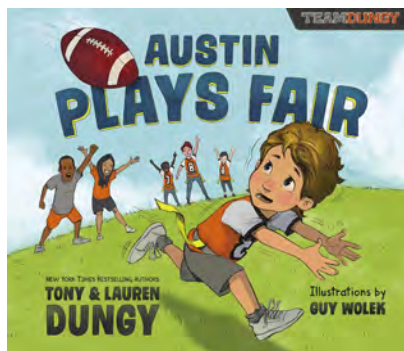
Tony Dungy and Lauren Dungy
Harvest Kids

Buy Now 

Find the Courage to Try Something New

When Maria's family moves to a new town, her parents sign her up for the summer soccer team to help her meet new friends. But Maria has never tried soccer before. She would rather be back on her old swim team. Maria is afraid she will be the worst player and no one will like her.

Coach Tony and Coach Lauren remind Maria everything is new at first. Maria will have to give soccer a try to see if she likes it. What have you wanted to try but were afraid to? Like Maria, you can have the courage to try something new, because who knows? That new thing you try might just become your next favorite thing! **FF**



Austin Plays Fair

A Team Dungy Story

About Football

Tony Dungy and Lauren Dungy

Harvest Kids

Buy Now



Fair Play Is Always the Right Way

Austin loves playing flag football for the Trentwood Tigers. There is only one problem. His team has lost six games in a row, and he doesn't like losing. At his next game, Austin's teammate has a plan to trick the other team. It works, but Austin knows his team cheated to win.

Coach Tony and Coach Lauren remind Austin the most important thing about football isn't winning—it's playing fair. When his team takes the field for their next game, will Austin choose to cheat again, or will he stand up for what's right? What would you do if you were in Austin's shoes? **FF**



Robin Carroll

Dealing With Life

The suspense author shares the life lessons percolating beneath her new suspense series.

Bestselling Christian suspense author **Robin Carroll** writes Southern stories of mystery and suspense, with a hint of romance. She launches her New Orleans-set **Darkwater Inn** series with ***Darkwater Secrets*** (Gilead Publishing): A murder investigation uncovers sordid secrets and haunting mistakes. In this interview, Robin talks about the new series, explains why the location is key, and reveals what to expect from the future books.

Robin, *Darkwater Secrets* is the first book in this new series. What can you tell us about the overarching theme or idea that will connect these books?

This is a series in the true sense of the word—in that the main characters stay the main characters for all three books, all with the same setting. There are additional characters that come through each of the books, but the central characters remain the same.

Darkwater Inn is in the French Quarter in New Orleans. How important is the sense of location to the story?

The setting is one of the characters. There are aspects of the story, and the series, that can take place *only* in New Orleans. Not only does the Cajun culture background play an important role, but there's Mardi Gras as part of the plot as well.

What inspired you to set the series there?

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I'm a Louisiana girl, born and raised, and it's different than any other place I've lived or visited. I love sharing part of the culture and lifestyle of my home state.

Hotel manager Adelaide Fontaine and Detective Beau Savoie are dealing with a killer, but they also each have secrets of their own. What made you want to tell their story?

The idea for this series was born at a writing retreat at a friend's house with several other authors. I knew where I wanted to set my next series, but as we started brainstorming, I realized that a hotel was perfect. Then I needed to think about the characters—Addy came immediately to mind.

As the conference director for American Christian Fiction Writers, I know how hard hotel staff work behind the scenes, and I wanted to portray that. I love crafting characters and building their backstories, so as Addy and Beau and Dimitri came to life, I knew the story I needed to tell.

Is there a theme or spiritual truth behind *Darkwater Secrets*?

So many, but two that are prominent! Of course, there's forgiveness, which I put into most of my books because I think we spend so much time beating up ourselves (or each other) when forgiveness is there for the asking. There's also the age-old question of why bad things happen to good people.

What inspired you to write about that?

I don't know anyone who has the "charmed" life without issues. Things happen, and we are often left asking ourselves why something happened to us or someone we care about. That's life. I wanted to use that gentle reminder for everyone to know they aren't alone. It's not just them. We all deal with it.



No spoilers, but what’s the plan for the series at this point?

I just completed and turned in book two, *Darkwater Lies*, and I have to tell you, I LOVED that storyline. I used Mardi Gras as a major backdrop to the plot, as well as weaving in some international facts. There’s even royalty.

I’m currently working on the third book, *Darkwater Truth*. I’m doing a lot of research of some of the historical moments of New Orleans to use in the plot. I have to say, I’m pretty excited about where the story’s going. And having a coroner and forensic anthropologist answering questions—well, no spoilers!

You also published a companion eBook, *Recipes from the Darkwater Inn*. What inspired you to publish a book of recipes for a suspense series? And, are these your recipes, or where did they come from?

Whenever I write about Louisiana, I include meals because that’s important in the South. Spices and seafood go hand-in-hand with family and friend gatherings. It’s just the way it is.

I always have people ask me if one of the meals I mention in a book is mine, and if so, can they get a recipe because it sounded great. Since Dimitri in the Darkwater Inn is a chef, food is really mentioned a lot.

And my beta readers would send me notes about being hungry after they read the book. It was time. I went to my publisher with the idea, and they loved it and we moved forward.

The recipes are from my personal use, my family, and my friends. Some have been tweaked from their original version—because all good recipes can and should be customized for your personal taste—after my husband found an original version through friends and/or the internet years ago. I gave credit in the naming of the recipe when I used one from someone who gave me the recipe.

I'm really loving the final product, which also includes excerpts, fun facts about my home state, and photos of New Orleans I snapped during a research trip. I hope to expand it more after the series is completed.

The novel balances elements of faith, romance, and suspense. What are the challenges of getting just the mix you want for your novel?

This series has pushed me as an author because the romance thread isn't resolved until the end of the third book. And I've never written a love triangle before, so it was a challenge to keep the balance between the three main characters in check.

I wanted to focus on the characters more deeply, and the dynamics between them more in the first book, so the suspense

was lighter. But the second book took a heavier suspense thread. I keep a running “line” of each of the elements as a visual over my desk to make sure that they stay where I want them to for each book, but also for the overarching plot of the series as a whole.

How does your faith impact how you approach writing fiction?

I think Christians have a natural bent to look at the world, and everything in our lives, through our faith’s eyes. Faith is part of all that I think and do, so that spills over into my writing, which I think is a great thing!

What are the best ways that readers can support their favorite authors?

I have a top three “author wish list” for readers—and yes, I follow my own advice with my favorite authors. They are...

1. Tell at least five friends/acquaintances/family members personally (not as a social media post) about a book you’ve read and enjoyed. This not only helps get the word out about the author, but it also opens a conversation with someone.
2. Buy the author’s book. Sometimes price can be an issue, but I make it a point to budget in that cost when I know one of my favorite authors is about to release a new book. One of my favorite authors only releases in hardback, which is quite a bit more expensive than paperback. When I know one of his books is going to release, I’ll skip coffee four times that month, or I’ll have a sandwich for lunch instead of grabbing lunch out. I make it a priority as much as I can.

Robin Carroll

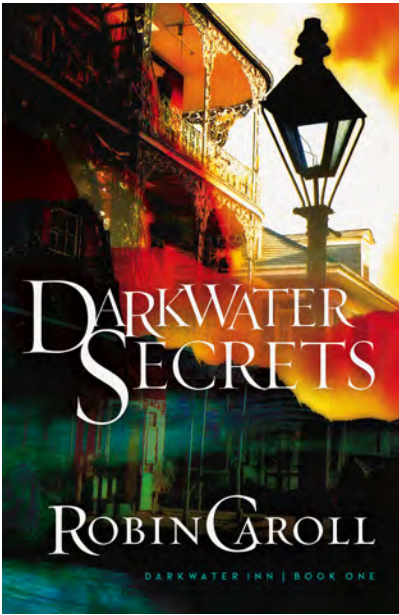
3. Write a review and post it. Reviews don't have to be long or detailed—just what I liked about the book, my impressions, that's it. I use the same review and post it on multiple sites. Trust me, these things matter to authors, and are SO appreciated. **FF**

Visit Robin Carroll's author page here:

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Robin Carroll



Darkwater Secrets

Darkwater Inn #1

Robin Carroll

Gilead Publishing

Buy Now



A murder investigation uncovers sordid secrets and haunting mistakes...

The Darkwater Inn stands tall and proud in the French Quarter, the hub of New Orleans. Bourbon Street is bustling, and General Manager Adelaide

Fontaine has her hands full with a hotel at capacity. She, along with everyone else, is shocked when a body is found: a hotel guest stabbed with a kitchen knife.

Detective Beau Savoie, Adelaide's childhood friend, is on the case. As Beau digs into the victim's past, he unearths a shocking connection between Adelaide and the murdered guest. Beau is hurt that his friend—the woman he's quietly loved for years—kept the truth from him. To make matters worse, the stress of the investigation has sent Adelaide right into the comforting arms of her coworker Dimitri. But Beau can't press Adelaide too hard—he's keeping secrets of his own...

Can Adelaide and Beau afford to hide from the truth with a killer on the loose? **FF**

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Kim Vogel Sawyer's titles have garnered a number of honors, including the ACFW Carol Award, the Inspirational Readers Choice Award, and the Gayle Wilson Award of Excellence. Her latest novel is ***Ours for a Season*** (WaterBrook): An Old Order Mennonite couple's vows and beliefs are challenged in this stirring contemporary novel for fans of Cindy Woodsmall or Shelley Shepard Gray. In this interview, Kim shares the particular way that Old Order Mennonites view infertility, the real-life ghost town that inspired the novel's setting, and why the book was written in memory of a dear friend.



Tell us about your new novel, *Ours for a Season*...

Ours for a Season probably combines the most incompatible list of themes I've ever tried to meld into a single story: infertility, marital discord, questioning one's faith, lifelong friendship, homelessness, a serious health challenge, rebuilding a ghost town... But if I were to encapsulate it all into one thematic idea, I would say this is a story about starting anew.

There's a wonderful old hymn with the phrase, "Morning by morning, new mercies I see..." That is what this story is about: God's mercies blooming fresh in people's lives.

The book captures Anthony and Marty Hirschler's—an Old Order Mennonite couple—struggle with infertility and the effects it has on their marriage. How did their beliefs and community make this reality even harder for Marty to bear? In the Old Order communities, children are the inheritance of the

Lord. Psalm 127:5 says, “Happy is the man who has filled his quiver with them [children].” Being a wife and mother is a woman’s highest calling; raising a large family to love and serve the Lord is a man’s highest calling. When the home remains absent of children, feelings of failure, bitterness, and jealousy are nearly impossible to avoid.

Both Marty and Anthony dealt with these emotions but expelled them in different ways, which of course led to conflict between them. The situation was hardest on Marty who, as a homemaker, faced the reminder of her empty house every day.

Most of the book takes place in a Kansas ghost town. What inspired this setting? Being from Kansas yourself, are there any real places that remind you of the ghost town?

Several years ago, my critique partners and I visited a nearly abandoned Kansas town called Elgin. The crumbling buildings in the business district made my heart ache. One could imagine the once-thriving community and the pride the owners must have taken in operating their stores.

One of my critique members commented that it was too bad we didn’t have the money to bring everything back to life, and the idea of restoring the historical structures sort of got tangled with the idea of rebuilding broken spirits and emerged in this story.

One of the main storylines is Marty’s friendship with her childhood friend, Brooke Spalding. With such different personalities and beliefs, their connection seems so unlikely. What message of friendship were you hoping readers would glean from their story?

I’ve always been a little envious of women whose friendships go

back to childhood. I moved so much as a child that I really didn't have friends for very long.

But in my early 20s I met a woman (she was my boss at the time) a few years older than me and very different in personality, aspirations, and background. Somehow, a friendship blossomed between us and she remains my dearest friend.

We call each other soul sisters—she truly is the sister of my heart. Friendship is such an incredible gift. We—especially women—need the support and camaraderie of trusted friends. It was a true joy to bring the friendship between these two very different women to life.

The book is in memory of your dear writing friend and author Diann Hunt. Can you tell us more about how she inspired this story?

Diann died in December of 2013 after a lengthy battle with ovarian cancer. Although the cancer ravaged her body, it never stole her faith or her infectious love for life.

She wrote on Facebook on a day when she was feeling particularly low physically, "Stop! Right where you are. What do you see? Taste? Feel? Smell? Hear? Root yourself in this very moment. Memorize it. Life is made up of these. Don't be so consumed by the past or with the future that you are blinded to your moment. Right now. The one you're given by Almighty God to make a difference. Go out and live for Jesus today, my friends! I mean REALLY live!! You can do it! Start now. Ready. Set. Go!"

She so loved Jesus (she glowed Jesus) and she so loved laughter (you couldn't help but laugh when in her presence) and so loved

Kim Vogel Sawyer

life... She's been gone now for several years, but she lives in the hearts and memories of her family members and many who had the pleasure of calling her friend.

Brooke and Marty were to each other what Diann was to many of us—steadfast, encouraging, and ever loving. She wanted to make a difference, just as Brooke wanted to make a difference. Brooke did, and so did Diann.

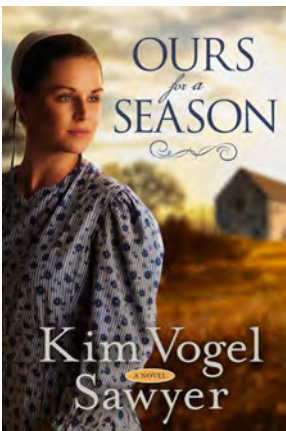
What do you hope readers will take away from this book?

Although it might sound like a platitude, it is really true that God brings beauty from ashes. He works in ways we cannot see to bring about joy and fulfillment in our lives.

I hope seeing God's plan played out on the page for Marty, Anthony, Brooke, and the ones with whom their lives intersected will encourage readers to trust God's purpose for the heartaches in their lives. **FF**

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A long-time believer in the power of story to change lives, **Amy K. Sorrells** is an award-winning author and columnist. Her novel ***Before I Saw You*** (Tyndale House) was inspired in part by her work with newborn and adult victims of the opioid epidemic, as well as the story of Moses' birth mother. In this interview, the author shares why her novel tackles such serious issues, the importance of talking openly about our struggles, and how her faith impacts her stories.



Amy, you tackle some serious subject matter in *Before I Saw You*. What inspired you to write this novel?

Two main themes inspire all of my novels: 1) a topic, social situation, or current event that breaks my heart, and 2) parallels to that situation I discover in nature. Overarching all of that is one question: *How does God redeem the pain in the midst of these situations?*

Before I Saw You is no exception, except it is a little unique because it was inspired by not one but two heartbreaking topics I used to loosely retell the story of Moses' birth mother, Jochebed, in contemporary times.

First, while researching the journeys of mothers who choose adoption for their children, I discovered the often silent, emotional burden of birth mothers. The misunderstanding they face, as well as the guilt, grief, and extraordinary sacrifice many of them make is indeed heartbreaking. Moreover, I realized that the miraculous work the Lord accomplishes through that sacrifice is woefully under-recognized.



The second inspiration for this story is the opioid epidemic, which I chose to use as a rough, modern-day parallel to the threats against Moses that forced Jochebed to place him in the river and entrust him to the Lord. As a registered nurse who has practiced at the bedside of premature babies, children, and adults for nearly 25 years, I have seen the rise of the tragic devastation of the opioid epidemic in people of all ages and socioeconomic levels, but especially in those from small towns and who are economically marginalized.

The parallel theme I discovered and used in nature is the plight of the ash trees—being killed off in overwhelming numbers by the emerald ash borer—in North America. I felt like this was a perfect parallel to the opioid epidemic sweeping the nation.

As with many epidemics, the damage starts small and insignificant. But once it starts it attacks often the most innocent, and combatting the spread feels insurmountable. And yet, the Lord is showing up in various ways in the midst of both of these situ-

ations, as he does for the characters in *Before I Saw You*. I also created a character, Sudie, who is a certified wildlife rehabilitator, to bring even more nature parallels of how God watches out over “the least of these” into the story.

As with my other novels, I used the birth mother and opioid epidemic themes, as well as the ash trees and wildlife rehabilitation, to create what I hope is a testimony and a story-prayer for readers.

The book includes a guide to help readers discuss the book. How important is it for readers to talk about these issues?

I believe one of the biggest roadblocks to bringing light to the dark places of the world is silence. When we don't talk about problems and struggles, we don't understand them. We don't understand each other.

One of the most powerful ways I have seen this happen with *Before I Saw You* is that when I talk with readers about the themes, the most common response is, “Me too.” Knowing we are not alone—whether addiction, grief, guilt, abuse, or any number of heartaches—is half the battle.

Even if we cannot relate to the heartache of someone else, we can all certainly relate to the way that the Lord shows up in the midst of that pain. We all have a story of how God has redeemed and restored heartbreaking events in our lives.

When we talk about and share those stories, we bring light into the dark places others feel they cannot escape. And that's a beautiful, blessed thing.

If the reader doesn't have a book discussion group already, what's the best way to start one?

Book discussion groups can be started in so many unique ways, especially at this time of technological connection. Invite friends on Facebook to read the book and discuss it online.

Once when my children were young, and it was hard to get out of the house, I led a Bible study primarily through email. I get invited to speak to a lot of book clubs that are started by individuals in churches, so that's a great place to find friends to read with as well.

What are the challenges of writing about ideas while still serving the needs of the story?

Because my books are inspired by real-life situations, the temptation is to be too didactic in my writing. Metaphor and nature parallels really help me construct stories that focus on the heart of my characters, rather than the point I'm trying to make.

I can only hope that I succeed. No one likes to be preached at unless they're at church, after all.

How does your faith impact your storytelling?

Without my faith, I would not have hope. Without my faith, my characters would not have hope, either. And so, faith is absolutely central to the creation of each of my stories.

Before I Saw You and *How Sweet the Sound* were both loosely inspired by Bible stories (Jochebed and Moses, and Tamar in 2 Samuel 13, respectively), so those plots were a little easier to navigate and infuse with faith.

Amy K. Sorrells

At the same time, discovering ways to incorporate faith into the lives of the characters in *Lead Me Home* and (soon to be re-released) *Then Sings My Soul* facilitated a faith-journey of my own as I wrote them.

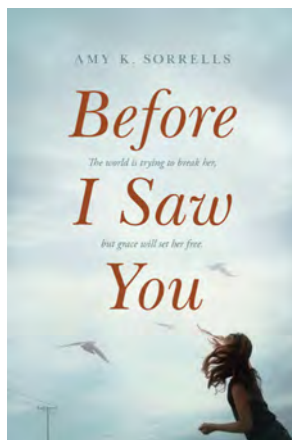
Of course I write to change the lives of my readers. However, often the biggest heart changes come within me as I learn to extend grace and forgiveness to characters that sometimes I feel don't deserve it.

Sometimes I really struggle with finding the hope in the tragic situations I write about, too. Sometimes we have to wrestle with God and with ourselves to find hope, and storytelling is no exception. But hope does show up. And eventually love does win. **FF**

Visit Amy K. Sorrells' author page here:

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Amy K. Sorrells



Before I Saw You
Amy K. Sorrells
Tyndale House



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Historical Suzanne Woods Fisher

Bestselling author **Suzanne Woods Fisher** has captivated readers with her Nantucket Legacy series. In the series' dramatic conclusion, ***The Light Before Day*** (Revell), Fisher offers another fascinating story set in nineteenth-century Nantucket, based on a true event, that will both surprise and delight readers. After three years on a whaling voyage, Henry Macy returns to Nantucket to find out that he and his sister are set to inherit their grandmother's vast fortune—but the inheritance comes with a steep cost, including when they should marry and whom. In this interview, Suzanne explains the changes her characters have gone through over the series, shares her favorite new character, and reveals the inspiration for her surprising plot.



***The Light Before Day* is the third book in the Nantucket Legacy series. How is this book different from the two preceding novels?**

The series' umbrella has been the historical rise and fall of Nantucket Island. *The Light Before Day* captures the steep decline of Quaker Nantucket in the mid-nineteenth century after decades as the wealthiest port in the world. Hitty and Henry Macy, children in *Minding the Light*, are now young adults, facing dramatic change in the island they love.

You introduce readers to some new characters in your book. Do you have a favorite character?

Astronomer Maria Mitchell, who was seeking a comet in this story (and eventually found it), became near and dear to my heart. And, of course, another favorite is Mary Coffin Starbuck—she's woven



all three books together through the secret in the journal she left behind.

***The Light Before Day* has some unexpected surprises. What was the inspiration behind your creative plot?**

My inspiration was the actual historical events that were changing Nantucket in the 1830s and '40s. Frederick Douglass, a former slave, gave his first public speech at the Atheneum, where astronomer Maria Mitchell worked as a librarian. The Great Fire of Nantucket, a historical event, was where I wanted this story to end. Getting there took some twists and turns.

The Nantucket Legacy series often references the whaling industry. For *Phoebe's Light* and *Minding the Light*, your research took you to a number of whaling museums. Did *The Light Before Day* require a different type of research?

Much of the research for this book took place in the Nantucket Historical Association library, a treasure trove of trivia. I discovered curious details like the Cent School, disciplinary actions

notated in Quaker meetings, and rumors about the source of cobbles for iconic Main Street. The NHA—it's pure bliss for history buffs.

Have you learned something new about the Quakers after researching and writing the Nantucket Legacy series?

Mary Coffin Starbuck is credited with bringing Quakerism to Nantucket. From what I've read, she believed the island needed a religious scaffolding. Although she'd been opposed to Quaker theology as a young woman, she later embraced it and became a minister. Quaker values, such as honesty and frugality, contributed to a healthy foundation as Nantucket's meteoric rise began.

What do you hope readers gain from reading *The Light Before Day*?

A financial windfall landed at the feet of Hitty and Henry Macy, but with it came a loss of personal freedom. All that glitters is not gold is the lesson of this book, even if it is, indeed, gold. **FF**

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Suzanne Woods Fisher



The Light Before Day
Nantucket Legacy #3
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Susan Anne Mason's historical novel *Irish Meadows* won the Fiction from the Heartland contest from the Mid-American Romance Authors Chapter of RWA, as well as the Christian Retailers Choice Award for Debut Novel. The Toronto-based author launches a new historical romance *Canadian Crossings* series with *The Best of Intentions* (Bethany House), which offers a fascinating glimpse into high society of Toronto after WWI. In this interview, the author gives us some background on the novel's period setting, explains how the book sets the stage for the series, and shares the overall theme of the book.



Tell me a little about your book, *The Best of Intentions*.

This is the story of Grace Abernathy, a girl from England who travels to Canada to find her widowed sister and infant nephew. Upon her arrival, she is greeted with bad news and learns the baby has been placed in the custody of his father's family, the wealthy Eastons, who Grace's sister despised. It then becomes Grace's goal to find her nephew and make sure he is being properly cared for, and if possible, figure out a way to get him back to England.

I understand the story takes place in Canada. Can you tell us a little more about the setting and the period?

Yes, the story takes place in Toronto, Ontario. My publisher suggested that I set my next series in Canada, so I chose Toronto since it is a city rich in history and very close to where I live. The time period is the spring of 1919, right after the end of WWI.



I created the Eastons as wealthy, elite members of Toronto society to serve as a foil for Grace’s simplicity—a girl from a small English village. It gave the family a great advantage in status and power over Grace, so the underlying conflict becomes “the underdog” versus the rich and powerful.

How does this book set the stage for the series?

The Best of Intentions is the first book in a new series called Canadian Crossings. Each book is a stand-alone story with the characters initially meeting on board a ship to Canada. Each person is searching for different family members for very different reasons.

What I want readers to know is that while there are some common threads in each book, like Mrs. Chamberlain’s boardinghouse and the wise counsel of the local minister, Reverend Burke, the stories are totally independent of each other. I did this so that readers wouldn’t feel obligated to read the series in order. It’s still nice to read them that way, but they won’t be missing big pieces of the puzzle if they don’t.

Is there a second love story in this book?

Yes, there's a rather lovely secondary romance along the lines of star-crossed lovers. Andrew's sister Virginia, who lost her first love in the war, becomes engaged to a wealthy Toronto businessman, a man her father approves of.

She is resigned to marrying within her social circle and is actually relieved not to be madly in love with her fiancé since she knows what pain love can bring. However, she is perturbed by her unremitting attraction to the family gardener, Collin Lafferty.

Collin is content to love Virginia from afar—until her wedding day draws closer and he realizes he cannot stand to watch her marry another man. Then the fun begins!

What's the overall theme of the book?

I think the main theme is being true to oneself and looking for one's value internally rather than externally. In the book, both Grace and Andrew are trying to please a parent with their actions. Grace wants to find her sister and nephew to bring them home to her mother, who is in poor health and has already lost two sons. Grace has always craved her mother's approval and hopes that once she brings her grandson home, she will at last receive her mum's favor.

Andrew, on the other hand, has struggled with feeling second-best compared to his older brother, the apple of their father's eye. With his brother's death in the war, Andrew feels he must step up and take his place in the family business as his father's right-hand man, in the hopes that his father will discover Andrew's talents and come to value him just as much.

Susan Anne Mason

However, in each case, Grace and Andrew must learn that they deserve happiness based on who they are inside, not what they can do for their family. They also must learn to trust God to show them their true path in life, one that might not coincide with their parents' wishes.

I truly hope readers will love Grace and Andrew's story as much as I enjoyed writing it! **FF**

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The Best of Intentions

Canadian Crossings #1

Susan Anne Mason

Bethany House



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With his second major novel in one year, *New York Times* bestselling author **Ted Dekker** offers the spellbinding finale to the *Beyond the Circle* series with ***Rise of the Mystics*** (Revell): With the fate of two worlds in the balance, Rachelle Matthews continues her quest to find an ancient path that will save humanity. If she fails, the world will forever be locked in darkness. In this follow-up to our June 2018 cover story interview, Ted reveals his master plan behind the new series, shares why seals play such an important role, and explains why Thomas Hunter needed to help Rachelle save him.

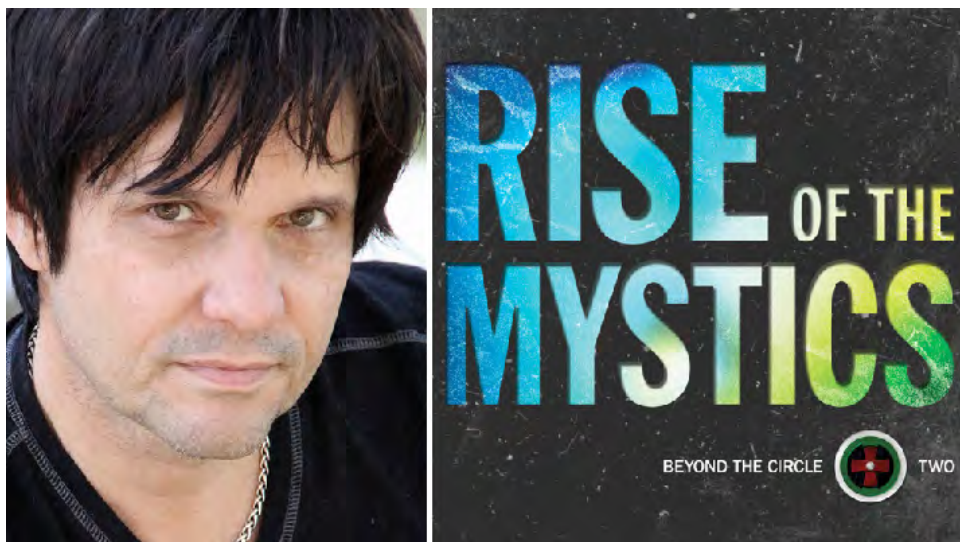


***The 49th Mystic and Rise of Mystics* are much more than an entertaining story. What was your purpose in writing them?**

With even a cursory look at the world of faith, it becomes clear that Christians are really no different from people of other faiths or of no faith. This defies Jesus's announcement that those in His way will be known for a radical kind of love that holds no record of wrong. So the question we ask is, What does it mean to be in His way? And are we in it now? I wrote these novels to plumb the depths of those questions.

Throughout both volumes of the *Beyond the Circle* series, you explore the journey from fear to love, from blindness to sight, and from darkness to light. Can you expound upon these concepts?

We are Christians, but we live in fear of loss. We live in blindness to the kingdom of heaven now present. We live in the darkness outside of our glorified nature, risen with Christ. These novels



take us all into a radical reexamination of what love, light, and sight are, and why we, though claiming to be Christian, are still lost to these simple truths.

***Rise of the Mystics* is the conclusion to the Beyond the Circle series and picks up where *The 49th Mystic* left off. Rachelle Matthews has found three of the five seals but still needs to find two more. Why do seals play such a huge role in your books?**

Each seal is a revelation of truth regarding the nature of reality. Rachelle's task is to discover truth beyond what humanity ascribes as truth. Ultimately, the seals are the only truths that matter, and each radically shifts her experience of her life in the story. The same is true for all of us.

In the Circle series, you introduced readers to Thomas Hunter. In *Rise of the Mystics*, Thomas makes another appearance. Why does he play such an important role in this finale?

Although this is Rachelle's story, and although she is tasked with

saving Thomas, she can only do so if he helps her in her role. They have a symbiotic relationship. Both are critical and interdependent.

You have some very dynamic characters in both *The 49th Mystic* and *Rise of the Mystics*. Which character has made the biggest impact on you?

Without a doubt, Rachelle. She really is all of us—certainly me—journeying through wild adventure to know herself in the midst of great change and challenge.

Was there any part of this book that really surprised you once you began writing it?

I was taken off guard by the climax, the last hundred pages. I had no idea it would end the way it did. But I quickly understood that it was the only ending that made any sense.

The journey that Rachelle Matthews takes is, at its heart, a spiritual quest. Do you think that everyone has the ability to take this journey?

Everyone is on that journey, whether they realize it or not. And that becomes very clear in this story. In fact, that journey is the primary reason we were born into this world.

You have alluded to the fact that story is a great tool for understanding truth. Why do you think that novels can convey truths so effectively?

We live and think in a story that we each call “my life.” Everything we think is really a story of what something is. Thus, story is paramount to our human experience, which is why Jesus used it as His primary mode of teaching. We are all looking to change the story of our lives. In fiction, we take that journey of change

Ted Dekker

through a series of events involving worthy characters who change as a result of those events. And we are invited to change with them.

What do you hope readers gain from reading *Rise of the Mystics*?

An addictive read and a shift in thinking about their own purpose for existence, whatever that shift might be. It's the reason we all read.

And for Christians, a whole new way to think of what it means to be in the way of Jesus. **FF**

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Rise of the Mystics
Beyond the Circle #2
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Suspense author **DiAnn Mills** creates action-packed, suspense-filled novels that have won her two Christy Awards, and been finalists for the RITA, Daphne du Maurier, Inspirational Reader's Choice, and Carol Award contests.

She launched her new FBI Rapid Response series with ***Burden of Proof***

(Tyndale House): FBI hostage negotiator April Ramos becomes a hostage herself in this race to find out the truth before the real murderer gets away.

In this interview, DiAnn shares the research behind the book, reveals the most difficult part of writing about the FBI's Critical Incident Response Group, and explains the role that faith plays in the novel.



What kind of research went into writing *Burden of Proof*?

I interviewed an FBI special agent who is a hostage negotiator (HN). His collateral duty was SWAT. He repeatedly emphasized the need for active listening skills so the person in crisis believes the HN cares about him/her. The HN offers understanding. Normally the negotiation is not face-to-face, because the HN is part of a six-to-eight-person support team.

A degree in psychology is good, but not necessary. Special training takes place at Quantico. We talked for two hours, all valuable information that I used for my character. Incredibly interesting!

I've often been in East Texas, but in writing *Burden of Proof*, I spent a day there detailing the community where the story is set, noting the homes, billboards, habits, hobbies, culture, restaurants, etc.



What was the most difficult aspect of writing about the FBI Critical Incident Response Group?

In *Burden of Proof*, my heroine is a special agent who specializes in hostage negotiation, but her collateral role is public corruption.

The writing portion challenged me in the details. I had pages of interview questions and answers, but how my characters thought, responded to life, and moved forward according to their training proved difficult.

I constantly posed the question: *Am I being true to the character and true to his/her role?*

What role does faith play in the story?

My hero must work through grief on various levels. His wife died of cancer after giving birth to their daughter. The hero allowed anger and resentment to separate him from a stronger relationship with God.

When he is falsely accused of murdering his best friend, and his daughter is kidnapped, the powerful emotions shake but do not destroy him. While he wants his relationship with God restored, he wrestles with the sovereignty of God. He reaches a point where he must choose between surrendering to God or living life his way.

My heroine grew up in church, but she never understood or thought she needed a relationship with God. Her god was performance, but it never satisfied her for very long. Through seeing others around her with powerful faith, she is drawn to surrendering her life to the one true God.

Your characters must make extremely difficult and potentially dangerous decisions, both for themselves and for others. What variables, do you believe, drive most of our decisions?

I believe our decisions are based on our priorities. What we deem as most important surfaces from faith, career, culture, education, life experiences, personality type, and a huge list of factors that make up each individual's uniqueness. Selfishness and greed have no place in a hero's or heroine's characteristics.

As you were crafting the characters featured in *Burden of Proof*, which one did you personally relate to the most? Which character surprised you the most?

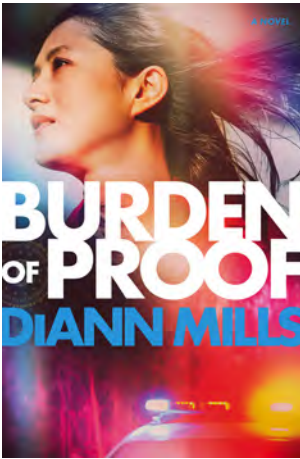
April dealt with perfectionism, and so do I. She maintained discipline and organization and followed the rules and FBI protocol until she realized her self-worth wasn't based on accomplishments. Jason surprised me with how he protected Billie. He knew helping her escape and stay hidden from Willis put his own life in jeopardy.

Why do you believe it is so important to craft strong female characters in your novels?

I believe women are the grass roots of any culture. They lay the foundation of each generation as nurturers, either as mothers or as role models. The strength of any society is established in the ability of women to influence others positively. **FF**

Visit DiAnn Mills' author page here:

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Burden of Proof

DiAnn Mills

FBI Rapid Response #1

Tyndale House



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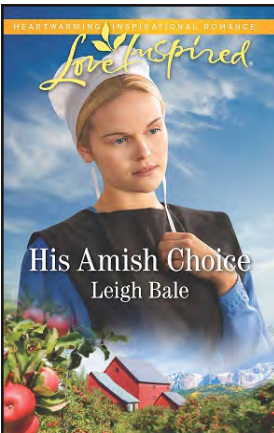


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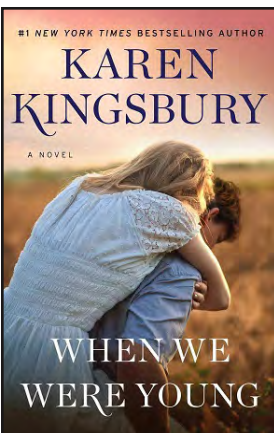


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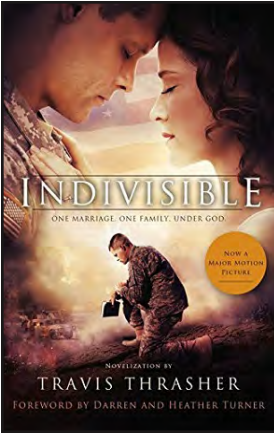
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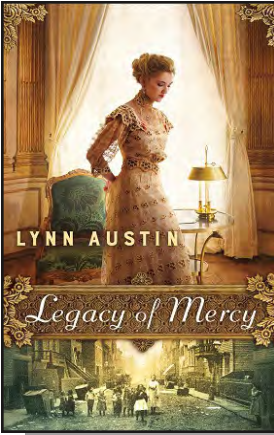
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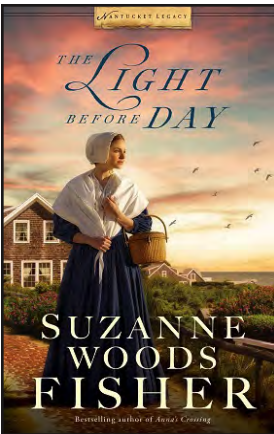
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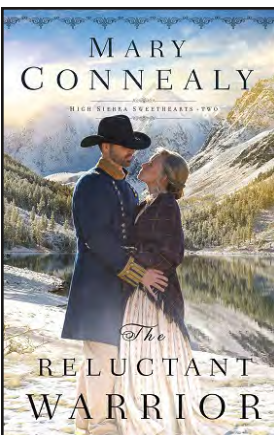
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Waves of Mercy #2
Lynn Austin
Bethany House
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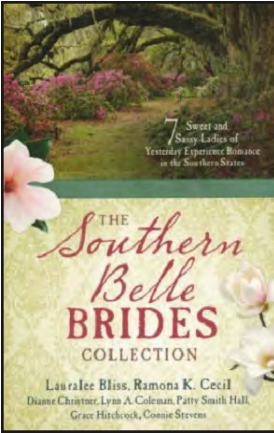
The Light Before Day
Nantucket Legacy #3
Suzanne Woods Fisher
Revell
Genres: Amish, Historical, Romance
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The Reluctant Warrior
High Sierra Sweethearts #2
Mary Connealy
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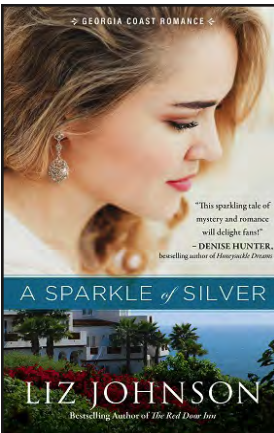
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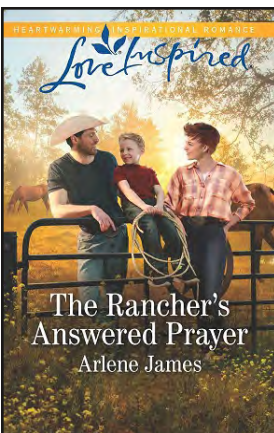
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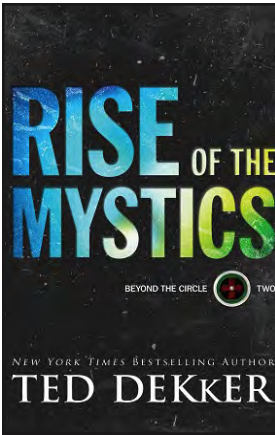
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Rise of the Mystics

Beyond the Circle #2

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Hideous Beauty

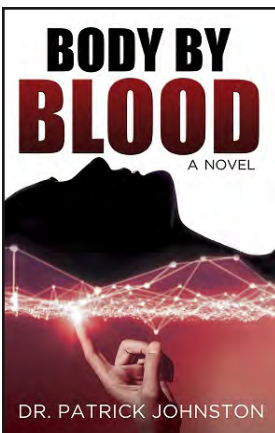
Kingdom Wars #1

Jack Cavanaugh

Enclave

Genres: Speculative, Suspense

October 9, 2018



Body By Blood

Dr. Patrick Johnston

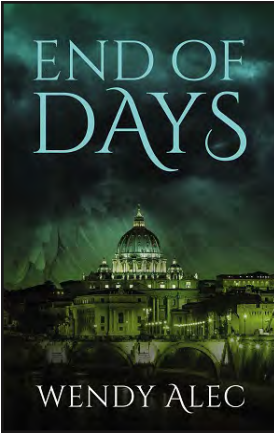
Ambassador International

Genres: Speculative, Suspense

October 1, 2018



New Releases: October 2018



End of Days

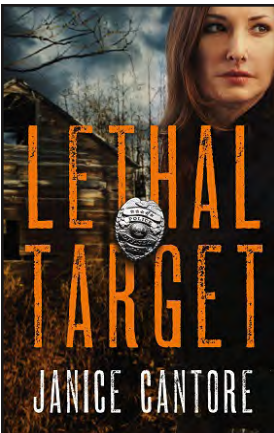
Chronicles of Brothers #3

Wendy Alec

Harper Inspire

Genre: Speculative

October 2, 2018



Lethal Target

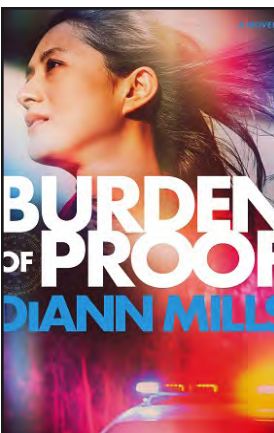
Line of Duty #2

Janice Cantore

Tyndale House

Genres: Suspense, Romance

October 9, 2018



Burden of Proof

FBI Rapid Response #1

DiAnn Mills

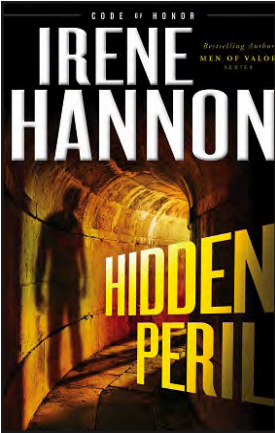
Tyndale House

Genres: Suspense, Romance

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New Releases: October 2018



Hidden Peril

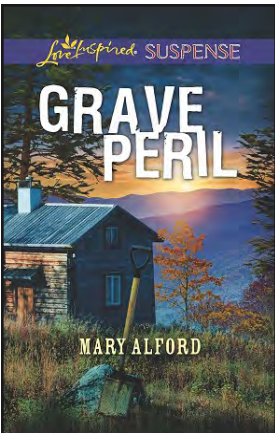
Code of Honor #2

Irene Hannon

Revell

Genres: Suspense, Romance

October 2, 2018



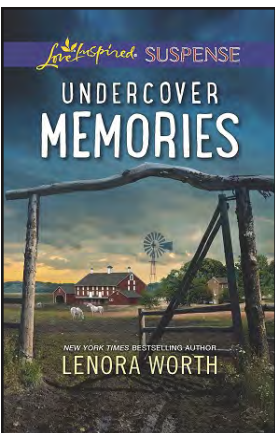
Grave Peril

Mary Alford

Love Inspired Suspense

Genres: Suspense, Romance

October 2, 2018



Undercover Memories

Lenora Worth

Love Inspired Suspense

Genres: Suspense, Romance

October 2, 2018



New Releases: October 2018



When Calls The Heart: Year Five
Shout! Factory
Genres: Movies, Romance, Historical
October 16, 2018



Healed by Grace 2: Time to Dream Big
Bridgestone Multimedia Group
Genres: Movies, Contemporary
January 1, 2018



Engaging Father Christmas
Hallmark
Genres: Movies, Christmas, Romance
October 2, 2018



New Releases: October 2018



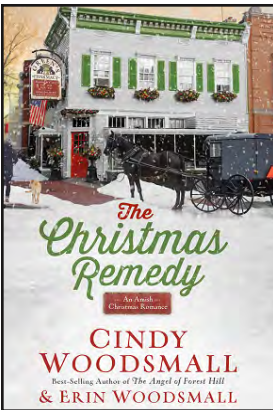
**Karen Kingsbury's
Maggie's Christmas Miracle**

Cinedigm

Genres: Christmas, Movies, Romance

October 2, 2018

Buy Now 



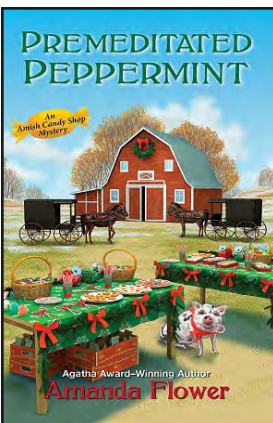
**The Christmas Remedy:
An Amish Christmas Romance**

Cindy Woodsmall, Erin Woodsmall
WaterBrook

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Premeditated Peppermint

Amish Candy Shop Mystery #3

Amanda Flower

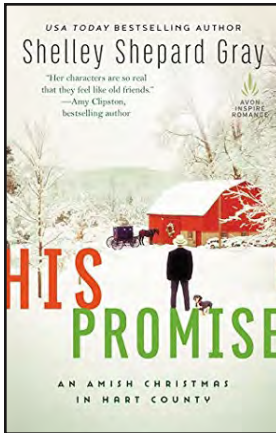
Kensington

Genres: Christmas, Suspense, Amish

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New Releases: October 2018



His Promise

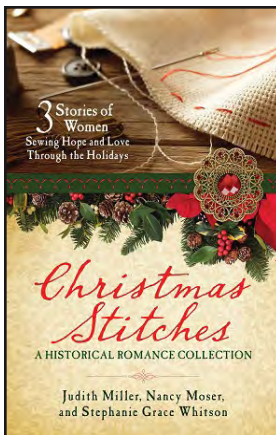
Amish of Hart County #6

Shelley Shepard Gray

Avon Inspire

Genres: Christmas, Suspense, Romance, Amish

October 23, 2018



Christmas Stitches:

An Historical Romance Collection

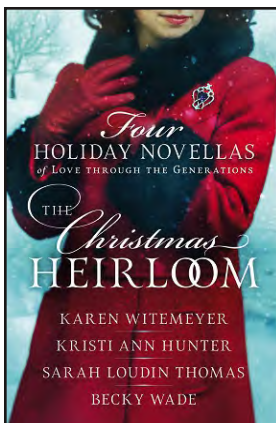
Judith McCoy Miller, Nancy Moser,

Stephanie Grace Whitson

Barbour Books

Genres: Christmas, Historical, Romance

October 1, 2018



The Christmas Heirloom 4-in-1

Four Romance Novellas of

Love through the Generations

Karen Witemeyer, Kristi Ann Hunter,

Sarah Loudin Thomas, Becky Wade

Bethany House

Genres: Christmas, Historical, Romance

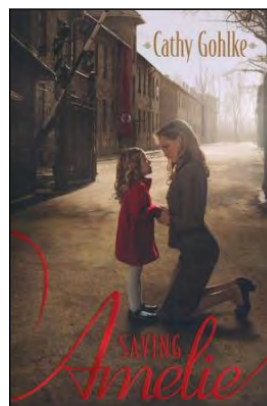
October 2, 2018



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

HISTORICAL FICTION

- 1** ***Saving Amelie***
Cathy Gohlke
Tyndale House Publishers
- 2** ***In Dreams Forgotten***
Tracie Peterson
Baker Publishing Group
- 3** ***In Places Hidden***
Tracie Peterson
Baker Publishing Group
- 4** ***Five Brides***
Eva Marie Everson
Tyndale House Publishers
- 5** ***The Sea Before Use***
Sarah Sundin
Baker Publishing Group



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CONTEMPORARY

- 1** *The Masterpiece*
Francine Rivers
Tyndale House Publishers
- 2** *The Story Keeper*
Lisa Wingate
Tyndale House Publishers
- 3** *The Outcast*
Jolina Petersheim
Tyndale House Publishers
- 4** *Sensible Shoes*
Sharon Garlough Brown
InterVarsity Press
- 5** *Manin the Blue Moon*
Michael Morris
Tyndale House Publishers

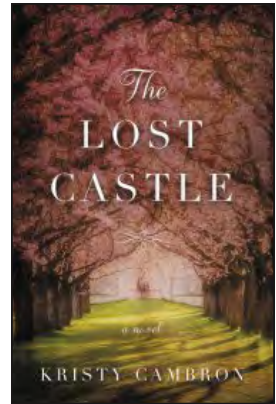


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ROMANCE

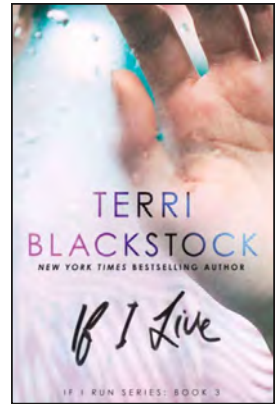
- 1** *The Lost Castle*
Kristy Cambron
Thomas Nelson Publishers
- 2** *The Weaver's Daughter*
Sarah Ladd
Thomas Nelson Publishers
- 3** *The Heart Between Us*
Lindsay Harrel
Thomas Nelson Publishers
- 4** *To the Moon and Back*
Karen Kingsbury
Howard Books/Simon & Schuster
- 5** *Dead Drift*
Dani Pettrey
Baker Publishing Group



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SUSPENSE/MYSTERY

- 1** *If I Live*
Terri Blackstock
Zondervan
- 2** *If I Run*
Terri Blackstock
Zondervan
- 3** *If I'm Found*
Terri Blackstock
Zondervan
- 4** *Where Shadows Meet*
Colleen Coble
Thomas Nelson Publishers
- 5** *The Man He Never Was*
James Rubart
Thomas Nelson Publishers

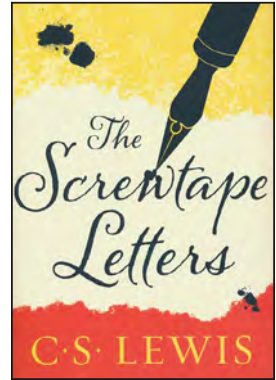


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SPECULATIVE/FANTASY/SCI-FI

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



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