

# familyfiction

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Feb/Mar 2013

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## KIM ALEXIS AND MINDY STARNS CLARK

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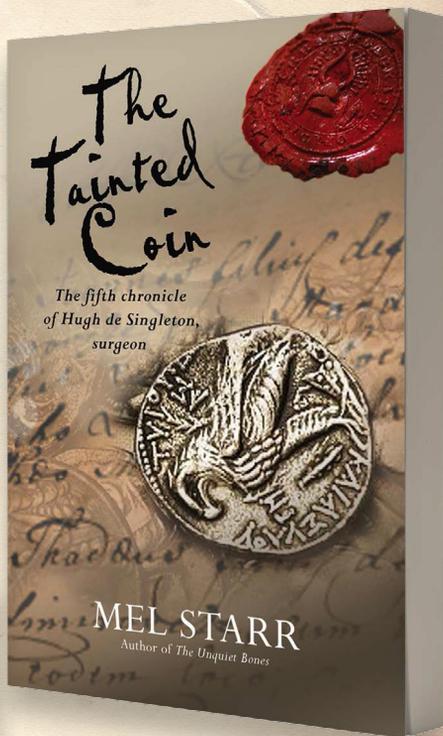
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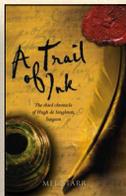
ROMANTIC TIMES



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Rachel Coker



Job the Film

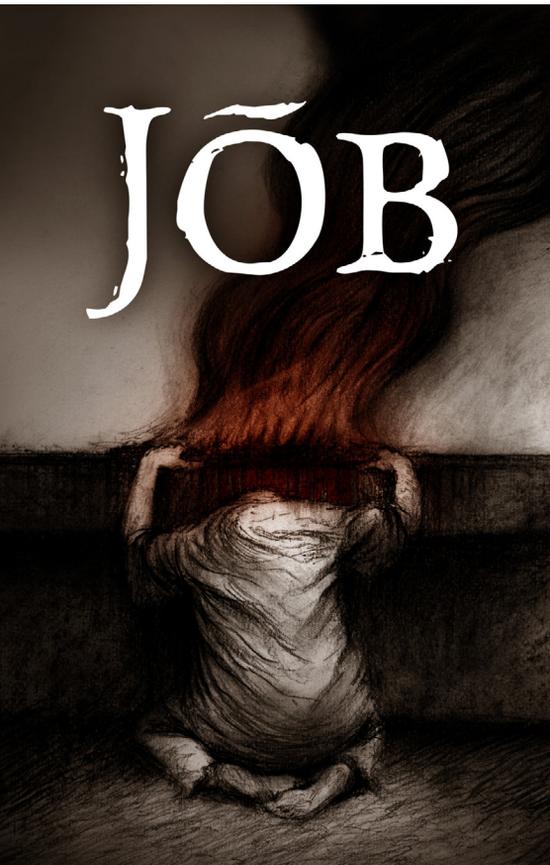
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and Shelley Adina**YOUNG ADULT****Rachel Coker**

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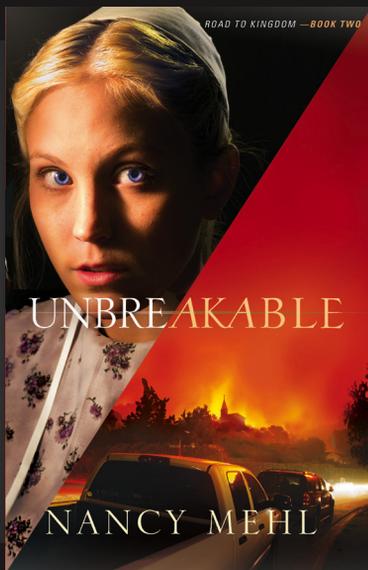
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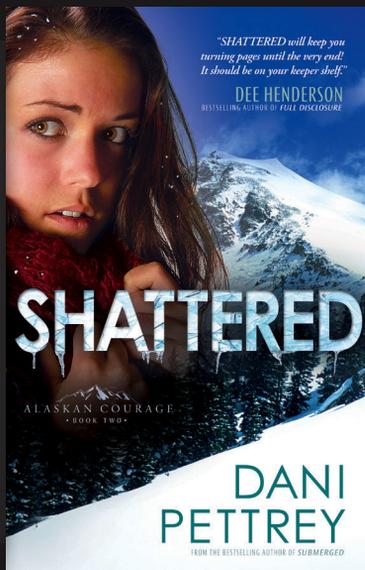
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**CHRIS WELL**

Chris Well is the editor of *FamilyFiction* and *FamilyFiction Edge*—plus the website, social media and weekly email newsletter. Somehow, he also finds time to be an author, too.

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

Rel Mollet resides in Melbourne, Australia, with her movie-loving husband and three book-loving daughters.

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**C.J. DARLINGTON**

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

Katie Hart spends her free time reading, connecting with authors and dreaming up new stories.

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



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[www.ChristaBanister.typepad.com](http://www.ChristaBanister.typepad.com)

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**CHRIS JAGER**

Chris Jager works at a great bookstore, writes a review blog and just generally reads as much as she can.

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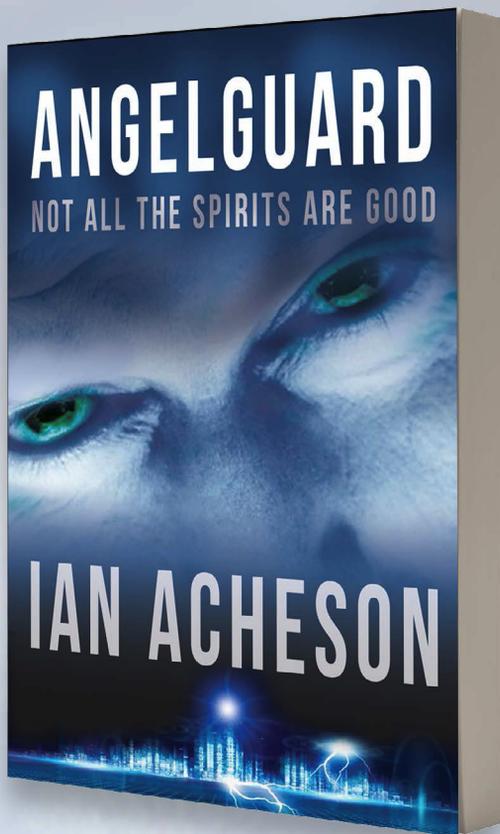
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—RONIE KENDIG, author of *Nightshade*



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# TWO HEADS ARE BETTER THAN ONE

What could be better than your favorite author releasing a new, exciting novel? Your favorite celebrity writing that page-turner with your favorite author! A creative intertwining of expertise, celebrity/novelist collaborations result in unique, well-written books, with inside glimpses into the worlds of the famous co-authors.

By C. J. Darlington



## TWO HEADS



Lis Wiehl



April Henry

**Lis Wiehl**, a Fox News legal analyst, prominent trial lawyer and the daughter of an FBI agent, was searching for someone who could help her realize her dream of writing compelling fiction for smart, well-informed readers who want to learn about law enforcement as well as TV life. Her agent connected her with established mystery writer **April Henry**, and they instantly hit it off. Their Triple Threat trilogy (*Face of*

*Betrayal*, *Heart of Ice* and *Eyes of Justice*) has been so popular, they're writing a new series debuting in March with *A Matter of Trust*. We asked Lis the secret of their successful collaboration, and she said without hesitation: "Easy. Divas prohibited. Tell a good story, and let the readers be the jury."

April Henry readily confirms this motto. "I've known authors who collaborated with celebrities who turned out to be divas. Lis isn't like that at all. We each have our area of expertise. I'm good at twisty plots; she's good at sharing the information that makes those twisty plots work. For our novels, we first think of an overarching idea that draws on something from Lis' real-life experiences. After that, we rough out an outline. Then I start work on the first draft. During that process we email

# TWO HEADS



Kim Alexis  
AP Photo



Mindy Starns Clark

each other back and forth, as I come up against an area I don't know very much about. After the first draft is done, we both go over it to improve and clarify before we send it on to our editor."

Model and actress **Kim Alexis** found herself in a similar position. She loved to read and had always loved cozy fiction, but she wanted a well-known writer to come alongside her to create the *Spa* mystery series. Enter **Mindy Starns Clark**, an author Kim describes as warm, funny and dedicated. "Mindy brings the mystery writing to our team," Kim says. "I bring a glimpse into what the fashion world feels like and what a model feels like behind the camera. I loved discussing possibilities with Mindy and

## FEATURED TITLES



**BEAUTY TO DIE FOR**  
(A SPA MYSTERY)  
B&H Books  
By Kim Alexis and  
Mindy Starns Clark



**A MATTER OF TRUST**  
(A MIA QUINN MYSTERY)  
Thomas Nelson  
By Lis Wiehl with  
April Henry



**FATHERLESS**  
FaithWords  
By James Dobson  
and Kurt Bruner

## TWO HEADS

watching the characters in *A Beauty to Die For* grow and change into people you want to hang out with.”

Pastor and nonfiction author **Kurt Bruner** was the one who approached **Dr. James Dobson** about his idea for a series of dystopian novels set in 2042. “After working closely with him for 20 years at Focus on the Family I felt a collaborative effort would work well, me crafting the story and him infusing credibility as the foremost authority on the themes we depict,” Kurt says. “We brainstormed the characters, likely-future scenarios based upon present trends, etc. I then spent nine months writing the first manuscript of *Fatherless* (Faithwords), and he suggested modest changes. The



Kurt Bruner

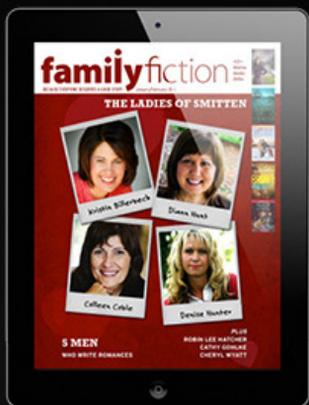


Dr. James Dobson  
Photo courtesy of Harry Langdon

process has been very rewarding.”

Whether they're writing cozy mysteries, crime novels or dystopian thrillers, these teams understand the power of fiction. “Often the best way to communicate vital truths is to weave them into a story,” Dobson says. “The New Testament parables offer a great example of that.” **FFE**

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# 10 Essential Authors of Police Procedurals

Rel Mollet

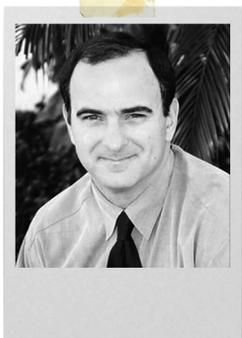
Television has all sorts of cop series, showcasing the quirky, defiant, dedicated—and sometimes crazy—police officers who uphold the law. Solve crimes with the best of them by reading the following authors' stories about those who serve and protect.



## Janice Cantore

A Long Island, Calif., police officer of 22 years, Janice Cantore retired and pursued a writing career. *Accused*, *Abducted* and her March release, *Avenged*, comprise her Pacific Coast Justice Series (Tyndale House).

► <http://www.familyfiction.com/authors/janice-cantore/>



## Mark Mynheir

Mark Mynheir has penned five novels with police officers as leading characters; and as a former narcotics agent, S.W.A.T. team member and homicide detective, he writes what he knows. Discover *The Nightwatchman* and *The Corruptible* (Multnomah Books).

► <http://www.familyfiction.com/authors/mark-mynheir/>



### M.K. Gilroy

With more than three decades in publishing, Mark Gilroy turned his hand to writing novels, and in 2012 police detective Kristen Connor hit the shelves. *Cuts Like a Knife* and *Every Breath You Take* (Worthy Publishing) tell her story.

► <http://www.familyfiction.com/authors/m-k-gilroy/>



### J. Mark Bertrand

Long fascinated with crime novels, J. Mark Bertrand jumped at the chance to give voice to a middle-aged detective, dedicated yet burdened by his job, called Roland March. Accolades have followed *Back on Murder*, *Pattern of Wounds* and *Nothing to Hide* (Bethany House).

► <http://www.familyfiction.com/authors/j-mark-bertrand/>



### Chris Well

*FamilyFiction* editor Chris Well began his career as a novelist with *Forgiving Solomon Long*, starring Detective Tom Griggs. Chris continues to focus on the crime genre in his Earl Walker mysteries (Spyglass Lane Mysteries) and *Too Good to be Truman*.

► <http://www.familyfiction.com/authors/chris-well/>



### Jerry B. Jenkins

New York Times bestselling novelist Jerry B. Jenkins honored the long line of police officers in his family by writing his Precinct 11 trilogy, which is now complete: *The Brotherhood*, *The Betrayal*, and *The Breakthrough* (Tyndale House).

► <http://www.familyfiction.com/authors/jerry-b-jenkins/>



### Brandt Dodson

Danger and thrills abound in Brandt Dodson's recent release *The Sons of Jude* (Monarch Books), featuring Chicago detectives Frank Campello and Andy Polanski investigating a young woman's murder.

► <http://www.familyfiction.com/authors/brandt-dodson/>



### Kathy Herman

Mystery novelist Kathy Herman bases her Sophie Trace trilogy around the town's first female police chief—Brill Jessup, a woman adept at solving crime but insecure in her family life. Read *The Real Enemy*, *The Last Word* and *The Right Call* (David C. Cook).

► <http://www.familyfiction.com/authors/kathy-herman/>



### Randy Alcorn

Founder of Eternal Perspectives Ministries, Randy Alcorn combines crime, mystery and the supernatural in his Detective Ollie Chandler trilogy, *Deadline*, *Dominion* and *Deception* (Multnomah Books).

► <http://www.familyfiction.com/authors/randy-alcorn/>



### F.P. Lione

Husband and wife team, Frank and Pam Lione, are F.P. Lione, author of *Clear Blue Sky* and the Midtown Blues Series: *The Deuce*, *Skells* and *The Crossroads* (Revell Books). Frank is an NYPD veteran, and both Frank and Pam were born to New York police detectives.

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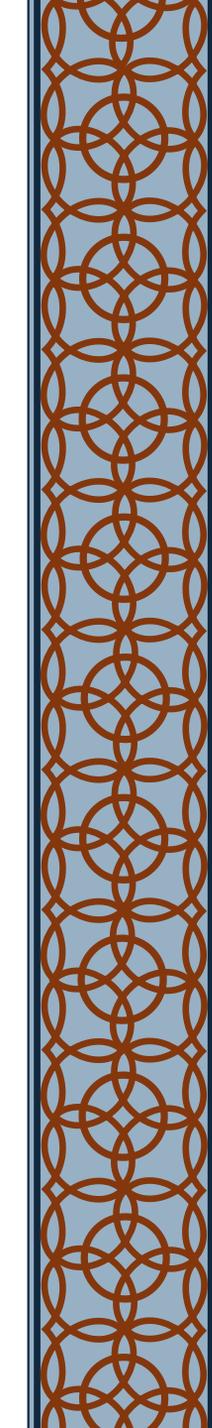


# BRAVE FAITH

With Pixar's latest hit now on DVD, producer Katherine Sarafian talks about her time working at the famed animation studio, the best thing she learned from Steve Jobs, and how each Pixar movie could be a sermon.



By C.J. Darlington

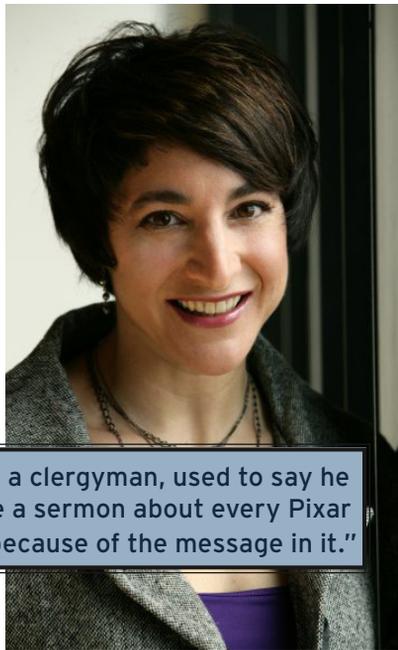


**G**rowing up, Katherine Sarafian didn't fit in. She was artistically minded and loved singing, dancing and entertainment, but she also had a strong logical side that didn't mesh. Katherine had no idea that, even from an early age, God was leading her through her diverse interests to eventually become a Pixar producer.

In 1994 it all began to make sense. "I landed at Pixar, and I said to myself, 'Now I get it! Here are 1,100 misfits, all in one place, coming together to create something beautiful.' Having that split for as long as I can remember, being artsy and sciency, and not knowing where I belonged, ended up being perfect for producing and production management where you have to be able to facilitate conversations with these two very diverse types."

From *Toy Story* to *The Incredibles*, Katherine has spent time in multiple departments at Pixar, including working directly with Steve Jobs. "The No. 1 thing I learned from him, no question, is the requirement of very, very high quality," she says. "Not taking shortcuts, not taking the easy way out. For example, it is easier and faster to tell a story by just shooting the first draft of your script. Or taking the first character design you have and just making that character.

"We don't do it that way at Pixar. I had firsthand knowledge of Steve's attention to quality and detail. Not settling for less and giving audiences smart entertainment, never dumbing anything down, and keeping it at a high level. That's in every Pixar filmmaker. We're not gonna do it halfway. We're going all the way and making the best possible thing we can create."



"My father, a clergyman, used to say he could write a sermon about every Pixar movie because of the message in it."

*Brave* is Pixar's latest No. 1 hit, and Katherine's first film at the producer's helm. Not your typical fairy tale, the movie stars young Merida, a headstrong Scottish princess who, just like Katherine as a girl, doesn't quite fit in. "A lot of contemporary fairy tales are more about making fun of the genre," says Katherine. "We wanted to honor it in a sincere way that would also be relatable for current audiences even though it takes place in an ancient time period. We wanted to create something for the new generation that would be more like the tales we grew up loving where the stakes were high, the dangers were real, and you really had to learn your lesson or bad things would happen.

"Kids are growing up so fast these days," Katherine adds. "It's not like it was in my day. I don't think there are enough depictions in cinema today where the end game is about growth, learning, development and family love rather than about 'Is he going to take me to the prom?' Young people have a lot more going on in their lives, and I want to remind them of that."

This year Katherine celebrates 18 years with Pixar, and she's excited about the future, including producing a new as-yet-unannounced feature film. But at the end of the day, it's all about values for Katherine. "My Christian faith is hugely important," she says. "And it does come into play with my work. Pixar's a place of deeply rooted family values. It tends to attract people who want to make family entertainment. We want to make something that will withstand the test of time, that all ages will enjoy.

"My father, a clergyman, used to say he could write a sermon about every Pixar movie because of the message in it. He taught me to put something into the world that is meaningful, rather than just fluff. Something that will stay with people, where they can grow and learn and be inspired by it." **FFE**



Richard L. Mabry, M.D.

# GOOD MEDICINE

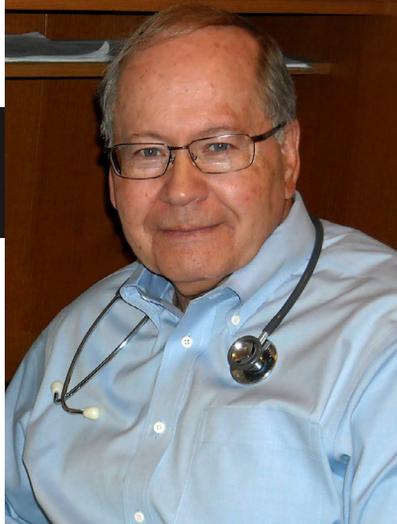
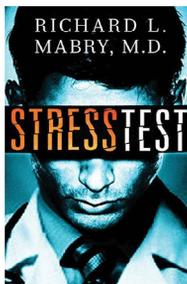
C.J. Darlington

Richard L. Mabry, M.D., believes practicing medicine is similar to piloting a plane—both have hours of routine and unexpected moments of stark terror.

After doctoring for 36 years, he should know. During his career, he's done an air rescue from a helicopter, delivered a baby in a hallway and saved a young girl's life while stationed in Azores as a member of the Air Force.

These days, he's traded in his stethoscope for a keyboard and is set to release a fascinating tale of medical intrigue called *Stress Test* (Thomas Nelson). "In the story, medicine actually offers my character, Dr. Newman a respite from the stress he experiences when he becomes a suspected murderer and the target of people who want to kill him," Mabry says, but is quick to point out that his brand of suspense is what he likes to call the "sleep with the light off" variety. "It's enough to keep you turning pages, but not enough to cause nightmares. There's also enough romance in my books for women to enjoy, but not so much that men close the book in disgust; and I always try to reflect the heart God has for His children."

Even after four previously successful medical suspense novels, Mabry finds writing about doctors to be challenging at times. "It's easy to write about the emotions and some of the day-to-day situations involved in the practice of



"[My suspense] is enough to keep you turning pages, but not enough to cause nightmares."

medicine, because I've been there and done that," he says. "At the same time, it's difficult, because I'm well aware that people may judge doctors and others in the medical profession by my portrayal, yet I have to paint them as we all are—flawed beings."

Now retired from medicine, Mabry considers writing his new profession, but he still answers to "Doc." "Outside the office I'm a husband, father, grandfather and frustrated golfer," he says. "In the office, I'm a writer." **FFE**

**MORE ONLINE:** <http://www.familyfiction.com/authors/richard-l-mabry-m-d/>

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# HEATHER JAMES

## CHASING THE ENEMY

When Heather James' grandfather gave her a copy of *Gone with the Wind* in high school, everything changed.

A reluctant reader became a voracious one, and James hasn't looked back since. She followed in her father's footsteps and became a lawyer to pay the bills, but held onto her childhood dream of being an author. It's finally become a reality with the release of *Unholy Hunger* (Kregel Publications), the first in the Lure of the Serpent Series. A story about a grieving mother's vigilante revenge against the unknown pedophile who killed her young daughter, the plot actually sprang from a nightmare James had about her own child.

Because of its tough subject matter, *Unholy Hunger* is gritty, but never gratuitous. "Writers have the ability, the power even, to either imprint their readers or

stain them," James says. "I don't want to stain my readers. The hardest challenge in writing this book was the obvious heartstrings involved. I had to become that woman who lost her child, and I really didn't want to go there. Still, I knew it had to be done."

Pleased with the end result, a mix of edge, drama, suspense and humor, James wants to clear up any misconception that *Unholy Hunger* is a scary book. "It's not," she emphasizes. "The bad things that happen to the children in this book happen out of the reader's view. Ultimately, I have to answer to God for what I put out there, and I feel I haven't crossed any lines in that regard. I'm trying to convey how important it is for parents to keep a close eye on their kids, but I'm also trying to relay that we have an enemy out there, above the flesh-and-bone ones we may cross paths with on a daily basis." **FFE**



"Writers have the ability, the power even, to either imprint their readers or stain them."



## UNHOLY HUNGER

(THE LURE OF THE SERPENT)

Kregel Publications

**MORE ONLINE:** <http://www.familyfiction.com/authors/genres/suspense>

# NEWS & NOTES



## Tragic Influences

The idea for Ace Collins' novel *Darkness Before Dawn* (Abingdon Press) has been with him since he was 15, when a hit-and-run drunk driver killed one of his best friends. "From that experience, I developed an interest in understanding the effect driving under the influence has on not just society, but individual lives," Ace says. "I reworked my thoughts into a drama that did more than just hit on the cold, cruel loss felt by a loved one from such an accident, but also brought in such hot-button topics as abortion, the inequities of the justice system, and the toll loss takes on a person's faith. This book examines two characters who each need acceptance and forgiveness in the worst way."

► <http://www.familyfiction.com/authors/ace-collins/>



## Surviving

DiAnn Mills' new novel *The Survivor* delves into the pain of betrayal and loss and how God brings about resolution. Book two in her Crime Scene: Houston Series (Zondervan), the novel was based on a real-life FBI Houston cold case, "This is the case of a 9-year-old girl who survived a brutal attack, gave a composite of the attacker, and 20 years later, an arrest was made because of her willingness to help with the investigation," DiAnn says. "When I first learned about it, I knew her story had to be the foundation for a novel. Through this story I want to encourage my readers to believe anything is possible with God."

► <http://www.familyfiction.com/authors/diann-mills/>

## New Again

Davis Bunn's The Priceless Collection Series is getting a facelift by Hendrickson Publishers. Although the trilogy originally was written in the '90s, it's just as gripping today. Says Bunn, "*Florian's Gate* is the first in a series of three books based around the experiences of my wife's family after World War II." Each book includes fascinating details from the international antiques trade and European history. *The Amber Room* and *Winter Palace* will be published in May and November, respectively.

► <http://www.familyfiction.com/authors/davis-bunn/>



# ROSS LAWHEAD

**Legends and Lore**  
Ross Lawhead brings ancient myths to life as his novels explore hidden realms beneath Great Britain.

As a second-generation novelist (his father is author Stephen R. Lawhead), Ross has been writing for as long as he can remember. “For whatever reason, writing is just how I express myself best—not just to others, but to myself. I’ve found that writing is something that I always need to be doing in order to be well-adjusted.”

Ross credits living most of his life in England for his deep love of history. “History is very thick on the ground over here—I mean literally thick, you trip over it,” he says. “In a second-hand bookstore I’ll come across a medieval translation of a French history of Britain, or a transcript of an Icelandic warrior saga. That stuff is like rocket fuel to my imagination.”



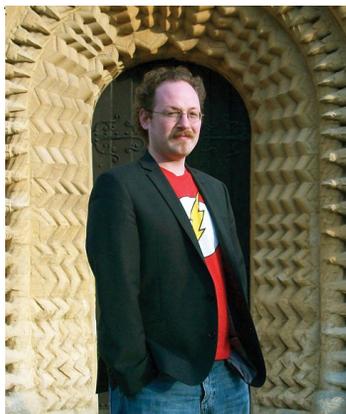
**A HERO'S THRONE**  
(THE ANCIENT EARTH #2)

Thomas Nelson

He draws on that history for his Ancient Earth trilogy, preferring to populate his story with legends. “Instead of making new fictional truths,” he shares, “I wanted to use ones that have existed for centuries, if not millennia.”

His characters are more flawed than typical in fiction, but Ross sees that as a more accurate portrayal of the human condition. “I think we as humans want to have near-perfect, clear-cut heroes in our stories, movies, whatever, and if not someone who is perfect, at least someone who is innocent,” he says. “So in creating characters that are realistic, I’ve built into them some of the awfulness that’s in all of us that we don’t want to look at—so no wonder people are put off by them!”

Ross has a lighter side as well. “I’m a nerd in about 30 different ways—I’m a “Doctor Who” nerd, a *Star Wars* buff, I adore silent movies as well as playing massively complex board games. I have maintained a lifelong devotion to the Fantastic Four since I was 13.” **FFE**



“Instead of making new fictional truths, I wanted to use ones that have existed for centuries, if not millennia.”

**MORE ONLINE:** <http://www.familyfiction.com/authors/ross-lawhead/>

# NEWS & NOTES

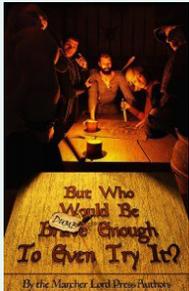


## ADVENTURE BY COMMITTEE

What happens when you bring seven different authors together and unleash them upon a single story? The rollicking fantasy adventure *But Who Would Be Dumb Enough To Even Try It?*, a collaboration featuring seven Marcher Lord Press authors.

A band of thieves brought together by greed and a righteous calling seek to claim the ultimate token of evil from an ancient fortress. No one who has ventured into that cursed stronghold has returned, but the rewards are too great to pass up. And when this much is on the line, who would be dumb enough not to try?

The story is available in eBook for a variety of formats.



## HIGH STAKES

Brock Eastman's newest novel, *Risk* (P&R Publishing), reunites readers with the Wikk kids as they explore a strange, abandoned civilization and continue their search for the hidden planet Ursprung in order to save all that they hold dear. "I wanted to take the story of the Quest for Truth series deeper and raise the stakes! I wanted to show the dynamics of a family and how siblings can work together. I also wanted to show readers that anyone can be a leader regardless of his or her age; it just takes courage."

► <http://www.familyfiction.com/authors/brock-eastman>

## STEAM CLEAN

Shelley Adina takes a cue from the alternative history genre, combining steampunk technology and imagination to bring her Magnificent Devices series to life. Written with teens in mind, the books have attracted readers of all ages—both in the Christian and general markets. "While the books have a Christian worldview, and Claire is a believer, they're not meant for one particular audience over another," Shelley says. "Instead, the heart of these books has two distinct beats: living up to one's potential, and forming a family."

# RACHEL COKER

**Teen Author**  
Seventeen-year-old homeschool student Rachel Coker infuses her own teenage experience into poignant historical novels.

“My first fiction story was a school assignment in sixth grade,” Rachel shares. “I guess my mom was pretty impressed by my short story, because she sent it to a professional writing coach who offered to work with me for a few months to hone my fiction skills.”

Short stories and a novella led to starting her first full-length novel at age 13. After finishing it, she queried agents, signed with one, and at 15 received a contract offer from Zondervan for *Interrupted: Life Beyond Words*.

Her sophomore novel, *Chasing Jupiter* (also Zondervan), takes readers to 1960s Georgia, where 17-year-old Scarlett Blaine struggles to hold her eccentric family

together and fulfill her autistic brother’s dream of flying a rocket to Jupiter. “I love how raw and real the characters in *Chasing Jupiter* are,” Rachel says. “They’re not perfect—in fact, they’re far from it, but you just can’t help but love how crazy and cute they all are. They have a genuine love for each other that is stronger than the circumstances surrounding them.”

She believes her age gives her books an edge that other young adult novels may not have. “They’re stories about teenagers written by an actual teenager, so they have a raw realness to them that I think a lot of other YA books lack. I write about what it’s like to be young—the heartaches, joys, humor, and love that comes with being 17. And other teens relate to that!”

Rachel lives with her parents and two younger sisters in Virginia, where she writes and owns a photography business, as well as continuing her schooling. “All my years of home education opened my eyes to the exciting and vast world of classic literature,” she says, “and many of those books inspired my later works.” **FFE**



“I write about what it’s like to be young—and other teens relate to that!”



**CHASING JUPITER**  
Zondervan

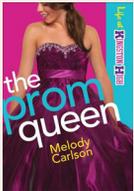
**MORE ONLINE:** <http://www.familyfiction.com/authors/rachel-coker>

# NEWS & NOTES



## PROM HEROINE

Author Melody Carlson shares the real story behind one of the characters in her latest novel: “When I started writing *The Prom Queen* (Revell Books), it was simply the final book in the Life at Kingston High series. But after a girl named Bethany Bridgewater (from Houston) used her Make-a-Wish to spend time with me at my home, I decided to do something a little different. Bethany was diagnosed with Ewing’s Sarcoma shortly before her prom and she shared a touching story of how her boyfriend Michael carried her out to the dance floor since she was unable to walk. While Bethany, who wants to be a writer, was visiting, I was in final edits of *Prom Queen*. So I asked if she wanted me to write her into the story as a “real” character. She was elated about the idea. And so I added her into the mix. It made the book really special to both Bethany



and me. Bethany finished her treatments and is making a great recovery and hopes to write her memoir someday.”

► <http://www.familyfiction.com/authors/melody-carlson/>

## RUTH REVISITED

Krista McGee shares many experiences with the characters in her latest book, *Right Where I Belong* (Thomas Nelson), including working at and running a VBS program at the very Costa Rican school where Natalia’s life is changed. The novel is a loose retelling of the Biblical story of Naomi and Ruth, with Natalia leaving her home country of Spain to live with her stepmother in Florida.

► <http://www.familyfiction.com/authors/krista-mcgee/>

## SOLITARY CLOSURE

Travis Thrasher wraps up his latest series with a book that finally reveals what’s actually going on in the mysterious small town. He shares, “*Hurt* (David C. Cook) is the final book in The Solitary Tales and could easily be called *Here Are The Answers You’ve Been Waiting For*. For three books I test readers’ patience with mystery after mystery. I think there’s a nice payoff—I’ve been pleasantly surprised to hear all the great comments for the book.”

► <http://www.familyfiction.com/authors/travis-thrasher/>



# SCOTTY CURLEE

## TRUE POTENTIAL

When Scotty Curlee was 18, he had no idea God already was orchestrating his life.

An army brat from South Korea, he came to America with dreams of becoming an Olympic medalist in cycling. Then his father died. He promised his mother he'd go to college; after graduating from Liberty University, he spent 10 years in the pharmaceutical industry. Looking back, he now sees that all of this prepared him for his role as producer, director and lead actor in *The Potential Inside*, the story of a pro cyclist who hits rock bottom when his young daughter dies in a tragic accident.

"There are a lot of cycling movies for the road," Scotty says, "and a bunch of mountain bike documentaries, but there's never been a feature level film that revolved around the sport of mountain biking as does *The*

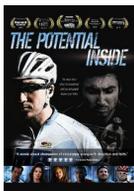
*Potential Inside*. I put in about six months of solid training and riding to get back into the groove for the role."

Under the supervision of cycling coach Hunter Allen and two-time U.S. national champion and gold medallist Jeremiah Bishop, Scotty and his crew made sure the sport was depicted accurately. "We wanted to tell a story of redemption and hope, but do it with reality," Scotty says. "We wanted it to be original and different, and we hope people who see it don't feel preached at, but feel motivated to make a change. We get so caught up in life—putting out fires—that we often don't become who God made us to be.

"The whole concept of max VO<sub>2</sub> [maximal oxygen consumption] in the movie is a foreign concept to most people, but the more important thing is not the physical max VO<sub>2</sub>, but the correlation it has to our spiritual lives. Every day, we need to look for the opportunity to reach our true potential." **FFE**



"Every day, we need to look for the opportunity to reach our true potential."



## THE POTENTIAL INSIDE

**MORE ONLINE:** <http://www.familyfiction.com/movies/>

# NEWS & NOTES



## Small Town Roots

The tiny town of Thrall, Texas, is as much a star in film *Abel's Field* as its leading actors Kevin Sorbo (*Hercules*, *Soul Surfer*) and Samuel Davis. Discovered by director Gordie Haakstad using Google Earth, real-life Thrall becomes the fictional town of Sinai, where football is king. High schooler Seth struggles to care for his younger sisters in the wake of his mother's death and his father's abandonment, but he keeps getting in trouble at school. He soon finds himself working with groundskeeper Abel (Sorbo) to prepare the football field for the big game. "This movie is about getting a second chance," Sorbo says.



## A Forgotten Art

Shot in 16 days with a skeleton crew, *The Letter Writer* is an inspiring coming-of-age tale rekindling the lost art of writing letters. When a rebellious teenage girl receives a letter from a stranger, she sets out to find the author, and her life is changed by an elderly man. The Dove Foundation calls the film "a wonderful movie with a nice redemption theme, which families everywhere will enjoy." The film was written and directed by Christian Vuissa, an Austria native, whose film *Silent Night* also recently released.

## Value of Life

Della Reese and Dean Cain hit the screen with Bradley Dorsey (*A Greater Yes*) in the pro-life film *Meant to Be*. "The movie deals with a dramatic story of writer Nathan Burr, who is in search of his birth mother after being raised in a foster home," says Pureflix social media director Mani Sandoval. "It also intertwines with the story of a young pregnant girl named Tori, who is dealing with thoughts of abortion as she struggles to find any value in herself and her unborn baby's life."



# THE BOOK OF JOB

## Poetry in Motion

When artist Chris Koelle first began working on *Job the Film*, it seemed as if it was not going to happen.

In 2008, the company he worked for produced a sample animation to show how it would produce a full-length animated adaptation of John Piper's poem "The Misery of Job and the Mercy of God."

"We put a ton of thought, care and hard work into the sample," Koelle said, but "a full-length film at that level of production cost just wasn't feasible."

Instead, Koelle was asked to draw an illustrated edition of the book, which sold out quickly. "In the fall of 2011, while working nonstop on *The Book of Revelation* graphic novel, I was still getting emails on a pretty regular basis about the Job book," Koelle said. "My friend had the vision to bring back the Job story as an animated Ken Burns-style movie, using the existing artwork and



"My friend had the vision to bring back the Job story as an animated Ken Burns-style movie."

Piper's reading of the poem on CD from the original publication."

After pitching the idea to the poem's publisher, they began work again. Koelle co-directed the movie with Danny McNight, who animated it using Koelle's illustrations.

*Job the Film* is now available as a digital download from iTunes and on DVD from their website, where churches and small groups also can schedule a free showing of the 45-minute movie.

The first run of DVDs sold out, but a second run recently was printed. "I'm thrilled that we've been able to bring it back and get it in people's hands again," Koelle said, because of the response *Job the Film* has prompted. "We regularly receive messages from viewers who, through the message of the film, have been able to see Jesus, the suffering Savior, more clearly and treasure Him more deeply in the midst of pain. It's this kind of faith-building, Christ-exalting response that we love to see from people who have experienced the film." **FFE**



## JOB THE FILM

**MORE ONLINE:** <http://www.familyfiction.com/genres/comics-animation/books/>

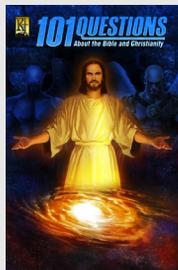
# NEWS & NOTES



## Comic Book Q&A

Kingstone Comics is releasing the first volume of its *101 Questions About the Bible* graphic novel series. Author Art Ayris came up with the idea because of a college and singles class he taught at his church. “At the end of class each week, we would give them the opportunity to ask any question they wanted,” he remembers. “Through that experience, I discovered there were a host of questions that were faith sticking points to young people, so I began gathering those questions.”

This volume, illustrated by Claude St. Aubins and Frank Fosco, explores the first 15 of the 101 questions, covering topics ranging from the trinity to angels and demons to the question of if there will be pets in heaven.



## Small Characters, Big Stories

Robin White has been drawing a new page of his webcomic, *Doodze*, every week since April 2010 and is now coming up on 120 pages. A fantasy story featuring cartoonish and fantastic characters, writer/artist White describes the comic as “Smurfs meets *Lord of the Rings*.” “The major theme I’ve been exploring is fear,” says White, “overcoming fear for the sake of a greater good. I hope that idea encourages readers.”

Updating the website with one new page every Friday, White, a Canadian missionary who lives in Japan, said he hopes readers who follow the weekly webcomic “have a lot of fun along the way.”

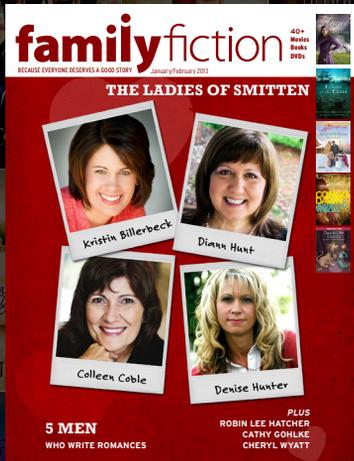
## TV on the ‘Net

Phil Vischer’s JellyTelly, an online network intended to be “a Nickelodeon for Christian families,” has undergone a major revamp. The new service “Club JellyTelly” is now available for a monthly subscription. The subscription gives families access to a number of Christian children’s shows such as the *Adventures in Odyssey* animated series, “What’s in the Bible?” and “The Pond.”

Since the creation of VeggieTales, Vischer has had a passion to, as he says on the JellyTelly website, “inspire kids to trust God in their lives every day,” and Club JellyTelly is part of that vision. Vischer says, “Club JellyTelly takes a huge step toward providing our kids with a real alternative to Hollywood’s kids networks.”

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