

**KAREN KINGSBURY**

June 2015

presents

# Family Fiction

A close-up portrait of a woman with long, dark red hair, smiling warmly. She is wearing a dark blue or black top with a ruffled collar and a multi-strand pearl necklace. Her eyes are looking slightly to the right of the camera.

**EVA MARIE  
EVERSON**

**With the Stunning  
Novel Based on  
Real-Life Events**

**How Indie Authors  
are Changing  
the Landscape of  
Christian Fiction**

**3** Historical  
Must-Reads

**5** Summertime Books  
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4 Fabulous Excerpts in This Issue!**



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Eva Marie Everson is a multiple-award-winning author and speaker. She is the president of Word Weavers International, vice president of BelieversTrust, director of Florida Christian Writers Conference, and enjoys coaching new authors through her company, Pen in Hand. Eva Marie and her husband are the parents of three fabulous children who have blessed them with the world's greatest grandchildren. Visit her at [evamarieeversonauthor.com](http://evamarieeversonauthor.com).

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## EVA MARIE EVERSON

We've got the true story behind her new release,  
*Five Brides!*



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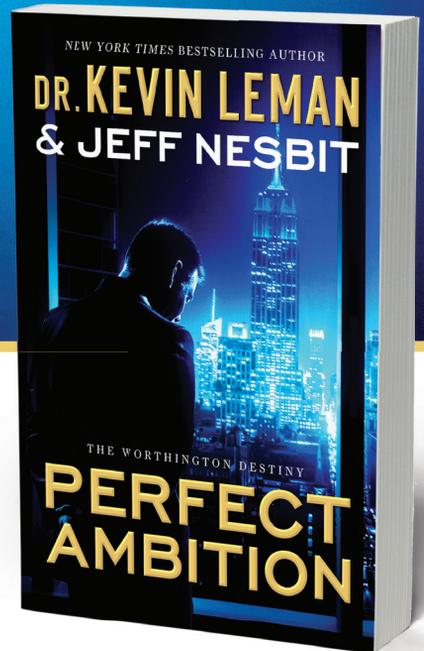
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# WHO WE ARE

## DEIDRA ROMERO



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

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

## REL MOLLET



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

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

## C.J. DARLINGTON



C.J., the author of *Bound by Guilt*, is the cofounder of TitleTrakk.com.

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

KAREN KINGSBURY

presents

# FamilyFiction

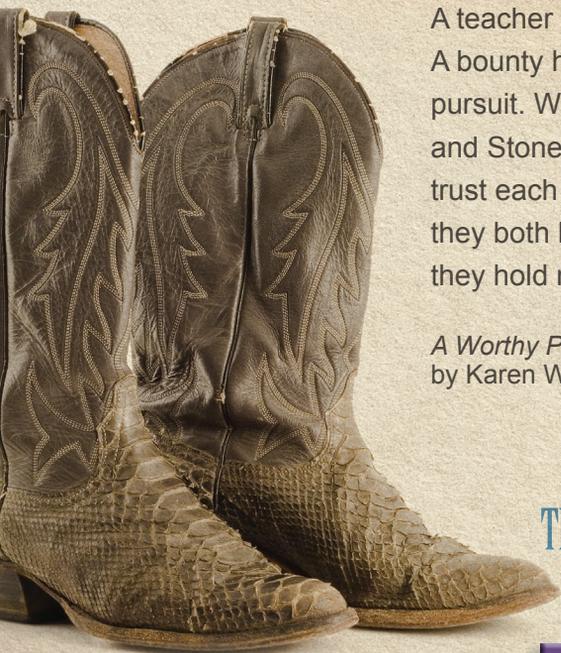
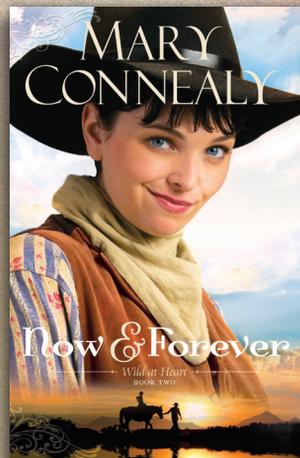
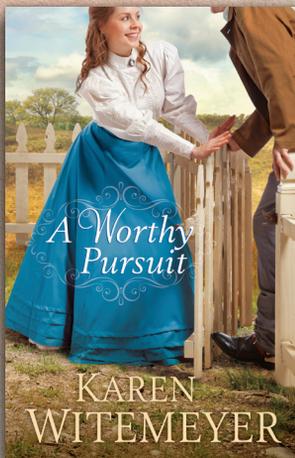
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Deidra Romero



## How an Influential Woman's Story Inspired a Novel

Over the years, Eva Marie Everson has delighted fans with her romance novels. Her latest release *Five Brides* (Tyndale House) has everything you want in a good book. It's a historical, set just after the second World War. The novel follows five women who all take turns sharing one wedding dress they purchased together. As if the engaging plot wasn't enough to pull you in; to top it all off, this story is based on real-life events.

**F**ive Brides is a story of sisterhood and romance. But behind the fiction there are remnants of reality. "This is actually a true story," says Eva. "A dear friend of mine told me the story of a friend of hers who had come to the States after WWII, had moved into an apartment with four strangers in Chicago, and then bought a wedding dress with them from the famed Carson, Pirie, Scott & Co. All five women, she said, wore the dress. When I found out who the friend was, I became even more excited."

The "who" Eva mentioned is Joan Zimmerman, who started "Southern Shows" with her husband more than fifty years ago. Southern Shows—national consumer events held all over the country—draw huge crowds to their events—over 600,000 guests each year! Through the years, Joan was asked several times to share her story. But it was Eva, the award-winning novelist, who she trusted to write her journey into pros for fans all over the world.

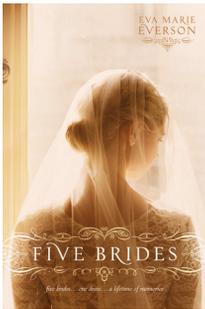
“THIS IS ACTUALLY A TRUE STORY. A DEAR FRIEND OF MINE TOLD ME THE STORY OF A FRIEND OF HERS WHO HAD COME TO THE STATES AFTER WWII ...”

Writing a novel based on a true story was something new for Eva. But she pursued the story with tenacity. “It’s not easy holding Joan Zimmerman down long enough to get the stories ... but I finally did. She and her husband Robert were wonderfully gracious ... and so, so funny!” Of the five stories, only Joan’s story is true. The other four main characters were fictionalized.

These five women share the spotlight in *Five Brides*. And of their characters, Eva says, “They were five fiercely independent women—both in my story and in real life—in a period of our history when women were returning home from the work place. But these five wanted more than working until marriage and living in a boarding house until Mr. Right came along. They thought for themselves.”

One day while window shopping, the five women spot a stunning wedding dress. On a whim, they decide to pretend one of them is engaged and they try the dress on. They *all* try the dress on. After they fall in love with the white stunner, they decide they should pool their money and buy the dress—each taking their turn to wear it. And so the fun begins. At the time, none of the girls are engaged. Who will be the first to wear it? The girls go their separate ways. They were not close friends, but one thing holds their stories together—the beloved wedding dress. *Five Brides* follows each of their love stories until the moment they walk down the aisle.

It is an enchanting, fun novel that will urge readers to contemplate their faith as they cheer for each of the five women on their journeys. **FF**

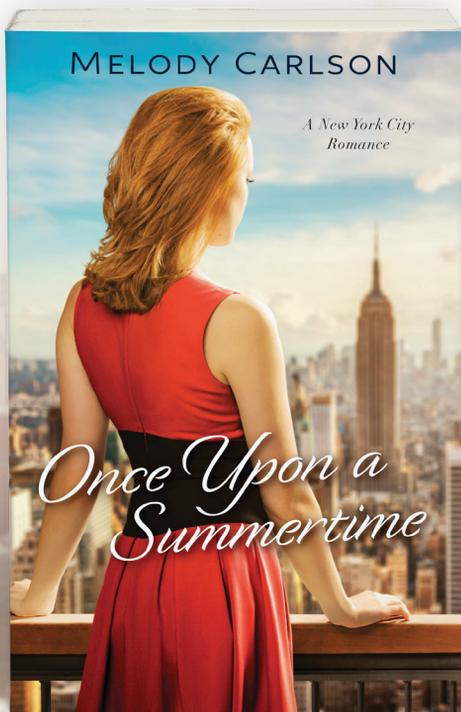


**FIVE BRIDES**  
*Eva Marie Everson*  
Tyndale House

READ MORE ONLINE!: <http://www.familyfiction.com/authors/eva-marie-everson/books/five-brides/>

“Readers will cheer Anna’s journey as a summer of new beginnings becomes a summer of *unexpected love.*”

—LISA WINGATE,  
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## START READING NOW

An Excerpt From *Five Brides*  
by Eva Marie Everson

1951

Chicago, Illinois

The three laughed easily, sobering only when they came to where Betty and Inga had stopped in front of one of the colossal, architecturally framed storefront windows of Carson Pirie Scott & Co.

“Would you look at that,” Evelyn breathed.

“I have to say,” Betty said, “that is the prettiest wedding dress I’ve ever seen in my entire life.”

“I’d give my eyeteeth to have a gown like that.” Evelyn’s eyes scanned the dress as though she already did.

The young women remained silent for a moment, lost in the folds of the dress, the long, lacy sleeves, and the sweetheart neckline.

“I’ve never seen so much lace in my entire life.” Betty continued in her ogling.

“What do you think?” Joan asked, feeling the eastbound crowd brush against her. She stumbled slightly but managed not to fall as her eyes roamed the cathedral-length veil floating from a headband of pearls crowning the mannequin’s brunette hair.

“Two fifty?”

“Two fifty?” Betty cast a glance that inquired if she’d quite possibly lost her mind. “For all that elegance and enchantment? You must still be thinking in quid, Joan. I’d say more like four hundred. *Dollars.*”

“If I wore that dress on *my* wedding day,” Evelyn said, once again adjusting her glasses, “I’d feel like Cinderella on her way to the ball.”

Betty crossed her arms as a look of genius settled on her face. "I say let's do it."

"Do what?" Joan asked.

"Go in." She tipped her head toward the front doors. "Try it on."

"Are you serious?" Magda asked, turning to stare at the dress once again.

"Why not? We're not doing anything else the rest of the day." She smiled, the fire-engine-red lipstick making her pearly whites look all the more so. "Unless someone wants to go home and dust something ... or *cook* something..."

"But," Joan said, "we..." She looked around at the faces of her flatmates. "None of us has so much as an engagement ring."

"So?" Betty asked, her eyes shining with the excitement of it all.

Inga bounced on the balls of her feet. "I'm with Betty. Let's do it."

Joan looked to Evelyn. Behind the specs, her blue eyes had grown wide and anxious with anticipation.

Joan nodded. "Okay. Let's do it," she said, making a dash toward the door. "Last one in has to clean the loo for the rest of the month."



Betty pushed through the heavy, bay-shaped revolving doors on the northwest corner of the imposing department store. She looked over her shoulder at the others. Inga stood closest to her heels, Evelyn only steps behind her. Joan and Magda pulled up the rear. She watched their faces as they stood just inside the door. Each of them looked up, then turned slowly, mouths gaping at the splendor and architectural genius of the glittery interior. Their eyes scanned the gold capitals encircling thick supporting columns that stood like Buckingham Palace guards and the chandeliers, as big as boats, hanging from the ceiling, dripping crystal, light, and color.

"Come, come, come," Betty said. "Bridal wear is on one of the upper levels. Four, I think."

Opting against the elevator, they darted up stairs with banisters that matched the ornate decor of the store itself, the tap-tapping

of their shoes announcing their excitement to the fourth floor, where the plaster ceilings hung much lower than those on the first. Again, they all stopped, clustered together and breathing heavily as they absorbed the grandeur and elegance of the department.

A middle-aged salesclerk with perfectly coiffed hair approached, and she nodded as Betty described the dress in the showcase window along Madison.

"I know the one you mean," the clerk replied, and she smiled at the cluster of young women wearing their Saturday-go-into-the-city clothes and wide-eyed expressions. "And, if I may inquire, which one of you is the lucky girl?"

Evelyn grabbed Joan's hand as though they were about to be hauled off to jail for impersonating blushing brides-to-be.

"That would be me," Betty piped up.

Joan shot Betty her best are-you-joshing? look.

"You're in luck," the clerk said. "I believe we have it in your size." Again, she smiled. "And would these lovely ladies be your bridesmaids?"

Betty smiled knowingly. "Perhaps. For now, we're interested only in that *one* dress."

The woman arched a brow. "Please have a seat and I'll be right back."

Velvet settees encircled the bridal showroom's marble-topped platform. The women perched like real ladies on the edges of five individual sofas, straight-backed with legs crossed at the ankles, lips pressed together. Betty couldn't help noticing that no one dared to look at the others for fear of breaking into laughter at their own courage to do something so daring.

The salesclerk returned, holding a plump satin-covered hanger high above her head. The dress draped from her right hand over her left arm, sweeping the air in front of her as she walked. "Here we are," she sang, looking at Betty.

Betty rose from her seat, heart pounding as she glided toward the clerk as though stepping down a wedding aisle. In the window, clothing the inanimate mannequin, the dress had appeared

nothing short of lovely. But here, so close to her twitching hands, it became the gown of fairy tales. The kind of dress a girl could only hope to wear on her wedding day. The kind she had always dreamed of...

"I don't believe," Joan whispered out of a sort of reverence, "that Her Majesty Elizabeth's dress was any more beautiful than this." She stood, and the others followed suit, each of them taking a step forward.

Evelyn leaned close to Betty's ear. "Maybe we shouldn't—"

Before Betty could shush her, the salesclerk interrupted. "Would you like to have one of our girls model this for you or would you prefer to try it on yourself?"

"Oh, no," Betty said. "I'll try it on." She turned to the others. "And then I want my friends to do the same."

*"All of them?"*

"Yes, please," Betty answered, scooping the dress from the clerk's arms and into her own. The material rustled, sending a shiver of anticipation through Betty that she hadn't known in months. Not since her father had cut off her allowance and her endless days of compulsive shopping had come to an end. "Point me to the dressing room, if you will be so kind," Betty said with the same flourish she'd heard in her mother's voice time and again.

Then to the others, she said, "Girls, I'll be back momentarily."



# NEW HORIZONS FOR CHRISTIAN PUBLISHING

*Deidra Romero*

**How Indie Authors are Changing  
the Landscape of Christian Fiction**



Since the inception of independent publishing, it has been a taboo topic in Christian fiction. Like any genre, readers expect something when they pick up a Christian fiction book. They expect it to be family-friendly with an underlying message of faith and hope. For a long time, publishing houses, big and small, have been the gatekeepers of Christian fiction. However, the tide appears to be turning as independent Christian authors are carving out a fan-base of readers and changing the landscape of publishing.

[Christina Coryell](#) is a spunky young author. She independently published her first book, *A Reason to Run*, in 2014 under her own company, Coryell Publishing. To date she has published three other books in her Camdyn series. That's right—four books in less than 12 months. According to Christina, her launch into publishing happened at just the right time. "I considered traditional publishing early on, but the farther I walked through the process, realizing that God was blessing me in His timing, publishing sooner rather than later felt right." Her timeline probably wouldn't have been possible had she chosen a traditional publisher. "Knowing that I might have been waiting for a couple years for my book to be released with a traditional publisher makes me so grateful that I trusted God enough to follow the non-traditional path," adds Christina.

And it appears to be paying off for her. Christina's books have been Amazon bestsellers. And though, publishing independently has its perks, it definitely requires more work on the author's part. All the marketing, cover design, and distribution fall on the writer's shoulders. Basically publishing independently means bigger risk, a lot more work, but potentially with bigger rewards. Christina is able to write exactly what she wants without worrying about the oversight of a publisher. And in her opinion this is the best part about publishing independently. "A lot of indie authors are thinking outside the box when it comes to plotlines and narrative style, and that makes the fiction landscape more exciting. When some of these authors achieve success, the rest of the industry might take notice that diversity in fiction is embraced, which can only lead to more choices on the fiction scene. That's good news for everyone."

Independent authors represent a grass-roots effort to expand the genre of Christian fiction. Indie authors have the ability to reach readers that perhaps would never pick up a Christian fiction author's book. "In the case of indie Christian authors in particular, when their books are popular they are more likely to be picked up by non-Christians as well, since the authors might be virtually unknown. That's what most excites

“A LOT OF INDIE AUTHORS ARE THINKING OUTSIDE THE BOX WHEN IT COMES TO PLOTLINES AND NARRATIVE STYLE, AND THAT MAKES THE FICTION LANDSCAPE MORE EXCITING.”

me—the opportunity to reach someone with a great story about God that they might not have otherwise chosen,” says Christina.

Over the last month, *FamilyFiction* has taken notice of the new wave of independent authors. And it’s not just us. Many authors who have been published by traditional publishing houses are also spreading their wings and expanding into self-publishing. This past fall, bestselling author, [Dan Walsh](#), published his very first novel independently. He is one of many “hybrid-authors” who have chosen to publish both independently and traditionally.

Some readers may find themselves weary to test out an independent author. As Christina put it, they may feel it is a “risk.” However, there are resources, such as Goodreads, where readers can gauge a book’s popularity before purchasing. Amazon reviews can be helpful as well. At *FamilyFiction* we have recently allowed independent

authors a chance to have profiles on our site. Before we post any of their books, we ask them to verify that their content represents a Christian worldview and does not contain any graphic content or vulgar language. That’s our promise to you—that all of the independent authors on our site have personally stated that their content is family-friendly and will meet your expectations of inspirational fiction.

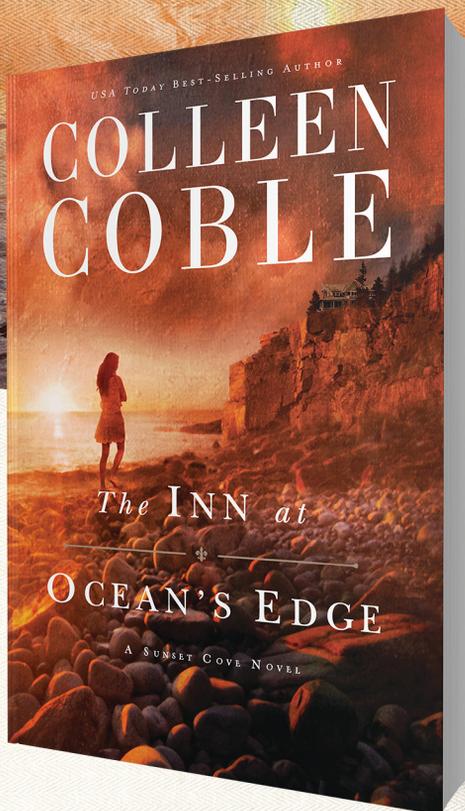
The good news is that Christian fiction is growing and expanding. New authors bring new, exiting stories to the table and can garner new audiences. There’s still a place for traditional publishing. Some authors may always prefer to work with traditional publishers because of their marketing and editing expertise. But there is also room at the table for more voices and more stories. Our motto at *FamilyFiction* will always remain the same, “Because Everyone Deserves a Good Story.” **FF**

If you are an independent author and interested in an author profile, [CLICK HERE](#) to visit our indie author portal. An editor will be in touch with you shortly.

USA Today bestselling Author

# COLLEEN COBLE

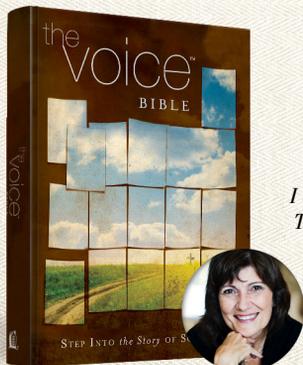
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# UNFORGETTABLE SUMMER READS

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# 5

Summers are made for relaxation, family vacations, and some extra time to lose yourself in a new story. Put those feet up, feel the warmth of the sun on your face, and immerse yourself in the adventures to be had between the pages of these new releases.



## **ONCE UPON A SUMMERTIME BY MELODY CARLSON**

As the weather heats up, Melody Carlson's *Once Upon a Summertime* (Revell) is a befitting read! Take a trip to New York as Anna Gordon jumps at the chance to reinvent herself in the Big Apple, hoping to gain a management position in a boutique hotel. The unexpected also arrives in the form of Sean O'Neil, a former crush who is now vying for her heart and the same job!

<http://www.familyfiction.com/authors/melody-carlson/books/once-upon-a-summertime-follow-your-heart-1/>

### **ONCE UPON A SUMMERTIME**

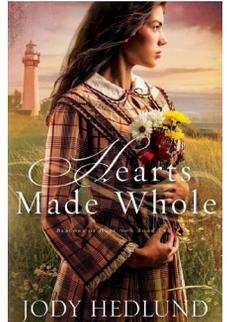
FOLLOW YOUR HEART #1  
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## **HEARTS MADE WHOLE BY JODY HEDLUND**

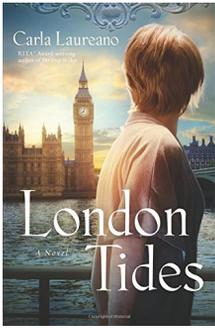
Escape to 1865 Michigan and the romance and danger of the Windmill Point Lighthouse in *Hearts Made Whole* (Bethany) by Jody Hedlund. Following her father's death, Caroline Taylor knows, despite her expertise, that a man will be chosen as the new lighthouse keeper. When Civil War veteran, Ryan Chambers, is appointed to the position, the trauma he has suffered interferes with his duties and lives are endangered. Will he accept that the help he needs is close at hand?

<http://www.familyfiction.com/authors/jody-hedlund/books/hearts-made-whole-beacons-of-hope/>



### **HEARTS MADE WHOLE**

BETHANY  
Jody Hedlund  
Bethany House



## **LONDON TIDES BY CARLA LAUREANO**

If a summer trip to England is out, travel to London with Grace Brennan, a war correspondent traumatized by the horrors she has seen and the loss that has marked so much of her life. Hoping for another chance with her former fiancé, Ian MacDonald, a man who sacrificed so much for her, the man she left ten years earlier without a word. *London Tides* (David C. Cook) is a gripping love story that takes readers to London and the beautiful Isle of Skye.

<http://www.familyfiction.com/authors/carla-laureano/books/london-tides/>

### **LONDON TIDES**

Carla Laureano  
David C. Cook

## **A FLYING AFFAIR BY CARLA STEWART**

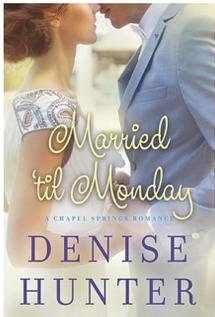
Prepare for a summer adventure with Mittie Humphreys as she discovers a love of flight when aviation fever strikes America as Lindbergh and Earhart take to the skies. A joyride with pilot Ames is all it takes for Mittie to be hooked, soon finding herself caught between the fearless Ames and British aviator, Bobby York. But Mittie's eyes are fixed on competing in the Women's National Air Derby. Barnstorm your way to adventure in *A Flying Affair* by Carla Stewart (FaithWords).

<http://www.familyfiction.com/authors/carla-stewart/books/a-flying-affair/>



### **A FLYING AFFAIR**

Carla Stewart  
FaithWords



## **MARRIED 'TIL MONDAY BY DENISE HUNTER**

Kick off your flip-flops and travel to Summer Harbor, Maine, in Denise Hunter's contemporary romance, *Married 'til Monday* (Thomas Nelson). Celebrating her parents' 35th wedding anniversary means only one thing to Abby—confessing to her parents that she and Ryan McKinley are actually divorced. Ryan knows it's the perfect opportunity to win back his wife's heart, and play the husband he always meant to be.

<http://www.familyfiction.com/authors/denise-hunter/books/married-til-monday-a-chapel-springs-romance/>

### **MARRIED 'TIL MONDAY**

Denise Hunter  
Thomas Nelson

Jennifer Beckstrand continues her Matchmakers of Huckleberry Hill series with the fifth installment, *Huckleberry Harvest* (Zebra). This joyful series is one Amish fans have thoroughly enjoyed. Jennifer answered our questions about her latest release and treated us to a wonderful Amish recipe!



**This book is the fifth in your Huckleberry Matchmakers series. How have fans received the series?**

I have been thrilled with the response to the Matchmakers of Huckleberry Hill. There is nothing as delightful as a sweet romance, and Huckleberry Hill has proven a wonderful place for love to bloom. I hope readers connect with the struggles and triumphs of my characters, who learn and grow from their mistakes and fall in love in the process. Fans have a soft spot for Anna and Felty Helmuth, the feisty grandparents who make matches for their unsuspecting grandchildren. Anna knits pot holders and cooks potato-and-green-bean lentil soup to lure potential suitors, and unassuming Felty has a few tricks up his sleeve as well. They'll keep you in stitches trying to guess what they've planned next.



**HUCKLEBERRY HARVEST**  
THE MATCHMAKERS OF  
HUCKLEBERRY HILL #5  
Jennifer Beckstrand  
Zebra

**Will there be additional books in the series?**

The sixth book in the series, *Huckleberry Hearts*, comes out at the end of November. In *Huckleberry Hearts*, Anna and Felty take on the difficult task of matching their non-Amish granddaughter with a doctor who has lost his faith in God. It's a wonder Anna's fingers don't fall off from all that knitting she ends up doing. After *Huckleberry Hearts*, I will leave Huckleberry Hill for a short time to introduce a new Amish romance series, *The Honeybee Sisters*, scheduled for release in 2016. I will definitely be returning to Huckleberry Hill. Anna and Felty have dozens more grandchildren to match up, and if they don't meddle, who will?

**What's been your favorite part about writing the Huckleberry Matchmakers installments?**

I love making people laugh. Anna and Felty are near to my heart because they are so sincere and loving but still create all sorts of havoc with their matchmaking schemes. And what could be more fun than writing about two people falling in love?

## Can you tell us where *Huckleberry Harvest* picks up the plot in the series?

Anna and Felty are the thread that runs through all the *Huckleberry* books, but each book stands as its own story. You don't have to have read one to understand what's happening in any of the others. Of course, if you want to know what Anna and Felty are up to, you'll want to read all of them. Other beloved characters resurface from time to time, but readers won't be confused, even if *Huckleberry Harvest* is their first visit to *Huckleberry Hill*.

## You love sharing Amish recipes with your readers. Do you have a favorite you'd like to share with us?

In *Huckleberry Harvest*, Mandy Helmuth bakes Noah Mischler an apple pie for dinner when she sees the sparse ingredients he has in his cupboards. Here is my favorite apple pie recipe. If you need an excellent crust recipe, you can go to my website and look under the recipes tab.

## Mom's Apple Pie

### Ingredients:

- 1 Pastry for 2-crust pie
- 2 lbs. tart apples (I use Granny Smith)
- 1 tablespoon lime juice (you can use lemon in a pinch, but lime is a hundred times better)
- 2 tablespoons flour
- $\frac{3}{4}$  cup sugar
- Dash of salt
- 1 teaspoon cinnamon
- 1 tablespoon butter  
(Don't use margarine. No, no, no.)

### *For the top of the crust:*

- Canned milk (Or substitute regular milk. I hate to open a whole can for just a few tablespoons)
- 1 tablespoon sugar and
- 1 tablespoon cinnamon mixed together

### Directions:

Line a pie plate with pastry.

Peel and slice the apples and layer in the pie shell. Sprinkle the apples with lime juice, flour, sugar, salt, and cinnamon. Dot with the butter.

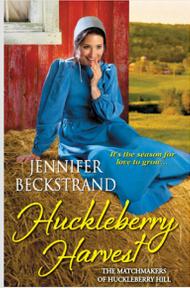
Brush the edge of the lower crust with a little cold water then put the second rolled-out crust on top. Press edges of top and bottom crust together and flute the edges. Cut slits in top of pie to allow steam to escape, or decorate with pastry cutouts.

Brush top crust with canned milk, and sprinkle with sugar-cinnamon mixture.

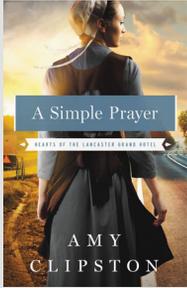
Bake at 350 degrees for about 1 hour, until nicely browned.

# AMISH NEW RELEASES

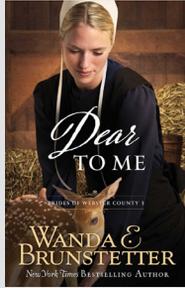
CLICK ON A BOOK COVER FOR MORE INFORMATION



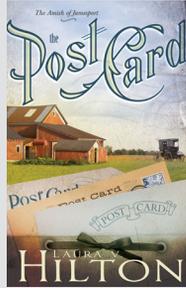
**HUCKLEBERRY HARVEST**  
THE MATCHMAKERS OF HUCKLEBERRY HILL #5  
*Jennifer Beckstrand*  
Zebra



**A SIMPLE PRAYER**  
HEARTS OF THE LANCASTER GRAND HOTEL #4  
*Amy Clipston*  
Zondervan



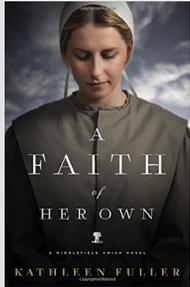
**DEAR TO ME**  
BRIDES OF WEBSTER COUNTY #3  
*Wanda Brunstetter*  
Barbour Books



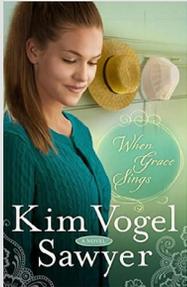
**THE POSTCARD**  
THE AMISH OF JAMESPORT #2  
*Laura V. Hilton*  
Whitaker House



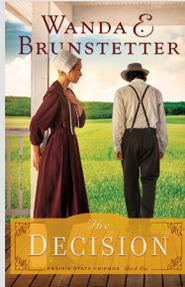
**THE LOVE LETTERS**  
*Beverly Lewis*  
Bethany House



**A FAITH OF HER OWN**  
MIDDLEFIELD AMISH  
*Kathleen Fuller*  
Thomas Nelson



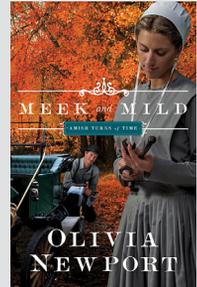
**WHEN GRACE SINGS**  
THE ZIMMERMAN RESTORATION TRILOGY  
*Kim Vogel Sawyer*  
WaterBrook Press



**THE DECISION**  
PRAIRIE STATE FRIENDS  
*Wanda Brunstetter*  
Shiloh Run Press



**ANNA'S CROSSING**  
AMISH BEGINNINGS  
*Suzanne Woods Fisher*  
Revell



**MEEK AND MILD**  
AMISH TURNS OF TIME  
*Olivia Newport*  
Shiloh Run Press

MORE NEW RELEASES ONLINE: <http://www.familyfiction.com/genres/amish/books>

With all the talk about the changes in healthcare, it's nice to know that our family has a God-honoring alternative.

## Medi-Share is healthcare reform for Christians!

Medi-Share isn't insurance. It's a community of believers across America who share each other's healthcare bills. Our family share is about

\$300 a month! And **unlike insurance, we know our dollars never go to pay for procedures that are unbiblical.** Plus, the new healthcare law has a provision for health sharing ministries, so we don't have to buy insurance or face penalties.

**Medi-Share is a healthcare choice Christians can believe in!**

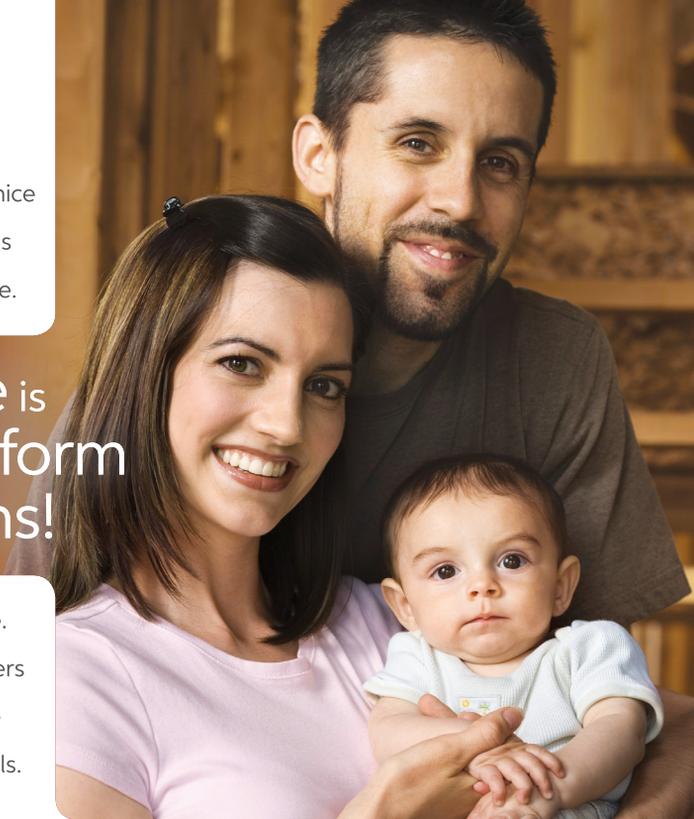
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- Family options average around \$300 a month
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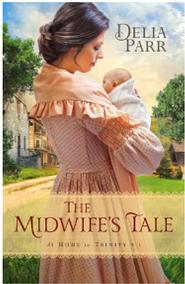
Medi-Share™  
Affordable, Biblical Healthcare

*Medi-Share is not health insurance. Medi-Share is not available in Montana.*



## 3 Great Novels to Take You Back to the 1800s

The 19th century was a time of discovery, growth and change. The industrial revolution was beginning, the United States was expanding, and tensions were brewing over slavery and land ownership. Let's time travel back to the 1800s this summer with these three new releases.



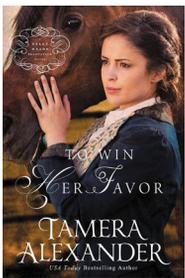
Delia Parr kicks off a new series with *The Midwife's Tale* (Bethany House), set in 1830. Change is on the horizon for midwife Martha Cade. A new doctor is in town and she fears she may lose her job and her income. As a widow with two grown children, she has a lot to worry about. When her daughter and protégé runs away, it seems everything may come crashing down. If you love the show “Call the Midwife,” this will be your new favorite series!

<http://www.familyfiction.com/authors/delia-parr/books/the-midwife-s-tale-at-home-in-trinity-1/>



Mail-order brides had a lot to worry about when meeting their new husbands. But wondering if their fiancé was a criminal was probably an unusual dilemma. Margaret Brownley puts readers in the hot seat with her new romantic, suspense, historical novel, *Undercover Bride* (Shiloh Run Press), part of her Undercover Ladies series. It's the 1880s and the Whistle-Stop Bandit is on the loose. Could Maggie's very own fiancé, the kind and gentle father, Garrett, actually be the suspected criminal? She's just the girl to find out!

<http://www.familyfiction.com/authors/margaret-brownley/books/undercover-bride-undercover-ladies-2/>



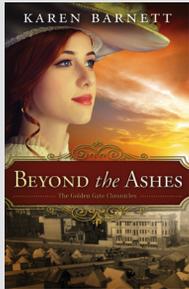
Tamera Alexander's historical novels have always dazzled fans. The second book in her Belle Meade series, *To Win Her Favor* (Zondervan), is no different. The Civil War has left Maggie and her aging father nearly destitute after the deaths of her brothers and mother. The one thing Maggie loves, her prized thoroughbred, is their only hope of saving their plantation. However, her father has other plans when he finds Maggie a husband who could get their farm up-and-running again. But Cullen McGrath isn't just handsome; he's new in town and Irish. Will Cullen stand in the way of Maggie's racing dreams? Can

Maggie overcome her fear and prejudice to find love with her new husband? Tamera spins a lovely historical tale in this stand-alone-novel.

<http://www.familyfiction.com/authors/tamera-alexander/books/to-win-her-favor-belle-meade-plantation-2/>

# HISTORICAL NEW RELEASES

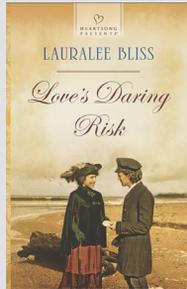
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**BEYOND THE ASHES**  
THE GOLDEN GATE  
CHRONICLES #2  
*Karen Barnett*  
Abingdon Press



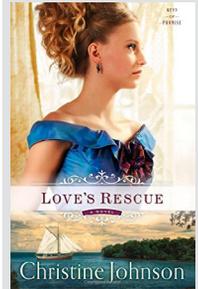
**UNDERCOVER BRIDE**  
UNDERCOVER  
LADIES #2  
*Margaret Brownley*  
Shiloh Run Press



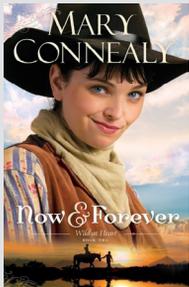
**LOVE'S DARING RISK**  
HEARTSONG  
PRESENTS  
*Lauralee Bliss*  
Love Inspired



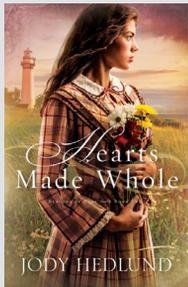
**A WORTHY PURSUIT**  
*Karen Witemeyer*  
Bethany House



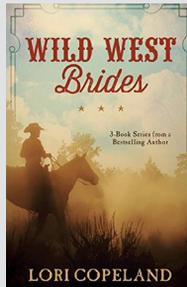
**LOVE'S RESCUE**  
KEYS OF PROMISE  
*Christine Johnson*  
Revell



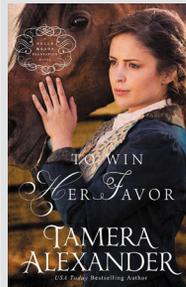
**NOW AND FOREVER**  
WILD AT HEART #2  
*Mary Connealy*  
Bethany House



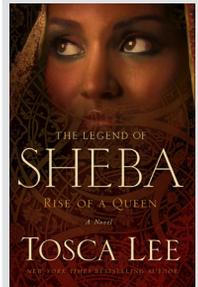
**HEARTS MADE WHOLE**  
BEACONS OF HOPE  
*Jody Hedlund*  
Bethany House



**WILD WEST BRIDES:  
3 OLD WEST  
ROMANCES**  
*Lori Copeland*  
Shiloh Run Press



**TO WIN HER FAVOR**  
BELLE MEADE  
PLANTATION #2  
*Tamera Alexander*  
Zondervan



**THE LEGEND OF SHEBA:  
RISE OF A  
QUEEN**  
*Tosca Lee*  
Howard Books

MORE NEW RELEASES ONLINE: <http://www.familyfiction.com/genres/historical/books>

Susan May Warren teamed up with Terri Blackstock and Candace Calvert to compile a novella collection titled *Chance of Loving You* (Tyndale). Short, sweet romances about the risks we take for love. Susan answered our questions about her contribution.



***Chance of Loving You* is an anthology you wrote with Terri Blackstock and Candace Calvert—three novellas packaged together. Where was the idea for this anthology conceived?**

This awesome collection was the brainchild of editor Jan Stob, at Tyndale. She knew that we all had stories about mis-matched couples who took a chance on love, and asked if we'd be willing to include them this collection. I love writing about Deep Haven, Minnesota, a tiny hamlet on the north shore of Lake Superior, where I've set my Deep Haven Collection, and I decided to write a light-hearted story about two missions group leaders who have very different ideas about "fishing for men." I took the whole metaphor and put it into a literal fishing contest! Of course, it's a romance, but I thought, how fun to talk through

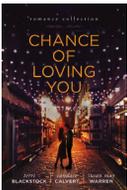
our personal evangelistic bent without getting too crazy with a theological discussion. And, of course, the romance is funny and sweet.

**Do you enjoy writing shorter fiction like novellas?**

Love it! I love the bigger novels, also, because I love adding in the subplots, to add texture and give a bonus read to my readers, but the novellas allow me to go all in with just one powerful storyline. It also forces me to write tight, so I have to plot well and hone my writing. I think it makes me a better writer because I have to develop the story so quickly and with fewer words, but I must still create the delicious romance my readers want.

**Novellas have gained a lot of popularity recently. In your opinion why is this?**

They are quick reads—like a 30-minute television show. You can read a novella while waiting for your son to run his race at a track meet, or while you're waiting for your daughter to get out of



**CHANCE OF LOVING YOU**  
Terri Blackstock,  
Susan May Warren  
& Candace Calvert  
Tyndale House

“SHORT STORIES ARE LIKE A DOVE CHOCOLATE INDULGENCE—SHORT, SWEET, BUT EXACTLY WHAT YOU NEED TO FEEL PAMPERED”.

theater rehearsal. You could sit down on a Saturday, after you’ve finished your gardening and indulge for an hour of fun, or jump in one evening while the kids are doing homework and hubs is at a meeting. Longer stories have their place—I read a novel every weekend. But the short stories are like a Dove chocolate indulgence—short, sweet, but exactly what you need to feel pampered.

**Each of the three stories share a common theme. Can you tell us what that theme is?**

It’s all about what we risk for love! The heroes and heroines all have the odds against them, and they have to sacrifice and overcome their fears to jump into the Happy Ending. And, there’s a recipe after every novella—fun! More, it’s a great way to get a taste of three different authors’ styles.

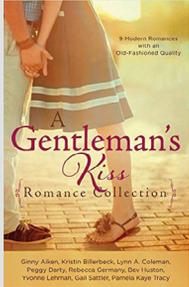
**Your novella is about a grad student who competes in a fishing contest. Is fishing a hobby of yours? If so, can you tell us what you enjoy about it?**

Fishing, for me, is not about the fish. Or the bait, or how to angle. I learned to

fish from my father, when he’d take me out for a day, or a weekend of angling. We’d troll around the lake, searching for the secret fishing hot spot, set our lines in, open a bag of sunflower seeds and start to talk. I didn’t care if we caught anything. Fishing, for me, is about the camaraderie one finds spending hours in a boat with someone else. It’s the conversations that dive deeper as the water laps quietly against the boat, or the companionable silences broken only by the loons calling over the misty water. There’s a peace in fishing, a quietness of the heart required as you spend hours hoping a fish will bite. In truth, I’m not fishing for walleye, but rather I’m casting my line in as an excuse to slow down and savor relationships and the joy of a few quiet hours.

# ROMANCE NEW RELEASES

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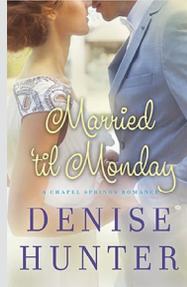
## A GENTLEMAN'S KISS

Ginny Aiken, Kristin Billerbeck, Lynn A. Coleman, Peggy Darty, Rebecca Germino, Bev Huston, Yvonne Lehman, Cusi Sattler, Patricia Kaye Tracy  
Barbour Books



## ONCE UPON A SUMMERTIME

FOLLOW YOUR HEART #1  
Melody Carlson  
Revell



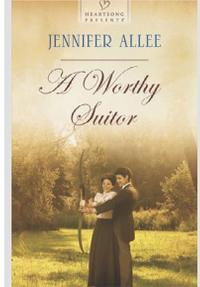
## MARRIED TIL MONDAY

A CHAPEL SPRINGS ROMANCE  
Denise Hunter  
Thomas Nelson



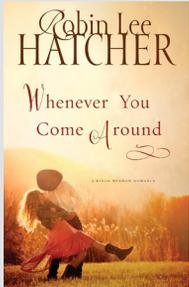
## GOODBYE, MAGNOLIA

Krista Noorman  
Amazon Digital



## A WORTHY SUITOR

HEARTSONG PRESENTS  
Jennifer AllLee  
Love Inspired



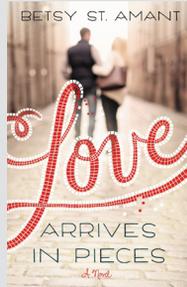
## WHENEVER YOU COME AROUND

A KING'S MEADOW ROMANCE  
Robin Lee Hatcher  
Thomas Nelson



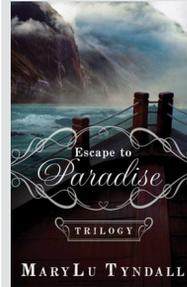
## SUMMER BRIDES: A YEAR OF WEDDINGS COLLECTION

Beth Wiseman, Marybeth Whalen & Debra Clopton  
Zondervan



## LOVE ARRIVES IN PIECES

Betsy St. Amant  
Zondervan



## ESCAPE TO PARADISE TRILOGY

MaryLu Tyndall  
Shiloh Run Press



## EVERY BRIDE NEEDS A GROOM

BRIDES WITH STYLE  
Janice Hanna  
Thompson  
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Award-winning author Cynthia Ruchti's new novel, *As Waters Gone By* (Abingdon Press) tells a complicated story, but still, true to her style, one that is "hemmed in hope."



**This book approaches a very controversial topic, especially for people of faith: when is it okay to walk away from a marriage? Why did you choose to write about this topic?**

People of faith have long debated not only what seems right to us, but what God has to say about walking away from a marriage. I'm intrigued by the unique way a novel can address subjects like that by starting conversations, helping the warring parties see depths and layers of the issue (not just the inciting incident or the problem), and developing our empathy while we develop our opinions. Christian fiction has the distinct privilege of expanding our capacity for empathy without prying our hands from our grip on truth.

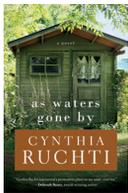
Emmalyn and Max's story provides a behind-the-scenes look at a relationship crisis that is not solely reserved for those with an incarcerated spouse. During the process of writing the book, I was gripped with the similarities

for others who try to make a home when a spouse is never home—in families of the deployed or those whose work takes them on the road for long stretches of time. Emotional distance can be more crippling to a relationship than physical distance.

I chose this topic because our extended family is living it right now. All my preconceived notions about what it's like to have a loved one in prison crumbled. Ankle-deep in the fallout, I'm watching people I care about deeply not only survive the separation, but learn how to thrive as a couple despite the distance and the disappointments that caused it.

Hearing from readers who identify with Emmalyn and Max's struggles reminds me that our family is not alone. And hope is present, even in this. We don't always notice it. But that's one of my passions as an author—pulling back the curtain to reveal where hope may be hiding in the bleakest of circumstances.

**Can you tell us about your main character Emmalyn and where she finds herself in the beginning of your book?**



**AS WATERS GONE BY**  
Cynthia Ruchti  
Abingdon Press

Emmalyn has lost everything—her identity and career, her marriage (at least short-term), her house, her friends, her connections to her social circles, and her hope of ever becoming a mother, which had been an all-consuming passion until her husband was sent to prison. Her self-imposed exile to Madeline Island was supposed to offer her a safe place to figure out where her life and her marriage are headed when her husband is released in a few months. But the hunting cottage with which she’s saddled is in as much disrepair as everything else about her life. Her faith is so faint, it leaves no marks. She hasn’t seen hope for so long, she’s not sure how to spell it anymore. But the Madeline Island residents—especially the owner of the Wild Iris Inn and Cafe—embrace her brokenness and offer hints that hope may still have a chance.

**What would you tell a reader or friend dealing with a similar issue as your main character when they are unsure about the future of their marriage?**

One of the worst decisions Emmalyn and Max made was to stop talking. They quit communicating, which can only breed false assumptions and heighten the devastation of unmet expectations. For a time, they both quit communicating with God, too. That can only end poorly. They allowed their hurt and depression to build walls more

impenetrable than the cement block and razor wire that separated them. Some friends or readers who observe the path Max and Emmalyn took in the early pages of the story may see themselves and say, “That’s not who I want to be.” As they turn more pages, they may find themselves noticing the differences when the characters sought help, listened to wise counsel, surrendered their preconceived notions in favor of a new dream, and walked through the hard part to get to the healing.

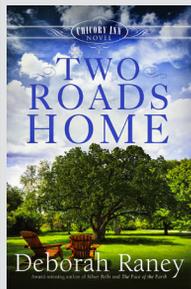
**How was this book different from your previous projects?**

If I were to point out a difference in *As Waters Gone By*, it might be the fact that a secondary character—Boozie Unfortunate, the owner of the Wild Iris—became so vital to the story that I’m not sure Emmalyn and Max would be where they are today without her influence. (And yes, I realize I’m talking about imaginary characters. But that doesn’t make them fake. They are truth in story form.)

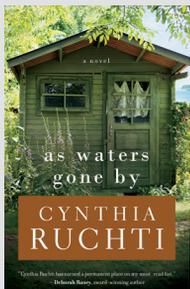
I emerged from writing *As Waters Gone By* with a strong desire to listen to and love on the hurting I’d too often bypassed in my life. But that kind of life-change happens to me every time. So, how is this book different from the others? Each new novel seems to require more courage to write. I pray that never changes.

# CONTEMPORARY NEW RELEASES

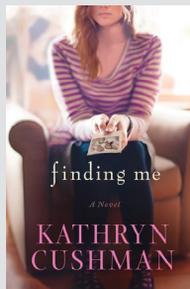
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**TWO ROADS HOME**  
CICORY INN #2  
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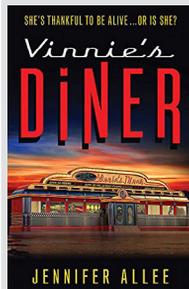
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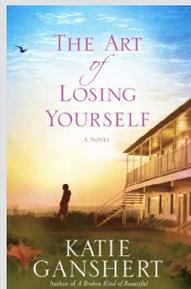
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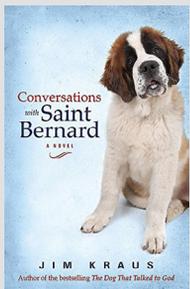
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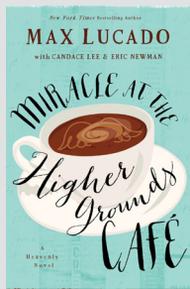
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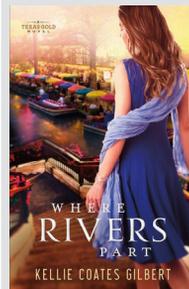
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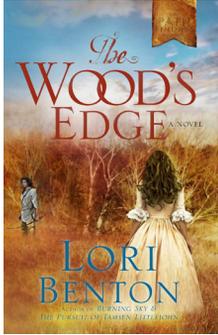
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## START READING NOW

### *The Wood's Edge* by Lori Benton

Lori Benton's stunning new historical novel, *The Wood's Edge* (WaterBrook Multnomah), is a story of decisions, regrets, relationship and faith. How can one decision shape the course of your life? Benton attempts to answer this question and more. Dive into 1757 and visit the British colonists on the frontier of New York.

*August 9, 1757*

A white flag flew over Fort William Henry. The guns were silent now, yet the echo of cannon-fire thumped and roared in the ears of Reginald Aubrey, officer of His Majesty's Royal Americans.

Emerging from the hospital casemate with a bundle in his arms, Reginald squinted at the splintered bastion where the white flag hung, wilted and still in the humid air. Lieutenant Colonel Monroe, the fort's commanding officer, had ordered it raised at dawn—to the mingled relief and dread of the dazed British regulars and colonials trapped within the fort.

Though he'd come through six days of siege bearing no worse than a scratch—and the new field rank of major—beneath Reginald's scuffed red coat, his shirt clung sweat-soaked to his skin. Straggles of hair lay plastered to his temples in the midday heat. Yet his bones ached as though it was winter, and he a man three times his five-and-twenty years.

Earlier an officer had gone forth to hash out the particulars of the fort's surrender with the French general, the Marquis de Montcalm. Standing outside the hospital with his bundle, Reginald had the news of Montcalm's terms from Lieutenant Jones, one of the few fellow Welshmen in his battalion.

"No prisoners, sir. That's the word come down." Jones's eyes were bloodshot, his haggard face soot-blackened. "Every soul what can walk will be escorted safe under guard to Fort Edward,

under parole..."

Jones went on detailing the articles of capitulation, but Reginald's mind latched on to the mention of Fort Edward, letting the rest stream past. Fort Edward, some fifteen miles by wilderness road, where General Webb commanded a garrison two thousand strong, troops he'd not seen fit to send to their defense, despite Colonel Monro's repeated pleas for aid—as it seemed the Almighty Himself had turned his back these past six days on the entreaties of the English. And those of Reginald Aubrey.

*Why standest thou afar off, O LORD?*

Ringling silence lengthened before Reginald realized Jones had ceased speaking. The lieutenant eyed the bundle Reginald cradled, speculation in his gaze. Hoarse from bellowing commands through the din of mortar and musket fire, Reginald's voice rasped like a saw through wood. "It might have gone worse for us, Lieutenant. Worse by far."

"He's letting us walk out of here with our heads high," Jones agreed, grudgingly. "I'll say that for Montcalm."

Overhead the white flag stirred in a sudden fit of breeze that threatened to clear the battle smoke but brought no relief from the heat.

*I am feeble and sore and broken. I have roared by reason of the disquietness of my heart—*

Reginald said, "Do you go and form up your men, Jones. Make ready to march."

"Aye, sir." Jones saluted, gaze still fixed on Reginald's cradling arms. "Am I to be congratulating you, Capt—Major, sir? Is it a son?"

Reginald looked down at what he carried. A corner of its wrappings had shifted. He freed a hand to settle it back in place. "That it is."

*All my desire is before thee; and my groaning is not hid from thee—*

"Ah, that's good then. And your wife? She's well?"

"She is alive, God be thanked." The words all but choked him.

The lieutenant's mouth flattened. "For myself, I'd be more inclined toward thanking Providence had it seen fit to prod Webb off his backside."

It occurred to Reginald he ought to have reprimanded Jones for that remark, but not before the lieutenant had trudged off through the mill of bloodied, filthy soldier-flesh to gather the men of his company in preparation for surrender.

Aye. It might have gone much worse. At least his men weren't fated to rot in some fetid French prison, awaiting ransom or exchange. Or, worst of terrors, given over to their Indians.

*My heart panteth, my strength faileth me—*

As for Major Reginald Aubrey of His Majesty's Royal Americans... he and his wife were condemned to live, and to grieve. Turning to carry out the sentence, he descended back into the casemate, in his arms the body of his infant son, born as the last French cannon thundered, dead but half an hour past.



He'd been alone with his son when it happened. Spent after twenty hours of wrenching labor, Heledd had barely glimpsed the child before succumbing to exhaustion. She'd slept since on the narrow cot, the babe she'd fought so long to birth nested in the curve of her arm. Craving the light his son had shed in that dark place, Reginald had returned to them, had come in softly, had bent to admire his offspring's tiny pinched face, only to find the precious light had flickered and gone out.

A hatchet to his chest could not have struck a deeper blow. He'd clapped a hand to his mouth, expecting his life's blood to gush forth from the wound. When it hadn't, he'd taken up the tiny body, still pliable in its wrappings, and left his sleeping wife to wander the shadowed casemate, gutted behind a mask of pleasantries as those he passed offered weary felicitations, until he'd met Lieutenant Jones outside.

How was he to tell Heledd? To speak words that would surely crush what remained of her will to go on? These last days, trapped inside a smoking, burning hell, had all but undone her...

Reginald started for the stuffy timbered room where his wife had given birth—but was soon again halted, this time by sight of a

woman. She lay in an alcove off the casemate's main passage...

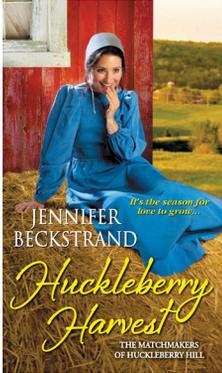
The alcove was dimly lantern-lit. Disheveled, malodorous pallets lined the walls, all vacated except for the one upon which the woman lay. A trade-cloth tunic and deerskin skirt edged with tattered fringe covered her slender frame. Her fair sleeping face was young, the thick braid fallen across her shoulder blond. No bandages or blood marked any injury. Reginald wondered at her presence until he saw beside her on the pallet a bundle much like the one he carried, save that it emitted soft kittenish mewls. Sounds his son would never make again.

He remembered the woman then. She'd been brought in by scouts just before Montcalm's forces descended and the siege began, liberated from a band of Indians a mile from the fort. For weeks such bands had streamed in from the west, tribes from the mountains and the lake country beyond, joining Montcalm's forces at Fort Carillon...

The woman's chest rose with breath, though her skin was ashen. A heap of blood-soaked linen shoved against the log wall attested to the cause. He started to wake her, thinking to see if she knew the fort had fallen—could he make himself understood. That was when he realized. The bundle beside her contained not a baby, but babies. One had just kicked aside the covering to bare two small faces, two pairs of shoulders...

They were as different as two newborns could be except—a peek beneath the blanket told him—both were male.

That was where resemblance ended, at least in that dimness. For while the infant on the left had a head of black hair and skin that foretold a tawny shade, the one on the right, capped in wisps of blond, was as fair and pink as Reginald's dead son.



## START READING NOW

### *Huckleberry Harvest* by Jennifer Beckstrand

In Jennifer Beckstrand's popular Matchmakers of Huckleberry Hill series, Anna and Felty are up to their matchmaking antics again! Here's a sneak peek at the fifth book in the series, *Huckleberry Harvest* (Zebra).

The grass in the front yard grew in tufts like the hair on a balding old man. Mandy tromped along the dirt path worn into the sparse lawn and climbed the two concrete steps to the small cement pad that served as a porch. Thick lilac bushes grew on either side of the house, creating a barrier as impassable as any stone wall. They grew tall and thick and undisciplined, as if they were trying to imprison the house. Without their blooms, they were quite unsightly. No trees or flowers graced the front yard, and a barbed wire fence, tangled and swaying, ran along the north side of the yard. The property looked sad, as if it had lived a long, difficult life and was ready to give up the ghost.

A droopy-eared hound lazed next to the door and didn't even bark when Mandy approached. He looked as if he had barely enough energy to lift his head.

Pausing, she took the dog's face in her hands and caressed his ears. "Pretty dog. Good dog," she cooed. The dog responded by attempting to lick her face. She dodged his tongue and gave him a swift pat on the head before squaring her shoulders and knocking on the door.

Time to show her angry-yet-ready-to-forgive face. Noah Mischler didn't stand a chance.

She waited for several seconds with no response from the inside and then knocked again—more forcefully this time. Six loud raps that told anyone inside she meant business.

A young man, sturdy and tall, answered the door. When he gave her a tentative smile, the air stuck in her throat, and she forgot to breathe. This pleasant-looking, muscular young man was Noah Mischler? The boy who had scornfully stomped on her best friend's heart? By the way Kristina had described him, Mandy had expected a scowling, sinister boy with fangs and bushy dark eyebrows.

The boy standing before her was not at all what she had pictured. His wavy hair was the color of wheat just before harvest and his dark, lively eyes called to mind the deep browns and rich greens of the forest. His face, lean and tan from the summer's work, looked as if it could belong to one of the statues standing in a museum in Milwaukee. No wonder Kristina wanted him back.

He tilted his head. "Can I help you?"

She realized she'd been staring and cleared her throat. This was no time to be distracted by a handsome face. Pretty is as pretty does, that was what Mamm always said. If Noah Mischler wasn't a godly man in his heart, it didn't matter how he looked on the outside.

"Are you Noah Mischler?"

"Jah," he said, holding out his hand. Instinctively, she shook it even though she had determined that she wasn't going to be friendly. Noah needed to see the stern side of Mandy Helmuth today. He must be made to understand the seriousness of his transgressions.

She quickly pulled her hand away. Puzzlement flitted across his face as he stepped out onto the porch and shut the door behind him. "And you are...?"

"Mandy Helmuth." She cleared her throat again.

"Helmuth. Are you related to Anna and Felty Helmuth on Huckleberry Hill?"

"Jah. I am their granddaughter. I'm visiting from Ohio."

"Nice to meet you. Felty is ... friends with my dat." His eyebrows inched closer together as he studied her face and waited for her to explain herself.

Suddenly she found the words harder to push out of her mouth than she had expected. He seemed so nice, the way he eyed her

curiously but with no apparent ill will.

She took a determined breath and arched her eyebrows. Looks could be deceiving.

“Noah Mischler, I came to tell you that what you did to Kristina Beachy is despicable, and you’d better repent right quick.”

His face immediately hardened like cement or, rather, like cold, hard granite. She’d never seen an expression so unyielding. “You don’t know anything.”

“I know that you flirted with Kristina for months and months and took her home from gatherings in your courting buggy and made her believe you loved her and then broke the whole thing off with a text message.”

He stared at her with fire in his eyes even as the rest of his face could have been chiseled out of solid rock. “Like I said. You don’t know anything about it.” He stepped back and took hold of the door handle, as if he were planning to leave her standing there. As if the conversation were over!

“I’m not finished,” Mandy said.

“I am,” he replied, opening the door and stepping inside.

Mandy pointed to the buggy. “There is a heartbroken girl in there, wondering what she did to deserve such cruelty from you.”

“Cruelty?”

“You treated her like dirt, and yet she forgives you.”

The lines of his mouth twitched with simmering resentment. “Kristina has an overactive imagination.”

“Don’t you think she at least deserves an apology for how you treated her?”

“Nae.”

“You won’t even apologize? Kristina hasn’t stopped crying since you dumped her.”

His eyes narrowed into slits. “She’s been crying for three solid weeks?”

Mandy shouldn’t have exaggerated. It made her sound childish. “All I’m saying is that she is devastated. You led her on. She has a right to an explanation.”

“I said all I needed to say in the text.”

She was losing ground. Not even the faintest hint of remorse tinged his features. “And that’s another thing. Kristina told me you’ve been baptized. Why does a baptized member of the church have a cell phone? I can understand Kristina having one. She hasn’t taken baptism classes yet. But why do you have one? What would the bishop think if he knew you were breaking the rules of the Ordnung?”

Nastiness crept into his voice. “Why don’t you go ask him and find out?”

“Maybe I will. Maybe if you lose your phone, you won’t be able to break more hearts. At least in a text.”

He folded his arms, moved closer, and stared her down with those fiery brown eyes. She resisted the urge to take a step back. She wouldn’t appear weak, not even if Noah Mischler was strong enough to break her like a twig. “Maybe, Mandy Helmuth, you should get your superior little hinnerdale off my porch.”

She nearly choked on his words. How dare he? Fighting the urge to hiss like a cat, she wrapped her arms around her waist until she felt composed enough to speak. “So, you refuse to see reason.”

“I’m not the one who refuses to see reason. You got precisely half of the story, which isn’t true, by the way, and you aren’t reasonable enough to ask my side. But it doesn’t matter, because my side is none of your business.”

“It’s my business when a dear friend gets hurt.”

He grunted so that Mandy knew exactly what he thought of that logic. “Why don’t you stick your little freckled nose into someone else’s life? I don’t care what you think.” He backed away and shut the door in her face before she had a chance to answer him. Before she could even give him a lecture about the proper way to treat girls and the punishments awaiting deceivers in hell.

Well then. If he refused to improve himself and repent of his wrongdoing, then his soul was not Mandy’s problem. She’d done all she could. Even her dawdi, as kind as he was, couldn’t have been expected to do more.

Mandy stomped down the stairs, gave the dog one last pat, and made a beeline for the buggy, not caring how many pathetic tufts

of grass she trampled along the way. That lawn wouldn't last another winter anyway. If she were them, she'd till up the whole thing and plant new grass seed next spring.

She couldn't hide her indignation as she climbed into the buggy and got it rolling as quickly as possible. Noah Mischler would try the patience of Job.

"What did he say?" Kristina asked, as if Mandy held all her hopes and dreams in her hand.

"I don't understand why you like Noah Mischler. He has no remorse for anything. He's doomkop. Forget him, Krissy."

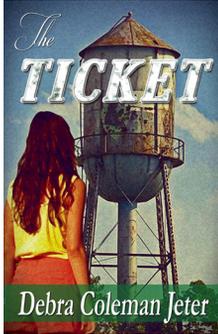
"I can't."

"Jah, you can. There's dozens of other boys who don't scowl and who don't say words like 'hinnerdale' right to a girl's face. You can do so much better."

"That's not true. Noah is the most wonderful boy in the world, and I think I'll die of a broken heart if he doesn't take me back."

Kristina always did have a flair for the dramatic. Still, Mandy sympathized with her completely. Insensitive, aggravating Noah Mischler had made her friend miserable, and Mandy had been left to pick up the pieces of Kristina's heart.

Mandy would be perfectly happy if she never laid eyes on that boy again.



**START READING NOW**  
***The Ticket* by Debra Coleman Jeter**  
*Provided by Firefly Southern Fiction*

You might not recognize her name, but Debra Coleman Jeter is no stranger to writing. With multiple awards under her belt for her nonfiction works and scriptwriting, Debra crafts a novel that peers into the life of one family in 1976. In *The Ticket* (Firefly Southern Fiction), a stroke of luck seems like it could be the answer to all of Tray's problems, but could it actually be her family's undoing?

"What are you talking about, Pee Wee?"

Something in Dad's voice, an undercurrent of excitement, catches my attention. I listen closely, even as I draw out bologna, cheese, mustard, and mayo, and balance them gingerly while I push the refrigerator door shut with my foot. Dad can't stand it if you leave the door open a second longer than you have to. Wastes electricity.

I decide to fry the bologna since I know he likes it that way. I put the skillet on the eye of the stove and drop just the least little dab of bacon grease into it. There's always a crock of bacon and sausage grease next to the oven to use for seasoning beans and keeping stuff from sticking to the skillet, like when you're frying potatoes. I don't much like the smell of grease myself, but it does make things taste better and cook more smoothly.

"Slow down, Pee Wee, and tell it to me outright, straight and simple." Dad's body is motionless, and I can tell he's hanging on every word being said on the other end. "How much?" he asks, in a funny choked sort of voice. Then, after a pause, "Are you sure? Let me write down the details. Hold on a sec."

Dad fumbles with the phone, his eyes darting around until they meet mine. Despite the thinning hair, he is still a good-looking man, with his lean body, chiseled jawline, and bottle-green eyes. For a second, I can see him darting around the tennis court, making unbelievable shots you'd never expect him to reach. The bologna is

spattering flecks of grease in my direction now, so I turn down the heat and take the bologna up before it can burn.

Pretending not to have been listening, I resume the sandwich-making process. Mustard on one side, mayonnaise on the other, bologna, and thin slices of cheese, the way he likes it. I decide to spread a little peanut butter on the meat, being careful not to burn my fingers.

But, out of the corner of my eye, I watch Dad. Frantically, he jerks open a drawer, locates a pen and a scrap of paper, and returns to his conversation. He writes carefully, eyebrows still drawn together in a single line. "I don't know about that," he says, the undercurrent of excitement more intense now, though his tone remains even and controlled. "We'll see. We'll have to see."

Pen and paper in hand, he places the receiver gently in its cradle and looks at me. The expression in his eyes tells me he's in no mood for my tennis tale. So I ask, "What did Pee Wee have to say?"

"He says—he says I've won the lottery." Dad's hand is shaking. "Of course it's a mistake, of course, it is. That idiot, Pee Wee. I'm going to wring his neck for putting me through this when I find out ... how can I find out?" Dad's eyes dart back and forth again, and his shoulders go left as his body goes right, then vice versa. "The ticket. I've got to find the ticket."

I don't know much about lotteries, not enough to understand exactly what he's talking about. I've heard him joke about Pee Wee and Uncle Jay-bird wasting their time and money driving all the way to Hazard, Illinois, to buy lottery tickets. Based on that, I'm pretty sure my father wouldn't. What grabs my attention even more than his words, though, is the intensity of his physical reaction. I rapidly finish making the sandwich as he dashes from the room—it's as if his frenzy is somehow contagious.

My thoughts spin. What could this mean? Could we be rich? Rich enough for me to buy some new clothes? The bluish-violet outfit I tried on but couldn't afford flashes in my mind, vivid in details I thought were forgotten—the way the pleats hung just so, the way the sweater felt against my skin, the way it matched perfectly, clinging just enough to be, well, almost alluring.

Dad is back then, frantically waving a ticket and the slip of paper with the carefully-written number. “He’s not wrong. It looks like, for once in his pea-pickin’ life, that goofy little son-of-a-b—son-of-a-gun is right.” He grabs me and swings me around and around.

I laugh with him—giddy, so giddy—until I’m breathless. I see the outfit still. Periwinkle. “How much did we win, Dad?”

“Enough, enough.” Dad releases me and executes a sort of rowing maneuver with his hands, revealing so much pent-up energy I fear he may explode. In one breath, he lets out a muffled war whoop while in the next he urges, “Don’t tell anyone. Let me think how to do it.”

“I won’t,” I promise. Not only is there a good chance the periwinkle outfit is mine, I also get to be privy to a secret with my father. “How did Pee Wee know about it?”

“He bought the ticket. To thank me for giving him and Jay-bird a ride that day. He bought the ticket, and he gave it to me.” Each sentence is chopped off, spoken as though out of sequence. Jumbled, like his thoughts.

“That was pretty nice of him,” I say, absorbing this.

“Yeah, it was. But the thing is—now he thinks he deserves a share. He’s demanding his fair share—that’s what he said.” Dad has gone from excited to agitated in one breath.

“What are you going to do?”

For a second, he looks perplexed, vaguely troubled by the question. “I don’t know yet.” Then the confusion evaporates, and he turns to me. “I still can’t believe I won—I actually won. Winning is just something I never expected, not in a million lottery tickets.”

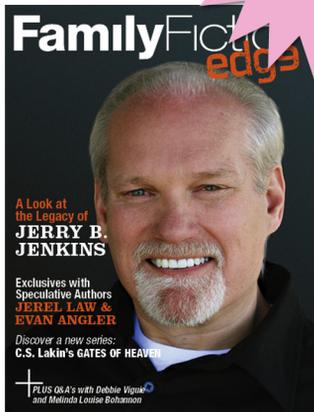
I watch the emotions passing through my father’s green eyes—amazement, disbelief, something akin to joy. Grabbing my hand, he whirls me into a gleeful dance, spinning and twirling me as I have only seen couples do on American Bandstand. I stumble a little, awkward but pleased.

Click [HERE](#) to watch the book trailer for *The Ticket*.

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