

storytellers' newsletter

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The Year of Our Lord, 1692

An original article by Susan Meissner

The afternoon light is fading. Soon darkness will flood this windowless cell and I and the women seated around me will begin our nightly test of wills. In the darkness it is easy to imagine the impossible; that the holy light of God has been extinguished in Salem and there is no hope for any of us. Few choices are left to me as I sit here in chains and use the last of my ink. But I can choose to believe that which my heart bids me to hold fast. I must believe it: God has not abandoned us. He is with us when the sun rises triumphant and when night descends like a shroud. And He is with us in this in-between moment—when neither light nor darkness reigns complete.

God knows I am innocent of the charges against me.

I, Mercy Hayworth, am no witch.

My soul belongs to God Almighty alone and I serve no other.

I look around at the other women in this cell, innocent like me, sentenced to hang like me, and I see in their eyes the very thing that brought us here.

Fear.

Fear of what could not be explained.

Fear of what had been set in motion and seemed

unstoppable.

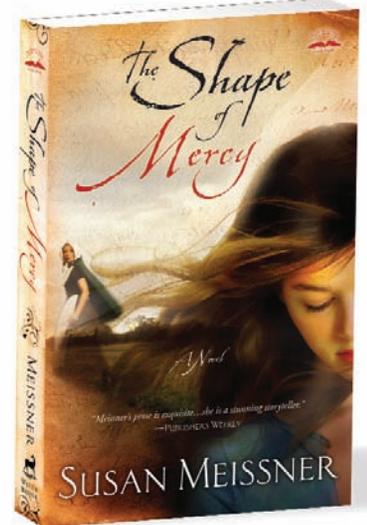
Fear of the will of empowered people.

Fear of the sway of deception.

Fear of the daring and extravagant nature of love and mercy.

Surely they know we are the bravest women in Salem. We have not confessed to a lie. When this madness at last ceases, and I know it will, it is Truth for which Salem will be remembered. Not for the innocents executed under a siege of fear, but for the unflagging devotion to God that flung us heavenward.

And it is this act of mercy toward our accusers—our courage—that will rend the heavy curtain that now hangs over Salem.



My ink is almost gone.

I have placed my diary in safe hands.

I have filled all the empty places within me with thoughts of my beloved.

And I have forgiven those who in ignorance have accused me falsely. A day is coming when in anguish they will realize their error and I pray they will be able to find a measure of peace.

Salem means peace. Did you know that? My dear Papa told me this long ago. Peace distinguishes itself when striving ceases. He told me this as well.

In the Holy Bible, God's chosen people, the Israelites, pronounced it shalom. I love the way that word falls from my tongue. And my quill.

So soft.

Like a prayer.

Shalom.

I can already feel the heavy curtain beginning to tear...

Who will she choose?

The long-awaited conclusion to Cindy Woodsmall's best-selling Sisters of the Quilt series

Also Available
When the Heart Cries
When the Morning Comes



Coming to stores
September 16th

New Author Spotlight: Susan Meissner

When I was in eighth grade I played the role of a young girl accused of witchcraft in the play *To Burn a Witch*. My role required me to be the accused one moment and then an accuser the next, as my character chose to save herself by suddenly claiming to be bewitched by an innocent girl who shared her jail cell. I've never forgotten how it felt to imagine myself falsely accused. Nor have I forgotten the hot shame in condemning an innocent person to death to save myself and align with the crowd.

Conjecture surrounds the Salem Witch Trials. Historians can only suppose what fueled the hysteria. In the end, this peculiar and sad moment in our nation's history reveals what can happen when the crowd mentality takes over and we believe the worst about others simply because the crowd tells us to. In *The Shape of Mercy*, I chose to weave in a secondary theme: What brings out the worst in one can bring out the best in another. Love shines the brightest in the theater of fear and apathy. Mercy has a shape and that shape is love.



History, Romance, and Faith... Q&A with Jane Kirkpatrick



Q: How much of your stories is history and how much is fiction?

A: Ah, there's the question! I see historical facts as the spine of a story while the flesh and blood are the characters and how they deal with the challenges they face as they seek their desires. In both books, the "shared knowing" as I call it, the facts, are as accurate as I can make them. In *A Sweetness to the Soul*, Jane was just fourteen when she married her husband who was sixteen years older. They did have a dream. Whether she had a friend named Sunmiet is fiction, but surely she did have such a friend! In *Love to Water My Soul*, my husband's great grandmother really was lost from a wagon train and found by Indians and raised by them until she was a teen. What happened to her after that and

God's faithfulness as she tried to find her family—that was fact too. But the scenes, the dialogue, the subplots are from my imagination. A writer friend of mine calls these novels "true stories, imagined."

Both books have foundation in facts, but so little is written about women in history and often what is there was written by men, which isn't bad but leaves gaps. Fiction allows me to speculate to fill those holes. Most of what I knew about Jane Sherar, for example, came from a single essay written by a descendant fifty years before, and from her obituary that was written with such passion and grace I knew she must have been a remarkable woman. I had to figure out how the story had relevance for a contemporary world. I hope I accomplished that!



On Sale: 9/16/08

Q: How would you compare the protagonists, Jane and Shell Flower, in these two stories?

A: Jane is strong-willed, work-oriented, opinionated, and doesn't always get along with her mother. As a wife she is a complete partner to her dreamer husband, and despite the differences in their ages, she brings wisdom and earthy practicality to his adventures. She also longs for something and discovers that there are some things we cannot change in our lives but we can always become clear about what matters and have the courage to act on that. Shell Flower is much younger when her story begins, and her journey is wrought with issues of survival and adaptability, something Jane really didn't have to contend with, at least not in the same way. Shell Flower is more of a dreamer, a seeker of spiritual understanding, even when she doesn't know the words to describe her search. She's more reflective while Jane is more of a doer.

Q: In what ways do you think the struggles that Jane and Shell Flower dealt with—in the 1860s and 1870s—are like the struggles modern women deal with?

A: Both women struggled with how to support their families without losing themselves in the process, and finding life work that had meaning. Theologian Paul Tillich wrote: "Human beings must come to terms with three issues: we control very little in our lives; that life is uncertain; and that we are all mortal and seek to find meaning." I see Jane and Shell Flower demonstrating their efforts to come to terms with those three issues just as we struggle with them today.

Our lives are the stories other people read first. Like these historical women, we often live in communities or sometimes have families who do not share our views of the world. Living well with them and being true to ourselves is a constant challenge today as it was then. Living so we leave a story worthy of remembering is also a yearning I think most women have regardless of the century.

Q: Did you discover any surprises as you wrote these novels?

A: Before I begin to write I answer three questions: What's this story about? What do I feel deeply about? How do I hope a reader will be changed in reading this story? It may take pages to answer the questions, but I get it down to one sentence each that I post on my computer. The answers help me keep going when I start to feel lost or think I should go do the dishes instead of doing the work of writing! What surprises me is that when I finish the first draft, I discover what the story was trying to tell me. Through *Sweetness* I came to terms with my childlessness, and in *Love* I discovered whom I belong to. These were not things I started out exploring; they are gifts in the telling that I hope I pass on to my readers.

Jane Kirkpatrick lives with her husband in a remote part of Oregon where she ranches and is a consultant to Native American communities. www.jkbooks.com

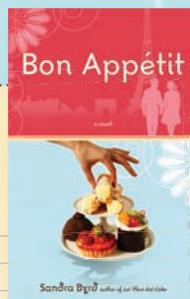
Top 5 Things

You Need to Know

Before Going to Paris

1. Parisians can spot an American from miles away. And even if they do speak English, don't be surprised if they respond in French to your question of "Parlez-vous anglais?" (Hint: the "z" is not pronounced!)
2. If your French friend asks you to go "licking windows" there's no need to be concerned. It actually means "window-shopping" in en français!
3. The French will most likely greet you with a kiss on both cheeks. But, don't expect a marriage proposal...this is just a friendly greeting.
4. The French would never buy pastries or a birthday cake from a grocery store. And neither should you.
5. Your quickest path to becoming royalty might be finding the painted figurine the French bake into their birthday cakes. The lucky person wins the right to being queen or king...but only for the day.

Read more in *Bon Appetit!*



Easy But Impressive Chocolate Truffles

Ingredients:

- 8 ounces good quality semisweet chocolate chips
 - 1/2 cup heavy cream
 - 2 Tbsp liqueur, such as Crème de Cassis or Crème de Framboise, or vanilla or almond extract
 - 1/2 cup sweetened cocoa, sifted
 - 1/2 tsp Gold or Silver Luster Dust
- (Can purchase at www.confectioneryhouse.com)

Place chocolate chips in a bowl. Bring cream nearly to a boil in a small, heavy saucepan. Stir frequently, until steaming but not boiling. Be careful to scrape the bottom of the pan constantly so the cream does not scald. When hot, pour cream over chocolate chips. Let stand for 3 to 5 minutes; gently stir until smooth. Add liqueur or extract and stir to combine. Cover loosely with plastic wrap and refrigerate for several hours, until firm.

Sift cocoa and luster dust into a bowl and gently blend with a fork until dust is evenly distributed. Using a measuring teaspoon or a small melon baller, scoop up chocolate chip mixture and quickly roll between your palms until you have a smooth ball. Roll each truffle in cocoa to coat. Chill until firm. Store in an airtight container in the refrigerator for up to 2 weeks.

You may wash your hands and/or cool them off during the process if the chocolate is melting too quickly. Truffles will be firm once refrigerated. Let them come to room temperature for about 10 minutes before serving.

bookreviews

In The News



Broken Angel
by Sigmund Brouwer
Publishers Weekly (May 2008 Issue)

“The terrific pacing is surpassed only by the character development; the many supporting characters are extremely well-drawn. Brouwer adds even more suspense by regularly revealing that some of these characters are not who they appear to be.”

—*Publishers Weekly Book Reviews*



Beyond the Night
by Marlo Schalesky
Library Journal (April 2008 Issue)

“For those who like sweet romance, this title will warm the heart and lift the spirits. Recommended for contemporary women’s fiction collections.”

—Reviewed by
Tamara Butler

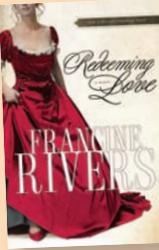


Fatal Deduction
by Gayle Roper
The Suspense Zone

“The story moves along at a fast pace and holds your interest until the very end, keeping you pulling for the characters as they work through their struggles. This is a well crafted story that you won’t want to miss.”

—Reviewed by
Susan Sleeman

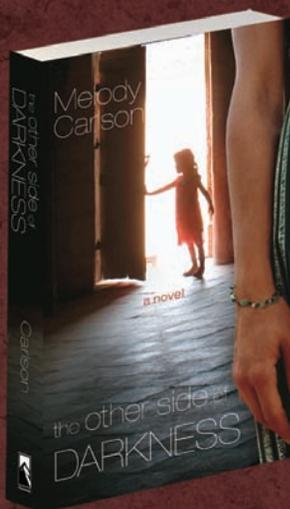
- Francine River’s top best-selling book *Redeeming Love* has now sold over one million copies and continues to impact lives worldwide



Congratulations to our Christy Award nominated authors

- Jeffrey Overstreet for *Auralia’s Colors* in the “Visionary” and “First Novel” category
- Karen Ball for *What Lies Within* in the “Contemporary (series, sequels and novellas)” category
- Jane Kirkpatrick for *A Tendering in the Storm* in the “Historical” category
- Sandra Byrd for *Let Them Eat Cake* in the “Lits” category

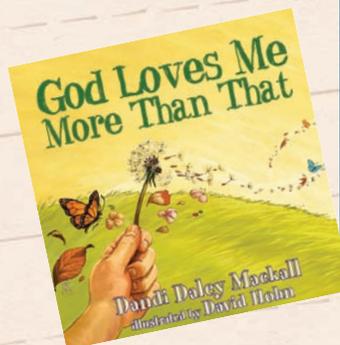
Once again,
I have kept the
demons at bay.



A spiritually hungry woman suffering from obsessive-compulsive disorder becomes entangled in a dangerous cult. She struggles to discern God’s voice and begin the arduous journey back to reality.

Coming to Stores
September 16th

HEARTWARMING BOOKS FULL OF LAUGHTER THAT CELEBRATE GOD’S LOVE AND HIS CREATION OF EACH CHILD



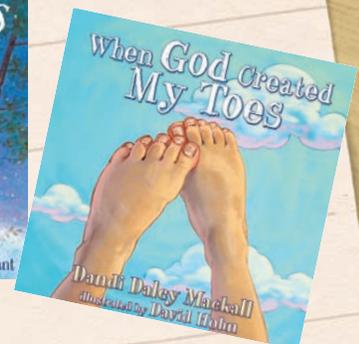
Dandi Daley Mackall
Illustrated by David Hohn

This delightful picture book’s lively rhymes and illustrations will show your child that God’s love is deeper than a wishing well, louder than thunder, and softer than a kitten’s sneeze!



Lisa Tawn Bergren
Illustrated by Laura J. Bryant

Little ones and those who love them will find reassuring answers to their questions about heaven in this charming tale, starring an adorable polar bear cub and her loving papa.



Dandi Daley Mackall
Illustrated by David Hohn

Through playful rhymes and beautiful illustrations, children will gain a new and personal sense of the fun God had in creating them.

Word Search

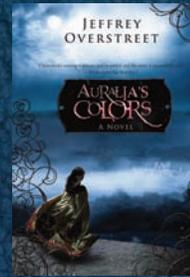
I T H Z T V I M K Z E D
 S S L C H R I S T M A S
 L I I I T Q M E X A H D
 A W Y V T E W D N E A A
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 T C Y L F R F E D U A A
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 T R Q W W E C N O L B A
 I F E R M G M A P N I C
 W R I S I R A P M N L R

Melody	Shell Flower	Paris
Mercy	Oregon	Auralia
Hannah	French Twist	Witch Trials
Christmas	Little Cub	Mackall

You've read tales of the beauty and the beast. But never quite like this.

A bloodthirsty beastman discovers Auralia's color, and his conscience awakens.

When the heiress of a powerful kingdom risks everything to help him, their lives—and the lives of a kingdom—hang in the balance.



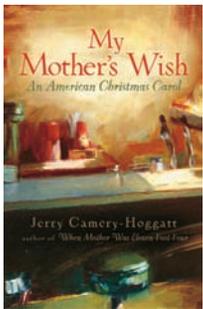
Also Available:
Auralia's Colors



"Overstreet's characters are wonderfully fashioned and the struggles and triumphs of each are incredibly captivating."

—Bookshelf Review of *Auralia's Colors*

The Gifts that Keep on Giving



The Christmas I was eight years old, my mother somehow scrunched enough spare change to buy the whole outfit: canvas chaps, tin spurs, red bandana for hold-ups and windstorms, and a pair of silver cap-guns with leather holsters that I would have worn low on the hips if I'd had hips.

But the magic was in the hat, a real beaut, black, with silver medallions around the band and a red lanyard laced into tiny holes punched along the brim. When I put it on, I turned into the Lone Ranger. My little brother Joelle became Tonto-by-default, and I made him speak in broken English and call me Kemosabe clear into summer. Together we ran the dreaded Roskilly Boys Gang clean out of

town and into Northridge. (It didn't hurt that Mr. Roskilly was transferred to a new office.)

Yet neither the hat nor duds were my mother's real gift. When I opened the wrapping that Christmas morning, I learned my mother valued the whole me, playful imagination included. My mother was a force of nature, who moved toward free play, open-handed engagement, and romance over work. She gave us gifts that touched our imaginations because she knew we needed open hearts if we were to do anything significant, go anywhere exciting, become and be grownups of compassion and depth. She gave me a gift that has kept on giving because riding the high-horse of my imagination, I became a writer.

This Christmas, I rode my imagination into a story about a teenage girl named Ellee who wants nothing more than to be wanted, whose imagination sometimes gets the better of her, who imagines herself, and in a way becomes, a bit of a gypsy. Ellee's mother has no room for her gypsy heart. Whatever Ellee's mother may think of her, I believe my own mother would have deeply loved this girl. In my mind's eye, I imagine my mother healing Ellee's heart—not with a cowboy hat but with a gypsy's dress, a string of gold medallions, and a handful of fireflies for her hair. They would be my mother's hallmark gift: an invitation to live large.

—Jerry Camery-Hoggatt



Want more fiction?

Fiction has a way of sweeping us up and away from our every day lives and then gently returning us to the present having lived vicariously through a character in a story. The stories meet us where we're at...and there's something for everyone. As you read through this Storytellers' Newsletter, you'll see the wide range of fiction titles that WaterBrook Multnomah offers. Keep up to date with your favorite fiction authors and discover some new ones!

1. Sign up for our "Pages" program. One week a month, you'll receive an excerpt from one of our new fiction titles each day. By the end of the week, you'll have read 1-2 chapters of the book. To sign up, email info@waterbrookpress.com with "Fiction!" in the subject line and your name, email address and contact information in the body of the email.

2. Look out for the **Storytellers' Journal**. This full length magazine includes articles from beloved fiction authors, book reviews, a sneak peek at up and coming titles, book excerpts, and is available at your local bookstore on May 20, 2009!



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