

Possible Interview Questions

1. Why do you write Christian Fiction?

I have always been an avid reader, mostly for the sense of escape from the challenge of life. However, I didn't exactly grow up in a Christian home. Sure we knew of Jesus and went to church on occasion, but His teachings didn't guide what I read or watched. Enter the vulnerable years of middle and high school, and I discovered romance stories that were anything but godly. I ate up anything I could get my hands on, and somehow Janette Oke's *When Calls the Heart* ended up in my hands. Other than by God's provision, I still don't know how it happened. However, it was through reading her Canadian West series that I witnessed what real love and marriage should look like when guided by God. I was a new Christian, and it totally rocked my world and completely shifted my world view. I write Christian fiction because God changed my life through a story I'd only picked up to be entertained by. It is my hope that those who read my novels will not only be entertained, but see how much God loves and cares for them. No matter their situation.

2. Why do you write historical romance?

For one, I LOVE history. Secondly, I need a break from our current times and stresses. It is nice to escape back into time and know that the world survived. I love seeing how history has influenced the past. For the romance part, romance to me is the perfect reflection of God's love for us. The Bible is one giant romance story of God's unconditional love for us and the great lengths He went and still goes to save us and draw us to Him, not just to be friends, but to be deeply intimate. I can't and don't want to live without Him in my life.

3. What is your writing Kryptonite?

Out of control emotions. If I am extremely stressed everything goes out the window. It is largely why I have to do my routine in the mornings before I start writing. It gets my focus realigned on God and the fact He is in control and I am not. There is no better person to be in charge either. ;-)

4. What did your writing journey look like?

This is one of my favorite stories to tell, because it just really shows God off. I've always read and written stories. They were my escape from life. Even after I got married, had a kid, attended college, and then went on to teach, I sneaked in time to write. Because I'm a teacher at heart, I LOVE to learn and grow. Y'all this is purely God.

Just before my 30th birthday, I saw an advertisement for the Kentucky Christian Writers Conference. I said nothing, just went ahead and tossed the idea aside. HOWEVER, my husband also saw the advertisement somewhere and without me telling him anything, he purchased my ticket and gave it to me for a present. I was thrilled and went to the conference with only the intention of learning to improve myself for the stories that would never leave my desk drawer.

God had much different plans. The first person I met was Ralene Burke who invited me to join ACFW. Then she introduced me to Gregg (publisher) and Hallee Bridgeman (author). Y'all, I

love Gregg to death, but in that moment I was absolutely terrified of him. He nice as could be, asked what I wrote and if I had any intention of publishing. Of course *I* didn't, but Gregg was the mouth piece of God that day. He asked me who gave me these stories? The answer of course is God. Then he proceeded to tell me God didn't give me those stories just to hole them up somewhere, then I needed consider seeking publishing. I thanked him and escaped as soon as possible. Yeah, that was great for everyone else there, but I was just a little closet writer with no aspirations for anything more.

God knows how thick-headed I am. All but one of the classes I wanted to attend was suddenly canceled due to the speaker having an emergency. The only classes left for me to choose from? Publishing classes. I ended up having a discussion with Gregg and another publisher just to learn more about the industry. I left for home with an unchanged mind. No way God was calling me to write. Absolutely not.

God and I wrestled for six months, and you can guess who won. I signed up for ACFW and from there God took me on a wild and humbling journey. At the beginning of the journey, God wrote a letter to me through the Holy Spirit while studying Psalm 37, and it has been the foundation for everything else on this journey.

“Trust Me. Commit your way to Me. Be silent. Listen. Wait expectantly for Me. Put your hope in Me. I have established your steps. Wait for me. I will act.”

It was a long, hard journey where I am still constantly going back to that letter and those words. I know that was a really long answer, but I guess the simple answer is: God called, I fought Him, He won, He taught and humbled me, and now I hope to glorify Him through this precious gift He has given me.

If another aspiring author is out there, listen to and heed those words. They will change your life.

5. What kind of research do you do, and how long do you spend researching before beginning a book?

I am an absolute research nerd. I could spend years on research and never get anything written. Therefore at the start of a new series I will spend about two months researching to get a baseline understanding of the historical period and events pertinent to my stories. Then I dive in and research as I find need. My favorite resources are period newspapers, first person accounts, books written by people of that time, anything I can really get my hands on.

6. Why did you write a series about the Secret Service?

Everyone knows the Secret Service as the men and women in black uniforms who protect the president, but few know the department's original purpose. I didn't until I stumbled upon it, and once I did, I was completely captivated. You see, the Secret Service only informally protected the president part-time until 1902, but the department was created in 1865. For over thirty years, their primary focus was to arrest counterfeiters. I absolutely adored diving into that research and

bringing to life a story that shows only a very small part of what they did. You can learn more about their history by visiting <https://crystalcaudill.com/bonuscontent/historyofthesecretservice/>.

7. What is your favorite Bible verse?

I have three when it comes to writing. 1 Peter 4:10-11, 1 Corinthians 10:31, Exodus 4:10-12

1 Peter 4:10-11 reminds me why I write. It is a gift given to me by God and it is my duty to be a good steward of that gift to serve others, speak God's words, and to glorify God and Jesus Christ in all things. My strength comes from Him.

Similarly, 1 Corinthians 10:31 is the verse I use to remind myself on the days I don't want to do a task either for myself or for others. It reminds me that I am to do it as if doing it for the Lord and not man. I would not give the Lord anything less than my best, so I can't give anything less than my best in those moments I'd rather slack.

Exodus 4:10-12 is for the days when I don't have the words to write and I don't feel like I'm equipped to do what God has called me to do. Just like Moses, I feel far from eloquent. But God is the one who created the human mouth. He is the one who has told me to go and write. And just like Moses He will help me to write and teach me what to say.

“Based on the gift each one has received, use it to serve others, as good managers of the varied grace of God. If anyone speaks, it should be as one who speaks God's words; if anyone serves, it should be from the strength God provides, so that God may be glorified through Jesus Christ in everything. To Him belong the glory and the power forever and ever. Amen.” 1 Peter 4:10-11

“Therefore, whether you eat or drink, or whatever you do, do everything for God's glory.” 1 Corinthians 10:31

“But Moses replied, ‘Please, Lord, I have never been eloquent—either in the past or recently or since you have been speaking to your servant—because I am slow and hesitant in speech.’

Yahweh said to him, ‘Who made the human mouth? Who makes him mute or deaf, seeing or blind? Is it not I, Yahweh? Now go! I will help you speak and I will teach you what to say.’” Exodus 4:10-12

8. How can we pray for you?

I always covet prayers for a humble attitude, a tender spirit toward God's leading, for moments of encouragement, and for my family's health. Words can't express how much prayers mean to me.