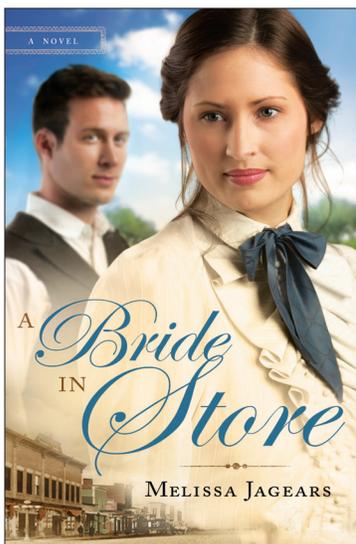


QUESTIONS & ANSWERS WITH MELISSA JAGEARS

A Bride in Store

by Melissa Jagears

Trade Paper ISBN: 978-0-7642-1169-0

\$14.99; 368 pp.

Ebook ISBN: 978-1-4412-6472-5

Release Date: September 2014

1. How did you decide on the story for *A Bride in Store*?

My series is about mail-order brides who do not end up with their intendeds. I'd decided on a mail-order bride mishap and then had fun deciding which secondary character from *A Bride for Keeps* would be a good foil and love interest for my heroine.

2. Did you do anything different with *A Bride in Store*?

I wrote discussion questions this time. I felt my characters dealt with a lot of situations that would make great fodder for book discussion groups because I don't think there's an obvious "Sunday school" answer for a lot of what they dealt with in the story.

3. What was the most fascinating historical tidbit you incorporated into your book?

I actually wanted a monkey in the story since I found an old reference to some Kansas businessmen sending up a trained monkey in a hot air balloon. Here's the little blip from the *Linn Centennial: 1877-1977*:

The enterprising businessmen who first set up shops in Summit found a unique way of attracting people to town. Balloon ascensions were held on Saturday afternoons with a real live monkey going up as a passenger. The monkey was trained to parachute at a certain altitude after which he would walk back to town. He was a familiar character on the streets for several years until he suddenly disappeared and the balloon had to go up without him. No one knew what happened to old Monk until many years later, when the old Linn Store building was being remodeled, his bones were found under the floor where, apparently, he had crawled away to die.

So since I wanted my heroine, Eliza, to be out-of-the-box clever with advertising and marketing, I figured it'd be fun to have her send a monkey up in a balloon to advertise her grand opening. But how would she have access to a trained monkey? I figured she could befriend a retired circus person with a monkey, and then I stumbled across the story of Baroness Sidonia de Barcsy, a bearded lady who retired in Oklahoma near the same time. She became the model for Irena Lightfoot in my book.

Irena grew into quite an important secondary character in my story; however, the monkey didn't survive my rough draft, and no one but me ever "met" Irena's monkey. May Mr. Peanuts rest in peace.

4. Which character is most like you?

I seem to be incorporating aspects of me and my husband in a lot of my books lately. The novella that started this series, *Love by the Letter*, was about a dyslexic hero and an academically-minded heroine, which is like us. For *A Bride in Store*, I wrote a somewhat insensitive, practical heroine, and a hero who has difficulty saying no. My husband is the guy who'll give you the shirt off his back if you ask for it, which is an endearing quality. Me? Well, being no-nonsense practical is a good quality for someone to have, right?

5. Do you have a way for readers to keep up with your books?

You can always visit www.melissajagears.com to see where I hang out on social media and sign up for my newsletter, but one fun thing I've done for my books is create Pinterest boards for each of them. Anytime I looked up something fun on the Internet (like for this story: the interesting medical problems I gave Will's patients, the dance near the end of the book, a video of a firing anvil, the real story behind the bearded lady, etc.), I pinned them to *A Bride in Store's* board. <http://www.pinterest.com/melissajagears/a-bride-in-store/>

Media Contacts

 FICTION PUBLICIST: **Amy Green**

952-829-2596

agreen@bethanyhouse.com

 CANADIAN MEDIA: **Ellen Graf-Martin**

519-342-3703

ellen@grafmartin.com

Please send tear sheets to:

Amy Green

11400 Hampshire Ave. S.

Bloomington, MN 55438