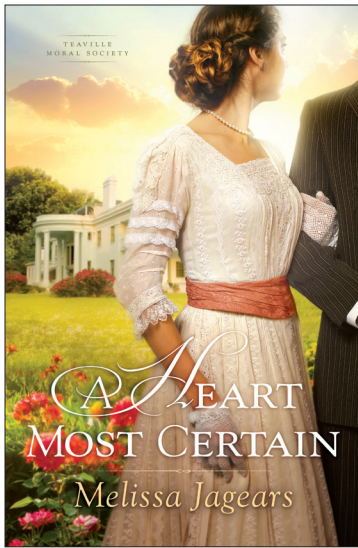




QUESTIONS & ANSWERS WITH MELISSA JAGEARS



A Heart Most Certain

TEAVILLE MORAL SOCIETY
by Melissa Jagears

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1. In past books, have you put bits of yourself/your personality into your characters? Did you do that with this novel?

I do so with most every novel. Not a single character is me, but generally someone or something in the story reflects me in some way.

In this one, the hero's personality is similar to mine, and aspects of the heroine growing up poor are similar to mine too. Obviously neither are complete reflections of me, but I used things about myself in these two areas of their lives to round them out. And then there are sometimes details I throw in that are completely me. In this book, when my heroine asks my hero if he has a favorite poet, his answer is pretty much my answer, verbatim.

2. How did you get the idea for this story?

I was driving past the Brown Mansion (which is the lovely mansion on the cover. I was so excited that the art department put the mansion I was picturing on the cover) and was thinking about how I could possibly put such an out-of-place mansion in a story. I was also reflecting on the popularity of fairy-tale retellings. I was trying to come up with fairy tales that hadn't been retold in Christian fiction, and thought up a way to combine *A Christmas Carol* with *Aladdin* in the Brown Mansion—and then things morphed from there.

3. Was it difficult to leave your first series behind to start a new one?

This book was actually the one I was editing in hopes of putting it out on submission when Bethany House contracted *A Bride for Keeps*. Now, all I thought I'd have to do was finish editing where I left off, but I had grown as a writer over the course of the UNEXPECTED BRIDES series, so I had to rewrite some things as well. But I could not wait for the day I could get back to Nicholas and Lydia. I felt as if I had abandoned them, the poor things.

4. What's your favorite scene in the book?

I can never pick just one scene! All the romantic-tension scenes are my favorite, of course. Other than those, I loved creating a temperance serenade similar to what I imagine famous temperance advocate Carrie Nation may have led when she went through the area with her hatchet, whacking away at saloon counters on her campaign to enforce Kansas's liquor laws. Her methods of singing hymns, squeezing a hand organ, and speaking in over-the-top fire-and-brimstone language was really fun to give to the leader of my moral society. My heroine is not at all prepared for how the serenade is going to go and is awkwardly stuck in the whirlwind of her leader trying to emulate the famous Carrie Nation.

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. I'm most active on Facebook and I love chatting with readers. Don't feel shy, I love comments and messages!