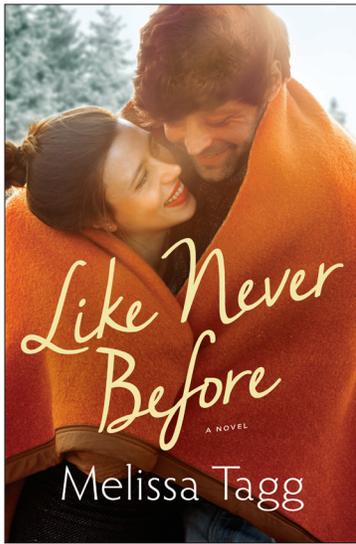




QUESTIONS & ANSWERS WITH MELISSA TAGG



Like Never Before

by Melissa Tagg

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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

Bethany House Publishers

11400 Hampshire Ave. S. #200

Bloomington, MN 55438

1. What's the premise of this story?

This is the story of Amelia Bentley—a woman who has lost her dream of having a family but has created a whole new life for herself as editor of a small-town newspaper. And it's the story of widowed, single father Logan Walker—a former reporter turned successful speechwriter who finds out he's inherited said newspaper.

Logan and Amelia end up having cross-purposes—Logan hoping to sell the paper, Amelia desperate to save it. But when they end up chasing an intriguing story together in an attempt to solve Maple Valley's long-time unsolved mystery, it's just the start of the sparks that fly in the office and in their hearts.

2. What kind of research did you have to do for *Like Never Before*?

One thing I *didn't* have to research is small-town newspaper life! I was a reporter for a small-town weekly newspaper for several years after college—and interned at another daily paper throughout college—so I felt confident in portraying that piece of *Like Never Before's* storyworld. But I did have to research the ins and outs of political speechwriting, and I did quite a bit of reading on Charles Lindbergh, as there's a light historical mystery thread related to him in this book.

3. Speaking of that little historical mystery thread, that's a first for you. What sparked it?

When I was a kid, I was obsessed with this picture book biography of Amelia Earhart. I'm sure I checked it out of my hometown library at least a couple dozen times. As I grew older, that interest spread to Charles Lindbergh, which then intensified when I visited Lindbergh's childhood home and museum in Little Falls, Minnesota. So those two interests somehow merged in my storyteller mind as I brainstormed this book. It wasn't entirely planned! But I definitely had fun with it.

4. What message or theme do you hope sticks with readers as they finish *Like Never Before*?

Prior to writing this story, I walked through a season of feeling creatively dry. My writing dream felt somehow beige; my creative energy lacked its former luster. But then I started writing *Like Never Before*, started getting to know these two characters who'd also seen their dreams sort of fade into something colorless. And as I wrote, as I dove into Maple Valley and Logan and Amelia's worlds, my storytelling delight reawakened! I felt my creativity come alive in a new way, as if God was saying, "Look, I'm doing something new here." It was a return of joy. . . .

And that is what I hope sticks with readers once they've turned the last page of *Like Never Before*. I hope they are refreshed and inspired by the reminder that no matter what we've gone through, no matter what we've lost, God can make all things new. He can truly give us joy like never before.

5. What's your favorite scene in this book?

There are some fun and funny scenes in this story and some overtly romantic and wonderfully gooey scenes that I just looooved writing. But probably my favorite scene in the whole book is a much quieter, much softer scene. It takes place on a little bridge right after a rainstorm. My staid and dependable hero, Logan Walker, has just done something he *never* does, and he's feeling awful. Enter Amelia. I won't give away any more than that, other than I just love how she ends up being exactly what Logan needs in those moments . . . from diverting him with charming jokes to emotionally tending his wounds with an unexpected, tender action.