



**QUESTIONS & ANSWERS WITH JULIE KLASSEN**



**The Painter's Daughter**

by Julie Klassen

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**1. Can you briefly describe your new novel?**

Artist Sophie Dupont believes dashing Wesley Overtree will marry her. But when he sails to Italy, leaving Sophie with child, she contemplates a marriage proposal from his brother, Captain Stephen Overtree. Stephen does not offer love, but “marriage in name only” to save her from scandal. Desperate for a way to escape her predicament, Sophie finds herself torn between her first love and this brooding man she barely knows. Dare she wait for Wesley to return? Or should she elope with the captain and pray she doesn’t come to regret it?

**2. Where did you find inspiration for this novel?**

I have always wanted to write a marriage of convenience story, and have also been intrigued by the former Church of England laws that prohibited a widow from marrying her brother-in-law and vice versa. So when Sophie contemplates marriage to an army captain she barely knows, she realizes that even if the captain were to die in battle, she could not later marry his brother, whom she loves. During my last trip to England, an old friend and I traveled to North Devon to research another book (*Lady Maybe*). While we were there, we spent several evenings in our B & B brainstorming the initial ideas for this book. We also fell in love with the stunning coastal landscape, and learned it had been a favorite among painters in the 19th century. That spurred me to write about artists, and knew I had found the perfect place to set *The Painter's Daughter* as well.

**3. You recently attended the national conference of the Jane Austen Society of North America. How do events like these enlarge and enrich your knowledge of the Regency period?**

Because I write novels set in the Regency time period when Austen’s novels were published, I see the conference—and events like it—as a chance to conduct research and spend time with fellow Austen enthusiasts. Workshops on topics like English country dance, village life, crime, carriage travel, the military, marriage law, tea, and fashion all help me learn more about the era and sometimes spark story ideas. Other highlights of the conference included dancing at a ball in my Regency gown, and attending a 19th century church service—a chance to not only study the period, but to “live” it!

**4. How did you go about researching the professions of your main characters (a painter and an army captain)?**

For Sophie, the artist, I read a great deal about famous painters of the period, and relied on a website called Pigments through the Ages, which helped me identify paint colors and methods in use at the time. Also, two artist friends were kind enough to read the painting scenes and make suggestions to add authenticity to the techniques and to the mindset of an artist. For Stephen, the army captain, I studied books and museum websites to get a grasp on British army strategy, uniforms, weapons, and rankings during the Napoleonic Wars.

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**5. What is the most difficult part of the writing process for you?**

For me, the hardest part of writing is making myself tough it out, stay in that chair for days and weeks on end, and write the first draft. After that, the editing and revising come a little more easily, though it's all hard work.

**6. This is your tenth Regency novel. Congratulations! What are you working on next?**

Thank you. Next, I am working on my first-ever series, focusing on the relationships, struggles, and romances of a group of friends in an English village. Book One will tentatively release in December 2016. I am excited to hear what my readers think!