



## QUESTIONS & ANSWERS WITH JULIANNA DEERING

### 1. Why did you write *Rules of Murder*?

I am a longtime fan of Agatha Christie, Dorothy L. Sayers, and Margery Allingham. The 1920s and '30s were the golden age of crime fiction, and nobody could tell a tale of murder and mayhem like those English ladies did. I am also a fan of the *Thin Man* movies from the 1930s and '40s. Americans Nick and Nora Charles, as portrayed by William Powell and Myrna Loy, were a stylish, witty, and loving couple who always managed to figure out “whodunit.” When I started thinking about writing a historical mystery, I thought it would be fun to mix them all together. My hero, Drew Farthering, is English and the heir to an old manor house, and my heroine, Madeline Parker, is an American debutante. Voilà! A little Nick and Nora, a little Tommy and Tuppence, and a whole lot of fun.

### 2. Are there actual rules in the novel? Where did you get them?

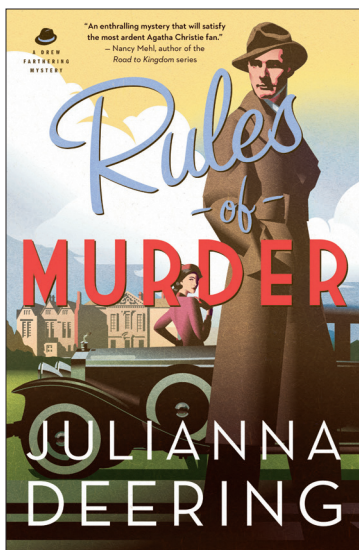
When I started thinking about writing this book, I did an internet search for tips on writing a mystery. I came across several very good lists about what to do, but then I remembered a quite famous one about what *not* to do. In 1929, Father Ronald Arbuthnott Knox, a priest who was also a novelist, published his ten commandments for what is and is not acceptable in a proper mystery story. His list had just the right classic mystery tone and was of course written during the period of history that interested me. I decided that I would write a book that breaks or at least bends all of his rules.

### 3. What is the spiritual theme of the book? Did you start out with that in mind or was it something that grew out of the story?

I rarely if ever start writing with a theme in mind. I tend more to start with a “what if?” and then see where it takes me. In *Rules of Murder*, Drew deals with the deaths of people close to him, the potential loss of his family business and his family fortune, and a revelation about himself that shakes some of his long-held beliefs. So when he comes to realize that even with all the advantages of money and social standing he still has a desperate need for God, that was something that just came naturally as a part of the plot. Who, in such a situation, wouldn't at least begin to wonder about life and truth and eternity?

### 4. So is the story really heavy and serious?

Oh, I don't think so. It does have serious moments and some serious themes, but I originally wrote it to be a fun adventure. The three main characters—Drew, Madeline, and Nick—do their best to be witty and entertaining in the finest 1930's style. And of course there is the strong-yet-playful attraction between Drew and Madeline that adds an element of romance to the mystery.



#### **Rules of Murder**

A DREW FARTHERING MYSTERY  
by Julianna Deering

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**5. What has your writing journey been like?**

Long! My first book, the medieval romance *In Honor Bound*, came out in 1997 (after taking over eleven years to write) with two sequels to follow in 1998. At the time I thought I was on my way to a career as a full-time author. I didn't have another book published until 2010. So, as they say, man plans, God laughs. But during that long hiatus, I was learning and growing as a person and as a writer, and I was writing the book of my heart, the first of the DREW FARTHERING mysteries. It's so exciting to finally get to see this book on the shelf.

**6. What do you want your readers to remember about the book?**

I want them to remember they had fun reading and solving the mystery, and I want them to be eager for more. But if they remember nothing else, I want them to realize, as Drew does, that God accepts all who come to him as long as they *do* come—even if it's because there's nowhere else to turn.