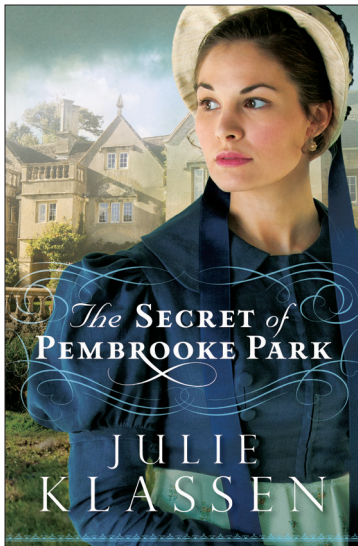




QUESTIONS & ANSWERS WITH JULIE KLASSEN



The Secret of Pembroke Park

by Julie Klassen

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\$14.99; 464 pp.

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1. Can you briefly describe your new novel?

Sure. *The Secret of Pembroke Park* centers around a manor house that has been mysteriously abandoned and locked for years, until an anonymous benefactor opens it to Abigail Foster's family. With help from a handsome neighbor, Abigail searches Pembroke Park, longing to unearth its secrets and hidden treasure—only to find danger instead.

2. What would you say is the theme of this novel?

The book is about where our value comes from. Abigail is tempted to believe she needs a large dowry—a treasure—to make herself worthy of a man's love. In the end, she learns she is already treasured by God, and that faith, family, and friends are the most valuable things we can possess.

3. This book has stronger mystery elements than some of your others. Was that intentional?

Yes. I am really enjoying incorporating more mystery into my books, and readers seem to be enjoying it as well. I grew up reading the Trixie Belden mysteries, and to this day I love atmospheric stories with twists and clues to figure out. The abandoned manor in this book was inspired by a long-abandoned house in the woods near my childhood home. The novel also includes a secret room, hidden clues, anonymous letters, treasure hunters, and a figure in hooded cloak. I'm excited for readers to dive into this one—reviewers are saying it's my best yet!

4. Your male lead is an Anglican curate. How did you go about researching what that profession was like in the early 1800s?

There was a lot to learn, and I'm sure I've only scratched the surface. I read bios of clergymen of the era, tried to familiarize myself with Church of England services and the *Book of Common Prayer*, attended services in the UK and a few locally. I also asked a London vicar's wife to read the manuscript to help me avoid mistakes. No doubt a few errors have slipped through even so, but hopefully nothing major that will interfere with readers' enjoyment of the novel.

5. Have you been to England lately to conduct more research?

Yes, I have! Thank you for raising my favorite topic. I took my third trip to England in May of 2014. There we toured Great Chalfield Manor, which inspired fictional Pembroke Park, with its lovely gardens, moat, and adjacent church, where we attended an Evensong service. Stop by my website (julieklassen.com) to see photos of this historic estate. We also visited London museums, old coaching inns, charming villages, and a 17th century house with a secret room. We hiked along the North Devon coast, met friends in Oxford, went English riding, and had tea in a 500-year-old thatched roof cottage. I loved every minute of it, and came away with lots of ideas for future books.

6. This is your eighth novel set in the Regency time period. Do you plan to stay in this era? Anything you can tell us about your writing plans for future?

I love the era and plan to stay there for now. I have recently signed a contract for at least four more novels in this genre. Now if only I could write them faster....