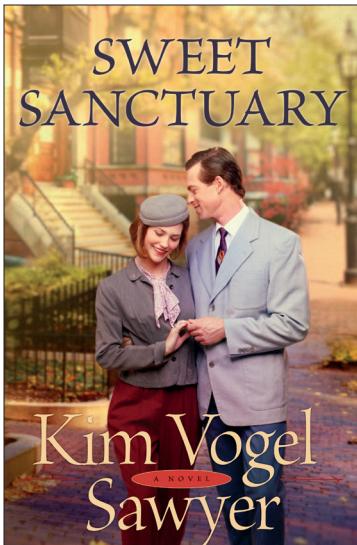


QUESTIONS & ANSWERS WITH KIM VOGEL SAWYER

**Sweet Sanctuary**

by Kim Vogel Sawyer

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Media ContactsFICTION PUBLICIST: **Noelle Buss**

952-829-2559

noelle.buss@bethanyhouse.com

CANADIAN MEDIA: **Ellen Graf-Martin**

519-342-3703

ellen@grafmartin.com

UK & IRISH MEDIA: **Ian Matthews**

+44 (0) 7939 098337

ian@gardenhousemedia.com

Please send tear sheets to:

Noelle Buss

11400 Hampshire Ave. S.

Bloomington, MN 55438

- 1. Your historical novel readership has a certain expectation when they choose one of your books. *Sweet Sanctuary* is set during World War II in large cities rather than on the prairie at the turn of the century. How is *Sweet Sanctuary* similar to your other works?**

I believe, whether I'm writing historical or contemporary, the reader can expect one common denominator—a story infused with faith. Since God is a main character in my life, He will always be a main character in my stories. Additionally, I've made a commitment to write stories that can be shared between generations, grandmother to granddaughter or daughter to mother. Regardless of setting, I hope readers trust me to craft a story peopled with interesting characters who grow and change when they learn to lean on God and follow His leading.

- 2. What inspired *Sweet Sanctuary*?**

As a history teacher, I loved teaching about the Second World War. Our country changed so much during that time. Although there was a great deal of turmoil and hardship, our nation banded together, and patriotism grew even stronger than it had been before. When I decided I wanted to write a story set during WWII, I checked out as many books from the library as I could carry and began scanning them for story fodder. Doctors and nurses called into duty, displaced

refugees, and women entering the workplace in droves all came together. One element of the story—a rather heartrending one—was woven in after I visited a concentration camp in Germany. As painful as it was to think of what took place there, I wanted to honor the people who died at Hitler's hand, as well as those who worked to save them. So inspiration for the story came from a variety of directions.

- 3. Do you have a favorite character from the story?**

For me, the secondary characters seem to become my favorites, and this story was no different. I absolutely fell in love with little Nicky. Many of his characteristics and comments were borrowed from my middle daughter—she was such a character, she needed to be in a book! Although he wasn't a main character, Nicky's plight affected all of the main characters, and seeing them work together to save this little boy gave me great pleasure.

- 4. One of the characters is encouraged to stand on "higher ground." What did you mean by that statement?**

When someone is in the midst of difficulty, we have a tendency to pat them on the back and say, "Hang in there." As Christians, we don't have to "hang in there." We can stand firm on our Foundation, Jesus Christ. He is our Rock. So when Nicolai was advised to stand on higher ground, out of the muck and mire, he was being encouraged to stand firm on the foundation of Jesus and His strength.

- 5. What do you hope readers will take away from *Sweet Sanctuary*?**

There are actually two themes that resonated with me while I wrote the story. First of all, none of us are so far gone that we can't find our way to God again. He is in the practice of using broken vessels, and I have seen His mighty hand make changes in hearts that seemed so hard not even a sledgehammer would crack them. Never lose hope! Second, as seems to emerge in most of my stories, God can use the hard things we encounter to make us stronger and more reflective of Him. When we face difficult situations we can take heart knowing there is a purpose in our suffering and He will reveal that purpose in His timing.

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