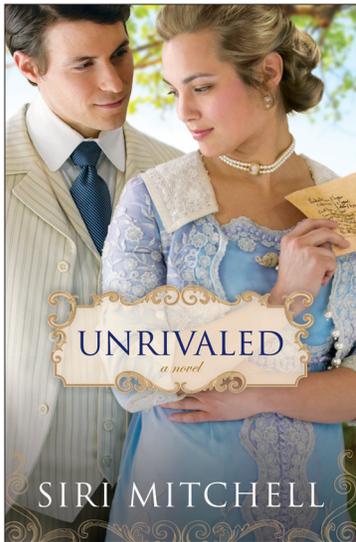


**QUESTIONS & ANSWERS WITH SIRI MITCHELL**



**Unrivaled**

by Siri Mitchell

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**1. Can you tell us about *Unrivaled*?**

In *Unrivaled*, the son and daughter of feuding candy makers develop an attraction for each other, despite not quite being able to ignore the rivalry between their fathers. I've been calling this book my Romeo and Juliet story...only it features candy along with a happy ending.

**2. You present the candy making business at the turn-of-the-century as being rather ruthless. That almost seems to be a contradiction in terms. Was that part of the story true to facts?**

Yes! History would say that it was even worse than I depicted. It was not unknown for rival candy companies to steal recipes, send moles to work in a competitor's factory, hijack delivery trucks, and remove rival candies from store shelves. Corporate espionage is not a modern invention.

**3. Your descriptions of candy making are mouthwatering. Are you a candy maker?**

Though I love desserts and candies, I don't often make them. My husband's family has a delicious recipe for English Toffee that we traditionally make for Christmas, but in general I prefer cooking to baking or candy making. As I researched for this book, I spent quite a bit of time looking for old candy recipes and I put out a plea on my Facebook page for an experienced candy maker who would be willing to check my candy making sections for accuracy.

**4. Did you come across any surprises in your research?**

I learned that candy making is an art. And it's not for the faint-hearted! In an era before electric appliances, things like whipping egg whites and the constant stirring of syrups took quite a bit of time and lots of muscle. In contrast to the way I normally cook, the process is quite precise and a moment's inattention can result in a candy entirely different than the one you were hoping to make. The influence of weather on candy was another surprise. At the turn of the century, candy making was still a seasonal business that was subject to the whims of geography. Without the ability to control things like temperature and climate, candy couldn't be made in areas with high heat or heavy humidity. The idea that some things can only be made on nice days during clear weather seems quaint, but at one time, it was true!

**5. What themes did you develop in this book?**

In contrast to the sweetness of candy, I wanted to look at the idea that sin spoils us all. Though we like to judge ourselves on a gradient, the fact is that it doesn't matter whether a sin is "large" or "small"; God doesn't compare us to each other, he compares us to his perfect son. I'm hoping that readers will grasp that although there's no hope of ever being able to earn God's grace, we all have the chance to simply reach out and accept it as a gift that's been freely offered.

**6. Is there any last word you'd like to leave your readers with?**

Great injustices and many prejudices are produced the moment we decide we're better than everyone else. Most of the time, in a paraphrase of one of *Unrivaled's* characters: We're all the same at believing we're not the same and being wrong because we are. It's about God...and what he's done. It's not about us. It's never been about us. Because we're not good enough and we never will be.