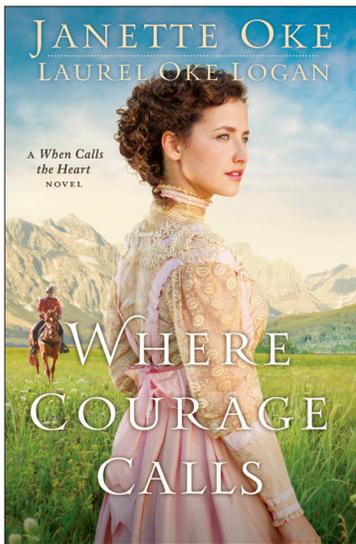


QUESTIONS & ANSWERS WITH JANETTE OKE & LAUREL OKE LOGAN



Where Courage Calls

by Janette Oke and Laurel Oke Logan

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1. Janette, what made you decide to return to prairie romance after 14 years?

Janette: I had retired from writing. When Michael Landon Jr. and Brian Bird decided to film *When Calls the Heart*, they introduced some new characters to the viewing audience. I had a phone call from them suggesting that I could write a new series to correspond with the films. At first I declined, but when they further suggested that I co-author, I thought of our daughter Laurel. She has previously published with Bethany House and is now in a space where she feels free to get back into writing. She was interested in the project, so together we have written the book titled *Where Courage Calls*, which will be out early in 2014.

2. Tell us a little about *Where Courage Calls*.

Laurel: The novel is a new adventure that we're adding to the *When Calls the Heart* books. It takes Elizabeth Thatcher's "niece"—city girl Beth Thatcher—on a life-changing adventure from the safety of her father's wealthy home to the coal mines of southern Alberta—against her mother's better judgment.

3. As a mother-daughter team, what did you enjoy about writing together?

Janette: First of all, it gave me the wonderful excuse to spend more time with Laurel—which I always enjoy. It is always interesting how working together encourages and stimulates creativity. Ideas feed ideas. A dimension of fun is added to the task of writing.

Laurel: I definitely enjoyed more visits and phone calls with Mom, but also a chance to work through the creative process with such a successful writer. I particularly like the way she develops her characters.

4. *When Calls the Heart* has been made into a Hallmark Channel Original Movie and TV Series, and your LOVE COMES SOFTLY books have been made into the highest ranking movies in Hallmark Channel history. What has it been like seeing your books adapted to film?

Janette: I just returned yesterday from the set where the story is being filmed. What a delightful experience. The entire cast and crew are working meticulously to make every scene all that it can be so that viewers will enjoy the story without considering the amount of effort that has gone into the production. It is a thrill to see the characters take on flesh and blood and become active and responding. I am so thankful for everyone who is working hard to preserve the integrity and faith I have been intent on presenting in the stories I have written.

5. Talk about your writing journey. What first led you to become a writer?

Janette: I don't remember a time when I wasn't interested in storytelling. Even as a small child, before I could put words on paper, I made up oral stories. Wanting to have training so that I would do things properly, I put off writing for many years. I wrote little bits of poetry or prose for my own need of expression, but these I tucked away rather than sharing them with anyone else. I was forty-two when I tried my first novel. It was *Love Comes Softly*. Bethany House, after lengthy consideration, dared to publish it, not knowing if there would be a viable readership or not. There did prove to be those who enjoyed a simple story, of simple people, in an equally simple setting.

I don't really think of myself as a pioneer. I was sure that there were many others, like me, who would have loved to have had material that better matched their worldview. I just wanted to write a simple story that might meet a need.

Laurel: Mom published her first novel when I was twelve, but I remember her reading some of the unpublished stories to me too. And there are plenty of other writers in our family—it's really part of the family legacy. So I found it fascinating to watch Mom work at this career all through my teen years and beyond. I've also always enjoyed the writing process—and that ideas and emotions can be conveyed through it. Writing is an amazing form of communication.

6. Are there any future writing projects in your plans?

Janette: The answer is, perhaps. Laurel and I are thinking of a second book. Where we go from there depends on the response from readers. At any rate, I do hope Laurel continues writing. I feel she has much to offer readers in whichever genre she decides to take in her future writing.

Laurel: I have a couple other projects that I've been working on. The last of our six kids has gone off to high school, so now that I'm done homeschooling them, I've got more time to write.

7. Is there a message you hope readers will take away from *Where Courage Calls*?

Janette: As our protagonist, Beth, leaves her protected and affluent life for something that will test her in every way, her father gives her a Bible verse to cling to: Philippians 4:13, "I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me." Beth learns the reality of the verse as she faces some very difficult situations. We pray others will also realize the truth of the Scriptural promise.