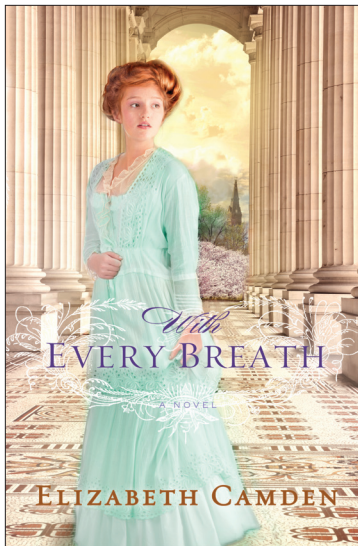




## QUESTIONS & ANSWERS WITH ELIZABETH CAMDEN



***With Every Breath***

by Elizabeth Camden

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### 1. Tell us a little about *With Every Breath*.

The novel is a hospital drama, and Kate Livingston is a government statistician who is hired by a rival from her school days, Dr. Trevor McDonough, to help with his research. I have found that passionate rivals are oftentimes very much alike in personality. This is the case with Trevor and Kate. Beneath the obvious external differences, such as her sunny disposition contrasted with his introverted and serious attitude, they have the same drive, values, and towering need to achieve. This makes sparks fly quickly, but also has the makings for a terrific love story.

The setting is Washington, D.C. during the 1890s. Trevor and Kate are trying to cure tuberculosis, which was a highly contagious and deadly disease. Anyone working with tubercular patients was at risk for contracting the disease, so the novel is filled with wonderfully heroic characters willing to risk everything for a noble cause.

### 2. What are some of the themes in this novel?

The biggest themes that emerge are about trusting God and learning to see Him in your life even when things seem to be going terribly wrong. Sometimes life deals people a tough hand of cards, but individual tragedies may have a far more profound meaning than any of us can anticipate while locked in the struggle to survive. On a more subtle note, it's also about learning to see past external differences. Much of Trevor and Kate's old rivalry is rooted in a personality clash, which is ultimately not worth the weight they allow it to have. The theme of respecting the inherent dignity in each human being, despite differences in class, intellect, or external differences, is also big.

### 3. You are known for having heroines engaged in interesting professions. Is that the case in *With Every Breath*?

Washington, D.C. was a fascinating place in the late 19th century. The federal government was the largest employer in the city, and around 40% of the people working in government offices were women. Many of these were clerical jobs, but plenty of women were hired into semi-professional positions. Kate has terrific mathematical skills, and she is employed as a government statistician. As such, she gets to interact with a huge cross section of the Washington political scene.

### 4. Is there anything controversial in the novel?

Kate works for Trevor, and both are well aware of the risks associated with becoming romantically involved in a workplace setting. "Dating the boss" was not as taboo in the 19th century as it is today, but as two intelligent people, both Kate and Trevor are aware of the potential problems of falling in love with someone in the workplace. This added a delicious layer of tension and complication to the plot. Over the years, we have developed an instinctive suspicion of relationships that begin with such a disparity of power, but this is a 21st century attitude, and I write 19th century characters. Trevor and Kate are smart enough to be aware of the emotional danger of their relationship, but it hardly stops them from pursuing it.

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**5. What makes this book unique among historical romances?**

When we think “medical romance,” we often think of contemporary drama. *With Every Breath* is set in the 1890s during an era of immense medical discovery. It was a time when medical ethics were still evolving, and doctors tended to be on their own in wrestling with moral dilemmas and the stress of caring for terminal patients. This is where Kate becomes so important to Trevor. Their romance blossoms out of a deep friendship, but Trevor also relies on Kate for strength in how to cope with the ethical dilemmas he must confront.

**6. What is the take-away message you want readers to receive after reading the novel?**

Most of all I wanted to write a thrilling, deeply romantic, and heart-pounding love story. The nature of the plot forces Trevor and Kate to delve into some pretty weighty issues, and they discover how faith can play a major role in powering through some of the big challenges in life. It is a deeply emotional story, but I tried to inject notes of subtle humor, hope, and inspiration throughout the novel.