



QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS WITH DEEANNE GIST

1. What inspired you to write *A Bride in the Bargain*?

I have always been fascinated with obscure historical tidbits in our country's history. I stumbled across an article about Mercer Girls—girls who were Civil War orphans and widows who were transported from the East Coast to the West Coast to become brides for the lumberjacks of the Washington Territory. Problem was, no one told them they were to be brides. They were told they would be domestics.

2. Your books are bestsellers, and among many other honors, you have won back to back Christy Awards. Now *Deep in the Heart of Trouble* was just nominated for a Rita Award. What is about your books, do you think, that makes them stand out so much?

I have a tremendous passion for the multitudes of Christian girls in our country (and beyond) who are trying to serve two gods—Christ and the world. In order to reach them, I find I sometimes have to be a little more open and frank than what you might traditionally expect in a Christian novel. Because my target market has a fairly high tolerance for fiction with a bit of an edge to it, my work has been tagged as “edgy inspirational.” And it is definitely a struggle to write in a way that is relevant but doesn't offend. I don't think it is necessary to be graphic, but to dismiss out of hand or to avoid our God-given sensual natures that attract us to our mates is not very realistic or honest, even. That said, it is my full intention to use my gifts and talents to glorify God. So, I keep my eyes on Him and at the end of the day, I put my offering at His feet and ask Him to refine it.

3. What do you hope readers will walk away with after reading *A Bride in the Bargain*?

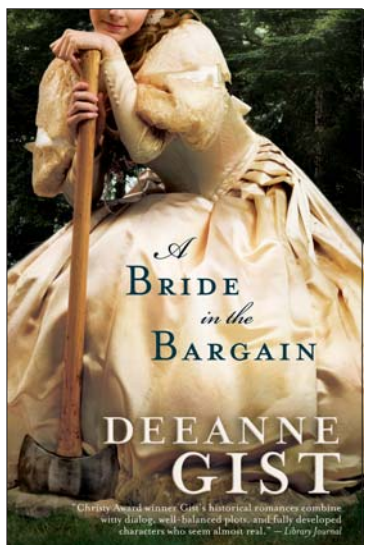
The underlying theme of *A Bride in the Bargain* is that God is in control. I hope that through the protagonist's journey readers will be reminded that our destinies—and the destinies of others—are not in our hands, but in God's.

4. How does the research you conduct play out in *A Bride in the Bargain*?

My biggest challenge was finding out what happened to the real Mercer Girls. There was a great deal written about the recruitment of the women and their ship's passage around South America, but absolutely nothing about what happened to them after they landed. And that's the part I was most interested in. I mean, can you imagine being told that when you arrived in Seattle you'd be guaranteed work as a domestic, only to find out your “employer” had contracted for a bride?

The novel is set in the Washington Territory right after the Civil War has ended. I did extensive research to find out exactly what businesses were in Seattle in 1866, who the proprietors were, what streets they were on, even what their façades looked like. In order to lend authenticity to the novel, I incorporated as much as I could of those findings. Also, my male protagonist is a lumberjack. Before I started this book, the only thing I knew about lumberjacks was that they were big, burly guys who chopped down trees. As I learned about the lumberjacks of the 19th century, I was amazed at their daring and innovativeness and unwavering grit. It's a culture in and of itself that has been passed down to the lumbermen of today.

Continued on next page



A Bride in the Bargain

by Deeanne Gist

Trade Paper ISBN: 978-0-7642-0407-4

\$13.99; 368 pp.

Hardcover ISBN: 978-0-7642-0694-8

\$19.99; 368 pp.

Release Date: June 2009

Media Contacts

PRINT/ BROADCAST: **Noelle Buss**

952-829-2765

noelle.buss@bethanyhouse.com

INTERNET: **Jim Hart**

952-829-2526

jim.hart@bethanyhouse.com

CANADIAN MEDIA: **Ellen Graf-Martin**

519-574-0442

ellen@grafmartin.com

Please send tear sheets to:

Noelle Buss

11400 Hampshire Ave. S.

Bloomington, MN 55438

QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS WITH DEEANNE GIST

5. What was the most interesting thing you came across while you were writing this novel?

While doing my research I read letters that Civil War soldiers had written to their loved ones at home. In one of the letters, the father told his child that when she was bad the “rebel bullets” came closer to him. But when she was good, then God protected him and kept him safe. Sadly, the father ended up dying. My heart broke for that poor little one who must have certainly felt responsible for her father’s death. Intrigued at what the long term effect of something like that might be, I incorporated the letter into my novel, making my heroine the recipient of it.

6. Why is *A Bride in the Bargain* relevant today?

Even though my characters live in the 19th century, their hopes, dreams, and foibles transcend time. Human nature is human nature, whether we’re looking at Bible stories from the beginning of time, persons in our country’s history, or everyday folks of today. What makes my characters different is not what’s on the inside, but what’s on the outside—their clothing, their customs, their way of life. But at the end of the day, they weren’t that much different than you and me.