



NAME: Linda Farmer Harris

GENRES: Christian Fiction; Adult, Young Adult and Middle Grade Historical Fiction; Romance

Q & A:

What kind of research goes into writing your novels and how much time does it take?

I do extensive research on the topic of the book/series, and on events surrounding the story. I use *etymonline.com* to confirm the words I use in conversation and narrative were used in the chosen time period.

I use *Project Gutenberg* at www.gutenberg.org for antique fiction and non-fiction books in the public domain such as *A Concise Practical Treatise on Artificial Fly Fishing for Trout* by Grey Drake, 1860. I also use places like the Chautauqua Institution and authors like G. K. (Gilbert Keith) Chesterton (1874 – 1936), Arthur Conan Doyle, A.A. Milne, Dorothy L Sayers, and Agatha Christie.

If you could offer one piece of writing advice to a novice author, what would it be?

Learn the writing craft and stay updated in the techniques wanted by publishers. Read current best writers; notice I didn't say, "sellers." Sellers is determined by sales, writers depend on skill.

What's the best piece of writing-related advice that you've received?

You don't have to feel like it to get it done. This applies to writing as well as tasks in life. I write in scenes, not chapters. It's easier to plot, construct, and to write the story event by event. I took to heart what Anne Lamott's father told her brother when he was overwhelmed by a huge school project on birds. Her father's simple yet profound advice was to take it "bird by bird," or one small step at a time. The overwhelming task of finishing a book is cut into manageable and

better written pieces.

How do you find your ideas for a book?

Ideas are everywhere. I got the idea for my middle grade book — *Escape from Outlaw Ridge, Book One, The Butcher Boy Chronicles* — from one sentence of research about the 1890 Iowa-Rock Island Line Railroad. I never found any additional references outside the rail line documentation, but that launched a 71,000-word manuscript!

What kind of books do you enjoy reading and how often do you read?

I enjoy reading books about writing, and fiction written by authors who write those books. I try to read at least an hour each evening.

Have you ever based characters on real people? Give us a couple of examples.

I have used attitudes and mannerisms from people I know if it fits the book character. In my first romance, I used my daughter's former boyfriend as the villain. (He turned out to be a cad in real life). My 14-year-old hero, Malachi Weston, is modeled after my husband as a teenager.

AWARDS: Writer of the Year, 1996 & 1998- American Christian Writers, Nashville, Tennessee

BIOGRAPHY:

Linda Farmer Harris edits fiction and non-fiction for Elk Lake Publishing, Inc., and several freelance writers including Dave Slade, Anne Greene, Kristen Terrette, and Derinda Babcock. Her novella, *The Lye Water Bride*, is in Barbour Publishing's California Gold Rush Romance Collection. She published *Mansion of Stolen Hearts* (2018) and *Treasure Among the Ruins* (2017) for Winged Publications' Forget Me Not Romances. In 2010, she was one of five finalists in American Christian Fiction Writers' (ACFW) Genesis Contest-Young Adult category with *Escape from Outlaw Ridge*. She wrote *Texas Elves* for young children.

Her non-fiction includes lessons for grades 1-6 for Southern Baptist Lay Renewal Weekends, Discipleship Weekends, and Prayer Weekends. She has published in *101 Ways to Romance Your Marriage*, *Advanced Christian Writer*, and *The Good News Journal*. She was the first editor (2000-2003) of *Write to the Heart*, American Christian Romance Writers (now ACFW), and *Lamplighter*, Austin Christian Writers' Guild, (1997-2003).

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