



Aiming for Love

BRIDES OF HOPE MOUNTAIN #1

by Mary Connealy

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QUESTIONS & ANSWERS WITH MARY CONNEALY

1. What inspired you to write *Aiming for Love*?

I had an itch to write a fairy tale. That is the basic foundation of *Aiming for Love*. This story has three sisters raised by reclusive elderly grandparents, who were afraid of an outside world that had dealt harshly with them. They taught the girls to *stay on the mountain*. Do Not Go Down. This was the litany the girls were raised with. After their grandparents passed away, the young girls were left alone on the mountainside. Completely isolated except for each other, they've grown up as skilled, timid, all-wild creatures.

Now, as the sisters are growing into adulthood and searching for their place in the world, a handsome young rancher herds his cattle into a meadow on Hope Mountain. The middle sister, Jo, with the archery skills of Robin Hood and the imagination of the Little Mermaid, longs for a life she'd been forbidden to even consider.

2. What is the faith story in *Aiming for Love*?

The sisters are very confused about the Bible. Their memories of their grandma and grandpa's Bible lessons are vague, so they've filled in some gaps with odd notions. And anyone who tries to convince them they are wrong is a heretic. It takes a lot of understanding to try to convince the sisters, for example, that "The Boy Who Cried Wolf" isn't a parable told by Jesus.

3. How did being isolated affect your heroine?

Josephine (Jo) Nordegren has spent her life running wild in the woods. She is a skilled archer and has done most of the hunting for her family. She loves to test herself against the woodland creatures. She can move silently through the woods and read tracks like the written word. She's been hiding, watching the newcomers, including a tall, young man named Dave. When Dave sneaks up on her in the woods, she's terrified, deeply impressed, and so curious that she can't quite run for her life the way she knows Grandma and Grandpa would want her to.

4. How does someone so cut off have the courage to befriend strangers?

Jo has been told since she was very young that curiosity is her besetting sin. She's heard it and believed it for so long that it no longer seems like a sin, it's simply how she is. So being curious overrides her fear. But being willing to stay and talk to Dave and his men, and then his ma when she shows up, is just the beginning of tangling up her life with the newcomers. Her sisters are curious, too, but one of them is also downright furious and terrified.