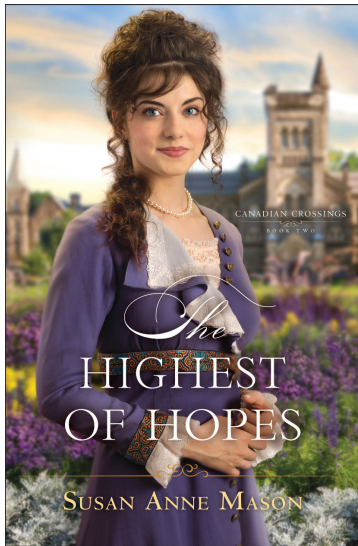


QUESTIONS & ANSWERS WITH SUSAN ANNE MASON



The Highest of Hopes

CANADIAN CROSSINGS #2
by Susan Ann Mason

Trade Paper ISBN: 978-0-7642-1984-9
\$15.99; 384 pp.

Ebook ISBN: 978-1-4934-1725-4
Release Date: March 2019

Media Contacts

FICTION PUBLICIST: **Amy Green**
952-829-2596
agreen@bethanyhouse.com

CANADIAN MEDIA: **Ellen Graf-Martin**
519-342-3703
ellen@grafmartin.com

Please send tear sheets to:
Amy Green
Bethany House Publishers
11400 Hampshire Ave. S. #200
Bloomington, MN 55438

1. Tell me about your newest book, *The Highest of Hopes*.

The story is about Emmaline Moore, a young woman who travels to Canada, accompanied by her best friend, Jonathan, in search of a father she'd believed to be dead. Emma hopes that once she finds him, she'll experience the father-daughter relationship she's always longed for. However, when she meets Randall Moore, she is disappointed at his lack of enthusiasm at seeing her. Randall seems worried that Emma's sudden appearance in his life will hurt his political career, and he asks Emma to pose as his niece instead. Hurt, yet wanting to please her father, Emma reluctantly agrees to go along with his ruse. Jonathan is helpless to keep Emma from certain heartache over her father. But he hopes she'll finally realize that she belongs back in England—with him. However, when he learns she has no intention of returning home, he fears he may lose her forever.

2. How did you come up with the idea for this book?

It started when I was doing research for my family tree. My maternal grandmother had believed all her life she was an orphan. She was raised by an aunt who brought her to Canada when she was twelve. During my online research, I discovered that her father had been alive all along and had lived not far from her in England. I was sad that my grandmother never knew her father, and it raised the question: What would she have done if she'd learned of his existence? Would she have crossed an ocean to meet him? And from there, Emma's journey began.

3. What is Jonathan's role in the book?

Jonathan has two purposes in the story. First, he embodies unconditional love and loyalty, which I hope mirrors God's love for us. And, secondly, he brings awareness of the terrible psychological effects of war that affected many returning soldiers.

Jonathan has been in love with Emma for years, and when he returns from the war, he vows to tell her. However, Emma has suffered the loss of her fiancé, as well as her beloved grandfather. In addition, she'd just learned that her father was actually alive and living in Canada. When she becomes determined to find him, Jonathan is not about to let Emma go alone and decides that he will use their trip to Canada to win her heart. Along the way, however, Jonathan must battle a condition now known as PTSD, but called "shell shock" in 1919. Back then, it was a shameful condition, one men tried to hide rather than be subjected to electric shock therapy or other horrific procedures. Jonathan's condition makes him feel less of a man, and in order to feel worthy of Emma's love, he finally agrees to get help for his issues.

Available at your local bookstore, bethanyhouse.com or by calling 1-800-877-2665.

4. What is the overall message of the book?

I think the message of this story is that sometimes a person can be so focused on chasing a dream that they overlook what is really important. Emma is so determined to win her father's approval that she is blind to everything else. Her single-minded pursuit of Randall Moore causes her to take Jonathan's devotion for granted. She overlooks his unconditional love and acceptance while chasing the elusive dream of her father's love. Over the course of the book, Emma must learn that her sense of worth cannot be tied to someone else's opinion of her. She must look within herself—and to her Heavenly Father—for validation.

5. What can you tell us about the third and final book in the CANADIAN CROSSINGS series?

Book 3, *The Brightest of Dreams*, is Quinten Aspinall's story. He comes to Canada in search of his three younger siblings. This book touches on the heartbreaking history of the British Home Children, youngsters who were brought over from children's homes and orphanages in England to become indentured workers for employers in Canada. The intent was noble in that the administrators believed the children would have a better life. Unfortunately, many had terrible experiences and were treated horrifically. It is a part of Canadian history that has remained hidden for a very long time, and I hope that Quinn's story will shed a little light on this painful subject.

In closing, let me say how grateful I am to the readers who have supported my books! I hope you all enjoy Emma and Jonathan's story and then join me next year for Quinn and Julia's amazing journey!