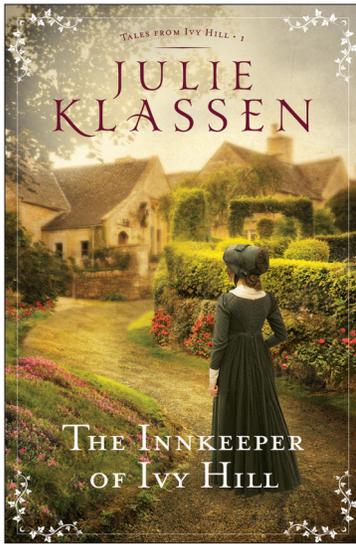




QUESTIONS & ANSWERS WITH JULIE KLASSEN



The Innkeeper of Ivy Hill

TALES FROM IVY HILL #1
by Julie Klassen

Trade Paper ISBN: 978-0-7642-1813-2
\$14.99; 448 pp.

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1. This book marks the beginning of your first series. After ten stand-alone novels, why a series?

Two reasons. First, I often receive e-mails from readers asking for sequels, or saying they don't want a book to end. Sometimes I don't either! After setting up an entire village and populating it with a cast of characters, it's hard to say good-bye after one book. I am looking forward to staying in the same village for at least three books, going deeper with the main characters, and bringing more characters to life.

Second, many readers (myself included) love village series set in England whether in books or television. Series like *Larkrise to Candleford*, *Cranford*, and *Thrush Green* draw us in with their close-knit communities filled with endearing characters. Or maybe it's just the British accents! Whatever the reason, I hope readers will enjoy my first series as well.

2. What can you tell us about the series, TALES FROM IVY HILL?

The series tells the stories of four women facing life-altering challenges with the help of their quirky neighbors and intriguing newcomers. Each novel will have a romance and drama wrap up in a hopefully satisfying way, while the main character's story spans all three books. The series celebrates the strong bonds of friendship, because in a small village like Ivy Hill, everyone is connected, like leaves on a vine.

3. Book One releases in December. Can you briefly describe it?

Sure. In *The Innkeeper of Ivy Hill*, a genteel widow becomes the reluctant landlady of a languishing coaching inn when her husband dies. Jane Bell has no idea how to manage a business. But with the town's livelihood at stake and a large loan due, she must quickly find a way to save the inn. As pressure mounts from the bank, Jane puzzles over the intentions of several men who seem to have a vested interest in the place, including a mysterious newcomer with secret plans of his own. With the help of friends old and new, Jane restores life to the inn, and to her empty heart as well.

4. Why did you choose to set the book at an inn?

In the early nineteenth century, before the advent of trains, the lifeblood of many small villages were their coaching inns. In this era, stage and mail coaches were the primary means of travel, and they stopped at coaching inns along the way to change horses, let passengers take a meal, or stay the night. Coaching inns were restaurant, hotel, "train" station, travel agency, livery, and repair shop, all rolled into one. I think it's a wonderful setting for a series, providing a backdrop for a cast of regulars who work at or frequent the inn, as well as for new people who are traveling through.

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

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5. You've been writing books for about ten years now. What would you say is your favorite thing about being an author?

I love several things. Two favorites would be listening to the audio versions of my books when they come out (Recorded Books hires such talented British narrators) and hearing from readers who've enjoyed or been touched by my books.

6. How can readers learn more about your new series?

Readers can learn more by "visiting" the village of Ivy Hill through a new website devoted to the series: TalesFromIvyHill.com, which includes a colorful village map, character list, photos, excerpts, author videos, and more. I am also active on Facebook and look forward to interacting with readers there and sharing more about my books.