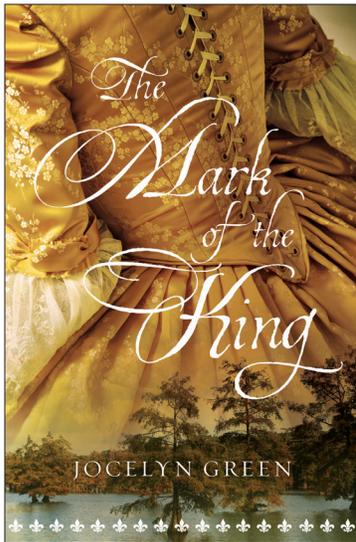




QUESTIONS & ANSWERS WITH JOCELYN GREEN



The Mark of the King

by Jocelyn Green

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1. What is the “mark of the king”?

The mark of the king, as referenced in the title, has two meanings. The first is very literal. It’s the fleur-de-lis symbol of the French monarchy that was branded on certain criminals, during the time the novel takes place, to permanently mark them with judgment. In the novel this mark plays a big role, but there is a spiritual layer to the phrase as well. As believers, we serve a higher King than any authority here on earth. Our lives are marked by His grace, no matter how scarred we may have been by judgment from others—whether that judgment was deserved or not. God’s grace covers all of it. Grace covers all of us.

2. What drew you to tell this particular story?

First of all, the history was both fascinating and new to me. There are many excellent books set in the British colonies, but the French colony of Louisiana seems to be much lesser known. The years of forced immigration, whereby Paris cleaned out its prisons to populate a floundering wilderness settlement, were just too rife with story potential to ignore. It’s a story of incredible hardship and courage, fear and hope, judgment and redemption. It also offered an opportunity to unlock a slice of American history most of us know little about, which appeals to me a great deal.

3. Why do you write historical fiction?

History still matters today. We can learn so much from the people who lived before us, and how they shaped and were shaped by the events of their generations. Not only can we find inspiration from them but also a much better perspective as we look at the world today. Unfortunately, so often history is distilled into a list of dates and names—not interesting at all. The vehicle of historical fiction allows us to explore segments of the past through the lens of the people who lived it. We get to explore the full spectrum of the human condition through the novel. Personally, I love learning while being entertained with drama, and studies show that when we’re curious about something—such as what will happen to our heroine in the next chapter—we’re far more likely to remember surrounding details, such as the historical context. To me, that’s the icing on the cake. When readers care about characters and learn about history at the same time, I’m thrilled.

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4. Where do you get ideas for your stories?

I look for ideas everywhere: books, online articles, Netflix documentaries, roadside markers, historical societies, museums, and other people and their vacation photos! The impetus for *The Mark of the King's Daughters*, a group of girls sent from France to be wives to Canadian fur traders in the 1600s. I was intrigued and started my own research. One click led to another, and I eventually learned about the French people forced to immigrate to Louisiana.

5. What was your favorite part of the process of writing this book?

Research breakthroughs literally make me shout for joy. For instance, my French sister-in-law translated a document I found in New Orleans for me, giving me a critical piece of the puzzle. Another challenge I ran into was just understanding the topography of the region. Visiting New Orleans still left me with questions as to what my characters would have encountered, geographically, in the year 1720. When I found an article online that hinted at the information I was looking for, I emailed the author, who happened to be a professor at Loyola University. I jumped up and down when he wrote me back with a goldmine of details! We ended up exchanging about six emails, question-and-answer style. With his help, I finally got a handle on the lay of the land between New Orleans and Lake Pontchartrain in the 1720s, with all its sand ridges, bayous, swamps, and marshes, including types of trees and vegetation that grew in each region. Being able to paint the scenes with accurate details is really important to me, so this was definitely a research highlight!