



QUESTIONS & ANSWERS WITH ELIZABETH CAMDEN



The Spice King
Hope and Glory #1
by Elizabeth Camden
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1. Can you describe the plot of *The Spice King* in one sentence?

When a reclusive business tycoon falls in love with a captivating botanist, he has no idea she may cause his life's work to crumble.

2. Tell us about the HOPE AND GLORY trilogy.

Each novel of the HOPE AND GLORY trilogy will feature a sibling from the rich and powerful Delacroix family. Set in the early years of twentieth-century Washington, DC, the series traces the romantic dramas of the three siblings, using actual historical events from the era as the backdrop for the novels. *The Spice King* is the first novel, and it focuses on the international spice trade and the quest to diversify the American food supply by importing new spices, fruits, and vegetables from around the world. The second novel will be set inside the White House and focus on what it was like to be a part of the McKinley administration. The final novel will deal with the passage of the Pure Food and Drug act of 1906. Although the novels are linked, each novel can easily be read and enjoyed on its own.

3. Your novels are distinctive in their use of little-known historical events that later became meaningful to our life today. What real-life historical aspects did you incorporate into *The Spice King*?

The American diet was fairly bland before steamships made the widespread importation of spices and other exotic foods affordable for the average consumer. The Department of Agriculture encouraged the introduction of many foods we now take for granted, such as lemons, avocados, soybeans, cherries, and winter wheat. There was a lot of trial and error as farmers experimented with the new crops, and spices grew in popularity. *The Spice King* explores some of the business aspects dealing with importing food from afar. Perhaps the most fun I had with the novel was learning how the magazine *Good Housekeeping* helped encourage food producers to clean up the abuses in the food industry.

4. Many of your novels are set in Washington, DC. Is there are reason you have focused on this city?

Washington, DC, has a long tradition of employing women in professional capacities. Much of this dates to the Civil War, when many government civil servants left employment to fight in the war. Women filled those positions and never really left, even after the soldiers came home. The government was undergoing massive expansion, so there was plenty of work to be had. A common theme with heroines in all my novels is that they work in a variety of different professional positions, so Washington is a rich environment for me. The heroines in the HOPE AND GLORY trilogy work as a botanist, a social secretary to the first lady of the United States, and a government photographer for the Department of the Interior.

5. What is the takeaway message you'd like readers to have from this novel?

With all my novels, I hope the reader feels like they've learned something about history, have new insight into family dynamics, and have enjoyed a thrilling love story. I also wove in deeper spiritual and ethical dilemmas to enrich the story. The novel touches on issues of forgiveness, acceptance, and salvation, but I used a subtle hand to deliver the message.