



QUESTIONS & ANSWERS WITH CONNILYN COSSETTE

1. What was your inspiration for writing *Wings of the Wind*?

When I was contemplating what to write after *Counted with the Stars*, I had a conversation with my mom about Rahab. The question her Bible study group had posed was, “What might make a Canaanite prostitute be so willing to put her life, and the lives of her family, in danger to protect enemy spies?” The Bible makes it very clear that Rahab did what she did because of faith in Yahweh, not simply out of fear of the God who had brought Egypt to its knees. As we tossed ideas around that day, the spark of a story came to my mind: What if someone else was a witness to Rahab, not only about the power and might of God, but of His goodness, His grace and mercy, and the beauty of His protective laws for His people? And so, with those questions in mind (and without revealing any spoilers . . .) Alanah’s story began to unroll itself in my imagination. And interestingly enough, I wrote the majority of *Wings of the Wind* before the idea for *Shadow of the Storm* came to me. So I had to put Alanah’s story aside in order to work on the second book in the OUT FROM EGYPT series when I signed a contract with Bethany House Publishers.

2. What does your research process look like and what historical resources did you use when writing *Wings of the Wind*?

Research is one of my favorite parts of being a historical writer. Of course, first and foremost, I go to the Bible before I even begin a story. I want to do my very best to stay within the parameters of the Word, its timeline, and its historical references. I also used the writings of Josephus, whose works are great for filling in some of the background information along with some research into other ancient rabbinical midrash (commentary). With regards to the Canaanite culture, there is much confusion and disagreement, and so many big blank spaces in the historical record, that it makes it much more difficult to research than ancient Egypt, which has such a plethora of information. One of the best sources I found to study the Canaanite religious texts was a book called *Stories from Canaan*, which went a long way in helping me understand what myths and epics were a part of Canaanite culture. For some of the background and setting detail, I spent some time on YouTube learning about archery and how to build a compound bow (since Alanah is an archer), used Google Earth to explore the geography, and wiled away many hours looking at pictures of the land of Israel—from the ruins of ancient Arad, to modern-day Jordan, to the ruins of Jericho, and the beautiful areas around the Galilee. I cannot wait to head to Israel this summer with fellow author Cliff Graham’s tour group and see some of these places with my own eyes! Research for me is an ongoing process as I write each story, and entails a lot of poking around on the internet, stumbling across hidden gems in out-of-print books on Google Books, and honestly spending quite a few hours following useless information rabbit trails that never end up in my books!



Wings of the Wind

OUT FROM EGYPT #3

by Connilyn Cossette

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3. What do you want readers to take away from *Wings of the Wind*?

Like Kiya in *Counted with the Stars*, Alanah begins her journey as an enemy of the people of God—so much so that her one goal is to kill as many of them as possible! Like Alanah, we too are enemies of God’s people before we take part in the Covenant of the Cross, and in Alanah’s story I hope to display the way that God cared for us “while we were yet sinners” (Rom. 5:8), how we were known from the beginning and wooed by the One who created us, and how each of us is being used by God to glorify Him in ways we do not yet understand and possibly in ways that will affect generations to follow. Alanah begins the story as a desperate woman who believes she is completely alone, but comes to learn that Yahweh was with her all along. I also hope that readers will be reminded that God’s story for us includes burning away the “chaff” of our sin and sorrow to reveal the purity of His unmerited grace and abundant mercy.

4. Since you began writing the OUT FROM EGYPT series what have you learned about juggling being a wife, a mom, and an author?

If you had visited me in a time machine back in 2008 or so and told me that I would be releasing my third book this year with Bethany House Publishers I would have probably laughed you back into your own year. My dream was to publish *one* book—*someday*—and even thinking beyond that to a career was pretty far outside the scope of my imagination. But since God decided to gift me with this wonderful and exciting career while I am still a homeschooling mom and while my husband travels 90 percent of the time for his job, I’ve had to learn some tough lessons about my priorities, time management, strengths and weaknesses, and my own limitations. I’ve learned that I cannot “do it all,” so I’ve had to say no to a lot of good things, but ultimately things that were not a good fit with my family and career goals. I’ve learned that my schedule may not look like other people’s schedules, workwise and schoolwise, and that it’s okay to order our school day/bedtime/wakeup time to fit what works for us, without guilt. I’ve also learned that if God opens up an opportunity He will absolutely provide me with the tools necessary to fulfill His plans, no matter the obstacles. I have been astounded that this procrastinating, non-project-finishing girl has completed four novels (on time!) and is working on number five, and I attribute that to God’s call on my life and His faithfulness in sustaining both me and the passion I have for writing stories that glorify Him.

5. Now that you are finished with the OUT FROM EGYPT series where do you plan on journeying next?

I am thrilled to be working on my next three-book series for Bethany House. These books will be a spin-off of the OUT FROM EGYPT series, following one of the characters from *Wings of the Wind* (not going to tell who yet though!), and takes place during the period *between* the Conquest and the Judges. It will be called the CITIES OF REFUGE series and will be based upon the provision that the Law of Moses made for those accused of accidental killing. These Levitical cities were a place of safety from the vengeance of the victim’s next of kin, but also came with unique conditions and consequences. As I researched these laws, I found the cities of refuge to be a beautiful picture of grace and mercy in the Old Testament that point forward to our Messiah and His work at the Cross. It’s been exciting to meet some different characters in these new adventures during the time the tribes were settling Canaan and to visit a few that we’ve gotten to know during the journey out from Egypt.