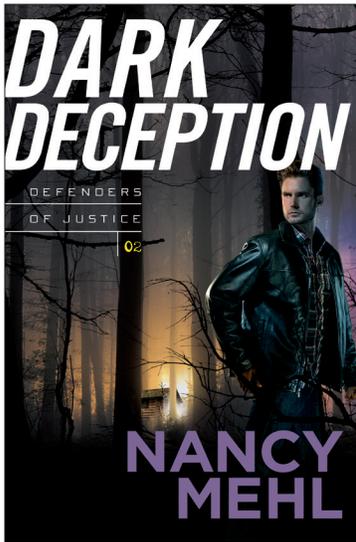




QUESTIONS & ANSWERS WITH NANCY MEHL



Dark Deception

DEFENDERS OF JUSTICE #2

by Nancy Mehl

Trade Paper ISBN: 978-0-7642-1778-4

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1. Can you give us a brief description of *Dark Deception*?

Kate O'Brien's quiet life in small-town Shelter Cove, Arkansas, is shaken when her past suddenly comes roaring back to life. Four years ago, she and her twin sister were attacked by an elusive serial killer. Only Kate survived, and she's been in witness protection ever since.

When new evidence arises to suggest the convicted man wasn't the murderer, she's subpoenaed to testify in the new trial. Afraid to go back into that world, Kate only agrees if Tony DeLuca, the deputy Marshal who protected her during the original trial, escorts her to St. Louis.

Tony readily takes on the assignment; Kate's beauty and inner strength made more of an impression on him than he expected. But when Kate's safety is threatened, Tony must race against the clock to keep her alive and put this ugly case to rest before anyone else gets killed.

2. Why was it important for you to write this story?

I've always wanted to write about a serial killer. Understanding the psychology behind this kind of evil was interesting to me. Rather than writing about one instance, serial killers are connected by several crimes. Finding ways to track clues is like putting together a puzzle. Fascinating for some writers.

But also, I felt the need to address something I see a lot of in the church. Sometimes I think we confuse faith with self-delusion. In other words, if I seem okay, I'm in faith. But while faith should carry us through any situation, God wants us to face the truth. Deal directly with our hurts and grief—then allow His healing to make us whole again. That's where real faith becomes alive and active—helping us to be the person we were truly meant to be.

3. What is the main theme of *Dark Deception*? What do you hope readers will take away from the story?

In *Dark Deception*, Kate O'Brien is a young woman dealing with a horrific past. Although she believes she's conquered the darkness, the truth is, she has only locked it behind a door she's afraid to open.

Through her story, I hope readers will discover that God understands our pain. He's not asking us to ignore it. Instead, we must face it before we can truly be healed.

4. What kind of readers would enjoy *Dark Deception*?

I think anyone who enjoys suspense or mystery will like *Dark Deception*. Even though some of the subject matter is edgier than my other books, I never use gore or excessive violence to tell my story. Also, there's a definite romantic theme—perhaps a little stronger than in some of my other books.

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. Do you have a favorite character?

Well, of course Kate and Tony would be first, but in this one, I included another character based on someone I actually know. Sergeant Leon Shook is based off my friend, Leon, from Garden City, Kansas. He helped me with some research because I wanted part of the backstory to take place in Garden City. As we exchanged information, I realized he was perfect for the part of the police sergeant. I asked Leon if I could use his name, and he agreed. After writing what I thought would be just a brief mention of the police sergeant, I realized that he should be an integral part of the story. In the end, he helped solve the crime. Writing about Leon—and turning him into a character—was great fun. I really like this story, and adding Leon is one of the biggest reasons it became special to me. Hopefully, after he and his wife, Linda, read it, we'll still be friends. LOL!

6. What's the next book in this series about?

I wanted something totally different, so I branched off into some international intrigue. Terrorists and politics. *Blind Betrayal* will send my readers into areas I've never written about before. I hope they like it as much as I enjoyed writing it.