



QUESTIONS & ANSWERS WITH MARY CONNEALY



Long Time Gone

THE CIMARRON LEGACY #2
by Mary Connealy

Trade Paper ISBN: 978-0-7642-1182-9
\$14.99; 304 pp.

Ebook ISBN: 978-1-4412-6957-7
Release Date: March 2017

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

1. What made you think of setting this story in such a rugged area?

I took a trip to Chama, New Mexico, several years ago for a writers' retreat, where we all rode a train on a narrow-gauge railroad. That train took us through the area I'm writing about. What amazed me were the desert-like conditions, and yet the grasslands, all brown and dead-looking, the tour guide said was lush and cattle got fat on it. It helped me to see that rocky soil for its real value—with the mountains rising up around us, covered in Aspen trees that seemed to grow right out of the rock.

In fact, this has helped me see past the reputation of many places and understand how people can live, often comfortably, in what seems like a forbidding land, if they can just learn to live with the land instead of imposing the life they came from on a place that won't support that.

2. The series title is THE CIMARRON LEGACY. What made you think of a legacy or a birthright as a theme for a novel?

I've noticed in all my work that I love to write about strong family connections. I suppose that's my own love for my children and my wish to see them often and stay close to them. Maybe this is even more true because I've got four daughters. Three of them live close to me, and one lives all the way across the country . . . the little troublemaker. I try hard to keep my mouth shut, but I want her closer so badly. So family, in the case of the Boden family of the Cimarron Ranch, always draws me to a story.

I also wanted generations in this land. So I'm on the third generation and hope the ranch is still in the Bodens' hands in 2017. Yes, I care about my fictional characters enough that I'm worried about their great-great grandchildren and want them to be happy.

3. So the seeds of the story are in a trip to this area and your love of family?

Honestly, those are the seeds of *most* of my books. The Boden family began for me with Jacob and Esau and this notion of how badly Jacob and Esau were treated by their parents, Isaac and Rebecca. The mom loved and favored Jacob. The father favored Esau. There were some real questions about who was oldest when the twins were born, and the deep differences in character between Jacob and Esau put them naturally in conflict.

That has always bothered me. I've known parents who had their favorites, bragged on one child and disparaged another, left more money to the favored child, things like that. So the seed of my story was, "What If . . ." (it almost always begins with a What-if . . .). What if instead of spurring on the conflict between their sons, Isaac and Rebecca had done everything in their power to bring their sons together? In *THE CIMARRON LEGACY*, Chance Boden is determined that his children will be close, will realize they love each other, and that the conflict between them is nothing compared to their loyalty to each other, as well as the connection they share as future owners of the ranch. Chance goes to some extreme measures to get his children to be friends. The conflict and the love between them continue to clash and grow in *Long Time Gone*.

Available at your local bookstore, bethanyhouse.com or by calling 1-800-877-2665.

QUESTIONS & ANSWERS WITH MARY CONNEALY

4. The Boden family consists of two brothers and a sister. *No Way Up* was the sister's story, Sadie, falling in love with Heath Kincaid, the youngest brother from *Over the Edge* in THE KINCAID BRIDES series. Now it's Justin's turn. He seems like the grouchy brother; how do you soften him up enough to make good husband material?

Justin is the rancher. The rough Esau-like brother. He's especially in conflict with Cole, the older, more citified brother. For Justin, I wanted a heroine who really clashed with him. So I brought in a very dainty woman who'd been raised in elite, moneyed circles in Omaha, Nebraska. A rich father, a rich husband, and none of them kind and loving people.

Justin is drawn to Angelique DuPree, but sees her as a woman who needs "civilization." And who has no ranching skills, no kitchen skills. She is the worst possible choice to be a rancher's wife in the rugged West.

Angelique is driven by the notion that she has been a weakling all her life. She let her mother rule her, then later her husband, and it all led to poverty and hardship and a life without love. She is determined to stop obeying blindly and find the courage God expects of her. But then along comes a man who's always snapping out orders . . . and they're the most reasonable orders a man could give. She'd be a fool to disobey him, and yet every time she does, she feels like a bigger disappointment to her heavenly Father.

I had a lot of fun with Justin and Angie. The draw between them, the conflict that would keep any reasonable people apart . . . except for the power of true love.