

Lorna Seilstad's

Questions and Answers



When and why did you begin writing?

I started writing when I was in the fourth grade when my teacher had us do weekly creative writing assignments. I loved it. Even though I continued writing into high school and college, the writing that I'd migrated toward had ended up being journalism. When my third child was little, I decided I wanted to get back to my first love in the world of writing. I discovered fan fiction and began practicing all the fiction skills I was learning about. In 2007, I began to pursue publication.

For me, it is impossible not to write. I love to read and even dream in plot lines. When I turned towards writing fiction, I'd been studying what God had given me a passion for. I knew it was writing, but I feared rejection. One day, I came to understand that He didn't ask me to be published, He wanted me to use the gifts He'd given me. Period. Who read what I'd written was up to Him. I found my mantra—"His words. His way. His timing."

Who encouraged you along the way towards publication?

My husband has been extremely encouraging. He knew I wanted to do this and supported me all the way. I also wrote fan fiction with a wonderful group. Within that larger group, a smaller group formed that wanted to seek publication on their original works. I joined that group and those ladies have been my anchor, accountability partners, and cheerleaders.

Not long after joining American Fiction Christian Writers, I met author Judith Miller. She has been such an encouragement to me, and she provided me with invaluable direction.

How much of "you" do we see in our characters?

In the second book in the Lake Manawa Summers Series, *A Great Catch*, readers will see a lot of me. There's a line where she says she would trip over a chalk line drawn on the boardwalk. That line is actually something one of my brother's said to me. I can certainly relate to Emily's struggle with gracefulness.

I suppose there's some of me in all the characters. It's hard to see myself, but my friends say they can hear me speaking when they read my stories.

Tell us a little about your family.

I married the love of my life, David, twenty years ago. He works in youth development. We have three children. Our oldest started college this year. It's been a whole new world for us. Our two daughters are still at home. They are 16 and 11, so our nest won't be empty for quite a while.

Where did you get the idea for the Lake Manawa setting?

Good question. I've lived in Iowa my whole life and Lake Manawa is about a ten minute drive from my house. Since my dad lived there as a child, I'd heard stories about the resort's heyday, but I had no idea just what a fascinating place it was until I began to research it. After I did, I had to write a story set there. I wanted to bring the area back to life.

Is it difficult to share your faith in your works?

I wouldn't say it's difficult, but I do feel a burden to share the character's spiritual journey in a way that is relatable, genuine, and scripturally accurate. Sometimes it's hard to find a way to make something that is relevant today, apply a hundred years ago. Still, I believe that human nature doesn't change. Women back then struggled with pride, anger, frustration, faith, and knowing God's will just as we do.

You write historical. Have you always been interested in history?

I grew up with history all around me—literally. While most kids were going to baseball games on the weekends, I was going to antique auctions with my parents, who were avid collectors. My dad expected us to each "know" our area. Mine was antique dolls. At an auction, he'd ask me how much a doll was worth and counted on my opinion. I still love a good estate auction.

My parents also thought history was important. We talked about it, read about it, and discussed family ancestry. Since we had a farm, long vacations in the summer were hard, so we went on a lot of day vacations. I think I'd been to every historical landmark within a day's journey of our home by the time I was sixteen.

What are three things readers would be surprised to know about you?

1. I love Oreos. In college, my roommate and I used to have a rule. We'd each pour a big glass of milk and open a fresh package. The rule was that you had to stop eating Oreos when your milk was gone.

2. I've never sailed, although I'd love to. I read "Sailing for Dummies" and several other sailing books when writing *Making Waves*. I also had help from a sailing writing friend to make sure I got the information correct.
3. In college, I was once stopped for armed robbery. Apparently, the getaway car used in a bank robbery matched my enormous '73 Dodge Polara. As I traveled through Kansas on my way home from college for Christmas, the highway patrol pulled me over and approached with their guns drawn. They let me go, but were surprised their were two cars like mine still on the road.

What advice would you give an aspiring writer?

First, write. Write a lot. I read recently that it takes 10,000 hours of practice to reach the level of professionalism in an area. You need that time with your tush in a the chair, writing away, to find your voice.

Second, I'd say join an organization like ACFW or RWA and make writing friends. Writing can be lonely, but with friends to encourage me, it's so much better. These organizations can also help you as your study your craft.

Last and most important, pray. Christian authors have to write from the overflow of their life with God. If you are always dipping into the well and not keeping your cup full, it's too easy to lose focus on what is truly important.

How can readers contact you?

I can be contacted through my website at www.lornaseilstad.com. I'm also on Facebook and Twitter. I blog with nine other writers at www.inkspirationalmessages.com. I love to hear from readers!