



1. What inspires you to write?

Often, it's an event or encounter in my life that gives me an idea; I use that idea as a springboard and my imagination takes over from there. Much of my writing explores the experiences our military personnel have lived through but find hard to explain in the context of everyday life.

2. What was your favorite *True Surrender* scene to write?

My favorite scenes are ones that just seem to flow without much effort. I especially like the scene where Aaron is struggling with his legs on a treadmill, and Holly presses up behind him to guide him, bringing unexpected sensuality to the situation.

3. *True Surrender* focuses on Aaron's point of view. Why did you decide to write from a male perspective?

I've always gravitated toward male friends. As a soldier and as a motorcyclist, I've had a lot of male co-workers and friends, and I had opportunities to study how they reacted to events and situations. And I like to bond the way men do: playing basketball or other physical activity. I'm not a "tea-and-gab session" kind of gal!

4. How does your background as a military paramedic impact your writing?

My writing is influenced by the time I spent in the Army National Guard, which trained me as an EMT and paramedic, and by military friends. Although I left the service after college, the conflicting emotions service people and their families experience is a source of fascination for me— not to mention fantastic fodder for drama and character development.

5. You are also a helicopter pilot. How did you become interested in flying helicopters?

My experience as a field medic during mock exercises in the Army National Guard exposed me to flying and helicopters. Boy, was I smitten! It was then (at the grand old age of 20) that I set a goal for myself: I would learn to fly a helicopter before I turned 30. Learning to fly the helicopter was one of the hardest things I've ever done, but it also opened new doors. I've met some amazing people and had the kind of experiences that inspire me to write.

6. *True Surrender* is your second novel. Tell us a little about your first.

Last Chance Rescue is about two people who have their own stories and face their own obstacles. But these internal struggles— with intimacy, with regret, with fear— are played out in a landscape of physical danger as members of a search-and-rescue team in the Colorado Rockies. It was a 2009 Indie Award Finalist.

7. What other writing projects are you working on?

I've always been interested in the fusion of writing, music and visual imagery. As a singer, I've collaborated on some albums and studio projects. As a taiko drummer, I work on stage presence

and the subtle difference between *performing* and *entertaining*. But these creative aspects really came together while working on my music video, "The Rose (Surrender Version)," which contains scenes from *True Surrender*. It was a collaborative process (unlike sitting alone and writing) that I would like to do more of. I'm also working on another novel.

8. You own a motorcycle accessories business, and are an avid motorcycle rider. Does that aspect of your life show up in your writing?

I've published three essays related to the life lessons I've learned from motorcycling. I do have some characters who are bikers, but thus far, I haven't written any "biker fiction." It's not easy to write (well)!

9. With a business to run and a young family—children aged 8 and 4—how do you find time to write?

Time is both an obstacle and a gift. Each day I wake up and God has gifted me with another day and another opportunity. I ask myself, am I spending my days on what really matters? To me, writing matters. I squeeze my writing in whenever I can. I sing when I can. And I play the taiko drums every week. I am always working on something creative!