



QUESTIONS & ANSWERS WITH JOCELYN GREEN



A Refuge Assured

by Jocelyn Green

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1. What drew you to tell this particular story?

When I first read a mention somewhere about French Asylum, the refuge built for Marie-Antoinette in the wilderness of Pennsylvania during the French Revolution, I couldn't tell if it was fact or fiction. So I immediately turned to Google and verified through several sources that it was real. Though Marie-Antoinette did not escape the guillotine, the refuge was still used by those who longed for their queen and her son, Louis-Charles. Once I started reading about the men and women who found refuge in Asylum, I was hooked. The settlement only lasted about a decade, but its history is fascinating and worth telling through the eyes of my heroine, Vivienne Rivard, a former lacemaker for the French court.

2. What is the theme of *A Refuge Assured*?

The primary theme is that of finding refuge in the Lord, when no physical place of safety seems to exist. But a secondary theme popped up through a character I didn't plan on creating: Armand, the father from whom Vivienne has been estranged her entire life. The two flee France together, and through their relationship, a picture of reconciliation emerged. At one point Armand says to Vivienne, "One is never too old for a father's love." None of us are ever too old—or "too far gone"—for our heavenly Father's love, either. And that is the greatest reconciliation story of all time.

3. What kind of research did you do for this book?

I devoured every book and digital resource I could find first, plus documentaries on the French Revolution, Marie-Antoinette specifically, and the Whiskey Rebellion. I did not go see *Hamilton* on Broadway, but I did read Ron Chernow's amazing book about Alexander Hamilton, since the Treasury Secretary plays a significant role in my novel. I also took my family on a spring break/research trip out to Pennsylvania. My favorite research spot in Philadelphia was City Tavern, an eighteenth-century-style restaurant that was a frequent haunt of our founding fathers. I created a fictional tavern in Philadelphia for my characters, so eating at City Tavern and getting a tour into every corner was a special treat. From Philadelphia, we drove to the site of French Asylum, or Asylum. As always, on-site research is the most fun!

4. What was your favorite part of the process of writing this book?

Aside from lunching at City Tavern, one of my favorite aspects has been learning how to bake baguettes and scones from the City Tavern cookbook as part of my research. The other favorite part was developing secondary characters that are just as vibrant as the hero and heroine. This cast of characters was a joy to bring together.

5. You have shared that your heroine, Vivienne Rivard, is related to the heroine in Laura Frantz's new novel, *The Lacemaker* (Revell, Jan. 2018). What is their connection?

Yes! Laura's story is set in colonial Williamsburg on the eve of the American Revolution. *A Refuge Assured* starts in Paris during the French Revolution and quickly moves to Philadelphia in 1794. The connection between the lacemakers was easy to imagine, because lacemaking is typically a tradition passed down from one generation of women to the next. Laura and I had a great time creating a family tree with roots in France, and determining where the branches reached to England before spanning the ocean to America. Our heroines don't interact with each other in either book, but eagle-eyed readers will catch the mention of a great-grandmother they shared in each one.

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