

## Interview Questions by Lisa Hasselton and J.A. Beard (for *Gallagher's Pride* - 2012)



### **What inspired you to write this book?**

I was inspired to write what I wanted to read! Living in Montana certainly helped with the idea, but mostly I enjoy reading historical western romances that are clean which are difficult to find. I also wanted adventure and to combine my love of Montana and Scotland into one book.

### **What exciting story are you working on next?**

Currently I'm working on the next Gallagher book, *Gallagher's Choice*, where we have the story of Ethan's brother, Gabriel and a woman from New Orleans. More of the same bit of humor, adventure and romance can be expected.

### **When did you first consider yourself a writer?**

I don't believe there was any one moment where I knew I wanted to write-it was more gradual and began from an early age. I've been writing in one form or another for as long as I can remember, but actually calling myself a writer? I'd have to say the moment that first book was finished. That's when it became real.

### **Scotland and Montana are two places that one doesn't typically associate with each other. You mentioned spending time in both places, but is that the main reason why you chose to include both of these places in your story?**

Good observation and you're right, though I do know a few Scottish who have made their way to Montana. I included both simply because I love both places. Scotland is a gloriously beautiful country and the Highlands had a mysterious and wild feel to them. The people I had the pleasure of meeting were kind, hard-working and amazing storytellers. It's also a country with a fascinating history. Montana is considerably younger than Scotland, but in some ways similar. While in Scotland people I spoke with about my home were fascinated with the American west, still in this day. They asked about cowboys and Indians and the way of life-I think some were disappointed that we lived modern-day lives, but the fascination was still there. What it comes down to is that both places are dear to me and I wanted both to have a home in the story.

### **What's the allure of Scotland? Even people with zero Scottish blood seem enamored of the country.**

There is a mystery about Scotland and a deep, sometimes dark history. The castles around almost every corner, the ruins, the royalty, the wars and even movies like *Braveheart* – all of these elements combine to paint a fascinating image and energy that

draws one in. I remember feeling that energy the moment I stepped foot onto Scottish soil. Like so many countries whose history have spanned centuries, there is a sort of magic in the air. Scotland has also been portrayed as not only a barbaric country, but also a romantic one through movies and stories-both are strong elements. I will say that I believe the real Scotland is far more beautiful and interesting than anything portrayed in fiction or on screen.

### **What, for you, defines the perfect romance hero?**

Personally, I prefer a hero with flaws. Perfection is overrated, especially in a hero. Yes, the element of a strong, capable character is essential to any hero, but I'd rather have a hero who shows us their less-than-perfect side. He doesn't get everything right. He might occasionally take a beating and he might even make mistakes-he's human. I also don't care for cookie-cutter heroes, meaning the same hero written over and over. I'd rather see a personality, whether charming or gruff, so long as he's an individual.

### **What defines the perfect romance heroine?**

The same elements for the hero, at least in my mind, are essential to the heroine. I do enjoy a heroine who has to be rescued by our hero-that's a part of the adventure and romance, but she should also be strong of character. I enjoy a heroine who knows her own mind and doesn't necessarily define her life by the hero but rather allows him to complement who she is as an individual.

**It's no secret that romance, as a genre, has gotten steadily steamier over the years. Indeed, a few notable romance sites have even stated they are realigning their "heat" scales to better reflect that reality. Others have noted that the rise of certain specific sub-genres, such as the so-called "Bonnet books" (Amish/Mennonite romance) may be a reaction by certain segments of the romance reader population who are disappointed by a lack of cleaner offerings. Can you share your thoughts on all this?**

I do agree that romance books have indeed gotten steamier, but at the same time, even erotica was written hundreds of years ago; it has just become more accessible and more accepted. I've also noticed that 'heat' scales or content ratings have been placed on blogs that offer reviews (mine included) to warn readers about the level of steamy content. The main problem I see with this, is that one person's opinion of minor steam content may be completely different from another reader's opinion, so it's not always easy to judge a book by those steamy-meters. The sub-genres have definitely seen a rise, especially Christian-romance sub-genres because some readers want a guarantee of a clean book and they know that certain authors will always deliver that. I do believe that the population of readers looking for cleaner offerings will continue to grow and possibly faster than authors realize.

Personally, I choose a book for the story. If the steamy content isn't overdone or doesn't take away from the story, then I generally don't think much about it. In GALLAGHER'S PRIDE, the scenes are merely implied and that was a personal choice as an author. The other books in the series will be just as clean even though the books wouldn't be considered one of these cleaner sub-genres, because I believe some readers are looking for clean books without the religious element. The good news is that there are enough readers who are either willing to span the entire romance genre, regardless of content, or who prefer a specific sub-genre and have found enough authors who have filled that need.

**Can you give us a bit of insight into the future of this series?**

There are four more books planned for the Montana Gallagher series, each telling the story of another family member. The next book is about the second Gallagher brother, Gabriel, and a woman from New Orleans. The third will be the story of their sister, Eliza Gallagher. I can't tell more than that without giving too much away. The fourth and fifth books are planned out (covers and all), but again at this point, those stories are being kept under wraps. I will say that the protagonist from the first book doesn't go away and story lines from the first book are picked up in the others, though each book has a unique romance and a new adventure.

(Note added by MK in 2021 – Obviously I didn't stop at four more books. Book seven was published in Dec 2020, and there are more to come.)

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## The Author

Award-winning author MK McClintock writes historical romantic fiction about chivalrous men and strong women who appreciate chivalry. Her stories of adventure, romance, and mystery sweep across the American West to the Victorian British Isles, with places and times between and beyond. With her heart deeply rooted in the past, she enjoys a quiet life in the northern Rocky Mountains.

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