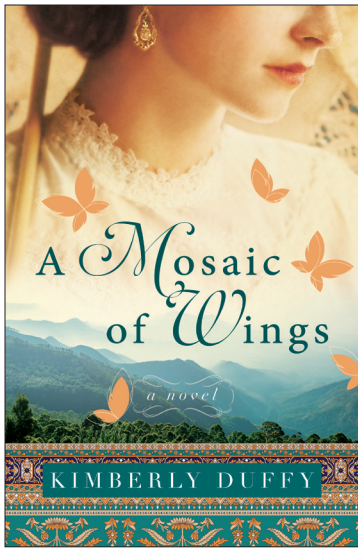




**QUESTIONS & ANSWERS WITH KIMBERLY DUFFY**



***A Mosaic of Wings***

by Kimberly Duffy

Trade Paper ISBN: 978-0-7642-3563-4

\$15.99; 368 pp.

Ebook ISBN: 978-1-4934-2519-8

Release Date: May 2020

**1. What was the inspiration behind *A Mosaic of Wings*?**

I didn't set out to write about an entomologist. I was probably the last person on Earth interested in learning about insects. But my nine-year-old daughter, who has always wanted to be an entomologist, suggested it might be interesting to write about a woman who studied them, and when I started digging into the history of women in entomology, I agreed. I've always been fascinated by women in history who acted outside of society's expectations and forged new paths. In the 19th century, women started really coming into their own in the sciences. They also began to travel more. It was an exciting time.

**2. The setting plays an important role. Can you tell us about your research process?**

I'm lucky to have lived in India for six months after high school and have spent a couple weeks there last summer, so my experiences offered a nice foundation for expansion. I know what it feels like to be caught in a monsoon rain and how *dal* smells, and that the heat just climbs into your every pore. I also have incredible Indian friends who read through my manuscript, answered questions, and offered suggestions for writing a more authentic and accurate story. Of course, I read a ton of books, websites, and papers, too. I spent a crazy amount of time trying to find 19th century shipping and train schedules. Because I love research and spent my childhood reading classic novels, I have a tendency to include too much information and description. The trick was to write in just enough detail that it created a sense of place and made the reader feel as though they had been swept across the ocean, but not overwhelm them with minutiae.

**3. Owen is an interesting mix of strength and humility. What inspired him?**

Oh, Owen. I'm half in love with him, which is all right because he's half based on my husband. The other half was inspired by my first literary crush, Gilbert Blythe. I can hear the sighs around the world.

I think the most attractive man is one who isn't threatened by strong, talented, successful, intelligent women. I wanted Owen to be the boy-next-door, kind of flirtatious but also a loyal, confident extrovert who is everything Nora isn't.

He is eternally supportive of her, but also not afraid to tell her when she's wrong. He's equal to her in every way but never, ever dominating.

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**4. Tell us about the spiritual threads in your book.**

Every time I write a book, I take care to write in a faith element that feels authentic to the character. Nora is a scientist. She is almost single-mindedly devoted to her work and studies. And as a pragmatist, she's not someone who spends a lot of time on introspection or philosophy, so I wanted to weave in a spiritual arc that made sense for her. That meant the natural world prompting her most thoughtful moments. She sees God's hand in a kaleidoscope of butterflies, and waterfalls are a catalyst for her greatest pain and joy. There isn't a lot of upfront discussion of spiritual matters, but the story subtly touches on themes of God's plans vs. our own, sacrifice in friendship, and forgiveness.

**5. What do you hope readers come away with after having read *A Mosaic of Wings*?**

I really hope they fall in love with India and perhaps even consider visiting there. It's not a place that sees a lot of exposure in Christian fiction, and I'm honored to be able to write about it. I also pray it sparks an interest in the study of not just insects, but all the natural world and that readers come away with an appreciation for God's creativity and artistry. The heavens declare the glory of God. And so do the butterflies and palm trees and waterfalls. His fingerprints are all around us, if we but take the time to look.