

“Streams of Mercy” by Teresa Slack Sample Interview Q & A’s

1. What is Streams of Mercy about?

On the day of her father's funeral, seventeen-year-old Jamie Steele discovers he was once suspected in the disappearance of an old girlfriend. All the evidence points to him. Jamie knows first-hand of his violent temper. But was he actually capable of murder like everyone in their small town believes? Jamie has to find out what really happened to the missing girl, Sally Blake.

2. What inspired you to write Streams of Mercy?

I've always loved listening to those stories relatives tell around the dinner table at family gatherings. That's when you hear the good stuff people have been rehashing for years. And a small town always has some sort of a scandal going on. I always wanted to know what really happened- - how much was rumor and how the people involved got into those situations in the first place. That's how Jamie Steele came into being. She's the overlooked daughter of the most disreputable guy in town. The townspeople have been talking about this unsolved crime for twenty-five-years. Everybody and his brother think they know the real story.

3. Your small town characters are so true to life. Are any of them based on actual people?

Many of my characters are based at least in part on someone I know or someone I've heard about. Sometimes I use is a little nugget of information I've heard from somewhere and build a whole character around it. For instance, Noel Wyatt, the town pharmacist, is based on a line from an old country music song.

4. Do you have any favorite characters in Streams of Mercy?

Several. Just like in real life, every character has his or her own story to tell. Besides Jamie, who is as real to me as you are, I love Noel Wyatt. He's a strong man; a leader in the community with secrets of his own. Because of mistakes he made in the past, he ended up living a very lonely life. People who think they know him, don't really have a clue. We all know someone like that. Or maybe we're that person. I also admire Grandma Cory. I could write an entire book about her. At first glance, she's cold and easy to dislike. But it becomes apparent as the story progresses that the tragedies in her life have shaped her into the woman she is today.

5. Your story isn't all tragedy and scandal, is it?

No, just true to life.

We live in a world where no one is immune to suffering. Marriages break up. Children

aren't always adored by their parents. People sometimes make poor choices that affect them and everyone around them. The Bible says; "The fathers will eat sour grapes that will set the children's teeth on edge." That's why it's so important to carefully consider how our decisions and choices today may affect someone we love in the future.

6. Have any aspects of your own personality made it into your book?

I think for any writer, it is nearly impossible to keep their own values and ideals out of their work. More than anything, I pray I've brought my faith in God to the page. I believe no matter what your circumstances, life is still worth living; that there's a blessing to be found in each new day. It's just that sometimes you have to make an effort to find it. Regardless of our current circumstances, He's still on the throne and still in control.

7. When did you first decide you wanted to become a writer?

I never really decided; it was just something I couldn't stop doing. In school that's what everybody told me I'd be doing. I was always writing back then. I would walk down the hallways between classes scribbling in a notebook and crash into people. But I never really thought about it being a job. It was years before I was able to devote myself to writing as a full-time job. Now I can't imagine doing anything else.

8. Do you have a specific reader in mind when you write?

Yes, myself. If it's something that interests me, then I want to write about it. I love watching people and imagining how they got to be who they are. I'm never bored. I usually don't enjoy books about supermodels or hard-boiled private eyes. I like a book where I can imagine myself as the main character.

9. What other stories are you working on?

I just finished the first book of a mystery series for middle-grade readers called See Spot Run. I loved reading mysteries when I was a kid and really enjoyed writing this one. I have also completed the second book in the Jenna's Creek series, *Beyond Redemption* which will hopefully be released next year.

10. What can you tell us about *Beyond Redemption*?

A year has passed since the first book. Jamie goes away to college, thinking her future is completely mapped out. But as in life, things don't always go as planned. Changes begin in the very first chapter that turn Jamie's well-laid plans upside down.

11. How many books do you have planned for the Jenna's Creek series?

That's difficult to say at this point. At least three. Possibly a half dozen. It all depends on reader response, and how the residents of Jenna's Creek react to having their lives invaded by me every so often.

12. You do realize the good people of Jenna's Creek are purely fictional, don't you?

Yes, they're fictional, but characters often take over the story and manipulate it to suit themselves. There are at least two characters in *Beyond Redemption* who I tried to create a certain way, but they wouldn't cooperate and ended up totally different than my original intention; for the betterment of the story I might add.

13. What do you hope readers will take away from Streams of Mercy?

That God is a loving God; faithful and just to forgive us, no matter how far we stray from Him. His mercy is everlasting, and in our pursuit to be more like Him we must extend mercy to others.

14. How do you hope God will use you through your writing?

I believe God has a plan and a purpose for everyone He placed on this earth. I'm thankful He's provided me with this outlet for my writing. I've always been a reader myself, but before Christian fiction, it was often difficult to find a book that wasn't objectionable in some way, even if it was an interesting story. I like the idea of providing quality fiction you can have sitting on your coffee table and you don't have to worry about your grandchild seeing something that would embarrass you or him. Mostly I want God's message of grace, forgiveness, and never-ending mercy to come through my fiction. Some people may never read the Bible, but they may pick up a good book and start reading, and without even realizing it, learn a spiritual truth.

15. Do you have any closing thoughts?

Just that I hope people enjoy the book. I believe most of us have found ourselves in Jamie's situation at least once; needing to forgive someone who might not deserve it or who refuses to acknowledge they've done anything wrong. But it's not our place to decide if they're worthy of forgiveness or not. Many times forgiving someone is more important to the person doing the forgiving than the one who needs forgiveness.