

**Author Interview #1**  
**Blog: L. L. Diamond – 2016**

**Who is your favorite sister??? Kelli or Rita???**

(Kelli Weekly)

Ha! I bet you thought you would stump me. My hands-down favorite sister in the whole wide world is Jonah's. For those who do not know me personally, Jonah is my grandson. He has a twin sister who is my only granddaughter. She would be my favorite. #grandkidsrule #grandkidsarenumber1

**Joy...I noticed that in the fine details of your stories, you use personal information from your real life Example: Using JJ's birth date for Georgiana. Can you give a couple of other examples where you did this?**

(Rita Malone Paul)

Good eye, Rita. I've actually used Jennifer's birth date a few times. I've "borrowed" names from people I love or don't love and have used them accordingly. Mainly, I have been pretty cavalier about adapting characters to fit personalities of people I know. (And, people you know as well.)

**How do you stay so positive and upbeat all the time? Does your writing help with that or is it part of your character to not let life get you down?**

(Janet T)

Thank you, Janet. Those are words I will cherish. For this you may blame my parents. By naming me "Joy", it obligates me to a certain attitude. And, I LOVE living. To me, every breath is precious and every minute should be filled with something we love to do. If my day is particularly challenging, I write happily ever after.

My instinct is to walk away from negativity and in-fighting. It's why I rarely get in the middle of an issue unless it affects someone I love. Then, the claws come out and I'm single-mindedly fierce.

**How long did you live in South America? Did your experience influence your writing?**

(tgruy)

John and I lived in Ecuador twice for a total of four years.

Absolutely/positively, Tere, our living there influenced me. I am forever filling my days to overflowing. In Ecuador, the pace of the whole culture is slower and more relaxed. Eventually,

my health and the high altitude forced me to slow down. It was then that I started thinking I might actually have the time to put a story to paper.

It also helped me to realize that Regency England was a culture. I found it much easier to place myself there alongside my characters with the experience of getting outside my comfort zone.

**Which is your favorite Jane Austen novel? .... And why is it your favorite?**

(Debbie Fortin)

Pride and Prejudice is my favorite. Why? I think it's the family dynamics of the Bennets and the Bingleys. There is no doubt that my siblings played a huge role in how I grew up. Getting to read about the same in P&P is like watching reality TV.

**Which are your top three favourite Austen novels?**

(Joana Starnes)

- 1) Pride and Prejudice
- 2) Persuasion (John was at sea for 21 years as a sea captain. I still cherish the letters he wrote. So, Captain Wentworth's letter? It's easy for me to think he spent years imagining what he would say to Anne Elliott if he ever had the chance. The days on the ocean, when not in port, are lonely and quiet. Lots of time for a healthy imagination to work.)
- 3) Emma – I will just say she reminds me of someone I know well.

**The best variations, in my opinion, are most credible when the values of the original are not ignored but, instead, are built on as circumstances change from the original source. That said, how many times have you read Jane's P&P and how recently?**

(Betty Campbell Madden)

Good question, Betty. I've read it twice in the last three years. How many JAFF have I read during that same time? Literally hundreds.

**Which of the Pride and Prejudice films is your favorite, and why? (insert evil laugh here)**

(Robin Helm)

You are a stinker of the first order, Robin. However, the answer may surprise you.

When Jennifer was still at home we watched the 1940 version with Greer Garson. That was way before I ever read the book. Jennifer was an only child so observing her watch the Bennet sisters was a hoot. She had grown up thinking that having a sister would be the same as having

a best friend. Then she found out some sisters are “Lydia” and she changed her mind. Those memories make it my favorite.

**What is your favorite non Jane Austen movie?**

(carterkristina2)

I LOVE sweet chick-flicks like You’ve Got Mail, Sleepless in Seattle, and Clueless. The Anne of Green Gables series is a special favorite and old musicals are a standby. My guilty pleasure? Sam Elliott westerns.

**Which is your favourite Mr Knightley in the adaptations?**

(Joana Starnes)

Both Jeremy Northam and Jonny Lee Miller are excellent actors. However, since I’m almost the same height as Jonny Lee Miller, I’d have to go with Jeremy Northam (he’s 4” taller). Besides, his clothes in Emma are the height of elegance, just as I imagine Mr. Knightley would wear.

**Who is your second favourite Austen heroine and why?**

(Joana Starnes)

This one is hard, Joana. You might assume that Elizabeth Bennet is my favorite. She’s not. From the first time I read P&P she frustrated me to no end. Yes, I would have reacted as she did at the Meryton Assembly. Yes, I would have wanted to make witty comebacks to Darcy and Caroline. Yes, I would have refused Mr. Collins as she did. But, she was smug. She arrogantly thought she knew everything she needed to know to pass judgements on people. Of course, by the end of the book she was a much smarter and mature young lady. She’s my third favorite.

My first is Anne Elliot. I love her loyalty.

My second is Elinor Dashwood. She loves her sisters more than herself.

**Which Austen villain do you dislike the most and why?**

(Joana Starnes)

Fanny Dashwood. Such a cold-hearted snake.

**When did you begin writing books?**

(Mary Michael)

I wrote a horrible book when Jennifer was little (about 30 years ago). It ended up in the trash bin. My first published book was written in 1985. It was a cookbook for the cancer clinic in

Mexico where I was treated. In just over a month, it will be two years since I started "A Father's Sins". I published it March 2014.

**What was your initial inspiration to begin writing JAFF?**

(Jen Red)

When I read "The Journey" by Jan Hahn (see the next question), I longed for more. I would dream about that story and spend hours' day-dreaming that particular Darcy and Elizabeth in a variety of altered situations. I found more and more JAFF, but never lost my storyline that came from those daydreams. After about a year, I just HAD to write it down.

**You mentioned once that 'The Journey' by Jan Hahn was part of your inspiration for starting your writing career. What about that book was so special to you?**

(Janet T)

I had just finished reading Pride and Prejudice for the first time when I found Jan's book. At the start, Darcy and Lizzy are in a carriage with the Bingley sisters. Darcy actually had a conversation with Elizabeth and I thought, "well, it's about time." His tender care of her during the robbery and kidnapping were exquisite. THAT was the Darcy I fell in love with.

Then came chapter 8. Wow! I've never forgotten it and reread it on occasion. By the end, I closed the cover, closed my eyes, and sighed a happy sigh.

**I remember reading that you had found your type of writing and it was fluff! Why do you call it fluff?**

(Janet T)

I love being in love. Love it! Love it! Love it! I love a hero who slays dragons with his brave heroine by his side (with a sword of her own, of course). I admire capable women immensely. Therefore, my stories tend to have Darcy and Lizzy stand together as one against their enemies. It gives me pleasure to watch a relationship bud and grow into something tested and strong. So, I write them falling in love easily. That's my fluffy marshmallow crème method of storytelling.

**The only question I can think of, and it would be for all authors, is where ever do you come up with the ideas for variations? As much as I read, I can't say that I have ever had a new idea for a story popped into my head.**

(Sheila L.M.)

Sheila, after I read a story I ponder over one small change. Then I mentally follow that to what I believe the conclusion would be. Thus, a new variation of an old story.

**What inspires you to write JAFF (P&P) novels and how do you come up with the plots?**

(Dung)

As I mentioned above, Dung, it involves a lot of thinking and a healthy dose of imagination. Many nights I lay awake moving my characters around like furniture in a room. I get to know my characters better as I imagine them reacting to unexpected influences.

If I am entertained by the path they take, I make a note of it for later. There's my story.

**After Jane Austen, what deceased author and what living author have been the greatest influence on your writing?**

(ladysusanpdx)

Ohhhh, good question. I think it's a tie between Charles Dickens and Lucy Maud Montgomery. For current? Hmmmmmm! Let me think. It would have to be Jan Hahn for JAFF and Richard Peck (his kid's books are so awesome – Way Down Yonder and A Long Way from Chicago are my favorites).

**I have really enjoyed all of Joy's stories and particularly love Married in "One Love, Two Hearts, Three Stories". I'd like to know what was your inspiration for this story. I thought Georgiana's character was excellent and very believable for a fifteen year old.**

(Lynn Bischoff)

Lynn, it was actually Georgiana that started Married! for me. What are the facts as we know them from Pride and Prejudice? She was a teenager who showed a propensity for poor judgement by falling for Wickham. She was wealthy, privileged, and without a parent's authority. It was an easy leap to make her teenage years more challenging to her dear brother. I couldn't see Darcy dealing well with it on his own so put him and Elizabeth together quickly. Married! Is my particular favorite as well.

**Would you ever consider writing a non P&P variation such as one based upon Persuasion?**

(Debbie Fortin)

Yes. I have a story outlined that is Persuasion based. In it, Anne Elliot has developed a subtle rebellion that none of her family are aware of. Captain Wentworth doesn't realize the woman he admires is actually Anne. When he finds out, he loves her more than before and his letter at Bath is 100% justified. Maybe one day I'll finish it.

**Do you try and keep a set schedule for writing, or do you write whenever the inspiration hits you?**

(Pam Hunter)

I try to write every day. However, I have the bad habit of editing as I go. That slows me down considerably. And, I'm easily distracted.

**How do you stay motivated?**

(Jennifer Joy)

Funny you should ask this, Jennifer. I have a lovely daughter that badgers me unmercifully.

**I love your stories, Joy. I do have a question or two for you. When writing, I am sure, you sometimes have moments when your characters just aren't cooperative. What do you do to get through those rough patches....walk, bake, watch a movie, etc?**

(Debbie Fortin)

Excellent question. I take them to bed with me. They invade my dreams and thoughts until I realize where I went wrong in my writing. Right now, Bingley continues to give me fits. You would think that such an amiable man would be easy to write. He's NOT!!! HE DRIVES ME CRAZY!!! I won't have relief until I tell his story exactly as he wants me to. Period!!!

**If you could meet Jane Austen what would you talk about/ask her?**

(Debbie Fortin)

I would like to hear her describe each family member one by one. In her writing, she provides very few personal details about her characters, so I would try to listen to see if that was her inclination with the real people in her life as well.

**I love how in your variations the villains don't get to do much damage, and if Darcy and Elizabeth have challenges to face, they often communicate and face them together. Will it be the same in your next novel?**

(Joana Starnes)

No. My next Darcy and Lizzy is called "The Abominable Mr. Darcy". When she overhears Darcy at the Meryton Assembly, she says he goes from an enigma to an enemy. (Very much a departure for me. I keep wanting to make everyone play nice and get along. It's not happening in this story.)

**Georgiana was a very entertaining surprise in 'Married' – very different to canon, but deliciously naughty and it was easy to believe why she would act as she did. Do you have another surprise like this in store for us?**

(Joana Starnes)

I believe the path Jane Bennet takes will be shocking in my Bingley/Jane story. She is much more “real”. Still kind and good, of course, but as imperfect as everyone else.

**Is your next book going to be a novel or a collection of short stories, and how long till the next treat?**

(Joana Starnes)

I wish I could make Bingley/Jane a short story so I can be done with them. Grrrrr! But, no. All are full-length.

**Would like to know about a publication date on the next book but I hate to seem like i am putting any pressure on you/her. Things all happened in good time, is a philosophy I seem to adhere to.**

(Sheila L.M.)

I adore you, I'm working on it, Sheila. Truly I am.

**Now, how long do I have to wait to add more Joy King creations to my inventory? I'm certainly ready for another good fix! And I'd be so happy, even jubilant, moving my mouse, turning the page, with that coveted bracelet decorating my wrist.:)**

(Betty Campbell Madden)

Thank you kindly. As mentioned above, I'm typing.

**Joy, I have all of your books and have read them several times. Are you still planning on finishing the sequel to A Father's Sins?**

(Tammy Bould)

I am. It is book 2, Bingley, which I am working on now.

**What other projects are you working on?**

(Dung)

I have two books and one screenplay in progress right now. If I'd quit bouncing back and forth I would probably get one finished sooner. I'm working on it.

**How many more ideas do you have for stories? I need more things to read.**

(Rhiannen Franklin)

The truth is that my brain keeps spinning with ideas. I don't think it will ever end. Thanks Rhiannen!

**Since I have and thoroughly enjoyed all your books and audios I was wondering. Are you branching out writing something else, like kids books?**

(Marie Jones)

Eventually, yes, I would love to publish my children's stories. I get such enjoyment sharing them vocally with my nieces, nephews, and grandchildren that I've not taken the time to write them down. I've not forgotten them.

**Joy do you have any suggestions for an aspiring writer?**

(Fawn George)

Yes. You will never have a finished book if you don't start. I think there's a shoe company whose advertising slogan is "just do it." Think of a story you would love to read and write it. The rewards are astounding.

**What words of wisdom can you share with someone who is thinking of pursuing writing and publishing as a career or hobby?**

(Jennifer Joy)

Jennifer, I don't know how wise I am, but thinking about writing is like sitting in a rocking chair – you don't go anywhere no matter how hard you think/rock. Writing a book is like eating an elephant – one bite at a time/one word at a time. I love those metaphors because they help me not be overwhelmed with the process.

If I type a few words, I have a sentence. If I type a few sentences, I have a paragraph. A few paragraphs, I have a chapter. Before I know it, I have a story in front of me that's begging for "the End".

## Author Interview #2

Blog: Maria Grace: Random Bits of Fascination – 2016

1. **If you were to write the 'origin's episode' of your writing, what would be the most important scenes? What did your early efforts look like? Are they still around to be used as bribes and blackmail material?**

While in elementary school, I developed a love of biographies, history, and adventure stories. It was my goal to read every book in the biography section of our school library. I accomplished my goal by 6<sup>th</sup> grade. By the time I hit the ripe old age of 12, I wanted to write my own biography. The problem with that was I hadn't lived a very exciting life to that point. I did start journaling in a notebook which was a 3-ring binder with lined paper we used in school. All my early efforts found their way to a garbage dump decades ago.

2. **All superheroes have their mild-mannered secret identity. What is yours? (I promise we won't tell!)**

To be honest, it never occurred to me to be anything but me. I don't use a pen name, because it didn't cross my mind to try to think one up. So, I'm very much "Joy" by day and night. I'm a bit of a Pollyanna-type person in real life and, as several reviewers have commented about my stories, I'm a Pollyanna-type writer as well.

3. **Who are your partners in crime? What are their superpowers?**

My husband, John, is the head of my crime-fighting organization. He has long, strong arms (David Gandy arms) that I can nestle under when I get a negative review, that provide a gentle push when I need prodded along to be more productive, and that help carry my loads of responsibility.

Jennifer Joy, my daughter, is a cohort. She is a gentle soul that can corral my imagination so that it moves forward. She is also a punctuation and grammar queen. It has become a challenge to me to keep the red marks on my manuscripts to a minimum. She's brutal.

I've seen the need to surround myself with others who have skills that I do not possess. Copy editors, story editors, cover designers, narrators, translators, media developers, and marketing coaches. It has been worth it financially for the peace of mind they give me.

**4. Where do you get your superpowers from?**

Besides my family, I think it is from old movies. I know, that sounds corny, but it's true. I grew up watching the good guys prevail time after time after time. I learned from a very young age, back when TV's were only in black and white, that every story can be written in such a way that there's a happily ever after. Even my reading of school library biographies was that way. No matter who the man or woman was, they always came out a hero. So, I became invincible (in my own mind).

**5. Where is your secret lair and what does it look like?**

My desk is a wooden platform built right into the space between the dining room and the kitchen. It's right out in the open in a high traffic area where I am easily distracted. I'm not going to provide a picture because it's cluttered. I will share some pictures that are on my wall next to my computer. They are inspirational.

**6. What kind of training do you do to keep your superpowers in world saving form? How do you insure they are used only for good?**

I am in constant contact with several other Jane Austen fan fiction writers that have sharpened and honed my skills and continue to do so. This is a wonderful community that, although not without imperfections, is capable of banding together to cross-promote to where other romance genre readers and writers are sitting up and taking notice. It is critically important for me to be supportive of new and existing authors, since I've personally benefited so much from them.

Being named "Joy" is hard at times. One of my all-time favorite scriptures in the Bible is the Golden Rule at Matthew 7:12. I try to treat others like I would like to be treated. Is it challenging at times? You betcha!

**7. Granted, you probably don't get to wear your superhero costume a lot, but if you did, what would it look like?**

Oh, you mean the black leather one that makes me look like the original Cat Woman on the old Batman series? Sure! I wear that every day. NOT!!! I start my day in baggy cotton night gowns (365 days a year) with pink fuzzy slippers with white hearts on them. Please don't tell anyone, Maria Grace, but oftentimes I don't match. Shhhhhh!

**8. What is your kryptonite? What are the biggest challenges you face in your writing?**

This is the easiest question to for me to answer. My kryptonite is other JAFF books. I'm a fast reader that gets 100% involved. Once I start a good book, everything else stops around me. It's highly unproductive for my own writing.

**9. What was the supervillain that threatened to stop your latest project and how did you vanquish it?**

Sigh! It's Bingley. Yes, poor, immature, vacillating Charles Bingley. I'm on the 3<sup>rd</sup> or 4<sup>th</sup> draft and I still have a love/hate relationship with the young man. I'm not fairing much better with Jane Bennet either. My supervillain was other stories that have been screaming to be written. There are a total of five such stories that will not leave me alone. I've completed three of them, have a good start on the fourth one, and collected the research information I need for the fifth. In between, I work on Bingley/Jane.

**10. What important lessons have you learned along the way?**

It has been said that it takes a village to raise a child. I've learned that it takes a village to produce a good finished book.

**11. What have been the best/most memorable experiences along the way?**

It has to be when I get letters and messages from readers who tell me they were moved to tears, or they wanted to throw my book against a wall, but couldn't put it down long enough to do so.

Sharing in this new career with my only child. I am so proud of Jennifer. She has always been very creative and is encouraging that in her six-year-old twins. My granddaughter loves to color, draw, and paint, which she calls "arting". My grandson is a story-teller. Jennifer has said that she wouldn't have written Darcy's Ultimatum had I not pioneered the way in this indie-publishing world. How can that not be memorable for me?

Getting my #1 banner for One Love – Two Hearts – Three Stories in German. Why that thrilled me so much confounds me, but it does.

**12. If you did this again, what would you do differently and what would you not change?**

I would have hired a cover designer and formatter from the start. When I look back at what John and I put together for A Father's Sins – it's just SO EMBARRASSING!!! I would not change that I write my stories for me. I write what I want to read. I'm satisfied with that.

**13. What is the best writing advice you have ever gotten and why?**

Do you remember the movie "Field of Dreams" with Kevin Costner? In it, he was told to build a baseball diamond in the middle of a corn field. It seemed so unreasonable and unrealistic to do so. "Build it and they will come." With my new writing career, I was told

to write it, perfect it as good as you can, and publish it. Then, the readers will come. And, it happened just like that.

**14. Tell us about your new book and why we need to drop everything and get it now.**

One Love – Two Hearts – Three Stories is a combination of three “feel good” stories about Darcy and Elizabeth. Personally, I wouldn’t drop *everything* to get it, especially if you have a hot dish straight out of the oven, folded laundry, or a piece of chocolate. Wait until you want to escape into the world of Jane Austen’s *Pride and Prejudice*, relax your mind and heart, and have your soul soothed. That’s when you want One Love – Two Hearts – Three Stories.

**15. What’s in store for you in the future? Do you have any other big projects on the horizon?**

Besides the Bingley/Jane fiasco, I have a work-in-progress called *Compromise!* Elizabeth inadvertently puts Darcy in a bad position and they are forced to wed before they really have a chance to get to know each other. Some parts I’ve written so far have made me laugh out loud. Other parts make me sigh. I’m loving this story and my Mom says it’s my best. But, she’s my Mom. She’s supposed to say that, isn’t she?