

## History, Romance, and Faith... Q&A with Jane Kirkpatrick

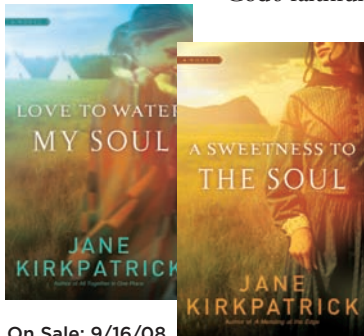


**Q: How much of your stories is history and how much is fiction?**

**A:** Ah, there's the question! I see historical facts as the spine of a story while the flesh and blood are the characters and how they deal with the challenges they face as they seek their desires. In both books, the "shared knowing" as I call it, the facts, are as accurate as I can make them. In *A Sweetness to the Soul*, Jane was just fourteen when she married her husband who was sixteen years older. They did have a dream. Whether she had a friend named Sunmiet is fiction, but surely she did have such a friend! In *Love to Water My Soul*, my husband's great grandmother really was lost from a wagon train and found by Indians and raised by them until she was a teen. What happened to her after that and

God's faithfulness as she tried to find her family—that was fact too. But the scenes, the dialogue, the subplots are from my imagination. A writer friend of mine calls these novels "true stories, imagined."

Both books have foundation in facts, but so little is written about women in history and often what is there was written by men, which isn't bad but leaves gaps. Fiction allows me to speculate to fill those holes. Most of what I knew about Jane Sherar, for example, came from a single essay written by a descendant fifty years before, and from her obituary that was written with such passion and grace I knew she must have been a remarkable woman. I had to figure out how the story had relevance for a contemporary world. I hope I accomplished that!



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**Q: How would you compare the protagonists, Jane and Shell Flower, in these two stories?**

**A:** Jane is strong-willed, work-oriented, opinionated, and doesn't always get along with her mother. As a wife she is a complete partner to her dreamer husband, and despite the differences in their ages, she brings wisdom and earthy practicality to his adventures. She also longs for something and discovers that there are some things we cannot change in our lives but we can always become clear about what matters and have the courage to act on that. Shell Flower is much younger when her story begins, and her journey is wrought with issues of survival and adaptability, something Jane really didn't have to contend with, at least not in the same way. Shell Flower is more of a dreamer, a seeker of spiritual understanding, even when she doesn't know the words to describe her search. She's more reflective while Jane is more of a doer.

**Q: In what ways do you think the struggles that Jane and Shell Flower dealt with—in the 1860s and 1870s—are like the struggles modern women deal with?**

**A:** Both women struggled with how to support their families without losing themselves in the process, and finding life work that had meaning. Theologian Paul Tillich wrote: "Human beings must come to terms with three issues: we control very little in our lives; that life is uncertain; and that we are all mortal and seek to find meaning." I see Jane and Shell Flower demonstrating their efforts to come to terms with those three issues just as we struggle with them today.

Our lives are the stories other people read first. Like these historical women, we often live in communities or sometimes have families who do not share our views of the world. Living well with them and being true to ourselves is a constant challenge today as it was then. Living so we leave a story worthy of remembering is also a yearning I think most women have regardless of the century.

**Q: Did you discover any surprises as you wrote these novels?**

**A:** Before I begin to write I answer three questions: What's this story about? What do I feel deeply about? How do I hope a reader will be changed in reading this story? It may take pages to answer the questions, but I get it down to one sentence each that I post on my computer. The answers help me keep going when I start to feel lost or think I should go do the dishes instead of doing the work of writing! What surprises me is that when I finish the first draft, I discover what the story was trying to tell me. Through *Sweetness* I came to terms with my childlessness, and in *Love* I discovered whom I belong to. These were not things I started out exploring; they are gifts in the telling that I hope I pass on to my readers.

**Jane Kirkpatrick** lives with her husband in a remote part of Oregon where she ranches and is a consultant to Native American communities. [www.jkbooks.com](http://www.jkbooks.com)

## Top 5 Things

You Need to Know

Before Going to Paris

1. Parisians can spot an American from miles away. And even if they do speak English, don't be surprised if they respond in French to your question of "Parlez-vous anglais?" (Hint: the "z" is not pronounced!)
2. If your French friend asks you to go "licking windows" there's no need to be concerned. It actually means "window-shopping" in en français!
3. The French will most likely greet you with a kiss on both cheeks. But, don't expect a marriage proposal...this is just a friendly greeting.
4. The French would never buy pastries or a birthday cake from a grocery store. And neither should you.
5. Your quickest path to becoming royalty might be finding the painted figurine the French bake into their birthday cakes. The lucky person wins the right to being queen or king...but only for the day.

Read more in *Bon Appetit!*



### Easy But Impressive Chocolate Truffles

#### Ingredients:

8 ounces good quality semisweet chocolate chips  
1/2 cup heavy cream  
2 Tbsp liqueur, such as Crème de Cassis or Crème de Framboise, or vanilla or almond extract  
1/2 cup sweetened cocoa, sifted  
1/2 tsp Gold or Silver Luster Dust  
(Can purchase at [www.confectioneryhouse.com](http://www.confectioneryhouse.com))

Place chocolate chips in a bowl. Bring cream nearly to a boil in a small, heavy saucepan. Stir frequently, until steaming but not boiling. Be careful to scrape the bottom of the pan constantly so the cream does not scald. When hot, pour cream over chocolate chips. Let stand for 3 to 5 minutes; gently stir until smooth. Add liqueur or extract and stir to combine. Cover loosely with plastic wrap and refrigerate for several hours, until firm.

Sift cocoa and luster dust into a bowl and gently blend with a fork until dust is evenly distributed. Using a measuring teaspoon or a small melon baller, scoop up chocolate chip mixture and quickly roll between your palms until you have a smooth ball. Roll each truffle in cocoa to coat. Chill until firm. Store in an airtight container in the refrigerator for up to 2 weeks.

You may wash your hands and/or cool them off during the process if the chocolate is melting too quickly. Truffles will be firm once refrigerated. Let them come to room temperature for about 10 minutes before serving.