

# **A Woman's Place**

**by Lynn Austin**

## About the Book

They watched their sons, their brothers, and their husbands enlist to fight a growing menace across the seas.

And when their nation asked, they answered the call as well...

Virginia longs to find a purpose beyond others' expectations

Helen is driven by a loneliness money can't fulfill

Rosa is desperate to flee her in-laws' rules

Jean hopes to prove herself in a man's world

Under the storm clouds of destruction that threaten America during the early 1940s, this unlikely gathering of women will experience life in sometimes startling new ways as their beliefs are challenged and they struggle toward a new understanding of what love and sacrifice truly mean.

## Praise for the Book

"In Christy Award winner Austin's latest...the attack on Pearl Harbor affects the lives of four diverse women. Virginia needs to find her identity beyond her family; Helen is aging but dives into a job that may be too much for her, Rosa craves freedom, and Jean is looking for a way to fulfill her dreams. These unlikely friends form a bond that helps them endure difficult times. Austin always writes with impeccable skill and careful insight; her well-drawn, multifaceted characters and a thought-provoking plot will keep readers glued to this wartime tale. Highly recommended for all collections."

—*Library Journal*

"In a heartwarming yet wrenching story, Austin describes life in a factory, the difficulties facing women workers, and the transformations that took place during the war. Readers will be drawn immediately into this eloquent story that explores each woman's beliefs, struggles, and dearest wishes. The pages turn quickly as each character finds out what it means to be a woman in the early 1940s, how to deal with a world at war, and how to survive with their men far away. Sure to provoke a tear or two, this is a beautiful, touching read."

—*Historical Novels Review*

*Courtesy of Bethany House*

## About the Author

Title: Lynn N. Austin

Known As: Austin, Lynn N.; Austin, Lynn

American Novelist ( 1949 - )

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### PERSONAL INFORMATION:

Family: Born December 5, 1949; daughter of a sales manager and a librarian; married; husband's name Ken (a Christian musician); three children. Education: Southern Connecticut State University, B.A.; Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary, graduate work. Religion: Presbyterian. Hobbies and other interests: Reading, hiking, traveling, exploring ancient ruins. Addresses: Home: Orland Park, IL. Agent: c/o Author Mail, Bethany House Publishers, 11400 Hampshire Ave. South Minneapolis, MN 55438. E-mail: lynnaustin@hotmail.com.

### CAREER:

Former teacher; author; speaker.

### AWARDS:

New Writer of the Year, Moody Bible Institute Write-to-Publish Conference, 1993; Writer of the year, Wheaton Write-to-Publish Conference, 1996; Silver Angel Award, for *Eve's Daughter*; Christy Award, for *Hidden Places*.

### WORKS:

#### WRITINGS BY THE AUTHOR:

#### "CHRONICLES OF THE KING" SERIES

- *The Lord Is My Strength*, Beacon Hill Press (Kansas City, MO), 1995.
- *The Lord Is My Song: A Novel*, Beacon Hill Press (Kansas City, MO), 1996.
- *The Lord Is My Salvation: A Novel*, Beacon Hill Press (Kansas City, MO), 1996.
- *My Father's God: A Novel*, Beacon Hill Press (Kansas City, MO), 1997.
- *Among the Gods: A Novel*, Beacon Hill Press (Kansas City, MO), 1998.

## "REFINER'S FIRE" SERIES

- *Candle in the Darkness*, Bethany House (Minneapolis, MN), 2002.
- *Fire by Night*, Bethany House (Minneapolis, MN), 2003.

## NOVELS

- *Fly Away*, Beacon Hill Press (Kansas City, MO), 1996.
- *Eve's Daughters*, Bethany House (Minneapolis, MN), 1999.
- *Wings of Refuge*, Bethany House (Minneapolis, MN), 2000.
- *Hidden Places: A Novel*, Bethany House (Minneapolis, MN), 2001.

Contributor of articles to magazines including *Moody*, *Parents of Teenagers*, *Christian Reader*, *Lookout*, *Teen Power*, *Discipleship Journal*, and *Teachers in Focus*.

## WORKS IN PROGRESS:

*Flames of Freedom* (novel).

## Sidelights

Lynn Austin, a full-time freelance writer and a popular speaker at churches, schools, conferences, and retreats, had always wanted to write fiction but could never find the time. While living in Canada, however, she discovered that the long winters and her children's nap times gave her the time she needed. Austin commented on her Web site, "I was not an English major in college, and I knew very little about writing except that I felt compelled to do it. So I simply set aside the time, sat down one day while my children were napping, and began my first novel."

Austin's "Chronicles of the King" series includes five novels set during Biblical times. Reviewing the first novel in the series, *The Lord Is My Strength*, *Booklist* contributor John Mort appreciated Austin's historical research and sympathetic portraits of her characters. Melissa Hudak, in a *Library Journal* review of *My Father's God*, also praised Austin's skill at presenting an ancient time and place, as well as her ability to create believable characters.

Her interest in biblical history also inspired Austin's novel *Wings of Refuge*. Set in the present era, the novel tells the story of Abigail MacLeod, who travels to Israel to participate in an archaeological dig and to escape from her family problems, which include a cheating husband. To her surprise, Abigail is a suspect in the murder of a man who was seated next to her on the flight to Israel. Once at the dig site Abigail forms a strong connection with Hannah, the dig leader. As the dig proceeds and artifacts are found, the story of a young woman from the past surfaces. Throughout the book readers learn about the lives of Abigail, Hannah, and the young

woman from the past. "It's an intriguing and eye-opening book . . . one I highly recommend," commented *Renown Magazine* contributor Jessica Heikoop.

*Hidden Places: A Novel* is set during the Great Depression. Eliza Wyatt, a widow with three young children, is determined to keep her family's orchard in business. A man comes to her door looking for work, and Eliza decides she needs his help. Though he appears like every other man looking for work during the Great Depression, but he seems very familiar with the farm and the work. Eliza begins to wonder just who this man really is. A reviewer for *Publishers Weekly* praised the novel as a "beautifully descriptive" work with "endearing, believable characters."

Set in Virginia at the time of the Civil War, *Candle in the Darkness*, the first installment of Austin's "Refiner's Fire" series, tells the story of Caroline Fletcher. Caroline has grown to love and care for the slaves that work for her wealthy family. When Caroline's mother commits suicide, Caroline, then twelve years old, is sent to live with her relatives in Philadelphia. Three years later, the Civil War is about to begin, and Caroline's father brings her back home to Virginia. Now a firm abolitionist, Caroline finds it hard to be back in the South and to support her loved ones who are fighting to keep slavery legal. Caroline decides to do what she thinks is right, with the help of God and the slaves she loves. *Renown Magazine* contributor Jessica Heikoop commented, "This book is so intriguing and suspenseful it will keep you at the edge of your seat." Its sequel, *Fire by Night*, focuses on the Civil War and its effect on two young women from the North.

#### FURTHER READINGS:

#### FURTHER READINGS ABOUT THE AUTHOR:

#### PERIODICALS

- *Booklist*, March 15, 1995, John Mort, review of *The Lord Is My Strength*, p. 1309; October 1, 1999, John Mort, review of *Eve's Daughters*, p. 326.
- *Library Journal*, September 1, 1997, Melissa Hudak, review of *My Father's God*, p. 166; November 1, 2002, Shawna Saavedra Thorup, review of *Candle in the Darkness*, p. 71.
- *Publishers Weekly*, June 25, 2001, review of *Hidden Places*, p. 44.

#### ONLINE

- *Beacon Hill Books Web site*, <http://www.nph.com/> (January 20, 2003), "Lynn Austin," reviews of *The Lord Is My Salvation*, *The Lord Is My Song*, *The Lord Is My Strength*.
- *Bethany House Web site*, <http://www.bethanyhouse.com/> (January 20, 2003), reviews of *Eve's Daughters*, *Wings of Refuge*, *Hidden Places*, *Candle in the Darkness*, *Fly Away*, *Among the Gods*.
- *Lynn Austin Web site*, <http://www.lynnaustin.org/> (January 20, 2003), "Biography," and "Frequently Asked Questions."
- *Renown Magazine online*, <http://www.renownmagazine.com/> (January 20, 2003), Jessica Heikoop, reviews of *Candle in the Darkness*, *Wings of Refuge*, and *Eve's Daughters*.

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## Discussion Questions

1. Which character did you identify with the most: Virginia, Helen, Jean, or Rosa? What about her personality or her life did you relate to?
2. Which character underwent the greatest transformation over the course of the book? What events contributed to that change?
3. How did the historical events in the story act as catalysts for change in these women's lives? Can you recall any historical events in your lifetime that affected your beliefs or your outlook on life? Have events such as 9/11 brought about changes in your life?
4. How have women's roles changed in the past 25 years? The past 50 years? The past 100? Do you see World War II as a defining moment for women? Why or why not?
5. The four women's personalities were all very different. What word would you use to describe each one? Which women grew the closest to each other? Why was that? Do you believe the four will remain friends after the war?
6. How did each woman's faith change in the course of the novel? What events influenced her beliefs? How did they change? Which woman's faith underwent the greatest change?
7. Each of the four women had a man (or men) in her life. Which man (Harold Mitchell, Jimmy Bernard, Meinhard Kesler, Dirk Voorhees, Wolter Voorhees, Russell Benson and Earl Seaborn) did you like the best? Why? Which one did you like the least? Did you change your mind about any of them as the story progressed?
8. Do you think that attitudes toward women have changed since the time when this story took place? In what ways? Have all of these changes been for the better?
9. One of the themes that emerged in the story was the destructive nature of racism. Which characters' lives were impacted by prejudice? How? Did anyone's biases change because of the events of the story?
10. Choose one character and tell what you think will become of her after the war.

*Courtesy of Bethany House*