



QUESTIONS & ANSWERS WITH JENNIFER DELAMERE



The Artful Match

LONDON BEGINNINGS #3
by Jennifer Delamere

Trade Paper ISBN: 978-0-7642-1922-1
\$14.99; 368 pp.

Ebook ISBN: 978-1-4934-1723-0
Release Date: April 2019

1. What was the inspiration for *The Artful Match*?

The framework for this story came from the series itself: three sisters who were raised in George Müller's famous orphanage in Bristol come to London at different times and find new lives. The more unique aspects of Cara's story grew out of my interest in Victorian art (which was partly inspired by an excellent BBC miniseries from a few years ago called *Desperate Romantics*). Cara wants to become an artist, and in the 1880s that wasn't necessarily an outlandish idea. It was a productive time for artists. Many enjoyed both critical and financial success. I thought it would be fascinating to visit the Bohemian world of London's artists, who freely take Cara in when she has nowhere else to go.

Several people who befriend Cara are followers of the Aesthetic movement. This was highly popular for a time, influencing paintings, poetry, and dress. Its devotees could be rather eccentric at times, and they were the subject of Gilbert and Sullivan's comic operetta *Patience*. I had fun with a few of their foibles too, but I also enjoyed being able to portray talented artists who were dedicated to their craft.

2. What do you think is a main takeaway from this story?

I knew early on that Cara's story would be especially fun to write, because her personality is so different from my own. She is free-spirited, impulsive, and wears her heart on her sleeve. She never quite fits in anywhere and is desperate to step out from the shadow of her more grounded and successful sisters. Surprisingly, she finds her answers in the place she least expects. A big theme in this book is the joy of discovering the real purpose for the gifts and talents God has given you.

3. Cara and Henry seem an unusual pairing for a romance. She grew up in an orphanage, and he is a member of the aristocracy. Do you see this as a kind of Cinderella story?

On one level it might appear that way, but I think there are some twists. For one, although Henry is an earl, he's not living a life of carefree ease. He's grappling with serious financial challenges and a family that today we might describe as dysfunctional. Nor does Cara come to this match with empty hands. She has a great capacity for love and kindness and bringing out the best in others. She can bring joy and emotional healing to a family that desperately needs it. They have very different personalities that complement each other in interesting ways.

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4. Which character was the most fun to write?

That would have to be seven-year-old Amelia, Henry's ward. There is some question about her parentage, and although she is well treated, she has no real emotional bonds with anyone. Her caretakers are not equipped to give her the kind of love a child craves. Amelia's frustrations make her stubborn and unruly, but she is also clever and resourceful. Her bravado is a cover for her insecurity about where she belongs in the world. Cara's heart immediately goes out to the girl, for she understands what it is like to grow up without parents. Although Amelia begins the story as an emotional outcast, she will ultimately be the catalyst that brings the family together.

5. Did you include any real historical characters in your story?

Yes! Early in the book, Cara pays a visit to the Grosvenor Gallery, an art gallery that was famous for being unique and very forward-thinking in its approach to choosing and displaying art. Cara meets Lady Blanche Lindsay, who co-owned the gallery with her husband, Sir Coutts Lindsay. Both Lady Lindsay and Sir Coutts loved art and were painters themselves. In addition, Lady Lindsay played the violin, wrote music, and even had a song copyrighted. Later in life she wrote novels too. A woman of many talents! Unfortunately, her marriage to Sir Coutts was not a happy one, and eventually they separated. But while they were together, the gallery had a huge impact on the art world and is still remembered today for its many innovations.

6. What's next on the horizon?

I'm working on a new series set in 1880s London. It follows the lives of three women whose successful careers as telegraphers lead to romance but also to plenty of complications. I've enjoyed learning about the history of the telegraph and of the many women who worked in this field. I'm excited to be able to bring this new series to readers!