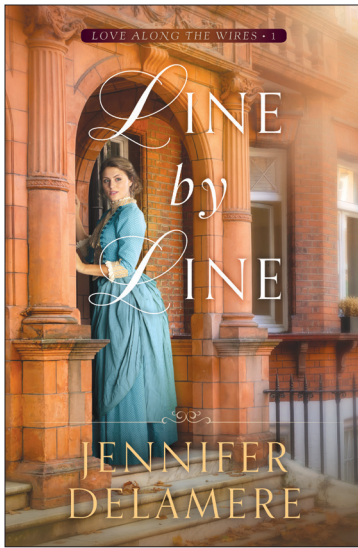




## QUESTIONS & ANSWERS WITH JENNIFER DELAMERE



### **Line by Line**

LOVE ALONG THE WIRES #1  
by Jennifer Delamere

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### **1. Why is this new series titled LOVE ALONG THE WIRES?**

The main characters are telegraph operators. It was a busy career field in the late 1800s, including in London, where this series is set. In *Line by Line*, Alice McNeil works for a company that has its own telegraph line—something that was not uncommon for large businesses at that time. Her two best friends are also telegraphers, although their working environments are different from Alice's.

### **2. What inspired you to choose telegraphy as a profession for these 1880s heroines?**

I became interested in the history of the telegraph when I read a book called *The Victorian Internet*. The book detailed many ways the telegraph's impact in the nineteenth century was similar to the internet's in the twenty-first. The world got smaller, news traveled faster, and businesses were transformed. As with the internet, there were even scams and long-distance romances!

Almost from the beginning, telegraphy was an occupation pursued by women as well as men. It was work that both could do equally well. Sometimes they worked in separate departments, but more and more, men and women worked right alongside each other. It didn't escape too many people at the time that this setup could easily give rise to workplace romances. That's a fun concept I'll be pursuing in the LOVE ALONG THE WIRES series.

### **3. Although the main characters in your books are fictional, you often include real people in your books. Is this the case with *Line by Line*?**

Yes! Douglas Shaw has several encounters with Scottish-born American industrialist Andrew Carnegie. I first heard of Carnegie in connection with the many public libraries that were built with money he donated. Carnegie was raised in poverty and began work very young as a telegram delivery boy. He never forgot his poor beginnings, and he became a great philanthropist. While researching this book, I discovered that Carnegie visited London during the time in which *Line by Line* is set. Because he had so many things in common with the book's hero, Douglas Shaw, I thought it would be interesting to have them meet. Drawing from Carnegie's own writings, I found he could give Douglas some good advice at a critical time.

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**4. What do you think is a main takeaway of this story?**

A theme of mentorship runs through the story. I have benefitted greatly from mentors in my own life, so I understand and appreciate their value. Alice and Douglas have mentors, people they admire and from whom they take important life lessons. At the same time, they must also learn to discern when God is leading their lives in a different direction than they'd planned. Perhaps many of us have experienced something similar. We might initially be stymied by an unexpected turn in the path, but in the end, we discover the new direction satisfies longings deep in our souls that God knew about all along.

**5. Speaking of surprises, did you come across any while writing this book?**

As an author, I do sometimes get surprised when a character turns out differently than I envisioned in the planning stages of the book. This happened in *Line by Line* with a minor character, Alice's former schoolteacher. To be honest, I initially saw her as a sort of Miss Havisham—a spinster who harbored bitterness over the fact that she never married. Instead, she turned out to be charming, comfortable in her own skin, and satisfied with the choices she'd made in life.

I think there is also a bit more humor in this story than in my previous books. This stems from Alice's attempts to try out a few suggestions found in a rather questionable book purporting to give advice to spinsters. The results are vastly different from what she expects. She finds herself in some humorously sticky situations that I hope will bring a smile to readers.

**6. What can we look for in upcoming books in this series?**

The telegraph will continue to play an important role, impacting not only the work environment of the characters, but their personal lives as well. There will be plenty of interesting surprises for Alice's friends, and some more hit-and-miss advice from that book for spinsters. And romance, too, of course—even for those who might be purposely trying to avoid it!