

## Alexis Harrington Talks About Herself...

Alexis, welcome!

You've been writing full time for twenty years, which in many ways is very solitary work. I would think that makes your work environment very important. What is yours like?

*I have an office in my home and settling down to work usually begins with me watching all the pets wander in—except the finch who is already there. I have two Great Pyrenees and a cat that all seem to want to be with me while I'm trying to work. Getting up to step around them is like maneuvering an obstacle course, but I wouldn't have it any other way. They are very dear to me. I also have three chickens who are not allowed in, but who would be thrilled to get into the house if I let them.*

*I keep dreadful hours. I'm not a morning person and I tend to be up late while the rest of the world is sleeping. I love the quiet. Just the kids and me, candles burning, and elevator music playing. It's even better in the summer because the still, fragrant nights are so inspiring.*

I know that you've been a full time writer for over twenty years and have published eleven historical romance novels. That must take up most of your time, but what do you like to do when you step away from the keyboard?

*I enjoy so many things! I make jewelry, I'm a fine needlework artist specializing in embroidery and I thread crochet and sew. My grandmother on my mother's side was a homemaker and a sewing whiz. She taught me to embroider, crochet and cook while my mom was at work. So it's no surprise that I enjoy cooking, as well. I also love to read, entertain friends, spend time with my pets, pursue craft projects, and decorate. Animal welfare is very important to me and I belong to several organizations, including the Oregon Humane Society and the ASPCA. I'm also a strong proponent of preserving our historical buildings and sites; developers would bulldoze them all to put in subdivisions and malls.*

What jobs have you held besides writing?

*My jobs were mostly in offices, administrative assistant, receptionist, eventually administrative manager. Before I made the leap to full-time writer, I spent about twelve years working for consulting civil engineers. Riprap, anyone? How about a nice detention pond?*

Most of your novels are set during various time periods in the Pacific Northwest. What appeals to you so much about the area?

*I've lived here my entire life, specifically in the Portland, Oregon area which is where I set Jess and Cole's story in Home by Morning. It helps me to be able to go to some of the places that I'm writing about. I'll often bring old photos and compare them to the streets and buildings of today. It helps me orient myself and never fails to feed my imagination. Today, my fictional Powell Springs, which is also the setting for my July 2012 novel Home by Nightfall, would be a pretty crowded suburb of Portland. Back in 1918, it was a long distance from the city.*



You share many of the historical details of Home by Morning in a very subtle way. You mention patriot songs such as *Over There* and *You're a Grand Old Flag*, Mary Pickford, calls handled by a telephone operator, prohibition, suffragettes. Do you think subtlety is important in creating the mood and ambiance of your setting? For any writer?



*Yes, definitely, and I hope I was subtle. Otherwise the writer's craft shows like a chartreuse slip hanging from beneath the hem of a burgundy skirt.*

How has your family reacted to your writing and success?

*Certainly, my mother is very proud. Her mother helped to raise me and she died two years before I sold my first book. That is one of my greatest regrets. My grandmother was a voracious reader, not bad for someone who came to this country without a word of English.*

Where did your family come from?

*My maternal grandparents came from Asia Minor in the early part of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. They were Turkish nationals but ethnically Greek. I grew up hearing Greek spoken in the house and although I didn't pick up speaking it, I can understand my American-born mother when she tells me something in public she doesn't want anyone else to understand.*

*So, there are no claims to historic fame such as my family journeying west via the Oregon Trail. We were a family of immigrants. My grandmother was first married to an American naval officer and at that time, automatically became American as well. There's a book in that story but I've been putting it off.*

What are a few of the things you believe readers have come to expect from an Alexis Harrington novel?

*Detailed reader reviews almost always note the vivid descriptions and feeling of "being there." When I started writing, my goal was, and still is, to write believable stories about believable characters. I try to write the kind of books I like to read. That being said, I'm a huge fan of the Harry Potter, Outlander, and Twilight series.*

*I also do my best to crank up the emotions. If a reader tells me I made her cry, I know I've done my job.*

Who are some of your favorite writers and books in general?

*Although I'm not a horror fan, I'll read Stephen King just because he writes so beautifully. I love that in the tensest moment, he'll throw in something funny that makes me laugh. He's one of those intimate, conversational authors who make me think of a rainy night, sitting in a kitchen with a bottle of wine, and he pushes out one of the chairs at the table and says, "Sit down, Alexis, I want to tell you a story."*

*I also loved Frank McCourt and was stunned and felt bereft when he died. I'm keeping a sharp lookout for Suzanne Collins' next work—I thought The Hunger Games trilogy was brilliant...Pete Hamill's Forever... Anthony Bourdain can also write very entertaining stories that center around food, but really are so much more. Anya Seton wrote some fabulous books. I'm sorry she's gone.*

Which is your favorite among your own books?

*A good friend taught me to always say that my latest book is my favorite, but privately, I think it's a tie between Allie's Moon and A Taste of Heaven.*

What's next?

*What's next—and I'm still writing it!—is Home by Nightfall. It takes us all back to Powell Springs and to many of the characters from Home by Morning. It's two years after the end of the Great War, but its repercussions continue to affect the lives of everyone there. Fingers crossed, I hope readers will enjoy the journey as much as I do. Home by Nightfall will be out from Montlake Romance in July 2012.*

How can readers keep up with your writing, books and everything else you're up to?

*Everyone is always invited to visit my website, [www.alexisharrington.com](http://www.alexisharrington.com). Also my email is [alexis@alexisharrington.com](mailto:alexis@alexisharrington.com) and mail still goes to PO Box 1229, Fairview, Oregon 97024. Please keep in touch.*

Thank you, Alexis.

*Thank you for having me. And thanks to all who have taken the time to find out more about me and my writing. I hope you'll share Jess and Cole's story with me in [Home by Morning](#).*

**HOME BY MORNING**

Alexis Harrington

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