

Melinda Viergever Inman's Press Kit Reviews

A selection of reviews of *Refuge* (pg.1-2), *Reviews of Fallen* (pg.3-4), *Reviews of No Longer Alone* (pg.5-6), and *Endorsements of Bible Studies* (pg.7)

Reviews of *Refuge*:

Bruce Van Horn, Author: "From the moment of his own fiery fall to earth, Satan has sought to thwart God's plan. He enflames our desires to have what is not rightfully ours to lead us from God's chosen path. David, driven by murderous passion, was willing give his entire kingdom to have Uriah's wife. Surely God couldn't use, let alone redeem, David after this. Or could He? Melinda Viergever Inman's story of Cain and Lilith, *Refuge*, draws us in to a story of rage, pain, passion and despair where we, too, wonder how God could possibly take this mess and make it right, let alone beautiful. A magnificent story that restores hope for our brokenness and leaves God firmly enthroned and in control of His creation!"

Julie Gwinn, Publisher: "In *Refuge*, the author expertly blurs the line between truth and fiction. Melinda takes the Biblical stories of God's first family and not only illustrates their struggle with sin but also shows how ultimately God uses them for good giving us hope he will do the same for us."

Cindy Sproles, Executive Editor, ChristianDevotions.us: "This book has it all. Murder, love, revenge, and redemption. Melinda Inman takes a pivotal story from the past and shows us the truth and peace in real redemption - exactly what we all need."

Patricia Todd, Attorney: "I could not put it down, and it fed my soul and my mind! I love historical fiction, but when its based on the Bible I find it really fascinating. When I opened *Refuge* I anticipated that it would be about sin and its impact on humans. What I did not expect was its redemptive ending. The theology is solid, and the study questions at the end will provide you with life application that is invaluable. I loved it and look forward to the next book!"

Jo Ann Pevoto, Professor Emeritus, College of the Mainland; former co-editor Poetry Texas, the Sidewinder, and Hurakan: "In *Refuge*, Melinda Viergever Inman takes Cain's act of killing Abel after God's rejection of his own sacrifice, and weaves it into a cosmic battle between God and Satan, reminiscent of Milton's epic *Paradise Lost*. She creates a poignant love story between Cain and his sister Lilith and then turns Cain's failure into a story of God's love and redemption. Inman inhabits Adam's and Cain's world with believable characters and supplies delightful details along the way so that the reader can visualize that world. The book is a real page turner as Inman creates suspense motivating the reader to persist till the last page and then beyond into the reader's guide."

Jen Sloniger, Writer, Seeker of Social Justice: “When Melinda offered me the opportunity to read her book, *Refuge*, in advance of its release I jumped at the chance. *Refuge* is a supernatural/speculative novel that plunges readers into the time of Adam and Eve, filling the white space between sentences in the story from Genesis we know so well with ingenuity. The fallen world in which Adam, Eve, and their children find themselves is one you and I can relate to, after all it is our own. Yet the landscape of *Refuge* manages to maintain the exotic ether of its former glory, the vapors of perfection having only just begun to dissipate. There is intrigue in this young earth where Cain, Abel and their siblings are beginning to experience the effects of their parent’s sin, and commit new sins of their own. In this place, visible angels stand guard at the entrance of Eden, an ever present reminder there’s no going back.”

Erin Chesney Holcomb, Classical Literature Instructor: “*Refuge* is not only historically enlightening but a fascinating and poignant depiction of human nature. Real struggles with guilt, lust, anger, frustration, jealousy and insecurity are depicted with honest, raw and truly captivating candor. The characters are diverse, the setting is engrossing; the story feels very real. The author includes some fantastic information and questions in the back of the book demonstrating the impressive breadth of her historical research: ranging from nomadic mythology to the ancient Israelite church. Cover to cover, a great read.”

Susan Lloyd, Biblical Counselor: “This Story while hauntingly familiar compels you to consider is there more to this story than I think I know? The exploration is captivating because you are drawn to the dilemma the character struggles through as though it were your own. Is it going to be as you expect, or will you be surprised by the conclusion? Dear reader, do you want to expand your world view and color outside the lines boldly, where it is safe to do so within the comfort of an intriguing fictional story? Venture into the dark side that begs for redemption, and Find it? You decide! Jump in and explore, you won’t be disappointed!”

Kristin Beck, Compulsive Reader, Literature Major, Literary Mom: “This is a very powerful book showing the power of sin to destroy a perfect world and tear apart a family; Cain's physical power over his brother and Satan's intense anger and hatred for humankind. As a reader, seeing the brokenness of Adam and then his son, Cain, over their own personal sins really hit home when I think about how blasé I sometimes am about my own attitude toward God. I also really enjoyed the fictional aspects of the book- the descriptions of the relationships and conversations between the first family ever created, the descriptions of the Garden being guarded by cherubim, and how nature may have looked in the newly-fallen and tainted world. I was pretty engrossed in this book (lost some sleep because of it! I had to find out what happened next!). The discussion questions are not to be overlooked, either.”

Reviews of *Fallen*:

Karina Herring, Artist, Entrepreneur: “After reading *Refuge* last year I was anxiously awaiting Melinda’s next fiction release. *Fallen* did not disappoint. Melinda has a fabulous ability to take you “on location” with her writing, even with this story that most know well. Clearly she spends time researching and studying. *Fallen* became reality. The epiphanies, the struggle, the communication trials between the characters were perfectly on point. *Fallen* is not another ‘old story’ retold, it’s a new way of viewing details we now pass over in haste.”

Liz Muller: “*Fallen* is a poignant love story of the first two humans, woven alongside the glorious story of love and hope that is offered to all humans by their Creator. The perfection of creation in the Garden of Eden is starkly contrasted with the world outside the Garden after the fall. The author took a story that was very familiar, and added new depth and meaning, allowing me to understand my own fallen and sinful nature more clearly. Also highlighted is the immense love God has for us, and the lengths to which He is prepared to go to show us His love.”

Barb Best, Writer: “After reading Melinda Inman’s first novel, *Refuge*, I anxiously awaited the release of *Fallen*. I was anxious as in anticipation and anxious as in fearful. I’d enjoyed *Refuge* so much I was afraid I’d be disappointed with *Fallen*. I need not have worried. Though a ‘prequel’ of sorts, *Fallen* continues what *Refuge* began – encouraging readers in their relationship with God by displaying historical characters in their personal cycle of sin, repentance and reconciliation with their faithful and loving God. I approach speculative Christian fiction with caution; concerned readers might mix fact and fiction, leading them on an unbiblical tangent. Inman’s plot carefully navigates this. She keeps her storyline close to the biblical account, generally limiting speculation to characters’ thoughts and feelings about events rather than adding, subtracting or embellishing biblical history. Her descriptions of Eden are lush and sensual, deftly capturing the newness and wonder of experiencing all of creation through the eyes of the first human beings. And from personal experience, I can attest Inman accurately describes the dark, raw emptiness of separation from our Creator. As was the case with *Fallen*, *Refuge* is more than entertainment; this novel will stimulate readers spiritually, giving them insight in to the character of God, His justice and love for His people.”

Diane Prieur, Writer: “Captivating! *Fallen* is the epic and tragic tale of two young lovers who literally have everything they could ever want or imagine but yearn for more and lose it all. Melinda’s masterful story-telling weaves a fluid narrative of the first man and woman that provides creative insight about what it means to be broken and brought back to peace with themselves, one another and God. The characters are portrayed with vivid detail striking at the core of who we are as human beings and the image bearers of God. It’s a powerful and heart-warming glimpse of two individuals who enjoy intimacy with the Creator, yet must confront the driving force behind their struggles to overcome anger, pride and hard-hearted selfishness. And

the battle still rages! *Fallen* compels the reader to explore the creativity of God and the wonderful depths of His love and compassion. *Fallen* offers a fascinating peak at the corruption in the Garden. Familiar characters are crafted from a fresh and insightful perspective. Page by page, the portrayal invites you in - with incredible spiritual impact.”

Ellen Evans, Avid Reader: “*Fallen* is a stunning depiction of the enduring story of Earth's first inhabitants. Powerfully evocative, it stirs the emotions and captivates the mind while filling in the details of what Adam and Eve may have experienced from Creation through the Fall and beyond. Fact and carefully woven fiction intermingle in this story of God's redemptive plan for mankind that has been at work since the beginning.”

Stacey Thureen, Published Writer and Speaker: “*Fallen* is a well-researched fictional account based on the scriptures, and it includes an in-depth Bible study. Just like its sequel, *Refuge*, this novel presents many foundational truths regarding salvation and redemption. It contains descriptive storytelling, with great character development. *Fallen*, just like *Refuge*, will challenge the reader to think authentically about their faith.”

Kim Fisch, Writer: “I love the author’s fresh perspective on humanity’s first family and how she kept weaving in the truth of God’s unconditional love for all of us, even in our fallen state. Her sparkling description gives us insight into the beauty of our unsullied world at the dawn of Creation. In the Garden of Eden, Adam and Eve destroyed their perfect harmony with God when they believed the lie that God’s goodness couldn’t possibly be true. We still believe the same lie today and quickly discard, or at the very least, don’t pursue God’s unconditional love for us. The author showed that God’s love is a force that is larger than we could ever understand, and she drives home the point that God’s ‘love would cover the mistakes they (Adam and Eve and all mankind) would make in the future as well.’”

Dawn Kinzer, Published Author: “Many of us have read or heard the story about creation told in the Bible. We know that God created Adam and Eve, that they lived in the Garden of Eden, and that they fell to Satan’s temptation to go against God’s command to not eat from the Tree of Knowledge of Good and Evil. But have you ever thought about what it would actually be like to live as Adam and Eve? What would it feel like to awaken as the first human created? To be told to be fruitful and multiply without any knowledge of how to accomplish that? Through story and thoughtful descriptions, Melinda V. Inman takes us into Adam’s and Eve’s minds, hearts, and bodies as they explore the garden, their relationship to God’s creations, their relationship to each other, and even how their bodies function. With beauty and sensitivity, we experience them discovering how wonderful it is to have physical intimacy as God intended. We also get a glimpse of how Lucifer’s (Satan’s) ego could have contributed to his rebellion against God, his jealousy of the humans, and his consuming desire to take revenge by enticing man and woman to fall from God’s grace.”

Reviews of No Longer Alone

L. B. Johnson, Award Winning author of Small Town Roads: “Soft stunning and lyrically captivating, ‘No Longer Alone: Based on a True Story’ grabs onto the reader as quickly as a prairie thunderstorm. Avery and Prentis’s journey to love and renewed faith in the days leading up to World War I resonates as much today as it did one hundred years ago. A wonderfully engaging reading complemented by Inman's vivid depiction of Oklahoma history and richly layered Christian characters.”

Katie Andraski, author of The River Caught Sunlight: “In No Longer Alone, Melinda Inman imagines what her great grandparents’ early marriage and courtship were like a hundred years ago when men courted women and worked to earn their heart. Set between the Oklahoma Land Rush and the beginnings of World War I, her novel explores how people lived as pioneers who wrestled with the land, the weather and their own history. I cared deeply about Prentis, Avery, their families and even their animals because they were so well drawn. No Longer Alone is a fast, lyrical read that explores how people on the eve of the Great War worked out their salvation, with as much thought, prayer and angst as we do today. Even though happiness is nearly impossible to write, Inman draws a beautiful portrait of a couple who fall in love and start a happy marriage, that was as refreshing to dive into as mountain lake.”

Carol Johnson Parker, Educator: “Intriguing Prairie Story. It was a pleasure to read this book from start to finish. Readers who come from a background of the homestead era and prairie farming traditions will recognize this story as an authentic portrayal of the dreams and struggles of a young couple as they forge a life together. The author’s descriptions of everyday life on a farm in the early 20th century are rich in detail. It is as if we were there, witnessing daily occurrences. The conversations in the story come across as genuine and underscore the importance of constant communication in any relationship. One section that was particularly delightful involved the young couple discovering things about each other they didn’t know before they married. So true to life!

“The incorporation of historical events lends additional authenticity to the story. It demonstrates how people’s personal lives are affected by both positive and dire circumstances at home as well as on the other side of the world. The faith element of the story is especially strong. There are many couples who enter into marriage hoping to meld their families’ different religious beliefs into a healthy whole. This is not an easy process, as all of us are influenced by our early experiences. Many families keep the peace on religion by not getting involved in any faith tradition. The author has used Avery and Prentis as models of not giving up on God and seeking a way to live together in faith for the benefit of their future family. No Longer Alone is an outstanding example of family memories incorporated into an intriguing novel.”

Kristin Lewis Robinson, Life Coach, Author: “Have you ever read a fictional book where you were drawn into the lives of the characters, and then a few chapters in find yourself

contemplating your own responses to life because of how the characters are processing theirs? This book did that. I was drawn into the pain and struggles of Prentis and Avery, each unique, but drawing them toward the Lord as He worked in their lives. The more they contemplated their family responsibilities and issues of faith, the more I loved them for their authentic responses - no platitudes or “Christianese”. Avery and Prentis truly grappled with what it meant to be followers of Christ in a family, community, marriage, and church – the everydayness, ups, and downs. This book stretched me and caused me to laugh, cry, and learn right along with the characters by challenging my heart to seek after what GOD wants for me, my marriage, and the use of my gifts as a Christian woman. Well written – characters, history, life events, faith struggles. Biblical truths were realistically applied to all relationships and situations. I want to know what happens next – and so will you when you get to the last page! Yes, there is a sequel coming... how will the war brewing in Europe affect their little farm in Oklahoma?”

Karina Herring, Artist, Entrepreneur: “Melinda elegantly writes a historical love story all while reminding us that God’s plans are undeniably perfect. In hardship, loss, and joy, His divine provision is a thread that binds us all, regardless of generation or race. A wonderful example of a relationship done well, No Longer Alone is the type of story you want readers to take note of. What more will the characters teach us in the sequel? It will be difficult to wait and find out.”

Barb Amstutz, Avid Reader, “This is the story of Avery and Prentis and the challenges they encounter on the path of life. These characters are so vividly portrayed that it seems as if you actually know them as you laugh with them and cry with them while following their many and varied activities. The storyline keeps you trying to guess what will happen next as the tale continues. A key element in the story is the relationship between Prentis and God. The story combines personal successes and failures with a religious theme threaded throughout the book. I was touched by the depth of character portrayal of both Avery and Prentis. This book is definitely a 5-star book. Thank you, Melinda Inman, for sharing your storytelling talent with your readers. I do hope there is a sequel coming!”

Vivian Helton, Reader: “What a wonderful story of God's love and grace. Prentis and Avery were meant to be together. It was so rewarding watching Prentis on his journey to the church and Avery's patience watching him get there. I loved the message this book shared with me. I would highly recommend this book to anyone that feels they need a little more reassurance of their own faith. It is a great story with a powerful message.”

Kim Williams, Author: “This story is beautiful and beautifully written. The author makes you feel as though you've been dropped in the time period. The relationship between Prentis and Avery is tender and genuine. This was the first book I had read by this author. I read the novel over one weekend and look forward to the sequel.”

Endorsements of Melinda's Bible Studies:

Available online in the Bible Studies Tab

Pastor Brian Jones, Senior Pastor, Calvary Bible Church, Ypsilanti, Michigan:

“The small group ministry at Calvary Bible Church has been built around Melinda's material for years. After years of using it, more and more of our people are studying God's word on their own for spiritual growth and forming godly friendships around God's word in their small groups. New believers will learn how to study the bible for themselves with this material. It also gives believers at every stage structure and guidance to keep them in the bible daily. Pastors and small group leaders, use this material! It will help your people grow deeper in their understanding and obedient of God's word.”

Paula Smith, Missional Team Leader, Cru (formerly Campus Crusade for Christ):

- The ShowKnowGrow material takes you through the entire inductive process from start to finish in a very structured way. It's easy for the novice to dig right in and discover God's Word on their own, but it is guided enough to prevent wrong interpretations.
- There is built-in flexibility for everyone from beginners to more seasoned students of God's Word.
- The material divides the study into 5 days, putting it in bite-sized chunks and enabling you to process what you've learned all week.
- There is built-in flexibility for people with more limited time.
- The ShowKnowGrow material puts great commentary, articles, and key-word definitions right at your fingertips. This makes it easier for people who don't have the time to do outside commentary work.
- The material provides a standardized method for approaching every scripture, so you can learn not only how to study a certain book of the Bible, but how to go about studying the Word in its entirety.