

Welcome to HEA, Jude! Please tell us a bit about your new release, *The Girl from Summer Hill*.

Why do a modern retelling of *Pride & Prejudice*? I mean, it's an awesome story and all, but why are you in particular drawn to it?

I love the story and for many years I thought I'd like to do a modern version of it. When I started a new series, I thought that now would be a good time. It was very, very difficult to do! There were times when I was screaming with frustration, lying on the floor banging fists and feet and saying, "I hate Jane Austen. I hate Jane Austen." How was I to have a man run off with a 15-year-old girl and come out a winner? Yuck, no! I changed it.

The Girl from Summer Hill is the first in a new series. What can readers expect from the Summer Hill series?

I like variety so I want to do different kinds of books. The second book is when Olivia goes back in time and changes 3 weeks in her life. The next book is a straight romance about the lake side of Summer Hill. Next I'm going to do some paperbacks about some young women who live in a house that has been made into apartments. One has a history story, one is a mystery, and one is about body image.

You recently posted a story on your Facebook page about library bars. Sign me up! If you were to go to a library bar, what drink would you order and what book would you thumb through while there?

I'm not much of a drinker but I like champagne. For cocktails it's always a gin and tonic.

If a hot guy were on the cover of *The Girl from Summer Hill*, what would he look like? Shirtless with big muscles? Bookish (with big muscles)? Pick your own adjectives ...

I like big men. Rugby player types. Lots of muscles. Not too tall. I like men who look like men, not models.

What are three romances in your TBR pile?

I hardly ever read romances. I read lots of nonfiction and mysteries that people tell me are good. But when it comes to romance, I make up my own.

What distracts you the most when you're writing?

Things that I have to do, like go to the grocery. Telephone calls. Emails that begin with, Jude, I know you're busy but could you . . .? Each winter I go on a world cruise. It's wonderful to say, "Sorry, I can't do that. I'm in Tonga." (That's true but more often I'm upstairs on the observation deck writing away — and smiling.)

Do you have a pet/pets that hangs out with you when you're writing?

I travel a lot so I have no pets. However, I am a lover of animals. On this cruise

I have hugged a koala, a python, a parrot, an elephant, two big lizards, and a wombat. They wouldn't let me hug the orangutan. Rats!

Do you have a favorite snack you munch on when writing?

Are you kidding?! I eat less than anyone I know but I'm still fat. I don't snack at all. When I write, I drink lots of iced green tea. (BTW, it's a lie that green tea takes the pounds off.)

What's coming next from Jude Deveraux?

I'm finishing the last quarter of a book about Nate Taggart who is in the Tate book. I'm just getting to the good part where they find out about Terri's mother. I spent last month obsessed with 2 plots for my next books. The first one has a historical story in it. What happened then affects what happens now. The second book has a personal trainer in it and it's about how your body looks affects everyone. I am interested in what happens when a person changes her physical appearance. The reactions of other people fascinate me. I look forward to skewering some Mean Girls.

Spotlight Q&A

Hi and welcome to HJ!

- Summary of the book (In your own words)

The Girl from Summer Hill is a modern version of Pride and Prejudice. Darcy is Tate Landers, a well-known actor who, as a favor for his cousin, is performing in a play in a small town in Virginia. By accident, he meets a young chef who deeply and sincerely does NOT like him. It's never happened to him before and he's intrigued.

- Please share the opening 3 lines of this book:

Alex, the only copy I have is mine, with no line edits. You should consult an ARC to get this right.

- 3 Fun Facts about the book.

(I had a friend who has read the book answer this for me. Some of her answers surprised me.)

-The book is based on Pride and Prejudice by Jane Austen. The play of P&P is ALSO included in the story! Double exposure.

-This is the first book set in the new fictional town of Summer Hill. More stories to come!

-The hero plays Nicholas Stafford in a movie before he comes to Summer Hill

-Uncle Kit from the Nantucket series once again makes an appearance

- Please tell us a little about the characters in your book. As you wrote your protagonist was there anything about them that surprised you?

My characters always surprise me. Tate was sexier than I thought he was going to be and Casey was stronger. Tate's sense of humor was a treat to discover. I deeply enjoyed getting inside Wickham's mind. It gave me great pleasure to put that on paper!

- If your book was optioned for a movie, what scene would you use for the audition of the main characters and why? (Please share a little snippet of the scene)

(Again, my friend, who is in plays, wrote these.)

-I would HANDS DOWN have Tate audition to the peacock/pie scene. Oh my god. That had to be the best scene in the entire book.

-I would have Casey do the opening scene as her audition just to see her sitting on a stool in awe. This scene is below — Jude

-If you want a "couples" scene — where Casey chews Tate out for the pie eating would be great. Shows her spunk and he backs down from being a celebrity. It's the first time you really see him raw. Typically these are the type of scenes you would audition for for a play. Or the most complicated/emotional.

-When she meets Nina!!! And Nina shows her the truth about Tate.

-When Casey is auditioning for Elizabeth. KILLER scene. I LOVE that one. It would

show an actor's ability to not only understand the characters or P&P, but the twist of the modern characters of Casey and Tate.

Jude: My personal favorite line from the book:

Tate reached into his pocket and withdrew a fat bar in a wrapper that proclaimed it was all protein and gave a person limitless energy.

Casey took it, tore off the paper, and bit into it. "I hope you know that these things are mainly sugar and very bad for you. They're downright lethal."

"Sounds like what my publicist says about me."

- What do you want people to take away from reading this book?

That good stories are timeless. It may seem like what happened in Jane Austen's time couldn't happen now — why would she believe a liar like Wickham when we have the internet? — but it can happen.

- What are you currently working on? What other releases so you have planned for 2016?

I wrote a Summer House book, meaning that 3 women go back in time and change their lives. Olivia, from Girl from Summer Hill, was one of them. I couldn't bear for her to live her whole life without Kit so I changed it. Right now I am 2/3 the way through a book about Nate Taggart, who is mentioned in Girl. Next I'm going to write 3 novels about young women who live in an old house that's been converted into apartments. The first novel has a strong historical element to it.

- Please include a Question for the readers (Conversation starter)

Were you glad to see Wickham punished rather than rewarded?

- Please share an excerpt. See below.

- Author Bio, Social media & Buy Links

Alex, can you fill this part in?

Just a reminder: I'm 24 years old, reigning Miss New York City, a member of MENSA, and won the Grand Prix last year. In my spare time I earned my black belt in karate.

Meryl Streep is my best friend. Etc. Nothing new.

BOOK EXCERPT

ACT ONE, SCENE ONE

Mr. Darcy is revealed

There was a naked man on Casey's back porch. She would have called the police or at the very least, screamed, if he hadn't been so damned beautiful.

Instead, without so much as a blink, she poured boiling water over the loose tea leaves in the silver strainer. It was so early that she hadn't bothered to turn on the kitchen lights.

He'd dropped his T-shirt and sweat pants on the stone path, then, totally nude and facing Casey, he walked up the three steps, his full male glory in view. He came straight toward her, as though he meant to enter the house. Not only was his body beautiful, but so was his face. Hair, eyes, beard stubble, truly luscious lips. His skin was a dark golden color all over, and he had long, sleek muscles. His hair was long, down to his neck, and in the overhead light it was so black that it seemed to glisten almost blue.

When he got to the porch, he didn't open the screen door and he didn't come inside. Instead, he turned so she had a glorious view of the side of him.

Lord! Pecs. Abs. The curve of his backside, thighs like an Olympic skater.

Casey managed to blink a few times. Surely she was asleep. Surely he couldn't be *real*.

He seemed to be doing something to the wall and seconds later it started raining. That made sense. The deity who controlled the heavens *should* look like this man.

But no, it was an outdoor shower that seemed to be attached to her little guesthouse. She hadn't noticed that it was there — in the few months she'd been in town it had been winter. She picked up her mug of tea and sipped it while she watched him lather himself with soap.

As he ran his hands over his body, she was even more sure that she was dreaming. And she was just as sure that if she took her eyes off of him she'd wake up.

She watched him soap his legs, between them, then he moved upward. He had such trouble reaching the entire width of his back that Casey had thoughts of slipping out of her pajamas and joining him.

"Could I help?" she'd ask. He wouldn't say a word. He'd just hand her the soap and she'd get busy.

Of course she could use some cleaning too, so he would do her back. Or front. Or wherever he wanted to.

He was rinsing off now. He reached up to the shower head on the wall, pulled it down, and began spraying water over his entire gorgeous body. His long hair was wet, plastered to his skull. His profile showed his strong features — and something about it seemed familiar.

He turned off the water, then looked around for something.

He needs a towel, she thought, and it ran through her mind that she could open the door and hand him one.

When he stepped toward the house as though he meant to enter, her heart seemed to stop. When he put his hand on the door handle, Casey's heart started pounding. She didn't dare move or he would see her.

He dropped his hand and went down the steps, picked up his sweat pants and put them on — and she let out her breath. He would never know. Good!

But as he reached for his shirt, her cell phone rang. He dropped the shirt and turned to look at the door.

She was almost sure he saw her. It had grown lighter outside and she knew she was probably visible inside the dark room. But maybe not. Maybe she could sneak upstairs and pretend she hadn't seen him.

As quickly as she could, she put her mug down and slid off the stool.

But she wasn't fast enough. He bounded up the steps and reached the door in seconds. When he tried to open it, the inside hook held.

Thinking she had a reprieve, Casey took a step toward the living room, but a sound made her look back.

The man, naked from hipbones up, put his fist through the screen and unfastened the hook.

Okay, so now she was scared. This man was big and he looked furious. She glanced at her cell phone but it was between her and him. Her little house was smack in the middle of acres of garden and woodland. If she screamed, no one would hear her.

"Did you get it all down?" He stepped closer to her.

His voice was deep — and menacing. Maybe if she ran she could reach the front door and get out. But then what? The only house nearby was the big one and it was empty.

She put her hands into fists at her side, took a deep breath, and faced him. Minutes before, his size, the muscles, the sheer masculinity of him had been enticing, but now they seemed threatening. She didn't think she could escape him but maybe if she didn't back down he'd go away. "I live here," she said. "You're trespassing."