

# An Interview with Betsy Ann St. Amant

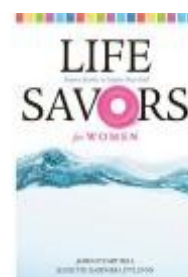
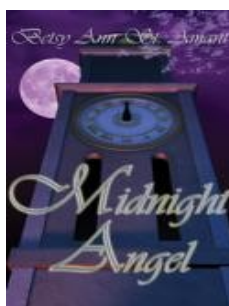
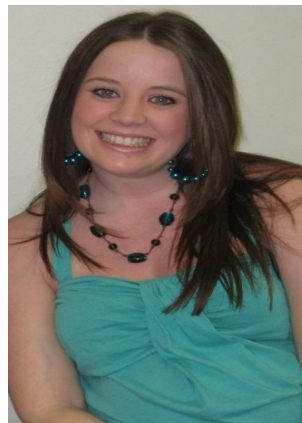
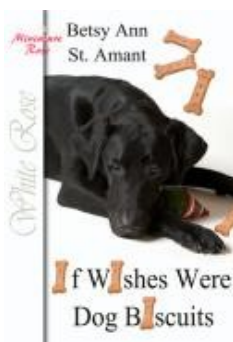
March 2009 Featured Author  
at

Time with Tannia

( <http://timewithtannia.tripod.com> )

By:

Tannia E. Ortiz-Lopés



## 1. Tell us about yourself:

I'm a wife, a new mother of a precious baby girl, an author, and a full time worker for an oil and gas company. I'm a busy lady, to be sure! Balancing all these parts of my life has been a challenge, but God is blessing my socks off for my efforts and I'm honored to be used by Him - doing what I love! God is so good.

## 2. Country music, horse riding, and red polka dot shoes are an unconventional attire for a Southern Louisiana girl. Why do you prefer red polka dot shoes over the traditional country boots? Is that a sign of the little girl living inside of you?

I guess you'd say I'm split down the middle. Part of me adores shoe shopping, all the latest trends, designer names, new purses, and all things girly...but the other part just wants to jump on a horse, or ride a 4-wheeler through the woods. One time I actually did most of those things all in one weekend =) We live in the country now on a few acres, and besides the bug situation, I'm loving it. (but the mall is still within 30 miles. ha,ha)

## 3. Your debut novel, *Midnight Angel*, takes the reader to Germany on a Cinderella type adventure ending in the USA. What triggered the story line for this novel? How did you choose your publisher?

This story was a long time coming. I wanted to write a romance with a fairytale, mystical air, and I hope I succeeded in that in the prologue. Sometimes our hearts get the best of our logical minds, and I tried to portray that with Madison falling in love on a whim in Germany.

I chose The Wild Rose Press(TWRP) to publish that story because, well - they sort of chose me too. =) I heard about them when they'd only been around less than a year, and submitted the manuscript that had been rejected by numerous agents/houses. I felt they were my last chance for this story, and it turns out God had big plans for us. TWRP does not require an agent representation as most houses do, which was a big help. The book was later contracted by my editor, Nicola Martinez. She's such a sweetheart and an accomplished author herself, and we had a wonderful time working on the book. I believe using TWRP for *Midnight Angel* was the best way for me to get my foot in the door for future stories and future houses. I learned a lot from Nicola.

## 4. In 2007 you followed the hottest trend in publishing, e-books, and published two books. What motivated you to publish e-books vs. paperback? What some of the advantages and disadvantages of e-books? Do you recommend this form of publishing to new authors?

The way The Wild Rose Press stories are determined is by word count. Stories that don't make a certain word count (you can check their guidelines at <http://www.thewildrosepress.com/> if you are interested in submitting!) can be published as e-books instead of print. They often have better sales with their e-books than they do their printed novels. Its definitely a growing trend though I still know many readers who prefer paper over computer screens.

I would recommend e-book publishing for someone who has a good story they'd like to share but who isn't hoping to make a ton of money off it. It's good for experience and getting your name out there, but not great for a huge paycheck.

5. Share with our readers a sneak peek preview of your e-books. Where can our readers buy them?

My e-books are available at <http://www.thewildrosepress.com/>. Here's the blurbs for each:

*The S.S. Grace*: Savannah Dodson thinks this cruise will be the honeymoon she never had. But once onboard, her husband delivers a blow that threatens to drown her heart forever. Can Savannah and Austin find the grace they need to save their marriage? Or will it sink to its death beneath tumultuous waves?

*If Wishes Were Dog Biscuits*: Bailey Sinclair has only one friend outside of her dog - Luke Pierson. They'd been through everything together or so she thought. When she discovers her precious black lab, Chevy is missing; Bailey and Luke must weather two storms together - the one roaring outside, and the one brewing in her heart.

**6. In addition to writing romance novels, you have participated in several anthologies. What is easier for you to write, a novel or a short story? Take us through the creation and editing process. How do you know when it is finished?**

I actually haven't written for an anthology, but rather have contributed non-fiction short stories of true life accounts/testimonies to compilation books. An anthology is a collection of fictional short stories or poems while a compilation book is a collection of (usually non-fiction) stories that have a common theme (for example, The Chicken Soup books.)

One of the compilation books I've contributed to is:

*"Life Savors for Women"* - collections of inspirational stories about the struggle for life and how God always comes through. They are raw, heart-warming stories of God at work in the midst of the struggle of everyday life. Just as we need food every day, we need "soul food" every day to keep our souls energized and full of life for life's journey. These are stories that help you savor life to the fullest.

The other is:

*"Praise Reports: Volume II"* - Read dozens of author's inspiring real life stories of how God still answers prayers!

Writing full length novels is much, MUCH easier for me than short stories! I tend to go on and on.

The creation and editing process of a novel, or any length story, is pretty tedious. For most authors, it begins with a character or a plot idea that then is fleshed out into a full story. A lot of authors make outlines so they know what will happen throughout the story, chapter by chapter. Other authors write as they call it by "the seat of their pants" and often have no idea where the story is going or how it will end. I tend to do a little bit of both! I like to be organized and have a base outline, but I keep it very flexible so my characters can surprise me and add twists and turns to my original idea.

And that's just the first draft! Then the writer must re-read, re-write, send to critique partners for different opinions and fresh eyes and edit-edit-edit until they finally consider the story "done". (for many authors, the story is never done, they simply just have to make themselves stop editing or else they never would!) Just because the words "the end" are

written doesn't mean you're really done.

Then comes the hard part - writing the proposal. A proposal consists of several elements of the story, including the author bio, the "hook" or "tagline" of the story (which is a one sentence summary that is supposed to grab the agent/editor's attention and make them want to read more.) Most proposals also include a market analysis, where you compare your story to others that are already published and list why yours is similar, but better. =)

A proposal will also in most cases include the first three chapters of your story and what is called a synopsis. Most authors agree the synopsis is ten times harder to write than the full story. It's a 2-3 page summary of what happens in your book. This is not meant to leave the editor/agent hooked as the tagline does, but rather the synopsis is supposed to tell step by step the major plot points of the novel and how it ends.

After the proposal is written, you send it to your agent, pray, and wait-wait-wait. Then wait some more.

**7. How long have you been writing non-fiction articles about faith and marriage for <http://www.crosswalk.com/>? Have you considered publishing a book on that subject, too?**

I have no plans at this time for a non-fiction book on faith or marriage. But its a great thought!

**8. Recently you signed with Tamela Hancock Murray from Hartline Literary Agency. What do you consider one of the biggest advantages of having an agent? Why did you choose her?**

I signed with Tamela Murray in September 2007. I can't believe its already been a year! She is such an amazing woman - in regards to her faith, her friendship, and her services. I'm so blessed that God saw fit to put us together as agent/client. I chose to sign with her because of her solid reputation, her expertise in the business, and her sweet heart. I'm just glad she chose me too! =)

A quality agent is the BEST and truly one of the only ways for a new author to break into the market. Most publishing houses now won't even accept query letters or proposals from a non-represented author. Of course, its also true that a bad agent is worse than no agent at all. If you decide to work with an agent, please check them out thoroughly as there are many scams out there today. A quality agent should never charge more than 15% commission, and should require zero up front fees from you.

A good agent is a benefit because they handle everything. You submit your work to them and then they take care of submitting it to the editors. They know the market, so they know which editor or which publishing house is looking for what kind of story, etc. They usually have great working relationships with the various editors/houses and therefore help move your submission from the slush pile on the editor's desk up for a quicker read time. They are your cheerleader and your critique partner...truly, the benefits are endless!

The hard part is, everyone wants a good agent, therefore the good agencies are often hard to get into. The agents have big client lists but obviously can't accept everyone. So, if you face multiple rejections, keep trying! Keep targeting the agencies with your different stories. God will lead you to the right one at the right time. =)

### 9. Are you working on any new projects?

Yes! Always. I just finished writing the sequel to my newly contracted novel with Steeple Hill Love Inspired, *RETURN TO LOVE* which will be released in July 2009 The sequel will be released February 2010. Very exciting stuff!

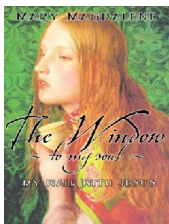
### 10. How can our readers contact you?

[betsystamant@yahoo.com](mailto:betsystamant@yahoo.com) or they can visit me on Facebook or Shoutlife or Myspace. (just do a search for my name!)

### 11. A word of advice for new authors.

Keep trying! Never give up because of rejections. We all get them, even after we're published we still get them! You're not alone in this. Just keep writing and sending those stories out and bathing them in prayer. God's will always prevails - trust Him. He has you and your stories at heart and will do what is best for you. If you quit, you might miss out on His many blessings. =)

Blessings! ~ Betsy St. Amant



**Tannia E. Ortiz-Lopés**, author of *The Window To My Soul; My Walk With Jesus* (ISBN 0975393359; 2004 Tate Publishing; [www.tatepublishing.com](http://www.tatepublishing.com)).

Author's websites: [timewithtannia.tripod.com](http://timewithtannia.tripod.com), [www.shoutlife.com/tanniaortizlopes](http://www.shoutlife.com/tanniaortizlopes), [www.myspace.com/tanniaortizlopes](http://www.myspace.com/tanniaortizlopes), and [www.myspace.com/tanniaortizlopesmusic](http://www.myspace.com/tanniaortizlopesmusic). The author also has a blog at [www.amazon.com](http://www.amazon.com)

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## Readers Comments:

**Date Received:** March 2, 2009

**Name:** Erica Vetsch

**Email Address:** (optional)

**Web site URL:** (optional) [www.onthewritepath.blogspot.com/](http://www.onthewritepath.blogspot.com/)

**Comments:** Very nice interview. You've got a lot of irons in the fire, Betsy. I'm excited to read your LI books!

**Where did you hear about this interview?** Betsy's website