**Media Packet for Michelle Massaro**

**March, 2016**

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# Journey to Publication:

The idea for *Grace in the Flames* sprouted years ago, probably about 2005 or 2006. Back then the idea of writing a story was a lofty dream. I made half-hearted attempts to develop the concept—at one point it was going to be a historical set somewhere in Europe—but I never got very far, and I never told anyone. It was in 2007 I believe, when I was inspired by Stephanie Myers’ story of writing her books during her kids’ swimming lessons that I sat down at my screen determined to get an entire story written. I had no clue where to start such a monumental task so I started searching online for guidance. I ended up finding a NaNoWriMo board, and the Snowflake Method, both of which were so helpful in those early days. I wrote and rewrote this story multiple times over the next 8 years, learning the craft, attending conferences, finding mentors and critique partners. In 2012 the manuscript was a Genesis finalist under the original title, *Beauty for Ashes*. I rewrote the story again, sent it around to the big pub houses, and got great feedback. But it was not ultimately picked up. I finally decided last year to go ahead and release my baby on my own. Ultimately, I think this was the best choice for me for this title. It’s so near to my heart that I’m glad I have all the control in the final manuscript, the cover, etc. and it was time.

# Author Q & A

Use whatever you like, reformat, etc.

1. What would you say is/are the major themes explored in your book? **I always say the main theme is surrender. Second to that is divine love.**
2. What do you hope readers take away from this story? **That our relationship with an Almighty God is not measured by how comfortable our circumstances are, but that despite the trials we face, God is real, and He loves you.**
3. Do you have a favorite character? **I actually love them all! Over the years, they’ve all come so alive to me and it’s hard to pick just one. I’ve come to identify with each of them in different ways. April’s story in the initial drafts was always captivating for me and I relished returning to her scenes. But as time went on, I really got close to Jenni as well. I was always drawn to John and the way he looks out for others. They’re all my favorite!**
4. Sometimes authors slip in cameos of people they know in real life, or tuck other little gems into the pages of their story. Are there any fun Easter eggs hidden in your book? **Yes! Two of my kids’ names are sprinkled in—Katy and Brandon—and I also slipped in mentions of a few other real-life friends: Chris Bowen is one, as well as Pastor Barry. And the dog, Sadie, is based on my childhood dog Sammy! I love doing stuff like this and will probably always find ways of placing people into my stories. It’s so fun!**
5. What’s next for you? **I’m releasing a novella called *Unbound by Grace*, a follow-up to Grace in the Flames. It centers on two side characters (Tori and Derek) and their struggle with the chains of the past. The tagline is: *When the past holds the future captive, there is only ONE chain breaker.* I’d love to share the blurb!**

**Tori Bishop has carved out a safe circle of friends who know nothing of her privileged status. But when she’s roped into attending a glitzy fundraiser, she brings along strong and steadfast Derek for support. As long as her secret stays safe, she never has to question his motives.**

**Derek Miller wants his life to count for something, to make a difference—especially in the life of Tori Bishop, the spunky smart-mouth who loves razzing him. But if his prison record comes to light, she’s sure to take off running.**

**When Tori and Derek get involved in building a local women’s shelter, the extra time together stirs more than an ember of attraction. Haunted by the fear of exposure, each must wrestle with the chains of their pasts to experience freedom, love, and the full depths of God’s grace**.

1. What is the best/hardest thing about indie publishing? **Retaining complete control is a good feeling, but the hardest part is trying to be seen, learning to market so others know I exist.**
2. How can readers best support their favorite indie authors? **REVIEWS. It isn’t just about the stars, it’s about the algorithms that determine which titles Amazon will make visible in the kindle store and which websites will accept application for inclusion in their lists. Often there is a minimum threshold of reviews needed to be considered for various promotions, and indies have a bigger challenge when it comes to crossing that barrier.**
3. Could you tell us about your journey to publication? **The idea for *Grace in the Flames* sprouted years ago, probably about 2005 or 2006. Back then the idea of writing a story was a lofty dream. I made half-hearted attempts to develop the concept—at one point it was going to be a historical set somewhere in Europe—but I never got very far, and I never told anyone. It was in 2007 I believe, when I was inspired by Stephanie Myers’ story of writing her books during her kids’ swimming lessons that I sat down at my screen determined to get an entire story written. I had no clue where to start such a monumental task so I started searching online for guidance. I ended up finding a NaNoWriMo board, and the Snowflake Method, both of which were so helpful in those early days. I wrote and rewrote this story multiple times over the next 8 years, learning the craft, attending conferences, finding mentors and critique partners. In 2012 the manuscript was a Genesis finalist under the original title, Beauty for Ashes. I rewrote the story again, sent it around to the big pub houses, and got great feedback. But it was not ultimately picked up. I finally decided last year to go ahead and release my baby on my own. Ultimately, I think this was the best choice for me for this title. It’s so near to my heart that I’m glad I have all the control in the final manuscript, the cover, etc. and it was time**
4. When you’re not writing, what do you enjoy doing? **I love musical theater and old Rogers and Hammerstein movies, hanging out with my family watching TV shows like Smallville, The Flash, Survivor, and Blue Bloods. My husband and I WON a karaoke contest a while back singing** [**What I’ve Been Looking**](https://candy.wistia.com/medias/pl57k4a91k) **For from High School Musical at our church’s Valentine’s Day dinner. =)**
5. Can you share a favorite scene/line from your story?  ***Grace in the Flames* is a weighty book, but there are definitely some lighter scenes full of fun and romance. This excerpt makes me smile. The hero works at a home improvement store and our couple have just begun moving from friends to something more when this scene takes place:**

Once outside, he took her hand. “If you have an hour to spare, there’s something I want to do.”

She stopped while he got out his keys. “Like what?”

“You’ll see.” He released her hand for her to climb into the car, then waited till she was safely settled to close her door.

When they pulled up to their destination a few minutes later, Home Depot was the last place she expected to see. She shut her door and looked over at John, who wore the expression of a child on his way to Chuck E Cheese. “So…what are we doing here?”

He shrugged. “I used to love Saturday mornings building stuff with my dad. Come on.” He held his hand out and she took it, letting him lead her into the home improvement store. Strangest date ever.

When they’d stepped through the doors, John paused, lifted his face, and inhaled deeply. “Ah…smell that?”

“Saw dust and paint fumes?”

“No. Creativity.”

He led her toward the back center of the store where long tables had been set up. Small squares of wood lay on them, and tools, and her eyebrows came together. “What’s this?”

“Our Saturday morning project.” He grinned then grabbed a work apron from the table, slipped it over her head, and reached around her waist. His nearness made her head pound, and he smiled down at her as he secured the apron ties, giving them a little yank. She stumbled into him and her hands flew to his chest as she steadied herself.

They both froze. “Sorry,” she whispered up at him.

“Don’t be.” His hint of a smile made her heart skip a beat, then she followed his gaze down to where her hands were still plastered against his…very firm chest.

Red faced, she withdrew them and inched backward with a shaky smile. Her legs would not hold her up much longer if she didn’t get some distance. She pivoted toward the table and busied herself examining its contents. “So…how do I help? What do you need?”

“Well, first, you won’t be helping…you’ll be building. And second, you’ll need this.” From somewhere under the table, he produced a hammer and held it out to her with both hands.

She stared down at it. “It’s pink.”

He smiled. “Yep. And it’s yours.”

“You…bought me a hammer?”

“You’re welcome.”

She poked out her lips and nodded, then wrapped her fingers around the handle. “Thanks.”

Definitely the strangest date ever.

# Bio

MICHELLE MASSARO writes *contemporary fiction soaked in grace.* She makes her home in Southern California with her husband of over two decades and their four children. She’s dabbled in homeschooling, teaching Creation Science, and leading worship. When she isn’t tinkering with words, Michelle enjoys old Rogers and Hammerstein movies, making kefir, and Sudoku. A new lipstick and a good French roast always make her happy.

# Back Cover Copy

*Grace in the Flames:*

***A prodigal, a sinner, and a saint… Three people. One God of grace***.

John Douglas thought he knew the future God had for him--raise a family and grow old with his bride, Hannah. But then a deadly house fire incinerates his faith, destroying the man he’d been.

Worship leader Jenni Dupont conquered her demons years ago and has the scars to prove it. But temptation strikes when her world is shattered, and this time she's not sure if God can carry her through.

Bar waitress April Johanson lives with the secret trauma of an abusive past. Desperate to stay off the streets of Vegas, she’ll do whatever is necessary to pay the rent.

When their lives intersect, God will ask them to do the impossible. To love Him *even if…*

*Unbound by Grace:*

***When the past holds the future captive, there is only ONE chain breaker…***

Tori Bishop has carved out a safe circle of friends who know nothing of her privileged status. But when she’s roped into attending a glitzy fundraiser, she brings along strong and steadfast Derek for support. As long as her secret stays safe, she never has to question his motives.

Derek Miller wants his life to count for something, to make a difference—especially in the life of Tori Bishop, the spunky smart-mouth who loves razzing him. But if his prison record comes to light, she’s sure to take off running.

When Tori and Derek get involved in building a local women’s shelter, the extra time together stirs more than an ember of attraction. Haunted by the fear of exposure, each must wrestle with the chains of their pasts to experience freedom, love, and the full depths of God’s grace.

*Better than Fiction:*

Romance novelist Meghan Townsend’s marriage is slipping, and no amount of prayer seems to help.  She aims to recapture her husband’s waning attention by getting in shape and finds escape by crafting her own fictional love story. Taking inspiration for the hero from a new friend—the attractive, spiritual, and attentive Curtis Jameson—she pours her yearnings onto the page, and craves the kind of pulse-pounding romance found in her book, *Racing Hearts*…

In 1916 Corona, California, motorcars are all the rage, and racing them is what Meghan’s hero, Russell Keegan, does best. But when his competition vandalizes his car, the only mechanic available is a greasy woman in a man’s overalls.

After a racing accident claimed her father’s life, Winifred became the sole breadwinner for her family. She is disdained as a female mechanic, but her daddy's trade is all she has left. Can she swallow her hatred of the races and take up Russell's offer of big bucks to fix his car, or will she lose everything to mounting debt?

Under Meghan's skillful pen, these two embark on a thrilling, adventurous romance. But she finds that writing those love scenes with Curtis’s face in mind takes her heart places it shouldn’t go. Will she realize in time that real life can be better than fiction?

# Links

**NEWSLETTER:** [**eepurl.com/bPQL0T**](file:///C:\Users\Massaro\Downloads\eepurl.com\bPQL0T)

**Facebook:** [**www.facebook.com/MichelleMassaroBooks**](http://www.facebook.com/MichelleMassaroBooks)

**Facebook Street Team:** [**http://bit.ly/2JH8E2F**](http://bit.ly/2JH8E2F)

**Buy Link for *Grace in the Flames*:** [**http://amzn.to/1SWNON8**](http://amzn.to/1SWNON8)

**Pre-order Link for *Unbound by Grace*: <https://amzn.to/2vAP0lC>**

**Buy Link for *Better than Fiction*:** [**http://amzn.to/1ShYX6v**](http://amzn.to/1ShYX6v)

**Twitter: @MLMassaro**

**Instagram: @MichelleMassaroBooks**

**Website:** [**http://www.michellemassarobooks.com**](http://www.michellemassarobooks.com)

**Amazon Author Page:** [**http://amzn.to/1pBBqHb**](http://amzn.to/1pBBqHb)

**Goodreads:** [**http://bit.ly/1LU5C4K**](http://bit.ly/1LU5C4K)

**Book Bub:** [**http://bit.ly/2EJXHt6**](http://bit.ly/2EJXHt6)

**Video interview for GitF:** [**https://www.facebook.com/MichelleMassaroBooks/videos/1028648480512458**](https://www.facebook.com/MichelleMassaroBooks/videos/1028648480512458)

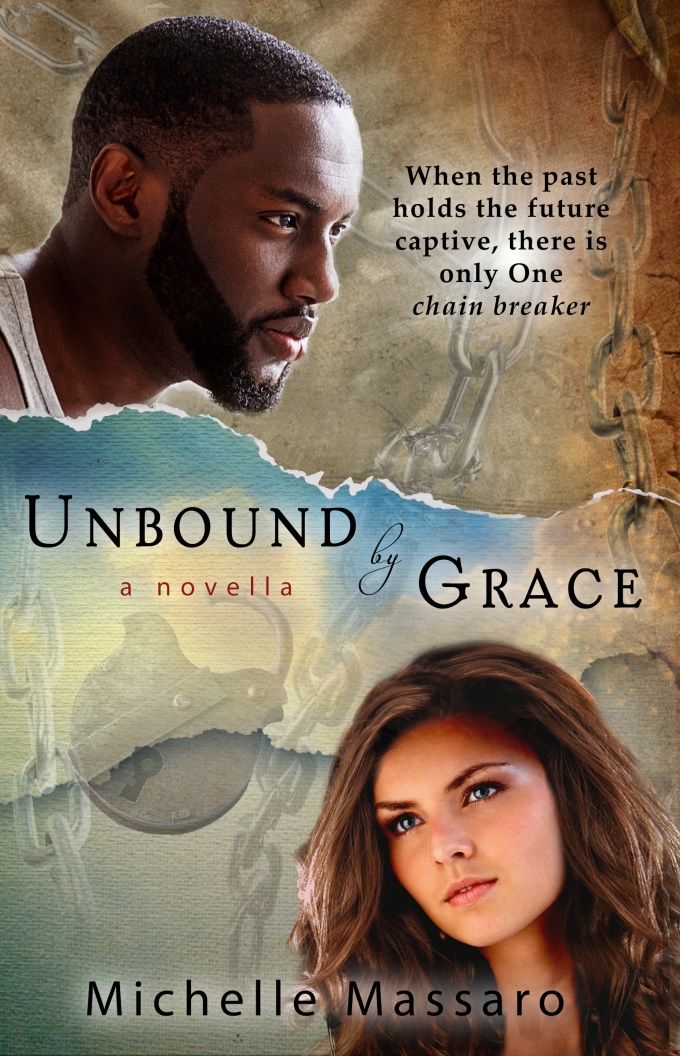
# **Images** (email for higher resolution needs)

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**(Book covers next page)**

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