

## **Steeple Hill Love Inspired Suspense**

### **Mission Statement**

Steeple Hill's fiction program features wholesome Christian entertainment that will help women to better guide themselves, their families and other women in their communities toward purposeful, faith-driven lives.

Length: 55,000–60,000 words

Executive Editor: Joan Marlow Golan

Senior Editor in charge of line: Tina James

Senior Editor: Melissa Endlich

Assistant Editor: Emily Rodmell

Assistant Editor: Elizabeth Mazer

Editorial office: New York

### *Riveting inspirational romance*

This brand in the Steeple Hill imprint is a series of edge-of-the-seat, contemporary romantic-suspense tales of intrigue and romance featuring Christian characters facing challenges to their faith...and to their lives.

Each story should have a compelling mystery or a suspenseful situation threatening the hero and the heroine combined with an emotional, satisfying and mature romance. Stories should focus equally on romance and suspense. However, the characters should not make love unless they are married. Even if characters are married, lovemaking must occur offstage. Any physical interactions (i.e., kissing, hugging) should emphasize emotional tenderness rather than sexual desire. Please avoid any mention of nudity.

All stories should focus on one hero and heroine who meet as early in the book as possible. The hero and heroine should be on the page together in the first chapter—the first page is even better. By the end of the story the main characters should be in a committed relationship.

In addition, we are looking for opening chapters that are compelling and grab the reader's attention from the first line of the story. Some ways to create effective openings are to employ dialogue, keep paragraphs short, or open with a dramatic situation. Ineffective openings tend to occur when there is little or no dialogue or the author focuses on background and setup (e.g., heroine is in a car/bus/train/plane, reviewing the reasons why she is returning to or leaving her hometown).

Drama, mystery, suspense and even a touch of humor all have a place in the series. Foul language and swearing do not. Paranormal or horror elements are

not acceptable. Conflicts cannot be solved purely by divine intervention (e.g., an angel arriving to save the day). Violence is appropriate only insofar as it relates to the plot. Any subplots should come directly from the main story. Secondary characters can also help contribute to an exciting story. Stories should be in the third person. Secondary characters' points of view can also be used, but only if sustained and appropriate to the story line. Stories can have international settings, though the main characters should be North American.

An element of faith must be present in the books, and should be well-integrated into the plot. The conflict between the main characters should be an emotional one, arising naturally from the story. The progression of the story must incorporate the faith journey of each protagonist, whether struggling to accept faith or simply being active in their church community. The suspense/mystery element can tie in to the faith element whether by aiding in solving the mystery, or strengthening hero/heroine in times of trial. By the end of the story, hero and heroine must be both believers and members of a church community.

Because Steeple Hill sells to both CBA and ABA bookstores, we must adhere to CBA conventions. The stories may not include alcohol consumption, card playing, gambling or games of chance (including raffles), explicit scatological terms, Halloween celebrations or magic. Lying is also problematic in the CBA market and characters who are Christian should avoid lying or deceiving others. Exceptions can be made but they must be approved by an editor.

We are looking for authors writing from a Christian worldview and conveying their personal faith and ministry values in entertaining fiction that will touch the hearts of believers and seekers everywhere.