



TEN QUESTIONS FOR KRISTAN HIGGINS by Lynne Marshall

New York Times and USA TODAY bestselling author and two-time winner of the Romance Writers of America RITA Award, Kristan Higgins is the author of seven novels. Her next book, *UNTIL THERE WAS YOU*, hits bookstores on November 1, 2011. Kristan is an avid New York Yankees fan and routinely stalks Derek Jeter. She is the mother of two often-charming children and the wife of one heroic firefighter. She lives in Connecticut.



USA TODAY!: "In contemporary romance, Kristan Higgins is a rising superstar, thanks to whippet-fast, funny dialogue and sweet plots with a deliciously tart edge."

Haven't we all dreamed of a review like this? When it comes to Kristan Higgins, it is spot-on, her books sparkle. I had the pleasure of speaking briefly with Kristan at the RWA Conference in NYC, and she graciously agreed to my Ten Questions interview.

I remember the first time I read one of her books a few years back, and how I was struck by her delightful voice, and the fact that she was a rule breaker. (See bonus question at end of interview) As you may have noticed by now, I'm a huge fan of Kristan Higgins,

and I'm thrilled to give LARA the opportunity to get to know her better.

1. How long were you writing before you got published and how many manuscripts had you completed?

Well, not all that long, but I'd been a working writer for 12 years before I gave fiction a whirl. I had a 93-page outline for a dark historical and a few chapters written before I realized I had no business writing historicals, though I love the genre. I switched to contemporary and my first manuscript landed me an agent and a multi-book deal. That being said, I have two completed novels I wrote after that which my agent put on her shelf (or burned). One was sort of literary fiction; the other was just bad.

2. Where do you get your ideas?

I think everyone has a story, whether they know it or not. If you spend more than 10 minutes with me, it's more than likely I've asked you how you met your spouse or when you first had your heart broken. I'm really fascinated with relationships. *Nosy* is another word. For my books, I like to take a traditional storyline, such as pursuing the perfect man or reconnecting with your first love, and put a twist on it in some way: what if the unattainable man was really truly unattainable...like a Catholic priest? Or what if your first love had broken your heart, but had no idea he'd done so?

3. Do you plot and make character studies before you start, or do you fly by the seat of your pants?

Oh, I'm a plotter. I like to know where I'm heading, and I love the anticipation of getting closer and closer to a pivotal scene. Which doesn't mean my car doesn't veer off the highway from time to time, so to speak. Some of the best scenes in my books were never in the outline, and some of the best scenes in the outline never make it into the book.

4. What about writing makes you anxious?

Well, I fret about everything in general. I despise the first draft; in every single book I've written, I've wondered how the heck I'm going to pull this one together. I worry about my next book being as good as my last book, I worry about doing something different, I worry about doing the same thing. The one thing I never doubt is my hero and heroine. It takes me some time to figure out who they really are, but once I do, we're in love.

5. How long does it take you to complete a manuscript and how many books do you write in a year?

I'm trying to write two books a year. Nine months is the magic number so far, but I think I'm getting faster.

6. Of all the books you've written, which is your favorite, and are there any you wish you'd never written?

The politically correct answer is all my books are my favorite, and that is definitely true. That being said, *THE NEXT BEST THING* is very close to my heart because the heroine's family was similar to mine in many ways. I think that Lucy had to

overcome more than any other heroine of mine so far (though Harper from MY ONE AND ONLY would give her a run for the money, methinks). And I loved Lucy's job—she was a pastry chef. I ate a lot during that book.

Though I do have those two books on the shelf, I can't say I wished I'd never written them, because I learned so much during that process. There were some really good things in those books, and I'm grateful to have found them, even though they'll never see the light of day.

7. [Are you involved with a critique group, plotting group, any kind of writer's group?](#)

I have a few very wonderful friends who help me plot. When I was a newbie, I had a fantastic crit partner, but her life took a different (and very happy) turn, so we weren't writing at the same pace. I belong to Connecticut Romance Writers, which is an incredibly supportive and talented group, and I really love being part of that.

8. [How do you see the romance genre evolving in the next five years?](#)

I think romance is getting smarter. I can't count the number of Ivy Leaguers, lawyers, doctors and other brilliant people who are writing romance these days. The happy ending is a given, but the emotional complexity is evolving. It's not just witty banter and hot sex any more. (That being said, if you can throw in those two elements as well, it's certainly not a bad thing.)

9. [Which writers do you admire?](#)

In terms of character, I think Jill Shalvis may be the kindest person I've ever met; Robyn Carr is the funniest and hardest working; Eloisa James the most generous; Susan Andersen the most genuine. In terms of authors whose books are a pure pleasure (in addition to those listed above) I'd add Sherry Thomas, Anna Campbell, Elinor Lipman, Susan Mallery and Cindy Gerard.

10. [Do you have any advice for aspiring authors?](#)

I do! My advice is twofold. Believe in yourself, and get over yourself. Writing is hard, and rejection can be crushing. But you can do it. No one was born published, and some people wrote for decades before their big break came. But they kept the faith and believed in their talent, they honed their craft and they did it. The get over yourself part...I'll tell you this. No one has ever been harder on me than I am on myself. If I thought my every word was a pearl beyond price, I'd be waiting tables right now. And as much as I enjoyed waiting tables in college, I'd rather be a writer.

BONUS QUESTION!

[I was wondering if you would consider answering one bonus question? I ask this because your books break the "rules of romance" so many of us get pinged for. \(I love that about them!\)](#)

[In your stories you always \(or almost always\) include an ex boyfriend or, in the case of MY ONE AND ONLY, an ex-husband, yet we are told this is a no-no by editors and agents alike. Also, your heroines frequently are actively involved with someone else \(to the point of having sex with them, in a few of your books\) Again, this is a huge no-no for](#)

those of us writing in the romance genre, and most especially in category romance. So here is my question:

How did you get away with that?

Not knowing the rules has helped me tremendously! I really believe that there's only rule that matters: write a great book. If the reader understands where the characters are coming from and why they're doing what they're doing, and they really feel the emotions driving that character, I think you can get away with just about anything.

Kristin Higgins latest novel is: **My One and Only** (in stores now!) and watch for **Until There Was You**, coming this November.