



The US Review of Books

Professional Reviews for the People



Author Spotlight



CHRISTAL KAHLES-JONES

This novel is a work of fiction, but it is rooted in truth. The Hall family are invented characters, but the world they inhabit is real. During World War II, families across America lived exactly as the Halls do in these pages: hanging blue star service flags in their front windows to mark a loved one serving overseas, receiving V-mail letters: tiny photographic prints no larger than a notecard, with heavy black ink covering anything the censors deemed too dangerous to send, and watching the road with the particular dread of a woman who knows what a Western Union messenger on a bicycle means when he turns up her drive. My grandmother told me about those banners. She told me what it felt like to hold a letter the size of a notecard and try to read the words that remained. This novel began in that conversation—in the things she knew that I did not, in the quiet courage of a generation of women who held everything together while the world came apart and called it ordinary. The title of this book comes from Hebrews 6:19. The line that runs through the heart of it: where I saw a mistake, God saw a miracle. That line comes from my own life. This is how The Garden series began in my thoughts, in my heart, and on to the page. First I had *In The Garden...* that sort of focused on pushing thru when disabilities try to hold you back. And then I got *In the Garden: Anchors of Faith*. That was so much about the life my grandmother and her sister and mother had to live. Now, I'm working on book 3 in that series. I can't let the secret out on that one yet!

Some of life's greatest lessons have come to me through stories. For as long as I can remember, God has used stories to speak to my heart. Long before they became books, poems, songs, or screenplays, they began as quiet thoughts, questions, and characters that lingered in my mind. I would ponder them, pray over them, and discover that each one carried a deeper truth than the story itself. As I grew older, I realized something that forever changed the way I viewed storytelling. Jesus often chose to teach through parables. He knew that stories have a way of reaching places in the human heart that facts alone cannot. His stories invited people to see themselves, wrestle with truth, discover hope, and experience the transforming love of God. In that realization, I discovered my own calling. What I once believed was simply a love for writing, I came to understand was a gift from God. He had planted within me a passion to tell stories that illuminate truth, inspire faith, encourage perseverance, and remind people that He is present in every season of life. Over the years, I have come to understand that my purpose is not simply to write stories. My purpose is to point people to God through stories.

I do not write for fame, recognition, or financial success. While I am grateful for every opportunity God provides, those things have never been my motivation. I write because I believe stories can open hearts, plant seeds of hope, and point people toward the One who is the Author of every good and perfect gift.

About the Author: Born with a pen in her hand in Cincinnati, Ohio, Christal Kahles-Jones discovered her love for storytelling early on, choosing to weave tales rather than join the neighborhood games. As a beacon of dreams, she penned her first 'real' book at just twelve years old, setting the stage for a lifetime of transformative storytelling. At age eleven, Christal's talent was recognized as she received the Verses Magazine's Featured Young Author Award,

an achievement that opened doors and confirmed her calling. Fueled by faith, her words reflect a deep connection to her spiritual journey, serving as a harmonious ministry of hope, rooted in love and guided by Christ. Christal extends her rich tapestry of creativity into poetry, short stories, and her first novel, *In The Garden*. For her, stories transcend mere words; they are a vessel of encouragement and spiritual awakening. To date, Christal has penned 2 novels: *In The Garden*, the sequel, *In The Garden: Anchors of Faith*. A Devotional titled, *Planting the Seeds*, and two Discussion Guides/Journals—one for each novel that are very popular in book clubs and church groups

