

The Interesting Questionnaire Answered by Author Alethea Pascascio

A series of questions posed to Alethea about her novel, life, thoughts and experience.

- **Where are you from?** I was born and raised in Gary, Indiana, however, I've live in Michigan, Ohio, and Texas. As if those aren't enough places, I currently live in Northern Illinois.
- **When and why did you begin writing?** I first began writing at the age of twelve to relieve myself of boredom. I started out competing against my sister in poetry contests. Years later, I wrote short stories and many people enjoyed them. Next thing I knew my peers were coercing me to write a novel. It took awhile for me to get around to it, but I finally did.
- **Who are your favorite authors?** Mary Monroe and Karen Quinones.
- **How has your environment/upbringing colored your writing?** It has colored it and caused it. I've been associated with so many broken women, so, it was only natural for me to write about it.
- **Tell us about your novel?** In my debut novel Bag Lady, Faith Donnovann has a life that includes childhood drama and dysfunction. And at the age of 18, she leaves home with more than clothes in her baggage- some times, the invisible is far worse than the visible. As the novel progresses we go on a very dramatic life-changing journey with Faith, who enters a series of tumultuous relationships including one that almost kills her. Eventually, Faith and her life change for the better when she yearns for true love and begins to let go of the past through forgiveness. It is then that her life takes an unfamiliar turn down a path that leads to the type of man she once thought was a fairy tale- a good one. Meet Justin Herrera, a dashing Central American/Belizean- Faith's knight in shining armor... Or is he?
- **How did you come up with the title?** The title came from Erykah Badu's song- Bag Lady. The song tells women to let go of their baggage from the past because it hinders their positive progression into the future. My novel is an example of how the baggage is obtained, and often maintained year after year after year until the owner decides to get rid of it.
- **Is there a message in your novel that you want readers to grasp?** There are so many messages in this book, but what is most essential is, forgiveness is essential. Unforgiveness is like a cancer. It eats away at you and can manifest itself in ways you'd never expect. It can rob people of health, happiness, and harmony. Another message is that another man is never the answer to our problems. This is how we as women get caught up in one bad relationship after the next. The issues within us that need fixing only attract men with their own set of issues. Ultimately, I want readers to realize that self-healing brings not only strength but the ability to make those good choices and attract good men.
- **How much of the book is realistic?** All of it. So real... it's scary. I've had people ask if I've been peeking in on them and their lives. I even had a women in South Africa tell

me that she saw herself in at least 80% of the book, so, it is definitely a story that transcends racial and ethnic boundaries.

- **Are experiences based on someone you know, or events in your own life?** The experiences of the main character, Faith Donovan, are based on every man, woman, boy, and girl who has ever seen or been a victim of child abuse, domestic violence, drug abuse, bad relationships, adultery, or the cycle of generational dysfunction.
- **Who designed the covers?** The original picture of the woman is stock art. My author friend, Sean D. Young and I put our heads together and altered it to complement my title and theme of the novel. That included adding words to the bags, and designing the back cover and spine.
- **What natural gift would you most like to possess?** I would like to possess the gift of motivating people to excel in life and reach their highest potential.
- **Name a person living or dead that you'd love to have dinner with?** I would love to have dinner with Dick Gregory. He is one of the most insightful, knowledgeable, and intellectual people still living today. Each time I hear him interviewed, I am in awe of how much wisdom God has given one man. So much has been learned and can still be learned from him.
- **What is your motto?** I have two. "I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me." And, "the past is in the tomb, the future is in your womb- so what you give birth to, is completely up to you."