

ROMANCE EDITION

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SIMPLY BOOKS

**BRENDA
NOVAK**

Four Questions
& Answers

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FOUR QUESTIONS (AND ANSWERS!) WITH

BRENDA NOVAK

From the personal experience that compelled her to try writing to sharing which book is her favorite, *New York Times* and *USA TODAY* bestselling author Brenda Novak answers the four most popular questions she hears from readers.

When people find out I'm a published author, the first question I'm typically asked is, "Did you always know you wanted to be a writer?" For me, that answer is no. I loved to read, and I had a fertile imagination; I was always daydreaming about something—usually boys. But it wasn't until years later, when I caught my day-care provider drugging my children with cough syrup to get them to sleep while I worked as a loan officer, that I turned to writing, because it enabled me to work from home.

Probably the second most popular question I get is, "How do you come up with the ideas for your books?"

When I first started writing, I had *the great idea*. It was based almost entirely on a title that popped into my head one day—*Of Noble Birth*. This title lent itself to a very specific theme: whether one is noble depends on the heart and not the pedigree. I knew the best backdrop for this story would be a historical setting with a class system firmly in place.

After five years researching the Victorian period and teaching myself the craft of storytelling, I managed to sell that book. But I soon realized it wasn't the only book I would ever need to write. In order to make a living as a published author, I had to write another story, and another, and another. That meant I had to develop my imagination, turn it into a deep well of ideas from which I could draw time and again.

My mind began to sift through everything that came my way—every conversation I overheard, every anecdote I was told, every movie I saw, every article I read—until I could pull an attitude from one character I'd come to know via a TV show, mix it with a situation my mother had mentioned to me the week before, throw in some of my own experience and...I was off and typing.

The third most popular question is, "Do you ever get writer's block?"

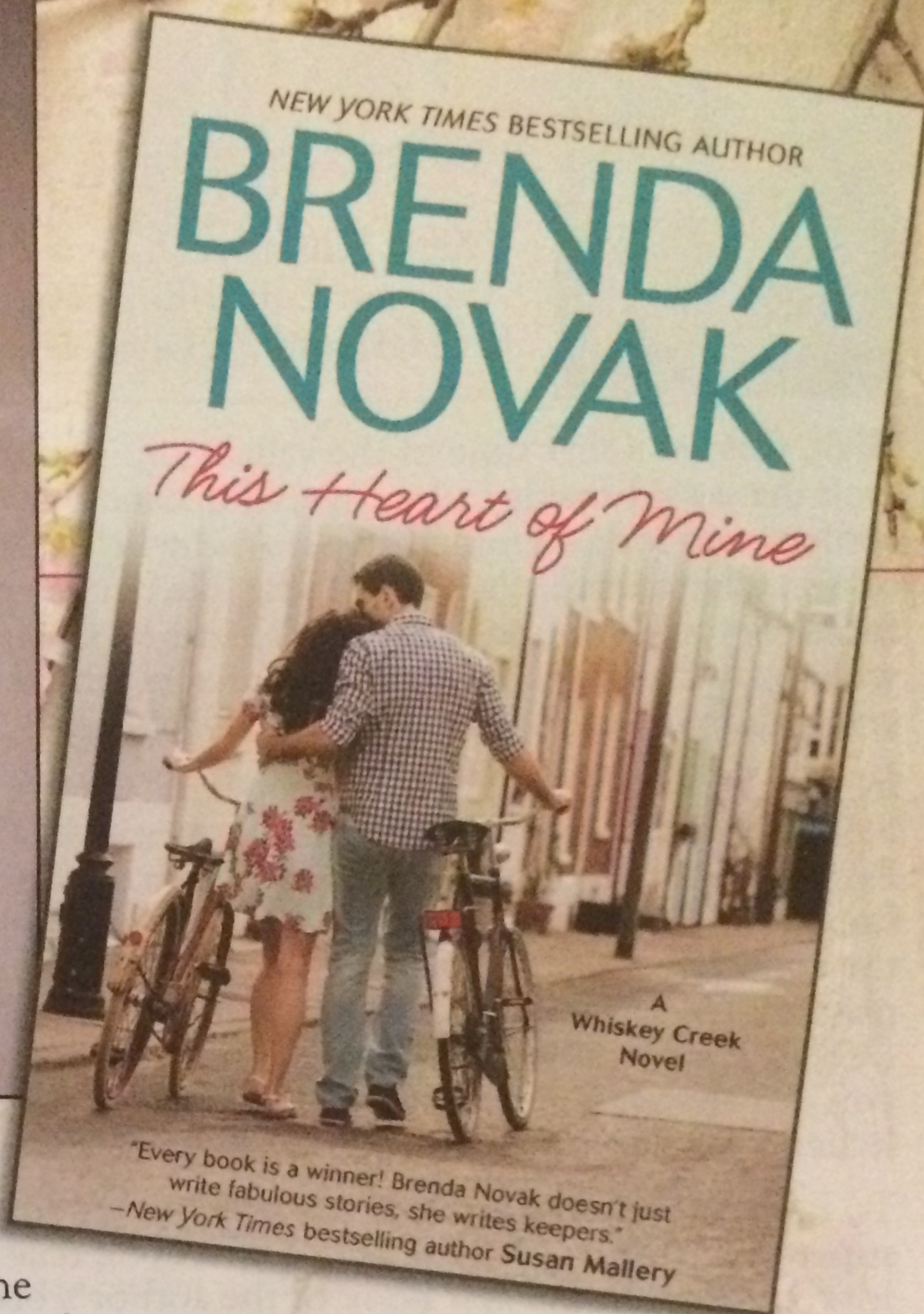
The answer to that question is yes AND no. I don't really believe in writer's



block, but there are days I get stuck. That's when I know I've taken the story where it wasn't meant to go. So I start from the beginning and check the story as a plumber might check a series of pipes for leaks. I feel my way along, testing the story to see if it's still "holding water." I read, consider, read, consider and read some more until I find the "break," the part that isn't in harmony with my intuition. Then, when I find the part that's troubling me, I can fix it.

Another popular question I get is, "Which, of all the books you've written, is your favorite?"

Answering this is like trying to choose a favorite child (impossible!). But I'd have to say that *THIS HEART OF MINE* is near the top of the list. It's part of my *Whiskey Creek* series, which features a close group of friends, both male and female, who



grew up together and still see each other regularly. This new addition to the series is about a character whose personal strength, determination and integrity help her overcome some huge challenges. I loved seeing Phoenix rise from the ashes of her past.

Brenda Novak

THIS HEART OF MINE
will be available in April!

To learn more about Brenda,
visit www.brendanovak.com.