

# #141 Mount Hope - Christian Love For The LGBTQ+ Community wi...

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## SUMMARY KEYWORDS

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## SPEAKERS

Kellie Woolf, Michelle Glogovac

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### M Michelle Glogovac 00:01

You're listening to the mind simplified life podcast in this episode number 141. Welcome to the my simplified life podcast, a place where you will learn that your past and even your present. Don't define your future. Regardless of what stage of life you're in, I want you to feel inspired and encouraged to pursue your dreams, simplify your life and start taking action today. I'm your host, Michelle Glogovac, and I'm excited to share my stories and life lessons with you will taking you on my own journey. This is my simplified life. Hey, friends, welcome back to another episode. I'm your host, Michelle Glogovac. Today I have a very special guest who is also a client. Her name is Kelly Wolf, and she is the author of Mount Hope, Mount Hope launches today. And I am so excited for the rest of the world to get to read this suspense thriller. And I'm even gonna say it's a love story, even though Kelly doesn't describe it this way. But it is a book about a gay man who is murdered, and his conversation with Jesus and the overall premise of how Jesus loves all of us. It really doesn't matter who you are, if you are an LGBTQ, if you're heterosexual, as long as you're a good person, then Jesus loves you. And I love that overall message that is in the book. The book overall is just fantastic. It does have suspense. It's got thrills, it gives you twists and turns of what's going to happen next. It'll make you think, and it'll make you appreciate those in life, who stand up for what's true, and who embrace you no matter who you are. Because that's a gift. And it's a gift that we aren't seeing enough of. So I am so grateful for Kelly to have written this book, and to be sharing it with all of us today. I can't wait for you to meet Kelly and to hear some of her story and how she wrote this book, and how it all came to fruition. Hello, Kelly. Hello, hello. I'm so excited to get to chat with you. And that today is your launch day for your book.

### K Kellie Woolf 02:32

It is I'm excited to and I'm excited that you're the first person I'm talking to on my launch day. Because I don't know what to do as myself. I'm just floating around the room like a crazy person. And so yeah, it's a big, big day in my life.

M

**Michelle Glogovac 02:47**

It is congratulations, a book is like a child. And as a mom, you know what that's like, too. So it's a big deal.

K

**Kellie Woolf 02:55**

Oh, yeah, I have been sitting on this book or working on this book for seven years. And your analogy is perfect. It was time to give birth to this baby. It's happening. So what

M

**Michelle Glogovac 03:07**

took seven years. Let's start there. You know what, wait, before we even go there. I'm jumping ahead of myself. Can you introduce your introduce yourself to everyone I'm like, I want to hear more about the book. But introduce yourself to everyone and share what the book is called and what it's about.

K

**Kellie Woolf 03:25**

Okay, so the book is called Mount Hope and it is a fiction mystery thriller. And it is set in Topeka, Kansas in modern day times pre COVID. And basically there are two plotlines the first plotline is a young gay man is brutally murdered in front of Mount Hope cemetery, and it's the investigation. And that's the part that's pretty dark and pretty exciting. And that's where a lot of the mystery is involved. The second plotline is a conversation in Mount Hope cemetery with Jesus and the young man who passed away, and they have a conversation about being gay in this world. And it's, it's my love letter to the LGBTQ community, because a lot of my dear friends and family and myself included have had to make a tough decision. If they grew up in the faith, they had to either choose their identity and their truth, or they had to hide that in order to remain in a relationship with their church and Jesus. And this is a conversation that I'm hoping will heal some of those old wounds and answer some of those old questions. So it is a fiction set in Topeka, but it's also a passion project for me as an advocate and ally to this community. So I'm super excited about it and it took seven years to answer your previous question because a lot happened. During those seven years, I started writing it in 2015. And I was just barely started in it. And then the Supreme Court passed the Marriage Act, same sex marriage act. And I naively thought the problem is solved utopias granted, this community is now going to be validated and whole and healed and equal. And I was wrong. It took me a little bit to figure out that that wasn't a magic wand decision, though it was an important one. And then my daughter, she transitioned to female. So she was assigned male at birth. And at age 30, during the seven year gap, she very bravely came to me and told me that she's transitioning to female. And so that made me re sit down and take a look at this love letter, again, from a very personal point of view. And then also, I lost a son in the last couple years, my 24 year old son who was adopted, sadly succumb to suicide, and he had an addiction issue that, sadly, shame got him in the end. And so in that seven years, a lot has happened. And I put the book down and picked it back up with renewed sense of energy. And the book that I started out writing is not the same book I ended up with, it's generally the same, but I was able to put new wisdom into it, you know how sometimes you can look back and wish that you had more evolved opinions about any topic, political, social, religious, and, and I certainly in that seven

years time, it allowed me to grow and to evolve as a person and to heal. And it shown in the message of the book, certainly. So that's kind of the rundown of the whole piece. I'm really, really proud of it. I'm really excited about the responses I've had so far from it. And I think because it's fiction, it is stepping outside of the debates, the nonfiction debates, the social debates, the televised debates about LGBTQ plus being included in the kingdom. And it allows people to relax and experience sort of a relationship and an experience with the divine that they wouldn't get if they're debating apologetics on the battlefield.

M

Michelle Glogovac 07:32

So now growing up for me, I was raised Catholic, and something that my mom and my stepdad always told me was to remember that the priests are humans, too. They're simply human beings. And you know, for so many, they put them up on this pedestal, because they work for God, and this is their position. But in reality, they're just human beings like you and I, and the whole fact that people, you know, they, they feel it's their job to judge others and everything. It's just, it heats me up. Because in the end, nobody is better than anyone else. And you know, we should all be loved for who we are, and the good that we do. And it shouldn't matter who we love, per se. Right? So I have to say, Kelly, as I'm writing my book, I have a complete admiration for those like you who write fiction because it is so beyond me how you create these characters. And you have everything you know, when it's nonfiction, like what I'm writing, it's just it's the knowledge that I already know, that's coming out of me, but to write fiction and to create not just characters, but scenes and things that can happen in real life. I know that you worked with a corner. So can you talk about that some more because it's so fascinating. What you did to create this book to write it so that there was factuality as to what could have happened is so interesting.

K

Kellie Woolf 09:06

Certainly, and because we're human beings, we have pride and ego, that sort of fight for control. And you just There's this great quote by a guy a follow on Instagram, his name is Dante Stewart. And he said the Christian faith would be much healthier if we didn't see it as a way of winning arguments, but a way of liberating and loving people. And I just don't want to entertain debates where we have to do theological gymnastics, to prove that we're right. Especially when a person's worth and dignity is not something I'm going to disagree. You know, I'm not going to you. We can't disagree on that. Basically, I it's to me that there are really great people in the community who do apologetics and do have very theological intelligent arguments for or Kingdom inclusivity. But that's not my purpose. And that is not my battle. And so I think that removing myself from that debate is a protects myself a little bit because I don't know the answers. I'm human. I'm just like the priests you just mentioned, right? I don't think I could provide the answers that you need. But as a storyteller, I can provide an experience. And that's where I landed. And there isn't anything in this book that would make me believe if there isn't anything. Any success that this book has, is not going to make me believe that I deserved it, or I deserve credit for it. I believe that, because I sat in front of the throne and said, Okay, I'm going to ask you some really tough questions, the questions I need answers for. And I'm not a prophet, but I can use my talents and my sacred imagination to have a small part of the conversation when we're trying to increase love and peace and harmony in the world. And so it's just a small attempt on my plate on my place. I know my wheelhouse. It's in storytelling, it is not in debating, but there are some really intelligent people out there doing it. And I just

think that those who attempt to do it from an unloving and critical attitude is just it doesn't align with who God is. Anyway, and so it's doing more harm than good. And that is exactly the history that I'm battling up against. In the story of Westboro Baptist Church, which is the hate group, and Topeka, who in real life, it's been around for decades. And they're the ones who protest funerals and have the really ugly signs and have been very vocal on TV and social media. And in real life, they play a part in my book, and some of the very strong language that they use, I don't use too much of it, but it is in there. And so I think that the LGBT Q plus community, they understand what hopelessness feels like. And because they have often hit a wall of either unacceptance, or having to make a choice between faith and truth, or feeling really, really isolated and even desperate enough to consider ending their lives. I think that they understand helplessness better than most. If you have a really good, easy life without many challenges or tragedies, hope is not that needed or necessary for you. But for this community, they have to lean really hard into hope, because they know what hopelessness feels like. And they know what being stuck feels like. And so this book is equal parts hopeless and dark and really hard to read. I call it my radar Jesus book. And it is also the complete pendulum swing of hope, and love and grace. And so I think this particular group of people understand that diverse swing in emotions better than most people do. And so I want to meet them there in truth, because if I just spun it in a way that either didn't answer their questions, or was light on the persecution piece, it wouldn't ring true to them. So it parts of it are hard to read and will challenge people. But I think this audience is the one who needs it the most. Yes, you

M

Michelle Glogovac 13:44

should be proud of yourself. Absolutely. So let's talk a little bit more about the story within the story because it is a thriller there suspense, but to me, it was also a love story. It was a love story between one two to three different couples on top of overarching families, but it was truly a love story and not in a sexual type of way per se. But the look between two people realizing that they're in love with each other, the holding of hands, the symbolism behind all of it, there was true love that was being seen and recognized between these couple the story. It was just beautiful, because you know, this is the rom com lover in me who loves the romance fiction books. So I really enjoyed how you brought all of that together.

K

Kellie Woolf 14:43

Yeah, it was fun too. So I have a fabulous female lead corner in my county, and I took the murder weapon to her and I said okay, this is how this man dies in my book, tell me if it's possible, and what kind of damage he would sustain and why it would be what would end up killing him in the end, because there are all sorts of devastating head and neck injuries. And so, oh boy, was that a fun conversation. And first of all, yay for women in leadership anyway, I was just so proud of her. But she was equally as excited to talk about this and participate in it. And so I gave her a little shout out at the end of the book, but I think storytelling, you know, creating change in story I listened to the Matthew Shepard, Matthew Shepard, first of all is mentioned in the book. He was a victim of a similar crime about 21 years ago. And he's mentioned in the book, the book is dedicated to him. And a portion of the proceeds of the sales go to the Matthew Shepard Foundation. And his mother had said at last year's Matthew Shepard foundation awards, that that story is actually the most powerful way to create change. And that experiencing and coming away from something that is thought provoking, sometimes

stories, the best way to do that. And so I had to stretch my skills in order to tell the story effectively and respectfully. But also really, really, honestly, and my sister gave me some good advice, who's also an author, she said, don't pull any punches, you know, you've got to, you've got to really just say the things that people are eager to hear. And what she meant by that is that, you know, because Christianity is kind of the weapon of choice to marginalize and discriminate this group of people. It probably feels like I'm picking on this particular religious group, but it's obviously as universal among many religions. But LGBTQ plus people can often feel tricked by churches who promise inclusivity, and welcome, LGBTQ plus folks into their fold, only to find out on the inside, that they're not going to be ground granted any kind of leadership, you're not going to sing on stage or hand around community. We can't marry you or dedicate your child. And so the inclusivity statement was just a way to get you in the door. So we might be able to change you later. And so I couldn't be guilty of that same trick in my book, I had to be able to answer the really tough questions about same sex parent adoption and conversion therapy and gay marriage and transgender youth and, like, really ask those tough questions not only to the church and to Jesus directly, but to hear his answers not be fluffy, whitewashed propaganda answers, to really just speak plainly and into people's hearts. And so it feels like I'm at war with Christianity. I'm not because I'm deeply loyal to Jesus and deeply love my church community. But we're flawed, and we've made some mistakes. And I consider identity and sexuality, the exact same as whatever your country of origin is, if you're Italian, or you're Irish or German, you are gay, or transgender, or bi, those are things you can't change. And people are coming into the realization of themselves. And sometimes they get it wrong. In the beginning, I thought I was this and then I ended up this. And so there that takes a long time of self discovery sometimes. But these are, imagine if a church came out and said, Well, you're German, so sorry, you aren't allowed to be in leadership here. That's absurd. And so to take an identity, that is outside someone's control, and to use that as a gatekeeping method to keep people from approaching the throne, or having fellowship is equally as absurd and completely full of hypocrisy. And so I'm not at war with the church. But I do believe we've made some mistakes. And I say we because I'm not perfect either. But this is my small attempt to have a voice and to help those I love who have hit that wall of faith versus identity and sexuality. So I'm really, really proud of it. And it's, as I had another person tell me that the difference between a writer and an author as an author finishes their work, and I'm like, wow, that's, that's me. I actually did it in today's the day. And so I'm really proud of myself.

M

Michelle Glogovac 19:31

How did you learn to write in this way to write about the characters to write about, you know, not just the suspense and the thrills, but the love stories that went along with each of these couples?

K

Kellie Woolf 19:45

Well, I first of all, Michelle, thank you. You're the first one who's really mentioned character development and the love stories that are in this piece. And part of that it's very intentional for me to Compare and contrast between her heteronormative relationships and same sex relationships. And that in some ways, they're all They're both the same. And I wanted to normalize that. And then in some ways, the same sex relationships that are in the book are actually the healthier relationships. And that, because they had to fight so hard to have them, I think the intentionality behind being really good about communication and expressing

themselves safely with each other was is really intentional. So it was just important to me that the parts of the book that are about the investigation, and the characters was as riveting and special as the Jesus chapters. And so you've given me a high compliment, Michelle, thank you, thank you. I have always loved writing. I am, I have been a journaler. My whole life, I have written poetry, like forever in my high school, junior high high school, college and have always been attached to the spiritual inspirations of writing to and so that's kind of been core to me for a long time, I was fortunate enough to work for a catalog company called proving connection that is a worldwide fashion company that has stores and websites and catalogs, and I was fortunate enough to be a proofreader and sort of a copy editor and writer for their blog. And so that helped me really dip my toe into professional creative writing, to some degree. And then I just, it was always on the side. And I feel like storytelling is a big part of my personality. And so I when I moved away from the area in Kansas that had the catalog company, and I could no longer write for them or work for them, then I was able to in Middle Earth Kansas get a different job where I was working with domestic violence survivors and sexual assault survivors. And that really tapped into my trauma, education. And then I moved away from that area, again, and ended up in the high school classroom, and began to really see the need for safe spaces for kids who are trying to figure out not only their identities and sexualities, but do it in a discreet way. And so, I was a sponsor for diversity club at my high school. And so all of that shaped me into the author that I am today, and intrinsic need to express myself through words. And then a job that gave me creativity. Another job that gave me trauma, understanding and healing. And lastly, another job that realized safe spaces needed to be created. So you can see how I evolved as a person, not only in my professions, but also just emotionally and spiritually you throw in some kids, hold on my kids, I have five, and all of their experiences. I think that I was uniquely given this path and this time to write this book. I couldn't have done it seven years ago, I couldn't have done it 15 or 20 years ago, I needed all of this experience to do that. So that's a really good question. And not an easy answer. But you can kind of see my evolution a little bit, right.

M

Michelle Glogovac 23:30

Yes, I love hearing that, that this is where your journey has taken you because I found that nobody just wakes up one day and says this is a path I'm gonna go on. And that's how it goes. There's always a twist and a turn and a fork in the road. So I love that all of these experiences have taken you to where you are today. Now tell me something. What do your kids think about the book and about this journey that you've been on? And that your book is launching today?

K

Kellie Woolf 23:58

You know what so Haley's, my transgender daughter, my oldest child, and she told me this morning she said, I'm proud of you. And I've never had one of my kids tell me that they're proud of me before and my heart exploded So I not only is my book being dropped today, but that probably is the biggest win for me is for her to say that and of course the book is in part dedicated to her as well. My other kids are, they're proud of me too. They just express it differently. You know, they they are like good job, mom. Good job, mom. That's about all I'll generally get out of them. They're all very different. They all have very diverse careers. My youngest natural born son Tanner is went to Manhattan Christian College and actually worked in youth ministry in Portland, Oregon. And so I his opinion meant a lot to me and I bounced a lot of ideas off of him. And so it we're a nice little tribe. We're pretty tight. There. The the, I'm

lucky that all of us love each other and support each other in a way that is beyond my parenting. And my husband's proud of me too. And so yeah, all of them have been really, really supportive and eager to, to see this actually happen and to actually hold the book in their hands is the look on their face mirrors mine, so I'm very blessed.

**M** Michelle Glogovac 25:27

This is absolutely a reflection on your parenting. You know, our kids don't just pick this stuff up, they definitely learn from us. So take that credit, this comes from you, for sure.

**K** Kellie Woolf 25:41

I don't know if I can take full credit for it. But they are really good, beautiful people. So yeah, I'm really proud of

**M** Michelle Glogovac 25:49

them. So my kids, they say that I'll have made it when my book is in the library. That's how they'll know that I've become a big deal.

**K** Kellie Woolf 25:57

Oh, that's, I'm not sure I'll be loud in the library. So that'll be another another hurdle to cross. But, but I am. I'm so in love with this story. And so in love with these characters. And I know it's sort of braggy to talk like this, but I just am. And so if you were to go to my website, which is Kelly wolf.com, you would see, I have character sketches. Like I hired an artist to draw sketches of these characters. So you can see what I think they look like on a sketchbook page. And then I also I heard music plays a really strong theme through this entire story. And I heard music sometimes as I was writing a chapter, some chapters actually talk about music. And so there's a playlist. And so for instance, the opening scene of the book, the prologue, I actually heard a song in my head as I was writing it, if you like that kind of additional ear candy. Then on my website, I've got a picture of the character and the music I heard as I wrote it. And so I know this comes from a really genuine place of like, I love the people I created. And the story I created so much. I'm like totally extra about it by adding music and images. So check it out, if you're interested. It's extra. Oh, I

**M** Michelle Glogovac 27:22

love extra this is this is why people don't love books, and not the movies. But I love that you have the extra stuff in it with, you know what people look like in the music? I think it's an excellent addition.

**K** Kellie Woolf 27:36

I know I've been told I got it wrong. I've been told by some people like that is not David, I'm sorry. But that's okay. That's okay. I don't mind at all. So

**M** Michelle Glogovac 27:46

now did you even mention what the book is called?

**K** Kellie Woolf 27:50

You know what? Probably not. It's called Mount. And Mount Hope is the name of the cemetery in which the young man is killed in front of but it's also where Jesus and the young man have their conversation. And also just additionally, it's a nod to Martin Luther King Jr. In his I Have a Dream speech. He had a quote in there about climbing out the mountain of despair and finding a stone of hope. And so Mount Hope is the name of it. And it's a real place. I have family members buried in this cemetery in Topeka. And so it's a real place. And if anybody's ever visited there, anybody who knows Topeka, they're going to recognize all the references I make in the town and in the cemetery. So, yeah, it was fun to sort of revisit my hometown.

**M** Michelle Glogovac 28:39

I am so proud of you.

**K** Kellie Woolf 28:41

Thank you, Michelle. I'm proud of me too. I think I'll have some bubbly after this. Just a little celebration, just a little tip.

**M** Michelle Glogovac 28:50

You deserve it. And on that note, I'm gonna end it. Okay, friends, we are in the middle of beach season. So this can be your beach read, I suggest you go grab a copy of Mount Hope, because it is a book that is about changing lives about accepting others, and so much more. I thoroughly love the book. I devoured it quite quickly. And as you could tell from my interview with Kelly, I loved the characters and the depth that she brought to all of them. I know that she's got more books coming based on this one and I cannot wait to read the rest of them and to see what she comes up with. So please go follow Kelly, check out her website and go purchase Mount Hope