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HOW I WROTE MY FIRST NOVEL

By Yolanda A. Reid

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At age 19, I told my English professor that I was writing a novel. I'd written the first chapter. How interesting! How wonderful! She wanted to know if the novel was about me. I told her that the main character was like me—a college student, at the time—and that her name was Yasmine. But she was NOT me. I was adamant: I wanted to write outside myself.

"Most first novels," she said, "are autobiographical."

I never finished that novel. I estimate that I began 3 or 4 more novels. I wrote lots of notes. None got beyond the third chapter. (Since then, I've written 2 complete novels.)

All the while, I wrote dozens of short stories. Some of these stories formed an inter-connected series, based on my grandfather's tales.

Over the years, I wrote in my journal, describing the novels I wanted to write. A few months before I began to write my first novel, I wrote the following words—which are, I think, the essence of my novel's grandfather-character:

"I could have the old man tell a tale when he speaks of love. Bk II is a combination tale, history (impersonal and personal). He reminisces on his youth, . . . on his beloved's death. On Love. On the world. Through time. . . ."

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Then, the next spring, I sat down and wrote a one-page outline for my novel. I wrote each chapter fairly swiftly. After about 6 months, I began to revise. The first version was written in longhand. The second, on a typewriter. Then, a couple more versions on my computer. (See resource links below.)

As I wrote and re-wrote, I wept. No one had told me how emotional I might get while writing a first novel. So I set the book aside. After a few months, I returned to the manuscript with the idea of incorporating some of the stories into the novel. And voila! I had written my first novel.

So, if you're a writer contemplating the writing of your first novel, here are a few suggestions:

--Be prepared to cry. When you do, take a break from writing--either a couple of days or a couple of weeks. You decide. You might try skipping the section that makes you cry. You can get back to it once the first draft is completed. Just know that your own reaction to the writing is a sign you're onto something authentic and life-altering.

--Ask a friend to be your novel-buddy if you anticipate a strong emotional reaction to your work. As you write--if you begin to experience the emotional reaction--call that friend. Go out to dinner with family. Do something that's fun for a change. Why not take up a hobby that is not writing-related? Like knitting or learning Spanish.

Find lots of links for hobbies at <http://www.searchingforhobbies.com> or <http://www.ivillage.com>.

--Create a novel journal. In this journal, write down ideas about the novel and its characters. Your vision of what you want the book to be. Be very specific. You could create a virtual journal on your computer disk/hard drive. Or you might try blogging. (A blog is an on-line journal.)

There are web sites that give free blog space, such as <http://www.crimsonblog.com> and <http://www.mindsay.com>.

--If you're not a member of a writers' organization/group/workshop, join one. The sense of camaraderie is so helpful. It's very isolating to write a novel alone, as I did--with no writers' group or class for

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support. I've since joined a writers' organization, which provides a feeling of help and support as we attain our dream.

Find writers' organizations at <http://www.writerswrite.com>.

--Of course, read writers' magazines/e-zines for technical tips on writing. But you should also choose a favorite author to read and re-read exclusively as you write your novel. Realize that the author's writing will influence yours--so he/she should be great.

Some writers choose not to read other writers while writing a book. Some novelists--like Barbara Kingsolver--read a favorite author. Think of this book or author as a literary comforter; mine is "Wuthering Heights" by Emily Bronte.

Find your favorite author's work at <http://www.sunsite.berkeley.edu/Libweb>

and <http://www.literature.org>.

--On revising: Ideally, revising ends when you begin your next book. In the meantime, have someone else read your manuscript. In my case, no one but editors read the entire manuscript. Several of my family members and a writer-friend read chapters/chapter.

But if you're not ready for your cousin to read your novel, work on an article, begin another book or just take a break and re-discover the world.

Web sites of interest to novelists-in-the-making:

<http://www.author-network.com/saevig1.html>

http://www.Suite101.com/welcome.cfm/novel_writing

<http://www.writepage.com/excerpts/exmchtw.html>

<http://www.writeyournovelnow.com>

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Yolanda A. Reid's poetry and short fiction have appeared in literary journals/e-zines, such as

www.womenwriters.net, and others. PORRIDGE & CUCU: MY CHILDHOOD—her first novel—is now being considered by a publisher. To read a novel excerpt, please visit her web site at <http://www.geocities.com/yareid2003/index.html>.

God Authored All Scripture For Our Benefit

By "Dr. Jay Snell"

As you delve more and more into the Book of Hebrews, you will become aware of something you have never seen before: namely, the author of Hebrews is more emphatic than any other Bible writer about one major theme; God wrote all the Old Testament Scriptures.

This author quoted at least thirty one Old Testament Scriptures in the book of Hebrews. Even when he knew the name of the human instrument that God used to write Scripture, this author spoke as though the Scripture was penned by God himself. For him, God wrote the Old Testament without the use of a human instrument even though He used them.

As you study this fascinating book, look for the above attribute throughout. This will be such a great blessing to you. Why can't modern teachers, pastors, academics and scholars have the same view of (and respect for) the Holy Scriptures as this special, Godly author of Hebrews?

Here is just a sampling of the Old Testament Scriptures the author quoted in the Book of Hebrews. In each and every case, our author of Hebrews declared that God wrote each Scripture, even though they had human penmen. See below how he demonstrates that God wrote them.

Heb 1:5 5 For unto which of the angels said he at any time, Thou art my Son, this day have I begotten thee? And again, I will be to him a Father, and he shall be to me a Son? (KJV)

Two Old Testament Scriptures are quoted here, Ps. 2: 7 and 2 Samuel 7: 14. David wrote the Psalm; Samuel wrote the one that bears his name. But notice how our author demonstrated that God himself wrote these two Old Testament Scriptures for us; look at the expression, "said he."

In other words, the Hebrews author always quoted the Old Testament in such a way as to leave no doubt: God wrote the Old Testament. Above, he used the expression, "he said" for "God said." Notice, however, that he never remotely implied that either David or Samuel said anything in this verse. For this author, God wrote the Old Testament.

Now, look at the next verse, Hebrews 1: 6. We shall see the same thing.

Heb 1:6 And again, when he bringeth in the firstbegotten into the world, he saith, And let all the angels of God worship him. (KJV)

This verse is a quote from Dt. 32: 34. Notice here also the expression, "he saith." Again, the author never implied that Moses wrote the above Scripture. By using "he saith" as he did above, he again shows his belief that God wrote it. For him, God authored all Old Testament Scripture.

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Heb 1:7 7 And of the angels he saith, Who maketh his angels spirits, and his ministers a flame of fire. (KJV)

The above verse quotes Psalms 104: 4. But notice! He used "he saith" again. To this author, God authored this Psalm also. Why cannot modern writers, preachers and theologians have the same confidence that God was the author of Scripture?

Now see the next two Old Testament Scriptures quoted below.

Heb 1:8 8 But unto the Son he saith, Thy throne, O God, is for ever and ever: a sceptre of righteousness is the sceptre of thy kingdom. (KJV)

Heb 1:13 But to which of the angels said he at any time, Sit on my right hand, until I make thine enemies thy footstool? (KJV)

Notice "he saith" in verse 8 above and "said he" in verse 13 above. For this author, God authored the Old Testament. What a thrill to see the pattern for modern scholarship so clearly given. Hebrews is the most unusual New Testament book.

Following the lead from the author of Hebrews, Scripture was and still stands written by God himself. As such, you can believe and depend on what it says. Furthermore, when you are troubled about what a particular Scripture means, ask yourself, "What does this Scripture say?" You will, then, have the answer to what it means.

Finally, Paul summed it up for us. He said "God breathed" all Scripture to profit us in at least six areas. Find them for your own benefit in the verses below.

2 Tim 3:16–17 16 All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness:

17 That the man of God may be perfect, throughly furnished unto all good works. (KJV)

God wrote it with His own breath even though He used human instruments. Therefore, you can trust it. You can stand on it. You can step out on it. He said what He meant to say in it. What does a Scripture mean? It means whatever that Scripture says.

Dr. Jay Snell: Author of several books concerning the healing, prosperity, family well being and salvation contained in the Abrahamic covenant for Christians. These books presented many times on TBN.



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