

Kingdom Pen

*Encouraging teen authors to
write well, write purposefully,
and to always write for Christ*

*“So, whether you eat or drink, or
whatever you do, do all to the glory
of God.”*

1 Corinthians 10:31



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Hi, my name is Alex. I'm seventeen, and I was born and lived for seven years in Denver Colorado. Since then I have moved all over the U.S. and even to a few other countries, but I always say that's where I'm from.

I love to write, read, study, travel and spend time with my family. I also love the Lord, and want to serve him in all I do. That's why I agreed to help with this newsletter, because I want to encourage teens to serve God with their writing.

Eli and I are good friends, and so we'll be working together on this newsletter/magazine (he still can't decide what it technically is). I'll serve as assistant editor and help out whenever I can.

Because of my Dad's work I travel a lot, so I may not be able to actually write articles very much. However, I'll try to write a few now and then, and some especially about my travels, because the setting of your story should always impact it's events, and it helps to get info from a guy like me, who might actually have been there.

I hope you enjoy this magazine (that's what I think it should be called). Again, because of my frequent travels, I am in and out of internet connections and I don't always have access to my e-mail. So if you have a question for me, just e-mail Eli. He's offered to cover for me in my absence, and he'll be able to track me down and relay your question to me.

Remember, always write first and foremost for God's glory!

Sto validus pro Sarcalogos!

~Alex L.

From The Corner

Editor's Notes

I first had the idea for this newsletter/mini-mag back in February of 2010 while attending a seminar with Mr. Gregg Harris of Oregon. In it he mentioned how his son Joshua, at the age of 14, was inspired to write a magazine aimed at teens after listening to the founder of WORLD magazine, Mr. Joel Belz, explain his own ideas. The magazine Josh ran was called "New Attitude," and ran for a few years.

When I heard that, I thought: "what a good idea. Somebody should do that for young Christian writers, too."

I didn't say anything about it at the time, but it was an idea that was in and out of my head for nine months. I prayed about it and spent a great deal of time thinking about it, planning how I would do it if I actually did set out to write such a newsletter.

During that time the idea continually popped back into my head, and I was continually coming up with new ideas for how it would work and be used. I saw a tool for the encouragement of teens around the country who, like me, want to write Christian fiction that is more than just

"clean and family friendly," but that is actually well-written and meaningful. A magazine-like setup that could serve as a place to learn, to share and to continually remind all of us of the only real reason we should ever write: to glorify Christ.

America needs good stories. More than that, America needs *Christian* stories. Stories that demonstrate with art and precision truths of God's word and bring honor to Christ.

America published 43,000 novels in 2007 (the latest year I could find). That number, by the way, includes collections of short stories. Out of those, how many are classified as "Christian"? I couldn't find any numbers here (remember this note), but it

doesn't really matter. The point is this: of all the "Christian" novels that are published in a year, how many of these are really, truly written to honor Christ, and how many are Christian simply because they are considered

"clean"? There is a huge

difference between a clean book and a Christian book, and if Christ is cheapened to the level of "clean" then the cross itself suddenly becomes unbelievable. The cross itself, after all, is anything but clean.

We don't need clean. We need truth -- we need Scripture. I do not mean by this

Quotes of the Craft

"The difference between the right word and the almost right word is the difference between lightning and a lightning bug." ~ Mark Twain

that we should write books full of gore, foul language and whatever else you could point to as being unclean, what I mean is that we need *more* than “clean”. We need truth, truth that is spoken in an educated, purposeful way. And we also need quality. God didn’t do a half-job creating you. Why should we deliver anything less than our very best when writing to honor Christ?

I find it interesting that Christ himself imparted a great many truths through what the Bible calls parables. Today, I might call them short stories, even though, technically, there is a difference. Christ told dozens of these, but what really interests me is how well-told they are. Christ doesn’t come up to the crowd and tell the story of a man who slapped another man, but was forgiven, and then he slapped another man again. Instead, Jesus tells us the fascinating, heartbreaking story of a man who owed more than we can imagine (comparable to our national debt, as my Dad would say) and even though he was forgiven, he refused to even show patience to another man who owed him the equivalent of a few hundred dollars. He then tells of us of a third man, an honorable man who was troubled by the deeds of the servant who was forgiven, and who told the king. He tells us how the servant was thrown into jail until he could pay what he owed.

Jesus could have said “You’ve been forgiven a huge debt, therefore forgive others,” but instead he chose to tell one of the most incredible stories in the Bible. A story that impacts us, one that we think about and chew on for a while. We humans

are a stubborn and foolish people, and personally, I get a far better idea of how much I was forgiven by reading that parable than I do if Jesus had just said “You’ve been forgiven a huge debt, therefore forgive others.”

But Jesus does more than just tell stories of drama and impact. He tells us stories that teach of generosity (Matt. 20: 1-16), obedience (Matt. 21 28-32) and wisdom versus foolish unpreparedness (Matt. 25: 1-13). He also tells us stories that describe human character, and contrast faithfulness with fear, wickedness and slothfulness (Matt. 25: 14-30).

These are words of life. Words that aren’t just simple, cheaply plotted nothingness with even worse morals (“Believe in yourself” or “play nice with others”) slapped on like a cheap coat of paint. These are stories that are real, meaningful and lasting. These are the stories America needs.

I do not mean to ever imply that we will be able to tell stories like Christ can. Nor do I ever think that any book other than the Bible itself is needed to share the gospel. But I do believe that novelism is a tool that God has blessed us with to spread His truth and encourage His flock. It is a tool that has been wasted for too long, and the aim of this newsletter is to encourage young teens to take up that tool for Christ’s glory.

You may only want to write for a time. Maybe as a “hobby”, as some would

Working Word

Defenestrate:
Throw through or out
of the window


call it. Or maybe you feel called to enter the world of fiction writing as a career. Either way, God has blessed us with the skills and desires to write stories, and we should never use those gifts for anything other than His glory.

We need a new generation of authors. Authors who are better than just “clean”. Authors who write good stories that are well-written, well-plotted and paced, intricately woven and centered on Christ. Enough cheap family media--movies and books that promise to be “great for the whole family” but really employ ill-crafted humor that keeps the kids laughing while mom and dad fall asleep.

We need fiction in America that capitalizes on the gifts God has given us. May Christ lead our lives, drives our lives, fill our lives and shine through our lives, and may our writing be salt and light to the world. That is the purpose and drive of this newsletter, and I hope it is an encouragement to you, and also helpful in your work as one of God’s authors, soldiers and servants.

“So, whether you eat or drink, or whatever you do, do all to the glory of God.”

1 Corinthians 10:31



Eli King lives with his parents and 6 of his siblings outside of Montgomery, Alabama. He wrote off and on between the ages of eight and fourteen, and finished his first novel just before he turned fifteen. Since then he has written two more, and is now working on several. His desire for this newsletter is that it glorify Christ and advance the cause of Christian fiction among teen writers.

For the Glory of God

By Tony King, co-leader of Grace Baptist Church, Montgomery AL

“And whatsoever ye do in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God and the Father by him.”

(Colossians 3:17)

Now there is a verse for us to memorize and repeat. All we do, all we say – everything we are is to be done in the name of the Lord.

And we give Him thanks for it all, since it is His Spirit that enables us to do anything good. Somewhere along the line, a pernicious (look that one up, it is a good one) error crept into our thinking as Christians. It is the idea that there are secular and sacred elements to the Christian life. There are things God cares about and therefore are sacred and things He doesn’t really care about and thus we don’t give much thought to any significance they might have in the Kingdom. But, as we see in this verse, that is just not so. For all we do is to be done for His Glory. Peter put it this way:

“But you are a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people for his own possession, that you may proclaim the excellencies of him who called you out of darkness into his marvelous light.” (1 Peter 2:9)

The Westminster Catechism starts off with:

Question 1: *What is the chief and highest end of man?*

Answer: *Man's chief and highest end is to glorify God, and fully to enjoy him forever.*

And here we see it all wrapped up – we are to glorify God – period. In everything, because we are a chosen race, a people for his own possession, proclaiming His excellencies. And don't miss the last part of the answer – so that we can enjoy Him forever! Yes, God is a good God. In fact,

goodness is so much a part of His character that we can't separate it from Him and even be able to define it. The Psalmist said "Oh, taste and see that the Lord is good!" (Psalm 34:8)

Lastly, notice our response – to proclaim his excellencies! Now how does one proclaim this about God? Certainly we speak the glorious truths of God's word whenever and however we can. A preacher does this every time he stands to speak.

But, most of us don't have the opportunity to preach regularly. And, since this verse doesn't speak only to those that do preach regularly, we must consider our proper response. As we talk with friends, we should proclaim and affirm the Word of God. As we speak with strangers, the Word of God

should be heard in our speech. Certainly this is a proper response. But to stop here would be pulling up short. No, we are to proclaim the excellencies of our God by being excellent ourselves. In his letter to the Philippians, Paul put it this way:

"And it is my prayer that your love may abound more and more, with knowledge and all discernment, so that you may approve what is excellent, and so be pure and blameless for the day of Christ,"
(Philippians 1:9-10)

Did you know that when you do anything as a Christian, you are reflecting on your Father in heaven? I have eight children. Many times I have been reflected on by them and their actions in the world around us. I have been amazed how many people notice my children. They have great power in their actions to bring honor to me and their mother and bring us credit as parents. But, they also have the power to dishonor us and damage our reputation. Likewise, as children of God, we have the ability to bring him great honor or dishonor in the world's eyes. By our actions, the Kingdom can be built up or torn down. Now, don't get me wrong – God is the sovereign Lord of universe and He will accomplish his objectives regardless of me. But, as a believer, I can be a part of his plans and purposes or work against them. What a tremendous and humbling responsibility.




Alex Tip

It is often helpful to be able to search and read Scripture while writing, if for no other reason than to get verses straight in your mind before referencing them in your work. It's also handy while traveling, and just handy all the way around. Maybe I'm cheap, maybe I'm just practical, but I seem to have a knack for finding free programs for download. This is no exception. At www.esword.net you can download for free a simply superb Bible software, complete with a search feature and more other bells and whistles than I've ever learned how to use. It really is a great tool.

So, what does this have to do with writing? Since this is an extraordinary crowd of young men and women, I am sure you have already figured it out. Write to the Glory of God. Write about God. Write about His goodness. When you get a moment, read and study Philippians 1:9-11 more thoroughly. He is the excellent God, so do things in excellence. In other words, write excellent fiction that glorifies God and points back to him. And, where do we start? Go back one verse in our passage from Colossians:

“Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly in all wisdom; teaching and admonishing one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing with grace in your hearts to the Lord.” (Colossians 3:16)

Read the Word – it is wisdom that will guide and direct you. Besides that, some of the greatest stories ever told are found in its pages. Speak in all you do, especially in your writing using the Word, exhibiting the Grace of God as found in its pages. You are called to base your life on the Word. There is no better way to do so than to base your writing on it as well. The World needs to here the excellence of God. Let them hear it from you in what you write.



Tony King is co-leader at Grace Baptist Church in Montgomery, Alabama, and the loving father of his 8 children. He's preached at Grace Baptist for two years, was one of the three men who founded the church, and has spent years studying at home. He loves being with his family, working around the house, farming and expositing God's Word.

READ **Four essential elements of fiction**

By Eli King

What does it take to write a story that is a real page-turner? How can you craft a tale that is simply enthralling and unstoppable? What elements are needed to make it lovable, clear, truthful and lasting?

Well now, if I knew that, I certainly would have it made, wouldn't I? The truth is, nobody really knows except God. As William Somerset Maugham once said, "There are three rules for writing a novel.

Unfortunately, no one knows what they are." That's the truth of the matter, really.

There is no one "way" to write fiction. One person might spend hours outlining their book and getting every scene perfectly mapped out before they write the first word, while another might just sit down and start writing and let it go where it wants to. I have tried both, and I have managed to turn out a book both times. Both will *work*. There is no right way.

This isn't an argument for subjectivism in all things; this is just a fact of life. A fact that works for the same reason different people learn math different ways (or not at all).

That said, it is essential to have some vague idea (at the very least) of where you are going, and one way or the other, there are certain basic elements that hold

true for fiction no matter how you write it. Your book may have not been outlined at all, or the outline may have been longer than the book, but either way, if it is well written, it should have these four elements in it. There may be, and probably are, more than these four, but I am of the opinion that these four are some of the most important.

So what are they? What is it that makes readers READ?

Research. Oh dear. I just said it, didn't I? The ugly R word. The fact is, if you are anything like me, research is a bad word. It can be difficult, and is, most of the time, even with the amazing Google. Google can't tell you everything. Believe it or not, I have personally stumped Google.

Remember what I said about not finding the number of Christian novels published a year? Yup. That aside however, even when it does seem to give you what you want, you can't always trust it. Yes, I know, Wikipedia is a wonder and very helpful, but come on, can you *really* trust it?

However, I have come to realize just how vital research really is. You simply can't write a convincing book, whether it is a political thriller or a fantasy epic, without some element of research. You can fake it some, and you can slide on a thing here and there, but it *will* shine through at some level. At some point, you have to know what you are talking about.

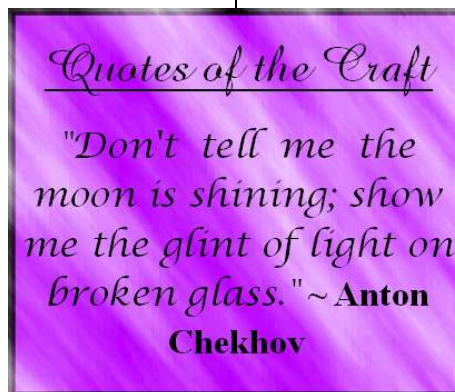
I really can't recommend exactly how to research, but I have found that far and away the best method is to talk to people. Google can lie, and books can be contradictory, but the man on the job knows what he's talking about. Of course, if your book is set in 1458, this won't help much, but even then you might run across a historian now and then, and if you are polite and clear, he might be willing to help. (One cautionary note here. Some people talk bigger than they are qualified to, so everything you hear should be taken with that in consideration.)

Entertaining Story. This may seem silly, and to a certain degree it is, but honestly,

this is important. If your story doesn't entertain you, it will not entertain me or anyone else. That said, just because it entertains you, that does not guarantee that it will entertain somebody else, but it *certainly* won't if you yourself are bored with it.

The reason it simple. How you feel when you write affects what you write, and if you are bored, it will shine through. (No, I am not saying that you have to be "inspired" all the time, all I mean is that you should be interested and happy with your story as a whole).

Accelerated plot. When you read that, all kinds of things probably shot through your head, all the way from a "fast paced book" to somebody racing down a street toward the



end of the book dodging bullets. All I mean by this is that the book should be moving faster in chapter 4 than in chapter 1, and still faster in chapter 8. If not, it will not be a rising action. It will feel slow. I do not mean that your character(s) should be dashing about like crazy toward the end, or that there should never be a scene where he is stopping to buy a Coke, all I mean is that things should be getting worse, more intense, more pressure. When I say accelerated plot, I mean that in more of an emotional, mental sense than a physical, although it should certainly be physical as well on some level. The point is that the story can't be a laid back, easy ride all the

Working Word

Construe:

Make sense of; assign a meaning to

way to the epilogue where your hero gets his prize, because if it is, we'll be asleep. Whether it is morbid or not, the truth is, we are bored with easy lives. We

might prefer one ourselves, but in general, we want it to be hard for the hero.

As J.R.R. Tolkien put it in his novel, *The Hobbit*, "Now it is a strange thing, but things that are good to have and days that are good to spend are soon told about, and not much to listen to; while things that are uncomfortable, palpitating, and even gruesome, may make a good tale, and take a deal of telling anyway." Again, very true.

We want your hero to have to fight for whatever he wants, or needs, and if he doesn't, we'll feel like whatever that goal is, that it isn't...well, worth what little trouble he gave for it. The plot needs to get worse for your hero, and your hero needs to be moving

along. The story needs to be moving faster and faster as it progresses.

Developed Characters. It shocks me how little any writer I know actually *knows* about his/her hero and side characters, and, truth be told, how little *I* know about my own. It really is horrendous.

Let's do a little test to demonstrate what I mean. I'll ask the questions, and you just see how much you know about your hero (I'll just stick to "he" for simplicity).

How tall is he? What size shoe does he wear? What is his favorite sport? Does he like movies? What is his favorite book? Is he saved at the beginning of your book? Where has he been? What is his favorite food? Does he like to get up in the morning or does he prefer to stay up late at night? Is he fond of any particular car? Does he chew gum? What color is his hair? Eyes? Does he prefer jeans or shorts in the summer? Does he wear any hat? Does he like physical exercise? Does he have any strong political beliefs? Does he have any family? What does he do with most of his time? Is he hardworking? Can he swim? Is he afraid of heights? How about water? What are his favorite terms? Expressions? How does he comb his hair? Can he be still and quiet for very long? Does he speak any foreign language? Does he like to read? Can he drive a semi-truck? Has he ever been very badly embarrassed and thus permanently affected somehow? Has he ever done something that he has regretted all his life? Does he have any big enemies? Who are his best friends? What does he think of current political issues in his time and

setting? How does he get along with members of other nationalities? Has he ever broken a big law or committed a felony? Has he ever done something for someone that cost him severely?

Are you getting the point? I myself can't answer immediately more than about a third of those questions. And yet this is the most vital part of writing a good character! He must seem real to us for us to like him, and he won't if we know nothing about him. You can predict what your closest sibling or friend or whoever else who is close to you will probably do before he/she does it because you know them well. You know their favorite foods and colors and what they like to do. You likely spend plenty of time with them, and you know what they are like.

If you plan to spend hours crafting a good novel, you are going to have to know who you're writing about. If you don't, it *will* shine through, and that's a guarantee. You have to know how your character will act in a certain situation, or else he will seem cheap. (Of course, there is a certain element of humanity that is never predictable, but this should still be a general rule.)

If you do this, there will come a time when you can't make him do something and still make him seem real. Why? Because you know that Johnny lost his dad to a wreck in a faulty Honda and thus he distrusts them, and so you can't have him buy one for the convenience of your story without a very convincing reason. If you do, you have just compromised the believability of Johnny. He ceases to feel real to us because, if he really *was* real, he would never have done that.

You simply have to develop your characters in order for them to feel real. You have to know them and pretend that they are real, because if you don't, you can guarantee yourself that they will never seem real to us.

Maybe there are more, and certainly there should be, but I believe that the 4 elements of story that I just listed are among the most essential for good writing. If I had to pick three more, I would extend my acronym to "READING".

In such a case, I would call "I" Integrity, "N" Nobleness, and "G" God. I say Integrity because we must stay true and faithful to Truth as outlined in God's word in our writing, and should never consent to tell a lie about life.

For "N", it is essential that our hero be a noble person, someone we can love. Someone who is not perfect, like all of us, but is striving hard for the truth and for justice.

And then "G" would be obvious, because God should always be the center of our lives, and that includes our writing.

The Immortality of Emotion

By Matthew Lauser

Recently I was talking about a book that annoyed me because the death of a main character wasn't handled well. My complaint was that even though I cared a lot about this character, the death didn't move me

anywhere close to crying, as many other books have.

My father then asked, 'Why would you want to cry?'

Good question. Why would I be upset that a book didn't make me cry?

To put it simply, it wasn't because it didn't make me cry, but because it *should have*. I felt let down, because it brought me to this point and then my emotions somehow fell dead. I'd invested in this character, and my investment ended up with a negative interest rate.

If you're going to build up to such a scene, don't then brush it off. The feeling has to linger. The end doesn't come when you kill off a character. In fact, it doesn't come at the end of the book. I need to see that the other characters are affected by the death long after the story ends.

This is one reason I think tragic and bittersweet endings are so effective. With a happy ending, everything is set right and all the sorrow seems to be forgotten. After the story is over, it's just something you look back on. Your emotions are resolved along with the plot.

But in a tragic or bittersweet ending, the conflicting emotions continue long after the story is over. Instead of thinking that those characters are all fine and the hardships are in the past, I wonder what the characters are going through *now*. How do their lives play out in light of this tragedy?

The book sticks with me much better when I wonder that. Just look at the *Lord of the Rings*. We aren't told the end of Legolas and Gimli's story, or Aragorn and Arwen's, in the actual book (they can be found in the appendices.) The book has a bittersweet ending, and it leaves many things unsaid, which makes the reader's thoughts continually return to the story. *How long is it before Aragorn dies and Arwen's heart breaks? What happens to her then? What is Hobbiton like without Frodo? Do Merry and Pippin still get into trouble sometimes?*

Any good book will resolve the plotline, but still leave such unanswered questions. It's the only effective way to make the story continue after the end of the book.

I just finished reading the *Inkheart* trilogy. Again, the ending of that was fantastic. It was more on the sweet side of

bittersweet, but because it leaves some of the villains, we know that the main characters aren't going to have an altogether easy life ahead of them. It may be better, but their story is far from over.

Good stories never end. When the characters live on in people's imaginations, it's because the writer manipulated the emotions just right, and ended the book just right. If I cry at the death of a main character, it's not just because I cared about them. It's because the author wrote the death scene in just the right way that my emotions continued to get stronger, instead

Quotes of the Craft

"Writing is one of the few activities where quantity will inevitably make quality." ~Harlan Coben

of winding down and disappearing with a fizzle.

That's not how you want to finish a novel, so why finish a character in that way? Give them a climax, and never forget the denouement. Death shouldn't mean the death of the reader's emotions. The character should never completely vanish from the story. There's always someone else who will remember them.

In my novel *Circle of Three*, one of two main characters dies at the end. The other one is left heartbroken but alive. It creates the question, *What happens to the poor person now? Do they ever get over it?*

You don't know yet, but it does make the book stick around, because you *want* to know. Your mind will try to deduce what will happen. If you cared about the character who cared about the other one who died, then you should feel the death with twice as much potency as if the character had died alone.

That is what makes books memorable. It's not often the plot, or the style of the writing, or the content. It's the characters and the emotions they elicit. If a book doesn't affect me deeply, I forget it easily. It didn't capture a part of my heart. Memories of the mind are prone to forget, but the recollections of a heart are not easily broken.

All stories are about people, whether they're actual humans, or aliens, animals, a little tin soldier, or other non-human characters. Animals as main characters may have some animal characteristics, but they are still overwhelmingly human.

And what drives humans? Emotion. When we're not excited by something, we aren't likely to care about it. Sometimes it can cause problems, but it's true that emotion is one of the strongest types of motivation we have for what we do and think. Not only does this go for characters, but for readers as well.

Your readers should be like characters. You want them to care about your characters and your story, just as your characters care about what's important to them. If the characters don't act human, the readers won't care about them.

We remember things best that affect us deeply. Since in this fallen world, many of those things are tragic and sorrowful, we tend to remember a lot of bad things. But this fact can be useful to a writer. A tragic book that reaches the reader's heart is much better than a happy one that falls flat. Even if you hate tragic endings. Because whether your readers like a tragic story or not, chances are they will remember your book for a long time.

I've read a few books during which I had to stop for a moment because my eyes were so blurred with tears that I couldn't read the words. Many of those books are on my shelf and I will read them over and over again.

So why would I want a book to make me cry? Because then I will remember it with my heart, not just my mind. It will mean that I care about the characters and what happens to them, and that I have a deeper connection to the story than just the entertainment factor.



Matthew Lauser lives in Washington State in the Columbia River Gorge with his family. He is the oldest of nine homeschooled children and started writing at age fifteen, when he decided he didn't want to keep trying to get out of writing essays. He discovered that he liked it, and after less than four years had written a total of 800,000 words in his fictional stories. He has finished two novels, six novellas, and two volumes of short stories. Besides writing, he enjoys playing the piano, which he has done since age five, and writing music.

Makeup, Drama, & Over-kill

By Hannah Mills

Too much drama in a story is like too much makeup on a young woman. When used sparingly, makeup brings out the best in a girl. But when too much is applied, it makes her look gaudy and overdone. It's not natural.

Too much drama in your writing can have the same affect on your story. It's about balance; too little can make your characters seem dry and lacking human emotions, and too much seems unnatural and sometimes downright absurd. No reader would expect your hero to remain stoic while his closest friend and ally is lying on the ground with a bullet through his chest. However, readers would think him lacking in self-control, and maybe something of a wimp, if he swooned at the mere sight of his friend lying there. Unless, of course, he has a habit of passing out when under extreme pressure. But for some reason I doubt that is a common scenario.

In the past, authors could get away with a lot more when it came to drama, especially in the early-to-mid 19th century. Fainting, melodramatic emotions, falling desperately ill because your father told you

“no” to something, and on it goes. That was the style of the times. If I am reading a book written in that time period, I cut the author some slack and put up with the melodrama. But if it's a book written fairly recently, my thoughts normally run along the lines of *C'mon, give me a break! This is ridiculous!*

Why? Because all of those incredibly dramatic scenarios don't mimic real life.

“Neither do epic car chases and shoot-outs,” you may argue. You're right; to a point. However, if your book involves a police officer, a sniper, or an FBI agent, then it *does* mimic real life for someone in that line of work.

Or if your central character is in the medical field, reviving a woman that passed out very well may be normal - for your specific story.

Part of it largely depends on context and the characters themselves. If you make it clear that your character has a medical or psychological

issue that causes her to hyperventilate or even faint in certain situations, readers are more likely to empathize with her rather than get mad at you for writing something that they think is ludicrous. One of the reasons they will feel empathy for her is because you gave her a *valid reason* for doing it. An excellent example of this was Muriel's disorder in the book *Burr* by Grace DeBusschere, one of the semi-finalists in the One Year Adventure Novel's 2010 Novel Contest.

Working Word

Aerie:

1. The lofty nest of a bird of prey
2. Any habitation at a high altitude

You will, of course, sometimes be around a born actor or actress; someone who loves the attention gained from hyping everything up. So sure; a character like that could add an interesting twist to your book. But please, don't use too many of those types.

Earlier I mentioned some scenarios that authors in the 1800's used. I have read examples of each one. Fainting is a fairly common one, and I'll admit I've used it once or twice, but I've only utilized it when the character in question has lost a lot of blood or otherwise been severely roughed up. In *The Brethren* by H. Rider Haggard, however, Godwin passed out when he saw that Masouda had been killed. It didn't fit his character. He was introspective, but he was also a strong, skilled knight that could handle almost anything. So his swoon seemed unrealistic and inconsistent (regardless, it is one of my favorite stories).

As to melodramatic emotions...this one especially irritates me when portrayed in men. In the book *Ishmael* by E.D.E.N. Southworth, the central character, Ishmael, is, to my mind, tainted by the author's apparent love of melodrama. Ishmael is, for the most part, an interesting, likeable character. But his almost-perfect and overly-emotional personality was, from my perspective, a slight downfall to an otherwise wonderful read.

And lastly, yes. I have read a book where the central character falls ill because she was told "no" to something. It was in one of the first several books in the *Elsie Dinsmore Series* by Martha Finely. She had been asked by her father to play a certain song on the piano for a friend. Elsie refused, because the day was Sunday and the song wasn't a hymn. So her father said 'no' to allowing her get down off the piano stool; she had to sit there until she would do as he asked. Basically, after sitting there for a long span of time, she either fainted or fell asleep sitting - I don't remember which -, fell off the stool, gashed her head, and fell deathly

ill. Ridiculous. Talk about far-fetched. I used to like that series, until I realized how unrealistic it all was.

Now you may be wondering if there is a good side to drama. Yes, there most definitely is!

Examples?

The book *The Scarlet Pimpernel*, by Baroness Orczy (and its movie adaptation starring Anthony Andrews and Jane Seymour) is a great example. Sir Percy Blakeney perfectly fills the role of an elegant, foppish man who thinks of little more than his cravat. He is very dramatic, but the way Orczy pulled it off was brilliantly hilarious.

Another good example is found in *Riven* by Jerry B. Jenkins. When in a fit of anger, Brady pulled the trigger and ended the life of his girlfriend, Jenkins took the time to slow down and write Brady's initial aftershock in great detail. In my mind I

Quotes of the Craft

"I write when I am inspired, and I see to it that I am inspired at nine o'clock every morning."

~Peter DeVries

could see Katie turn to leave, hear the gunshot and watch her body get propelled back, envision every emotion that crossed Brady's face and watch him frantically try to kill himself as well, and when that didn't work, tumble out of the car to the pavement, gasping and trying to comprehend what he just did. As a result of Jenkins' careful writing, that scene had punch; it stays with you for a while, as does the entire book, and especially one of the last chapters, which left me crying so hard I could barely see the words on the page.

The Bible, too, holds *many* examples of drama used in an excellent way. Since God wrote that Book, though, it shouldn't surprise us. Is it any wonder that the Bible is the best-selling book of *all time*

and that people read it over and over again and mull over it even longer? It shouldn't: the Bible was, after all, written by the One who authored everything about us and

the entire universe, and He is the *only One* who can write a perfect story.

To my mind, the essence of skilled writing is making your book stick with the reader long after he or she reads the final page.

Drama is one of the tools in our author's toolbox to do just that, and is just as important as the other elements of story, including but not limited to creativity, characterization, and ideals. And just like with anything else, it can be hard to find the perfect balance between too much and too

little, especially because it tends to vary to some degree between different stories and situations. I'm *still* trying to master it! But I know it can be done, because I've read excellent books where the author has perfected a superb mixture with just the right amount of drama.

If something seems "off" in your writing or you know you have a bad case of loving melodrama, try to envision the scene in your mind, like you're watching a movie, or try getting a second opinion. "Seeing" it in your head or having a friend or family member give you their candid opinion is very helpful in finding things that just don't mesh well with your specific characters and scenario. And lastly, don't be afraid to revise, scrap, or completely re-write. It's hard, but the end results are worth it.

Working Word

Lippen:

To have confidence,
faith, or trust

Hannah Mills lives in the Midwestern U.S. with her parents and four younger brothers. Homeschooled her entire life, she has written stories and poems off and on for as long as she can remember. In 2009 she became serious about her writing and since then has written three novels - almost completing a series of four, the last of which is currently in progress. In addition to writing she also loves to read, draw, spend time with family and friends, go horseback riding, study Worldview, and work on her photography skills.

Poems

The art and craft of writing is not confined to works of fiction prose, and poems can be one the most beautiful expressions of truth. They take work, like anything else that is well-written, but are worth the effort and, when they are well-written, can be just as enjoyable to read.

For His Glory

By Jacki Crooks

For His glory, I'll stand
I will walk, if for His glory
Sitting or running, whatever his call
And writing, too – but only His story

For His glory I write
It is His gift to me, after all
I could do none of these things
If not for his call

Be my writing as praise to Him
Or a desperate call for grace,
If I have written to His glory
I know He'll lift up my face

A gift used for naught
But our own selfish gain
Is a waste of our time
And a slander on His name

God, help me to use Your gift
To bring glory to You
May the words I write,
Lord, always be true

For His glory, I'll write,
If write I do.
I would not waste this gift
If I could share Him with you.

He Didn't Let Go

Esther Cook

I lost my parents.
I lost my brother.
I lost my life as I knew it then.
I lost my love, my innocence, my smile.
I lost my desire to live one more hour.
But He held me close and didn't let go.

I wanted to cry.
I wanted to run.
I wanted to hide.

I tried to resist.
I tried to hold back.
I tried to stand, alone.
I tried to build a wall against everyone and
everything.

I tried to escape.
But He held me close and didn't let go.
He picked me up and carried me through.

I lost my anger.
I lost my despair.
And my wall was broken down.

I still had pain.
I still had grief.
I still wept.
I still fell.
I still made foolish mistakes, hurting me and
the ones I love.

But He held me close and didn't let go.
He picked me up and carried me through.
He gave me family that loved me true.



Jacki Crooks lives in Wisconsin with her parents and younger sister. She enjoys writing, web-designing, photo editing/creating, reading, spending time with her friends and family, and driving. In 2008, she started the One Year Adventure Novel curriculum and began her serious writing career. She currently has two books in the works and multiple poems as well. Her passion truly lies in reaching hurting or lost teens with the love of Christ, as well as showing her support for the troops serving in our military, and she often does this through her writing.

And I felt peace.
I felt joy.
I felt hope.

Esther Cook is a homeschooled MK living in Spain. Her interest in writing budded when she was nine, resulting in some short children's stories, skits, and poems. Currently she is writing a novel with the help of the One Year Adventure Novel writing course, her supportive family, and most importantly, God. Esther also enjoys walking, singing, playing the piano, drawing, and interior decorating.

Short Stories

While the pursuit of a whole novel is often the drive of many young authors, short stories are still very popular and still abound. A short story, I personally believe, can take more energy, work and ingenuity in many ways than a novel, because there is much less room for explanation, setting detail and back story. Truly, a well written short story is a work of art.

BROKEN

By Miguel Flores


I feel broken.
I feel fractured.
I feel...
Alone.
I stare at the picture. Stare at the face. At the eyes.
I want to burn it.
I want to hold it.

I want to die with it.
It screams out at me.
Screams with love, and guilt.
Hate, and longing.
I stare at the picture.
The face...
My love.
I feel tortured.
I feel torn.
I feel...
Alone.
So very alone.

He's gone, left me alone in this world.
Left me all by myself.
Why?
Why does death have such a bite?
Why does it take lives so quickly?
Why does it hurt so much?
Why?
Broken...
So broken.
I stare at the picture, I push it away.
He's gone.
But he's still here.

I love him more than ever.
I hate the hole in my heart.

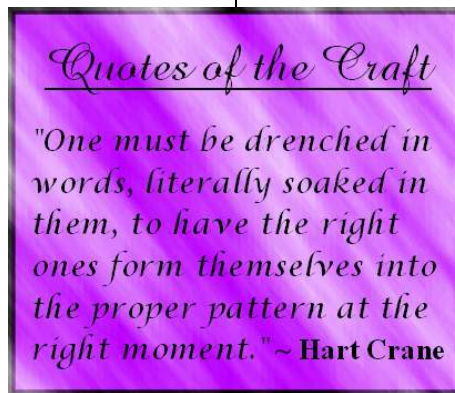
Broken.
My husband.
My love.
Myself.
Gone.
Torn.
Broken.
Why is death so bitter?
I hate it.



Alex Tip

Words are our business, and dictionaries are our tools. But looking up a word in a physical copy of a dictionary, while it may be fun, is tiresome and slow. When writing, it's much easier and faster to look up a word on a computer dictionary, and thanks to WordWeb, an excellent software is available for free download. It includes a thesaurus, a word bookmark feature and many other word tools, and is easy to use. Just go to <http://wordweb.info/free/> or do a search for "WordWeb".

Yet I want it to take me.
 Right now.
 Oh dear God, it hurts so much.
 You told me it was a bond to never be
 broken.
 Yet why does death tear it apart so easily?
 Why did you bring death into this world?
 Why do you tear lives apart?
 Have I done something wrong?
 Do you hate me God?
 Why?
 Why did you bring death
 into the world?
 Your word says that the
 wages of sin is death.
 My husband was a good
 man.
 Why, God?
 Dear God, why?
 That's all I want to know.
 He was my other; he completed me. I'm so...
 torn now.
 Broken.
 You told me it was a bond that could never
 be broken.
 Now death has destroyed it.
 Is it his fault?
 Is it mine?
 Can you take me too?
 I'm broken, Lord Jesus...
 Incomplete.
 You know what this feels like.
 You do, don't you?
 I'm so confused...
 I want to cry.
 Want to die.
 But you did.
 So I wouldn't have to.



Why does death have such a bitter bite?
 Why do I want to die so much now?
 Is it painful, Lord?
 Is my husband singing with you?
 Is he still in pain?
 Can I go to him?
 You died, didn't you?
 So I wouldn't have to.
 So he wouldn't have to.
 Why did you take him God?
 It wasn't his time yet.
 He wasn't ready...
 I wasn't ready!
 You died.
 Why did you die?
 You felt alone.
 Why would you go through
 this?
 Why would you break
 yourself?
 You weren't ready.
 The wages of sin is death.
 I've sinned, Lord.
 You haven't.
 Why did you die?
 Why would you break yourself?
 My husband...
 Was he really ready?
 I look at his picture and see his smile.
 Is it so much glorious a smile where he is
 now?
 Is he with you, God?
 Does he miss me?
 Why does death have such a bitter bite?
 Why do I feel so alone?
 Are you really with me?
 I am your bride.
 You said so yourself.

Why am I alone?
Why am I incomplete?
Broken...
I feel so broken.
Complete me God.
Or take me away
But... no.
You do complete me.
More than my husband?
You're more real than anything I've ever
known.
You are.
Aren't you?
Does my husband know?
Is he there with you?
I feel...
So broken.
But you complete me.
Your cross.
Does it heal all wounds?
Can it fill my heart?
Can it complete me?
I felt so broken.
But you were the one who healed me.
You completed me.
You saved me.
You loved me first.
My first love.
How could I forget?
Is my husband up there with you?
I hope he is.
I hope he loves you as much as I want to.
I do want to.
I felt so broken.
But you did complete me.
Why does life conquer death?
You conquered death so I wouldn't have to
be defeated by it.

Is my husband really dead?
Or is he alive?
Eternally alive.
Broken...
I felt so broken.
But you loved, you saved, you healed.
You completed.
You still complete me.
I am complete.
You are complete.
You complete me.
Broken?
Never again.
I am complete.
Eternally...

COMPLETE

Miguel Flores lives in Florida with his parents and younger sister. A worker of many odd jobs and wielder of the pen, Miguel enjoys challenging activities of all sorts - whether to exercise his limbs or his mind. His most driving passions are God, music, and writing. Always writing poems and songs, he is also currently working on several novels and has finished two. His desire in all things is to influence people, comfort them, and guide them to Christ with words on paper and with his life.

The Beggar's Cry

By Anna L. Pendleton

The wind howled and the rain came down in sheets as a dark figure struggled along the winding road leading to the village. He was clad in little more than rags, with his hair lying like a mop on his head. On his face could be seen countless years of begging and fighting.

As he entered the village the lighting flashed all around him. Running up to the first door he saw, he pounded on it yelling, "Help me! Help me!" As the door opened he clasped his hands and cried out to the man, "Please! Help me! My friend has fallen deathly ill and is in great distress! Won't you come to his aid?"

The man seemed willing to do so and hurried to get his cloak. Rushing into the empty street he shouted to the beggar, "Where is this friend of yours?"

"Just beyond the leviathan's cave, by the sea."

The man stopped dead in his tracks. Turning to the beggar he shouted, "Are you mad! To go by the cave of the leviathan is to die! Nay, I cannot go!"

"But sir! Have you no compassion? Come, help my friend!"

"Risk my life to help a beggar? I will not be such a fool! Be gone, man, before I take your life into my own hands."

Greatly distressed the beggar ran to the next house, but received the same words as before.

All through the night he went from house to house, being turned away at every door. Despair came over him as he approached the last house in the long row. The modest hut's roof was made of hay and the walls that of plaster. The beggar knocked on the rough wooden door. It creaked open and there stood a young man. His hair was black, being softened by his deep green eyes.

"What is it man?" He shouted above the shrieking wind.

"Please!" The beggar cried. "My friend has fallen ill unto death; will you hurry to his aid?"

"Indeed!" He said fastening his sword around his waist, "Where is your friend?"

"Just beyond the Leviathan's cave by the sea," replied the beggar.

"Onward, then!" The man said, greatly surprising the beggar.

"You're not turning back?" He shouted.

"Why should I?"

"Are you not afraid of the Leviathan?"

"Certainly. I would be a fool if I wasn't. But this man needs help."

"Very well, then!" Came the beggar. They hurried up that winding, treacherous road. It was a most frightful journey with lighting flashing all around them, the wind shrieking violently and the rain falling in hard giant drops.

Working Word

Fidelity:

1. Accuracy with which an electronic system reproduces the sound or image of its input signal
2. The quality of being faithful

For three quarters of an hour they walked, stumbling, doing their best to not go hurling over the jagged cliff that they were walking along. Now they were within a stone's throw from the cave. Deep growls could be heard coming from it. They took slow careful steps hoping not to encounter the dreaded beast. One soft step, two, three, four, five, one more and they would be safely past. But, alas, once the beggar was safe on the other side and the man was about to take his last step, a giant claw seized him and threw him up in the air! He landed in the monster's enormous hands. Though shaken, as a shepherd he had grown accustomed to surprise, and before he could think twice; his sword was out of its sheath and in his hand, hacking away at the paw. He got several jabs in, forcing the Leviathan to drop him; he landed hard on the ground and went rolling towards the cliff's edge and the raging water below. He tried with all his might to stop himself but to no avail and was soon dangling over it, clutching a shrub that he had managed to grasp. The beast roared in triumph. If it had not been for the thought of the beggar, who would undoubtedly be the monster's next victim, the man would have given up all together. But thinking of that and of the man lying ill just beyond the ridge he was motivated. Girding every last morsel of strength in him, he pulled himself up with the use of the shrub.

Quotes of the Craft

*"I don't wait for moods.
You accomplish nothing if
you do that. Your mind
must know it has got to
get down to work."* ~ **Pearl
S. Buck**

Before the leviathan knew what was happening, the man had picked up his sword and was now rushing at the beast. The monster charged with his head down and his razor sharp claws extended directly before him. They collided and there was a brief struggle. The man and the beast went

tumbling and rolling, with sword and claws slashing. Now they were next to the edge of the cliff, the man being on the outer side. His strength was nearly gone, but using what little he had left, he raised his sword and pushed it into the monster's side causing it to

release him. Taking advantage of this, he rolled underneath it to the other side. Then, through the hand of providence, the monster lost his footing and went tumbling down the precipice, dashed to pieces and landed in the raging water below.

The man stumbled over to the beggar, who had been lying stunned the whole time. He lifted him to his feet and supported him. They hurried on their way to the side of the dying man, reaching the place where he was said to be in little time. But instead of the rough hut that the man had expected, there was in its place a great crimson tent.

"Please, enter," the beggar said, his whole face lighting up.

The man entered and found, to his great surprise, the king lying there on a low couch with his beautiful, golden haired daughter sitting at his feet.

“Approach, friend,” the king said, extending his hand to the man.

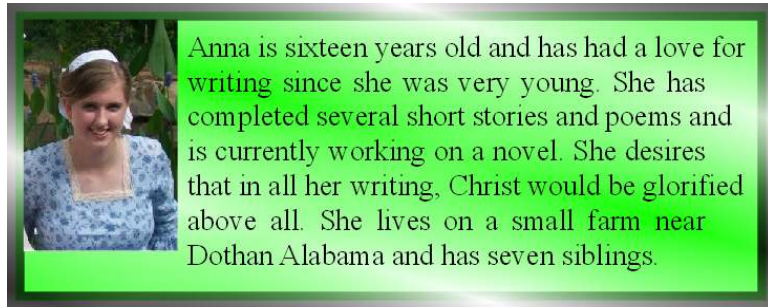
The man knelt and kissed it. “I do not understand, my king,” he said.

The King replied, “I am told by the leeches that I am to die within the month. Because I have no sons and, though I have searched all through the land, I have found none that is noble enough to take my place and care for my daughter. I hired this man here,” the king nodded to the beggar, “to go into the village and find a man that would be willing to help even the poorest of men. Then I would know that he who would do this would be the only man able to properly lead the kingdom. For is it written: ‘And whoever wishes to be first among you shall be the slave of all.’ ”

“On the morrow,” the king continued, “you will be knighted for

conquering the dreaded Leviathan, and if both you and she are willing, you will be wed to my daughter.”

Accordingly, the next morning, on the grassy slope, just beyond the mote, with the castle sitting behind them, the shepherd was knighted and thereafter, he and the princess were joined in holy marriage before God and man. At the death of the King the young knight took his throne, following in the King’s foot steps, leading the people with the heart of a servant.



Comments? Suggestions? Questions? Thoughts? We'd love to hear them. Drop us an email at kingdompen@hughes.net

Know someone who'd be interested in Kingdom Pen? Tell them to send us an email at the address above and we'll put them on our list!

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We hope this issue has been an encouragement for you to press on in Christian