



The Author's Blood

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The Wormling V: The Author's Blood

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For Jason

“You don’t have a soul. You are a Soul. You have a body.”

C. S. LEWIS



“No arsenal, or no weapon in the arsenals of the world, is so formidable as the will and moral courage of free men and women.”

RONALD REAGAN



“If you want to make enemies, try to change something.”

WOODROW WILSON



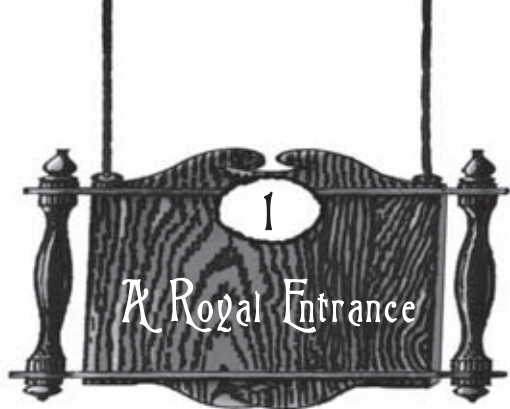
“The bravest are surely those who have the clearest vision of what is before them, glory and danger alike, and yet notwithstanding, go out to meet it.”

THUCYDIDES



“It is not often that someone comes along who is a true friend and a good writer.”

E. B. WHITE



It was only fitting that the Queen's sentence should be handed down at the Castle of the Pines, her former home, because this was where the Dragon and his council retreated. Not that they ran from any battle, for there was no one to run from. Lowlanders lay defeated in country fields. The survivors hid, cowering.

The Dragon and his council members simply returned to the castle to relax, belch fire, torment slaves, and gloat about their victory over the bedraggled army of the Wormling.

RHM, now the longest living aide of the Dragon in history, attended to his master's every need, be it food,

drink, or amusement. There was always amusement now and plans for more.

“Is the coliseum ready?” the Dragon said.

“Almost, sire. Your dwelling was in desperate need of repair, scorched as it was after your last assault there.”

“Yes, I recall the way the people scurried about, trying to get away. Delightful. Are there enough citizens left to be the sport of our games?”

“Plenty, sire. Young and old and some in between.”

“Good, good. I can’t wait to watch them die in agony. Does it get any better than this?”

“Only when the Highlands are joined under your rule, sire. There will be plenty more amusement from the inhabitants there.”

The Dragon’s eyes shone red and his teeth glistened. “Yes,” he hissed, drinking in the scene as if it were a sponge dipped in his favorite wine that he could suck on until the last bit was gone. “Is she here?” he said at last.

“She just arrived and the council has taken its place in the Hall of Meeting. Shall I announce you?”

The Dragon glanced at a stand that held a golden crown. “I shall wear that in her presence. A nice touch, don’t you think?”

The council met in a vast room, which, even to an untrained eye, had once been ornate and splendid. Charred tapestries

adorned the walls, murals now faded from the smoke graced either end, and from the ceiling hung colossal chandeliers. A masterpiece fashioned on the ceiling proved a stunning (though soot-covered) depiction of the Highlands, the Lowlands, and the invisible heavenly world—a crown and scepter leaning against a massive book, and the beings from these worlds kneeling, as if in worship to someone.

The council members this day, however, concentrated on the food slung about the table, goblets filled with drink, and bowls overflowing with fruits and nuts harvested from Lowlanders' farms. They chortled and told ribald stories (those we would not repeat) about their latest victories.

Only the presence of RHM at the door, clearing his throat, caused them to quiet. "It is my high honor and pleasure to present the supreme ruler, the preeminent power, who exercises decisive judgment, our king and sovereign, His Majesty, the Dragon."

As one, the council stood. Some banged their weapons on the floor, while others rapped on the table. All yelled or howled or whooped, filling the whole room with an unearthly noise.

The Dragon sashayed in, eyes shining. He preened and raised his head, sending a blast of fire toward the ceiling and further charring the picture of the crown, scepter, and book. With a wave he signaled the others to be seated and took his

place on the throne at the head of the table. “Before we get to the main course,” he said, chuckling, “I want reports. What of the so-called army of the Wormling?”

Slugspike rose at the other end of the table. He enjoyed such a prominent place not only because he had been appointed lead commander of the Dragon’s armies but also because no one wanted to sit next to a being with such razor-sharp spines that oozed poison. Slugspike had volunteered to capture and kill the Wormling but had failed. Had the Dragon not done the job himself with his blast of fire at the White Mountain, he would have dispatched Slugspike. But, euphoric at being done with the Wormling and with victory in sight, the Dragon had restored him.

“We have paved the way for your new kingdom, sire,” Slugspike said through puffy cheeks. “All the rabble has been dispatched, with the exception of a few stragglers.”

“Stragglers?”

“Halflings and the like. We left them to bury the dead. We’ll send a small contingent to take care of them when the job is finished.”

The Dragon turned to Velvel, the vaxor head of Lowland military affairs. He had come to power after Daagn had been killed by the Dragon. “And my command to assemble near Dragon City?” (Dragon City was a massive walled compound under repair. In its center lay the coliseum.)

"It has been heeded," Velvel said. "The people seem glad to obey your imperial edict, sire, and to congregate in the valley while Dragon City is repaired. The coliseum is nearly—"

"Yes, yes, I've already heard."

"How much longer before you attack the Highlands and bring them under your subjection?" General Prufro said.

The rest nodded and grunted.

"We had to evacuate the Highlands except for a skeleton crew. When the minions of time have done their work, we will purge the Highlands—by that time, anyone still living will need canes and walkers."

"Minions of time?" someone said, laughing. "What a wonderful idea, sire."

Finally the Dragon cleared his throat and nodded to RHM, who quickly left the room. "And now the moment you've all been waiting for," the Dragon said. "I have a special treat. You have long known of our enemy and his Son. The older was killed long ago—incinerated—although we have had disturbing reports that he may have survived. The younger has surely been subdued by the attack of the minions. He went into hiding shortly before the Wormling invaded the Lowlands, and we will soon search for his body to make sure. We also have the alleged king and queen of the west in custody, and when their daughter is located in the Highlands, her blood will anoint my throne."

“What have you prepared for us?” Slugspike said, drooling.
The Dragon rose and turned.

Through the doorway walked a woman so unkempt that
she looked like one with no home and no hope. Her hands
were tied behind her and her head downcast.

“I present the wife of our enemy,” the Dragon said, smiling.



The Wormling series is an allegory, a story designed to make a point. We hope you have learned something about yourself from our tale, but let us explain our reason for the telling.

Owen represents each of us—an ordinary, seemingly insignificant person. What he doesn't realize at the beginning is the same thing we often forget—that if we have a relationship with the King, we enjoy authority given by him. We were designed by him. Nothing happens by chance. Our life is a unique tapestry woven by an unseen hand.

We are also, whether we realize it or not, engaged in a fierce battle between

good and evil, and it is our choice whether to pick up weapons and fight or do something else.

While this present world seems like all there is, a much bigger reality awaits. What we do in this life reaches into the next.

The duality of the characters in the story, such as Watcher and Constance, represents the split between our spiritual lives and our physical ones. However, as we see in the end, when we allow the King to make us whole, these two can come together beautifully as we were meant to be.

While there are obvious parallels to Jesus, God, the angels, Satan, and other biblical characters and themes, we admit that there are also many differences which leave our story merely that—a story. It is not meant to exactly reflect the Bible. For instance, the King has a wife (which God does not have), Owen makes mistakes (which Jesus doesn't do), and so on.

We are grateful that you have picked up this saga and hope you have enjoyed the adventure. May you be aware of the presence and power of the King in your life today.

Jerry B. Jenkins
Chris Fabry

ABOUT THE AUTHORS

Jerry B. Jenkins (jerryjenkins.com) is the writer of the *Left Behind* series. He owns the Jerry B. Jenkins Christian Writers Guild, an organization dedicated to mentoring aspiring authors. Former vice president for publishing for the Moody Bible Institute of Chicago, he also served many years as editor of *Moody* magazine and now serves on Moody's board of trustees.

His writing has appeared in publications as varied as *Time* magazine, *Reader's Digest*, *Parade*, *Guideposts*, in-flight magazines, and dozens of other periodicals. Jenkins's biographies include books with Billy Graham, Hank Aaron, Bill Gaither, Luis Palau, Walter Payton, Orel Hershisier, and Nolan Ryan, among many others. His books appear regularly on the *New York Times*, *USA Today*, *Wall Street Journal*, and *Publishers Weekly* best-seller lists.

Jerry is also the writer of the nationally syndicated sports-story comic strip *Gil Thorp*, distributed to newspapers across the United States by Tribune Media Services.

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Chris Fabry is a writer and broadcaster who lives in Colorado. He has written more than 50 books, including the RPM series and collaboration on the Left Behind: The Kids and Red Rock Mysteries series.

You may have heard his voice on Focus on the Family, Moody Broadcasting, or Love Worth Finding. He has also written for *Adventures in Odyssey* and *Radio Theatre*.

Chris is a graduate of the W. Page Pitt School of Journalism at Marshall University in Huntington, West Virginia. He and his wife, Andrea, have nine children, two dogs, and a large car-insurance bill.