

What is the name of your book?

Sanctuary

What motivated you to write this book?

After more than a dozen years writing devotional blogs, sermons and bible studies, I had a vision that one day my only granddaughter would pull a dusty, dogeared book from her bookshelf for her granddaughter. She then encouraged her granddaughter to nuzzle closer as she opened the book. “When I was your age, my Poppy wrote this book for me.” After pointing to the inscription from me to her years before, she turned the worn pages to where a bookmark rested. “See where it says Sissy?” Her granddaughter looked up. “That’s my name, Grammy.” In my vision, my granddaughter smiled as she stroked her granddaughter’s hair and said, “I know Sissy. That was my nickname too. Would you like me to read Poppy’s story to you?”

That dream is all the motivation I have ever needed, and all five of my grandchildren can identify themselves in Sanctuary and its sequel, Testament.

Have you always wanted to write? What made you feel this way?

A lion’s share of clover-green Irish blood flows through my veins. As a result, I’ve always been blessed with the gift of the gab. However, contemplating getting the words onto paper did not begin to be real to me until I returned to college and then seminary late in life, where I became enthralled with the value of writing. Since then I’ve drafted far more sermons, Bible-studies and inspirational blog posts than I dare to recount. But, writing a serious novel presented new challenges that provided an excuse until my wife insisted that I should retire early to expand my writing for the sake of our grandkids. Of course, I fretted and fussed in the early months as I discovered writing a novel requires far more than my Irish DNA to be successful. Thankfully, God provided a great writing coach who became an indispensable mentor in the process. She showed me how to allow my shamrock-green blood to flow out onto the pages of my manuscripts. (Anyone seeking a phenomenal writing coach/editor, feel free to contact me and I’ll get you in touch with Kari Scare.)

What is something you want to say with your book beyond the story?

First, there are no short-cuts to success. A huge chasm divides a writer and an author. Overcoming that chasm requires unyielding patience, persistence and perseverance to bridge the abyss. Expect rejection and criticism along the journey. There will be plenty of nay-sayers whose voices may drown out the well-wishes of friends and family. At this moment, I am watching in humbled-awe the launch of my first book while the sequel is already about to be sent off to my publisher for its release later this year. To even contemplate a third story bouncing around in my head was incomprehensible even six months ago, but it is real to me now. Thus, don’t allow your age to be an excuse; our imagination grows with age.

For those thinking about accepting the daunting challenge of writing a story, fear and anxiety are natural. Just begin to put words onto paper, one page at a time, and you may well discover your story might well overflow into a book. But, if you allow fear and anxiety to stymie you, your story will have an audience of one. Never, never, never quit once you begin.

What day is your book officially on sale?

April 4th, the first Tuesday in April, but advance orders are available through Deeds Publishing right now.

Where can people get your book? And what about book events?

Online: Deeds Publishing web site, www.deedspublishing.com; as well as, Amazon and Barnes and Noble.

Several independent bookstores and retail outlets throughout Georgia will be carrying the book. Check my personal blog site, www.coachbrown.org or on Facebook at my author page, <https://www.facebook.com/TMBrownauthor/>. You will also find a listing of book events beginning on April 8th in Sparta, GA where their real-life tragic courthouse fire became the inspiration behind the book cover photo. The advantage of my wife and I being retired is the freedom to travel to meet folks at the various book signing events being added everyday to our already calendar.

Is there a question not asked that you would like to answer?

A preview reader asked me if the story behind Sanctuary was based on truth or not. And, does Shiloh, the quaint, time-lost South Georgia town exist? The answer to both is the same, the story and setting are very real to me and clutter my mind's eye everyday. My wife and I speak about the characters of Shiloh and their unique circumstances and challenges in the stories as if they were close friends and even family to us. For this reason, I confess that it is my belief that there is no such thing as pure fiction. We draft our fictional stories, filled with colorful characters and settings, from our storehouse of memories. Fiction cannot be created ex nihilo, out of nothingness; there is always a morsel of truth and reality behind each of our stories, no matter how hard we try to claim our works to be fiction.

What do you like to read?

As a history major, I love all forms of history books, but also enjoy seeking out the historical links found in great mysteries and thrillers by the likes of John Grisham, David Baldacci, Nicolas Sparks, John Irving, etc., but I would also be remiss not to mention Charles Martin and Terry Kay, as well. Someday, in the foreseeable future, I will be able to get back to reading as I once enjoyed after my writing days begin to wind down again.