

August 31, 2007

Dear Janet,

There is no one story in my life, no one particular day or event that I can point to and say, "Ah, this is it. I am now going to devote the rest of my life to telling stories." With me, it was more a gradual realization of a goal that I'd had since I was a child. I never wanted to *be* a writer when I grew up, I always knew I was one. When I was a child, I loved the written word. I read incessantly. Long after I should have been asleep, I'd be reading just "one more chapter" of the latest Nancy Drew under my covers with a flashlight.

I also wrote incessantly. Most days I had a long walk home from school and if I wasn't walking with a friend, I'd be making up stories in my head, usually with me as the hero who was saving her school from certain, imminent danger.

A favorite childhood game of mine was story writing. My friends and I would sit in a circle and would write a sentence or two at the top of our papers. Then we'd fold the top of the paper over and pass it on to the next person in the circle who would add to the story without reading what had been previously written.

After the sheets were filled we'd read our stories doubling over with gales of laughter. Unfortunately after a couple of rounds of this, my friends would be ready to quit. I, on the other hand, could have gone on playing that particular game all afternoon.

My best friend and I made up our own language. By switching letters around, or merely reversing them, we came up with words. My name was Adnil. The phrase "I love you" was translated "E vole oy-oy". We filled whole scribblers with our new language, constantly adding to it, constantly refining it.

The call to the ministry of fiction came much later. And it came gently to me, little by little, and when I was finally writing novels, it seemed not surprising to me at all that I'd gotten here.

After working for a number of years as a journalist and freelance writer, I wanted to try a novel. I had been enrolled in a weeklong writer's workshop, hoping that the workshop would show me how writing a novel was accomplished. I had written four chapters of a novel I knew I wanted to complete, but I knew there had to be some 'secret' to accomplishing this. I could picture us hunched over our desks working on strange looking charts with alien symbols, all things, I was sure, that novelists did.

I had an appointment with an editor there who practically bought my incomplete novel on the spot. All I had to do was to go home and finish it.

I was excited but stunned! I went to my room, needing to pray, and to give this entire new career change to the Lord. As I knelt in the middle of the afternoon in the room, I could almost sense God saying to me, "This is what I want you to do. It won't be easy. At times it will be tremendously hard, but this is what I want you to do."

I went home and finished the novel.

I learned something else, too. There are no magic formulas for writing a novel. You just start writing and keep on doing that until it's finished.

Yours truly,

Linda Hall

Fredericton, NB
CANADA

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Award winning and twice Christy nominated author **Linda Hall** has written more than a dozen novels and a number of nonfiction books. She has also worked as a freelance writer, news reporter and feature writer for a daily newspaper.

Linda has been married for 35 years to a wonderful and supportive husband who reads everything she writes and who always is her first editor. The Halls have two children and three grandchildren.

Growing up in New Jersey, her love of the ocean was nurtured during many trips to the shore. When she's not writing she and she and her husband enjoy sailing the St. John River system and the coast of Maine in their 28 foot sailboat, *Gypsy Rover II*.

Linda loves to hear from her readers and can be contacted at Linda@writerhal.com. She invites her readers to her website which includes her blog and pictures of her sailboat: <http://writerhall.com>

Letter sent to **Janet Chester Bly**, P.O. Box 157, Winchester, ID, 83555, janet@blybooks.com, <http://www.blybooks.com/>