

Writers of fiction are a strange lot, part introvert and part extrovert. Their withdrawn side helps them imagine fantastic characters, scenes and storylines, a world revolving inside their head that they desperately want to let out. Whether for the praise of their readers or for personal satisfaction, most writers have a burden to share their work. The time it takes to produce a full-length novel can be insurmountable for many of them. Combining the demands of family and friends, an outside job to pay the bills, and an occasional desire to see sunshine can lead to broken relationships, runaway debt, and a pallid complexion.

Still, the desire to write is addictive for this group of people, who rationalize why they bear their burden by declaring it's something they simply must do. The idea that great writers are compelled to put their imagination onto paper has existed in society since papyrus was invented, and that if you don't feel the compulsion to write, yours is just a passing fancy. I don't doubt the compulsion, but I do take issue with the pretense that everyone who feels the urge to write is a great writer. This is where the extroverted part of an author's constitution cuts in or their conscience is plagued with insecurity and doubt. What if the reader doesn't like my story? What if nobody buys it?

These are the feelings I have had about this work, 'Welcome to Sheol'. Is it a great story, just a pleasant read, or worse, a terrible exaggeration? It would be alright with me if it is none of the aforementioned as long as the point of writing it isn't lost. According to the Bible, Sheol is a real place and it is somewhere that you don't want to be. It might be easy to lose this point in an adventure story like this one, with heroes and heroines, their love for each other, and the struggle of good against evil. So to this end, I write this afterword. If you missed it in the text, the way to avoid Sheol is with a personal relationship with Jesus, the Christ. Christians like me understand that his story in the Bible reads something like mine, i.e., hard to believe. We see it as a work of God when someone does accept the gospel message as real. Jesus did come to the earth, take on human form, and deliver great news— God will forgive you of every personal sin if you will trust that Jesus is telling the truth, that he has the authority to fulfill his promise to you of a rewarding eternal life, and that he will keep his promise no matter what personal sins you may accrue while waiting for physical death. If you are sincere in your request to God for his forgiveness and you look forward to a future with him, you will find yourself in Heaven's light instead of a place called Sheol. If this story motivates you to implore God to save you, then next to the Bible, it may be the best book you have ever read, regardless of its literary value.



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