

# Emily's already writing the sequel

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later, he answered my prayer."

She was reading material on the Internet, when advertisements for a publishing company popped up on every page.

"I took the hint and looked up their website. After a while, I found that they were accepting manuscripts, but since they only accept 3 to 4 percent of the manuscripts submitted, I figured that it wouldn't be accepted," Emily says.

"Most manuscripts aren't accepted the first time they are submitted. I did submit my manuscript, but I only did so because they said that they would offer a critique of the manuscripts they don't accept for free," she says.

"I was interested in seeing my writing grow, and was at a loss as to what else needed to be tweaked, so I was hoping they would provide the answer to that.

"I was extremely surprised when I received the email which told me they were accepting it into publishing, provided I agreed with everything in the contract," she says.

"I read over it carefully over the next week or two and felt that God was leading me to (the particular company), so I signed the contract and mailed it back to them."

She was in 11th grade at her online school when she received the news that her manuscript was accepted by the publisher. "I would have graduated in June this year had I not withdrawn from school," she says. "For me, school wasn't as important as writing. So when God told me he wanted me to focus on my writing primarily, I wanted to follow him wholeheartedly."

She says she's "aware of what people see in drop-outs, however, I have faith in all that God has done for me and what he will do."

The book should be in Emily's hands no later than June. The author read it over more than 10 times before sending it to the publisher, refining grammar and checking spelling. Finally, she felt the editing was finished.

"I'm very picky about my writing," she says. "At a certain point, God told me it's OK now, so I let it go."

The book is 247 pages, but there's more of the story to be told.

"I never stop writing," Emily says. She has about 70 pages of the sequel already written because "the first one just stops; 247 pages is enough. I know a lot of teens who will stop reading at a certain point." And, she says, God told her to stop at 247 pages.

At this time, the cover is being designed by a graphic artist provided by the publisher, and Emily says she hopes it will incorporate an idea drawn by her sister, who she says, "has inspired a lot in my book."

Her two stepsisters, Barbara

Keenan, who is almost 12, and Amelia Keenan, who is 6, "have also inspired bits of my writing," she says.

While she knows her future holds more writing, she will leave the rest up to God.

"Dropping out of school at the stage where I did was not easy," Emily says. She knows people say it's hard to get a good job without a high school diploma, but at the same time, she also knows of people with college degrees who can't find work.

"It's not solely based on education, but on what you can do and what God wants

you to do," Emily says.

She says that she likes to cook and she likes to sew, but she's not a chef and she doesn't make clothing. "There's only one thing that God wants me to do, but he doesn't mind if I dabble to get rid of stress.

"I do not know about my future other than I want to help people, because I know what it is like to hurt," Emily says. "When God tells me to move, I will."

She believes her future will be led by God and he will provide the means for her to tackle what he wants her to do.

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— Emily Shawver



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