

God asked me to Write my Last Novel

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<http://kalinbooks.com/2010/god-asked-write-novel/>

So this is embarrassing to talk about as an atheist, which is why I've never mentioned this to anyone, but it's true. In 2008, God spoke to me and gave me a character and plot outline for my third novel, [Against A Rock](#). I know logically that it was just my mind playing tricks on me (or subconsciously guiding me), but in every emotional and spiritual way, it was real.

I won't get into how I got into writing when I was 15, which is a whole other spiritual experience, or what was going through my mind when I wrote my first novel. Suffice it to say that writing, especially fiction writing, is a deeply spiritual experience for me, even if I don't believe in physical spirits. I've had a lot of different experiences in life, but nothing I've found can compare with writing a novel and living in that alternate world for months at a time... assuming, of course, you can find "the zone", that passion and connection with those "fictional" characters, you know logically exist only as bits of text on your hard drive, but deep down inside you *know* are as real as you and me.

But in 2003, I became enthralled with programming Flash ActionScript, and web development in general, and couldn't get enough code in my life. It was like a giant puzzle, but a puzzle I could build myself, a piece of functional art. It couldn't quite rival fiction writing in emotional intensity, but what programming had was consistency. I could almost rely on writing code to sort of carry my mind away and relax me, and bring me that thrill and sense of magic (with a few simple conditions about the organization and purpose behind the code. I couldn't get excited about pointless code, but other than that, as they say at WordPress.org, code is poetry). Fiction writing can bring me the same spiritual benefits with much greater intensity, but it's hit or miss depending on how much I care about the characters or the theme of the story.

So... anyway, I sort of quit writing for almost five years, with the exception of a story called [In The Name of Justice](#), which came to me in a dream in 2006, all fully plotted, with characters fully developed and everything.

Shortly after this dream/story I started thinking that I had built up enough of a career as a programmer that my job was mostly safe, so I didn't need to spend all my free time programming, so I figured I should start writing again.

I had also been introduced to a game called EVE Online, a big spaceship online role playing game. In this game, I was what's known as an Amarrian, a member of a highly religiously devoted society. I came up with a short story idea that would serve as a back-story for my game character, where a turret commander named Floreina had grown up under the Amarrian religion, but recently had started rejecting religion and even sometimes God. However, she had to keep it secret for there's even more fundamentalists in Amarrian society than there is in modern religious society. She then has some token experiences that show that her captain is the bad guy and she goes on a secret mutiny. In the end, she succeeds and *becomes* my character in the game, (which explained why she had actually been doing missions for the

enemy of the Amarrian Empire), and she finally comes to accept that her religion was lies, that it's not necessary to believe in God, and from that freedom she feels the relief and independence, self-confidence, blah blah blah...

But somehow I couldn't make the story work. I wrote almost 20,000 words, which is half of a short novel, and I just couldn't *believe* in the characters like I did back when I wrote my first two novels from 1999-2002.

So I put the story away. I moved to Seattle and started working for a company that was building a DVD ordering system. My job was to build a functional demo of the entire application so that prospective clients could play with the system before it was actually built. One thing they could do was browse through a set of DVD images. They gave me a set of about 15 DVD images to put in as the graphics, so every day for a couple months I would look at these same fifteen movie covers, making them slide in and out and animate based on user input. Movies such as 3:10 to Yuma, Crash, and the one that caught my eye: Resident Evil 3, with the gorgeous Mila Jovovich and her confident strut, and the machine pistols she held in each hand.

This got me back into the idea of my mutiny story, and I kept telling myself to get back to it, just force your way through it. Sure the plot is just kinda atheist propaganda, but maybe you can turn it into something good. You can go back through and tone it down a bit. Maybe you can turn it into a simple action story, and if it gets too preachy, just cut out the preachy and make it all about the action and the mutiny.

I sat down a few times to write, but I still just couldn't find that passion.

Then one day I was riding the bus home from work, just trying to force myself to brainstorm as hard as I could about the story. Normally the buses are packed, but today it was nearly empty. I sat by myself near the back, listening to Tool's Vicarious, and suddenly, like magic, I stopped being an atheist. An overwhelming presence seemed to come down from everywhere and consumed me. My mind cringed, and I couldn't open my eyes against this strange brightness that somehow wasn't there. Then suddenly I saw my story, but one that was so twisted as to be nearly unrecognizable as the original story. And this commanding voice told me, or essentially *ordered* me to do a complete overhaul on Floreina. It was not in words, per say, but it was a linear series of concepts and thoughts that loosely translate to the following: "She will be an absolute believer. She will not be an atheist. In fact, she will hate people like you, and she will never question that belief, and you will use your writing to do everything you can to justify her hatred and help people understand her. You will embrace her religion with everything you have... and you will embrace her hatred. Don't think about promoting atheism. Instead, embrace the opposite. Allow me to guide every keystroke in this novel. Listen to my voice. Embrace the violence; embrace the hatred..."

And I heard the lines in the song,

"Cause I need to watch things die...from a distance
Vicariously I live while the whole world dies
You all need it too, don't lie"

blasting in my ears as God spoke to me. "Because I love violence, Kalin." God told me. "I'm no different than any other author of a fictional universe. I want drama in my realm. I want action and screaming and crying and passion. That's why I want you to commit such horrible, unspeakable violence through this novel. Naturally, I want this violence contained only to the realm of fiction. When you're in the physical world, making real world decisions, you continue being an atheist, you continue logically recognizing that I am simply a trick of your mind, but when you're in front of the computer, your fingers running over the keyboard, creating whole other worlds, and you're lost in that alternate reality, I want you to give yourself over to me, and let me guide you. If you do this, I promise, this novel will be the best you've ever written and you will turn a new leaf as a writer."

Shortly after arriving home, I sat down to start writing and was amazed at how quickly the magic arrived, and I became a believer. It took me six months to write *Against A Rock*. It was all I thought about for that time. My daily emotions revolved around the story. Things that happened in real life became irrelevant. The only thing that mattered was the story, but it never seemed to require work. It came like magic, the words flowing one after another.

Then one day I read some random story about police brutality and became distracted with thoughts of my anarchism for a few days. Then, as I was driving to Costco one day, I received the same kind of message from above, though this one much more mild, probably because I was driving. Something told me, or actually *ordered* me to write an article called 12 Reasons Why Criminal Justice is Counter-Productive to Peace On Earth, inspired by my article, [22 Ways Religion Promotes Crime](#), which I had written a few years earlier but never showed anyone. I went home and started writing, and rapidly surpassed the goal of 12. I got up to about 20 reasons, and found my mind cleansed and was able to get back into writing *Against A Rock*. Over the next couple weeks, I added to that article, and finally ended on the title, 35 Reasons Why Criminal Justice is Counter-Productive to Peace on Earth. I now consider this to be the most important thing I've ever written, and I'm waiting for just the right time to release it. It's been over two years and I've returned to reexamine it a number of times, so it's getting close.

Within two weeks of writing the 35th point in this list, my childhood friend, Isaac Zamora, whose family introduced me to Christianity and God, went on a killing spree. "I kill for God. I listen to God." Isaac said at his hearing.

At this point in my novel-writing, Floreina was floating in space, her suit running out of oxygen, alone with her thoughts, and she starts thinking about the horrible murders she's just committed.

After Isaac's murders I almost completely lost the passion for the religiously-motivated murders in my story. Everything I was writing just seemed sick and disturbed, and that connection with God was nearly gone. The parallels between Floreina, Isaac and myself were simply terrifying. For almost a month I couldn't write more than a few paragraphs.

Then something changed. My sorrow for the victims was replaced with anger at the religion that had done this to them, that does this to countless people all over the world. I consciously channeled that anger into Floreina and pressed on, and somehow, that passion for violence came back, and that feeling of being touched and guided by God rapidly returned. He went back to guiding my keystrokes and I lost myself in the story, but as I finished off the last twenty percent of the novel, pushing the violence and intensity up another few notches, I kept seeing myself as a kid, living next door to Isaac for so many years, and

receiving similar subconscious tricks of the mind, voices, telling me to go over there and try to show them a different way of thinking. And from deep in the back of my mind, as I typed out the last of my story, I could hear God telling me that I could have saved those people. Isaac had been so open-minded, peaceful, caring and ready to listen when we were kids, and I felt this was a lesson. It's wrong for me to worry about offending the religious.

So yes, I have had a few profound experiences with God (this is only one example). Recognizing it as being a trick of the mind does absolutely nothing to reduce the emotional, intellectual and spiritual power of the experience. God can do some amazing things, bringing confidence and inner peace, but only when He is recognized consciously as fiction or an abstract concept. When God is applied as though he actually exists in the real world, we don't get wild fantasy sci-fi novels, we get people like Isaac Zamora.

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