

## *Rejoice Oh My Soul*

A newsletter from the desk of Susan May Warren

July 2005

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### **Greetings!**

The air smelled of pine and campfire smoke as Andrew and I sat on our blanket on the beach overlooking the harbor. Other families, clumped on blankets, sat with their arms about each other while their children played tag or climbed on the boulders outlining the shore. Laughter and voices rose and fell as people greeted each other. I lifted my hand to at least three people I knew.

Independence Day. We'd spent it roasting hotdogs and marshmallows, talking politics and meeting new friends. As the fireworks exploded above, reflecting in the water and tingeing the air with smoke, the faint melody of our national anthem rose, hummed by the hundreds of amazed onlookers.

I love America. I didn't realize how much until I lived overseas for nearly a decade. Being an ex-pat gave me new perspective on freedoms and opportunities. I loved walking by the embassy - and seeing the marine guard out front. Sent a ripple of warmth through me. The first fourth of July I spent stateside had me in tears. And last night, sitting among my friends and neighbors sharing our freedom, remembering costs, the triumphs, and the gift of this country reminded me that we're all in this together. While we have plenty of differences, we can agree that we are gifted with this country and our freedom to worship and build a life for our families because of the sacrifices of our fellow Americans.

I folded my hand into my husband's, so very grateful for this fourth of July, and all the others I've spent, wherever I've been on the globe. For the open doors I've had as an American to share God's grace, and for the pleasure of coming home. I don't take this freedom lightly. Sometimes, however, like my salvation, it becomes something familiar instead of awe-inspiring. It's easy to think of myself as saved, and as an American, and perhaps forget the price paid. Sitting under the stars last night, snuggled close to my children, watching the fireworks light the sky gave me a fresh reminder to start each day with a prayer of gratefulness for all God has done, for me and for our country.

I pray you had a restful holiday, and that during it you and yours were able to stop, reflect on this gift of our country, maybe pray for our brave soldiers and their families. Thank you so much for your letters and support over the past month. For anyone going to the CBA in Denver -- I'll be signing for Steeple Hill on Tuesday am. Stop by! And thank you for your support and prayers. God bless!



*Susan May Warren*

### *What's News?*

Susan Downs and I just finished the final revisions on Oksana, book 4 of the Heirs of Anton, due out in September. The last book in the series, it ties up the mystery and begins the adventures of the Heirs of Anton. Here's a glimpse at the back copy:

- **The Bolshevik revolution,**
- **A daring escape**
- **A powerful story of family love**

***Watch the pieces of God's perfect plan come together when one woman begins a journey toward freedom.***

It is 1917 when revolution threatens to destroy the Romanov dynasty. Anton Klassen is given a sacred trust and a royal command by none other than the Imperial Czar Nikolai himself. Yet, fighting a past of cowardice, Anton has much to prove. . .to the Fatherland, to himself, and to the woman he loves—a rescued chambermaid from the Royal House of Romanov. Oksana yearns for a home and family, yet she harbors a state secret so dangerous she dares not share it even with the man she loves. Will Anton's fledgling courage destroy Oksana's future? Only faith in the promises of God can save the Heirs of Anton.

[Read an Excerpt here](#)

### *Writer's Tip!*

**I believe that everyone has a book inside of them, something they long to write about.** Often, readers write to me asking for tips on how to encourage that book out of their hearts. So -- here's a place to start.

Writers often say the key to writing is reading. What do we mean? Beyond universal story structure, every writer has their own style, that voice that draws us in. When I read a book, I keep notes. I highlight phrases that delight me, dog-ear pages of key



*Waiting for*  
**D A W N**  
BY SUSAN MAY WARREN

scenes, and keep a journal on the back page of the elements that the author employs to ramp up tension or deepen character. I ask myself - why do I like/dislike this book? What would I do differently? What is the one lesson I can bring

from the book and apply to my own writing? From these questions I can develop an analysis of my writing, and hopefully improve my own skills.

Pick your favorite books, get a journal and start dissecting why they work. In the end, not only will you become a better reader, but maybe also have the tools to urge your own story out of hiding.

[For more on writing check out my favorite organization -- American Christian Fiction Writers!](#)

### *Excerpt from Waiting for Dawn*

*The news of the last few days has been about the search for the lost Navy Seals in Afghanistan. Having written a story about lost commando team, the situation weighs heavy on my heart, and prompts me to pray for their recovery. The story, *Waiting for Dawn*, is in it's tenth installment of the online serial novella at [www.heartquest.com](http://www.heartquest.com). It's the PREQUEL to [Flee the Night](#), so for all of those who've written to me, asking for MORE of Lacey and Micah's story, this is the behind the scenes look at what happened before **Flee the Night**. Below is an excerpt. While it is fiction, it reminds me that I need to pray daily for the safety of our troops around the world, and to thank them for the freedom they protect.*

Three weeks of captivity by Kurdish rebels and Micah still awoke each morning dragging himself away from the nooks of western Kentucky and into the jagged mountainscape of northern Iraq. Or was it southern Turkey? Or even Iran? He'd walked so far the first week his feet screamed, and blood scarred his wake. Probably because his captors had taken his boots as a deterrent to escaping.

Obviously, they didn't know Americans that well. Escape filled his thoughts, and per his mental routine, he scanned his surroundings for subtle changes without moving. Not far away, a fire crackled, and he heard the clang of pots as women prepared breakfast- rice and sometimes meat. The smells of smoke, horseflesh, and his own unwashed body filled his nose. How he longed for a shower. He did a mental physical. His leg felt like it was healing; the searing saber wound no longer bit into each moment. He still fought flashes of regret that they hadn't used a bullet to bring him down.

Conner wasn't doing so well. Thankfully, his gunshot wound had gone right through his foot and the blood had clotted fast. Beside Micah, tied hand-to-foot, Conner slept. He looked as if he'd been run over by a mustang, his lip split, his long curly hair matted with blood.

And Dakota hadn't been shot at all. Which made him their automatic pack mule, despite a broken rib. He tried not to show it, but the rookie Green Beret looked like he regretted ever leaving his South Dakota ranch.

None of the Green Berets had gone down quietly.

Micah lay on his back and shielded his eyes against the sunlight, his hands tied to a tent pole above his head. Ropes chafed his wrist, and every movement made him want to cry out.

Mind over matter. As long as he could sort out day from night, sleep from insanity, and start each day with a prayer of gratitude to be alive, his captors hadn't won. But who were they? They didn't seem like Kurds. Micah didn't recognize their low-toned dialect. Nor did they keep their women under dismal black burkas. These women looked more like the women of the Caucasus Mountains, with their beautifully ornamented veils and long wool dresses.

The men only confirmed Micah's suspicions. Dressed in wool pants, leather boots, lambskin vests and caps, they wore two centuries' worth of weaponry over their clothing--sabers right alongside Kalashnikov rifles. Micah felt like he'd been chucked back in time, maybe to the invasion of the Mongol horde. Including one Genghis Khan-like warrior at the helm. The fierce, middle-aged warrior had led the attack in the mountains and had sat back directing traffic while his henchmen kicked the tar out of Micah. He'd then ridden shotgun as they dragged Micah and his pals back to Mongol headquarters, a village of maybe one hundred skin-and-fur-draped tents.

Last night, Micah had watched, straining to decipher words, as Genghis held court before an open, crackling bonfire. The flames flickered shadows across his bearded face. He gestured to the captives, to their gear, and especially to the Raptor, now boxed up and under guard in a nearby hut.

It was said Raptor that gave Micah the most hope. The Green Berets didn't leave a man out in the field, but they'd trekked so far he wasn't holding his breath. However, if he could somehow get free and activate the Raptor, well, maybe they had a chance.

A blip from their missing hardware would wake up army headquarters. Micah let his thoughts unravel all the way to the hope that they'd even send him stateside for some rest and recreation.

And the first thing he'd do--track down Lacey and tell her . . . what? That he loved her? That she filled every cranny in his mind? That more than anything he longed to pitch John onto the sidelines and take her in his arms?

He heard movement from within the tent behind him. Craning his neck, Micah watched, his chest tightening, as Genghis pulled back the flap. The bare-chested man stepped out of his tent and stretched against the sun. Oh, man, did the guy sleep with goats? What was that smell?

Then Genghis walked over, blocked the sun, and grinned down at Micah with chipped, brown teeth. Micah couldn't ignore the chill that brushed over him like the lick of cold sweat.



[Start at chapter 1!](#)

## July Contest!

Thank you to all who participated in last month's contest! The winners are: Heather C, Kris M, and Chrissy G. All will be receiving a copy of [Marina](#), book 3 in the Heirs of Anton series.

### This month's contest!

Answer the following question: *What did Dan nickname Ellie in [The Perfect Match](#)? Book 3 in the award-winning Deep Haven series?*

**The winner will win one of three copies of Ekaterina -- the first adventure of the *Heirs of Anton*!**

[Read about Ekaterina!](#)

### Quick Links...

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