

Adam, Eve and the Indie Author

by Alison Wells

In the beginning was the Word and the Word was God. What on Earth does that mean? What the hell? Earth, hell, heaven, they were good concepts. He took a rib out of Adam and began to write with it.

Eve gave Adam the apple, knowing. Adam took it at face value. As men do. But Eve knew all along, so did Snow White. She wanted to eat the apple. She wasn't green, she knew red constituted passion. But that's another story.

In the beginning and forever after God wrote. He heard that you can write a novel in a week if you really want to. He stayed up all day and night. In the early days he spent a lot of time on world building. He wanted to make sure people really believed in the one he created. Although he was a bit of a sci-fi buff he didn't want to pigeonhole himself but he was not yet ready for literary fiction. He heard that men enjoyed action/adventure.

At the garden of Eden the squad cars arrived, squealed up to the gate. The cops jumped out. Keystone. Cornerstone. They did a recce, they were too late - the gates were wide open. Adam had fled and the snake had escaped the zoo. Eve was still there but they didn't want her for questioning or anything. She was now dressed in army combats, blended in.

'No, no, that's not right' God said and crossed it out.

He thought he should perhaps write more from Eve's perspective but he hadn't yet figured out how to write the woman's voice convincingly.

'Conflict' he said, 'we need conflict' so he created Cain and Abel. Tribes, wars, kings, journeys — the story of the world had a blockbuster feeling to it. He considered writing a screenplay. The working title was *Apocalypse Now*. He decided against it for the time being.

He could have done with some tuition but he felt his way as he went along. Practise - that was all he needed. He realised eventually that he was committing the cardinal sin of narcissistic writing — all the characters were aspects of himself. He concentrated for a while on character sketches; he wanted to get a feel for the nuances of what he called *humanity*.

He revisited earlier themes with postmodern irony. In his new work it was summer. The apples were ripening on the trees but they weren't ready yet. The globally warm weather was perfect for barbeques. The protagonists were enjoying barbeque ribs.

If it had been horror or surrealism Eve would have butchered Adam and the ribs would have been his, albeit that they were done in a honey and chilli marinade. The juice dripped down her chin and all that. But this was more a cozy domestic drama or a slice of life:

Adam and Eve had realised the moment they met on the floor of Mark's living room in between the cider and the crisps that if they chose each other that they would really have to be serious about it. I mean 'Adam' and 'Eve', Wey hey. But the feeling of lips, hips and skin has no name. The sticks and stones of life, job insecurity, Adam's intransigence, Eve's infidelities, 2.4 children and ailing elderly parents might have ushered them out of Eden's Gate (a newly built deluxe housing estate which had fallen foul of the property boom and of which half was unsold) and broke their backbone but their names, being what they were had never hurt them.

In fairness the ribs were delicious. Adam knew how to barbeque. He'd invited a few of his mates from the golf club and the drugs squad. They really knew how to let their hair down. The cider was gone in seconds.

More apples...

They ate quickly. The bulldozers were coming and the packing boxes were lined along the living room wall. They were levelling the estate house by house so they could sell off the land to set against the developer's insolvency.

God liked that element of modern verisimilitude. He developed in his writing — particularly in much of the African and Asian stuff - a gritty realism. He dabbled in triumph over adversity stories (and hadn't his treatment for the reality show *Black Death meets Noah's Ark* been of his best?) He went back to the novel.

'I was watching that pop star scientist on the telly' the other day said Richard, an IT developer from Oracle.. There's this mad theory that says that the universe made itself the way it did because some quantum physicists thought about it. At least I think that's what he said. 'Another rib?' asked Eve, waving round the plate. 'Don't mind if I do' said Richard. Eve looked at him, he had rugby shoulders and just out of bed hair. The bulldozers were coming. They would soon be out of here. She fingered the strap of her vest top, revealing a line of pale skin. Later she would be naked with Adam in a fevered twist of limbs and sheets, euphoric yawps, hooted pleasure. But when she looked at Richard, all was still possibility.

He crossed the last bit out; it needed some more work, some more delicacy perhaps. Novels were hard going, they were relentless really. He had progressed to a laptop, the sun made it hard to see. Should he rewrite it dimmer? He chewed the rest of the barbeque rib dry, sucked it and tossed it into some metaphorical bushes. Not burning ones.

Pop star scientists eh? Quantum physicists making it up as they went along? The world needed a lighter touch with only the odd catastrophe. He was tired of creating epics and intergenerational sagas. Flash fiction was the thing.

He went digital. He discovered that 'Choose your own adventure books' were now available as an I-phone app. This suited his requirements perfectly.

Needless to say, God never stopped writing and even when he wasn't producing, stories were writing themselves in his head. Once, when awakening from a power nap, he came up with a self-referential six word story: *God saw. And it was good.* But like every

writer, while the writing was *the* thing, he needed to get out there, see his characters come to life.

But how? Get an agent? He decided against. It wasn't his style. God was essentially an indie author. After some careful consideration he self-published. The downloads were free.

