

## Once Upon A Time...We All Lived Happily Ever After

By Laura L. Shaw

***"He said to me: 'It is done. I am the Alpha and the Omega, the Beginning and the End. To him who is thirsty I will give to drink without cost from the spring of the water of life.'"***

**Revelation 21:6**

Imagine you've been given an amazing book to read in a super comfy chair with no distractions. You open it up and read the credits. The introduction then informs you that this particular book is self-timed, but it doesn't let you know how long you have to finish it. As soon as you open it, though, you only have a certain amount of time to read it before it self-destructs. The timer has begun the moment you opened the book. How exciting!

The beginning is so thrilling that you are sitting on the edge of your seat and your heart is racing: "Once upon a time..." Your mood changes by the time you get to the middle of the story, and the words begin to run together. You hate to admit it's even a tad on the boring side. You keep reading, however, because you've got an unknown deadline. As you go on, your boredom turns to frustration, then to apathy. When will I get to the exciting part?

It seems to me that this is often the way many of us live our lives on this earth. We're here, in the middle of our life stories, knowing our days are numbered, and we're just waddling through or struggling on until we get to the "exciting part" or even the end itself. We know that our Lord is the Alpha and the Omega, the Beginning and the End, but we need fresh reminders that He is here with us every day in between, surely, to the very final chapter!

Our Alpha did not come at the beginning only to give us a promise at the end...He came to keep His promises in the middle as well. He says in John 10:10b, ***"I have come that they may have life, and have it to the full."*** And He gives us that fullness each and every day through the dwelling of the Holy Spirit in us and through us: ***"And I will ask the Father, and He will give you another Counselor to be with you forever—the Spirit of Truth...for He lives with you and will be in you. I will not leave you as orphans; I will come to you."*** John 14:16-18.

Let's make a great start to this new day in the middle chapter of our life books. It's sobering to think that we have no idea how close to the end of our book we actually are. First, though, let's take a pop quiz over the chapters before this one: ***"Who have been the main characters in my story? How have I blessed them? How have they made a difference to me? When was the last time I shared the gospel with someone, or even my story?"***

And can you recall the plot? ***"Where was I when I gave my life to Jesus, and what details led up to it? How have I grown as a Christian since then? What sin struggles have been overcome, and which ones am I carrying over?"*** And on and on...continue to ask yourself some true or false questions and spend this time deciding which facts you need to leave behind and which ones you need the Lord to use to make changes in you today.

Here's the happy ending: *"Now the dwelling of God is with men, and He will live with them. They will be His people, and God Himself will be with them and be their God. He will wipe every tear from their eyes. There will be no more death or mourning or crying or pain, for the old order of things has passed away. He who was seated on the throne said, 'I am making everything new!' Then He said, 'Write this down, for these words are trustworthy and true.'" Revelation 21: 3-5*

When we know the hope that exists at the end, it makes us want to live our now to the fullest. What stimulating characters, adventures and plots will our lives record this day? What struggles will the Lord allow to shape us and grow us up? Will we choose to be the conflict or the climax in others' life-stories? Why should we waste a single moment we've been given? Let's live on in the Spirit together, shall we? Until the "HAPPILY EVER AFTER!" So be it.