



"It was a dark and stormy night..."

"No it wasn't. It was a bright June afternoon--not a cloud in the sky."

"Are you sure?"

"Of course I am, I was there."

"So was I."

"Yes, but you were a newborn baby. I'm your mom. Trust me on this, I remember it better than you."

Okay, okay, we'll roll with my mom's account of my birth because truthfully, I don't recall much about the event. In fact, I don't recall much about my first years other than life was good. I had my favorite security blanket, sucked my thumb and did all the stuff any normal baby would do.

I grew up on the west side of Salt Lake City in a pretty typical family. My dad worked most of his life in a factory, my mom was a homemaker and my three sisters were...sisters! The two older ones were always bossing me around and I always had to give in to my younger sister. (They may not remember it exactly like that, but it's true--really!) A mom and three sisters means a lot of estrogen in a house, so during my preteen years my dad and I would escape

whenever we could to the quiet of the mountains and deserts of Utah pursuing my dad's favorite hobby--rockhounding. Saturday's meant tramping over desolate ground and blasting old cans full of holes with a .22 rifle.



My early teen years were filled with pimples and the clumsy awkwardness of getting to know girls and for the most part, those are years to be forgotten. It was during my high school years that two great things happened in my life. First, I discovered airplanes and boats--two things I thoroughly enjoy to this day. But second, and by far the most important and best thing that's every happened to me, was I met my wife, Debbie. (That's a picture of her over on the right.) I met her in a geometry class. The teacher sat us alphabetically and I ended up in the desk behind her. Had there still been ink wells in the desks, I'm sure I would have dipped the tips of her long dark hair in the ink in an effort to attract her attention. With no ink I had to satisfy myself with untying the bows made from ribbons that she used to tie back her hair. I succeeded in getting her attention, and ultimately convincing her to marry me, but not for several more years.

After high school there was a year of college (University of Utah) and then two years as a missionary for The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. Returning from my missionary responsibilities I shocked everyone--including myself--by being accepted to Brigham Young University. And that's when I first discovered writing. I had no idea what I wanted to be when I "grew up," but the fiancée of one of Debbie's roommates was majoring in public relations. I had no idea what that was, but it sounded fun so from then on I told everyone I was a public relations major. I thought it would be a bunch of back slapping and socializing. Little did I know that English and writing are at the heart of public relations. And the rest, as they say, is history. I ultimately got an Associate degree in public relations and a Bachelor degree in creative writing.



I didn't start out to be a novelist. I actually wanted to be a pilot--I got my private pilot license when I was seventeen. The Vietnam war was in full swing and I had dreams of joining the military and flying fighters or helicopters. I would have made it except for one thing: my

eyesight--it wasn't 20/20. Oh, and I'm also colorblind. Ironically, the Air Force wouldn't take me as a pilot, but the Air National Guard decided I was good enough to be a military policeman, so I got to serve Uncle Sam by standing on the ground guarding planes rather than being in the air flying them. I still love flying, but today I fly for personal and business use.

I'm rambling, so here's the abbreviated version: I got married, had two beautiful daughters and pursued a career (actually, a couple different careers). And then it happened. One day I was handling marketing communications for a company--churning out advertising copy, writing news releases, developing advertising campaigns--and the next day I wasn't. I got fired. It turns out that was the best thing that could have happened. My wife and I started our own business and that allowed me the freedom to put words on paper for myself rather than others. To this day I don't know exactly what prompted me to write a book, but one morning I sat down at my desk, fired up the laptop and began tapping out words that eventually became *The Tomb Builder*. My intent was to write a short story, but that only lasted for about two pages. I thought, heck, why not write a novella--a short novel. Thirty days later, writing eight and sometimes ten or twelve hours at a time, I had a novel.

The manuscript for *The Tomb Builder* was barely on its way to prospective publishers before I was back at the laptop working on a second novel, *Chariots to Jordan*, and since then my days have been filled with putting my own words on paper for the enjoyment of others. It's a good life.