

I was ministering to a young man this week, a new believer. Like all new believers, much of his attention is focused on his problems. And for him, this is rightly so, since he arrived with some fairly hefty baggage. He needed some hope, and the good news for those who love the Lord is that no one can provide hope like the Lord can. When we come to the Lord, we sometimes expect everything to be rosy and wonderful and resolved. But when the battle of flesh kicks in, we worry about what we've gotten ourselves into. The young man needed to know there was light at the end of the tunnel and a life beyond just fighting battles of the flesh. So, I told him about urban fantasy.

Urban fantasy is a literary device commonly used in books and movies. Its purpose is to establish dual realities in a story: the normal one we can see and the paranormal one we can't. Both exist side by side. Here are some well-known examples. In the Chronicles of Narnia, children living in humdrum England escape through magic to Narnia, a land peopled by dwarves, talking animals, giants. In Harry Potter, normal humans are blind to magic all around them. In the Matrix, humanity thinks it is the year 1999, but it's actually 2199, and we're sleeping in a computer-generated dream world while AI machines siphon our bodies' biological energy. Urban fantasy is not new. Odysseus battled otherworldly beings in Homer's work, written thousands of years ago. But in our current times, urban fantasy has exploded in storytelling. Many books and most films produced today introduce super humans, robots, aliens, vampires, spies, futuristic technology, witches, and monsters living among us, yet generally unseen except by a chosen few. Oftentimes, these paranormal beings are the heroes or anti-heroes of the story.

I think there's a reason these stories inherently appeal to us. We instinctively know there is something else out there. We are spiritual beings and God's law is written on each of our hearts, so we long for fantastic things to be true. We were made for it.

And here, I arrive at why I spoke to my friend about urban fantasy. There is only one urban fantasy that is real. It truly exists. As my dad wrote in his book, *The Lady and the Dragon*, there are hidden Watchers out there, unnoticed except by a special people. The natural occurrences in this world are actually harbingers of unseen prophecies. Coming to the Lord Jesus is our entrance into this other place and enables us to begin to see and understand what's beyond the veil. We are the heroes and heroines of this adventure, which only begins - it doesn't end - at the cross.

So overcoming his problems is not my friend's whole story. There is so much more beyond that for us to see and do and experience. Coming to the Lord is just the first step of an adventure beyond adventures. It's a true story in which an invincible king rules over a hidden Kingdom of Heaven on earth. He exercises royal prerogative to elevate us who are paupers to stand among the honored chosen and he assigns us quests to complete. We are armored warriors. We are expected to hone the supernatural gifts bestowed on us to complete our tasks. There is warfare in spiritual realms where unseen enemies conspire against us. But the king helps us, and we have fellow adventurers for support. Rewards await those who fight the good fight. And when the first part of the story concludes, the next begins. We will enter a new world at the end of this world. It's a holy realm. And who can comprehend the marvels that await us there?

- Bill Wilson (*This article may be copied freely.*)