

Novel Specifics & FAQ for *The Spindle Chair*

By Shellie Arnold

SPECIFICS:

Title of Novel: *The Spindle Chair* (Book One in The Barn Church series)

Genre: Contemporary inspirational fiction

Publisher: Lighthouse Publishing of the Carolinas

Release date: October 20, 2015

Other books in series: *Sticks and Stones* (October 2016) and *Abide with Me* (October 2017)

High concept: After having a miscarriage, an infertile pastor's wife's marriage is threatened when she finally conceives, provoking her husband's repressed memories of childhood trauma to surface.

Scriptural inspiration: He will bring to light what is hidden in darkness and will expose the motives of men's hearts (I Cor. 4:5 NIV).

Theme: Emotional healing depends on God, our obedience to Him, and His provision in our lives, not the apology of the offender nor our understanding of God's ways.

Summation: *The Spindle Chair* is the story of Laurie and Pastor Pierce Crane, a young couple who longs to have a child, but to date have been infertile. Shortly after a miscarriage, they move to Rowe City in southern Alabama to take over the church founded by Pierce's adoptive parents. Prior to the miscarriage, Pierce had shared with Laurie his few memories of his pre-adoption years. But after the miscarriage when Pierce begins having flashbacks, Laurie senses the change in him and feels distance growing between them. After Laurie unexpectedly conceives, Pierce's memories torment him with overwhelming fear for Laurie regarding the pregnancy. The marriage becomes more strained. As the pregnancy progresses and Pierce is forced to face his painful memories, Laurie's pregnancy experience is nothing like she'd dreamed, and she must choose to let go of her expectations, exchanging them for God's plan for her life, her pregnancy, and her marriage.

Back cover blurb:

What happens when the miracle God gives you threatens to destroy your marriage?

Laurie Crane is happily married. And she is usually able to overlook her husband's moments of quiet sadness. If only God would give them a child ...

Pierce wants a child as badly as Laurie and has spent years praying alongside her. But he has no idea that a "yes" from God will unearth long-buried memories and bring their marriage to the brink of catastrophe.

In The Barn Church series' first novel, *The Spindle Chair*, Shellie Arnold explores what happens when "happily ever after" becomes more than one couple can handle.

FAQ:

1. Share about your journey to publication:

My journey to publication has been very long. I attended my first writers conference in January 1994, and dabbled at writing for many years. I worked toward writing nonfiction until 2002 when I became ill. On May 18, 2005, God healed my brain and turned my head to fiction. I said, "That's not what we were doing." God's response was, "That's what we're doing now." So, I started learning about fiction in 2006/2007 as a total newbie after being out of the industry for several years.

2. What do you feel is your calling as a writer?

There are two parts to my answer: With my fiction, I hope to offer a really good read in a captivating story. By doing so, I hope to cause readers to consider their own life and marriage. But mostly I want them to enjoy the story. Fiction gives me the means to touch a reader's emotions. To stir them.

Part two of my answer is, I really want to help marriages. I write about the "perfect storms" in marriage—what happens when our weaknesses hit head-on and we're both left wondering what can be salvaged. That's my fiction. Through my web site and (hopefully soon) non-fiction books, I hope to provide solid teaching which addresses the issues found in my novels. So, my fiction can be a really good read, and, if the Holy Spirit leads a reader to consider the same type of issues in their own life and marriage, I'll have resources available to address those issues.

3. What is The Barn Church series?

I call it The Barn Church series because all the couples in this series attend the same church, Rowe City Gospel Church in Rowe City, Alabama (a fictitious church in a fictitious place). The church is literally a huge converted barn. Very welcoming. Very rustic. Each book is about a different couple within the church, so each story stands alone. It's a series, but a reader wouldn't have to read them in order to enjoy the stories.

4. Is the wife in your books the only main character?

Not in this series. Both husband and wife are my main characters. I write from both points of view, so I can focus on the marriage as a whole.

5. What gave you the idea for *The Spindle Chair*?

After God healed my brain, my husband and I prayed for eleven months before I started writing again. Setting aside writing and speaking while I was ill was terribly painful. After God healed me, I didn't assume He wanted me to pick up where I'd left off, I didn't assume He wanted me to pursue writing at all. Toward the end of that eleven-month period, I started getting pictures in my head which became two or three scenes in *The Spindle Chair*. At first, I didn't know what I was supposed to do with those images, so I kept praying until God told me what to do with them.

6. Tell us a little about your book:

The novel takes place in Rowe City, a town in southern Alabama. This first book is the story of Laurie and Pierce Crane. As a child, Pierce was adopted by the couple who founded Rowe City Gospel Church. When his adoptive father retires, the church board asks Pierce to come pastor the church. Laurie's parents were killed in an auto accident right after she graduated from high school. She and Pierce met in college and fell in love. They're very close, very comfortable with each other before the story begins. They both want to have children, and have been trying to conceive since they first married about seven years ago.

7. In your novel, the husband is the one dealing with a painful past, not the wife. Why did you write it this way?

I think a woman dealing with a painful past is pretty common in fiction today. By having it be the husband and not the wife, I hoped to give women readers an alternate perspective. And, I think at any given time in my marriage I could be the one dealing with pain from my past, or I might be married to the one dealing with past pain. I think husbands and wives both suffer at different times and in different ways, so I give both perspectives.

9. So, what's your background? Are you a counselor? A psychiatrist?

No, I'm just a kid from a broken home who was scared to death to marry. I figured either there was no way to marry and be happy, or God wasn't telling how to do it. When I knew God wanted me to marry, I did so only after telling God I needed Him to teach me how to do this. I started studying and paying attention to my marriage and what was happening inside me. As God addressed issues and hurts inside me, I saw the benefits manifested in my marriage. I simply want to share all I've learned the hard way.

10. Back to your first novel, the book deals with the topic of childhood trauma?

Yes, Pierce carries some deep wounds from his childhood that he doesn't even realize he carries. Which I think can happen to almost anyone. I certainly carried pain into my marriage and didn't recognize the effects that had on my marriage. I believe God uses circumstances in a believer's life to spotlight areas of hurt, not just sin, so those hurts can be healed. It's not often a simple or painless process, but the fruit of the process is undeniable. When God heals me of something, my marriage reaps the benefits. But, as I said, it's not the easiest journey.

11. What about the wife in your novel?

She has wounds of her own, too, that neither she nor her husband realize. And she has a lot of expectations about pregnancy and raising a family with Pierce. They both want children, so when Pierce manifests strange behavior after the miscarriage, Laurie's devastated at the changes in her marriage.

12. What would you tell someone God is pushing to deal with hurt from the past?

I would say if God's pushing you, then it's time. I know it's scary, and I know at times you might feel like you've lost your mind. But God's work in us is always for our benefit. If He's bringing something to the surface, no matter how uncomfortable you are right now, healing and peace are on the other side. Let God walk you through healing.

13. What would you say to someone whose spouse is dealing with past hurts?

First, you can't fix your mate. You can't. You can't heal him or her. And you don't have to understand why they hurt so badly over a particular incident, in order to offer encouragement. Just be available. Listen, encourage, go with them to counseling or go by yourself. You should pray every day, sometimes every moment, that God will show you how to be a help to His work in your mate rather than a hindrance to that work. Even if it takes one, three, or five years or more for your mate to be healed, that's a small investment compared to the benefits healing will have on your mate and your marriage.

14. Finally, tell us about your tagline “Live Happily Even After”:

I can't take credit for it, my best friend and I brainstormed together to come up with a tagline and I think she nailed it. Basically, I believe any marriage can be healed and thrive—no matter what baggage or bad habits we brought into it—if both parties obey God. God is all about redemption, restoration, and resurrection. He's all about making old things new. Making seemingly irreparable things better than new. No matter what's happened to you, what you've done, or what you brought to your marriage, if you'll walk with God you can *Live Happily Even After*.