

# Comic fiction. Parable. And buying presents for impossible people

### THE NOVEL

Any novel worthy of the name should have vivid, rounded characters who develop through the book and whose company you enjoy; sparkly dialogue; wild ideas; and a plot that springs out of a compelling dilemma, that carries the characters along with it, and that arrives at a fresh, unexpected and wholly satisfying conclusion.

If it's a comic novel, every page has got to be amusing and quotable.

The place for any 'Christian' message in such an endeavour is not in sudden robotic bursts of theologically sound dialogue, dropped in like product placements. The Christian message belongs at the heart of the book. Let the central struggles of the biggest characters be the great issues of fallenness and redemption, guilt and fear and grace.

### BLINDING WITH THE LIGHT

Then you've got to remember the phenomenon of 'blinding with the light.' A good novel does not feel the need to spell out

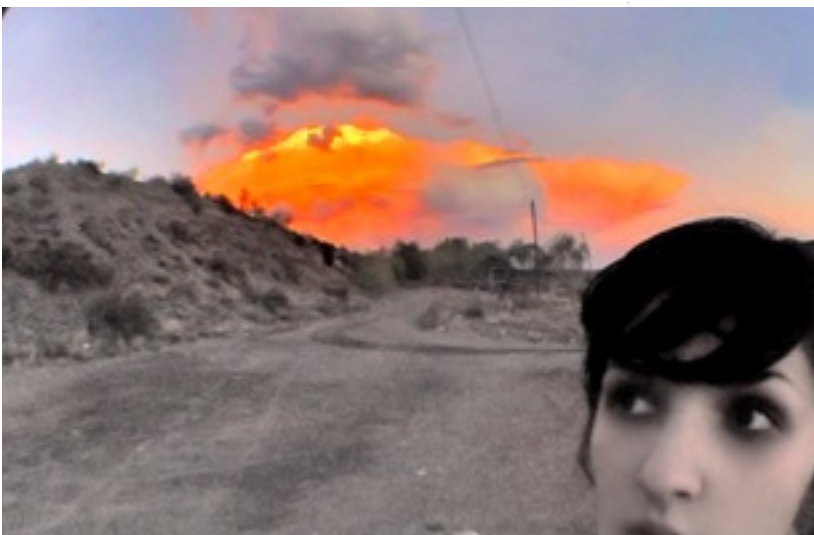
Four Spiritual Laws. It is sly and artful. It gently disarms. It always leaves the majority of the processing to take place in the head of a reader. Jesus kept his teaching for insiders; everyone else got stories, along with the command, 'He who has brain to figure, go figure.'

### PARADISE

My novel *Paradise* drops two lost genres into scenery borrowed from John Milton. It's aimed at those hard-to-buy-for people who read Terry Pratchett or Douglas Adams, or who enjoyed the *Men In Black* films or *Red Dwarf* on the TV. It talks about cricket, bacon sandwiches, failed love affairs, an Afghan restaurant called Osama's, life, death, hell, paradise and repentance. There's a supporting cast of evil spirits. The Prophet Jonah gets a walk-on part near the end.

It is, or at least it's meant to be, comic fiction for the soul.

*Glenn Myers*



This extraordinary photo, *Stone clouds* by Carlina Lampezuda, could be a scene from the book (*@Flickr and used with permission*).