

to suggest she consider getting published.

"I never did do that," Sara says. "I wasn't certain how to go about it. When I got to college I decided to get serious about finishing my book. It took me about six months to finish the manuscript. Then I started looking for publishing options."

Sara's search led her to Oklahoma's Tate Publishing, a Christian-based, family-owned, mainline publishing organization with a mission to discover unknown writers, eagerly accepted Sara's manuscript. The company produces books in paper, audio and e-book format and assists authors in developing promotional events.

Wanting to remain realistic about her chances of landing a publishing deal, Sara prepped herself to deal with the rejection she knew was highly possible.

"I had to submit three chapters and a synopsis of the book," she says. "I revised those chapters and the synopsis again and again to make it the best it could be. One morning about 2:00 or 3:00 I realized I had done everything I could to get it ready. I was pretty scared about submitting it, but I sent it in. The next day I was overjoyed to receive the publisher's next-day-air contract for publishing the book."

Sara's parents, Kevin and Marcia, had always supported her literary efforts and encouraged her to pursue publication. When she received the Tate Publishing contract, her banker-father helped her scrutinize the agreement before she officially signed it. They decided to seek sponsors to assist Sara in her first publishing venture.

"I felt so good about Tate's offer," Sara says. "They only accept about four percent of the manuscripts they receive. I had to do a lot of formatting to get the rest of the manuscript ready. Then it took about three months for me to hear from the publisher about a projected publishing date."

Soon after acceptance of her first manuscript, Sara submitted her request to Tate for their consideration of a second book.

"They accepted the second manuscript right away, too," she says. "I'm trusting that the books will be successful and I'll be able to reimburse my investors. I have worked on plans for my fourth book and have more story lines, plots and titles in mind. I'll keep writing books as long as I'm able. I'll be announcing plans for signings in Yankton in the near future."

Sara's writing and publishing success hasn't drawn her away from her social work career plan. If anything, she sees more opportunity to combine the two.

While the final details of her career goals are not yet clear to Sara, she's leaning toward work skills that will put her in a position to assist young adults recover from experiences such as sexual abuse, a topic that is also at the heart of her books.

"Molly is my main character in 'Another Ending,'" Sara says. "Her experience with rape turns her world upside down. She tries to run from the reality of what's happened. Runs from herself and from God. What she realizes is that it's only through God's grace that our endings turn into new beginnings."

"The book is intended for young adult readers," Sara adds. "But some of the adults who've read it have gained a much better understanding of what a young woman goes through when she experiences rape and an unplanned pregnancy. They feel the book helps them understand better how to reach out to someone in that situation."

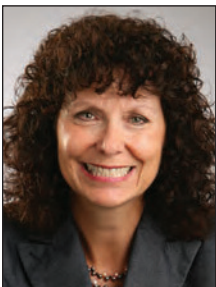
Through training related to her social work career, Sara is learning that misinformed or uninformed youth often complicate their situation because they don't know where to turn or how to ask family and friends for help.

"In sexual abuse situations, there's a lot of shame, regret and secrecy," Sara says. "Sexual abuse is a taboo subject, which makes it that much harder for young adults to ask for help. The book is written in first person, and my parents were deeply affected by it, reflecting on their own parenting experiences."

In her book, Sara's own prolife views are evident, however, she believes the realistic way her book deals with Molly's story makes it appealing to a broad group of readers.

"It doesn't have what I call a bubble gum ending," Sara says. "Some people weren't really happy about that. But it is a realistic ending. Teen pregnancy is such a huge issue and teen moms struggle with how they'll be viewed by others when they have a baby so early in life. These are the kinds of real life issues I want to help young women with. My hope is that this book helps people realize that with God's help we can face the darkness in our lives and turn our endings into new beginnings."

■ by Loretta Sorensen



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