



By Diana Prusik

God allows suffering. He allowed it for Christ; He allows it for us. When a father began sexually abusing his three-year-old daughter, God allowed it for young Ronie Kendig.

Yet Kendig wished malice on no one—not even her abuser. When he silenced her with threats he'd go to jail if she tattled, her compassionate heart bore the pain. "He held my voice hostage," Kendig says.

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*God had great plans  
for her future.*

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An approval seeker from an early age, she believed the abuse would end if only she were good enough. This mindset trapped her into striving to please others, even at her own expense.

# The Stamp Of His Approval

No matter how good Kendig managed to be, abuse continued whenever her mother was gone. She grew up needing to protect herself, to defend herself from the one who should have ensured her safety. "Essentially, I was never a child," she says.

Kendig could not have known then, but God had great plans for her future—though tribulations loomed.

## **BORROWING STRENGTH, FINDING SELF**

Since her mother's presence kept her father at bay, Kendig's mom unknowingly became a shield. As a result, their bond grew tight.

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*Her mother's death rocked her  
world and shook her faith.*

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Seven years later, through "strength not [her] own," she found her voice and told her father to stop. Five more years passed before she gathered the courage to tell her mother. Divorce followed, but Kendig's suffering would not end there.

When she was 25, Kendig's beloved mother died suddenly of non-Hodgkin's lymphoma. She felt God had ripped her anchor from her life. Floundering, she realized she had depended upon her mother for everything—even her identity. Her mother's death rocked her world and shook her faith.

Kendig took another blow four years later when her father died. Convinced as a teen that she had forgiven him, she realized too late that she wanted to confront him for stealing her innocence.

"One day, I cried out to God, demanding to know why He never protected me. I knew He could've—but He didn't," Kendig says. In a split second, she saw an image in her mind of her 8-year-old self in the midst of abuse. "God—GOD!—was leaning over me, brushing my hair from my face, touching my mind, smiling at me, protecting who I was and loving me through those years."

## **BLESSINGS AND HARDSHIPS**

The future held more challenges for Kendig as a wife and mother. In a struggling economy and, through no fault of his own, her husband Brian lost four jobs in five years, sending the family into financial ruin.

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*Through their faithfulness,  
He delivered blessings  
amid hardships.*

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"I hated watching Brian fall apart," Kendig says. "I hated watching him blame himself and feel less than dirt for not providing for his family. We had tried everything and were actively looking for ways to supply an income."

As the Kendigs struggled to stay afloat—even attempting to sell their home—a lender's error doubled their mortgage payments. While the family paid what they could, their lender refused partial payments and pressed foreclosure, leaving them homeless.

At rock bottom and feeling void of approval, Kendig nearly gave up on everything, including life. Yet God did not give up on her or her family. Through their darkest days, He provided them with food and shelter. He kept their marriage strong. And they kept their eyes on Him, their only constant. Through their faithfulness, He delivered blessings amid hardships.

### A LIFE'S THEME

One tremendous blessing arrived when Kendig signed with agent Steve Laube. Another came 18 months later when she received her first book contract. During this time, God showed her the truth in her life verse: "The Lord will fight for you; you need only be still" (Exodus 14:14).

"This verse is probably the most common thread in my stories—heroes willing to fight for those who can't or won't fight for themselves."

As suffering shapes her fictional heroes, it has also shaped Kendig into the person and author she is today.

Her compassion permeates her Rapid Fire Fiction brand. An Army brat and wife of a military veteran, she feels compelled to write about wounds "visible and invisible" that military heroes and their families too often suffer. She witnessed marriages end in divorce for no apparent reason after friends returned from Operation Desert Storm/ Shield. She saw a SEAL, unwilling to deal with his anger after multiple tours of duty, let his family disintegrate. "I knew when I saw that young family ripped apart that I could never again

pen a story about our military heroes without showing the toll it takes," Kendig says.

*Let your stories scream in the face of evil.*

She advises other writers who have faced difficulties to "Use it! If you have this gift of communicating through stories, let them scream in the face of evil. The stress and anxiety will bleed into your story and God can use that to minister to another who is enduring a trial. Never miss an opportunity to share your pain!"

### THERAPY, PASSION, GIFT

With her eleventh title *Beowulf* in the works, Kendig is taking every opportunity to communicate with readers through stories. While writing is her therapy, her passion, and a gift that has brought her numerous accolades, including the coveted Christy Award for her military romantic thriller *Wolfsbane*, her craving for the approval of others intensified with her success in an industry that demands strong sales numbers and social media presence.

Lately, she admits, God has been tugging at her performance-driven ambition. Instead of seeking the approval of others, she feels God challenging her to seek Him, to write for an Audience of One. Aware that the publishing industry can be fickle, that success can be fleeting, she is striving to maintain perspective and honor God.

"I have already pleased Him, merely by writing, by using the gift He has given me," Kendig says. "He already stamped His approval on my heart!"

**DIANA PRUSIK** is the Tyndale author of *Delivery*, a two-time finalist in the Christian Writers Guild Operation

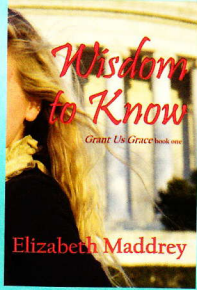


First Novel Contest. A Missouri certified teacher, she holds a bachelor's degree in English and a master's in Secondary Education. In addition to writing, Prusik enjoys photography, creating art, and

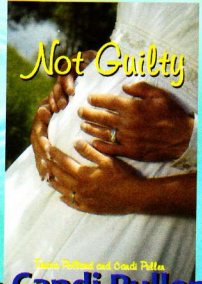
making memories with her husband, children, and grandchildren. Connect with her at [www.dianaprusik.com](http://www.dianaprusik.com), on Twitter, and on Facebook.

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