Before Grandma picked me up from the Hallmark on Highway 7 and Weston, I was pieced together page by page.¹ The American Bible Society provided me with stories of Saints and stories from old-time witnesses, like the Apocalypse of Peter, printed on pieces of thin opaque printing paper which were glued into me with PVA glue that was sure to last a lifetime. My birthing process took place at the Catholic Bible Press in Nashville, Tennessee in 1993 and no time was wasted in getting us “Collector’s Editions” out into the world. As I was packaged along with the others of my kind, our creators took great care in ensuring we would not get damaged during our low-budget travel with Faithgateway, an online Christian bookstore, and told us that someday we would be “reborn” into a new life where we would open our pages to young Catholic students across Canada and guide them through the word of God. The journey was short, yet the true waiting began when I was finally placed on the bookshelf right in the front of the brand-new Hallmark store. Mothers, fathers, sisters and brothers happily turned me over in their warm soft hands filling me with excitement just to crush my dreams again when they put me back down on the shelf.

On March 21st 1998, I strained to see the beautiful snowfall coming from the window at the front of the store. Even though I wasn’t front and centre anymore, I had a strange feeling that it was going to be a good day! That was when I first saw Grandma. She pushed through the front door with a scarf over her head as to shield herself from the white flakes falling from the sky. Grandma later told me that she loved the snow, she just didn’t want her hair and makeup to get ruined before Nicole’s big ceremony! Anyways, I watched her as she scanned through the aisles carefully with a determined look on her face. As she got closer and closer to me I started to get

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nervous! No one ever came this far back in the store anymore, all the new stuff was at the front! Before I could even collect my thoughts, she smiled at me and said “You will be perfect for her! I can’t wait for her to meet you!” Her… Who was her?! Was I finally about to meet my life partner or was this just another scam to get my hopes up again? I think Grandma felt my confusion, so as a sign of reassurance she took me up to the cashier and set me free.

About an hour later I was sitting in my church with Grandma who made me look really pretty by putting a big red bow around me. I felt more confident than ever! This was my day! Grandma brought me up to the alter where Father John awaited my arrival. He placed his hand over me and blessed me with a prayer by saying “Our memory of God’s revelation is maintained in the Scriptures that we hold in our hands. Encourage us with the help of the Holy Spirit to use these sacred writings for our prayer and inspiration, for the increase of our own faith and devotion, and for the building up of your Kingdom.” He then stepped aside and that is when I finally laid eyes on her. Although she was only a few months old, I knew Nicole and I were going to be soulmates forever! As Father John presented me to her, he gave us both a splash of Holy Water and we were reborn again on our first Baptism! Together connected by this Holy Sacrament, Father John recorded the first of the many special occasions we spent together inside the front cover of my thick, and now holy, body. I finally felt like a real Bible and not just another book on the shelf! With the essence of the Holy Spirit infused in my pages, I vowed to guide Nicole throughout her life and strengthen her relationship with God.

Over the years, Nicole and I spent every night cuddled up in bed together. We prayed when times were tough, when we were happy and when we just wanted to give thanks to Our Lord and Savior. I taught her right from wrong and shared my intimate stories of faith with her. Nicole grew up to be a strong, independent teenager who lived her life in the footsteps of Jesus Christ. I couldn’t have been more proud of her and even proud of myself for helping her reach
her true potential. All those lonely days of mundane conversations with raggedy old books were over. I was the happiest I had ever been for finally being able to fulfill my true destiny. At least that’s what I thought.

One day after school Nicole came home in tears. She picked me up and I was ready to do whatever it took to comfort her. “HOW COULD YOU DO THIS TO ME AND MY FAMILY?”, she screamed. Confused and taken back, I was shocked that she would ever raise her voice at me. Instead of hearing me out, she did what I never could have imagined. She put me on her bookshelf. On the bookshelf where all the read and abandoned books went, where all the forgotten stories lived out the rest of their existence with unbearable small-talk, and where the painful memories of my many years on that Hallmark bookshelf came back to haunt me.

Nicole’s parents were getting a divorce, and she blamed me. She threw me away and never looked back. As each day went by, her connection to God got weaker. I felt it as my pages became limper and limper. The other books tried to talk to me and reassure me that life here wasn’t so bad after all, but I wasn’t interested. We made a life-long commitment to God and to each other and for that I never felt like such a failure. All I ever wanted to do was guide her through tough situations like these, but instead of being cuddled up in her bed, layers of dust covered every inch of my body. I hoped that one day she would come back for me and even though I was filled with sadness and frustration from her betrayal, I’d give her the chance to explain, the chance she never gave me. I’d forgive her and ease her pain by giving her hope through restoring her faith.

Six years later, a quiet voice woke me up from my sleep. “God, are you there?”… 
Bibliography


