Professional Editorial Review by Lee Ann at FirstEditing.com

for

Gideon: Only Believe

Author: Randall Hahn

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Substance:

The substance of the manuscript is riveting. It’s the story of a young boy with Christ-like healing abilities. It’s also the story of segregation in the South, even between so-called Christians. When Gideon starts healing people physically, they are also healed emotionally and spiritually. References are made to the Bible and hymns throughout, mainly the song “Only Believe.”

A strength of this story is that believers in Christ will clearly see the parallels between the two lives of Jesus and Gideon. A weakness might be that non-believers may be wary of reading the book because it is so plainly Christian. A way to overcome this might be to focus more on the segregation aspect in the advertising, which the black and white butterfly symbolism does very well.

Organization:

The writing is organized as a story, both chronologically and with flashbacks/flash-forwards. This is a refreshing organization technique. There are scene breaks and italics used to differentiate the story from the storytelling.

A strength of organizing the novel this way is that storytelling is historically the way mankind has relayed information. A weakness might be that if someone’s not paying attention, say they’re reading this on a train on the way to/from work, they may miss a transition between the story and storytelling, and would have to re-read for clarity. A way to overcome this in the final product could be to use slightly different fonts for the storyteller and the story.

Presentation:

The story is presented as a tale from the segregated south of the 1930s, with the moral of the story being love they neighbor, no matter what color their skin. The heavy parallel to the life of Jesus makes this a very deep topic. The dialect of the characters, and the description of the physical and emotional environment really make the reader feel like they’re there, although many of us weren’t even born yet. Characters are young, old, black, white, rich, poor, saved, and unsaved. Anyone who reads this book will surely identify with at least one of the characters. The reader needn’t know anything about the Bible, but will likely come away a changed person. The emotions of the characters come shining through, from highly elated to earth-shatteringly devastated, and the reader will definitely want a box of tissues nearby.

I would recommend this book for all ages.