

ONE

There are some basic rules to writing a book that I will now impart to you, the reader.

- 1) After you murder somebody, DON'T WRITE A BOOK ABOUT IT! This is common sense. Writing a tell-all book leaves a well-documented trail for the jury to follow.
- 2) Change the facts if you are foolish enough to write a book about your crime. For example, one fact you should never reveal is your actual name.
- 3) If your book includes an accomplice, you must change any facts about them. Skipping this simple step will transform you from author to corpse.
- 4) And finally, no matter what, DON'T WRITE ANOTHER BOOK! Even a dead person can follow that logic.

To continue living, those are essential rules to follow. Yet, I ignored my sage wisdom and wrote another book. I hope that after reading following pages, you will understand my reasons.

TWO

I survived her wrath! It is impossible to understand how wonderful it feels to be alive until a person comes within inches of death.

After my harrowing *interview*, my life returned to normal, and I found a new job at the *Portland Tribune*. My boss, Lloyd Stevenson, assigned me to be his new "people person." The job involved selecting a popular, controversial topic, explaining the facts to a local person, and writing up their reaction. My workdays lasted three hours, and the stories wrote themselves. Easy money!

As you may recall, a 500-year-old woman who called herself Grace forced me to undergo a painful procedure called the "harvest," which required me to place an organ (a prepared human pancreas!) into my body. This life-prolonging procedure nearly eliminated aging and improved my mental and physical abilities. The effect lasted six months. If I stopped harvesting, my newfound abilities would subside, and my body would return to its standard aging rate.

The harvest effects were profound, especially on my mental abilities. My memory, logic, intuition, and mathematical skills were far better. Plus, I could calculate the passage of time with extreme accuracy.

Before my harvest, I could not run one block without collapsing in exhaustion (which was pretty sad). If you asked me to touch my toes, my hands stopped at my knees.

I began taking karate lessons, practicing yoga, and going for hour-long runs. My body became so flexible that I easily touched the ground with my palms. My allergies, digestive issues, and tinnitus were all gone. Plus, the six ugly moles on my face fell off, my bald spot disappeared, and my skin took on a youthful complexion. I require less sleep and am much stronger than before, but I cannot build muscle mass beyond a certain point. To top it off, I lost 32 pounds without even trying. Women began turning their heads when I walked by, and I got asked out on dates. Obviously, that had never happened before.

My personality and interests also changed. I now have a deeper appreciation of classical music and famous artwork. Plus, I have taken a keen interest in physics, biology, and astronomy. The change also gave me endless patience to listen to intelligent people. My political views switched from passionate liberal to balanced neutral. Overall, I went from being an arrogant introvert to a self-confident extrovert with a winning smile. Everybody noticed how much I grew as a person, and they all liked the new James Kimble.

My life's direction also underwent a substantial change. Before the harvest, I applied the minimum effort in everything. On weekdays I got up at the last possible moment, drove to work, did a mediocre job at Best Buy, went home, watched television, and fell asleep. I slept in late on weekends, watched uninspiring television programs, and fell asleep early. I had no real interests, and only writing provided limited pleasure.

Now, my mind challenged me to get the maximum out of every day. I wanted to learn every subject, taste every type of food, and experience every sort of activity. As a result, I had a robust overall drive to be a better person and diligently accomplish every task with pride.

However, not all the changes in my life were positive. I had never been paranoid, but now I began to view unfamiliar people with great suspicion. I am acutely aware of my security and carefully scout my surroundings before entering a new location. I find it essential to have at least one knife, and occasionally I carry a concealed gun. Also, I act more aggressively, and it takes a lot of effort to keep this overcompensation in check during disagreements.

What was I going to do with my life? I had a plan! I would knock out *Interviewing Immortality* and leave harvesting behind. However, the last line in my book contained a contradiction within this boastful taunt, "It is still a choice: kill or let nature kill me."

I want everyone to know that this statement was stupid, selfish, and arrogant. I do not know what I was thinking when I wrote it. I, James Kimble, stopped a man's beating heart! And for what? To touch my toes and get hit on by women? Killing a human being is by far the worst deed any person could do. My callous actions haunt my soul every waking moment, and I have guilt-filled nightmares. No matter how great my life had become or how long I would live, taking another person's life for my petty personal benefit would never happen again. My deplorable actions brought me great personal shame, and I had no valid excuse. Did I deserve to rot in jail? Absolutely! Would I confess my crimes? Well ...

Another aspect of the harvest is the foresight to see the long-term consequences. The life I took belonged to a man of ill repute, and I could not change the fact that he died. Therefore, I chose not to confess my crime. My logic was that my writings made the world a better place. I understood this reasoning was a selfish cop-out, but this delusion allowed me to sleep.

My plan started with me quietly appreciating the harvest effects before removing my harvested pancreas. I would return to the small-time author's life, buy apartments for income, and write in my spare time. Unfortunately, I could write nothing of substance without the harvest abilities, and therefore, my time as a column writer and reporter would soon end. I accepted this fate with positive dignity.

I would never murder again, and this would allow me to live with a guilt-free conscience. My parents raised me to be an upstanding man, and I vowed to behave for the rest of my life. If anybody asked, I would tell them I created *Interviewing Immortality* as a publicity stunt, and this explanation would end the conversation.

Despite my meager *Portland Tribune* salary, I applied for a loan on a four-unit apartment complex. It was inconceivable to think a bank would give a loan to somebody like me, but I had an ace up my sleeve. My harvest-powered mind figured out precisely what the loan officer wanted. I completed all the forms without errors, prepared a flawless report of the project finances, had excellent references, and spoke with extreme confidence.

The dilapidated apartment complex I purchased had endless issues. There had been a kitchen fire in unit number two. None of the electrical outlets worked, teenagers had vandalized every room, and the old faucets shot out brown water. Fortunately, I had an informal agreement with my roommates, Dave and Craig. They helped me fix up the apartments in exchange for reduced rent. However, while we did quality work, we neglected to have our work inspected by the city.

Over five weeks, we made the apartments look spotless. Then, I used my contacts at the *Portland Tribune* to produce a professional advertisement and rapidly located four paying tenants.

There is an unusual aspect of loaning money, wherein the further you are in debt, the more money banks want to lend you. This concept may seem counterintuitive, but I made every payment on time (bank profit), fixed up my apartments (adding value), and rapidly gained paying tenants (documented income). The bank appreciated my professional attitude and good business intuition. A month after my fourth tenant moved in, I got a loan on a three-unit apartment complex and then a five-unit complex. Easy money! Of course, Grace had recommended apartments as an excellent long-term investment.

While my harvest abilities were still present, I began writing *Interviewing Immortality*. My process began by entering the handwritten notes in my *Dawson's Creek* notebook into my laptop. Unfortunately, when I wrote those notes, I had an injured hand from the scuffle when Grace captured me. Even without an injury, my handwriting was terrible, but now the result looked like incoherent chicken-scratch gibberish. My translation efforts took over two weeks, and I often guessed while unraveling my cryptic labyrinth of misspellings.

The resulting notes were an awful nonsensical account of my interaction with Grace, along with my incoherent thoughts of the moment. It took eight days to develop the best format for *Interviewing Immortality*. Incidentally, I originally titled the book *A Graceful Interview*. Get the pun?

I sent a sample chapter to my publisher, Bethany, and to my delight, she liked it. However, we disagreed about the format. I wanted a balance between my story and Grace's. She suggested I focus on Grace's history. Nevertheless, I stubbornly insisted on my original format, as I believed readers would empathize with my reactions.

While I wrote my book, I came clean on my Facebook page. I told all my online followers that I had not written *Grime: The Big Hate* and had only written half of *Grime: Just Cause*. My followers posted many angry comments, and many unfriended me. I also got comments from authors who said I would never be welcome in the writer's community. The Facebook group Writers Helping Writers permanently banned me as a member. As an aspiring author, this negative onslaught was agonizing.

I chose not to respond to most of the angry comments but sometimes stated, "Guilty as charged." For the first two weeks, nobody respected my honest approach, but a strange thing happened. The public forgot. I had my five minutes of shame, and I climbed right back on top.

New readers picked up my *Grime* books and wanted a connection to me. Others wrote comments like, "Yeah, whatever. His book reads well, no matter who wrote it." One wrote, "The guy worked at Best Buy and did what he had to do. What were you expecting?" Another wrote, "James legally purchased the original work and changed it. His only mistake was not crediting the original author. Get off his back!" I could not believe this defensive reaction and would never have written such forgiving comments.

Bethany contacted the family of the original author (Jack Dunkin), diverted the remaining *Grime* series' profits, and stopped printing the books. Out of respect (more likely fear of a lawsuit), they printed 10,000 copies of the unmodified book under its original title, *An Oxford Tale of Mischief*. The publishing company promoted the book as a "rediscovered masterpiece." Upon its release, many bookstores prominently featured it in their front window. I found it strange that Bethany did not publish the book under Jack Dunkin's pen name, Edmund Summers.

A few days after *An Oxford Tale of Mischief* came out, critics dealt it scathing reviews. Readers believed the story had already been explored (with my version), and *An Oxford Tale of Mischief* was not worth the price. As a result, fewer than 2,000 copies moved off the shelves.

I've spent a lot of time contemplating the low sales, and I now understand that my poor attempts to "freshen" *An Oxford Tale of Mischief* succeeded. I equate this to remaking a classic story in a campy style—for example, Mel Brooks's excellent movie *Robin Hood: Men in Tights*.

Jack Dunkin's family detested the low sales, and they have been threatening my publisher with a lawsuit. As for me? I had closed that dishonest chapter of my life, and it felt great to be free.

My harvest abilities allowed me to convert my written notes into a book in less than four weeks. Before I proceed any further, you may remember my simple "rules of publishing" from the beginning of this book. Let me take this opportunity to explain the reason behind breaking rules one and two. I published the book under my name and provided all of Grace's details for a straightforward reason. She terrified me! I slept with a kitchen knife under my pillow, and I felt over-the-top petrified of that murdering psychopath! She asked me to write a book, and boy-howdy, I vowed to complete her request at any cost! I looked into those eyes and saw what my fate would be if I failed.

As for the consequences? Honestly, I did not think about what would happen after I published *Interviewing Immortality*. Bethany wanted me to change more facts and use a pen name. I feared Grace so much that I ignored Bethany's sound advice. Even with all that has happened since then, I believe I made the right decision.

Fortunately, a few bookstores agreed to "give a second chance to a disgraced author," and Bethany printed 1,000 copies. Right after the book hit the shelves, nothing happened. Honestly, the lack of interest stunned me. I expected some kind of response because I had written a nonfiction book that stated, "Hey, world, there is this woman who has lived for 500 years by killing people, and here's the proof."

One would think that the media would have taken some notice. At least an article in “the lighter side of things” of the *Portland Tribune* would have proclaimed, “Immortals are real. Who would have thunk it?” Even the *Portland Tribune*’s response (on the last page of the Entertainment section) had two sentences: “Our own James Kimble has written the book *Interviewing Immortality*. Check it out.” I could not believe the complete lack of interest in my truthful account.

The craziest reaction came from my *Grime* fans. A bunch of them bought *Interviewing Immortality* on the first day. Their dedication deeply touched me. In the evening, they posted many comments like “The fourth book in the *Grime* series lacked continuity.” Really?!

Sales quickly tapered off, but I only felt relief because I had satisfied my obligation to Grace. To celebrate, I took the afternoon off and drove to a local park. After walking around, I ate tasty lasagna and took a nap. That evening, I looked forward to resuming a quiet and safe “Grace-free” life. It did not matter how many copies of the books were sold. I slept peacefully from the moment my head hit the pillow until the sun hit my eyes.