

***Voice of the Ancient*
by Connilyn Cossette**

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***Sweeping and Romantic New Biblical-Era
Series from an Award-Winning Author***

“Cossette’s ability to bring Biblical times and its rich cultures authentically to life is, in a word, glorious. This is a beautiful exploration of the ancient past that will resonate with modern readers.”

—*Historical Novels Review* on *To Dwell Among the Cedars*

Minneapolis, Minn.—Known for her captivating biblical fiction novels, ECPA and CBA bestselling author Connilyn Cossette has successfully carved out her own space in the genre by fictionalizing characters and storylines that take place against the backdrop of major biblical events mentioned in scripture. Launching a new series with impeccable research and award-winning writing, Cossette now brings to life the first years of King Saul’s reign in a new installment that fans of Tessa Ashfar, Angela Hunt, and Jill Eileen Smith won’t want to miss—book one in THE KING’S MEN series, *Voice of the Ancient*.

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As the eldest son of a Levite and a Philistine, Avidan is torn between his duty to his family legacy and the desire for something more. When Ammonites attack the city of Yavash-Gilead, he takes the opportunity to fight with his cousins for the newly crowned King Saul. But when one of the cousins goes missing during the battle, Avidan stays behind to search for him in hopes that he’s still alive.

Keziah is the daughter of one of the most powerful clan chiefs in the territory of Manasseh. On the brink of a forced marriage to a loathsome man decades older than her, she has no choice but to run. Dressed as a boy, she takes her horse and heads for the south, hoping to find sanctuary with her mother’s family.

Battling to survive the dangers surrounding them, Avidan and Keziah make a pact to travel together. As Keziah’s true origins are revealed and Avidan’s search for his cousin becomes increasingly futile, they must not only rely on each other to stay alive but learn to trust the true and eternal King of Israel to guide their every step.



About the Author

Connilyn Cossette is a Christy Award and Carol Award–winning author whose books have been found on ECPA and CBA bestseller lists. When she is not engulfed in the happy chaos of homeschooling two teenagers, devouring books whole, or avoiding housework, she can be found digging into the rich ancient world of the Bible to discover gems of grace that point to Jesus and weaving them into an immersive fiction experience. She and her husband currently call a little town south of Dallas, Texas their home. Connect with her at ConnilynCossette.com.

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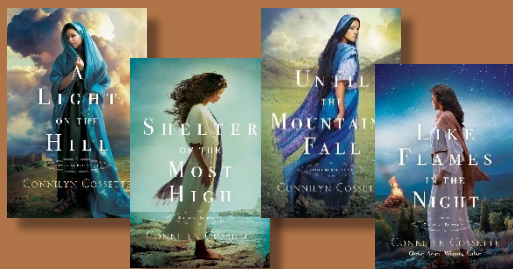


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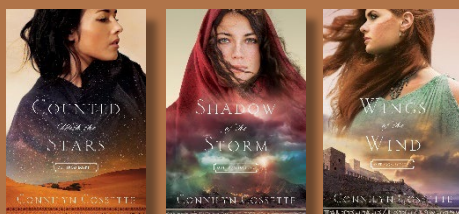
Cities of Refuge

1. A Light on a Hill
2. Shelter of the Most High
3. Until the Mountains Fall
4. Like Flames in the Night



Out From Egypt

1. Counted With the Stars
2. Shadow of the Storm
3. Wings of the Wind



Available wherever books and ebooks are sold.

PRAISE for Cossette’s Biblical Fiction

“[Cossette] pays exquisite attention to the ancient setting, creating an exotic yet foreboding atmosphere. Biblical fiction buffs, especially those who follow Angela Hunt, Jill Eileen Smith, and Rebecca Kanner, are sure to be swept away.”

—*Library Journal* on *Counted with the Stars*

“Telling the story from the perspective of a Gentile who traveled alongside the escaping Hebrews, Cossette flips the script on the usual telling of the biblical tale. Readers will smell the fear on Passover night, feel the wonder of the Red Sea crossing, and sympathize with the starving and thirsting of those escaping in the wilderness.”

—*Publishers Weekly* on *Counted with the Stars*

“Cossette delivers a soul-deep, spirit-stirring adventure set amidst the vivid, awe-inspiring beauty of the Promised Land ... The richness and depth of the storytelling beg readers to savor each chapter.”

—*RT Book Reviews* top pick, *A Light on the Hill*

“For fans of Biblical fiction, Cossette’s novels are not to be missed!”

—*Historical Novels Review*, *Like Flames in the Night*



Author Interview with Connilyn Cossette

Voice of the Ancient

Can you tell us a little about your new novel *Voice of the Ancient*, book one in THE KING'S MEN series?

Connilyn Cossette: This first book in the series is a spin-off of *Between the Wild Branches*, from the Covenant House series, and opens at the very beginning of the reign of King Saul. We journey along with Avidan, one of four young cousins, who run away from home to fight for the newly crowned King Saul. Not only is Avidan not yet of military age, he is also a Levite and therefore forbidden from serving as a soldier in order to instead serve in a more priestly role. When disaster befalls the four cousins and one of them goes missing during a battle, Avi refuses to believe his cousin is dead and remains across the Jordan River to search for him. He crosses paths with Keziah, a young woman who has also run away from home, because she is being forced to marry a dangerous man decades older than her. Dressed as a boy, she flees with her beloved horse Sarru, and finds a traveling partner in Avidan. They make a pact to journey south together, searching for Avi's cousin and Keziah's family, and together discover who the true king of Israel is and why he deserves their full allegiance.

In your own words, how are your books distinctly different from other biblical fiction novels in the genre?

CC: Even as a kid, I used to wonder about the people “behind the scenes” who interacted with Moses and David and Rahab and Jesus, the villagers or servants in the palaces or nameless faces in the crowds, and so that is who I like to write about. I love to wonder about what would *I* have done if I came face to face with the pillar of fire in the wilderness or had to collect manna every day or felt the ground shaking under me at Jericho. So that's why my desire has been to write from the perspective of fictional characters who witness those Biblical events and how those well-known happenings pointed those “every day” people to Yahweh's goodness and how he showed the ancient Israelites his beautiful grace long before he sent his Son to earth in human flesh. It sets me apart in the genre a little bit but also gives me some really fascinating “white space” to peer between the lines of Scripture and wonder “what if?”

How is this series different from other biblically based novels you've personally written?

CC: First of all, these books are primarily hero-based stories, since four young men are at the center (although their heroines have strong roles and voices through each book). I've written male voices before, which I enjoy doing, but this series is really the journey of four young men who start out from a place of strong friendship and, through tragic circumstances, are forced to find their own way apart from the cousins they'd always relied on and instead lean into Yahweh for direction and growth. There's also a bit of a mystery throughout the series, since it'll be a good long while before we know what happened to that missing cousin, so that's been fun to

develop and weave into these books. As well, I've now moved from the Judges period of the Bible into Kings which was such a time of transition and upheaval for the people of Israel.

Can you share a snapshot of the beginning of King Saul's reign, the period in history in which this novel and series take place?

CC: Before Saul became king, the tribes had their own elder-run legacy leadership and some of them had even lived far across the Jordan River, separated from the center of religious life, for hundreds of years. But after being harassed and oppressed so much by the nations around them, Israel was desperate to have a human king to rule over them, give them some standing in the world, and protect them from their enemies. They didn't care that Yahweh had already promised His divine protection and blessings, or that He had warned them a human king would eventually become corrupt and self-serving, they wanted a good looking, tall guy to represent them and make those enemies shake in their boots. So, the Lord graciously gave them exactly what they asked for. And, as prophesied, things did not go well. Saul may have started out as the embodiment of all the people wanted in a good king but it was not long before it became about him and his own glory. My series explores this time of transition and the struggle to understand what it means to pledge our full allegiance to the Eternal King, regardless of what the culture around us looks like. It's a lesson I think all of us who follow the true Anointed One must learn, especially in the time of upheaval and uncertainty in which we now live.

What inspired the idea behind a series set during this famous biblical king's reign?

CC: Honestly, I just had such a fun time getting to know the family in the Covenant House series that I wasn't ready to leave them behind. I was excited to explore a new era but also wanted to continue on with the next generation. Therefore, the idea of using a group of four young cousins who showed up at the end of *Between the Wild Branches* came to life in my mind. The era of King Saul's reign tends to, in my opinion, get skimmed over a little bit when we are reading through the Bible so I thought it would be great to slow down and explore what it must have been like for a group of tribes to change from elder-led government, especially after being so independent for hundreds of years (longer than America has been under the Constitution), to shifting into a united monarchy. There was always strife between the sons of Jacob and it is obvious from the contentious split after Solomon's reign that nothing ever really changed. With humankind there is never full consensus on anything, let alone politics and religion! Therefore, all that strife between people and nations just gives me lots of juicy drama to play with in this series.

What lessons can the lives of your main characters Avidan and Keziah teach modern Christians today?

CC: Avidan and Keziah come from vastly different backgrounds. Avi grew up in a Levitical family, in a community where Samuel the Prophet himself taught the Torah to his students. He knows the stories of the Israelites and much about Yahweh, yet he struggles to see his own place in those stories and understand his role in the larger picture. Learning to listen to and obey the Voice of the Ancient One by laying down one's own desires and following His will is an

ongoing process for all who are called by His name. On the other hand, Keziah grew up in a place far away from the center of worship, in a community that had largely forgotten their heritage and had allowed pagan practices to mix with worship of the True God. Her journey is one of discovering who Yahweh is, of separating truth from fiction, and bowing her knee to the One True King of Israel for the first time. And don't we all need to examine our hearts and determine whether we are holding onto false idols as well?

What led you to write your own brand of biblical fiction?

CC: I really didn't set out to write Biblical Fiction, nor did I consider that my spin on it was a little different than the rest, I just got fascinated with the historical context and culture surrounding the biblical narrative and especially the Old Testament time period and found myself dreaming up a cast of characters that led me on that first journey out from Egypt in *Counted with the Stars*. Once I found that biblical era fiction was my passion, the stories just began to flow and now I can't keep up with all the ideas I want to write! I may explore other genres in the future but for now, I feel like the Lord is constantly bringing me fresh inspiration for books that illuminate the ancient world of the Bible.

What do you think readers gain by diving into the history of their faith?

CC: Just like the Renaissance painters who depicted Jesus and his disciples wearing current-era clothing and hairstyles among European settings like their own, we westerners tend to look at the Bible through the lens of our own culture, experiences, and worldview. The more I have learned about ancient Hebraic culture, language, and customs the more I appreciate some of the deeper meanings found in Scripture that have been obscured, or even ignored, over time. I think its not only enriching for Christians to dig deeper into the roots of our faith and understand the historical context of the Bible and the world in which its authors lived but an imperative to understanding more fully the nature of the Hebrew Messiah we worship, the culture in which he lived, and how to better align our distorted worldview with his perfect one.

What are you working on next?

CC: I am writing Book Two of the King's Men series and having so much fun exploring the story of yet another of the cousins who run off to fight for King Saul and the feisty woman he meets that wants nothing to do with one of Saul's warriors. I'm going to keep the rest of the details on this one close to my chest for now but I will say that I've had this book percolating in my head for over two years now and I am dying to get it on paper! And yes, I do mean paper because I write all of my manuscripts entirely by hand now and would never go back to my old way of drafting. There's just something magical about scribbling away with a physical pen on real paper that sparks my imagination and gets my creative juices flowing!

How can readers connect with you?

CC: The best way to find me is at my website, ConnilynCossette.com where readers can sign up for my periodic newsletter and keep up with all my writerly news. But I can also be found on [instagram.com/connilyncossetteauthor](https://www.instagram.com/connilyncossetteauthor) and [facebook.com/connilyncossette](https://www.facebook.com/connilyncossette). I also have a special Facebook group page (Connilyn's Bibliophiles) where readers can get the inside scoop and interact with me personally from time to time. Come find us, we'd love for you to join in the conversation!