

## Summer fades but hope does not: Author's authentic take on the life experience of young adults

**Nathan Brown**

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Avondale College of Higher Education alumna Amanda Bews has a passion for the issues that affect young adults and the choices they make. A teacher and the mother of three boys, Bews has written a new novel called *Summer Fades* as a follow-up to her first, *Heaven Sent*. She responds to questions from Nathan Brown about her stories and why they are important.

### Why stories?

For thousands of years, we've used stories to pass wisdom from generation to generation. Jesus knew the value of stories. Stories are memorable and can lead us to knowledge that mere delivery of information cannot do. With *Summer Fades* and *Heaven Sent*, the stories generate discussion and allow exploration of serious and often uncomfortable issues in non-threatening ways.

### How does your research of the issues about which you write grow into a character and a story?

The issues grow out of my interaction with contemporary culture. After I've identified which issues to address, the characters and their stories develop. Then I study the issues by reading biographies, newspaper articles and academic journals and use the research to inform the story. After completing the third draft, I ask experts to read the manuscript. In *Summer Fades*, for example, an ambulance arrives to take Summer to hospital. So, I asked some paramedics to read the scene so it would reflect how they would manage the situation. I also had a doctor, a psychologist, a counsellor and a sexual abuse survivor read the manuscript before I completed the final draft. Authenticity is important. Faith is also a significant part of the stories. Why? My faith is intricately linked to all the decisions I make in life. When I've tried to "go it alone," things haven't worked out. I hope the young adults who read the stories are encouraged to explore how God wants to be a part of their lives and how biblical principles apply to contemporary issues.

### What's surprised you about the responses you've received to *Heaven Sent*?

Just how many people have found themselves in similar situations to *Heaven*. Date rape is so much more common than I imagined. Concern about the spiking of women's drinks is understandable, but the most used date rape drug is alcohol.

### Apart from understanding more about anorexia and abuse, what do you hope readers will learn from *Summer Fades*?

I hope they might be more willing to think about why people act the way they do. We all experience life differently and many people have lived through extenuating circumstances, so we should always be kind and considerate. I also hope they'll understand more about God's renewing, healing power and about how He works in and through genuine community. A healthy church family is a wonderful place in which to experience life change. (see the Book Review p. 63)



Amanda Bews introducing *Summer Fades*  
Photography: Nathan Chee

### DISCUSSION GUIDES

*Summer Fades* and *Heaven Sent* are available from Adventist Book Centres and from [hopeshop.com](http://hopeshop.com). Download discussion guides for *Heaven Sent* at [www.amandabewsbooks.com](http://www.amandabewsbooks.com).

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