THE REAL HISTORY BEHIND THE NOVEL

Solomon's Wives, Foreign Gods & *Forbidden* Faiths



The astonishing true history woven through Solomon's Wisdom

A COMPANION DOSSIER

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A Note Before You Begin

When I wrote *Solomon's Wisdom*, I wove real history through the fiction, and the truth, it turns out, is stranger than anything I could invent.

The wisest king in the Bible kept a thousand women. He built temples to forbidden gods within sight of his own. And the very idea of "one God" was, in his lifetime, still taking shape.

What follows is a short dossier of the genuine biblical and historical record that inspired the novel, paired, for each entry, with what I imagined on the page. Where the Bible speaks, I've cited the verse. Where scholars debate, I've said so. And where I invented, I've owned it.

Consider it a game of *fact vs. fiction*. See if you can tell where history ends and the story begins.

Marie



EXHIBIT ONE

A Thousand Women, and Not One of Their Names

The Bible calls him the wisest man who ever lived. It also records that he had 700 wives and 300 concubines, and it remembers almost none of them.

IN THE RECORD

Scripture states it plainly: Solomon "had seven hundred wives, princesses, and three hundred concubines." Many were foreign royalty: women of Moab, Ammon, Edom, Sidon, and the Hittites, married to seal alliances and secure trade. Yet across all of it, the text preserves his glory and lets the women dissolve into a number.

Source: 1 Kings 11:1-3

IN SOLOMON'S WISDOM

History gave me a thousand silences, so I filled one. The novel imagines a single wife with a name, a mind, and a will of her own: a Sidonian princess who refuses to be a line in a ledger. She is invented. The world that reduced women to a tally was not.



EXHIBIT TWO

The Devout King Who Built Altars to Forbidden Gods

On the mountain across from the Temple of the Lord, the same king raised shrines to the gods of his wives' homelands. In his day, that was not as unthinkable as it sounds.

IN THE RECORD

As Solomon grew old, the text says, his wives "turned his heart after other gods." He built high places for Chemosh, the god of Moab, and for Milcom (also called Molech), the god of the Ammonites, and did the same for all his foreign wives, who burned incense and offered sacrifices to their own deities, in sight of Jerusalem.
What makes this stranger still: many scholars argue that early Israelite religion in this era operated as *monolatry*, the worship of one supreme national god while accepting that the gods of neighboring nations were real, rival powers. In Solomon's time, Yahweh, the God of Israel, was understood as one god among many. Only over centuries, especially after the Babylonian Exile, did that belief harden into the conviction that he was the *only* God who exists. The single God worshipped today by billions, across Judaism, Christianity, and Islam, was once, at his origin, one deity in a crowded and competing field.

Sources: 1 Kings 11:4-8; and modern scholarship on the evolution of Israelite monotheism

IN SOLOMON'S WISDOM

This is the charged, complex world the ancient chapters move through, and the novel draws its tension from that very real pressure. The history behind it is genuine.



EXHIBIT THREE

The Vanished Ark and the Fall of the First Temple

One of history's greatest treasures simply disappears from the record, and no one has ever explained where it went.

IN THE RECORD

In 586 BC, after a brutal siege, Babylon breached the walls of Jerusalem and burned Solomon's Temple to the ground. Among the sacred objects lost that day was the Ark of the Covenant, kept in the Temple's innermost chamber, the Holy of Holies. And here the historical trail simply ends: the Ark is never clearly accounted for again. Destroyed in the fire? Carried off? Hidden before the city fell? Scripture and history fall silent, leaving one of the ancient world's most enduring mysteries.

Context: the Babylonian destruction of the First Temple, 586 BC; the unexplained disappearance of the Ark of the Covenant

IN SOLOMON'S WISDOM

History loses the Ark in the smoke of that burning Temple. The novel asks a quieter question: on the day everything sacred was scattered or destroyed, what *else* might have slipped out of the Holy of Holies and survived? The Temple's fall is real. What escaped it is the story's to tell.



EXHIBIT FOUR

Buried Alive to Keep a Secret

Some secrets were guarded by locks. Others were guarded by people who were never meant to come out.

IN THE RECORD

Immurement, sealing a living person inside a wall or chamber, was a real practice in the ancient and medieval world. It was used as punishment, as sacrifice, and, in enduring legend, as a way to bind a guardian to a sacred place forever. The victim was left alone with the thing they died protecting, entombed in silence, remembered by no one.

Context: immurement as a documented historical practice and a recurring theme in folklore

IN SOLOMON'S WISDOM

The novel opens with a man who chooses that fate: sealed into the dark to guard something the world was not meant to find. He is the first of many who pay that price across three thousand years. What they die protecting is the story's to reveal.



EXHIBIT FIVE

History's Editors: Who Decided What We're Allowed to Remember

We tend to think of history as what happened. But so much of it is really what someone, somewhere, decided to let survive.

IN THE RECORD

By roughly the 4th century AD, the framework of the Bible had been set, and a great many other writings, more than a dozen gospels and countless letters, were deliberately left out. Some were denounced as heresy; others were burned, buried, or quietly forgotten. It was one of the most effective acts of curation in history. Then, in 1945, a sealed jar unearthed near Nag Hammadi in Egypt gave up a cache of those very suppressed texts: proof of an entire silenced tradition that had nearly vanished from memory.

Context: the formation of the biblical canon; the Nag Hammadi library, discovered 1945

IN SOLOMON'S WISDOM

This is the question the novel is built to ask: what happens to a truth the powerful decide we are not meant to have? The book imagines one such truth, buried on purpose, and the people who are still determined to keep it that way. What that truth is, you will have to discover for yourself.

The story is fiction.
The questions are real.

If this glimpse behind the novel sparked something, there's a whole story waiting, one where a buried tablet, a ruthless order, and a three-thousand-year-old secret collide in the present day.

Solomon's Wisdom is available now. And the next adventure is already underway.

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Thank you for reading, and for caring where history ends and the story begins.