

The Soulbane Illusion

A novel by Norman Jetmundsen, Jr.

Paperback

John Hunt Publishing

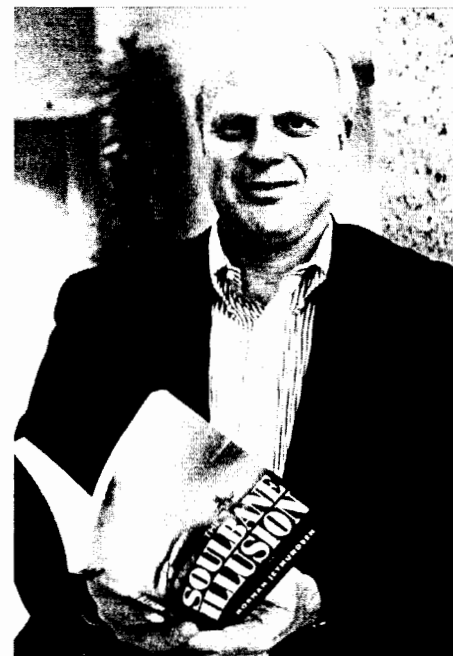
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REVIEWED BY CHARLES A. STEWART, III

Norman Jetmundsen's second book, *The Soulbane Illusion*, is a fast-paced, mystery novel. The characters are well developed. The story moves at a rapid pace, and I completed the book in no time, much faster than other books of a similar length. It truly is hard to put down. Jetmundsen's first novel, *The Soulbane Stratagem*, was published in 2000 to very strong reviews. The book made the regional bestseller list and was crowned by an English bookstore as one of the "ten...very best Christian fiction titles around." In fact, the English bookstore places Jetmundsen's book among the top ten Christian books, right up there with his literary muse, C.S. Lewis.

I initially reviewed *The Soulbane Stratagem* for Norman back in the March 2000 issue of *The Alabama Lawyer*. I concluded my review by encouraging Norman to write another book. However, I had no idea that this second book would be such a great read.

The Soulbane Illusion picks up ten years after the point at which *The Soulbane Stratagem* story ended. The hero of *The Soulbane Stratagem* was an American student, Cade Bryson, who was studying at Magdalen College in Oxford, England. He uncovers strange



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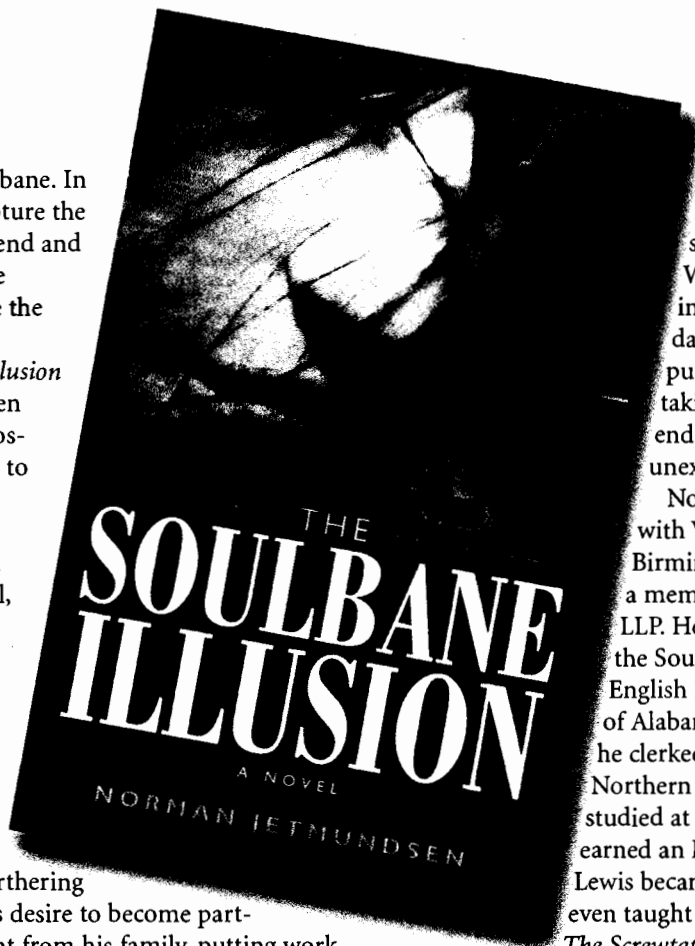
letters hidden in the college library. As it turns out, the letters were written between modern minor devils who were communicating about the recent successes of the Devil in encouraging decay and godlessness in modern society. Bryson and his girlfriend go in search of certain reports which are going to be

prepared by a junior devil, Soulbane. In the end, Bryson manages to capture the reports. He promises a close friend and his girlfriend he will publish the reports and, in doing so, expose the evil forces.

It is here that *The Soulbane Illusion* picks up the story. It has been ten years since Bryson came into possession of the reports. He failed to keep his promise to expose the devil. Instead, he has moved on with his life. He is now married to his college girlfriend, Rachael, and they have a daughter. Bryson finds himself very successful in his law practice and on the verge of becoming a partner with a large Atlanta law firm. Work is the center of his life. In fact, it becomes a god of sorts. All of Bryson's thoughts and energy go into furthering his career and into pursuing his desire to become partner in the firm. He grows distant from his family, putting work before all else. Bryson manages to shine in the eyes of his partners because he works all hours, attacks his cases with tremendous energy, and is willing to do anything for the firm.

Bryson manages to capture the attention of one of the firm's most prominent clients. The client appears to find Bryson's legal abilities invaluable. However, something more sinister is going on. Those devils from his Oxford days have caught up with him and they are intent on capturing back the reports Bryson secreted away ten years before.

Complicating matters, Rachael tires of the inattention and mourns the loss of her best friend and lover. She takes her daughter back to England to be with her mother. Rachael simply has to get away from the decaying marriage. Bryson is left behind to deal with his failing marriage, his blossoming legal career and the inevitable encounter with the devil's foot soldiers. Finally, awakened to the miserable state of his existence, Bryson decides to change things. He barely makes it on a plane



to England, escaping narrowly from his law firm's investigators sent to stop him from leaving the country. When he arrives in England, he goes in desperate search for his wife and daughter. Meanwhile, the devils are in pursuit of the reports, even if it means taking his daughter to get them. In the end, Bryson's struggle culminates in an unexpected encounter.

Norman Jetmundsen, Jr. is an attorney with Vulcan Materials Company in Birmingham. Before joining Vulcan, he was a member of Bradley Arant Rose & White LLP. He graduated from the University of the South (Sewanee) with a degree in English literature. He attended the University of Alabama School of Law. After law school, he clerked for Judge Sam Pointer in the Northern District of Alabama. Thereafter, he studied at Magdalen College, Oxford, where he earned an MLitt in Law. While at Oxford, C.S. Lewis became very important to him. (Lewis even taught at Magdalen College, where he wrote *The Screwtape Letters*, the inspiration for Jetmundsen's first and second novels.) Both novels are available from local bookstores or via the Internet. You can also read more about them at www.soulbane.com. ■



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Charles A. Stewart, III is a partner in the Montgomery office of Bradley Arant Rose & White LLP. Stewart attended the University of the South in Sewanee, Tennessee. While in college, he studied one summer at University College, Oxford, England. He attended Cumberland School of Law, Samford University. Stewart currently serves on the board of directors of the Defense Research Institute. From 1998-99, he served as president of the Alabama Defense Lawyers' Association, and recently served on its board of directors, as well as editor of its publication, *The Journal*. Stewart is a member of the International Association of Defense Counsel, the Federation of Defense and Corporate Counsel, the Federal Bar Association and the Hugh Maddox chapter of the Inns of Court.