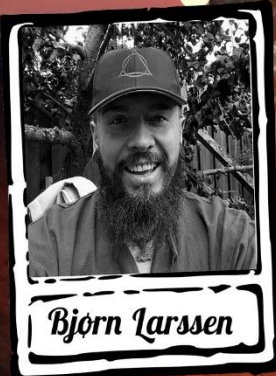


5th Edition

"Juggernauts"

The Creator Of Creation



Bjørn Larssen

The King
Of Destructive Plot-Twists



Steven McKinnon

With:

Cyberpunk Goddess &
Best-Selling Indie Author



Anna Mocikat



+A VERY Special Surprise Feature!

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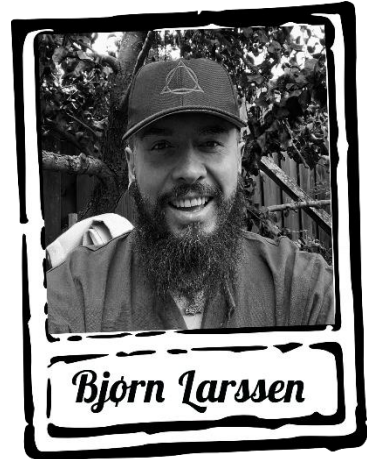
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The Creator of Creation, Bjørn Larssen

Welcome to our E-mag! It's a PLEASURE, a mighty honor to have you with us Mr. Bjørn! Could you tell us about yourself?

Hi Julio, thanks so much for having me! I'm a Norse heathen, an ex-blacksmith, and I've been called a Sage Veteran of the Writing Community. I love Iceland, campfires, and horsies (not a typo). I hate celery and mosquitoes. Aha, and [I write books](#).



You are known, and beloved by the Writing Community for many, many things, but specially for your humor and friendliness. Can you tell us what are your views about the people in the #writingcommunity?

That's a lot of a question! The #writingcommunity are thousands of people – writers, bloggers, older, younger, from all sorts of backgrounds, all sorts of views... When I'm [on social media](#) I like to interact, and those are my people – we understand each other, whether it's about procrastination or editors' remarks or that last final FINAL fINaL Corrected FINAL edit.

Some people are nicer than others, some are there only to advertise their books, some become dear friends. Most of all I just love knowing that when I am sitting here grinding my teeth because chapter 7 just **WON'T WORK**, there are twenty other people all over the world doing exactly the same because *their* chapter 7 just **WON'T WORK**. I'm never alone.

Talking about humor, and things you are known for, besides your incredible books, is the "Who needs Context" Series. For those who haven't yet seen it, or have

been "surprisingly" featured on it, lol, could you tell us what is it about and how it came to be?

Hahaha! I can't remember how it came to be. Sometimes, when a Twitter conversation has been going on for a while and you see only one reply (*please* don't say anything about [anal harpoons](#)) without, well, context, it's bound to raise your eyebrows.

I started picking the most curious and hilarious (when taken out of context) tweets and RTing them, and it kind of escalated from there. I even designed a Medal Winner Prize Award badge you can put on your blog if you like.

I sometimes get strangers tag me in their conversation asking to be included in the "Who Needs Context?" series. Some people (hi [Penni](#)) actively bait it! I wonder how many people only follow me for WNC?

You are a very dedicated writer and it shows, and one of the things you are known for is your "relentless" editing of your books. Do tell us a little about that, because, apparently, it pays off BIG time.

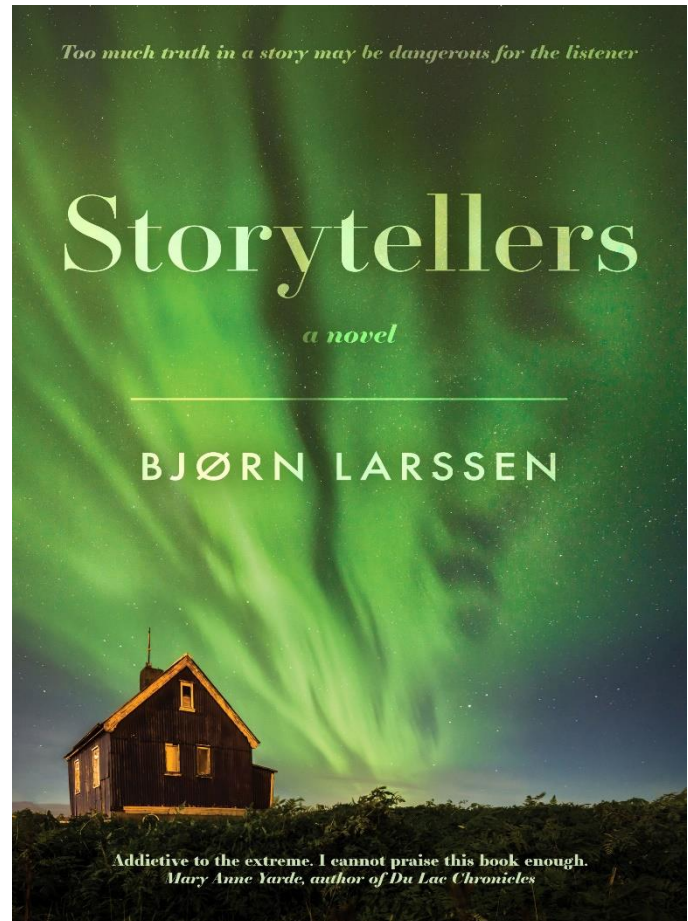
Obviously it depends on what "pays off" and "BIG time" means ;) I have a mission and a vision statement, like I'm some sort of corporation (only without the money).

My mission is to bring Norse and Scandinavian history and lore to people. My vision is to [write books](#) I will not be ashamed of five years from now. And because I keep learning, my standards for myself go further up. Which, by the way, is not necessarily a good thing. Writing for yourself when you're a perfectionist might *not* be safe. In unrelated news, my therapists retire early.

HAHAHAHAHAHAHAHAHA, LOL. So, let us talk about editing. How do you go about when editing, what are your intentions when editing, or better saying, "filing" your drafts and manuscripts?

When I was working on [Storytellers](#) I depended on my editor's knowledge, tried to absorb it, but I really had very little clue as to what I was doing. There just was a story I had to tell, because it kept bothering me until I wrote it down.

With [Children](#) I knew exactly what I wanted to do – but not how. I'd rewrite some scenes 40-50 times until it worked. At the end I went through every sentence removing superfluous words, sometimes making punctuation or grammar incorrect on purpose because some people don't speak pretty. There is one missing comma that completely changes the mood and meaning. Have I mentioned my therapists retire early?



Hahahaha, you *did* mention indeed. How about Plots. How do you go about them? What are your advices and practices when it comes to plot creation?

I'm not great with plots. Seriously, I'm not being cute. There are plot-based writers and character-based writers. I'm the latter.

I work on my characters for a very long time, sometimes write their backstory to understand them better, then I put them in a certain situation and try to figure out what they would do.

One of my MCs, Maya, is very good at ruining my plans.

- Me: “And now, for the plot purposes, you will do X”.
- Maya: “*rolls her eyes* No”.
- Me: “But this is necessary! You have to!”
- Maya, shrugging: “You’re the “aUThUr” here, you figure it out, I’m going to have a nap.”

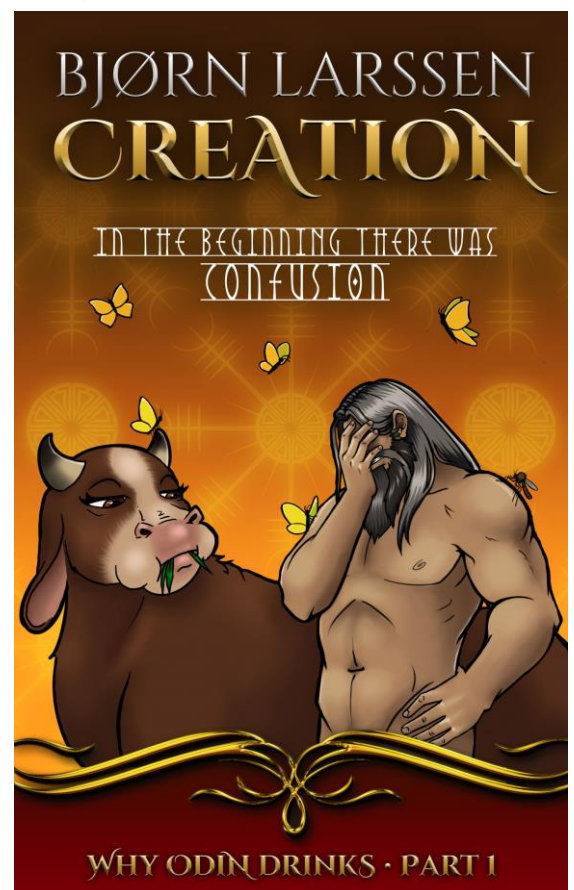
And *then* I have to somehow turn this into plot...

You are known for your humour, as we are clearly seeing why, so do let us know what are your tips in making readers laugh.

My biggest inspirations are Sir Terry Pratchett, *Calvin and Hobbes* and British comedy – from *Keeping Up Appearances* to *Coupling*. There is no single happy person in *Keeping Up Appearances*, it’s actually terrifying when you analyse it more deeply, but we laugh our socks off.

Calvin and Hobbes is a cartoon where an obnoxious six-year old and his stuffed tiger are based on the theologian John Calvin and philosopher Thomas Hobbes. They discuss the meaning of life, but with fart jokes, the weirdest snowmen ever, and imaginary spaceships.

In my last novella, [Creation](#), which is humorous fantasy, one of the jokes is a character pointing out he’s going to make a joke, then failing at it. I break the fourth wall. I pair words and phrases that should never be paired. I take conventions of a rom-com and apply them to a tense, often horrible situation. I’m writing something that’s deeply disturbing and then I throw in the sort of sentence that makes you snot-snort.



Have you noticed by now that I have no idea how to answer this question? I wish I had some Wise Advice On Hilariousness, but the best I can come up with is “be inappropriate.”

Character sexual diversity is something that is very much still a taboo in the writing world, and we would like to know how do you feel about that, if you were so inclined.

I think sexual diversity is actually becoming a trend – in a bad way.

The legacy (“traditional”) publishing industry decided that racial, sexual, etc. diversity is the way to go, because that’s where the money is.

I feel the publishing’s understanding of “diversity” is really “tokenism, but more.” There is a wonderful author who writes disabled romance, i.e. romance with disabled characters, and a legacy publisher told her to make the heroine “less disabled.” She was *too* diverse for the average reader. I prefer the word “inclusion.” It’s also why I have mostly been reading indie writers/books in the last years. They’re more...diverse.

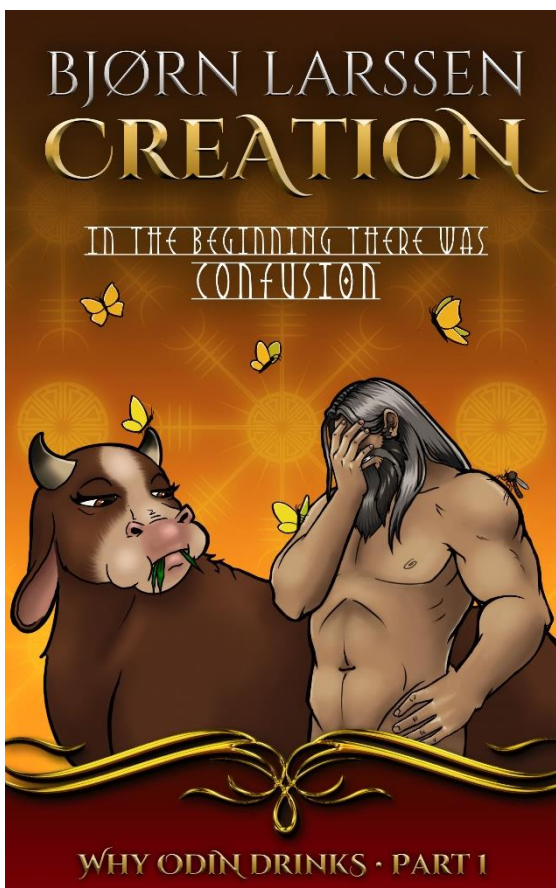
One of my favourite authors is Michael Cunningham, in whose books sexual diversity is just something that exists. It’s a trait – this character has grey-blond hair, wears glasses, is a lesbian, loves flowers, and is preparing a party. It’s not a superpower, it’s not a plot device, it’s not a burden, it’s not taboo. It just is. That’s how I try to write.

So let us talk about your amazing books. Björn, you have written historic fiction, fantasy, won prizes left and right. The first one, [Storytellers](#), is actually Best-seller on Amazon, and it’s one of the most acclaimed books on the world in the category. Can you talk about that a little?

My ego just grew so big I can't see the keyboard or the screen, sorry.

Could you tell us more about the other books, such as “*Land*”, that has an EPIC cover btw.

Land is the sequel to [Children](#). The series is called [The Ten Worlds](#), where the first nine are the Norse Nine Worlds, and the tenth is Earth. My Gods and their minions find themselves on Earth, which they find somewhat confusing. It's a 9th century version of Earth I have observed around me in 2020-2021 – so this is what people are really like.



A friend and beta-reader remarked that *Children* is a dark book, but *Land* is just sad. (Even the bits that make you snort-laugh.)

I'm also working on my humorous fantasy series, [Why Odin Drinks](#), which is the weirdest Norse mythology retelling you could think of. The first book in the series, *Creation*, is about, well, creation – the three brothers, Odin, Vé, and Vili (as per actual Norse mythology) wake up completely confused (as per NOT actual Norse mythology), not knowing how to God. (Do you even God, bro?)

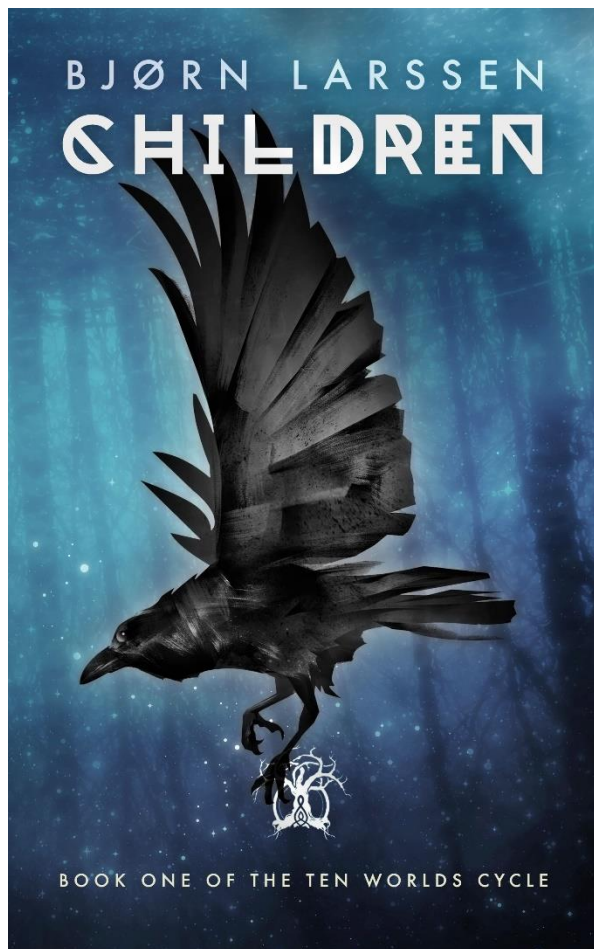
The next instalment will describe Odin receiving the runes with the help of a dominatrix and a very confused Loki – who doesn't know how to Loki yet either.

I'm *also* working on a non-fiction... something. I'm autistic, with bipolar disorder and c-PTSD, and that makes my life different from that

of others – apparently. It’s hard to see from the inside, so I’m going to describe that inside and see what people say. The trouble is that I also want to make it funny, because duh, but the last two years haven’t been very funny. So I have no idea when this one is going to happen and what it will be.

Although we are eager to review one [of your books](#), we know they are amazing, because we follow you and get snippets of your writings now and then, but we must ask: from [all these amazing books](#), which one was the most challenging to write and why?

Always the one I’m working on.



With [Storytellers](#) I didn’t know what I was doing – I was just typing with my type-y hands, then sending that to my editor and hoping *she* would know what to do. (She did.)

With [Children](#) there were the expectations of the readers, but also my own, as I knew what I wanted to achieve and also that I wasn’t very good at it yet. I wanted people to *feel* the pain, the hunger, the excitement.

And then [Creation](#) was a different sort of struggle, because making people laugh is much more difficult than it looks. There’s a very thin line between “this is hilarious” and “this is stupid/gross” – in this book I try to do the balancing act... and still smuggle something serious among all the ass-

thetics and peeing dispensers.

Since I'm currently working on [*Land*](#), which has to be better and deeper than *Children* and based on actual history, it's so challenging I end up not working on it. It intimidates me. I'd say that's quite challenging...

Do you have any tips or advice for writers that admire your work?

I don't feel qualified to give writing advice. Sometimes I see people online giving this very...absolute, black-and-white advice that's more like an order, and I wonder who gave them their expert badges. Oh, to have the self-confidence of an average white man...

Okay, I have one.

It hurts me to see people call themselves "aspiring writers" and put down both themselves and their work. Don't do this to yourself. If you are writing, you are a writer. Like, literally. "Aspiring" is only true if you are *not* writing. Once you've finished a book, you're an author, not an aspiring author. You might be an unpublished author – still, you are one.

Impostor syndrome rides you hard enough, don't help it. Once you're doing it, you're *doing* it, not aspiring.

Thank you SO much for being here with us, and sharing your experiences.

Thank you so much for inviting me!



Bjørn Larssen

[Bjørn Larssen](#) is a Norse heathen made in Poland, but mostly located in a Dutch suburb, except for his heart which he lost in Iceland. Born in 1977, he self-published his first graphic novel at the age of seven in a limited edition of one, following this achievement several decades later with his first book containing multiple sentences and [winning awards](#) he didn't design himself. His writing is described as 'dark' and 'literary', but he remains incapable of taking anything seriously for more than 60 seconds.

[Bjørn](#) has a degree in mathematics and has worked as a graphic designer, a model, a bartender, and a blacksmith (not all at the same time). His hobbies include sitting by open fires, dressing like an extra from Vikings, installing operating systems, and dreaming about living in a log cabin in the north of Iceland. He owns one (1) husband and is owned by one (1) neighbourhood cat.

Awards:

Readers' Favorite Gold Medal winner,

Eric Hoffer Grand Prize Award Finalist (['Storytellers'](#))

2020 Stabby Award Nominee (['Children'](#))

His [Site and Blog](#) // [Twitter](#) // [Facebook](#) // [Instagram](#) // [Goodreads](#)

Cyborgs, and Best-Sellers with Anna Mocikat

Mrs. Anna Mocikat, everybody talks about you, many people admire you, and you were mentioned more than once by our previous guests on the previous editions of our E-mags*, so, we couldn't resist having you with us! Please, tell us about yourself.



Oh wow, thanks so much! I had no idea I'm so popular. Back at school I never was one of the popular girls haha.

I'm the author of the [Tales of the Shadow City](#) series, the [Behind Blue Eyes series](#), and [Cyber Squad](#), which has been just released. [My books](#) are sci-fi/cyberpunk and LitRPG. Before becoming a full-time novelist I used to work as a screenwriter and game writer.

This month's theme is "Juggernauts", and we know that you are one of the BIGGEST names on the [SciFi](#), [Cyberpunk](#) side of the #WritingCommunity. How do you feel about holding such a position of reference on that part of the community?

I'm flattered! Again, I had no idea this was the case. I love being a part of the Writing Community! I met some wonderful people there who I now call my friends and the community has been always extremely helpful to me. It was probably one of the best things that happened to me, to find the writing community!

We have [heard that you crowned our beloved Julie Kuma](#) with her title of Queen Of Horror. Can you tell us about that? Why the title?

I think it's the logical choice of a title for her, is it not? [Julie Kusma](#) is not only a wonderful person and a good friend, she's also a fantastic writer. I love her [short stories](#) and she never fails to amaze me as a reader. Therefore I think that "[Queen of Horror](#)" is the perfect title for her.

Let's get into your books and career. So, you are the author of the Amazon Best-Selling book, "[Behind Blue Eyes](#)". Can you tell us about the book, what is it about, and how it came to be?

[Behind Blue Eyes](#) is a cyberpunk story circling around a cyborg called Nephilim. She has been conditioned since childhood into believing she's fighting for a righteous cause but instead does the dirty and very bloody work for a mega-corporation. Until one day she realizes that all her life has been a lie and decides to take a stand...

[Behind Blue Eyes](#) is the most important book in my career. I think it's [by far my best book](#) and it makes me extremely happy that most readers love it. Usually, there will be people who like a book and others not so much. But everyone loves [Behind Blue Eyes](#)! I get contacted by readers often, who tell me how much they enjoyed [BBE](#) and the sequel, [Fallen Angels](#). Nothing makes me happier.

[BBE](#) is only the first chapter in a much larger story and I can't wait to share the rest of it with the world!

How do you feel like having written a book that became a Best-seller, even with the TREMENDOUS competition out there?



Well, I have to explain that [Behind Blue Eyes](#) only was a bestseller in its niche. It's not that I hit the NY Times bestselling list and now live in a beach house and drive a Tesla lol

I'm still far away from being a "real" bestseller author. However, I'm very proud of what I've achieved in the Cyberpunk niche, especially being a woman in a mostly male-dominated genre.

Surely there was [marketing](#) involved on the journey to making "[Behind Blue Eyes](#)" what it is today, a Best-Seller. Can you share your experiences on that?

I'm a marketing junkie, haha.

Well, not really. I would prefer sitting in the sun and reading a book or writing instead of doing marketing, but it's a fundamental necessity for success as an indie author. I spend easily 4-5 hours on marketing every day. That includes social media (I'm on [Twitter](#), Facebook and Instagram), newsletter, setting up promotions, creating promo graphics, setting up and running ads...and more. It never ends.

What are the factors that you, would say that contributed the most to make this dream a reality?

Hard work. Unfortunately, I'm not a lucky person. There are people out there who are just lucky with whatever they try. I'm the one who always throws a 1 when rolling dice. It's kinda my super-power ☺

Which means that I need to work extremely hard to achieve anything. This doesn't bother me as I have been a hard worker all my life. I started my professional career in the film industry, had two scholarships with 23 and was running a little production company with 25.

Many writers have the idea that you will hit "jackpot" writing one book, so, tell us, how long did it take to "make" it. Did you write many books and stories before that, or was it just a "marketing" prowess and connections?

Hitting the jackpot with one book is possible but extremely unlikely. I'd say it's more likely to be struck by lightning. Yes, it happens and we all know examples of such authors. But what many people don't understand, is, that those authors are always traditionally published by one of the big publishing houses. And even more, someone in those publishing houses has decided to deliberately make this book a hit. In such a case they unleash their full, gigantic marketing machine and often spend millions on marketing. Ta-da, suddenly we have a bestseller coming out of "nowhere".

Every author who made it in the indie scene has made it out of their own drive, energy and talent, which is something astonishing. And none of them made it with one book, they often have dozens of books and a huge fan base they built up over the years.

An off-side question here Anna, did Limp Bizkit have anything to do with the title? LOL

Haha yes indeed! I named the book deliberately after the song title. This is because the cyborgs have neon-blue eyes and because the song text applies to several characters in the book. I'm aware that the original version is by The Who but I always preferred the Limp Bizkit version.

Ok. Plot-wise and story construction. How do you think that writers should tackle that EXTREMELY sensitive sphere of [Sci-fi](#)?

When it comes to plot and story construction sci-fi works on the same principles as any other genre. I would strongly recommend reading some books about story development BEFORE writing your first book

(my favorite one is Story by Robert McKee), it will make your life much easier.

I've also said it many times that I'm not a fan of pantsing, in general, but in [sci-fi](#) in particular. Often when I read a bad book I can tell that the author is a pantsner. Very often the story leads into nowhere or runs in circles in the mid part because the author didn't know what they want to tell.

Now, not every pantsner is a bad author, some are really good, with Stephen King being the most prominent example. But most authors simply aren't as good as Stephen King, especially when writing their first book.

This is why I advocate for plotting. If you plot the story beforehand it's much easier to write a good book. I believe in sci-fi where world-building and logic are important, plotting is even more essential than in other genres.

Can you share with us the essentials, on your point of view, in writing [great Sci-fi stories](#)? Can you share your tips on that?

As just mentioned above, I'm an enthusiastic plotter, which also comes from screenwriting, which I studied at film school. You can't be a pantsner when you write a screenplay, you just can't.

Another important thing in sci-fi is world-building. I would recommend taking your time and building the world in as many details as possible before you start writing the book.

What is the society like? What tech level are they on? What do they eat, how do they dress, how do they love? What do they do for entertainment, how do their cities and houses look like? Etc etc...

Then comes the whole tech aspect which is extremely important in [sci-fi](#). A good sci-fi author will take a lot of effort in researching technology and coming up with technology that is at least plausible, although clearly sci-fi. A good example is Star Trek with its Warp drive. It's based on actual astrophysics which makes it believable.

In [BBE](#) I took a lot of time to design the cyborgs. I came up with the 60/40 rule which defines how much machine a cyborg can be and how many human components need to remain so they function properly (it's explained in the book). I describe how their artificial muscles work, why they don't sweat, why they can withstand an EMP attack and much more. Even though clearly sci-fi, my cyborgs seem very plausible and realistic.

When developing tech stuff and world-building, I always imagine the worst possible one-star reader talking to me, saying stuff such as: meh, that's not logical! Meh, that can't work this way! Meh, you have no idea what you're talking about! Meh, you haven't explained that properly!

By anticipating such critique, I write everything in a way so such critics won't find anything to complain about. And it works!

[Sci-fi](#) is, from our [experience in reviewing books](#), one of the, if not, THE, hardest type of fiction to get right, so, we ask you, Anna, what are the "no-no's" when it comes to writing Sci-fi?

As explained above, sloppy world-building and tech that could impossibly work are two big no-nos. I think what makes sci-fi more difficult to write than for example fantasy, is that it needs to be grounded in reality, it needs to be believable, whereas you can always explain almost anything in fantasy with magic.

Personally, I don't really like sci-fi/fantasy mash-ups. I'm more of a purist and don't want to see witches, fairies or mermaids in a sci-fi setting. As soon as magic comes into play sci-fi stops being sci-fi. As the name says 'science fiction', it's grounded in science, not in magic. And yes, I'm a geek and science nerd haha

Are there any mistakes that you did, when starting your career writing Sci-fi that you learned to "undo"?

Absolutely. As mentioned above, when I started out with my first books I encountered such “meh” readers. Those are usually male and being a female author in sci-fi I need to constantly prove myself...it’s not nice but it is what it is. This is why I make everything waterproof. I put A LOT of effort into it, and as it seems, it pays out. So far, everyone loves [BBE](#).

What’s the scene you wrote that you were most proud of?

There are two scenes in [BBE](#) I like particularly. In one, Nephilim goes full John Wick and rips apart a hideout full of armed-to-the-teeth thugs to save her friend. I have to note that she can do that because she’s a cybernetically and genetically enhanced super-soldier. So, it’s realistic that she can do that. But the sequence was fun to write. Action scenes are my favorites.



Another scene I love is when Metatron, the villain, spills the beans at the end of the book. The information revealed there caught every reader so far by total surprise. But, I made sure that everything is logical, plausible and foreshadowed.

Which scene was the hardest to pull off, and why?

The romantic scenes haha.

I’m not much of a romance type and it took me five times as long to write the romance scenes than everything else. I have no idea how authors are able to fill whole books with that.

If you could tell something to your younger writer-self, what would that thing be?

“Listen to the experienced people in the industry. They’re ALWAYS right. You’re not smarter than them.”

Thank you SO much for having accepted our invite Anna, it was a pleasure to have you with us.

Thanks so much for having me! Those were really interesting questions, and I had a great time answering them ☺

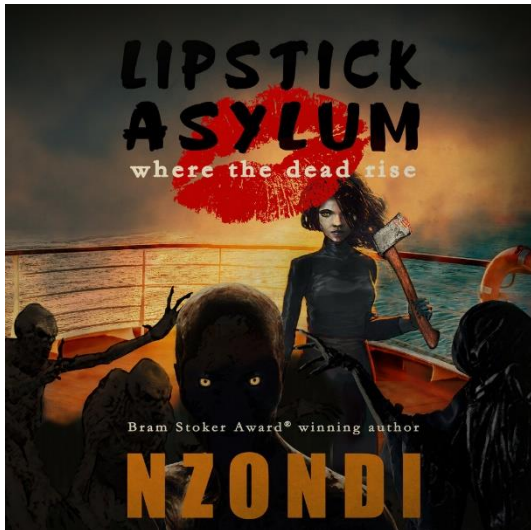
Grab [both books on Amazon](#). Audio Books also available.



The Most AMAZING Reads This Month!

Lipstick Asylum By Nzondi (9.4/10)

-Horror/Thriller/Fantasy-



THIS BOOK IS CREEPY.

Like... *Zombie* style creepy. OMG, WHY ISN'T it Halloween already?! This book is *perfect* for Halloween! LOL!

The descriptions that Nzondi makes, and *how* he takes his time to build the tension *without* taking a lot of time to describe what's happening and how... is impressive and just adds to the whole atmosphere of the book. You **will** want to read this in a dark room to increase the

spookiness.

(...) this is **CLEARLY** best-selling material.

(...)This is the best horror book I've read this year! OMG!

Get your book at [Amazon](#)
Listen to the [Podcast Review](#)

[Read full Review Here](#)

The Warfighter By Craig DiLouie (9.0/10)

-Military Thriller/Romance -

(...) Value is a big word when it comes to books with our site. It's not only a big word, but it's *the* central word on Scribble's Worth, and that's one of the reasons we love [Craig DiLouie's](#) writings. They are packed with value as moralistic views are questioned and distinct approaches in seeing things are given point-blank to the reader, in a way that one can only be engulfed in the beauty, the wit and the poignancy of the words that writes and the concepts he teaches on the pages of these books.

Here's a good example:

"How can one not be romantic about fighter jets, comrades, and stoic courage in battle? But past the uniforms, they're just people.

In the end, what makes them heroes isn't that they're like cardboard characters in an action movie, it's that they're ordinary Americans, warts and all, who fought and sacrificed everything, right down to their skins, to do their duty."

— Jack Knapp

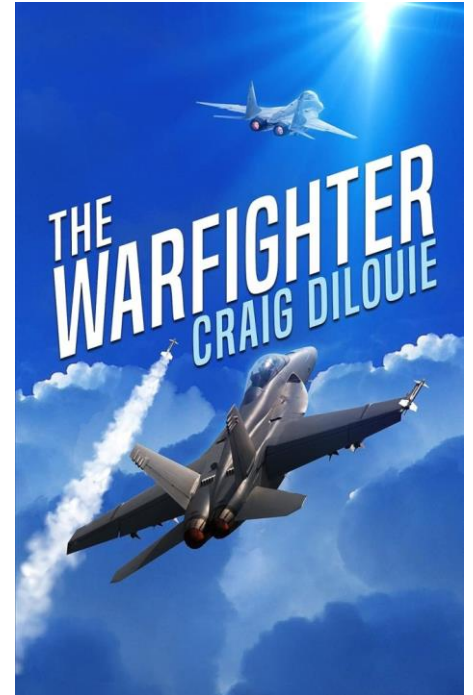
That's EXACTLY the type of stuff we are proud to recommend to readers!

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Other Books By [Craig DiLouie](#) - [The Aviator](#)

[Read full Review Here](#)



Year Of The What? by Jennifer Lieberman

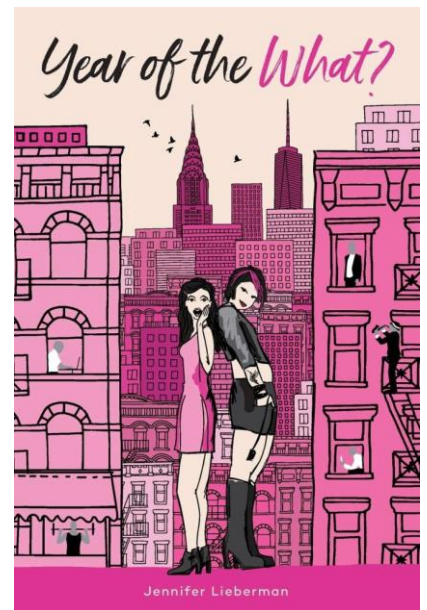
(9.0/10)

-Comedy/Romance -

(...) We need more [books like this](#) because you *cannot* fathom the amount of judgment women suffer for having sexual urges, as if they were some kind of alien species that reproduced by cellular fission. It's *bonkers*, and I clap towards this POSITIVE statement and this enlightening guide for women AND *men* that are somewhat afraid to see sex as it is: A form of natural expression needed for the healthy living of every human being.

(...) This is SO necessary for all women in the world. [I think that EVERY women should read this book](#), no matter what they think, because they will SURELY relate. SURELY. Awesome stuff.

(...) [This book has SO Much](#), but SO much that we cannot cover into a review, so [DO GET YOUR BOOK. This book is a MUST READ!](#) We need this, not only for the amazing sexual education it has, but for the *sheer quality* of this writing. AMAZING!



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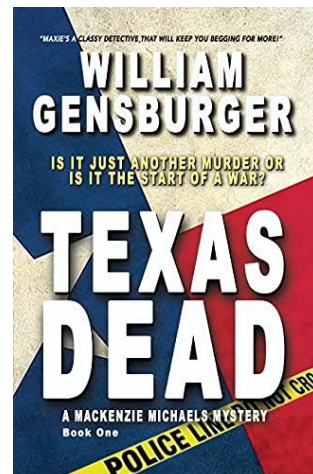
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Texas Dead by William Gensburger (8.3/10)

-Mystery /Romance -

(...)Although this is a mystery crime novel, I think that the author made a hell of a good job in making it more than that, as he took the opportunity to make it an inspirational book between all the investigating and all the crime fuzz and gang killing, which I made this book shine a whole lot more than expected, providing a great read to us and making us push ourselves more and more towards our goals.

(...)This book is very nice, and we think that more writers should come up with books with this much of valuable content.



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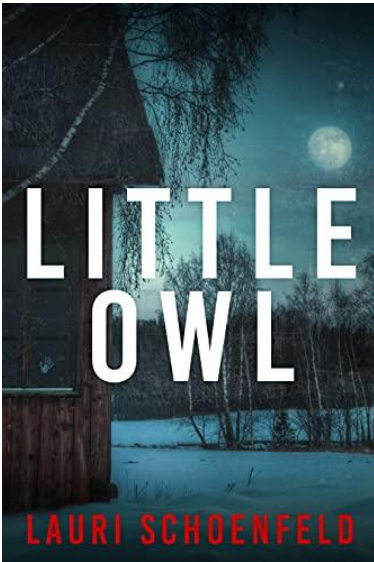
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Little Owl By Lauri Schoenfeld (8.3/10)

-Mystery/Romance -



(...) The mystery grows with the number of pages and the line between illusion, insanity caused by trauma and reality blur together and swirl with tension in a tango of suspense and possibilities. It's something... new to read, as even us, the readers, *although* we are given more clues than each character, cannot decide what to believe, *or* at least, not until we know more about the story that is being told, which is EXACTLY why we keep reading until we cannot dare to turn back, there are just *too* many loose ends, too much in stake in order *not* to know how this is going to end.

If Lauri Schoenfeld wanted us glued to our seats, then she achieved that with an A+.

(...) Nothing is what it seems and everything keeps changing, until the end, making this an entertaining story that keeps us curious until the end, and end that promises another book, as this vicious cycle of killing promises to repeat itself.

Book Score: 8.3/10

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A Fun Talk with Mrs. Mary Snow !

- Special Feature! -

Thank you so much Mrs. Mary for being here with us, we are total fans. Could you please tell us a little about yourself ?



I am a retired college psychology teacher. Before that I did clinical work with inmates, the most aggressive mental hospital residents, those with addiction issues, and victims of domestic violence. All the easy stuff.

I started reading and writing when I was a child beginning with colorful comic books with lots of pictures. My parents read to me from "those other books." Life took me away from writing more than once, but I've always thought of myself as a writer.

We couldn't help but notice and admire your prowess when it comes to writing impressive "tweet-sized" stories out of prompts. It must take a LOT of practice to write so simple, yet always amazing and valuable [stories on your timeline](#). How do you do it?

I learned how to write [very short stories](#) by reading those written by all levels of abilities on Twitter. I soon plunged in with my own writing while trying not to judge my own as good or bad.

What was unexpected was the support in the form of "likes" and kind replies from other writers who responded to many of the same [prompts I did](#). The interaction led to followers and friendships that I value.

As I continued to write in response to the prompts, I slowly began to fulfil my goal of having a hook, middle, and ending in 280 characters. I failed more often than not, but regarded each one as a lesson in writing. I improved as I learned to use only the characters necessary for the story. The most common unnecessary word I deleted was the word "that".

It hurt me to delete punctuation but I did so where the meaning wasn't affected. I also learned to depend on the Twitter essentials of acronyms, abbreviations, and the use of symbols. These shortcuts left more characters available to use for the story.

It became a personal challenge to reduce or expand [the story to exactly 280 characters](#). Silly, maybe, but it helped to not rush the story. Making the best use possible of 280 characters permits more opportunities to be imaginative.

Do you, [Mrs. Mary](#) always look for prompts, or you just prefer the challenge?

I'm not always faithful to particular prompts. When I see one that is new and needs some support, I might follow it for that reason alone. Also, I often change up the prompts that I respond to when I feel I'm in a rut.

Since the first of January, [I have hosted daily prompts for #LimerickRhyme](#). Last year, someone on Twitter said they'd like to see limericks make a comeback. I researched what they were, various forms, and the history of limericks.

[I began writing a limerick nearly every day](#) for a couple months. As a newbie, I wanted to read limericks from others and maybe encourage others to try this delightful form. So, I started the daily limerick prompts. Still a newbie, I'm not always exacting regarding the traditional limerick pattern and don't expect anyone else to be. For me, limericks are a pleasant, sometimes funny or risqué diversion, not to be taken too seriously.

What's your secret to make such powerful stories in such short letter-span?

To make room for the punch any story needs, [I trim as many unnecessary characters as possible](#). I use adjectives sparingly except when essential to the tone. Something I learned on Twitter was how to throw a curve at the end of the very short story. I found that difficult at first, but the challenge has been rewarding. While I admire those who are able to meld description into a very short story, I'm not among them. I need to aim for the punch.

Oh, and the humour [you put into them is priceless](#)! How you go about in making funny stories?

Some people I know would be shocked that anyone would think I'm funny. I am a Jonathan Winters exterior and a Robin Williams interior, not that I claim the comedic talent of either one. I'm literally funny only in my own mind. Only a few years ago, that humor found its way to paper.

As a kid, I re-wrote comedy sit-coms in my head and sometimes laughed in my sleep so loudly that I woke up my siblings. As for humorous writing, it was about 20 years ago that I learned to deal with anger [through writing humor](#). I came home from an employer I hated in a small town I hated and banged out a few chapters that made me (and others since then) laugh out loud. That novel is still unfinished and someday ...

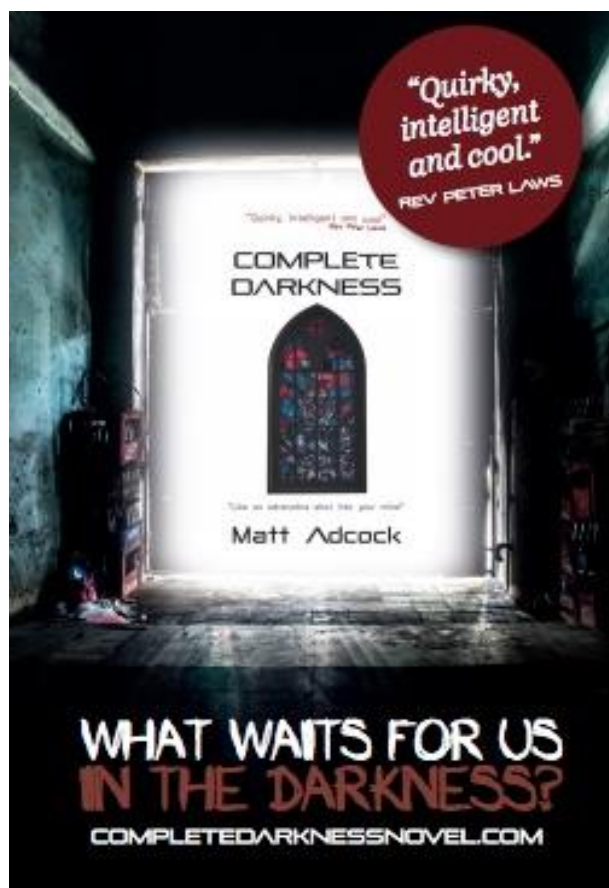
Since then, I have had an on and off interest in learning to write humor. The book *The Humor Code* by a psychologist and a journalist is a funny and instructive book that I read a few years ago. There are several other titles about writing humor on my to-be-read list.

Hopefully, after I've read those, I'll be able to tell you how I write funny stories. There are some who know how to write funny stories and are also able to explain the process. I'm not included in that list either. I

should add that comedy writing can be learned and improved upon. Do you know the funniest letter in the alphabet? It's K. Seriously.

From your writing experience, could you leave us with one lesson when it comes to writing you wish you learned sooner ?

If I have one lesson to pass on, it is this: write daily, even if it is only 280 characters. It will convince you that you really are a writer.



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The King of Destructive Plot Twists, Steven McKinnon!

Welcome Steven! Thank you so much for being here with us, we know that you are a very busy man. So please, do tell us a little about yourself and your writing career.

Thanks for having me, Julio! [I'm](#) a Glasgow-born indie author of the action-packed fantasy trilogy [The Raincatcher's Ballad](#). The final book is about to land and I'm strangely calm about it. That'll change...

Ok, you are NOT one writer that is [ALWAYS on twitter](#) posting, and, from the impression that we get is that you are 100% focused on writing your [AMAZING, heart-stopping, mind-twisting and gorish books](#). So, do tell us about your methods and writing mentality that help you achieve THAT level of sharpness on your writings.

Haha, thanks! I might not always post [on Twitter](#) but I often lurk – probably too much...

As for writing, I like an early start. When drafting, I get up at 5am and get cracking. 20-minute writing sprints get the creative juices flowing. There's something special about getting up before the rest of the world has awoken and cranking the words out while it's still dark outside. It's fun, and I think that's key. Sure, there's plenty of stumbles along the way, but if I'm not having fun overall with a project, then I look



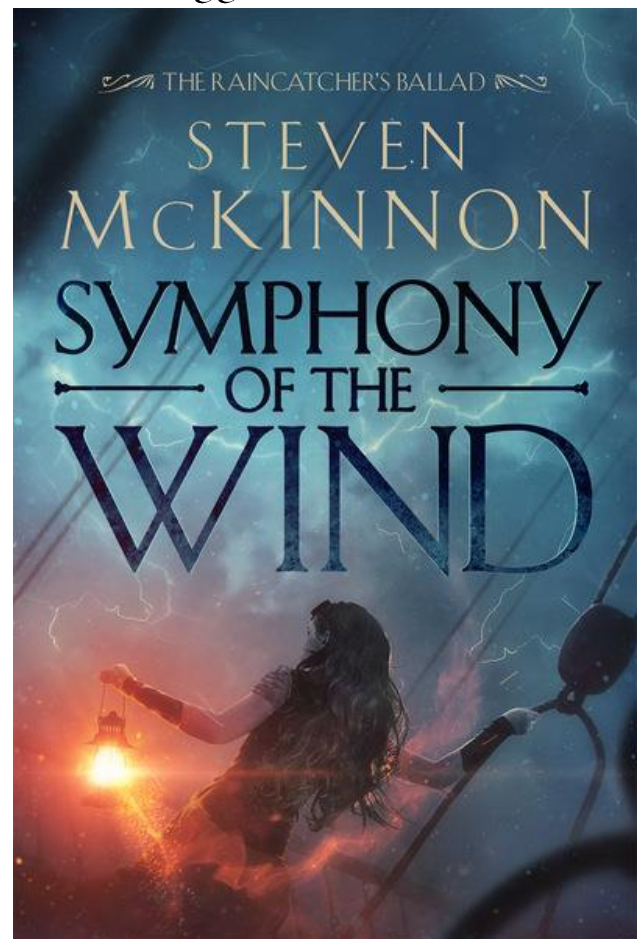
back and figure out where I've gone wrong. Often cutting a large portion of text is the cathartic kick up the ass a writer needs to progress!

Given that we [have reviewed the 3 books of this series](#), we have HIGH expectations for "[The Choir Of the Damned](#)", and we are confident that it will be a blast! But, before we go there, could you tell us a little about each book and how they came to be?

Oh, man, I hope it lives up to those expectations! And thank you for taking the time to [review the series thus far](#) – book bloggers are the unsung heroes of the publishing world.

The first book in the series is [Symphony of the Wind – \(Review here\)](#) – this book was selected as a finalist in [Mark Lawrence's Self-Published Fantasy Blog-Off](#), - and won the [Scribble's Worth 2019 Book Of the Year Award](#) - an incredible (and surprising) milestone in my career. I'm still amazed by it, to be honest.

This was my first foray into fiction and the story grew and grew, becoming much larger than I'd initially planned, but it was also a lot of fun uncovering the world and facets of the characters I didn't know existed. The main character, Serena, popped into my head fully-formed. The series is really her coming-of-age tale.

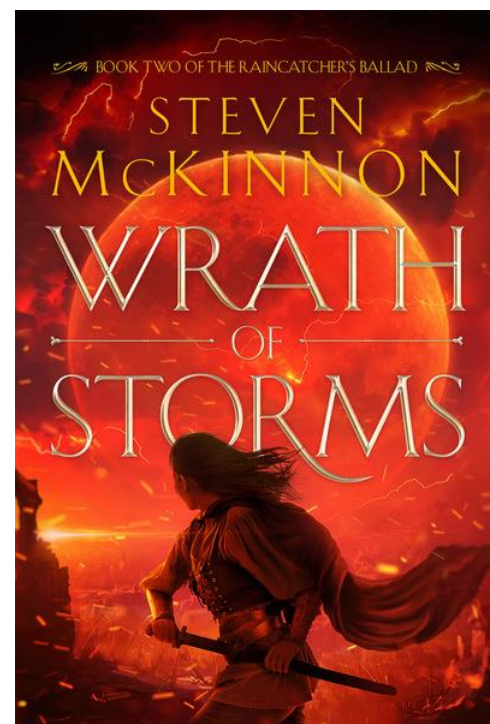




The Fury Yet To Come -([Review here](#))- is a short prequel written at the same time as *Symphony*. It focuses on Tyson Gallows and his time as a soldier prior to the events of Book 1. He kind of ends up as Serena's brother-figure. I like a bit of found-family dynamics in fiction, so I wanted to explore that in this series.

Book 2, *Wrath of Storms* -([Review here](#))-, came together a bit more quickly. Though it's Serena's series, I knew I

wanted to shift the focus away from Gallows and onto Damien in this one, as there are interesting parallels between him and Serena and the capacity for destruction they both share. So we get much more of his back-story and the motivations behind his darker side. We also delve a bit deeper into Serena's lineage and the lore of the world, which sets us up nicely for [Choir of the Damned...](#)



WHERE did this series come from? Did you simply wake up and wanted to write books about... well, everything?

Serena was a character I'd thought of around 2010 (although the character was unnamed at that time). I had a few notes on a world that was overcome with pollution and disaster, and the only way to get fresh water was from rainfall. So, there's this crew of roughneck labourers who work long hours in dangerous conditions to provide for a world that doesn't give them the credit they deserve, and then they have an apprentice orphan who's still idealistic and sees the beauty of the open

sky and the romance of being spirited away to different parts of the world. She eventually became Serena.

That had been rolling around my head for a while. I also wanted to write a high-octane action story, one that had the visceral action-packed entertainment of an *Uncharted* video game with the gritty edge of *Die Hard*. I'd say *Uncharted* and *Firefly* are the two primary influences on this series, with a dash of *Raiders of the Lost Ark* and *Final Fantasy*.

[These books](#) have all that one can think of and MUCH more. I mean, there are ninjas, assassins, golems, wraiths, zombies, plagues, bullets, magic, gay people, pirates, mad scientists, prostitutes, corruption, Buzz Titangus, drugs, schools, lighting spires, weather modification tech, nuclear weapons, sword fighting, and above all, EXPLOSIONS! So... please tell us, how can you *constantly* increase the levels of thriller in these books?!! It seems like there are no limits to the action and emotions in there.



There's certainly a lot going on! The theme of each individual book is the governing factor for everything else – that's what informs *how* and *why* I put each character through an emotional ringer. Once I figure that how, I think about how to highlight a facet of the world-building and make it entertaining for the reader. Everything else crops up from there.

You are THE SUPREME RULER of plot twists. So... HOW?! How can you put so many plot twists in a single book?! We must know.

High praise! I don't know, I always figure readers see where I'm going when I put in revelations. I guess it's related to my answer above. If the character needs to learn a revelation or plot detail, it's worth considering the most fun way to deliver that information. As well as a healthy dose of left-field surprises that come out of nowhere – just like real life.

These books are long, I mean, VERY long. How can you keep the plot consistent throughout? That must be VERY challenging. Do you have a method?

I think of a theme and then an arc for each character. There's plot stuff in the back of my mind, but it's the character arcs and the lessons they need to learn that dictate the rest. [The books](#) are long – longer than I originally planned – but I hope the pace makes it feel like they pass in a flash.

It actually does feel like that. So, Steven, how do you eliminate plot-holes. I mean, we have read your books back and forth but not even ONE plot-hole is there. How do you do it?

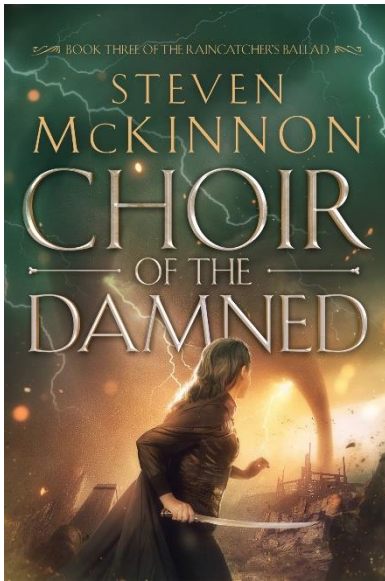
Oh man, I'm always wary of that in case there's something I've missed. I recently combed through [Wrath of Storms](#) to triple-check Serena's inventory of a certain item she found in Book 2... I'm sure there's a plot hole or two lurking in the trilogy that I haven't noticed.

The depth of the characters. Your characters are simply breath-takingly deep, solid and colorful, and it hurts us whenever you kill one, and you DO hurt us a lot in your books. So, how do you go around with the construction of your characters?

Thanks! The characters are the best part of any story. They breathe life into it. Like I said before, theme is essential in recruiting the cast of

the story, and developing the main players' character arcs is essential in recruiting a supporting cast. The world-building informs the characters and their experiences, too.

So, what can we expect from "[The Choir of the Damned](#)"? Tell us about your newest book, please.



In the words of Doctor Strange, we're in the endgame now. Serena and her friends have come through a lot, and Serena know where her nemesis lurks – but getting there to confront them is going to be a challenge...

We can expect to see new corners of the world, one or two familiar faces and a ton of action. Fun!

Thank you SO MUCH for being here with us Steven, we look forward in reviewing your book and promoting it to the world. Can't wait.

My pleasure!



Join [Steven's Newsletter](#) and get your FREE full copy of the first book, the [Fury Yet To Come](#), and Join the Raincatcher's Guild!



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