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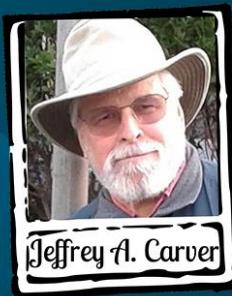
Ashleigh Bonner

The
Research Pro



Marie Powell

The
Sci-Fi Legend



Jeffrey A. Carver



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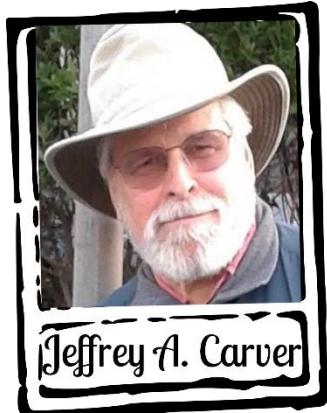
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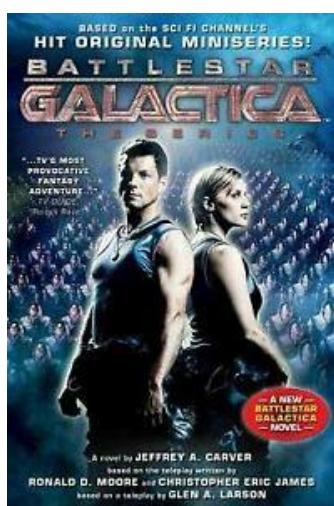
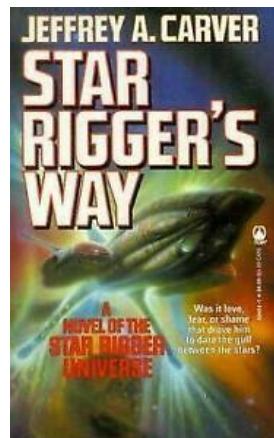
Jeffrey A. Carver on Writing Well

Welcome, Mr. Carver! Would you care to introduce yourself and your work to our readers?

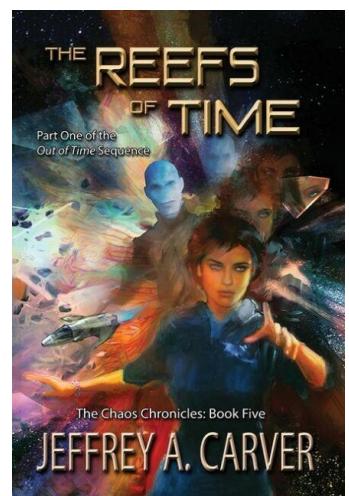


Thank you. It's good to be here. [I'm an American SF writer, mainly of novels](#), though I have written some short fiction, as well. I grew up in the town of Huron, Ohio, situated between Cleveland and Sandusky, the latter being known as the home of the roller coaster-filled amusement park, Cedar Point. I moved to New England to attend Brown University, and have lived now in the Boston area for a number of decades.

My first novel, [Seas of Ernathe](#), was published in 1976 following a couple of short story sales. That established in book form my [Star Rigger Universe](#), in which I have written and played for half a dozen novels, [including Eternity's End](#), which was a finalist for the Nebula Award.



I've written [a number of standalone and tie-in novels](#), including the novelization of the [SyFy Channel's Battlestar Galactica: the Miniseries](#). More recently, I have focused on another series, [The Chaos Chronicles](#). My recently-published duology, [The Reefs of Time](#) and [Crucible of Time](#) are books five and six in that story. Some people call my work *hard SF*; some people call it space opera; some people call it character-driven science fiction. I am happiest in the borderland among those characterizations.



I have been published by Tor, Bantam, Dell, the Science Fiction Book Club, and as an indie writer. I am currently working as an indie writer, but that's always subject to change.

In our review of “[The Reefs of Time](#)”, we loved how smoothly the narrative flowed. Do you have tips for aspiring writers about how to maintain good pacing in a narrative?

That's something that comes with experience. It's important for every writer—whether working freehand or from a close outline—to be conscious of whether and how every chapter (every scene!) advances the story. If it doesn't, it probably needs to be reworked. Or cut. I do a lot of cutting and reworking between my first drafts and my finished books. Writing is rewriting.

Story structure is a hard thing to learn, and books are written about it. But think of story structure as the skeleton of a story. If there's no structure, a story just goes limp like a beached jellyfish.

How do you create characters with depth and clear personalities?

So many things go into creating characters. Every person you've ever talked to, worked with, fought with, loved, hated, lived with, or read about in the news is raw material for creating your own characters. You have to spend time with them, thinking about them. You have to *pay attention to who they are as they grow* on the page, how they talk, how they think and act.

Some writers create entire biographies of their characters before they even start writing. I don't. I can't. I discover my characters as my stories unfold. I let them guide me. I let my subconscious guide me, my intuition. My way isn't necessarily *the* best way, and certainly not the only way. All writers discover their own way to do this.

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You sound like you've spent time teaching and working with aspiring writers. Have you?

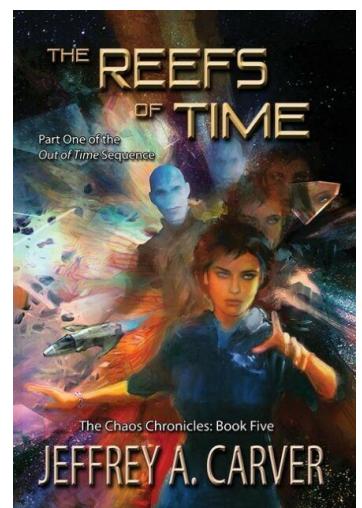
Oh yes. I've worked with middle-school kids on satellite TV (before cable and the internet). I've worked with high-school kids at the New England Young Writers Conference. I've worked with college students at MIT. I've worked with adult writers at Odyssey Workshop and my own writing workshops. Much of my [advice for beginning writers is available for free online here](#). (The publishing advice there needs updating, mumble mumble, but the writing advice never gets outdated.)

What's the most important piece of advice you would give to a new writer?

Read widely. Study the work of other writers. And write, write, write. Don't set out to write the "great Terran novel." Set out to tell an interesting story and tell it well. Expect to rewrite a lot. (Be kind to yourself and let your first drafts be crappy without self-recrimination. Everyone writes crappy first drafts. Most people, anyway. I sure do. That's why rewriting was invented.)

We notice that you've written many long books. Thoughts on that?

Well, yeah. And I'm a slow writer. Really slow. So logically, I should write short books, right? But something in my hindbrain doesn't think up stories that make short books. I don't *plan* to write long novels. They just come out that way. My last, [The Reefs of Time](#), took eleven years to write. When it was finished, it was so long I split it into two long



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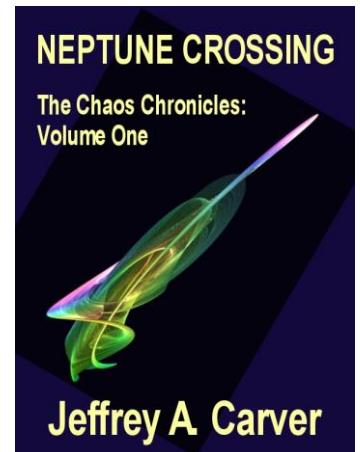
parts, the second part being [*Crucible of Time*](#). They are one story, in two volumes.

If you can write short books, go for it.

Series of books are a good way to deal with telling a long story, by breaking it into multiple parts.

Which of your books would you recommend to new readers?

If you like hard SF and space stories with interesting characters and fun aliens, and a sense of humor, try [*The Chaos Chronicles*](#). The first title is [*Neptune Crossing*](#). But if you want to start with the newest work, you can jump into [*The Reefs of Time*](#) – [SW review Here](#) – without reading the books before, since I provided short synopses of the books that came before.



If you lean a little more toward fantasy, but still science fiction, try the [*Star Rigger books*](#). A good one to start with is [*Dragons in the Stars*](#) and its sequel, [*Dragon Rigger*](#). Probably my most accomplished with in that universe is [*Eternity's End*](#). Except for the dragon books, you can read the Star Rigger books in any order you like.

Nearly all of my books are available in audiobook, by the way, many narrated by the amazing and award-winning Stefan Rudnicki. Visit your favorite audiobookstore – [Audible](#) // [Audiobooks.com](#) – to find them.

Where can readers learn more about you and your work?

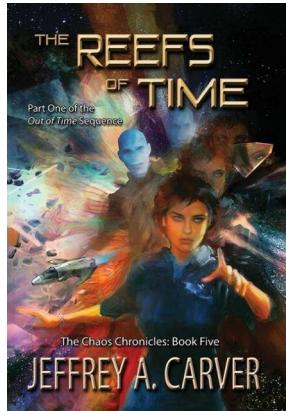
By all means, visit [my website here](#). Information, buy links, interviews, all kinds of material there. Stop in and say hi!

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Thank you, Jeffrey A. Carver!

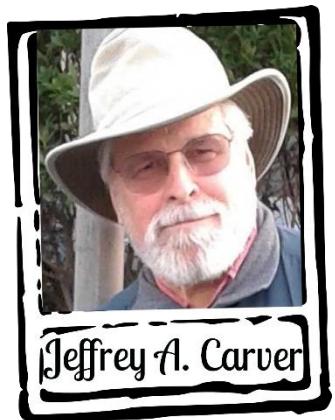
It's been a pleasure!



Jeffrey A. Carver is the author of eighteen science fiction novels, including—just published!—[The Reefs of Time](#) – [Reviewed by us here](#) - and [Crucible of Time](#) of [The Chaos Chronicles Series](#). Carver is a member of SFWA, and the highly regarded author cooperative Book View Café.

Visit [Carver and his blog](#), or his free guide for aspiring authors of all ages [here](#)

A native of Huron, Ohio, he lives with his family in the Boston area, his greatest love remains character, story, and a healthy sense of wonder.



Jeffrey A. Carver

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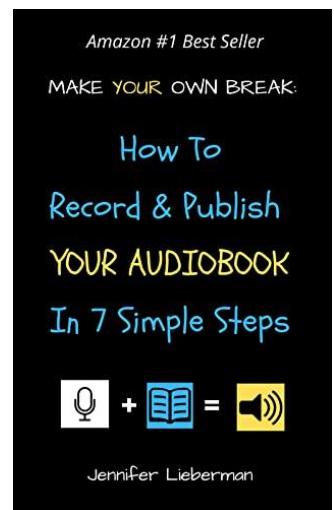
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“How to Record and Publish Your Own Audiobook in 7 Simple Steps” By Jennifer Lieberman

Audiobooks are one of the most popular forms of experiencing a book, one of the most accessed and bought formats of books because of the convenience that they allow readers to have.

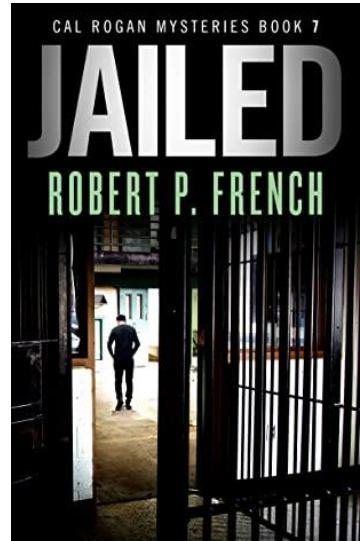
Organized in a very simple and practical way, this short guide is a solid crash-course for all of those who want to make their own audiobook but have no clue whatsoever on where to start.

Book score: 9.5/10 // Get your copy on [Amazon](#) // [Full Review Here](#)



“Jailed” by Robert P. French

High tension, *jail-style high tension*, gives us a heart-stopping introduction to the 7th book in the [Cal Rogan Mystery series](#), as we are presented to a 6 feet tall man with a gang that wants a piece of Micah, but doesn't get it because he is friends with another gang leader that is as muscled as one can be and he is standing right beside him, which almost causes a violent altercation. Why does the giant want a piece of Micah, if he is just a skinny kid that has never seen jail in his life? We are yet to find out because apparently, Micah, was wrongfully convicted and is doing jail in one of the harshest prison facilities in Canada, and the whole situation looks like a set-up.



Book Score: 8.8/10

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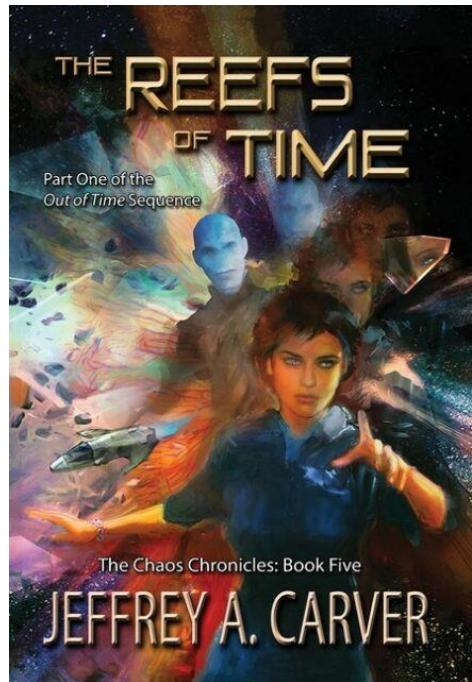
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“The Reefs of Time” by Jeffrey A Carver



The narration is perfect, with a great pace, and the introduction of the actual story is very well made, making us, the readers become engaged with the plot and the characters with ease, even if we haven't read the previous four book. The imagery on this great book is suggestive, being accurately descriptive but leaving room for the reader to take its own conclusions and put much of its own imagination on the book as the story develops with its consistent, deliberate pace.

The emotions of the characters are very well displayed in the interactions that occur, and the author can and does show the inner struggles of characters with ease that makes us readers understand, relate and feel the weight of such pains and joys, the doubts and fears in our own selves which makes the whole book even more intriguing.

The mystery and the amount of secrets inside the book is enticing, with questions growing and answers that take time to appear, as our characters try to work around the reason why are they being sent to several deadly missions and yet, not being acknowledge by anyone once they complete them, and we as readers are as clueless as the characters. Very nice.

Book score: 8.5/10

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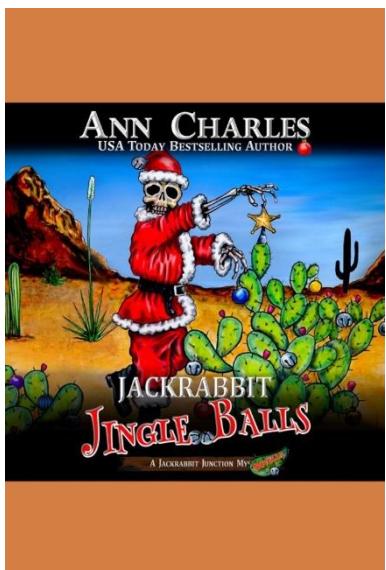
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“Jackrabbit Jingle Balls” by Ann Charles



[Ann Charles](#) packs some serious, priceless humour, both in the titles of her collections and in the narrative and a very pleasant read awaits us on this short-story, part of the Jackrabbit Junction Mystery Series

This chapter of the series, focuses on the theme of divorce and marital issues, mixed with an insanely crazy, odd and humorous family dynamics with some thriller and suspense spice. This novella is a gem.

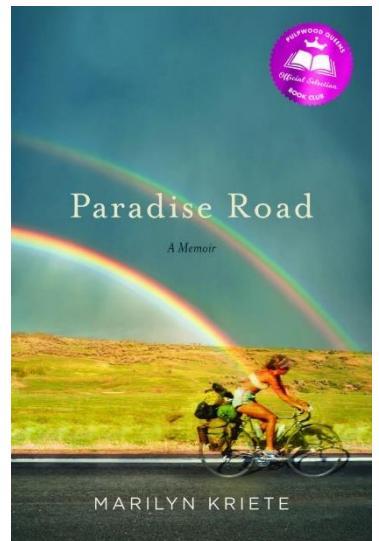
Book score: 8.5/10

Available at [Author's Page](#) // [Amazon](#) // [Barnes&Noble](#)
Listen to the [Podcast Review](#) // [Full review here](#)

“Paradise Road” by Marilyn Kriete

It's fascinating how easy it is the read this memoir, the narrative just flows as [Marilyn](#) tells about her friendships and the wild adventures of exploring basements, the occult, rivers and creeks, as both herself and her friends wanted to grow up as fast as possible and become “admirable and beautiful”, with such adventures somehow, and funny enough, turning into the pursuit of LSD and acid.

With a healthy, quite light, dose of sarcasm the stories flow and keep a smile on your face, when the atmosphere is light enough, and the fact that you rise and fall with the mood of the book is a sure telling sign of how engaging this memoir is.



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Book Score: 8.0/10

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Listen to the quick [Podcast Review](#)

[Full review here](#)

“Remember, No Matter What; Chin Up, Tits Out” by Miranda OH



What was the first thought that crossed your mind when you read the part: “Chin Up, Tits Out” ? That’s exactly why we loved this book from the first moment. The image of determination and self-confidence in women.

The fast pace of this book makes it even more engaging as this love story progresses, the “living young wild and free” attitude that makes everything is possible makes itself more solid after the turn of each page. As readers, we don’t expect it to end, and it seems like there is no going down from this crazy ride of love and possibilities! It’s super nice.

Book Score: 7.8/10

Get your copy of this great book on: [Author's Page](#) // [Google Books](#) // [Barnes&Noble](#) // [Abebooks](#)

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“Research & Writing” with Marie Powell!



Marie Powell

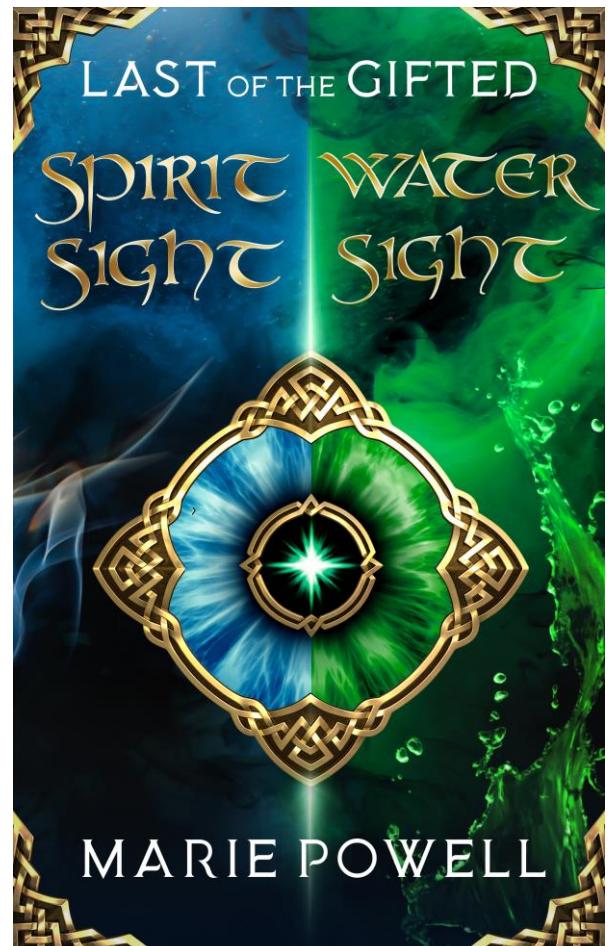
Marie, thank [you once again](#) for joining us. We are great fans of your books.

Thanks for the opportunity! And I'm glad to hear you've enjoyed the books.

In your books, the [Last of the Gifted Series](#), we the readers could feel the amount of research put in each book, and it really made the difference. How can writers go about when it comes to doing research for their books?

Yes, I did mountains of research for [these books](#)! And there are a lot of sources that writers can tap when it comes to research. [Last of the Gifted](#) is set in a real place and time: northern Wales in 1282-1283. It's a historical fantasy, telling the tale of two siblings who pledge their magical gifts to protect their people from the ruthless army of Edward I (aka Longshanks), with help from the last true Prince of Wales—after his murder! So, research was an important component.

I found great details and information in books, websites, footnotes, bibliographies from willing university scholars and professors, YouTube videos, movies, photographs,

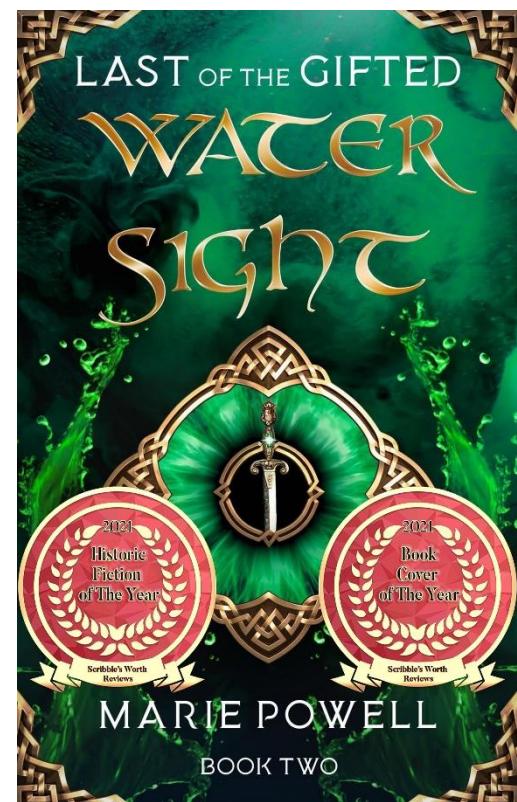


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Google Earth satellite shots, old illustrations and paintings, and strange old tomes on Google Books. As well, I wanted to include legends and myths, so I looked for that on books and websites. For information about the landscape and animal life, I emailed Welsh heritage organizations and scholarly experts. I phoned people to interview them. I travelled to the UK, rented a car, and learned how to navigate in northern England and Wales. Driving on the wrong side of the road, with gears on the wrong side of the car! While there, I stayed on a sheep farm and in a restored 13th Century wattle-and-daub cottage and tried to visit and photograph as many castles and ruins as I could. I used a hand-held recorder to record bird and animal calls, and the sound of the rivers as I was walking along them. Of course, I photographed everything I could find, from locations to placards at historical sites. I took a Welsh language class at Nant Gwrtheyrn, a medieval cooking class through Durham University and Blackfriar's Restaurant in north England, and a medieval history course from my historical editor Daniele Cybulskie (aka the *Five-Minute Medievalist*). And it isn't over yet, because now I'm researching a spin-off series also set in north Wales in the following year.

Your books have several fantasy elements, although they are historic fiction. In your opinion, Do you think that even fantasy writers should mind their research?

Absolutely! Fantasy world-building needs a strong foundation to help readers understand the differences between our world and the story-world. So it's important to consider how the story-world



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works: its social structures, political influences, physical landscapes that affect the characters, and biological aspects like what types of creatures inhabit your world, how they live, how they move, and so on.

I think it helps readers understand the story better if we can find ways to contrast that story world to the physical world of the reader.

When it comes to keeping the writing disciplines up, can you suggest things writers can do to put down more words "into paper"?

It's important to write every day, although I don't have a set routine. I'm lucky to be part of a wonderful community of writers, The Creative Academy for Writers, and that helps a lot. As they say, it's not really possible to make or find time, so we have to schedule time to write and be determined to make it happen.

I have heard of writers who use dictation as well, but for me it's either by hand in a notebook or by typing the words into my laptop. I actually write at my kitchen table, with my cat on her special blanket beside me. It's a habit I started years ago, as a single parent raising two little kids, and I still do it. I think you have to fit writing in as a natural part of your day. Plus, I take breaks during the day to look out the window, stretch, or grab a coffee, and I try to go for a walk or do some exercise at least once a day. But for the rest of the time, I write.

Marie, thank you so much for being with us, and before we leave, we do have a question: Will we have another book for the series, or are you preparing another series completely?

Yes and no! I'm working on a spin-off series called the *Chronicles of Meirionnydd*, which will bring the characters from

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Last of the Gifted into the following year, after the devastating war. I want to explore the way the Welsh survived this conflict with their language and culture intact. Their rural way of life was changed completely, and Edward and his followers had to build 13 huge stone castles around this tiny country to keep the Welsh subjugated. So I want to delve into those stories of survival and determination. Also this year, I've started working on a contemporary thriller that also has the makings of a series. And hopefully, I'll come up with some more ideas as the year goes on!



Marie Powell

Marie Powell's adventures in castle-hopping across North Wales to explore her family roots resulted in the YA Fantasy series *Last of the Gifted*: [Spirit Sight \(Book 1\)](#) and [Water Sight \(Book 2\)](#), from Wood Dragon Books.

Marie is the author of more than 40 children's books with such publishers as Amicus, Scholastic Canada, Crabtree, Lerner/Lightning Bolt, and more. Her award-winning short stories and poetry appear in such literary magazines as *subTerrain* and *Room*. Among other degrees, she holds a Master of Fine Arts (MFA) in Creative Writing from the University of British Columbia (UBC). The author lives on Treaty 4 land in Regina, Saskatchewan. Marie is represented by Creative Edge Publicity. Find her at mariepowell.ca



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“Writing, From The Editor’s Eye” with Ashleigh Bonner

Welcome to our E-mag, Ashleigh! It’s so cool to have you with us! Would you introduce yourself to those who don’t know you or your work?

Hey, awesome people! My name is Ashleigh Bonner, and I’m a [professional book editor](#), sci-fi author. I’ve been writing for nine years, editing fiction and non-fiction, including web-content for five, and reading dystopian sci-fi forever, especially centered on Black characters and people.

As an author, I’m working on the final edits of my debut sci-fi novel, *The Price of a Beating Heart*, and then sending it to my editor. Yup, I’m an editor with an editor. All right, enough about me, let’s talk about editing.

[As an experienced editor](#), what are the most common pitfalls for writers, Ashleigh? Where do writers tend to make mistakes most easily?

These are great questions.

First, writing is a complex process. There are many areas writers can have difficulties with, but through revisions, they can fix these issues.

A writer’s pitfalls depend on which type of editing their manuscript receives. There are many types of editing, and each one looks at different aspects of the manuscript.



My specialty is developmental editing, the big-picture critique of an author's manuscript that improves the story's structure, pacing, character development, and more.

So, I'll tell you the most common problems I see in three of the four services I offer: developmental editing, line editing, copyediting, and proofreading.

Developmental Editing

- **Lack of cohesion**

- The story's events—or emotional arcs—don't flow logically; the story's hard to follow.

- **No conflict**

- Nothing's keeping the character from their goal.

- **Uninteresting characters**

- The characters lack personalities, or they don't have enough real-time reactions, thoughts, and emotions.

- **Severe underwriting**

- The story is too big for the current word count.

- **Showing vs. telling**

- Events, relationships, emotions, dialogue, etc., are told, not shown.

Note: *Sometimes*, telling is useful for the story, but it depends on what kind of scene you're writing. Showing is better, as you want to immerse your readers in the world.

Second note: In the past, overwriting was an issue, but often I get manuscripts that need to add tens of thousands of words, which can be terrifying for writers to hear.

A developmental edit may be the hardest edit authors go through, but it's where you mold the manuscript's core into the masterpiece the story will become.

Line Editing

•Monotonous sentences

- These sentences may bore your readers because they don't have varying lengths or word usage.

•Passive voice

- This writing style adds unnecessary words and removes character agency.

•Clichés

- Adding overused and unoriginal phrases weakens your writing.

In my opinion, you can use clichés and passive voice sometimes. But, their usage has to be deliberate. For instance, in real life, people use clichés, so this could be a tiny part of a character's dialogue. I'd avoid using too many clichés, though. You want to put in your unique metaphors and similes, not someone else's.

Create clichés; don't copy them.

Copyedit

•Period or comma misplacement

- Correct: "Mom, I want to go to the store."
 - Most periods and commas go inside of the quotation marks.

•Incorrect capitalization

- Correct: "I want to go to the store, Mom."
 - Because you're talking to your mom, "mom" should be capitalized.
- Correct: "Where did my dad go?"
 - Because you're talking about your dad, "dad" should be lowercase.

- Correct: “I love you,” she said.
 - When you use a speech tag (“said,” “asked”), end the dialogue with a comma, not a period.
 - The pronouns (“she,” “he,” etc.) should be lowercase.
- Correct: “I adore you.” She scratched her elbow.
 - When body language comes after dialogue, end with a period.
 - Capitalize the pronoun.

2.1. From an editor’s perspective, how can writers improve?

Okay! How to improve. There are many ways to fix these issues, and they differ from writer to writer. So, I’m not offering universal answers, and I don’t believe anyone has them.

For me, seeing improvements are the best part of being an editor. I love watching a manuscript transform from a sand castle to marble.

Developmental Editing

•Lack of cohesion

- Outline your book—or emotional arcs—to improve the story’s flow and remove confusion.
 - Some people don’t benefit from outlining, so for them, getting outside readers, like alpha or beta readers, may be their next best step.
- Add context. Make sure you set up scenes before jumping into them.
- Listen to your manuscript using speech-to-text software.
- Record yourself reading it aloud.

•No conflict

- Add external conflict
 - Brainstorm antagonists, events, and societal rules that will stop your character from reaching their goal.
 - Whenever your character's close to their goal, either move it further away or hurl something in their way.
- Add internal conflict
 - Guilt, regret, self-hatred, or a moral dilemma are some excellent go-tos.
- Add microtension
 - This tension is subtle and simmers throughout your book. Donald Maas recommends that you put it on each line. For my books, I add tons of microtension on each page. Definitely up to you.
- Don't be afraid to make your characters miserable; they're not real.

•Uninteresting characters

- Some people write character sheets that list their characters' personality traits, likes, dislikes, fears, desires, and more.
- Other writers like to discover their characters as they create, think about their fears, and immerse themselves in their world and emotions. These authors may have conversations with their characters or roleplay.
 - Either way, it's essential to make sure your character changes, moves the plot forward, reacts to events, expresses emotions, and makes decisions. But, some characters don't change by the end of the book. Lol. These are guidelines, not rules.

•Severe underwriting

- While some authors can tell when their story isn't working, some can't. For them, underwriting can only be detected when someone else points it out.
 - Readers may say your story is missing context, confusing, filled with dull characters, emotionally uninteresting, or suffering scenes that are moving too fast. The last problem is a sign you're telling too much and not showing enough.
 - Pinpoint what's missing and fill in the gaps to fix this issue. Both steps take time.

•Showing vs. telling

- When editing a manuscript, I suggest writers pretend they're watching a movie, then describe it in words.
 - How would you show character movements, gestures, and facial expressions if your readers had their eyes closed?
 - For emotions, how would you describe sadness, happiness, fear, love, or resentment to a robot?
 - Which original similes and metaphors can you use to convey your characters' environments, desires, and fears?
- One of your goals is to yank your readers from the real world and immerse them in your book world. It's near impossible to do that if you're telling what's happening. Describe. Emote. Show.

Line Editing

•Monotonous sentences

- Avoid starting too many sentences with the same word, especially pronouns.
- Use short and long sentences.

- Listen to your piece aloud to hear the character's voice. Every voice has a personality, and you can get to know it better by varying your sentence length and trying new words.

•Passive voice

- The majority of the time, use the active voice.
 - For example, "The apple was eaten by Janae" vs. "Janae ate the apple." The second sentence makes it clear that the subject, Janae, did something.

•Clichés

- Avoid these worn-down phrases and story tropes. They need a break; they're exhausted.
- Watch out for personal clichés. We all have them.

What can a writer expect from an editor when editing a book? Is it just grammar, or can one expect to have the plot inspected and corrected as well?

Most people believe editing only encompasses grammar. Nope, that's not the case at all! There are many types of editing, and they go in stages, depending on what your book needs.

Between editing stages are author revisions. So, if someone tells you they can do every type of editing in one round, find a different editor.

There are lots of us.

Note: Your novel may not need every stage. And yet, sometimes, your book may need another round of the same edit. This additional round often happens with developmental editing, as it's important to make sure your story's structure is in its final form before moving forward.

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While more editing rounds aren't mandatory, later edits will be a waste of money if you continue with a broken core, as you'll need to overwrite edits to mend the shaky story.

So, if you're getting a developmental edit, do as many rounds as needed to make sure your story's core is solid. Then go to the next stage.

..... More about these little aspects [on the original, extended interview](#) version...

Can you talk a little more about your specialty as an editor? Do you have a niche?

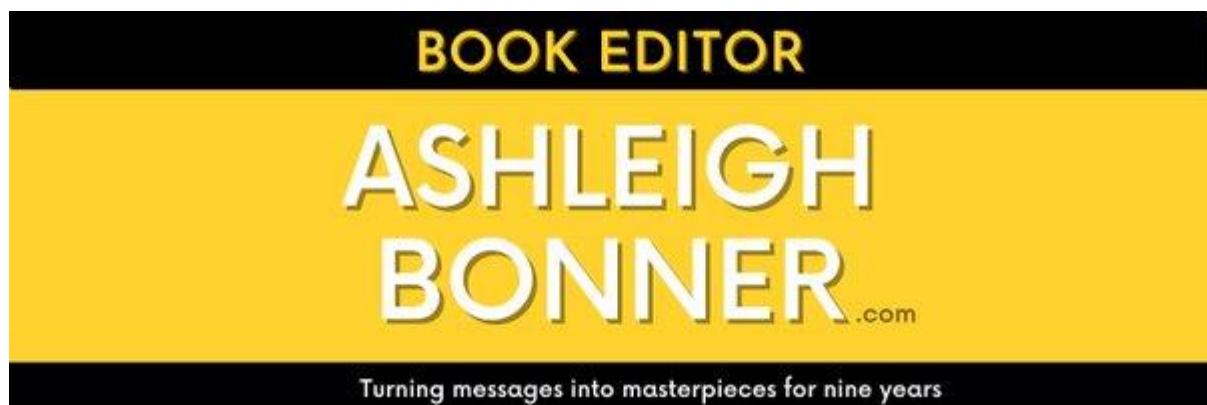
I'm well-versed in the types of editing above, but my specialty is developmental editing of Sci-fi, but I edit most genres, except historical non-fiction, children's books and academic works.

Where can writers find you and your services?

I have a few spaces on the internet, but I spend most of my time as a bird on Twitter.

It's my greatest pleasure to offer authors developmental editing, line editing, copyediting, proofreading, and copywriting.

You can find me at my [Website](#) | [Services and rates](#) | [Twitter](#) | [Other links](#) |



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I hope this information was helpful. Please know I'm wishing you so much success with your books, and here are a few free resources that will help you on your writing!

Resources

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