



Writing as a Sanctuary



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Writing refuge in New Orleans, with K. E. Robinson

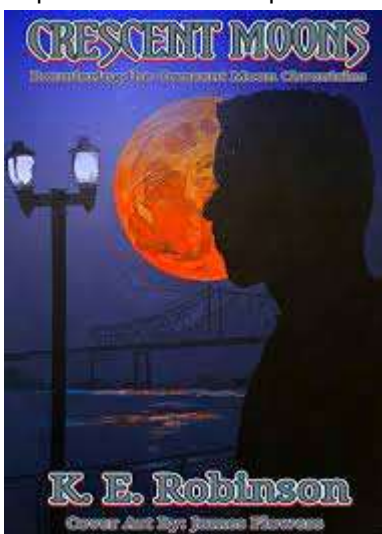
Welcome to our E-mag Robinson! It's a pleasure to have such a great writer with us here. For those who don't know you yet, can you tell us a little about you and your career?



Hello to all of you Scribble's Worth subscribers and readers! [I am K.E. Robinson](#), the author and architect of the Crime Adventure Thriller Series known as "[The Crescent Moon Chronicles](#)" as well as the host of [The Authors Spot Podcast](#).

"Mystery in Mactown" what a great book of yours, and the previous was also good, but before we go deep into them, I want to ask you this: how much did these books help you personally by writing them?

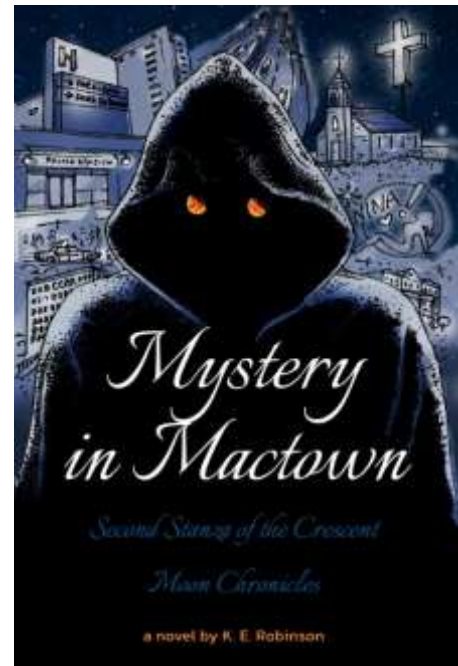
As a creative, writing [these books](#) helped me to express things that I was never able to express before. It allowed me to place thoughts, themes, and scenarios [into a story](#) form that would allow others to ponder things I previously pondered on my own.



Even if I played devil's advocate in some of the dialogue or narrated something I personally did not agree with, it challenged me to look from the other side of the table and attempt to understand it from a different perspective.

As a writer, how has this activity helped you so far? Maybe dealing with some dark moments in life?

Believe it or not writing has helped me in a multitude of ways. I wrote the first book because I honestly wanted to put something in the atmosphere that represented the place I was from for the main event attraction that it should be. Writing the second book pushed me to try to write a better book than the first while at the same time saving me from some personal distractions. Writing [that second book](#) was an escape from my day to day by giving me an outlet and a place to focus my attention.



Have you ever seen it as a go-to therapy when it comes to stress or anxiety?

Writing is definitely an outlet. Think about it! How many places can you go where you are completely in control of the possible outcomes? Even with having children and raising them, you cannot guarantee what path they will take because there is always a chance of outside influences making their way onto the scene. As a writer, you can navigate the narrative however you want to fit whatever you want. Even if a good portion of the story imitates a segment of life, you are able to change the outcome for whatever purpose you desire.

True, true. Robinson, have you ever had that "thing" in your stomach, that you wanted to describe but didn't know how and you had to write it out to find out, or is it just me who has these bugs?

You are not alone my friend! LOL! This desire to write is exactly why [I encourage aspiring authors](#) to just write down what is given to you.

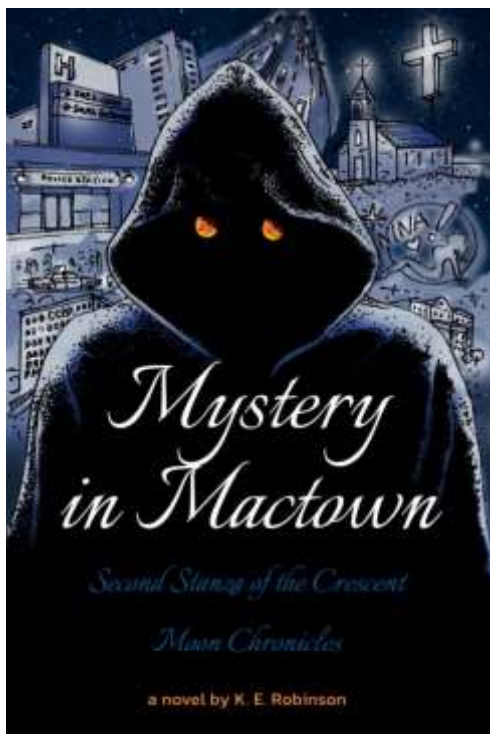
There are mornings I may wake up with a scenario or a piece of a poem in my head; **IT's GOT TO GET WRITTEN DOWN!** *Too many times* I've *thought* I would remember every great idea I came across and many times I have been wrong. These anecdotes we receive in passing are an opportunity, a blessing, and eventually a curse *if* we let them slip away.



Well said! Our theme in this E-mag is Writing as a Sanctuary. Did writing your series feel like being in one, or can you relate to this when it comes to having written your books?

Writing allows you to put yourself into an entirely different universe, specifically if you are writing fiction. If you are planning to have any accuracy in your fiction series, you need to have your characters and their backgrounds crisp and detailed in a way that you either remember it or have it written down because there will be that one reader who will call you out! It has not happened to me yet but

when writing [the second book](#), I referred back to [the first](#) many times because even the smallest details have to be continued for the sake of consistency. Putting that much effort into a book makes it a world of its own and even as a writer you can become engulfed in it.

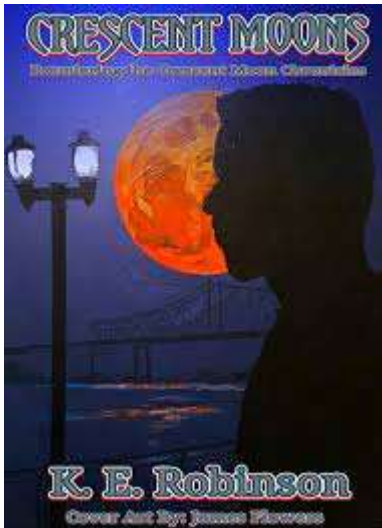


They have a lot of New Orleans into them, and a lot of drama along with the scares. Weird question: Was it a relief to put those little details on paper?

It absolutely was a relief to place the Greater New Orleans areas and lingo into the books. It was my full intention to draw people into the parts of [Crescent City](#) that they may not be aware of as well as the culture. Yes, there are some elements that are more

commonly known but I felt there were some necessary evils that needed to be surfaced. You can pay for gas, a plane ticket, and a hotel to come get the experience or [you can pay roughly \\$30 for two books that will get you deeply engulfed in the culture.](#) The choice is yours.

Which scenes of the books you had to "unloaded" a little bit of yourself into?



In "[Crescent Moons: Premiering the Crescent Moon Chronicles](#)" there is a scene where Julissa and Renaldo are at dinner and they are discussing possible names for their child. When Julissa expresses her reasons behind her opposition of naming a child after an ancestor, that was more of my reasoning coming out.

Through both books, the emphasis on the court scenes, especially the movements of the attorneys and witnesses is drawn from my experiences of working in courts for multiple years. None of the scenes I wrote come from actual cases but the chess game between the opposing sides is overdrawn because that is how intense court hearings are in my mind.

Does it help with the rawness of the scenes? The drama? And if so, which drama part are better for one to pour his emotions into, the romantic-drama, or the dramatic-drama?

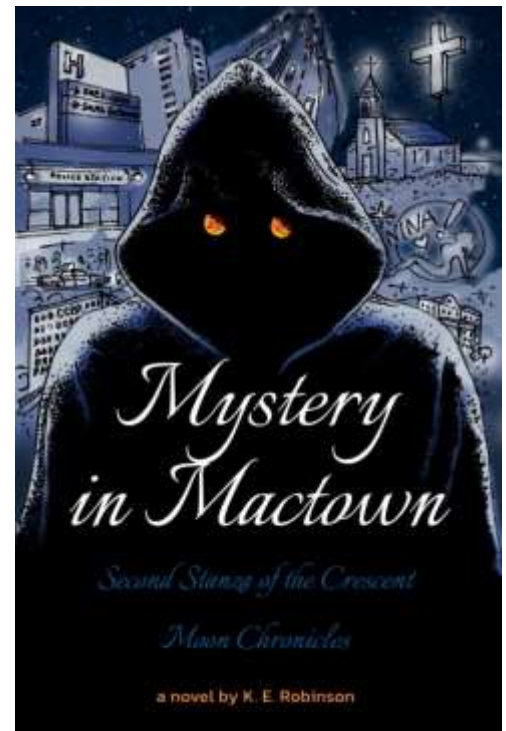
Being able to draw on certain experiences and emotions does absolutely help with the rawness of scenes. Even if those scenes don't fit exactly what you may have experienced, being able to tailor some details to fit the feeling allows that emotion to stay in tact while you are allowed to focus on making sure the reader is allowed to experience that emotion first hand.

Whether it is romantic-drama or dramatic-drama, there is always a feeling or a situation that someone else may be able to resonate with,

even if it is not a play-by-play repeat of what situation they experienced that the feeling is tied to. I am not a fan of drama in my personal life but I'd be lying if I didn't say that it may be the preferred choice of entertainment regarding television shows, books, or other forms of entertainment media.

Your books, [and specially the second](#), touch a lot on the supernatural and the suspense. How could you make readers gasp in shock? Does touching one's fears help in provoking fears in others?

The [second book](#) was meant to be darker and more emotional because it was far more *personal*. A lot of what scares us is the things we don't know and with so much being [revealed in the second book that lingered from the first](#), there was plenty of shock value to be exchanged. The [initial book](#) had it's own revelations and the third book itself will answer some questions that have been on the back burner. If a book is not teaching you something, I hope it is at least provoking thought and/or emotion, if not both.



Could you share your favourite scene with us?

My favorite scene of the series, thus far, is the scene at Nina's in ["Mystery in Mactown"](#). I absolutely love that bartender and her flirtatiously comedic lines. She has plenty of them in [the first book](#) and even in her less than pleased demeanor in [the second book](#) she still finds a way to be endearingly hilarious.

Robinson, before we go, we want to know some comments readers of your books made, so we can have an idea of how good they are.

In regards to ["Crescent Moons Premiering the Crescent Moon Chronicles"](#) people have stated:

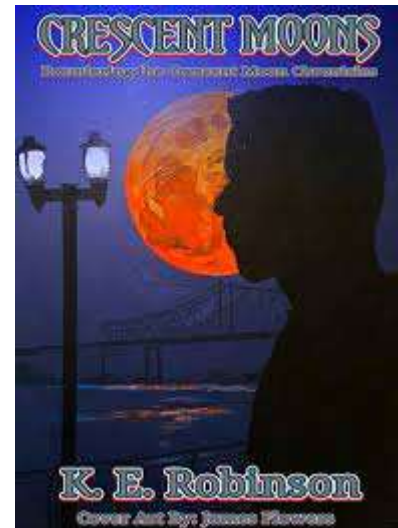
Scribble's Worth

Book Reviews—

- "This book gave me more than I ever expected it would. It is a crime drama, a relationship whirlwind, a sci-fi thriller, but it's still so real you forget you are reading fiction."

- "A great read- well written with nuanced storylines that take the reader out of the gripping tale to ponder the lived experiences of those similar to its protagonist."

- "In "[Crescent Moons](#)" author K.E Robinson demonstrates his ability to shape words into sharp storytelling. His characters are very well defined, the dialogue sharp, descriptive and to the point."

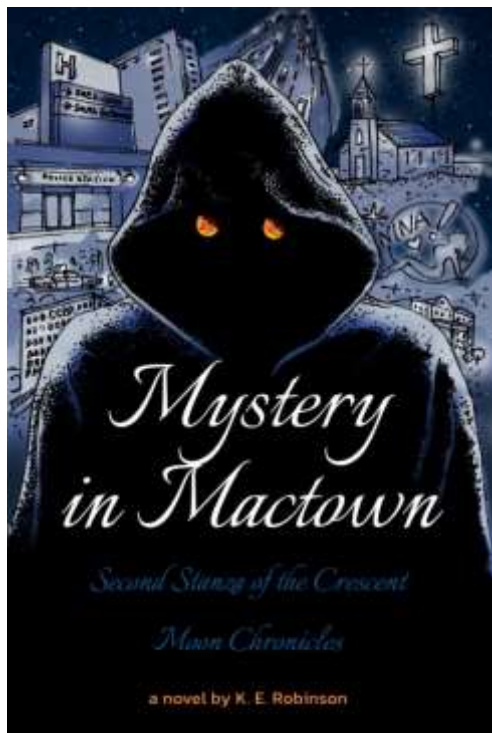


Regarding "[Mystery in Mactown](#)"

- "I was [ready for the second book](#) and it is amazing and does not disappoint!!"

- "[This book](#) is the perfect concoction of a gripping, creepy, page-turning murder mystery story. The author does a phenomenal job of keeping the reader in suspense and incorporating just the right amount of character development, which has the reader still wondering."

- "I must say that while reading this book, I kept thinking that it would make an excellent graphic novel!"



What are the type of people that will love your books?

Believe it or not, there are all kinds of people who have loved the books so far. People who have experienced the Crescent City area for themselves as well as those who have experienced parts of the culture in small doses. I only remember maybe a few people who were not fans of it, one person who lived somewhere in the Midwest and

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another who was not a fan of the first book due to what they thought were “grammatical errors”. Well, can't please everyone. Those who will find themselves enthralled with these titles are those who enjoy Crime Books, Adventure, Thriller, Mystery or all around drama.

Where can people get your books? And where can people interact with you?

I am glad you asked that. Regarding "*Crescent Moons: Premiering the Crescent Moon Chronicles*" it can be found [on Amazon in Paperback or Kindle forms](#). "*Mystery in Mactown*" can be found online at all major book distributors [to include Amazon](#), Barnes and Nobles, Target, Walmart, Books-A-Million, etc. Also, each book and my blogs are available on my website www.robinsonianexhibit.com. You can received signed and stamped copies of each book directly from me on the website.

Thank you so much for being here with us Robinson, and thank you for writing such awesome books. Cheers!

Thank you all so much for having me man. I am always ready to collaborate with [Scribbles Worth Book Reviews' Team](#). You guys do a bang up job in everything y'all do!!

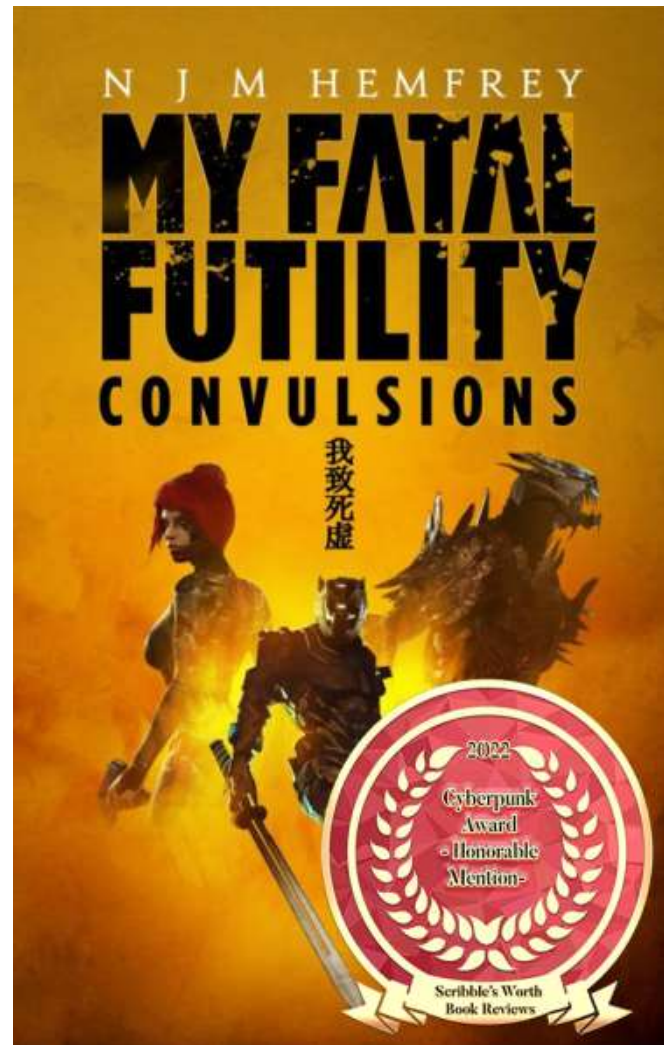


[My Fatal Futility Convulsions](#) by [Neil Hemfrey](#)

The philosophical beauty of the plot that made us fall in love with this series is still there, and very much a big part of it, not only in plot but in dialogue. Once again, we have to say that you will learn a LOT from reading just a few [pages of this book](#). Important, yet, seemingly trivial distinctions of words, concepts and explanations of attitudes that will enrich this book and mark it on a class with very few books of the same calibre.

Oh, yes, the lessons of violence are STILL very much a backbone of [this book](#), and yes, all readers should aim and aid to that, if not implement them in their lives, and NO, I'm not saying that we should murder each other like the many scenes here show, but we should all re-evaluate and ponder the concepts of violence presented on this book, *which are very true*, and compare them against what we are taught in society and measure its effects on our lives. WE need more individuals that master violence and themselves, and if you [read and understand this book](#), you will know why I am saying this.

One has to truly appreciate the seemingly undying rivalry between Kage and Hayami, and to the point that you might just ask yourself: ***"Do these two love each other and Kage doesn't know it yet?"*** Because it **sure** seems so. The way Hayami kind of... teases, if not *expects* Kage to fight her, and the way she talks to him, and at



times reacts sadly to his actions, are intriguing, and really makes you think twice about the whole relationship and dynamics between the two. We knew, that Hayami was Kage's enemy, yes, but this was on

the previous book, *on this one*, that position was **clearly** challenged. Not only that, if you remember the last scene of fighting between the two on the last book you will see that Hayami didn't want this to end like it did, and to this point is trying to tell Kage a story that he himself doesn't want to believe, but, is Hayami telling the truth?

SO! If you haven't read the first book of the series, PLEASE read the [review to the book](#), in order to give you pretty clear idea of what to expect of this mind-twisting, brutal, unmerciful story, by Neil Hemfrey. IF you have read the first book *and survived*, and have taken a break (maybe rehab too), take a breather, ease yourself, and ...

roll with this [punch of a book](#). Cheers! See you on book three!



Book Score: 9.4/10

Get your book on [Amazon UK](#) & [US](#)

Written In Blood

[A collection of poems](#) ranging from romance and coming of age tales to socio-political commentary, [Written in Blood](#) is a work that describes the world as is and the world that could be. With commentary not seen since the days of the Last Poets, Gil Scott Heron and the Watts Prophets, the author takes their spirit and style and adapts it to modern times. [A collection](#) that you will want to come back to again and again.

Get your copy [here](#).



No Rain In The Desert

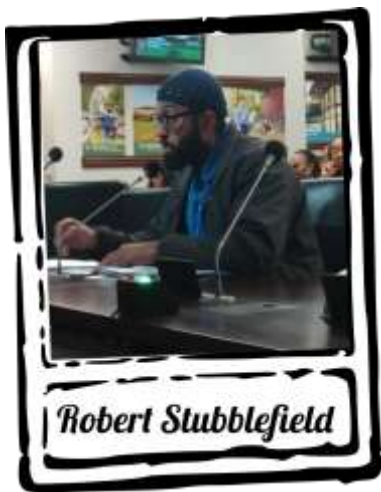


The awaited follow up to Written in Blood, picking up from where it left off. [No Rain In the Desert](#) is stronger in it's commentary on socio-political issues of what will happen if things don't change for the better. Words on love, lust and dreams appear, to provide a glimpse of a better world if we work for it now, reflecting the author's experiences, dreams and hopes.

Get your book [here](#)

Poetry, a sanctuary for writers and activists, with Robert Stubblefield!

Robert, welcome to the E-mag! It's great to have you here, not only as an Award-Winning Writer, but also as a valued member of the Writing Community on Twitter. Can you please introduce yourself for those who would like to know more about you?



Thank you for having me. My name is Robert and I am the third of four children and I started writing when I was younger around seven years old. I have also been an activist and **organizer since I was twelve and I'm currently** working on my CPA certification and when not fighting the power, I can be found exercising, painting or being around friends and family.

Robert, you are an activist, can you share how this position in your life affect your writing?

So being an activist affects [my writing](#) by observing and writing what is going on so not only is there a record but also something that future generations can read, review and adapt to the situations in their time. In addition writing and activism go hand in hand in the sense that writing is a form of activism in the sense that it can help hold power accountable.



It must be hard to deal with the situations that happen on the US, and have to see it everyday. Does writing help to deal with these situations?

Let me add that anti-blackness is a global phenomenon and so that seeing it every day is necessary because we have to have both an domestic and international lens when fighting for justice, truth, and liberation. That said [writing](#) helps me deal with these situations because it helps relief the stress and it helps me be raw and unfiltered so what the person sees reading it is my soul laid bare.



Can you explain how you feel and how you go about when "downloading" these experience "into paper" ?

Downloading these experiences is powerful, maddening and saddening. Every emotion in the book putting it on paper or typing on screen.

I go about by getting a base of what I want to talk about and then I just let the words flow from there. In a way, it feels as if when writing I am merely a conduit for a higher power to communicate.

Nice! Robert, although you are mostly a poet, you also write essays, so I have to ask. In terms of stress-shedding, and therapeutic effectiveness through expression which one do you feel that is more effective?

For me it is poetry that is very therapeutic in the sense that poetry has a sense of freedom of creativity especially when it comes to creating words.

Did writing ever save your life, or sanity? If so, when and how?

Yes absolutely writing has saved my life and sanity. I battle depression on a regular basis and writing gives me the space to just get my feelings out there.

You are a critical thinker, Robert, allow me to ask this thought question: Why do you think that "writing things off" works in terms of therapy?

Writing things off, *I see what you did there*, is good in the sense of putting your feelings on paper and the relief of letting all your emotions out.

Can people isolate themselves in their writing? I mean, engross themselves so much in it that they forget the world for a good while? Has that ever happened to you?

Yes and yes and that's why at least for me it is important to take breaks so one doesn't lose touch with the world around them.

Another difficult question: Should writers take this experience of "writing to cure themselves", purely as a thing to just do and let go, or should they actively take time to write things to take out the stress instead of just working on their projects?

I would go with the latter because writing, as part of the arts and it is healing by nature and with the pandemic still going on, it has been that art that has helped at least retain some semblance of sanity.

From poet to poet here. Flexibility of language as per genre. Do you think it's easier for people to express things when writing poetry due to it's apparent "lack of rules", or subjectivity? What is your point in this?

I think it is easier for that reason. Poetry allows freedom of expression that comes easier than in other genres like essays. Precisely because of the lack of rules and that it is subjective to the reader. It is open to interpretation.

For those who don't want to write poetry. Can reading more poetry help them feel heard and understood?

Yes because reading poetry and reciting it aloud or quit to oneself can help the reader convey feelings in ways they wouldn't normally be able to.



Scribble's Worth

Book Reviews—

Ok. Your book won the [Scribble's Worth Pick of the Year](#).

Congratulations on that! How do you feel about it?

I feel thankful, grateful [cause No Rain in The Desert](#) was in my opinion more direct than [Written in Blood](#) and the fact that it won Pick of the year says that people were looking for something real and they chose me. I'm still teary eyed about it.

We are making a challenge: Pitch your book to readers in less than 100 words. GO!

[Written in Blood](#) and [No Rain In The Desert](#) speak on liberation, love, light and community. Buy them and open see the hype!!



Before we go, for those who would like to talk to you and read your essays, where can they be found?

My essays can be found on Medium where people can read my essays and comment and react. Here is the link to my page:

<https://medium.com/@rstubb326>

An advice for authors struggling out there?

My advice to authors who are struggling is to keep writing, keep putting yourself out there because you never know where you end up. Host writers' lifts and take pride that you accomplished what most people say they're going to do but don't.

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Do you want to leave a special message for someone reading this? Maybe?
To people reading this, know that I love you and please be
involved in your community wherever you are.

Awesome. Thank you so much for taking the time to answer our questions
Robert, and for leaving us with these great tips! Thank you, and see you on
Twitter!

Anytime and see you soon!!.

*Paint your own life with Rebecca Weber's
magical middle grade debut,*

THE PAINTER'S BUTTERFLY!



*A young foster child discovers a magic easel
that brings paintings to life and learns the true
meaning of family and home.*

What if art could come alive and guide you home? Twelve-year-old foster child Nova longs to find her one true home. When jealousy of her art ability upends her **most cherished placement**, Nova's **dropped in the middle of nowhere** to live with painter Mr. Russell in his ramshackle farmhouse. While exploring, Nova sneaks into the attic and discovers a magical easel that brings paintings to life. She puts her art skills to the test and gets caught in a whirlwind adventure, complete with rainbow butterflies, a devious leprechaun, and a journey to the rainforest. Following the magic, Nova stumbles upon an underground cellar that houses a startling secret. **She's forced to choose:** escape to a prior foster home, or mend her relationship with Mr. Russell. Nova makes a dangerous mistake when she strikes a match of revenge. She must survive the inferno to learn the true meaning of home.



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"Kent looks at me, lips tilted up in

a real smile. I think my heart just stopped beating.

- Susie"

"While I more than deserve the sentence, it's one I'm not strong enough to carry. "

- Kent

I am more sorry than you'll ever know about what I did, but I can't go to your celebration. I don't belong there. Not anymore." - Susie

Susie is a domestic violence survivor. When she married Matt, she thought she was getting the American Dream. She didn't realize until it was too late, that what she got was the exact opposite. She didn't escape unscathed.

Kent came home from Afghanistan with more guilt than anyone should ever carry alone. He was the only member of his unit to come home. Survivor's Guilt weighs on even the strongest. It certainly weighed on Kent.

Their first meeting isn't exactly a meet-cute. They rub each other the wrong way. Their romance isn't easy, nor sweet. It's hard, gritty. The traumas they've survived have made them stronger. They've fought for themselves, now they'll have to fight for each other. After all, sometimes even soul mates have to fight for the good stuff.

Lean [more about the book here](#)

Character therapy with Ryan Cipriani

Ryan, you are back from a hiatus, a social media hiatus. Can you tell us a little about that and why you decided to do so?



Hey, Julio and Scribble's Worth readers! Thank you so much [for having me back!](#)

Yes, I am returning from a three month break from social media. At the time, NaNoWriMo was just getting started and I was connected with an awesome group of writers, but in the background my personal journey was struggling. I alluded to it when I paused my [newsletter](#) and [daily podcast/vlogs in October](#). A relationship that was deeply important to me was struggling, and I felt that my energy, focus and heart needed to be in that relationship entirely while we tried to heal it. We were not able to. We parted in mid November and I was shattered. In many ways I still am. I went home for a while to spend time with family, only to return to my apartment in Tennessee and find that it had water coming in after the freezing storms, and I ended up having to move. I was exhausted and I was heartbroken. The last thing I wanted to do at the time was try to be big and vocal and outspoken in the writing community because my confidence was crumbled and I was in pain. So I logged off and walked away for a while to focus on myself, my own mental health, and most importantly: [my writing](#).

Did you write a lot while you where logged off?

[Writing](#) is where I always return to when I am struggling. Of course I write when I am not struggling, too! [I always write!](#) But it takes on more importance and is given even greater priority when I'm

in a dark place. I'll cast off other interests like video games or chess or music, and put my entire focus into writing. And I certainly did that while I was off social media. I am halfway through the manuscript for a new novel that I began after my breakup, and I am still halfway through the project I began for NaNoWriMo. On my current pace, I should have both completed by mid February, which would be an exciting way to start the year. I am anxious to return to querying and publishing, and these new works feel like the spark of a wonderful new period for my writing. TL;DR- yeah, I wrote while I was logged off. [I wrote a lot.](#)

To the topic. We are talking about how writing can be a sanctuary for writers, a sort of therapy. Can you relate to this, and if so, how?

Writers, [especially speculative fiction writers like me](#) who love horror and fantasy and sci fi, often get accused of wanting to run off to other worlds as cope instead of dealing with the problems of the real world right in front of them. I think this is an entirely unfair characterization of the **incredible** healing power of writing.

Using myself as an example, I never stopped showing up for work, or making my bed, or paying my bills or any of those **'real world'** things during my breakup. And I spent time trying to get to the root of the collapse of my relationship. I dealt with life just fine. Writing provided me a means of escape where I could *rest* from the real world.

Everyone has something like this. Some people work on cars, some people go to the gym, some people knit- but some of us write. Writing gives us a place to go where, *if only because we write the rules*, the little worlds we create make sense. I think when my mind is in chaos, writing introduces and maintains order and helps me steady myself. It absolutely **is** a sanctuary. And it is a place that I can explore the things bothering me in an abstract way.

For example, I wrote [Krög: the Battle Prince's stories](#) as a reaction to a personal experience. Back in my 20s, I was a heavy metal guitar player, and I uprooted myself from a great group of friends and



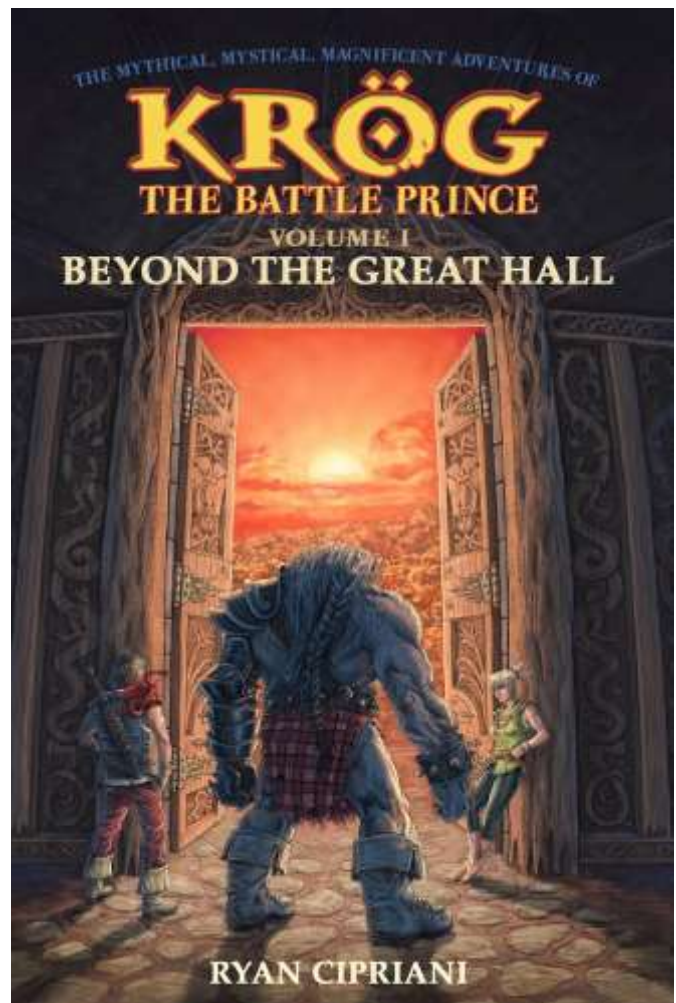
vibrant life to go to Los Angeles and try and make it as a rockstar. When I eventually moved back, I thought I would plunge right back into my old life, but instead I found that my friends had all moved on and the world I came back to was entirely **different. That's growing up, that's life.** But it was a shock to me as a young twenty-something who had never experienced that. So I started writing a story about a wandering barbarian prince who strikes out into the world to seek adventure, only to find that when he returns home, his kingdom has changed and it no longer remembers who he is.

Writing helped me understand what I was feeling, and move forward. And it gave me a safe, and ultimately productive, space to explore that feeling.

Stress or anxiety? Which one is better dealt with the act of writing?

This is a tough question. My vote is going to be stress. I think **because when I am truly anxious, I can't always focus enough to write. When I'm anxious I definitely retreat to other practices like vigorous exercise- somewhere that I can vent all that excess nervous energy out. When I'm stressed, I'm more likely to want to hole up somewhere and just be away from the world.** Which, for me, is an ideal time to write.

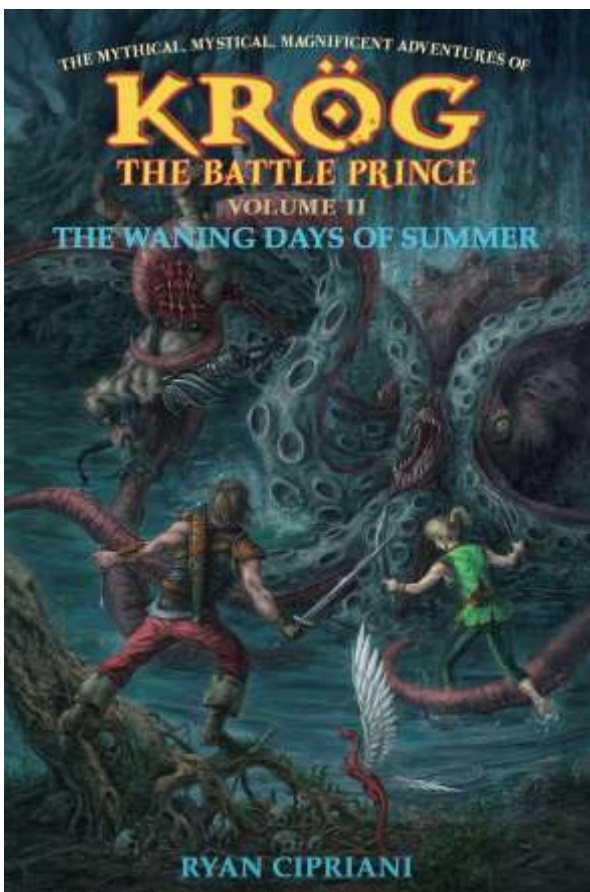
To be clear, this is how I experience stress and anxiety, and **there's no perfect solution for everyone.** I just know that when I am anxious, I want to move. When I am stressed, I want to be still. When I want to be still, my best use of time is writing.



From your point of view, and experience, how should writers use writing to shed their weights for a bit?

In my experience, there are two ways to approach this.

One, you can confront your weights head on. If there is something heavy you are dealing with and you don't know how to approach it, write about a hero who goes out and slays a dragon (literally or metaphorically). Again, this is akin to how I wrote [Krög's saga](#). It was a direct reaction and reflection of my own struggles. I did not shy away from what I was struggling with, but [instead I wrote it into a grand metaphor](#). Krög's wanderings were my wanderings.



His battles were reflections of my own inner conflict. Even some of the villains in his story exhibited traits that were parallel to things I was uncomfortable with in my life, and in that way, I could cut them down one by one as I dealt with them in 'the real world.'

The other way to approach this is to get as far away from your weight as you possibly can. I'm currently working on a science fiction thought piece that explores the philosophy of great discoveries and their impact on mankind. Most of it takes place on Phobos, a moon of Mars, and Titan, a moon of Saturn. Far, far away from Earth.

Because my mind did not want to be here. I wanted to fly a starship across the great gulfs of darkness to someplace where my heartbreak couldn't bother me. Obviously, it doesn't work that way. But by having a completely alternate place to escape to, I gave myself space to come down off the pains of my breakup so that when I stepped away from the keyboard, I was ready again to address those struggles.

It can be difficult to write, when you feel... exhausted. So, how can writers find the courage, or motivation to write when they feel like that?

Life *is* exhausting. This world is exhausting. We live in particularly exhausting times as far as culture goes. Exhaustion *is* real.

Sometime in my late 20s, *though*, I realized I was waking up every single day tired, no matter how much sleep I had gotten the night before. I was doing everything right. Eating right, exercising regularly, keeping a consistent sleep schedule, but the gradual exhaustion of just being... alive was catching up to me. So I made a commitment to myself: if I'm going to always be tired, then I'm going to be always doing things tired. I couldn't stop doing things.

In the years that followed, *at various times*, I took up ballroom dancing, boxing, axe throwing, obstacle course races, went skydiving a few times, and most importantly for this article, wrote a dozen novels. I kept doing things. And I was tired for all of it, haha.

Okay, but seriously. This is a tough one because there is not an easy answer here. And there's really no definite answer. All I can give is my take.

In my experience, motivation and courage are choices. You're not brave if you face the dragon and you were never scared in the first place- *you just were never really afraid of that thing*. You have to **choose** to be brave. And I really believe you have to choose to be motivated. Motivation is something that can be practiced. I write every day because I write every day. I choose to be motivated and finish my works.

There are some days I wake up and say 'nope, don't have it today,' but I write anyway. And it's bad writing, haha! But I wrote. And it keeps the practice and the habit so that even when I'm tired, I still write. Even when I'm afraid that what is going to come off the keyboard is garbage, *I still* write. It's like I always say: don't try to write just right, *just* write.



You said that you are back to the social medias, and I want to ask you, how effective was this writing therapy of yours? How were you feeling before and how are you feeling now?

I'm definitely coming back feeling more focused, but also more liberated. There are a lot of things I've chosen not to speak out about on social media because I was afraid of what people might think of me, but I'm definitely returning with an expectation of being more outspoken and more involved in some of the communities that are important to me.

I also know that I was spreading myself really thin and I need to get back to having a narrower focus, but bigger impact. Something I am really excited to start on is instead of doing daily [newsletters and podcasting](#), instead doing more thought deep pieces and writing and recording long form video essays about writing and writing culture. **I'm currently scripting my first, which will be a critical examination of a book I read while on hiatus "The Night Land." It's something I never would have considered six months ago because the time involved in its creation would have felt like it was taking away from my daily content output. I still want to find a way [to add daily value to the writing community](#), but I definitely want to start experimenting with content that goes deeper than I have been.**

It's kind of funny that sometimes our best work comes when we are trying to get rid of these stressful feelings. Has that ever happened to you?

Even though I look back on those early writings and there is so much I want to do different, I still consider the saga [of Krög the Battle Prince](#) **my greatest body of work to date. It's my calling card. It's the story I was always meant to create. And it was a direct response to a difficult time in my life. I was stressed and shaken in ways I had never been before. Back then, I was not only grasping for a social circle that was not there anymore, but I was broke after my escapades in Los Angeles, couch hopping because I had nowhere to live and many weeks I was unable to afford groceries. Those struggles all played**



into [Krög's adventures](#). And I wrote it comedically because that was a time in my life I really needed a laugh, too!

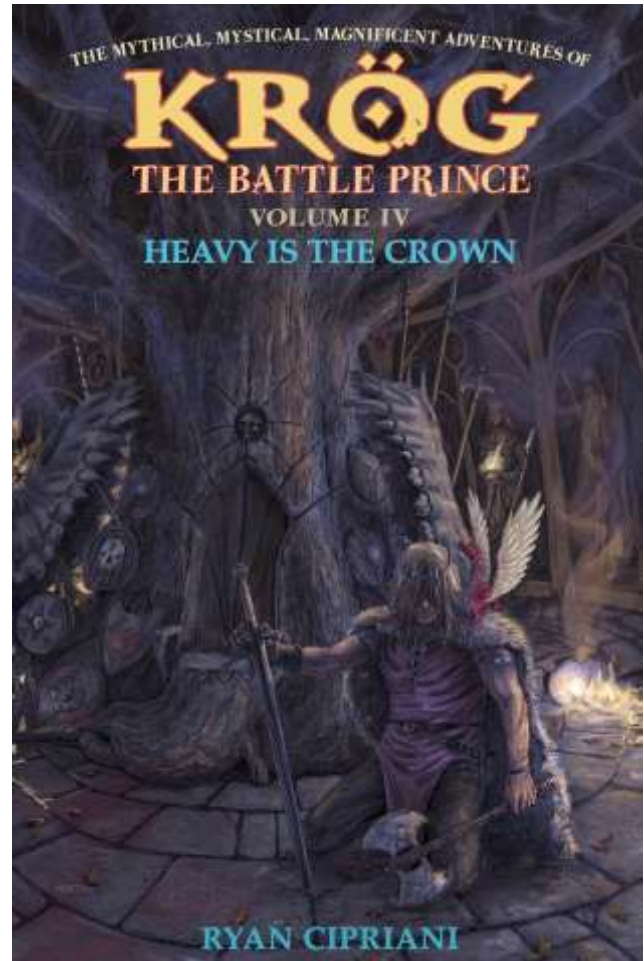
I do wonder how much of that has to do with writers tending to be a more introverted people. Not all are, of course! But writing is such a solitary activity most often, and when introverts especially (like myself) fall on hard times, we are less likely to seek out the company of others. Personally, I know I always isolate myself **for a while when I'm stressed** and need to work through things in my own head on my own time. But during those periods of retreat, [the writing is always there](#), and I have abundant focus and time for it. **Maybe that's part of the reason some writers do great work during difficult periods. Maybe I'm reaching.**

Did Krog ever benefited from these therapy sessions?

Haha, yeah, like I said [Krög](#) was a direct response to difficult times. He would not exist without them. Or, I think he would, but not in the way I created him.

[The character is such a funny creature](#)

amalgamated from the deepest insecurities I could recognize in myself at the time. And, again, putting them down on paper and growing a character through the writing helped me realize pathways to addressing my real life insecurities and stresses. Of course, this was all balanced with seeking outside perspective as well, because like many things we can be too close to our own problems to view them objectively. But the great part about that approach is when someone would suggest new ways to tackle my own obstacles, I could find ways to adapt them into the writing as well! Yes, [Krög](#) very much benefited.



Of course, it did take him [8 books to fully benefit](#), but that's the arc of an epic hero, haha!

You are one of those people that are ALWAYS [telling others how to better write and your discoveries and observations](#) as you write, and that is really amazing. Does making these videos also help? Or they feel like work?

Writing encouragement and guidance is content I am desperate to get back to once my mind settles down a little more. I loved doing that. Even giving imperfect [advice](#). Because ultimately, no one knows the exact right way to write (remember, don't write just right, just write!).

I am working towards making [my daily newsletters](#) and writing tips a little more sustainable so I can get back on pace with them. I'll say this: they never felt like work because of how much I enjoyed the project- but at a time when I needed to put my head and heart into my faltering relationship, I definitely realized how much energy they were taking. And it was energy I needed to redirect. [I love telling people how awesome writing is](#), and reminding them how awesome THEIR writing is. That's not work. That's just groovy.

A little bit off the topic here, are people checking your books more often as a result of these videos?

[Krög](#) is starting to rustle out of his slumber a little bit. I can't tell if it is directly related to the videos and vlogs, or what's going on, but I'm seeing new reviews pop up, a few people have reached out to tell me about it, and I get occasional nudges from Amazon saying another copy has sold. All of it makes me realize that I was probably on to something, I just needed to get it together and be a little more organized with it all. With the turning of the new year, I'm back to focusing on how to [bring Krög to a larger audience](#).

To whit, however: my videos - TikTok: @TheGrimSkald -and [newsletter](#) were never aimed at *selling* Krög to people. They were strictly for the purpose of teaching, encouraging and hyping writers. I



think the world needs more writers. I [definitely want more people to read Krög's series](#) because there is a great story in it, but keeping that push siloed from amping up other writers is important to me. I don't want people coming [to my newsletter](#) or vlog and feeling like they're just being sold on something. I want them to come to it and be like "heck yeah! I wanna write something now!"

Back to the topic, has writing ever saved your life in some manner?

There have been times in my life where it has felt like all I have is my writing. I remember thinking at one point that if the house I was staying in burned down and all my belongings inside were gone, as long as I had my computer with me, everything would be okay.

More than anything, what writing has helped me is to be more *engaged* with my life. Great adventures are wonderful to write about- **but they're even better to have. And by going out and being in the world and seeing it and touching it and interacting with it, your own writing gets infinitely better.** Even if it is a solo adventure- going for a hike through the mountains or a drive across the country on your own- you pick up new observations and new experiences that you **can apply to your writing.** There's a reason the greatest writers of yesteryear were also so worldly: they went out and saw the world and weaved it into their writing.

Writing teaches me to be more present and involved in my own life. I live with more intention because of writing. In that way, it has saved me from quietly despairing on the couch doom scrolling through social media or something, and reminded me 'if you don't get out there and do *something* you're going to run out of stories to tell.' I have a lot more stories to tell. Thanks to writing.

Before we go, Ryan, what advice would you give to those writers that are afraid of writing by feeling overwhelmed by the world?

This is absolutely my favorite and most frustrating topic, haha!



First. Do not be afraid of the writing. Do not be afraid to do it right or wrong. There is NO. SUCH. THING.

Write. Let your writing help you explore. Write with reckless abandon. **Don't ever, ever, EVER let anyone tell you that you can't** write a book this way, or create a story that way, or that there is an order or a process to write things correctly. There is no such thing as correct writing. Not when it comes to creative writing.

(Quick sidebar: if you want a commercially viable piece, then, yes, there are some things you must do and must not do, but for the purposes of this rant and speaking strictly to artistic creation, there is no wrong writing. There just isn't.)

Stop worrying about your writing and just write it. Just write it! You can't fix or edit or tweak or better writing that doesn't exist! "Bad" writing is just a few edits away from being "good" writing. Nonexistent writing can't be bettered. It doesn't exist. It's nothing. Don't be nothing. You're not nothing. You're a wondrous, vibrant, unbelievable ball of unique experiences and those experiences will help you create amazing writing if you just WRITE.

So that's my first piece of advice. Stop thinking. Start writing. Let your unique author's voice shine through and write, write, write, *and then* write some more.

Second. Being overwhelmed by the world- I get this. I have to give myself pep talks to leave my apartment and just go to the gym some days. The world can be a big, intimidating and mysterious place. So on this I say: go slow. Take it one step at a time. For one week, make your daily adventure a fifteen minute walk around your neighborhood, or city block, or wherever you can walk, and be intentional about your observations. Look closely at whatever there is to look at. Even if it is the vast sky or the little bits of lichen growing between sidewalk cracks. But make yourself go out into the world a little bit and watch, listen, and experience. [I wrote an article about great writers being great observers.](#) So try that.

Then start to expand your circle. Adventure a little further the next week. Go a few extra blocks or find a new neighborhood to walk



around. Then, a week or two later, make your way to a part of the city or countryside you've never been in and see what there is to observe and experience there. Slowly keep pushing your ring of adventure out.

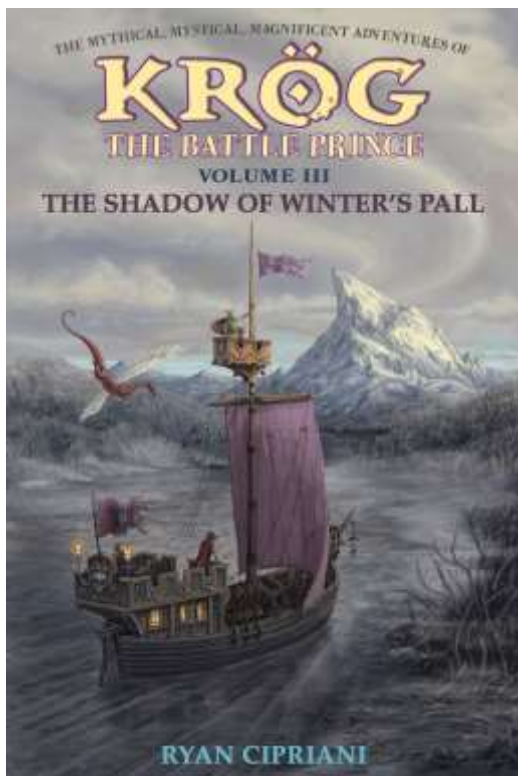
It's never going to stop being overwhelming. But you'll gradually grow more comfortable with going a little further.

An difficult truth of the human experience: *we learn most when we are outside our comfort zones*. I struggle with this daily. **Literally**. I have to put signs around my apartment that say “be audacious” just to get up the courage to reach out into the world. But by pushing beyond my comfort zone, I collect new adventures and experiences to apply to my writing. The world feels overwhelming, I'm right there with you. But to heighten our abilities, we must be willing to be a little overwhelmed sometimes. Not too overwhelmed! But a little bit.

A challenge: Pitch any of your books in less than 100 words, to readers. Go!

You know I can't be brief! That's my biggest weakness! Haha!

Okay, let me try:



The wind is singing. The horizon is calling. The world is waiting. And Krög, the Battle Prince... is oversleeping.

Join the junior barbarian on his first adventures as heir to the badlands throne as he trips, stumbles, and fumbles his way through a world that is hostile, horrifying, and undeniably humorous. Whether he's sneaking into a pirate stronghold, or trying to sing a dragon back to sleep, Krög's escapades bring him right to the edge of embarrassing disaster again and again.

One day he'll get it right. If only he can remember where his sword went...

Look, if you're into a humorous take on fantasy that pokes fun at the great epics of old as much as it pays homage to them, [Krög is for you](#). That's probably a better short pitch, haha!

Thank you so much for being here with us Ryan, where can people find you, now that you are back?

Yes! I am going to resume posting on both Instagram and TikTok (Insta @KrogTheBattlePrince TikTok @TheGrimSkald, assuming TikTok does not get banned in the U.S.). I've already started to creep back into [Twitter a bit \(@cipriani_ryan\)](#) but I have to admit it is more overwhelming than I remember. I have plans to resume writing for my [Substack "The Cip Stack,"](#) though this may move to a different platform so if you are interested in my writings on writing, definitely keep an eye on the links I post on Twitter. My videos are going to resume on YouTube as Ryan Cipriani (@RyanCipriani7191) with some new content ideas coming there, too! You can find some information on Krög's adventures at www.krogthebattleprince.com as well as all the books currently available being found on Amazon. And a teaser: I've gotten the rights and permissions to bring back The Lemonade Stand Massacre, a short form pulp fiction site that I was at one time a part of before it crashed and burned. More to come on that later!

Keep in mind I've been out of the stream for a few months, so my return ramp up will be slow, but I will be bringing regular writing content, teaching and encouragement back soon.

I also co-host two podcasts with a fellow writer, Josh Rigdon: "The B-Siders" is a critical examination of very mediocre movies where we humorously tear down the story structure, character arcs and dialogue and discuss why the films weren't better, and "Morning Radio TBD," where we rant and laugh about pop culture, current events, media and some light politicking.



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