

MASTERCLASS:

WRITING IN OTHER PEOPLE'S WORLDS

Writing and Selling Media Tie-in Fiction

with NY Times bestseller JONATHAN MABERRY

Topics covered include in Live Class

- The World of Tie-in Writing and Licensing
- The Novelization and How it Works
- Original Works in Other Worlds
- Short and Long Tie-in Fiction
- Media Tie-in Anthologies
- Media Tie-in Nonfiction
- Comics
- Working with Established License-holders
- Expired Licenses and Why They Can be Career Gold
- Media Tie-in and Comics
- Getting Involved
- Making the Fiction Your Own (while Respecting the License)
- The Edit Process
- Finding Helpful Experts in Key Licenses
- Taking Creative Risks
- Emerging Licenses
- Finding Markets

ALSO IN THIS PACKET:

- Info on the International Association of Media Tie-in Writers
- Info and commentary by noted Media Tie-in Writers
- Sampled Media Tie-in Short Stories

The International Association of Media Tie-in Writers

- Founders: Max Allan Collins and Lee Goldberg
- President: Jonathan Maberry
- Vice President: D.J. Stevenson
- Website: www.iamtw.org

About the IAMTW

Tie-writers and their work are often overlooked and under-appreciated by existing organizations like the Mystery Writers of America, Science Fiction Writers of America, and the Romance Writers of America, even though some of their most respected members work in the field. Tie-ins represent a huge percentage of the books

published each year, they are enormously successful and are widely enjoyed by readers. And yet we have no organization that represents our unique business and professional interests nor acknowledges excellence in our field.

Until now. Until the IAMTW. The name itself is a declaration of pride in what we do: I AM a Tie-in Writer. We say it with pride because we are very proud of what we do and the books we write.

The IAMTW is dedicated to enhancing the professional and public image of tie-in writers...to working with the media to review tie-in novels and publicize their authors...to educating people about who we are and what we do....and to providing a forum for tie-in writers to share information, support one another, and discuss issues relating to our field (via a monthly e-newsletter, our website, and our active yahoo discussion group). Our members include authors active in many other professional writer organizations (MWA, PWA, WGA, SFWA, etc.) and who share their unique perspectives with their fellow tie-in writers.

Every major industry has an award for excellence in their field...not just books, movies, records, and TV shows. Awards are a demonstration that people take pride in their work and strive to constantly do better. Respect from ones peers is important...and, up until now, tie-in writers haven't even been able to enjoy that, despite our impressive sales. Our [Scribe Awards](#) will celebrate excellence in our craft and, at the same time, draw attention to tie-in writers among publishers, booksellers and readers.

Current Officers

Current IAMTW president is [JONATHAN MABERRY](#). Jonathan is a New York Times best-selling and multiple Bram Stoker Award-winning suspense author, editor, tie-in writer, comic book writer, magazine feature writer, playwright, content creator, teacher/lecturer and a familiar, friendly face at genre conferences across the country.

Executive Vice President [D. J. STEVENSON](#) handles the day-to-day management of the organization, including membership, the [Scribe Awards](#), and our social media. She's written twenty-one novels and seventy-seven short stories including for Star Trek and Shadowrun, and essays on Star Trek the Next Generation, Buffy the Vampire Slayer, and Angel.

Founders

The IAMTW was co-founded by Max Allan Collins and Lee Goldberg, who served as Vice-President and President respectively until August 7, 2018.

MAX ALLAN COLLINS, an MWA “Edgar” nominee in both fiction and non-fiction categories, has earned fourteen PWA “Shamus” nominations for his historical thrillers, winning for his Nathan Heller novels, *True Detective* (1983) and *Stolen Away* (1991). His graphic novel *Road to Perdition* is the basis of the Academy Award-winning film starring Tom Hanks; a prose sequel, *Road to Purgatory*, was published by Morrow in 2004. His many comics credits include “Dick Tracy”; “Ms. Tree”; “Batman”; and “CSI: Crime Scene Investigation,” based on the hit TV series for which he has also written video games, jigsaw puzzles, and a USA TODAY-bestselling series of novels. An independent filmmaker in his native Iowa (“Mommy,” “Shades of Noir”), he and his writer wife Barbara frequently collaborate, sometimes under the name Barbara Allan.

LEE GOLDBERG is a two-time “Edgar” nominee whose many TV writing and/or producing credits include *Martial Law*, *Spenser: For Hire*, *Diagnosis Murder*, *The Cosby Mysteries*, *Hunter*, *Nero Wolfe*, *Missing* and *Monk*. He’s also the author of many books, including *My Gun Has Bullets*, *Beyond the Beyond*, *Unsold TV Pilots*, *Successful Television Writing*, *The Walk*, *The Man With The Iron-On Badge*, as well as the *Diagnosis Murder* and *Monk* series of paperback originals.

The book cover features a dark, atmospheric illustration of three characters standing in a library. On the left is a pirate with a large black hat and a beard, holding a pistol. In the center is a man with long hair wearing a full suit of plate armor. On the right is a cat wearing an Egyptian pharaoh's headdress and a decorative collar. The background is filled with bookshelves and a glowing blue archway behind the central figure. The title is written in a stylized, ornate font at the top.

AN ANTHOLOGY OF
DOUBLE TROUBLE
TWO-FISTED TEAM-UPS

EDITED BY
**JONATHAN MABERRY
& KEITH R.A. DeCANDIDO**

Featuring stories by *New York Times* best-selling authors
KEVIN J. ANDERSON • GREG COX • DELILAH S. DAWSON
NANCY HOLDER • DAVID MACK • SCOTT SIGLER • DAYTON WARD
...and a dozen more of the best media tie-in writers in the business!

TURNING THE TIED

INTERNATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF MEDIA TIE-IN WRITERS

MAX ALLAN COLLINS JONATHAN MABERRY YVONNE NAVARRO
WILL MCDERMOTT MARSHEILA ROCKWELL JEFF MARIOTTE
ROBERT E. VARDEMAN WESTON OCHSE STEPHEN D. SULLIVAN
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JONATHAN MABERRY
IAMTW PRESIDENT

EDITED BY
JEAN RABE
ROBERT GREENBERGER

D. J. STEVENSON
IAMTW VICE PRESIDENT

Edited by Lee Goldberg

TIED IN

THE BUSINESS, HISTORY AND
CRAFT OF MEDIA TIE-IN WRITING



NOTE:

The following is information shared by my colleagues in the Media Tie-in business. Each offers a bio, info on how they broke in, tips for writing tie-in fiction, a list of their tie-in works, and social media links.

AARON ROSENBERG

TIPS AND HOW I BROKE IN:

I actually started out in roleplaying games. My friends and I were avid tabletop gamers in college and wrote our own SF game, *Periphery*, which we then printed and sold at GenCon (the country's largest tabletop gaming convention). While there, I took a copy around to other publishers and used it to solicit work. I wound up writing for a few other games, and the following year had several credits to show off, which led to even more work. Some of my game work over the next few years included short fiction snippets as flavor text. From there I got invited to a few tie-in anthologies for various games. That gave me enough fiction credits to pitch novels, especially for properties I was writing in the game industry like *Warhammer* and *World of Warcraft*. The fact that I already knew the worlds and was contributing to them was a huge advantage for me.

When looking for writing work in general, you need to show not just that you're a solid writer but that you can follow directions, hit deadlines, and take editorial feedback. Tie-in writing has the added requirement that you immerse yourself in a particular IP, capturing the feel of the world, its stories, and its characters. That means you need to be a fan of the IP. It doesn't require you to have been a fan *beforehand*—I've picked up several projects as a pinch-hitter over the years because I'm known for writing fast and submitting clean manuscripts, and some of those have been for properties I wasn't following already. However, I always took the time to learn them, to understand them, and to find things I loved about them. That's crucial because tie-in writers *are* fans and they can feel it if you're not. The easiest way to do this, of course, is to look for opportunities with IPs you already know and love. But barring that, make sure if you do try for a tie-in project that it's one you feel you can learn to love and one that you know you would enjoy writing. Then look for the parts that really speak to you, the spaces where you think, "Oh, I wonder what happened there?" Those are where you'll find the stories you really want to tell in that space.

BIO & PUBLISHED WORKS:

Aaron Rosenberg is the author over fifty novels, more than seventy short stories, over seventy roleplaying games, and a dozen or more each of children's books and educational books. He's written novels for *Star Trek*, *World of Warcraft*, *Shadowrun*, *Warhammer*, *Starcraft*, *Eureka*, *Stargate: Atlantis*, *Exalted*, and *Mutants & Masterminds* and short stories for properties including *Highlander*, James Bond, *the X-Files*, Joe Ledger, Sherlock Holmes, and Zorro. Aaron has won awards for fiction, for children's books, and for roleplaying games, is a founding

member of Crazy 8 Press, and lives in New York with his family. You can follow him online at gryphonrose.com, on Facebook at facebook.com/gryphonrose, on Bluesky at [@gryphonrose.bsky.social](https://gryphonrose.bsky.social), on Instagram at the_gryphonrose, and on X (formerly known as Twitter) @gryphonrose.

AMANDA BRIDGEMAN

TIPS AND HOW I BROKE IN:

I was approached by a publisher who had worked with me previously on an original novel for a different publishing house. He was obviously familiar with my work, knew I was reliable, and liked working with me, and I with him. I'd always wanted to do tie-in writing, so it was an awesome opportunity and I jumped at the chance! This led to more tie-in opportunities with the same publisher, while separately I was approached over Twitter to write for Black Library in the Warhammer 40K universe.

On breaking in: From my experience and from what I've seen, relationships are key. First you need to prove that you can write a good story, whether short story or novel. Once you've proven your writing standard (through being traditionally published, or winning/shortlisting for awards, or perhaps mega-selling as a self-published author), it's about finding who is publishing the tie-in fiction you want to break into and see if you can get an introduction. It's not easy, as there are only so many writing gigs every year, and many tie-in writers are already embedded with those publishers. The publishers will generally go with who they know, and who they trust will deliver (to a particular standard, and on time). That said, the smart publishers stay on the lookout for new talent. Just keep trying and don't give up. Most importantly, keep an eye out for any Open Submission/Pitching opportunities (whether short fiction or novels). Occasionally they'll pop up and that may be a chance to break in.

BIO & PUBLISHED WORKS:

Novels:

Marvel: Sound of Light (X-Men universe, based on the comics)

Pandemic: Patient Zero (Based on the board game)

Short Stories:

Eye of the Storm (X-Men universe, Marvel: School of X anthology)

Reconsecration (Warhammer 40K universe, Inferno! The Emperor's Finest anthology)

Novellas:

I have a Warhammer 40K novella coming out this year - - but it's not yet announced.

WEBSITE AND SOCIAL MEDIA LINKS

Website: www.amandabridgeman.com.au

Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/AmandaBridgeman2/>

Twitter/X: @Bridgeman_Books

Instagram: @Bridgeman_Books

Threads: @Bridgeman_Books

BOB GREENBERGER

BIO:

Bob is a writer and editor of over 100 books and anthologies, many within the DC, Marvel, and Star Trek franchises. A lifelong fan of comics and science fiction, Bob's writing was encouraged by his father and inspired by Superman's alter ego, Clark Kent. His undergrad degree acquired from SUNY-Binghamton in the 1980s, Bob continued with two master's degrees – one in education in 2012 and the next in creative writing and literature for educators in 2016. Bob co-founded Crazy 8 Press and is a member of the Science Fiction Writers of America as well as the International Association of Media Tie-In Writers. He currently teaches high school English and resides in Howard County, Maryland, with his wife Deborah. Find him online @bobgreenberger.

TIPS AND HOW I BROKE IN:

After training to be a journalist and starting my career at Starlog Press, I gradually drifted into writing through my work as an editor of the *Star Trek* comics for DC in the mid-1980s. After befriending Pocket Books editor David Stern, he invited me to a series of cocktail parties for NY-area ST authors, which led to me being asked to try my hand at fiction in a collaborative *Star Trek: The Next Generation* novel, and it's been a roller coaster ride ever since.

Along the way, I have written novels and short stories (and a few comics) featuring Star Trek, Zorro, The Green Hornet, Hellboy, After Earth, Batman, Superman, Bolos, Iron Man, Captain America, Planet of the Apes, Captain Midnight, Winnie the Pooh, Sherlock Holmes, Predator, and Scooby-Doo. I have written media tie-in nonfiction about even more. All of this was freelance work, and I spent days as a staff member at DC Comics, Marvel Comics, Gist Communications, ComicMix, Famous Monsters of Filmland, and Weekly World News. I currently teach high school English and a course on graphic novels at the Maryland Institute College of Art.

As for advice, much of it applies to being a good freelancer. That means understanding the market and making sure you don't waste your time applying in the wrong place or misunderstanding how licensed IP works. Scan the trades for current news on license acquisitions, network with fellow authors at conventions, and pay attention. It's a lot of fun once you get the gig, but finding opportunities is the real challenge.

WEBSITE AND SOCIAL MEDIA LINKS

www.bobgreenberger.com

<https://linktr.ee/bobgreenberger>
www.Crazy8Press.com

PUBLISHED WORKS:

<https://bobgreenberger.com/publications/>

BOBBY NASH

TIPS AND HOW I BROKE IN:

My introduction to writing a media tie-in was telling a short story featuring The Green Hornet and his trusty aide, Kato for Moonstone Books' The Green Hornet Casefiles back in 2009. I was invited to pitch a story because I had worked on other anthologies for the publisher. Based off my work there, they offered me the opportunity to write this licensed character. That opened the door to future tie-in writing opportunities.

The advice I often share when it comes to writing tie-in fiction is to treat it as though you are just another writer brought in to tell a story. By that, I mean, I write it differently than I would fan fiction, for example. I keep the wink and nods to a minimum and focus on the characters and telling the best story I can. This also helps when I pitch a story. I don't pitch what I feel are obvious stories. If they come to me too quickly or easily, they've probably come to others as well.

When asked about writing tie-ins at cons or events, I often compare it to Star Trek. Most episodes start with the USS Enterprise flying through space. Everyone is on the bridge, happy, and laughing. All good. Then, something bad happens. Our heroes struggle but then solve the problem. The episode ends with the USS Enterprise flying through space. Everyone is on the bridge, happy, and laughing. My job as a tie-in writer happens between those bridge shots. I can play with the toys, but I have to return them the way I found them.

BIO:

Bobby Nash is an award-winning author, artist, and actor. He writes novels, comic books, short stories, screenplays, audio dramas, & more. Bobby is a member of the International Association of Media Tie-in Writers, International Thriller Writers, Southeastern Writers Association, and Atlanta Writers Club. Please visit him at www.bobbynash.com, www.ben-books.com, and across social media.

PUBLISHED WORKS NOVELS

- Alexandra Holzer's Ghost Gal: The Wild Hunt (Raven's Head Press)
- Nightveil: Crisis at The Crossroads of Infinity (Pro Se Prod.)
- The Avenger Double Feature: Black Water (Moonstone Books)

- The Wraith: Sanderson of Metro (Glowing Eyes Media)
- "A Thing of Beauty" Green Hornet: Casefiles (Moonstone Books)
- "Fear The Dark" The Spider: Extreme Prejudice (Moonstone Books)
- "First Contact" Renegade Insights, Volume 6 (Budgie Smuggler Games)
- "Fox Hunt" Zorro's Exploits (Bold Venture Press)
- "House of Revenge" The New Adventures of Major Lacy and Amusement, Inc. (Pro Se Prod.)
- "Lights! Camera! Sabotage!" The New Adventures of The Eagle (Pro Se Prod.)
- "Lone Justice" The Avenger: Roaring Heart of The Crucible (Moonstone Books)
- "Manifest Destiny" The New Adventures of The Green Ghost (Pro Se Prod.)
- "Naomi" Hollis P.I. (Pro Se Prod.)
- "Overlord of Undertown" The Wraith Vol. 1 (Airship 27 Prod.)
- "The Crate Train Robbery" Sherlock Holmes/Domino Lady (Moonstone Books)
- "The Devil Level" Kolchak The Night Stalker 50th Anniversary HC (Moonstone Books)
- "The Game's afoot, Mr. Holiday" Box Thirteen: Adventure Wanted! (Radio Archives)
- "The Gauntlet" Green Hornet: Still at Large (Moonstone Books)
- "The Girls Best Friend Matter" Yours Truly, Johnny Dollar (Moonstone Books)
- "The Mystery of the Menacing Manuscript" Box Thirteen: Adventure Wanted! (Radio Archives)
- "The One That Got Away" Nightbeat: Night Stories (Radio Archives)
- "The Out of This World Affair" Box Thirteen: Adventure Wanted! (Radio Archives)
- "The Phoenix Sanction" Moonstone Double Shot Kolchak: The Night Stalker & The Phoenix (Moonstone Books)
- "The Target" The Black Bat Returns (Moonstone Books)
- Box Thirteen - Adventure Wanted (Radio Archives)
- CNI: Classified (Blue Planet Press)
- Kolchak The Night Stalker 50th Anniversary Deluxe HC (Moonstone Books)
- Moonstone Double Shot: The Lone Ranger (Moonstone Books)
- Remo Williams - The Destroyer: The Adventures Continue! (Bold Venture Press)
- The Lost Adventures of Captain Hawklin Vol. 1 (Stormgate Press)
- The Lost Adventures of Captain Hawklin Vol. 2 (Stormgate Press)
- Zombies Vs Robots: No Man's Land (IDW Publishing)
- Zorro: Swordplay & Romance (Bold Venture Press)

COMICS

- Edgar Rice Burroughs' At The Earth's Core graphic novel (Dark Horse Comics)

BRYAN THOMAS SCHMIDT

HOW I BROKE IN:

I broke into media tie-ins working with Jonathan on The X-Files: Secret Agenda. Then Jonathan invited me to collaborate on a novella for SNAFU: Black Ops anthology set in the Joe Ledger/Rot N Ruin universes. Shortly thereafter, I pitched him and Larry Correia separate anthologies based on the universes of their Joe Ledger and Monster Hunter series and we

collaborated on those with Jonathan and Larry co-editing each book with me then writing stories in each other's universes. I wrote stories as well.

BIO:

Bryan Thomas Schmidt is the twice Hugo-nominated and #1 Amazon and Audible bestselling editor as well as author of ten novels, thirty short stories, and twenty-three anthologies for publishers including Titan Books, Baen Books, St. Martin's Press, IDW, JournalStone, and more. He can be found online at www.bryanthomasschmidt.net or via his Amazon author pages.

MEDIA TIE-IN WORKS:

AS WRITER OR CO-WRITER

- "Aftermath (Predator)"
- "Back to Black" with Jonathan Maberry
- "Dogwatch (John Simon/Joe Ledger crossover)"
- "Drug War (Predator)" with Holly Roberds
- "First Hunt (AVP)"
- "Huffman Strikes Back (MHI)" with Julie Frost
- "Instinct (a Ghost Story/Joe Ledger)" with GP Charles
- "Point of No Return-an Earther Codetta (Decipher's Wars)"

AS EDITOR OR CO-EDITOR

- ALIENS VS. PREDATORS: ULTIMATE PREY co-edited with Jonathan Maberry
- JOE LEDGER UNBREAKABLE co-edited with Jonathan Maberry
- JOE LEDGER UNSTOPPABLE co-edited with Jonathan Maberry
- MONSTER HUNTER FILES co-edited with Larry Correia
- PREDATOR: EYES OF THE DEMON (editor)
- PREDATOR: IF IT BLEEDS (editor)
- The X-Files: Secret Agendas "Border Time" with Kate Corina

TIPS:

My advice for breaking into tie-ins is to pick IPs you love and know well and stick to the canon rules. Don't try too hard to reinvent it. That's generally not what Licensors are looking for. And secondly, understand it is work-for-hire and what that means. You are being invited to get paid to play in their IP, so you must be open minded and adaptable and expect changes to be part of the process. Don't be difficult and leave the ego out of it. You are there to do your best work, of course, but it ultimately belongs to them, not you. So treat it accordingly.

The X-Files: Secret Agendas "Border Time" with Kate Corina

CHRIS RYALL

TIPS AND HOW I BROKE IN:

I broke into tie-in writing in part out of necessity and partly out of opportunity and access — in my early days at IDW, there were certain projects that required more secrecy than an NDA might have offered and so I took them on — projects like a tie-in prequel comic to the 2007 Transformers movie. But I also pitched both the owners of the company on the properties I wanted to write, and also pitched various licensors directly. Which I know isn't the usual path of these things, and the deck was stacked at times in my favor for those reasons but I also sought to only take on the projects I really cared about to an unhealthy degree — ROM, KISS, Weekly World News — while also at times submitting multiple writers' pitches without writer names attached to democratize the process. And then once those relationships were established, continued to try to build on them even after leaving IDW.

BIO & PUBLISHED WORKS

Chris Ryall boasts a prolific career as a writer, editor, and publisher. Currently the co-founder and publisher at Image Comics imprint, Syzygy Publishing, Ryall is also the former Editor-in-Chief/Chief Creative Officer at IDW Publishing. He is the writer/co-creator of *Zombies vs Robots*, *Onyx*, *Groom Lake*, *The Hollows*, and *Dreamweaver*. He has also written graphic novels based on the *Transformers*, *Rom Spaceknight*, *KISS*, *Weekly World News*, *Mars Attacks*, and more; he has collaborated with Stephen King, Clive Barker, and Francis Ford Coppola on graphic novels based on their works, and was an Executive Producer on Netflix's *Locke & Key*. He is the author of *The Mighty Marvel Calendar Book: A Visual History* (October 2024, Abrams ComicArts) and *Origins of Marvel Comics: The Deluxe Edition* (October 2024, Simon & Shuster/Gallery), and is the co-creator of an original drama series in development at Paramount.

TIPS ON BREAKING IN

Blindly pitching on licensed properties and tie-ins can be tough because most publishing plans are set years in advance. So it can be impossible at times to try to wedge a new story into an existing line. Much more effective to make the introduction with the editor and then ask if you can pitch, and then if so, if there's any directional advice they can provide before you do, in order to help maximize the chances that your pitch be properly considered.

And aiming to write a Star Trek or Dragonlance novel right from the start is probably not likely to happen, so better to build a body of work doing other/smaller tie-in stories and then using those as backup for why you're the right person to take on a larger franchise.

SOCIAL MEDIA LINKS:

Mostly just BlueSky, Threads, and IG now: @chris_ryall

CHRISTIE GOLDEN

HOW I BROKE IN:

I became a media tie-in writer kind entirely by accident. While shopping around a manuscript, I worked full-time at a magazine. Somewhere around 1989, I attended the ABA convention at the Javits center as an editor. There, I talked to folks at the TSR booth, and got my name on a mailing list for novel auditions. My original novel never sold. But I *did* get tapped to write a tie-in novel through the audition! *Vampire of the Mists* was my first published novel, and launched the D&D Ravenloft line in 1991. It was called Vampire of the Mists, and it sold like gangbusters. I also introduced an original creation...the first elven vampire. I would write two more novels for them before moving on to Star Trek and 19 other franchises...so far!

TIPS

Some DOs and DON'TS:

- DO start on something new while waiting to hear about something else you've submitted.
- DON'T submit your work to an agent or editor who has no idea who you are.
- DO follow people like editors, authors, and agents on social media...respectfully. Learn about them, read their posts, listen to their suggestions. They are invaluable.
- DON'T be a jerk. Really. Publishing is so, so much smaller than you think, and we do talk...both pro and con.
- DO attend conventions, both in your genre and general writing conventions.
- DON'T write your complete tie-in manuscript and hope to publish it. Media tie-in publishers and editors work VERY hard and they're not about to read a complete tie-in over the transom. For one thing, it could present a BIG legal problem.
- DO Get credits under your belt before you attempt to write media tie-ins. Even short stories help.
- DO stay open to unexpected opportunities manifesting and be ready to jump. Watch out for scams, of course, but don't miss the magic. Fortune favors the bold!

BIO

Christie Golden is the award-winning and *New York Times* bestselling author of nearly 50 novels and dozens of short stories in the fields of fantasy, science fiction, and horror. She's also written

for six of Blizzard Entertainment's games, contributing short stories, comics, and cinematics. She was named Grandmaster by the International Association of Media Tie-in Writers in 2017 for her body of work.

PUBLISHED WORKS:

NOVELS (52)

52: TBA 2025

51: *World of Warcraft: The War Within Art Book*

50: *"A" is for Azeroth*

49: *World of Warcraft: Sylvanas*

48: *World of Warcraft: Before the Storm*

47: *World of Warcraft: Exploring Azeroth*

46: *Star Wars: Inferno Squad*

45: *City of a Thousand Planets* movie novelization

44: *Warcraft: Durotan*

43: *Warcraft* Movie Novelization

42: *Assassin's Creed* Movie Novelization

41: *Assassin's Creed: Heresy*,

40: *Star Wars: The Clone Wars: Dark Disciple*, July 2015

39: *Assassin's Creed: Unity—Abstergo Employee Handbook*, November 2014

38: *Cryptozoic: HEX The Accidental Knight*, November 2014

37: *World of Warcraft: War Crimes*, May 2014

36: *Assassin's Creed: Black Flag--Blackbeard: The Lost Journal*, March 2014

35: *StarCraft: Flashpoint*, November 2012

34: *World of Warcraft: Jaina Proudmoore: Tides of War*, August 2012

- 33: *Fable: The Edge of the World*, Del Rey, August 2012
- 32: *World of Warcraft: Thrall—Twilight of the Aspects*, Pocket Books, June 2011
- 31: *Star Wars, Fate of the Jedi, Book 8: Ascension*, Del Rey, August 2011
- 30: *StarCraft: Devils' Due*, Pocket Books, April 2011)
- 29: *World of Warcraft: The Shattering—Prelude to Cataclysm*, Pocket Books, October 2010
- 28: *Star Wars, Fate of the Jedi, Book 5: Allies*, Del Rey, May 2010
- 27: *World of Warcraft, Arthas: Rise of the Lich King*, Pocket Books, April 2009
- 26: *Star Wars, Fate of the Jedi, Book 2: Omen*, Del Rey, June 2009
- 25: *StarCraft-The Dark Templar Trilogy, Book Three: Twilight* Pocket Books, June 2009
- 24: *Warcraft: Beyond the Dark Portal*, with Aaron Rosenberg, Pocket Books, July 2008
- 30: *StarCraft—The Dark Templar Trilogy, Book Two: Shadow Hunters*, Pocket Books, November 2007
- 23: *StarCraft-The Dark Templar Trilogy, Book One: Firstborn*, Pocket Books, May 2007
- 22: *Warcraft: Rise of the Horde*, Pocket Books, December 2006
- 21: *Star Trek Voyager: Spirit Walk Book 2: Enemy of my Enemy*, Pocket Books, December 2003
- 20: *Star Trek Voyager: Spirit Walk, Book 1: Old Wounds*, Pocket Books, November 2003
- 19: *Star Trek Voyager: The Farther Shore*, Pocket Books, July 2003
- 18: *Star Trek Voyager: Homecoming*, Pocket Books, June 2003
- 17: *Star Trek: The Last Roundup*, Pocket Books, July 2002
- 16: *Star Trek Voyager: No Man's Land*, Pocket Books, 2001
- 15: *Gateways: What Lay Beyond*, Pocket Books, 2001
- 14: *Warcraft: Lord of the Clans*, Pocket Books, 2001
- 13: *Star Trek Voyager: Endgame*, with Diane Carey, Pocket Books, 2001
- 12: *Star Trek Voyager: The Dark Matters Trilogy, Book 3: Shadow of Heaven*, Pocket Books, 2000

- 11: *Star Trek Voyager: The Dark Matters Trilogy, Book 2: Ghost Dance*, Pocket Books, 2000
- 10: *Star Trek Voyager: The Dark Matters Trilogy, Book 1: Cloak And Dagger* Pocket Books, 2000
- 9: *Star Trek The Next Generation: The First Virtue*, with Michael Jan Friedman, Pocket Books August 1999
- 8: *Invasion America: On The Run*, Roc, November 1998
- 7: *Star Trek Voyager: Seven of Nine*, Pocket Books, September 1998
- 6: *Invasion America*, Roc, February 1998
- 5: *Star Trek Voyager: Marooned*, Pocket Books, December 1997
- 4: *Star Trek Voyager: The Murdered Sun*, Pocket Books, February 1996
- 3: *The Enemy Within*, TSR's Ravenloft series, March 1994
- 2: *Dance of the Dead*, TSR's Ravenloft series, July 1992
- 1: *Vampire of the Mists*, TSR's Ravenloft series, September 1991

SHORT STORIES, Novellas, Manga and Essays (21)

- “The Calling: Anduin” World of Warcraft, published online and in anthology
- “The Vow Eternal”, World of Warcraft, published online
- “Stone by Stone,” Overwatch (Symmetra short story), published online and in books
- “YOKAI,” Overwatch(Kiriko short story), published online
- “Terror by Torchlight”, World of Warcraft, published online
- “A Warrior Made, part 2,” Warcraft: Legends, Volume 5, TokyoPop, September 2009
- “A Warrior Made, part 1,” Warcraft: Legends, Volume 4, TokyoPop, June 2009
- “I Got What Yule Need,” Warcraft: Legends, Volume 3, TokyoPop, March 2009
- “Seduced,” Tales from the Captain’s Table, Pocket Books, June 2005

“Where’s the Religion in Willow’s Wicca?” BenBella Books, 2003

“The Sun Child,” *Angel: The Longest Night*, Simon & Schuster, 2002

“Hard Crash,” *Star Trek S.C.E.: Have Tech, Will Travel*, Pocket Books, 2001

"The White Doe," *Tales of the Slayer*, Simon & Schuster, 1999

"A Light in the Sky," *Whitley Strieber's Aliens: An HWA Anthology*, Pocket Books, December 1998

"A Night at Sandrine's," *Amazing Stories*, December 1998

"The Ultimate Weapon," *Tales from Tethedril*, Del Rey, September 1998

"The Play's the Thing," *Miskatonic*, DAW Books, Inc., November 1996

"Summer Storms," *Lammas Night*, Baen Books, February 1996

"The Quiet Place," *Realms of Magic*, TSR, December 1995

"Blood Sport," *Realms of Infamy*, TSR, December 1994

"One Last Drink," *Realms of Valor*, TSR, February 1993

WEBSITE AND SOCIAL MEDIA LINKS

Visit my website at: www.christiegolden.com (It’s under construction but working on it!)

Follow me at:

LinkedIn: <https://www.linkedin.com/in/christie-golden-86385918/>

BlueSky: <https://bsky.app/profile/christiegolden.bsky.social>

CHRISTOPHER GOLDEN

HOW I BROKE IN:

I honestly don’t remember how the first meeting came about. I’d already published my first couple of original novels and I was writing a lot of articles and interviews in the comic book industry press. Somehow I ended up in a meeting with an editor at Byron Preiss Multimedia, a book packager in those days. They’d just licensed the rights to do original novels with a bunch of Marvel characters and wanted to hire me as a freelance editor to oversee those books. I was so excited to do that, but it turned out they realized they had someone in house—Keith

DeCandido—who could do the job handily and was already on staff. As a consolation prize, they offered me my choice of the characters they had licensed, and I chose Daredevil, which is how I ended up writing the first ever Daredevil novel, and my first tie-in novel.

BIO:

Christopher Golden is the New York Times bestselling, Bram Stoker Award-winning author of such novels as *Road of Bones*, *Ararat*, *Snowblind*, and *Red Hands*. With Mike Mignola, he is the co-creator of the Outerverse comic book universe, including such series as *Baltimore*, *Joe Golem: Occult Detective*, and *Lady Baltimore*. As an editor, he has worked on the short story anthologies *Seize the Night*, *Dark Cities*, and *The New Dead*, among others, and he has also written and co-written comic books, video games, screenplays, and a network television pilot. In 2015 he founded the popular Merrimack Valley Halloween Book Festival. He was born and raised in Massachusetts, where he still lives with his family. His work has been nominated for the British Fantasy Award, the Eisner Award, and multiple Shirley Jackson Awards. For the Bram Stoker Awards, Golden has been nominated ten times in eight different categories, and won twice. His original novels have been published in more than fifteen languages in countries around the world.

MEDIA TIE-IN WORKS:

HELLBOY

- Hellboy: The Lost Army (Dark Horse, 1997)
- Hellboy: The Bones of Giants (Dark Horse, 2001)
- Hellboy: The Dragon Pool (Pocket Books, 2007)
- Hellboy: A Plague of Wasps (Graphic Audio)
- Lobster Johnson: The Proteus Club (Graphic Audio)
- Hellboy and the BPRD: Goddess of Manhattan (Graphic Audio)
- As editor:
- Hellboy: Odd Jobs (Dark Horse, 1999)
- Hellboy: Odder Jobs (Dark Horse, 2004)
- Hellboy: Oddest Jobs (Dark Horse, 2008)
- Hellboy: An Assortment of Horrors (Dark Horse, 2017)

BUFFY THE VAMPIRE SLAYER

- Halloween Rain [*w/Nancy Holder*] (Pocket, 1997)
- Blooded [*w/Nancy Holder*] (Pocket 1998)
- Child of the Hunt [*w/Nancy Holder*] (Pocket 1998)
- The Gatekeeper, Book One--Out of the Madhouse [*w/Nancy Holder*] (Pocket 1999)
- The Gatekeeper, Book Two--Ghost Roads [*w/Nancy Holder*] (Pocket 1999)
- The Gatekeeper, Book Three--Sons of Entropy [*w/Nancy Holder*] (Pocket 1999)
- Immortal [*w/ Nancy Holder*] (hardcover, Pocket, 1999)
- Sins of the Father (Pocket, 1999)
- Spike & Dru: Pretty Maids All in a Row (hardcover, Pocket, 2000)
- The Lost Slayer—parts 1 through 4 (Pocket 2001)

- Oz: Into the Wild (Pocket, 2002)
- The Wisdom of War (Pocket, 2002)
- Monster Island [w/*Tom Sniegowski*] (hardcover, Pocket, 2003)
- Dark Congress (Pocket, 2007)
- The Faith Trials (as James Laurence)
- The Watcher's Guide: The Official *Buffy the Vampire Slayer* Companion [w/*Nancy Holder*] (Pocket 1998)
- The Sunnydale High Yearbook [w/*Nancy Holder*] (Pocket, 1999)
- Buffy the Vampire Slayer: The Monster Book [w/*Stephen R. Bissette & Tom Sniegowski*] (Pocket, 2000)
- Buffy the Vampire Slayer: 20 Years of Slaying—The Watcher's Guide (Simon Pulse, 2017)
- Slayers: A Buffyverse Story (Audible Original Series, 2023)

MISC MEDIA TIE-IN WORKS

- X-Men: Mutant Empire—Siege
- X-Men: Mutant Empire—Sanctuary
- X-Men: Mutant Empire—Salvation
- X-Men: Codename Wolverine
- Daredevil: Predator's Smile
- Battlestar Galactica: Armageddon
- Battlestar Galactica: Warhawk
- Star Wars: Shadows of the Empire (YA)
- Choose Your Own Star Wars Adventure: A New Hope
- Choose Your Own Star Wars Adventure: The Empire Strikes Back
- Choose Your Own Star Wars Adventure: Return of the Jedi
- Gen13: Netherwar [w/*Jeff Mariotte*]
- Justice League: Exterminators
- King Kong (the movie novelization)
- Uncharted: The Fourth Labyrinth
- Alien: River of Pain
- Sons of Anarchy: Bratva
- Don't Be Afraid of the Dark: Blackwood's Guide to Dangerous Fairies
- Runaways
- The Predator

WEBSITE AND SOCIAL MEDIA LINKS

www.christophergolden.com

bluesky @cgolden.bsky.social

instagram @christopher_golden

www.facebook.com/christophergoldenauthor

DAVID AVALLONE:

BIO

David Avallone is a freelancer from a long line of freelancers, born to a pulp fiction writer ([Michael Avallone](#)) and women's rights activist ([Frances Avallone](#)).

Since graduating from Bard College in 1987, David has been involved mostly in independent film production ([as a writer, editor, director, producer, actor, etc.](#)), but in 2014 he branched out into comic book writing, mostly with Dynamite Comics. With them, he's written LEGENDERRY: VAMPIRELLA, TWILIGHT ZONE: THE SHADOW, DOC SAVAGE: RING OF FIRE, BETTIE PAGE and ELVIRA: MISTRESS OF THE DARK. For American Mythology, he's written ZORRO: SWORDS OF BLOOD, and for Kevin Eastman Studios he's writing DRAWING BLOOD and THE RADICALLY REARRANGED RONIN RAGDOLLS.

He lives in Hollywood, California with his delightful wife Augusta aka filmmaker, costumer and burlesque icon [Penny Starr, Jr.](#) and three cats who may or may not be secretly radically rearranged.

TIPS AND HOW I BROKE IN:

The very first writing job I ever got was Star Wars short stories for the role-playing game. I got that gig because the editor was an old college friend who liked my writing. Then I did nothing in that space for decades, literally, because I was working in film. Then I transitioned from film to comic books, starting with Vampirella, and eventually in the comics realm I wrote Red Sonja, Bettie Page, Elvira: Mistress of the Dark, Kolchak The Night Stalker, The Twilight Zone, The Shadow, Doc Savage, Zorro, John Carter of Mars, Gullivar (also of Mars), etc. My comics work in turn led back to writing in the role playing game industry, starting with Planet of the Apes.

2- Any advice you feel you'd like to share. (And, again, include your short bio and published works list).

About getting the job: I think networking is a wildly misunderstood phenomenon. It's not about making business contacts. It's about making friends. Maybe your new friend will have a gig for you someday. Maybe they won't. But you approach them as you would a new friend: with interest in THEM, not dollar signs in your eyes. They'll always spot the dollar signs and get turned off.

Everyone's work process is unique to them, so these are not rules... these are just what works for me. They may work for you.

I don't always outline... but I always regret when I DON'T outline. For me, it helps to have a map. And then if you decide to wander off the map, that's fine, too. But you know where you started and where you intended to go. That's an enormous help.

Deadlines are great. Some authors hate them. I love them. Deadlines cure you of the pretentious

“waiting on the muse” mythology of writing. When it’s due, it’s due. Do the work. Writing is better than staring off into space and thinking about writing. Both are necessary, but it’s great to have a strong impetus to WRITE RIGHT NOW. Deadlines give you that. And if you find yourself in that horrible position where you know you’re going to blow a deadline... let the editor know. It’ll probably be fine. What’s NOT fine is the deadline coming and going and the editor getting no communication from you.

PUBLISHED WORKS:

[ELVIRA: MISTRESS OF THE DARK](#)

I’ve been writing Elvira for about five years, and most of the work is collected in trade paperback. She’s time-travelled, been to Hell and back, fought Vlad the Impaler, invaded the Multiverse of Movies, and lived to tell the tales. Well. I told the tales. But click the link and check out the comics!

[BETTIE PAGE](#)

It’s 1951-1952. Through various (mis)adventures the famous model finds herself working for a secret division of the US Government, investigating the strange and unusual. Through 25 issues, that’s been everything from UFOs to werewolves to Great Old Ones.

[Volume One:](#) how Bettie got recruited and her first adventure in Hollywood.

[Volume Two:](#) giant 1950s monsters and spies at the Cannes Film Festival.

[Volume Three:](#) can Bettie save Queen Elizabeth from Alien invaders and government intrigue?

[Volume Four:](#) Bettie tours the Multiverse in Bettie Page Unbound!

In 2017, I wrote [DOC SAVAGE: THE RING OF FIRE](#) a classic adventure that puts Doc back where he belongs: fighting a supervillain in the 1930s, and looking for Amelia Earhart.

In 2016, I had a fantastic opportunity to combine two of my favorite things in one:

[TWILIGHT ZONE: THE SHADOW](#), now collected in trade paperback form.

My first assignment was a 5-issue steampulp adventure called [LEGENDERRY: VAMPIRELLA](#), which started in February, 2015.

The series is available as a [trade paperback](#).

WEBSITE

www.davidavallonefreelance.com

DAVID MACK

HOW I BROKE IN:

In 1995, I made my first freelance story/script sales to television at *Star Trek: Voyager* and *Star Trek: Deep Space Nine*. My scriptwriting partner at that time, John J. Ordovery, was an acquiring editor of *Star Trek* tie-in novels. Though we were unable to repeat our success of those early TV pitches, John hired me to do slush-pile reading and reference-material writing for the *Star Trek* publishing office. After about five years of that kind of work, editor Margaret Clark hired me in May of 2000 to write my first tie-in book, *The Starfleet Survival Guide*. That gig springboarded me into writing for the *Star Trek* eBook novellas and then the full-length novels. Twenty-five years later, I'm still at it: my 32nd original *Star Trek* novel, *Ring of Fire*, comes out this August.

SHORT BIO

David Mack is the multiple award-winning and *The New York Times* bestselling author of 39 novels of science fiction, fantasy, and adventure. His writing credits span several media, including television (for episodes of *Star Trek: Deep Space Nine*), audio drama, and comic books. He has worked as a consultant for *Star Trek: Prodigy*, and in June of 2022 the International Association of Media Tie-in Writers honored him as a Grandmaster with its Faust Award. He resides in New York City.

TIPS

Try not to commit to writing tie-ins based on intellectual properties that you don't like or, even more importantly, don't respect. Fans of the source material can always smell a phony who's only spinning a story for a paycheck, and they don't appreciate it. That doesn't mean you need to possess in-depth knowledge of every tie-in property you agree to work for; that's what research is for, as well as editorial and licensor guidance. But you need to treat each IP you work on with respect and professionalism at the very least, and genuine affection whenever possible.

MEDIA TIE-IN WORKS:

- *Star Trek: Strange New Worlds – Ring of Fire* (2025)
- *Star Trek: Picard – Firewall* (2024)
- *Star Trek: The Original Series – Harm's Way* (2022)
- *Star Trek: Coda, Book III – Oblivion's Gate* (2021)
- *Star Trek – More Beautiful Than Death* (2020)
- *Star Trek: The Next Generation – Collateral Damage* (2019)
- *Star Trek: Discovery – Desperate Hours* (2017)
- *Star Trek: Titan – Fortune of War* (2017)
- *Star Trek: Section 31 – Control* (2017)
- *Star Trek: Legacies – Book II: Best Defense* (2016)
- *24 – Rogue* (2015)
- *Star Trek: Seekers, Book 3 – Long Shot* (2015)
- *Star Trek: Section 31 – Disavowed* (2014)
- *Star Trek: Seekers, Book 1 – Second Nature* (2014)

- Star Trek: The Fall, Book III – A Ceremony of Losses (2013)
- Star Trek: The Next Generation, Cold Equations, Book III – The Body Electric (2013)
- Star Trek: The Next Generation, Cold Equations, Book II – Silent Weapons (2012)
- Star Trek: The Next Generation, Cold Equations, Book I – The Persistence of Memory (2012)
- Star Trek Vanguard – Storming Heaven (2012)
- Star Trek: Mirror Universe – Rise Like Lions (2011)
- Star Trek: Typhon Pact – Zero Sum Game (2010)
- Star Trek: Mirror Universe – The Sorrows of Empire (2009)
- Star Trek: Vanguard – Precipice (2009)
- The 4400 – Promises Broken (2009)
- Star Trek: Destiny, Book III – Lost Souls (2008)
- Star Trek: Destiny, Book II – Mere Mortals (2008)
- Star Trek: Destiny, Book I – Gods of Night (2008)
- Star Trek: Vanguard – Reap the Whirlwind (2007)
- Star Trek: Mirror Universe: Obsidian Alliances (anthology, 2007) – short novel: Saturn’s Children
- Wolverine – Road of Bones (2006)
- Star Trek: Deep Space Nine – Warpath (2006)
- Star Trek: Vanguard – Harbinger (2005)
- Star Trek: SCE, Book Six: Wildfire (collection, 2004) – short novel: Wildfire
- Star Trek: The Next Generation – A Time to Heal (2004)
- Star Trek: The Next Generation – A Time to Kill (2004)
- Star Trek Explorer, Issue No. 14 (December 2024) – short story, “Family History”
- Star Trek Explorer, Issue No. 13 (September 2024) – short story, “Freeblade” (digital supplement)
- Star Trek Explorer, Issue No. 12 (June 2024) – short story, “Memoriam” (digital supplement)
- Star Trek Explorer, Issue No. 11 (April 2024) – short story, “Dignified Transfer”
- Star Trek Explorer, Issue No. 9 (October 2023) – short story, “Sundered” (digital supplement)
- Star Trek Explorer, Issue No. 8 (July 2023) – short story, “Lost and Founder”
- 2113: Stories Inspired by the Music of Rush (anthology, 2016) – short story: “Our Possible Pasts”
- Star Trek: Vanguard: Declassified (anthology, 2011) – novella: “The Stars Look Down”
- Star Trek: Mirror Universe – Shards and Shadows (anthology, 2009) – short story: “For Want of a Nail”
- Star Trek: Corps of Engineers – Creative Couplings (collection, 2007) – novella: “Small World”
- Star Trek: Corps of Engineers – Grand Designs (collection, 2007) – novella: “Failsafe”
- Star Trek: Tales of the Dominion War (anthology, 2004) – short story: “Twilight’s Wrath”
- Star Trek: New Frontier – No Limits (anthology, 2003)

- short story: “Waiting for G’Doh, or, How I Learned to Stop Moving and Hate People”
- Star Trek: SCE, Book Two – Miracle Workers (collection, 2002)
 - novella: “Invincible,” written with Keith R.A. DeCandido
- Star Trek: Khan (2025) — 9 episodes, written with Kirsten Beyer, based on a story by Nicholas Meyer
- Star Trek: Deep Space Nine, “It’s Only a Paper Moon” (1999) [with John Ordovery and Ronald D. Moore]
- Star Trek: Deep Space Nine, “Starship Down” (1995) [with John Ordovery]
- Star Trek: Prodigy, consultant (2019–2021)
- Star Trek: Lower Decks, consultant (2019)
- Farscape: Scorpius (2010; eight-issue miniseries, written with Rockne S. O’Bannon)
- Star Trek – Divided We Fall (2001; four-issue miniseries, written with John Ordovery)
- Star Trek: The Starfleet Survival Guide (2002)

WEBSITE AND SOCIAL MEDIA LINKS

David Mack Official Website – <https://www.davidmack.pro/>

David Mack Official Facebook Page – <https://facebook.com/TheDavidMack>

David Mack on Bluesky – <https://bsky.app/profile/davidmack.bsky.social>

DAYTON WARD

HOW I BROKE IN:

In 1997, I entered the very first Star Trek: Strange New Worlds writing contest sponsored by Pocket Books, the Simon & Schuster imprint which at the time was publishing Star Trek novels. The contest was for new, unpublished writers and winning entries were paid for their short stories, which were collected into an anthology. My story was one of that first year’s 18 winners. For each of the next two annual contests, I sent a story that was selected. At that point, I’d rendered myself ineligible to enter future contests, after which John Ordovery, the editor at Pocket overseeing the contest, offered me a contract to write a *Star Trek* novel. That was in 2000, and since then I’ve been writing or co-writing (among other things) *Star Trek* novels for Simon & Schuster as well as other media tie-in works for other publishers.

TIPS

If you’re looking to write in this genre, you should be very welcoming to the idea of collaborating on several levels. This certainly includes your editor, with whom you’ll likely develop and refine your story. You’ll also need to be comfortable with the increased level of scrutiny your work will bring from the IP owners, as they’ll be acting to protect “the brand” and ensure your story appropriately represents the property, its characters, and even its values. Finally, you’ll encounter far more success in this field if you’re able to embrace the notion of also working in concert with other writers. This doesn’t necessarily mean working with a co-writer, unless you’re already doing that, but rather collaborating with other authors who are also contributing to a property’s “expanded universe.” The writers of novels and other tie-ins for larger, established properties like *Star Wars*, *Star Trek*, *Alien*, *HALO*, and so on tend to coordinate their efforts with one another to ensure consistency. The editor of such works will likely spearhead these efforts, but I’ve found that simply reaching out to my fellow scribes when

working on, for example, a *Star Trek* novel which might cross paths with something they've written or might currently be working on tends to be quite beneficial and rewarding. In truth, I find that sort of partnership and teamwork to be one of the most fun aspects of the job.

MEDIA TIE-IN WORKS:

NOVELS

STAR TREK

Original Series: In the Name of Honor – 2002

The Next Generation: A Time to Sow (w/Kevin Dilmore) – 2004

The Next Generation: A Time to Harvest (w/Kevin Dilmore) – 2004

Vanguard: Summon the Thunder (w/Kevin Dilmore) – 2006

Mirror Universe: Age of the Empress (w/Kevin Dilmore) – 2007

Vanguard: Open Secrets – 2009

The Next Generation: Typhon Pact – Paths of Disharmony – 2010

Vanguard: What Judgments Come (w/Kevin Dilmore) – 2011

Original Series: That Which Divides – 2012

Original Series: From History's Shadow – 2013

The Next Generation: The Fall – Peaceable Kingdoms – 2013

Seekers: Point of Divergence (w/Kevin Dilmore) – 2014

The Next Generation: Armageddon's Arrow – 2015

Seekers: All That's Left (w/Kevin Dilmore) – 2015

Original Series: Elusive Salvation – 2016

Original Series: Legacies – Purgatory's Key (w/Kevin Dilmore) – 2016

The Next Generation: Headlong Flight – 2017

The Next Generation: Hearts and Minds – 2017

Discovery: Drastic Measures – 2018

The Next Generation: Available Light – 2019

Original Series: Agents of Influence – 2020

The Next Generation: Coda – Moments Asunder – 2021

Discovery: Somewhere to Belong – 2023

The Next Generation: Pliable Truths – 2024

MARVEL

Iron Man: Tony Stark Declassified (w/Kevin Dilmore) – 2023

Captain America: Steve Rogers Declassified (w/Kevin Dilmore) – 2024

Trial By Fire – 2016

THE 4400 (original series)

Wet Work (w/Kevin Dilmore) – 2008

NOVELLAS

STAR TREK

Starfleet Corps of Engineers (SCE): Interphase, Book 1 (w/Kevin Dilmore) – 2001

SCE: Interphase, Book 2 (w/Kevin Dilmore) – 2001

SCE: Foundations, Book 1 (w/Kevin Dilmore) – 2002

SCE: Foundations, Book 2 (w/Kevin Dilmore) – 2002

SCE: Foundations, Book 3 (w/Kevin Dilmore) – 2002
SCE: Home Fires (w/Kevin Dilmore) – 2003
SCE: Grand Designs (w/Kevin Dilmore) – 2004
SCE: Where Time Stands Still (w/Kevin Dilmore) – 2004
SCE: Distant Early Warning (w/Kevin Dilmore) – 2006
Original Series: Mere Anarchy – Things Fall Apart (w/Kevin Dilmore) – 2006
SCE: Turn the Page (w/Kevin Dilmore) – 2006
Original Series: The First Peer (w/Kevin Dilmore) – 2010
Vanguard: Almost Tomorrow – 2011
Vanguard: In Tempest's Wake – 2012

MARS ATTACKS

The Armageddon Directive – 2016

SHORT STORIES

Reflections – Star Trek: Strange New Worlds Vol 1 – 1998
Almost, But Not Quite – Star Trek: Strange New Worlds Vol 2 – 1999
The Aliens Are Coming! – Star Trek: Strange New Worlds Vol 3 – 2000
Loose Ends – Star Trek: New Frontier: No Limits – 2003
Field Expediency – Star Trek: Tales of the Dominion War (w/Kevin Dilmore) – 2004
Enemy Unknown! – Rocket League RPG (w/Kevin Dilmore) – 2005
First, Do No Harm – Star Trek: Constellations (w/Kevin Dilmore) – 2006
Acts of Compassion – Star Trek: The Sky's the Limit (w/Kevin Dilmore) – 2007
Ill Winds – Star Trek: Mirror Universe (w/Kevin Dilmore) – 2009
Message In A Bottle – Planet of the Apes: Tales from the Forbidden Zone – 2017
Recon – Predator: If It Bleeds – 2017
Dark Truths – Unioverse: Tales of the Reconvergence (w/Kevin Dilmore) – 2023
Mass Distraction – Double Trouble: Two-Fisted Team-Ups – 2023
A Study In Vacuum – Multiverse of Mystery – 2024

POP CULTURE/REFERENCE WORKS

STAR TREK

Hidden Universe Travel Guides: Vulcan – 2016
Hidden Universe Travel Guides: The Klingon Empire – 2017
IncrediBuilds: USS Enterprise NCC-1701 (YA/model kit) – 2018
IncrediBuilds: USS Enterprise NCC-1701-D (YA/model kit) – 2018
Kirk Fu Manual: A Guide to Starfleet's Most Feared Martial Art – 2020
IncrediBuilds: Klingon Bird of Prey (YA/model kit) – 2020

TOY STORY

IncrediBuilds: Buzz Lightyear: To Infinity...and Beyond! (YA/model kit) – 2019
IncrediBuilds: Sheriff Woody: You've Got A Friend In Me (YA/model kit) – 2019

JURASSIC WORLD

The Official Cookbook (w/Elena P. Craig) – 2022

ROLEPLAYING GAMES

STAR TREK ADVENTURES

Core Rulebook (contributor) – 2017

The Klingon Empire Core Rulebook (contributor) – 2020

The Shackleton Expanse Campaign Guide (contributor) – 2021

Second Edition Technical Manual (contributor) – 2025

MARVEL MULTIVERSE

Spider-Verse Expansion (contributor) – 2025

PLANET OF THE APES

The ANSA Files: Classic Film Series Sourcebook (contributor) – 2025

SOCIAL MEDIA:

<https://daytonward.wordpress.com>

DEBBIE DAUGHETEE

BIO & PUBLISHED WORKS:

Before I became a television writer, I worked as a writer's assistant for Dan Curtis. When the person who handled all of the licenses heard that I had fallen ill and could no longer write for TV, he called and asked if I wanted to write audio dramas for Dark Shadows. I ended up writing three DS audio dramas for Big Finish. Subsequently, I wrote short stories for Knight Stalker and Green Hornet for Moonstone Books. I got those gigs because my friend Nancy Holder recommended me. My advice to people who want to break in is to network, network, network. I have found other writers to be very supportive and willing to help introduce you to the right people when they can. Attend conventions, join organizations, and participate in social media groups.

MEDIA TIE-IN WORKS:

In the World of Dark Shadows

Final Judgment

Lost Girl

Echoes of Insanity

Kolchak, the Night Stalker: Touch of Silk

Shadows Past and Present

Green Hornet

The Last Dance

Bitter Oils, Broken Ground.

WEBSITE:

<https://deborahdaughetee.com>

DELILAH S. DAWSON

BIO

Delilah S. Dawson is the New York Times bestselling writer of Star Wars: Phasma, Galaxy's Edge: Black Spire, Inquisitor: Rise of the Red Blade, The Secrets of Long Snoot, The Perfect Weapon, and Scorched; Disney Mirrorverse: Pure of Heart, It Will Only Hurt for a Moment, Guillotine, Midnight at the Houdini, Bloom, The Violence, the Blud series, Servants of the Storm, the HIT series, Wake of Vultures and the Shadow series (as Lila Bowen), and a variety of short stories in anthologies such as Death & Honey, Robots vs. Fairies, Hellboy: an Assortment of Horrors, Violent Ends, Carniepunk, Three Slices, and Last Night a Superhero Saved My Life. With Kevin Hearne, she is the co-writer of the Tales of Pell series. Her middle grade works include Mine, Camp Scare, and the Minecraft Mob Squad series

HOW I BROKE IN:

My first book came out in 2012, a steampunk vampire Romance called Wicked as They Come. In 2013, I went to a small literary convention in Macon, GA, the Crossroads Literary Conference, in part to meet my online acquaintance Chuck Wendig, who is now one of my closest friends. At that con, I met Kevin Maurer, who co-wrote the New York Times-bestselling book No Easy Day about the mission that killed Osama Bin Laden. We were discussing at the bar how much we both wanted to write Star Wars. A few months later, I received an email from an editor at Amazon who was looking for writers for the new Kindle Worlds program; Kevin had recommended me, and the editor wanted to know if I was interested in writing a Kindle Worlds novella about the Valiant Comics character Shadowman. That was my first IP work, and I soon learned that tie-ins are a very niche skill--and one of my greatest joys.

TIPS

Tie-in work is an extremely specialized skill that few writers possess. You must be able to produce around 100,000 quality words in 30-45 days and have tough enough skin to withstand so many editorial comments that Word might crash. You have to be able to make a quick turnaround on revisions and make changes on a dime with a cheerful attitude. You need to be able to produce multiple pitches in a short time frame and work with your editor to craft an outline that will fulfill the needs of the franchise while still staying true to yourself and your vision. Most writers have to build up to this kind of grueling pace, flexing their writing muscles and developing the speed and sharpness to thrive instead of hitting burnout. If you want to write tie-ins, you'll want to perfect your own body of work first to prove that you have skill, speed, and attitude necessary for the job. Getting an IP job is not about being the person who knows or loves

the property best; it's about being the person capable of performing quality work in a quicker-than-usual time frame with a positive attitude, crafting a story so fine-tuned to the property that the fans are willing to trust you with something they love.

PUBLISHED WORKS:

Since then, my tie-in novels include the New York Times-bestselling Star Wars: Phasma, Star Wars Galaxy's Edge: Black Spire, Star Wars Inquisitor: Rise of the Red Blade, The Skywalker Saga, the Minecraft Mob Squad series, Disney Mirrorverse: Pure of Heart, and the upcoming Dungeons & Dragons Ravenloft: Heir of Strahd and Marvel Thor & Loki: Epic Tales from Marvel Mythology. My tie-in comics include Marvel Action: Spider Man, Adventure Time, Labyrinth, The X-Files, Firefly, Star Wars Adventures, Rick & Morty Presents, Disney Descendants, Batman: The Brave and the Bold, The Legend of Korra, World of Warcraft, and a story about Artemis the Amazon, and I've written short stories in the worlds of Hellboy, Alien vs. Predator, Vampire The Masquerade, and Diablo.

WEBSITE AND SOCIAL MEDIA LINKS

www.delilahsdawson.com

Bluesky, Threads, Instagram: @delilahsdawson

GEORGE IVANOFF

HOW I BROKE IN:

There wasn't just one way in for me. My first break (a *Doctor Who* short story for Big Finish) was via a recommendation from another author. My second break (articles and a book for an Australian kids educational series called *Behind The News*) came about because I was an education writer, so there was a cross-over. And my third break (a short story for *The X-Files* anthology *Secret Agendas*) was via a story call out to IAMTW members from the book's editor Jonathan Maberry. From then on, it was a case of me having had experience in the area and commissioning editors knowing who I was.

TIPS

Never give up. Keep persisting. Keep pitching. I pitch way more than I get. For every successful commission, there are at least 5 unsuccessful pitches.

MEDIA TIE-IN WORKS:

<https://georgeivanoff.com.au/media-tie-in/>

BIO

George Ivanoff is an Australian children's author with over 100 books, best known for his interactive *You Choose* series and his non-fiction *Survival Guides*. He has three new children's books scheduled for publication over the next twelve months. George has a sideline in media tie-in writing. He has just handed in a *Doctor Who* spinoff story for an upcoming anthology and is now working on an as yet unannounced tie-in project that he is super excited about.

WEBSITE

<https://georgeivanoff.com.au>

GREG COX

HOW I BROKE IN:

The short version is that I started out on the other side of the desk, editing movie novelizations and media tie-in books (Freddy Krueger, Mortal Kombat, Farscape, et cetera) as a full-time editor at Tor Books, while occasionally writing fiction on the side. It's a small, specialized niche of publishing so I was naturally acquainted with other tie-in editors, who started throwing writing jobs at me. "Hey, Greg, you're into Batman, right? Think you can get me an outline by Thursday?"

Gradually, I segued from being a full-time editor who wrote tie-in books on the side to being a full-time writer who still did some editing on the side.

TIPS

I'm all about immersion. For example, if I'm writing a new Star Trek novel, I will eat, breathe, and sleep Star Trek for the duration. I'll binge-watch the movies and episodes, and keep the soundtrack albums in heavy rotation while I'm actually writing at the keyboard. All to get myself into the proper Star Trek groove. (Ditto for Superman, Godzilla, Planet of the Apes, you name it.)

In addition, I think it's vital to try to get the characters' voices right. In my experience, nothing knocks a reader out of a tie-in novel faster than their favorite characters' not sounding like themselves. ("Picard wouldn't say that!") And this is where immersing yourself in the source material pays off; ideally, you want to absorb the speech patterns so that they come naturally to you when you're putting words in their mouths. \

BIO

Greg Cox is the *New York Times* bestselling author of numerous novels and short stories, including the official movie novelizations of *War for the Planet of the Apes*, *Godzilla*, *Man of Steel*, *The Dark Knight Rises*, *Ghost Rider*, *Daredevil*, *Death Defying Acts*, and the first

three *Underworld* movies, as well as books and stories based on such popular series as *Alias*, *Buffy the Vampire Slayer*, *CSI: Crime Scene Investigation*, *Farscape*, *The 4400*, *Leverage*, *The Librarians*, *Roswell*, *Star Trek*, *Terminator*, *Warehouse 13*, *The X-Files*, and *Xena: Warrior Princess*, along with various Marvel and DC Comics.

He has received six Scribe Awards, including one for Life Achievement, from the International Association of Media Tie-In Writers.

MEDIA TIE-IN WORKS:

- NOVELS:

War for the Planet of the Apes (Titan, July 2017)

Godzilla (Titan, May 2014). New York Times Bestseller.

Man of Steel (movie novelization, Titan, June 2013). New York Times Bestseller.

The Dark Knight Rises (movie novelization; Titan, July 2012). New York Times Bestseller.

Final Crisis: The Novel (comic book novelization, Ace, July 2010)

Countdown: The Novel (comic book novelization, Ace, July 2009.)

Underworld: Rise of the Lycans (movie novelization, Pocket, Jan 2009.)

Death Defying Acts (movie novelization; Pocket Books, July 2008.)

52: The Novel (comic book novelization, Ace, July 2007)

Ghost Rider (movie novelization; Pocket Books, Feb 2007)

Infinite Crisis: The Novel (comic book novelization; Ace, October 2006.)

Underworld: Evolution (movie novelization; Pocket Books, Jan 2006)

Underworld (movie novelization; Pocket Books, Sept 2003)

Daredevil (movie novelization; Onyx, Jan 2003; hardcover edition, Science Fiction Book Club)

The Eugenics Wars duology

Star Trek: The Eugenics Wars, Volume One (Pocket Books; hardcover, July

2001; paperback, April 2002)

Star Trek: The Eugenics Wars, Volume Two (Pocket Books; hardcover, April 2002; paperback, April 2003)

The Q Continuum Trilogy (New York Times Bestseller)

Star Trek: The Next Generation: Q-Space (Pocket Books, Aug 1998)

Star Trek: The Next Generation: Q-Zone (Pocket Books, Aug 1998)

Star Trek: The Next Generation: Q-Strike (Pocket Books, Sept 1998)

[Published jointly as Star Trek: The Next Generation: The Q Continuum, hardcover omnibus, (Science Fiction Book Club, Nov 1998); trade paper omnibus (Pocket Books, Oct 2003, with added interview with author)]

The Gamma Quest trilogy

X-Men/Avengers: Lost and Found (Berkley Boulevard, July 1999)

X-Men/Avengers: Search and Rescue (Berkley Boulevard, Aug 1999)

X-Men/Avengers: Friend or Foe? (Berkley Boulevard, June 2000)

Additional Novels

Star Trek: Identity Theft (Galley Books, November 2025, forthcoming)

Star Trek: Lost to Eternity (Gallery Books, July 2024)

Star Trek: A Contest of Principles (Gallery Books, November 2020)

Star Trek: The Antares Maelstrom (Gallery Books, Aug 2019)

Batman: The Court of Owls (Titan, Feb 2019)

The Librarians and the Pot of Gold (Tor Books, Oct 2018)

The Librarians and the Mother Goose Chase (Tor Books, April 2017)

The Librarians and the Lost Lamp (Tor Books, October 2016)

Star Trek: Legacies I: Captain to Captain (Pocket, June 2016)

Star Trek: Miasma (Pocket, Feb 2016, ebook only)

Star Trek: Child of Two Worlds (Pocket Books, Dec 2015)

Star Trek: Foul Deeds Will Rise (Pocket Books, Nov 2014)

Star Trek: No Time Like the Past (Pocket Books, March 2014). New York Times bestseller.

Leverage: The Bestseller Job (Ace, May 2013). Scribe Award winner.

Star Trek: The Weight of Worlds (Pocket Books, March 2013)

Riese: Kingdom Falling (Simon & Schuster, June 2012)

Star Trek: The Rings of Time (Pocket Books, Jan 2012)

Warehouse 13: A Touch of Fever (Pocket Books, June 2011)

C.S.I.: Shock Treatment (Pocket Books, Nov 2010).

Terminator Salvation: Cold War (Titan, October 2009). Scribe Award Winner.

The 4400: Welcome to Promise City (Pocket Star, July 2009)

C.S.I.: Head Hunter (Pocket Books, Oct 2008). Scribe Award Winner.

The 4400: The Vesuvius Prophecy (Pocket Star, July 2008)

Alias: Namesakes (Pocket Books, June 2006)

Alias: The Road Not Taken (Pocket Books, Nov 2005)

Fantastic Four: War Zone (Pocket Books, Aug 2005)

Alias: Two of a Kind? (Pocket Books, May 2005)

Star Trek: To Reign in Hell (Pocket Books, hardcover, Jan 2005; paperback, June 2006)

Underworld: Blood Enemy (Pocket Books, Dec 2004)

Roswell: Loose Ends (Pocket Books, May 2001)

Star Trek: Assignment: Eternity (Pocket Books, Jan 1998)

Iron Man: Operation A.I.M. (Berkley/Byron Preiss, Dec 1996).

Star Trek: Voyager: The Black Shore (Pocket Books, May 1997.)

Star Trek: The Next Generation: Dragon's Honor (Pocket Books, January 1996.) With Kij Johnson.

Iron Man: The Armor Trap (Berkley/Byron Preiss, July 1995).

Star Trek: Deep Space Nine: Devil in the Sky (Pocket Books, June 1995). With John Gregory Betancourt.

Robert Silverberg's Time Tours #5: The Pirate Paradox (Harper Paperbacks, 1991). With Nick Baron.

SCRIPTS (AUDIO):

Tales From the Crypt: "A Little Stranger" (scifi.com, Seeing-Ear Theater, 2000). Based on a classic comic book story. Available at: www.scifi.com/set/tales/episodes/episode2. Released as part of TALES FROM CRYPT audiobook (HighBridge, 2002).

SHORT STORIES:

"The Lost Noel," STAR TREK EXPLORER magazine (Winter 2024, digital supplement)

"Housewarming," STAR TREK EXPLORER magazine (Summer 2024)

"The Trouble with Jones," STAR TREK EXPLORER magazine (issue?)

"Pulaski 2.0," STAR TREK EXPLORER magazine (issue?)

"Scramble," STAR TREK EXPLORER magazine (issue?)

"The Way to Exile," STAR TREK EXPLORER magazine (Summer 2022)

"Seven > Seven," STAR TREK EXPLORER magazine (Spring 2022)

"Endangered Species," Planet of the Apes: Tales from the Forbidden Zone (Titan, Jan 2017)

"Mummiya," The X-Files: The Truth is Out There (iDW, Feb 2016)

"Ashen to Ashes," The Avenger: The Roaring Heart of the Crucible (Moonstone, June 2013)

"I Had the Green Hornet's Love Child!", The Green Hornet Chronicles (Moonstone, 2010.)

"Against the Terror!", THE PHANTOM: GENERATIONS #12, (Moonstone, June 2010).

"Work is Hard," Star Trek: Seven Deadly Sins (Pocket, March 2010).

"The Weeping Woman," Tales of Zorro (Moonstone, August 2008)

"Thinking of You," Star Trek: The Sky's the Limit (Pocket, Oct 2007)

"The Worst of Both Worlds," Star Trek: Mirror Universe Part 1: Glass Empires (Pocket, Feb 2007)

"Sideshow Slayer," Buffy the Vampire Slayer: Tales of the Slayer, Volume Four (Pocket Pulse, November 2004)

"Night of the Vulture," Star Trek: Tales of Dominion War, (Pocket, July 2004)

"Blood and Brine," Buffy the Vampire Slayer: Tales of the Slayer, Volume Two (Pocket Pulse, Jan 2003).

"Home Alone," FARSCAPE: The Official Magazine, Nov/Dec 2002

"Lese-Majeste," FARSCAPE: The Official Magazine, June/July 2002

"Samsara," FARSCAPE: The Official Magazine, September 2001

"Bard and Breakfast," The Further Adventures of Xena: Warrior Princess, edited by Martin H. Greenberg. (Ace Books, September 2001)

"Bedside Matters," AMAZING STORIES, Spring 2000. Reprinted in Star Trek: The Amazing Stories (Pocket Books, August 2002)

"Though Hell Should Bar the Way," Star Trek: Enterprise Logs, edited by Carol Greenberg. (Pocket Books, June 2000)

"All Creatures Great and Skrull," The Ultimate Super-Villains, edited by Stan Lee, (Boulevard, Aug 1996.)

"Cold Blood," The Ultimate Spider-Man, edited by Stan Lee. (Putnam/Berkley, trade paper, November 1994; Boulevard, pb, Jan 1996.) An abridged version appeared in WEB OF SPIDER-MAN #120 as a teaser for the anthology.

"Copycat," The Further Adventures of Batman, Vol. 3, edited by Martin H. Greenberg (Bantam, 1993). With John Gregory Betancourt. Reprinted in Tales of the Batman, edited by Martin H. Greenberg (MJF Books, 1995).

"Catwomen," The Further Adventures of Batman, Vol. 3, edited by Martin H. Greenberg (Bantam, 1993). With John Gregory Betancourt. Reprinted in Legends of the Batman, edited by Martin H. Greenberg (MJF Books, 1997).

"Endangered Species," The Further Adventures of Batman, Vol. 2, edited by Martin H. Greenberg (Bantam, 1992). Reprinted in Tales of the Batman, edited by Martin H. Greenberg (MJF Books, 1995).

JEFFREY J. MARIOTTE

BIO:

Jeffrey J. Mariotte is the multi-genre, multiple-award-winning author of more than 60 novels, dozens of short stories, and nearly 200 comic books and graphic novels, among other things. He has worked in virtually every aspect of the book business as a bookstore manager and owner, VP of marketing, and editor for various publishing companies. When he's not writing, reading, or editing something, he's probably out enjoying the desert landscape around the Arizona home he shares with his family and dog and cats.

HOW I BROKE IN:

I was working in comics publishing when my friend Christopher Golden was invited to write a tie-in book about characters my company published (and about whom I'd written comics). Chris was busy, but didn't want to turn down the job, so he asked me to collaborate with him. After that experience, he introduced me to his Buffy the Vampire Slayer editor at Simon & Schuster, who invited me to write a Buffy novelization, then a series of original novels based on the Angel spin-off. It all grew from Chris's kind invitation.

MEDIA TIE-IN LICENSES WORKED WITH:

AS A WRITER:

1. Buffy the Vampire Slayer
2. Angel
3. Charmed
4. Star Trek

5. CSI
6. CSI Miami
7. Narcos
8. NCIS: New Orleans
9. NCIS: Los Angeles
10. Mafia III
11. Dark Sun (D&D)
12. Spider-Man
13. Superman (DC Universe)
14. Deadlands
15. Conan
16. 30 Days of Night
17. Supernatural
18. Gene Roddenberry's Andromeda
19. Las Vegas
20. Gen13
21. Zorro
22. Hellraiser
23. The Phantom
24. True Blood
25. V-Wars
26. X-Files
27. Evil Dead 2
28. The Shield
29. Boogeyman
30. Criminal Minds
31. Warbirds of Mars

AS AN EDITOR

1. Star Trek,
2. CSI
3. CSI Miami

4. World of Warcraft
5. Thundercats
6. Dawn of the Dead
7. The Time Machine
8. Eight-Legged Freaks
9. 24
10. Deadlands
11. Underworld

WEBSITE AND SOCIAL MEDIA LINKS

Find him online at www.jeffmariotte.com, <https://www.facebook.com/JeffreyJMariotte/>, <https://bsky.app/profile/jeffmariotte.bsky.social>

JENNIFER BRODY

BIO

Jennifer Brody (a/k/a Vera Strange) is the author of the DISNEY CHILLS series, THE 13TH CONTINUUM trilogy, and SPECTRE DEEP 6, which was a Bram Stoker Award Finalist, prompting Forbes to call her “a star in the graphic novel world.” She is the co-author of ALL IS FOUND: A FROZEN ANTHOLOGY with her spooky Elsa story and STAR WARS: STORIES OF JEDI AND SITH, where she penned the Darth Vader story. At least two more media tie-in works are in the pipeline -- but still too secret to publicly announce.

HOW I BROKE IN:

I wasn't planning to break into media tie-in fiction, but this is how it happened. First, I wrote and sold my debut series -- THE 13TH CONTINUUM -- a YA dystopian that came out around the Hunger Games era. That book put me on the radar. Then, I met an editor at Disney for a friend's book launch. He had been her editor, and we hit it off. He remembered me when he was trying to launch a new middle grade horror series for Disney with villains and contacted me. I had to audition with a few chapters and a take ... that led to me being hired with a 3-book deal. The series took off and expanded to seven books. "Making villains scary again" put me on the radar of an editor at Lucasfilm, who contacted me with the mission: "Make Darth Vader scary again." I wrote the cover canon Darth Vader story for the anthology "Star Wars: Stories of Jedi and Sith." Essentially, it boils down to 1) writing great work that gets published and 2) networking and delivering (usually on tight insane deadlines) once you land IP writing opportunities.

TIPS

I touched on that above! But the big key is to write and publish work in your "sweet spot" that can then attract the interest of the editors who hire for media tie-in fiction. Networking and

appearing on panels can help, along with joining author trade groups. Long before I was hired for Star Wars, I used to guest on a lot of Star Wars podcasts as a science fiction author. So, when the opportunity arrived, I was ready for it! Also, learning how to outline and write on tight deadlines is a great craft skill that is very necessary for IP -- along with being able to take direction and work within IP universes (that you didn't create). Finally, you need to get good at pitching ideas and concepts, both on the page and in person / on zoom calls.

MEDIA TIE-IN WORKS (As Jennifer Brody or Vera Strange):

Disney Chills

1. [Part of Your Nightmare](#) (2020)
2. [Fiends on the Other Side](#) (2020)
3. [Second Star to the Fright](#) (2021)
4. [Be Careful What You Wish For](#) (2021)
5. [Liar, Liar, Head on Fire](#) (2021)
6. [Once Upon a Scream](#) (2022)
7. [The Circle of Ter-ROAR](#) (2023)

All is found (2023)

A Frozen Anthology

(Disney Frozen Polar Nights)

edited by

Heather Knowles and [Mari Mancusi](#)

WEBSITE AND SOCIAL MEDIA LINKS

More info: www.jenniferbrody.com

Substack: <https://jenniferbrody.substack.com/>

X/tiktok: [@jenniferbrody](#)

Insta/FB [@jenniferbrodywriter](#)

JOHN PEEL

BIO:

John Peel (born 1954) is a British writer, best known for his TV series tie-in novels and novelizations. He has written under several pseudonyms, including "John Vincent" and "Nicholas Adams". He lives on Long Island, New York. While his wife is a US citizen, Peel continues to travel under a British passport.

HOW I BROKE IN:

Actually, rather a funny story. St. Martin's Press approached me about wanting to do a tie-in to "Doctor Who" when it had started to become popular in the US. I honestly didn't think of suggesting I write one for them - instead, I suggested they contact Terry Nation, who'd written

books on the show in the Sixties, and was best known as creator of the Daleks. St. Martin's asked me to contact Terry, and I did, suggesting to him that he update a book he'd previously written. At the time I spoke with him, he was working for Paramount TV, who were keeping him busy, so HE was the one who suggested I update his book, so that's how we agreed to do it. Meanwhile, Target Books in England approached Terry, asking for permission to adapt one of his TV Dalek stories as a novel. He agreed - provided they let me write it. They were so desperate, they agreed, even though I'd never written a novel before. Then Terry called me up and asked if I was interested in writing a novel based on his scripts. Of course I said yes, and then he told me he was glad because he'd just brokered the deal...

TIPS:

Advice? Lots of it, mostly useless. Basically, stay alert to possibilities, stick to writing for series you actually enjoy, and always remember to have fun. If YOU don't have fun, the readers certainly won't!

MEDIA TIE-IN WORKS:

Carmen Sandiego series

All published by [Western Publishing](#).

- *Where in America is Carmen Sandiego?*
- *Where in America's Past is Carmen Sandiego?*
- *Where in Europe is Carmen Sandiego?*
- *Where in Space is Carmen Sandiego?*
- *Where in the World is Carmen Sandiego?*
- *Where in the USA is Carmen Sandiego?*
- *Where in the USA is Carmen Sandiego, Part II?*
- *Where in Time is Carmen Sandiego?*
- *Where in Time is Carmen Sandiego, Part II?*

` Doctor Who series

- [The Chase](#)
- [The Daleks' Master Plan, Part I: Mission to the Unknown](#)
- [The Daleks' Master Plan, Part II: The Mutation of Time](#)
- [The Power of the Daleks](#)
- [The Evil of the Daleks](#)
- [War of the Daleks](#)
- [Legacy of the Daleks](#)
- [The Gallifrey Chronicles](#)
- [Evolution](#)
- [Timewyrm: Genesys](#)

Dragonhome Series

- *The Secret of Dragonhome* (1998)
- *The Slayers of Dragonhome*
- *The Siege Of Dragonhome*

Eerie, Indiana series

- *Eerie, Indiana: Bureau of Lost* ([ISBN 0-380-79775-5](#))
- *Eerie, Indiana: Simon and Marshall's Excellent Adventure* ([ISBN 0-380-79777-1](#))

James Bond, Jr. series

All published by [Puffin Books](#) in 1992 under the pen name "John Vincent".

- *A View to a Thrill*
- *The Eiffel Target*
- *Sandblast*
- *Live And Let's Dance*
- *Sword of Death*
- *High Stakes*

Shockers series

Published by [Grosset & Dunlap](#).

- *Shockers: Alien Prey*
- *Shockers: Blood Wolf*
- *Shockers: Dead End*
- *Shockers: Ghost Lake*
- *Shockers: Grave Doubts*
- *Shockers: Night Wings*

Star Trek: The Next Generation series

- *Here There Be Dragons* (1993)
- *The Death of Princes* (1997)

Star Trek: Deep Space Nine, Young Adult series

- *Prisoners of Peace* (1994)
- *Field Trip* (1995)

Star Trek: Deep Space Nine series

- *Objective: Bajor* (May 1996, [ISBN 0-671-56811-6](#))

Tombstones series

Published by [Pocket Books](#) in 1995.

- *Dances With Werewolves*
- *The Last Drop*

2099 series

- *Doomsday* (September 1999, [ISBN 0-439-06030-3](#))
- *Betrayal* (November 1999, [ISBN 0-439-06031-1](#))
- *Traitor* (January 2000, [ISBN 0-439-06032-X](#))
- *Revolution* (March 2000, [ISBN 0-439-06033-8](#))
- *Meltdown* (May 2000, [ISBN 0-439-06034-6](#))
- *Firestorm* (July 2000, [ISBN 0-439-06035-4](#))

KEITH R.A. DeCANDIDO

BIO:

Keith R.A. DeCandido has written more than 60 novels, more than 115 short stories, more than 75 comic books, and more nonfiction than he's entirely comfortable counting. His media tie-in resume includes fiction based on TV shows (*Star Trek*, *Farscape*, *Supernatural*), movies (*Alien*, *Serenity*, *Cars*), games (*Dungeons & Dragons*, *Resident Evil*, *World of Warcraft*), comic books (Spider-Man, X-Men, Thor), and literary characters (Sherlock Holmes, Professor Challenger, Joe Ledger), as well as editing a wide range of tie-ins, notably the Marvel novels published from 1994-2000 and the monthly *Star Trek* eBook novella line from 2000-2008. The International Association of Media Tie-in Writers favored him with a Lifetime Achievement Award in 2009, which means he never needs to achieve anything ever again. He also has written a ton of material in universes of his own creation, most recently the new *Supernatural Crimes Unit: NYPD* series from the Weird Tales Presents imprint of Blackstone Publishing. Keith is also a pop-culture critic (primarily for the award-winning web site Reactor Magazine, formerly Tor.com), a martial artist (a fourth-degree black belt in karate, in which he both trains and teaches), a musician (currently percussionist for the parody band Boogie Knights), and an avid baseball fan.

HOW I BROKE IN:

In 1994, I was the co-editor with John Gregory Betancourt of a new line of novels and anthologies based on Marvel superheroes. We were putting together an anthology of Spider-Man stories. We had sent six different proposals by six different authors for stories featuring Venom, all of which Marvel rejected. The problem was that Venom was a) on the cover and b) by far Spidey's most popular villain at the time, so we can't just not have Venom in the book. We're past the 11th hour at this point, so we ask Marvel what they want in a Venom story: they give us a one-sentence springboard. We don't have time to assign it to anyone else, so John and I wrote the story ourselves. That's how I published my first professional short story, also my first work of tie-in fiction, "An Evening in the Bronx with Venom" in 1994's *The Ultimate Spider-Man*, written **with** John Gregory Betancourt.

Bio:

TIPS:

Remember that when you're writing in someone else's universe, your job is to immerse your writing *in that universe*. It needs to feel like the world that the readers are familiar with from the TV show or movie or game or comic or other tie-in fiction in that world. Your job isn't to fix it or improve it, but to add to and enrich the existing tapestry.

MEDIA TIE-IN WORKS:

Star Trek novels

- [*The Next Generation* - Diplomatic Implausibility](#) (2001), [ISBN 0-671-78554-0](#)
- [*Deep Space Nine* - Gateways: Demons of Air and Darkness](#) (2001), [ISBN 0-7434-1852-2](#)
- *The Brave and the Bold* (2002), [ISBN 0-7434-1922-7](#) (Book 1), [ISBN 0-7434-1923-5](#) (Book 2)
- [*The Lost Era* - The Art of the Impossible](#) (2003), [ISBN 0-7434-6405-2](#)
- [*I.K.S. Gorkon* - A Good Day to Die](#) (2003), [ISBN 0-7434-5714-5](#)
- *I.K.S. Gorkon* - Honor Bound (2003), [ISBN 0-7434-5716-1](#)
- *The Next Generation* - [*A Time for War, A Time for Peace*](#) (2004), [ISBN 0-7434-9179-3](#)
- *Ferenginar: Satisfaction Is Not Guaranteed in Worlds of Deep Space Nine* Volume 3 (2005), [ISBN 0-7434-8353-7](#)
- *I.K.S. Gorkon* - Enemy Territory (2005), [ISBN 1-4165-0014-6](#)
- *Articles of the Federation* (2005), [ISBN 1-4165-0015-4](#)
- *The Mirror-Scaled Serpent* in [*Mirror Universe* - Obsidian Alliances](#) (2007), [ISBN 0-7434-9253-6](#)
- *The Next Generation* - Q&A (2007), [ISBN 1-4165-2741-9](#) (nominee, Best Speculative Fiction Novel, [Scribe Awards](#))
- [*Klingon Empire* - A Burning House](#) (2008), [ISBN 1-4165-5647-8](#)
- *A Guttled World in Myriad Universes - Echoes and Refractions* (2008), [ISBN 1-4165-7181-7](#)
- *A Singular Destiny* (2009), [ISBN 1-4165-9495-7](#) (nominee, Best Speculative Fiction Novel, [Scribe Awards](#))

Star Trek novellas, short stories, comic books, etc.

- *The Next Generation* - *Perchance to Dream* (four-issue comic book miniseries, art by Peter Pachoumis and Lucian Rizzo, with Scott Benefiel, February–May 2000) -- collected in *Enemy Unseen* (2001), [ISBN 1-61377-131-2](#), alongside "The Killing Shadows" and "Embrace the Wolf"
- "Horn and Ivory" in *Gateways: What Lay Beyond* (2002), [ISBN 0-7434-5683-1](#)
- "Broken Oaths" in [*Deep Space Nine* - Prophecy and Change](#) (2003), [ISBN 0-7434-7073-7](#)
- "Revelations" in [*New Frontier* - No Limits](#) (2003), [ISBN 0-7434-7707-3](#)
- "The Ceremony of Innocence Is Drowned" in *Tales of the Dominion War* (2004), [ISBN 0-7434-9171-8](#)

- "loDnIpu' vavpu' je" ("Brothers and Fathers") in *Tales from the Captain's Table* (2005), [ISBN 1-4165-0520-2](#)
- "Letting Go" in *Voyager - Distant Shores* (2005), [ISBN 0-7434-9253-6](#)
- "Four Lights" in *The Next Generation - The Sky's the Limit* (2007), [ISBN 0-7434-9255-2](#)
- "Family Matters" in *Mirror Universe - Shards and Shadows* (2009), [ISBN 1-4165-5850-0](#)
- *Alien Spotlight: Klingons: Four Thousand Throats...* (comic book, art by [JK Woodward](#), 2009; winner, Best Single Issue of a Comic Book, [TrekMovie.com](#)) -- collected in *Alien Spotlight Volume 2* (2010), [ISBN 1-60010-612-9](#), alongside Q, Romulans, Tribbles, and Cardassians.
- "The Unhappy Ones" in *Seven Deadly Sins* (2010)
- *Captain's Log: Jellico* (comic book, art by JK Woodward, 2010) -- collected in *Captain's Log* (2011), [ISBN 1-60010-887-3](#), alongside Sulu, Pike, and Harriman.
- *The Klingon Art of War* (2014), [ISBN 1-4767-5739-9](#)
- several chapters of *Star Trek Adventures: Klingon Empire Core Rulebook* (2020)
- *Star Trek Adventures: Incident at Kraav III* (with Fred Love, 2022)
- "You Can't Buy Fate" in *Star Trek Explorer #7* digital supplement (2023) -- collected in *"The Mission" and Other Stories* (2024)
- "The Kellidian Kidnapping" in *Star Trek Explorer #8* (2023) -- collected in *"A Year to the Day I Saw Myself Die" and Other Stories* (2024)
- "Work Worth Doing" in *Star Trek Explorer #9* (2023) -- collected in *"A Year to the Day I Saw Myself Die" and Other Stories* (2024)
- "Attempted Break-In" in *Star Trek Explorer #11* digital supplement (2024)
- "The Sirius Snarl" in *Star Trek Explorer #12* (2024)

Star Trek eBooks

- [S.C.E. \(Starfleet Corps of Engineers\)](#) series (2000–2006)
 - *Fatal Error* (2000)
 - *Cold Fusion* (2001)
 - *Invincible* Books 1-2 (w/[David Mack](#), 2001)
 - *Gateways* epilogue: *Here There Be Monsters* (2001)
 - *War Stories* Books 1-2 (2002)
 - *Breakdowns* (2003)
 - *Security* (2005)
 - *What's Past* Book 6: *Many Splendors* (2006)
- *The Next Generation - Slings and Arrows* Book 6: *Enterprises of Great Pitch and Moment* (2008)

Other novels

- [Spider-Man: Venom's Wrath](#) (written with Jose R. Nieto, 1998), [ISBN 0-425-16574-4](#)
- [Young Hercules: Cheiron's Warriors](#) (1999), [ISBN 0-671-03552-5](#)
- [Young Hercules: The Ares Alliance](#) (1999), [ISBN 0-671-03554-1](#)
- [Farscape: House of Cards](#) (2001), [ISBN 0-8125-6162-7](#)
- [Andromeda: Destruction of Illusions](#) (2003), [ISBN 0-7653-4407-6](#)
- [Spider-Man: Down These Mean Streets](#) (2005), [ISBN 1-4165-0968-2](#) (reprinted in *Spider-Man: The Darkest Hours Omnibus*, 2021, [ISBN 1789096049](#))
- [World of Warcraft: Cycle of Hatred](#) (2006), [ISBN 0-7434-7136-9](#)
- [Buffy the Vampire Slayer: Blackout](#) (2006), [ISBN 1-4169-1917-1](#)
- [StarCraft Ghost: Nova](#) (2006), [ISBN 0-7434-7134-2](#)
- [Buffy the Vampire Slayer: The Deathless](#) (2007), [ISBN 1-4169-3630-0](#) (nominee, Best YA Novel, [Scribe Awards](#))
- [Command & Conquer: Tiberium Wars](#) (2007), [ISBN 0-345-49814-3](#)
- [Supernatural: Nevermore](#) (2007), [ISBN 0-06-137090-8](#)
- [CSI: NY: Four Walls](#) (2008), [ISBN 1-4165-1343-4](#)
- [Supernatural: Bone Key](#) (2008), [ISBN 0-06-143503-1](#)
- [Mack Bolan, Executioner: Code of Honor](#) (under Don Pendleton's name, 2009), [ISBN 0-373-64373-X](#)
- [Supernatural: Heart of the Dragon](#) (2010) [ISBN 1-84856-600-X](#)
- [Mack Bolan, Executioner: Deep Recon](#) (under Don Pendleton's name, 2010)
- [Dungeons & Dragons: Under a Crimson Sun](#) (2011), [ISBN 978-0-7869-5797-2](#)
- [Super City Police Department: The Case of the Claw](#) (2011)
- [The Scattered Earth: Guilt in Innocence](#) (2011)
- [Leverage: The Zoo Job](#) (2013), [ISBN 978-0-425-25384-7](#) (nominee, Best General Original Novel, [Scribe Awards](#))
- [Sleepy Hollow: Children of the Revolution](#) (2014), [ISBN 978-0553419009](#) (nominee, Best Speculative Original Novel, [Scribe Awards](#))
- [Stargate SG-1: Kali's Wrath](#) (2016), [ISBN 978-1905586752](#)
- [Marvel's Thor: Dueling with Giants](#) (2015), Book 1 of the Tales of Asgard trilogy, [ISBN 978-1772751970](#)
- [Marvel's Sif: Even Dragons Have Their Endings](#) (2016), Book 2 of the Tales of Asgard trilogy, [ISBN 978-1772752298](#)
- [Marvel's Warriors Three: Godhood's End](#) (2017), Book 3 of the Tales of Asgard trilogy, [ISBN 978-1772752052](#)
- [A Furnace Sealed](#) (2019), Book 1 of the Adventures of Bram Gold, [ISBN 978-1956463415](#)
- [To Hell and Regroup](#) (with [David Sherman](#), 2020), [ISBN 1942990464](#) Book 3 of Sherman's "18th Race" trilogy
- [Animal](#) (with Munish K. Batra, MD, FACS, 2021), [ISBN 1680571613](#)

- *Feat of Clay* (2024), Book 2 of the Adventures of Bram Gold, [ISBN 978-1956463439](#)
- *Supernatural Crimes Unit Book 1: The Thin Blue Ley-Line* (forthcoming)

Novelizations

- *Gargantua* (1998), [ISBN 0-8125-7098-7](#) (as K. Robert Andreassi)
- *Buffy the Vampire Slayer: The Xander Years Volume 1* (1999), [ISBN 0-671-02629-1](#)
- *Darkness Falls* (2003), [ISBN 0-7434-6632-2](#)
- *Resident Evil: Genesis* (2004), [ISBN 0-7434-9291-9](#)
- *Resident Evil: Apocalypse* (2004), [ISBN 0-7434-9349-4](#)
- *Serenity* (2005), [ISBN 1-4165-0755-8](#)
- *Resident Evil: Extinction* (2007), [ISBN 1-4165-4498-4](#)
- *Alien: Isolation*, [computer game](#) novelization (2019), [ISBN 1789093074](#)

Novellas

- -30- (w/[Steven Savile](#), 2012; reprinted in *Without a License*, 2015), part of the *Viral* series
- *Heroes Reborn: Save the Cheerleader, Destroy the World* (2015; reprinted in *Heroes Reborn Collection Two*, 2016)
- *Super City Cops: Avenging Amethyst* (2016)
- *Super City Cops: Undercover Blues* (2017)
- *Super City Cops: Secret Identities* (2017)
- *Systema Paradoxa: All-the-Way House* (2021)

Short story collections

- *Ragnarok and Roll: Tales of Cassie Zukav, Weirdness Magnet* (2013), [ISBN 0-9860-0856-7](#)
- *Without a License: The Fantastic Worlds of Keith R.A. DeCandido* (2015), [ISBN 978-1-937051-76-1](#)
- *Ragnarok and a Hard Place: More Tales of Cassie Zukav, Weirdness Magnet* (forthcoming)

Other comic books

- *Farscape: The Beginning of the End of the Beginning* (cowritten with [Rockne S. O'Bannon](#), art by Tommy Patterson, four-issue miniseries, December 2008–April 2009)
- *Farscape: Strange Detractors* (cowritten with O'Bannon, art by [Will Sliney](#), four-issue miniseries, April–July 2009)
- *Farscape: D'Argo's Lament* (art by Neil Edwards, four-issue miniseries, April–July 2009)
- *Farscape: Gone and Back* (cowritten with O'Bannon, art by Patterson, July–October 2009)
- *Farscape: D'Argo's Trial* (art by Caleb Cleveland, August–November 2009)

- *Farscape* (monthly series, cowritten with O'Bannon, art by Sliney, November 2009–October 2011)
- *Farscape: D'Argo's Quest* (art by Cleveland, December 2009–March 2010)
- [*StarCraft*: Ghost Academy Volume 1](#) (manga, art by Fernando Furukawa, 2010)
- [*Cars*: Adventures of *Tow Mater*](#) #1–4 (art by Travis Hill, four-issue story arc, August–November 2010)
- [*Kung Fu Panda*: Tales of the Dragon Warrior #1](#) (art by Massimo Asaro, backup story, 2013)
- *Icarus* (cowritten with Gregory A. Wilson, art by Áthila Fabbio, 2020)
- [*Resident Evil*: Infinite Darkness—The Beginning](#) (art by Carmelo Zagaria & Valentina Cuomo, five-issue miniseries, 2022–2023)
- *Farscape 25th Anniversary Special* (the story "The Hynerian Prisoner," art by Francesco Mortarino, forthcoming)
- *Animal* (five-issue miniseries, adaptation of the novel by DeCandido & Munish K. Batra, art by JK Woodward, forthcoming)

Short fiction

- "An Evening in the Bronx with Venom" in *The Ultimate [Spider-Man](#)* (1994), [ISBN 1-57297-103-7](#), with [John Gregory Betancourt](#)
- "Improper Procedure" in *The Ultimate [Silver Surfer](#)* (1995), [ISBN 1-57297-299-8](#)
- "God Sins" in [*Magic: The Gathering*: Distant Planes](#) (1995), [ISBN 0-06-105765-7](#)
- "UNITed We Fall" in [*Doctor Who*: Decalog 3: Consequences](#) (1996), [ISBN 0-426-20478-6](#)
- "Arms and the Man" in *Untold Tales of Spider-Man* (1997), [ISBN 1-57297-294-7](#)
- "How You Can Prevent Forest Fires" in *Urban Nightmares* (1997; reprinted in *Ragnarok and Roll: Tales of Cassie Zukav*, *Weirdness Magnet*, 2013), [ISBN 0-671-87851-4](#)
- "A Bone to Pick" in [*Did You Say Chicks?!*](#) (1997), [ISBN 0-671-87867-0](#), with Marina Frants
- "Playing It SAFE" in *The Ultimate [Hulk](#)* (1998), [ISBN 0-425-16513-2](#)
- "Diary of a False Man" in [*X-Men*: Legends](#) (2000), [ISBN 0-425-17082-9](#)
- "Raymond's Room" in [*Doctor Who*: Missing Pieces](#) (2001)
- "Recurring Character" in *The Further Adventures of [Xena: Warrior Princess](#)* (2001), [ISBN 0-441-00852-6](#)
- "A Vampire and a Vampire Hunter Walk Into a Bar" in *Amazing Stories* #608 (2005; reprinted in *The Town Drunk*, 2006; reprinted in *Without a License*, 2015)
- "Editorial Interference" in *Circles in the Hair* (2006; reprinted in *Without a License*, 2015)

- "Sunday in the Park with Spot" in *Furry Fantastic* (2006; reprinted in *Without a License*, 2015), [ISBN 0-7564-0381-2](#)
- "Life from Lifelessness" in [Doctor Who: Short Trips: Destination Prague](#) (2007)
- "Meiyo" on the Battlecorps.com web site (2008)
- "Three Sides to Every Story" in [BattleTech: 25 Years of Art and Fiction](#) (2009)
- "Letter from Guadalajara" in *More Tales of Zorro* (2011)
- "Under the King's Bridge" in *Liar Liar: Short Stories from Members of the Liars Club* (2011; reprinted in *Without a License*, 2015)
- "Ragnarok and Roll" in *Tales from the House Band Volume 1* (2011; reprinted in *Apocalypse 13*, 2012, and in *Ragnarok and Roll: Tales of Cassie Zukav, Weirdness Magnet*, 2013)
- "The Ballad of Big Charlie" in *V-Wars* (2012; reprinted in *Without a License*, 2015)
- "I Believe I'm Sinkin' Down" in *Tales from the House Band Volume 2* (2012; reprinted in *Ragnarok and Roll: Tales of Cassie Zukav, Weirdness Magnet*, 2013)
- "The Stone of the First High Pontiff" in *Defending the Future: Best-Laid Plans* (2013; reprinted in *Without a License*, 2015)
- "Undine the Boardwalk" in *Ragnarok and Roll: Tales of Cassie Zukav, Weirdness Magnet* (2013; reprinted in *Bad-Ass Faeries: It's Elemental*, 2014)
- "Love Over and Over" in *Ragnarok and Roll: Tales of Cassie Zukav, Weirdness Magnet* (2013)
- "Cayo Hueso Part 1: A Farewell to Cats" in *Ragnarok and Roll: Tales of Cassie Zukav, Weirdness Magnet* (2013)
- "Cayo Hueso Part 2: The Buck Stops Here" in *Ragnarok and Roll: Tales of Cassie Zukav, Weirdness Magnet* (2013)
- "Cayo Hueso Part 3: Twisting Fate" in *Ragnarok and Roll: Tales of Cassie Zukav, Weirdness Magnet* (2013)
- "God of Blunder" in *Ragnarok and Roll: Tales of Cassie Zukav, Weirdness Magnet* (2013)
- "Stone Cold Whodunit" in *With Great Power* (2014)
- "Fish Out of Water" in *Out of Tune* (2014), a tale of Cassie Zukav, weirdness magnet
- "Time Keeps on Slippin'" in [Stargate SG-1/Stargate Atlantis: Far Horizons](#) (2014)
- "Down to the Waterline" in *Buzzy Mag Online* (2015) [\[1\]](#)^[*usurped*], a tale of Cassie Zukav, weirdness magnet
- "Partners in Crime" in *Without a License: The Fantastic Worlds of Keith R.A. DeCandido* (2015), set in the same universe as *Dragon Precinct*
- "Seven-Mile Race" in *Without a License: The Fantastic Worlds of Keith R.A. DeCandido* (2015), a tale of Cassie Zukav, weirdness magnet
- "Wild Bill Got Shot" in *Without a License: The Fantastic Worlds of Keith R.A. DeCandido* (2015)

- "Behold a White Tricycle" in *Without a License: The Fantastic Worlds of Keith R.A. DeCandido* (2015)
- "Back in El Paso My Life Will Be Worthless" in [The X-Files: Trust No One](#) (2015)
- "William Did It" on StoryOfTheMonthClub.com (2015; reprinted in *A Baker's Dozen of Magic*, 2016), a tale of Cassie Zukav, weirdness magnet
- "Send in the Clones" in *The Side of Good/The Side of Evil* (2015)
- "Streets of Fire" in *V-Wars: Night Terrors* (2016)
- "We Seceded Where Others Failed" in *Altered States of the Union* (2016)
- "Right on, Sister!" in *Limbus Inc. Book 3* (2016)
- "Identity" in *Baker Street Irregulars* (2017)
- "Deep Background" in [Aliens: Bug Hunt](#) (2017)
- "Behind the Wheel" in *TV Gods: Summer Programming* (2017), a tale of Cassie Zukav, weirdness magnet
- "Live and On the Scene" in *Nights of the Living Dead* (2017)
- "Ganbatte" in Joe Ledger: Unstoppable (2017; winner, Best Short Story, Scribe Awards)
- "Sun-Breaker" in *Stargate SG-1/Atlantis: Homeworlds* (2017)
- "Six Red Dragons" in *Baker Street Irregulars, Volume 2* (2018)
- "House Hunting" in *They Keep Killing Glenn* (2018)
- "Rán for Your Life" in *Unearthed* (2019), a tale of Cassie Zukav, Weirdness Magnet
- "Alien Invasion of Earth!" in *Thrilling Adventure Yarns* (2019)
- "The Silent Dust" in *Brave New Girls: Adventures of Gals & Gizmos* (2019)
- "The Puzzle" in *Footprints in the Stars* (2019)
- "Materfamilias" in *Bad Ass Moms* (2020)
- "Journalistic Integrity" in *Pangaea III: Redemption* (2020)
- "Unguarded" in *Horns and Halos* (2021)
- "Ragnarok and a Hard Place," Indiegogo-supported (2021)
- "In Earth and Sky and Sea Strange Things There Be" in *Turning the Tied* (2021)
- "The Carpet's Tale" in *The Fans are Buried Tales* (2022)
- "What You Can Become Tomorrow" in *Three Time Travelers Walk Into...* (2022)
- "History Lesson for Royal Puppies in the Castle Portrait Gallery" in *Ludlow Charlington's Doghouse* (2022)
- "The Light Shines in the Darkness" in *Phenomenons: Every Human Creature* (2022)
- "Smells Like Teen Spirit" in *Tales of Capes and Cows* (2022)
- "A Lovely View" in *Zorro's Exploits* (2022)
- "The Rat's Tail" in *The Eye of Argon and the Further Adventures of Grignr* (2022)
- "Ticonderoga Beck and the Stalwart Squad" in *Thrilling Adventure Yarns 2022* (2022)

- "This Little Light of Mine" in *Phenomenons: Season of Darkness* (2023)
- "Know Thyself Deathless" in *Double Trouble: An Anthology of Two-Fisted Team-Ups* (2023)
- "The Thick Blue Line" in [*Sherlock Holmes: Cases by Candlelight* Volume 2](#) (2023)
- "Prezzo" in *Weird Tales: 100 Years of Weird* (2023)
- "What Do You Want From Me, I'm Old" in *The Four ??? of the Apocalypse* (2023)
- "Another Dead Body on the Corner" in *Joe Ledger: Unbreakable* (2023)
- "The Legend of Long-Ears" in *The Good, the Bad, and the Uncanny: Tales of a Very Weird West* (2023)
- "Progenitor" in *A Cry of Hounds* (2024)
- "Stop Dragon My Heart Around" in *A Trove of Legacies* (2024)
- "Blinded by the Light" in *Phenomenons: The Wind and Fire* (2024)
- "Death Row" in *Sherlock Holmes: Cases by Candlelight* Volume 3 (2024)
- "The Norwood Contractor" in *Multiverse of Mystery* (forthcoming)
- "A Scandal on 47th Street" in *Sherlock Holmes: Eliminate the Impossible* (forthcoming)

Reference books

- *John Winchester Hardcover Ruled Journal* (2017)
- *Orphan Black: Classified Clone Report* (2017)
- *Poison Ivy Hardcover Ruled Journal* (2018)
- *Batman: Quotes from Gotham City*

WEBSITE AND SOCIAL MEDIA LINKS

Web site: <http://decandido.net>

Facebook: <http://facebook.com/KeithRADeCandido>

Twitter: @KRADeC

Threads and Instagram: krad418

Blue Sky: kradec.bsky.social

Patreon: <http://patreon.com/krad>

YouTube: <http://youtube.com/c/KRADCOVIDreadings>

KEVIN IKENBERRY

BIO:

Kevin's head has been in the clouds since he was old enough to read. Ask him and he'll tell you that he still wants to be an astronaut. With over twenty five years of experience in space science education, including managing the U.S. Space Camp program and serving as an executive of two Challenger Learning Centers, Kevin continues to work with space every day. A retired Army armor and space operations officer, Kevin lives in Colorado with his family. His home is seldom a boring place. Kevin is the international bestselling author of The Protocol War series featuring

Colorado Book Award finalist SLEEPER PROTOCOL, which Publisher's Weekly called "an emotionally powerful debut." Kevin is also the author or co-author of twelve bestselling Peacemaker novels in the Four Horsemen Universe and as well as the alternate history novel THE CROSSING, in Eric Flint's Assiti Shards universe. His latest bestselling series, The Buzzer War, blends modern military science fiction with the techno-thrillers of the 1990s. Kevin is a member of the International Association of Science Fiction and Fantasy Authors (IASFA), International Thriller Writers, and is a member of SIGMA, the science fiction think tank. Kevin can be found at kevinikenberry.com and on Facebook, Instagram, and X/Twitter.

HOW I BROKE IN:

Writing in someone else's playground wasn't something I'd even considered as I was getting started until the now-defunct "Kindle Worlds" program launched in 2013. The concept of it fascinated me and it featured some universes I knew a few things about, including the 1980s cartoon GIJOE: A Real American Hero. On vacation a short time later, I conjured up this idea and submitted it to the program. It went on to be one of the bestselling stories in that universe, but it was just the beginning. In 2016, I met Charles E. Gannon and from our friendship, he asked me to write in his bestselling Caine Riordan mediaverse. He also introduced me to the creative team behind the mega-bestselling military science-fiction series the Four Horsemen Universe. I also met and befriended the late Eric Flint and had the opportunity to write an alternate history novel in his award-winning 1632 / Ring of Fire series. From there, I went on to other projects including Jonathan Maberry's Joe Ledger universe and being asked to pitch for the recent Amazon series "Secret Level."

TIPS:

As for advice, there are a couple of things when it comes to media tie-ins. The first is do your homework. With every universe I've written in, I've read every piece of background information, delved deeply into the characters and the worlds, and even adopted the voice of the characters to the best of my ability. If you're writing Joe Ledger, you need to sound like Joe Ledger, right? The second is make your "gates" and hit your deadlines. The folks behind large properties are putting their trust in you to have your contribution ready on time – so do that. Don't miss it, because if you do you might not get the chance to do it again. Always be on schedule having done your homework and given it your best shot.

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MEDIA TIE-IN WORKS:

The Four Horsemen Universe novels
Peacemaker
Honor The Threat
Stand Or Fall
Deathangel
Fields of Fire
Harbinger
Enforcer (with Quincy J. Allen)

Redacted Affairs (with Kevin Steverson)
Redacted Vice (with Kevin Steverson)
Redacted Weapon (with Kevin Steverson)
On A Cloudy Day (with Jason Cordova)
The Misfits (with Jason Cordova)

The Caine Riordan Series
Obligations
Murphy's Lawless
Desperado
Watch The Skies

The 1632 / Ring Of Fire Series
The Crossing

GIJOE: A Real American Hero
Friends In High Places

The Silo Saga Universe (Hugh Howey)
Vessel

The Joe Ledger Universe
True Friends

WEBSITE:

<https://kevinikenberry.com>

KEVIN J. ANDERSON

BIO:

Kevin J. Anderson is the author of more than 190 books, 58 of which have appeared on national or international bestseller lists; he has more than 24 million copies in print in 34 languages. He has won or been nominated for many awards, including the Nebula, Hugo, Shamus, Scribe, Bram Stoker, Lifeboat to the Stars, SFX Reader's Choice, Colorado Book Award, and New York Times Notable Book.

Kevin has written numerous Star Wars projects, including the Jedi Academy trilogy, Darksaber, the Young Jedi Knights series (with his wife Rebecca), and Tales of the Jedi comics from Dark Horse. He wrote three X-Files novels, including the #1 bestseller Ground Zero, and also collaborated with Dean Koontz on the novel Frankenstein: Prodigal Son, which sold a million copies in the first year of its release. He has written Superman and Batman novels, as well as comics for DC, Marvel, Boom!, IDW, Wildstorm, Topps, and Dark Horse.

Kevin has coauthored fifteen books in the DUNE saga with Brian Herbert, as well as their original Hellhole trilogy. His epic SF series, The Saga of Seven Suns, is a 7-volume opus that topped international bestseller lists; he followed it with the award-nominated sequel trilogy, The Saga of Shadows. He produced and cowrote the lyrics (with his wife Rebecca Moesta) for two crossover rock CDs based on his Terra Incognita fantasy trilogy. He wrote a steampunk fantasy adventure novel based on the concept CD, “Clockwork Angels,” by legendary rock group Rush, as well as the steampunk novels Captain Nemo and The Martian War. In a lighter vein, he has written humorous fantasy The Dragon Business and the Dan Shamble, Zombie PI series. He has edited numerous anthologies, including 2113, the Pulse Pounders series, A Fantastic Holiday Season 1 & 2, Blood Lite 1–3, Five by Five 1–3, War of the Worlds: Global Dispatches, and three Star Wars anthologies.

As publishers of [WordFire Press](#), Kevin and his wife Rebecca Moesta have released more than 300 titles from Alan Dean Foster, Frank Herbert, Jody Lynn Nye, Allen Drury, Mike Resnick, Tracy Hickman, Jay Lake, Brian Herbert, Ken Scholes, and their own backlist.

Kevin has a degree in physics/astronomy from the University of Wisconsin, Madison and worked for thirteen years as a technical writer for the Lawrence Livermore National Laboratory before becoming a full-time novelist. He holds an MFA in Creative Writing from Lindenwood University. He is a Special Ambassador for the Challenger Centers for Space Science Education and a board member for the Lifeboat Foundation.

He climbs mountains, including all 54 peaks over 14,000 ft in Colorado, has completed all 500 miles of the Colorado Trail, and has visited six of the seven continents (only Antarctica left!). Kevin and his wife have been married for more than thirty years; they live in a castle in the Rocky Mountains of Colorado.

His most recent novels are Bats in the Belfry, Skeleton in the Closet, Persephone, and Princess of Dune (with Brian Herbert).

HOW I BROKE IN:

I broke into media tie-in work by accident. I had published 6-7 of my own novels with trad publishers, and I always delivered on time and I wasn’t a diva to work with. I didn’t know I was auditioning. When Bantam signed with Lucasfilm to do Star Wars novels, they offered my name as a possible author. I got a phone call out of the blue and an invitation to write the Jedi Academy trilogy. Before that, I was *aware* of media tie-in work, but I always thought you had to know someone on the inside. When I was in high school, I wrote a ton of my own Star Trek episodes and naively wrote to Paramount for permission to publish them (they said No). I loved doing it, because I was (and am) a fanboy and I really get a kick out of making up new adventures in my favorite series. I’ve worked for Star Wars, X-Files, Star Trek, Batman, Superman, Starcraft video game, Planet of the Apes, as well as movie novelizations for Supernova, Sky Captain and the World of Tomorrow, and League of Extraordinary Gentlemen. I have also worked on other IPs for the rock groups Rush, Dream Theater, and Coheed and Cambria. And I’ve done all the new DUNE books with Frank Herbert’s son Brian.

TIPS:

Most important advice for doing media tie-in work: be FAST, be RELIABLE, and don't be a drama queen. You are playing in someone else's sandbox with their toys. Sometimes their story or their universe doesn't make sense! And you need to be able to meet deadlines!

MEDIA TIE-IN WORKS:

- Star Wars: Jedi Search
- Star Wars: Dark Apprentice
- Star Wars: Champions of the Force
- Star Wars: Darksaber
- Fantastic Voyage: Microcosm
- Outer Limits: Armageddon Dreams
- X-Files: Ground Zero
- X-Files: Ruins
- X-Files: AntiBodies
- *Sky Captain and the World of Tomorrow*
- *The League of Extraordinary Gentlemen*
- Star Trek: The Next Generation *The Gorn Crisis* (with Rebecca Moesta)
- Star Wars Jedi Academy: *Leviathan*
- Star Wars: *The Golden Age of the Sith*
- Star Wars: *The Sith War*
- Star Wars: *The Fall of the Sith Empire* (with Mark Heike)
- Star Wars: *Dark Lords of the Sith* (with Tom Veitch)
- X-Files: *Ground Zero* (with Gordon Purcell)
- Dune: Tales from Arrakeen
- Dune: The Graphic Novel volume 1: Dune
- Dune: The Graphic Novel volume 2: Muad'Dib
- Dune: The Graphic Novel volume 3: The Prophet
- Dune: House Atreides vol 1 (House Atreides graphic novel 1)
- Dune: House Atreides vol 2 (House Atreides graphic novel 2)
- Dune: House Atreides vol 3 (House Atreides graphic novel 3)
- Dune: House Harkonnen vol 1 (House Harkonnen graphic novel 1)
- Dune: House Harkonnen vol 2 (House Harkonnen graphic novel 2)

- Dune: House Harkonnen vol 3 (House Harkonnen graphic novel 3)
- Dune: House Corrino vol 1 (House Corrino graphic novel 1)

Brian Herbert & Kevin J. Anderson

- Dune: The Butlerian Jihad
- Dune: The Machine Crusade
- Dune: The Battle of Corrin
- Dune: Sisterhood of Dune
- Dune: Mentats of Dune
- Dune: Navigators of Dune
- Dune: House Atreides
- Dune: House Harkonnen
- Dune: House Corrino
- Dune: Paul of Dune
- Dune: Winds of Dune
- Dune: Hunters of Dune
- Dune: Sandworms of Dune
- Dune: Tales of Dune
- Dune: The Duke of Caladan
- Dune: The Lady of Caladan
- Dune: The Heir of Caladan
- Princess of Dune
- Sands of Dune
- *The Road to Dune*
- *Hellhole*
- *Hellhole Awakening*
- *Hellhole Inferno*

Kevin J. Anderson & Neil Peart

- *Clockwork Angels*
- *Clockwork Lives*
- *Clockwork Destiny*
- *Clockwork Angels: The Comic Scripts*
- *Drumbeats*

Star Wars—Kevin J. Anderson & Ralph McQuarrie

- *The Illustrated Star Wars Universe*
- *Star Wars Art Box*

Star Wars—Kevin J. Anderson & Rebecca Moesta

- Young Jedi Knights 1: *Heirs of the Force*
- Young Jedi Knights 2: *Shadow Academy*
- Young Jedi Knights 3: *The Lost Ones*
- Young Jedi Knights 4: *Lightsabers*
- Young Jedi Knights 5: *Darkest Knight*
- Young Jedi Knights 6: *Jedi Under Siege*
- Young Jedi Knights 7: *Shards of Alderaan*
- Young Jedi Knights 8: *Diversity Alliance*
- Young Jedi Knights 9: *Delusions of Grandeur*
- Young Jedi Knights 10: *Jedi Bounty*
- Young Jedi Knights 11: *The Emperor's Plague*
- Young Jedi Knights 12: *Return to Ord Mantell*
- Young Jedi Knights 13: *Trouble on Cloud City*
- Young Jedi Knights 14: *Crisis at Crystal Reef*
- *Star Wars: Mos Eisley Cantina Pop-Up*
- *Star Wars: Jabba's Palace Pop-Up*

Star Wars—Kevin J. Anderson & Dan Wallace

- *Star Wars: The Essential Chronology*

Additional Books by Rebecca Moesta

- Junior Jedi Knights 4: *Anakin's Quest*
- Junior Jedi Knights 5: *Vader's Fortress*
- Junior Jedi Knights 6: *Kenobi's Blade*
- *Buffy the Vampire Slayer: Little Things*

WEBSITE AND SOCIAL MEDIA LINKS

X: @TheKJA

Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/KJAauthor>

Webstore: wordfireshop.com

LEE GOLDBERG

BIO:

Lee Goldberg writes books and television shows. His mother wanted him to be a doctor, and his grandfather wanted him to go into the family furniture business. Instead, he put himself through UCLA as a freelance journalist, writing for such publications as *American Film*, *Starlog*, *Newsweek*, *The Los Angeles Times Syndicate*, *The Washington Post* and *The San Francisco Chronicle* (he also wrote erotic letters to the editor for *Playgirl* at \$25-a-letter, but he doesn't tell people about that, he just likes to boast about those "Tiffany" credits).

He published his first book *.357 Vigilante* (as "Ian Ludlow," so he'd be on the shelf next to Robert Ludlum) while he was still a UCLA student. The *West Coast Review of Books* called his debut "as stunning as the report of a .357 Magnum, a dynamic premiere effort," singling the book out as "The Best New Paperback Series" of the year. Naturally, the publisher promptly went bankrupt and he never saw a dime in royalties.

His many subsequent books include the non-fiction [*Successful Television Writing*](#) and *Unsold Television Pilots* as well as the novels [*Lost Hills*](#), [*True Fiction*](#), [*My Gun Has Bullets*](#), [*The Walk*](#), [*King City*](#), and [*Watch Me Die*](#), which was nominated for a Shamus Award for Best Novel from the Private Eye Writers of America. He was also the co-author with Janet Evanovich of the five international bestselling [*Fox & O'Hare novels*](#) (*The Heist*, *The Chase*, *The Job*, *The Scam* and *The Pursuit*) and two *New York Times* bestselling prequel novellas (*The Shell Game* and *Pros & Cons*). His most recent books include [*Dream Town*](#) (the 5th novel in the Eve Ronin series), [*Malibu Burning*](#) (the first novel in the Sharpe & Walker series) and the genre-bending thriller [*Calico*](#), a 2024 Spur Award finalist for Best Contemporary Western from the Western Writers of America.

HOW I BROKE IN:

I broke into tie-writing in an uncommon way. Penguin/Putnam wanted to capitalize on the success of their MURDER SHE WROTE tie-ins by doing DIAGNOSIS MURDER tie-in novels not long after the TV series was cancelled. I was the executive producer and principal writer of DIAGNOSIS MURDER for several years...and I was also a novelist. So the publisher came directly to me and asked if I would write the books. I agreed to do it... and wrote eight of them. While I was doing that, I also started writing for the TV show MONK. Publishers approached Andy Breckman, the creator of MONK, about doing a series of books. He said he'd only do it if I wrote the books, so I agreed to write them, too. I ended up writing 15 MONK novels, two of which were adapted into episodes of the show. I've never written a tie-in novel for a TV series I wasn't already writing and/or producing... so I haven't written any tie-in novels since then.

TIPS:

I think tie-ins are a great way to break into the business....and establish relationships with both the publisher and readers. But, IMHO, it's a poor long-term career strategy, because ultimately you are writing books you don't own. It's essentially work-for-hire, whether you are getting a flat fee, royalties or both. You are making more money for other people than you are for yourself. In retrospect, I should never have written as many tie-in novels as I did. Now I have a rule -- I don't write books that I don't own.

MEDIA TIE-IN WORKS:

Diagnosis Murder Book Series

- #1 *The Silent Partner* (2003)
- #2 *The Death Merchant* (2004)
- #3 *The Shooting Script* (2004)
- #4 *The Waking Nightmare* (2005)
- #5 *The Past Tense* (2005)
- #6 *The Dead Letter* (2006)
- #7 *The Double Life* (2006)
- #8 *The Last Word* ([2007](#))

Monk Book Series

- [Mr. Monk Goes to the Firehouse](#) (2006)
- [Mr. Monk Goes to Hawaii](#) (2006)
- [Mr. Monk and the Blue Flu](#) (2007)
- [Mr. Monk and the Two Assistants](#) (2007)
- [Mr. Monk in Outer Space](#) (2007)
- [Mr. Monk Goes to Germany](#) (2008)
- [Mr. Monk is Miserable](#) (2008)
- [Mr. Monk and the Dirty Cop](#) ([2009](#))
- [Mr. Monk in Trouble](#) (2009) Excerpt: *The Case of the Piss-Poor Gold*, Ellery Queen Mystery Magazine, November 2009
- [Mr. Monk is Cleaned Out](#) ([2010](#))
- [Mr. Monk on the Road](#) ([2011](#)) Excerpt: *Mr. Monk and the Seventeen Steps*, Ellery Queen Mystery Magazine, December 2010
- [Mr. Monk on the Couch](#) (2011) Excerpt: *Mr. Monk and the Sunday Paper*, Ellery Queen Mystery Magazine, July 2011
- [Mr. Monk on Patrol](#) ([2012](#)) Excerpt: *Mr. Monk and the Open House* Ellery Queen Mystery Magazine December 2011
- [Mr. Monk is a Mess](#) (July 2012) Excerpt: *Mr. Monk and the Talking Car* Ellery Queen Mystery Magazine May 2012
- [Mr. Monk Gets Even](#) (January 2013) Excerpt "Mr. Monk Sees the Light" Ellery Queen Mystery Magazine, December 2012

WEBSITE AND SOCIAL MEDIA LINKS

LEE MURRAY

BIO:

Lee Murray ONZM is a writer, editor, poet and screenwriter from Aotearoa New Zealand, a Shirley Jackson Award and five-time Bram Stoker Award® winner. A USA Today bestselling author with more than forty titles to her credit, Lee holds a New Zealand Prime Minister's Award for Literary Achievement in Fiction, and is an Honorary Literary Fellow of the New Zealand Society of Authors. Recent works include feature film *Grafted* (directed by Sasha Rainbow), horror anthology *This Way Lies Madness* (Flame Tree Press) co-edited with Dave Jeffery, and poetry collection, NZSA Cuba Press Prize-winner *Fox Spirit on a Distant Cloud* (The Cuba Press). Read more at <https://www.leemurray.info/>

HOW I BROKE IN:

While I have written some tie-in short stories (Pugmire's Monarchies of Mau, Unioverse Reconvergence, for example), and I've been invited to write in others (WarHammer) I don't feel I've really broken in at all. I'm a member of the IAMTW group, and have been for four or five years, and I have reached out to connections for work in this field, but my feeling is that franchises have their favourites authors and for newbies (even experienced author-newbies) breaking in is almost impossible, unless the franchise holders see your work / branding as being aligned with their own and reach out to you. This has been my experience, where editors who were familiar with my work, reached out to include me in their line-up. I think, in some cases, franchises will bring in new / fresh writers / voices to create and expand on the world(s) based on a skeletal concept; to put flesh on the bones, if you like. Other times, it's to create additional content in an existing world using new voices and perspectives. I believe this is where the new opportunities exist.

TIPS:

For writers trying to break in, I think it's important to remember that tie-ins tend to be writer-for-hire situations, and the franchise owns all the rights (including to alter your work) and any derivatives, going forward. If you create a character, that character becomes the property of the franchise. Contracts include terms like 'in all the universe and for all time and in all possible formats or versions known or unknown', so that is something to be aware of. Occasionally, tie-ins can be extremely lucrative (being writer-for-hire contracts), but writers need to be aware that they have minimal creative control over the final work, and if this is an issue for you, then tie-writing probably isn't the right market for your creative endeavours. (Also, something that needs to be pointed out is that writing in public domain works, like Lovecraft and Arthur Conan Doyle, while these *are* tie-in works, are not considered tie-ins in the true sense as the term applies to licensed works.

My advice in the first instance, for those hoping to break in—and remember, except in a very small way I haven't really broken in at all—would be to write works that are tie-in adjacent, with the same or similar aesthetic / theme / genre as your favourite franchise so there is some evidence that you can make the jump. And if you are making approaches, I recommend you only pitch to your favourite franchises, those whose work you love and know well (especially if those franchises are well established), because if you are commissioned to write a novel or short story in someone else's world, you are going to have to do a mountain of research into what has gone before. You can be reading 10-15 books or an enormous wiki to get to grips with the worldbuilding—backstory, character arcs and motivations, the ins and outs of all the myriad battles—and that's before you even start your own narrative. It's a LOT. So while the gig could be lucrative, you will need to factor in this research time before you start planning / writing.

I suspect film novelisations may be easier to achieve, since the film / script are already available as a basis for the work, and it is simply a matter of filling in the gaps. I say this with my tongue in my cheek, of course, since any novel is a big undertaking, especially if you're going to do it well, and because I have never been offered a film novelisation myself! However, after nearly two decades on my own, I finally have an agent, so perhaps more opportunities will open up to me going forward.

MEDIA TIE-IN WORKS:

Details coming soon!

WEBSITE AND SOCIAL MEDIA LINKS

leekiwi@gmail.com
www.leemurray.info

MARSHEILA ROCKWELL

BIO:

Marsheila (Marcy) Rockwell (Chippewa/Red River Métis) is a Rhysling Award-winning poet and Scribe-nominated author. Her work includes the novels *Marvel Zombies: The Hunger*, *Marvel Untold: Sisters of Sorcery*, SF/H thriller *7 SYKOS*, and *The Shard Axe* series, set in the world of Dungeons & Dragons Online, as well as dozens of short stories, poems, comic book scripts, and TTRPG adventures. A citizen of the Manitoba Métis Federation and a pediatric cancer and mental health awareness advocate, she currently lives in the desert with her husband, three of their five children, two rescues, and far too many books.

HOW I BROKE IN:

I found my way into tie-in writing because of my love for Dungeons & Dragons. Back in 2003, Wizards of the Coast had an open call, accepting pitches for novels in their Forgotten Realms setting. While I didn't land that novel contract, I did catch the eye of their editors and got put on the short list for further open (and closed) calls. After several near-misses, I eventually got the chance to pitch a book set in their newest campaign setting, Eberron. That pitch became my first published novel, *Legacy of Wolves* (2007), and I've never looked back.

TIPS:

My advice to any writers looking to break into the tie-in world is two-fold: First, write the best stuff you can, stuff that you love, and try to get it published in markets that cater to the same genre as the properties you want to write for. Most IP license-holders want writers with a track record of sales. Second, network. Many tie-in jobs are referrals from other writers or editors who are familiar with your work (and in this day and age, networking doesn't have to happen at conventions – you have a computer in your pocket that can connect you to all corners of the globe). Good luck!

MEDIA TIE-IN WORKS:

- Marvel
- Dungeons & Dragons Online
- Dungeons & Dragons
- Xena, Warrior Princess
- Buffy the Vampire Slayer
- Mafia III
- X-Files
- V-Wars
- Renegade Legions
- Well World
- Neil Gaiman's *Lady Justice*
- *Evil Dead 2*
- *Occupied Earth*
- *Story Portals*

WEBSITE AND SOCIAL MEDIA LINKS

You can find out more here: <https://linktr.ee/marsheilarockwell>.

MATT FORBECK

BIO:

Matt Forbeck is an award-winning and *New York Times*-bestselling author and game designer of over thirty-five novels and countless other books and games. His projects have won a Peabody Award, a Scribe Award, and several ENnies and Origins Awards. He also runs the Diana Jones Award Foundation and is the father of five, including a set of quadruplets. He lives in Beloit, Wisconsin, with his wife and a rotating cast of college-age kids. For more about him and his work, visit Forbeck.com.

HOW I BROKE IN:

I broke into tie-in writing through tabletop RPGs. I'd written millions of words for the games, but still TSR/Wizards of the Coast and Games Workshop wouldn't sign me up to write a novel for their books divisions, as I didn't have a finished novel I could show them to prove I could do the work. I was complaining about it at a bar at an industry trade show when Ed Pugh of Reaper Miniatures overheard me, leaned over, and said, "Hey, Matt, I'll pay to write a novel." That was for their C.A.V. game of giant battle-mechs, and once it came out, I showed it to Wizards and Workshop, and they started signing me to write novels on the spot.

TIPS:

The trick to writing any tie-in novel is to find a way to love the original material. If you can do that, you can understand why other people love it too, and you can bring some of that over to your novel, giving the original stuff all the respect and adoration it deserves. That resonates with the fans because, hey, you're one of them too.

MEDIA TIE-IN WORKS:

Role-playing games

- [Mutant Chronicles](#) (1993)
- [Deadlands](#) (1996), contributor
- [Brave New World](#) (1999)
- [Tales from the Loop](#) (2017), additional writing
- [Marvel Multiverse Role-Playing Game](#) (2022)^[9]

Collectible card games

- [WildStorms: The Expandable Super-Hero Card Game](#) (1995)
- [Fastbreak](#) (1996) – a now-out-of-print [collectible card game](#) (CCG) by [WildStorm](#) based on professional [basketball](#).^[10] It was first released in August 1996 and was designed by Matt Forbeck.^{[11][12]} The original set had 303 cards plus 2 promo cards, though one source claims there are 8 promo cards.^{[10][11]} The art was [cartoony](#) with a humor theme and was described as having a "consistent theme" with its "best traits [being] its humor and the realism".^[11] Matt Forbeck is featured on a card, and, as one of the designers, put significant effort into designing and playing the game.^[12]

[Gameplay](#) involves players taking on the role of coaches to guide their basketball players to victory. Two rows of five-man teams are lined up and a basketball

token is passed between the player cards using [Dribble](#) cards.^[11] The ball moves up columns and across rows on a 5×5 grid.^[11] Counter play is initiated through Foul cards that can steal or shoot the ball that is being dribbled via Grab cards.^[11] Passes are resisted with Steals and Shoot cards resisted with Blocks.^[11] Wild cards allow effects outside of moving the ball.^[11]

Fiction

Blood Bowl series

1. *Blood Bowl* (2005)
 2. *Dead Ball* (2005)
 3. *Death Match* (2006)
 4. *Rumble in the Jungle* (2007)
- *The Blood Bowl Omnibus* (2007) collects #1-3

Guild Wars series

- *Ghosts of Ascalon* (2010) with [Jeff Grubb](#)

Knights of the Silver Dragon series

- *Secret of the Spiritkeeper* (2004)
- *Prophecy of the Dragons* (2006)
- *The Dragons Revealed* (2006)
- *Knights of the Silver Dragon* (2008) omnibus of all three novels, with [Ree Soesbee](#), [Dale Donovan](#) and [Linda Johns](#)

Eberron series

- The Lost Mark:
 1. *Marked for Death* (2005)
 2. *The Road to Death* (2006)
 3. *The Queen of Death* (2006)

Endless Quest series

- *Escape the Underdark* (2018)
- *Big Trouble* (2018)
- *Into the Jungle* (2018)
- *To Catch a Thief* (2018)
- *Escape from Castle Ravenloft* (2019)
- *The Mad Mage's Academy* (2019)

Magic: The Gathering comics

- *Magic: The Gathering* #1–4, with artist Martin Cocco (2011–12)^{[13][14]}
 - *Magic: The Gathering Volume 1* ([tpb](#), 2012, [IDW Publishing](#), ISBN 9781613772287)

- *Magic: The Gathering: The Spell Thief* #1–4, with artists Christian Duce, Martin Coccolo (2012)^{[15][16][17]}
 - *Magic: The Gathering Volume 2: The Spell Thief* (tpb, 2012, IDW Publishing, [ISBN 9781613774144](#))
- *Magic: The Gathering: Path of Vengeance* #1–4, with artists Jack Jadson, Martin Coccolo (2012–13)^{[18][19][20]}
 - *Magic: The Gathering Volume 3: Path of Vengeance* (tpb, 2013, IDW Publishing, [ISBN 9781613776377](#))

Novels

- *Mutant Chronicles* (2008)
- *Amortals* (2010)^[21]
- *Vegas Knights* (2011)^[22]
- *Carpathia* (2012)
- *Leverage: The Con Job* (2012)^{[23][24]}
- *Halo: New Blood* (2015)^[citation needed]
- *Halo: Legacy of Onyx* (2017)
- *Halo: Bad Blood* (2018)^[citation needed]
- *Minecraft Dungeons: The Rise of the Arch-Illager* (2020)^[25]

Nonfiction

- *Star Wars vs. Star Trek: Could the Empire Kick the Federation's Ass? And Other Galaxy-Shaking Enigmas* (2011)^[26]

Collections

- *Crocodilopolis* (1992)
- *Space Station Boomtown 13* (1994)
- *Interesting Times* (1994)
- *Musings* (1995)
- *Reconciliation* (1995)
- *Talking Heads* (1999)
- *Reborn on the Bayou* (1999)
- *Head Games* (1999)
- *Prometheus Unwound* (2001)
- *Coming Home* (2005)
- *In the Belly of the Behemoth* (2011)
- *The Fury Pact* (2012)

Essays

- "Author's Introduction" in *The Blood Bowl Omnibus* (2007)

WEBSITE AND SOCIAL MEDIA LINKS

MAURICE BROADDUS

BIO:

An award winning writer with over a hundred short stories published, his work has appeared in such places as Magazine of F&SF, Lightspeed Magazine, *Black Panther: Tales from Wakanda*, *Out There Screaming*, *Weird Tales*, Asimov's Magazine, and *Uncanny Magazine*. He has well over a dozen books that jump genres, including Marvel's *Black Panther: T'Challa Declassified*, the science fiction novels, *Sweep of Stars*, and *Breath of Oblivion*; the steamfunk books, *Pimp My Airship* and *Buffalo Soldier*; and the middle grade detective novel series, *Unfadeable* and *The Usual Suspects* (both of which were Gold Standard Selections by the American Library Association). His gaming work includes writing for the Marvel Super-Heroes, *Leverage*, and *Firefly* role-playing games as well as working as a consultant on *Watch Dogs 2*.

HOW I BROKE IN:

Two words: GenCon and Friends. So much of this life is about "networking," yet too few people unpack what "networking" means in a way that, frankly, doesn't sound like meeting people to use them for your benefit. I think of networking as making friends. The opportunities that pop up are the result of friends finding excuses to work together. So a friend invited me to GenCon (which took some convincing despite GenCon being in my backyard). When I did, he showed me around and introduced me to people. Pretty soon I met editors who were looking for new writers and they gave me opportunities to prove myself.

TIPS:

Start with "yes," figure it out, and do your best. When I was asked if I could do something (write a 2000 word profile on a character, devise an RPG scenario, etc. ... in 24 hours), my answer was always "yes." Sometimes I didn't even understand the assignment. But I relied on a few things: having friends I could ask if I had questions, embracing the writing challenge, and keeping my eyes open so that I could learn as much as I could about the process. Basically, I wrote to have fun (fun under pressure, but fun nonetheless, because that was part of the learning and embracing!)

MEDIA TIE-IN WORKS:

- "Black Panther – Kindred Spirits" (*Black Panther: Tales of Wakanda*, Titan Books, March 2021)

WEBSITE AND SOCIAL MEDIA LINKS

Learn more about him at MauriceBroaddus.com. (He's @mauricebroaddus on social media platforms)

PAUL KUPPERBERG

BIO:

Paul Kupperberg is the writer of over 1,400 comic book stories for DC Comics, Archie Comics, Marvel, Bongo, and others on characters including Superman, Supergirl, Aquaman, Peacemaker, The Doom Patrol, Captain America, Conan the Barbarian, Bart Simpson, Johnny Bravo, and the Phantom, and countless others, as well as the writer of the Harvey and Eisner Award nominated Life With Archie series which featured the groundbreaking "Death of Archie" storyline. He is the author of dozens of books and stories including many featuring such media tie-in properties as Spider-Man, the Hulk, Batman, Superman, Wonder Woman, Star Trek, Dr. Who, Planet of the Apes, Aliens, Green Hornet, The Avenger, Kolchak the Nightstalker, Lone Ranger, and Powerpuff Girls for Pocket Books, Bantam, Titan, Simon and Schuster, Moonstone, and others.

HOW I BROKE IN:

I supposed I was roped into media tie-in writing more than actually breaking into it, largely a case of me being what comic book writer Denny O'Neil once called "a carbon based lifeform that could type" who was in the right place at the right time. In 1978 I was a 23-year old comic book writer with a little more than three years of professional credits under my belt. One of my gigs was writing for Marvel Comics' *MAD Magazine* clone, *Crazy Magazine*, and I was up at Marvel delivering a script to the editor when I ran into writer and editor Len Wein. Len and his writing partner Marv Wolfman had signed a contract to package a dozen novels based on the Marvel superheroes, and they were looking for writers who could meet the short deadlines. I don't know why Len's first thought upon seeing me was to ask "Wanna write a novel?"—my guess was and remains desperation—and I don't know why I accepted, considering other than comic book scripts and some school writing assignments, I'd never written any long prose pieces, certainly nothing even close to the 50,000 words I signed on for. The "desperation" move sounds even more plausible when they decided to contract me to write *two* novels in the series (*Marvel Novel Series #8: Spider-Man in Crime Campaign* and *Marvel Novel Series #11: Spider-Man and the Incredible Hulk in Murdermoon*) before ever reading a word of my prose.

MEDIA TIE-IN WORKS:

Prose fiction

- *The Amazing Spider-Man: Crime Campaign* (Pocket Books, 1979)
- *The Hulk and Spider-Man: Murdermoon* (Pocket Books, 1979)

- "Creature of Habit," in *The Further Adventures of Batman: Featuring Catwoman* (Bantam Books, 1993)
- "Food for the Beast," in *Fear Itself* (Warner Books, 1995)
- "Reflected Glory," in *Superheroes* (Ace Books, 1995)
- *Wishbone Mysteries: The Sirian Conspiracy* (Big Red Chair Books, 1999)
- "Walk Upon the Waters," in *Oceans of Magic* (DAW Books, 2001)
- *The Powerpuff Girls: Buttercup's Terrible Temper Tantrums* (Scholastic Books, 2002)
- "Sargasso Sector," in *Star Trek Corps Of Engineers: Grand Design* (Simon & Schuster, 2007)
- "Strange Attractor," in *Doctor Who, Short Trips: Destination Prague* (Big Finish Books, 2007)
- "The Cloud of Doom," in *The Avenger Chronicles* (Moonstone Books, 2008)
- "Man Bites Dog," in *Vampires* (Moonstone Books, 2009)
- *Jewjitsu: The Hebrew Hands Of Fury* (Citadel Books, November 2008)
- *JSA: Ragnarok Book 1* (of 3) (DC Comics publishing partner, forthcoming)
- *Hey, Sophie!* (publication TBD)

Non-fiction

- DC Comics — introductions and historic forewords for collected editions of classic comic books, including *Action Comics Archive* Vol. 2, *The Flash Archives* Vol. 1, *Challengers of The Unknown Archives* Vol. 1, *Superman: Whatever Happened To The Man Of Tomorrow?*, *The Essential Showcase*, *The Doom Patrol Archives* Col. 3, *Superman: The World Of Krypton*, and *Superman: The Bottle City Of Kandor*.
- *Spy Satellites* (Rosen Publishing, 2003)
- *The Tragedy of the Titanic* (Rosen Publishing, 2003)
- *You Did What?: Mad Plans and Great Historical Disasters* (Harper Paperbacks, 2004)
- *Astronaut Biographies: John Glenn* (Rosen Publishing, 2004 — Society of School Librarians International Honor Book, 2004)
- *Critical Perspectives On The Great Depression* (Rosen Publishing, 2005)
- *The Nature of Disease* (Rosen Publishing, 2005)
- *Edwin Hubble and the Big Bang* (Rosen Publishing, 2005)
- *The History of the New York Colony* (Rosen Publishing, 2005)
- *Rodeo Clowns* (Rosen Publishing, 2006)
- *Origins of the Action Heroes: Spider-Man* (Rosen Publishing, 2006)
- *Cutting Edge Careers in Robotics* (Rosen Publishing, 2007)
- *In the News: Hurricanes* (Rosen Publishing, 2007)
- *Great Historic Disasters: The Influenza Pandemic of 1918–1919* (Facts On File, 2008)
- *Building America, Then and Now: The Alaska Highway* (Facts On File, 2008)

Syndicated newspaper strips

- [Tom and Jerry](#) – syndicated newspaper strip ([Editors Press Service](#), 1990–1991)
- [The World's Greatest Superheroes Presents Superman](#) ([Tribune Company](#), 1981–1985)

Comic books

DC Comics

- [Action Comics](#) #536, 547, 555, 557–561, 564, 569–570, 580, 598 (1982–1988)
- [Action Comics Weekly](#) #610, 613–614, 617, 623, 631–634, 636, 641 ([Phantom Stranger](#)) (1988–1989)
- [Adventure Comics](#) #453–455, 460–463 (1977–1979)
- [All-Star Squadron](#) #41, 44 (1985)
- [Aquaman](#) #58–60, 62–63 (1977–1978)
- [Arak, Son of Thunder](#) #15 (1982)
- [Arion the Immortal](#) #1–6 (1992)
- [Arion, Lord of Atlantis](#) #1–3, 12–35, *Special* #1 (1982–1985)
- [Atari Force](#) vol. 2 #13, *Special* #1 (1985–1986)
- [Batman](#) #352 (1982)
- [Batman: Gotham Knights](#) #29 (2002)
- [The Brave and the Bold](#) #163, 175 (1980–1981)
- [Cartoon Cartoons](#) #1–2, 4, 9, 19, 22 (2001–2003)
- [Cartoon Network Block Party](#) #10, 25, 32, 45, 52 (2005–2009)
- [Cartoon Network Starring](#) #2–3, 6–8, 10–11, 13–14, 16–17 (1999–2001)
- [Checkmate](#) #1–33 (1988–1991)
- [Crusaders](#) #5–7 (1992)
- [Daring New Adventures of Supergirl](#) #1–13 (1982–1983)
- [DC Challenge](#) #7 (1986)
- [DC Comics Presents](#) #47, 49, 52, 54, 56, 65, 70, 72, 75, 79–80, 86, 90, 93 (1982–1986)
- [DC Science Fiction Graphic Novel](#) #6 ("The Magic Goes Away") (1987)
- [DC Special Series](#) #1 (1977)
- [DC Super Stars](#) #14 (1977)
- [Detective Comics](#) #485, 489, 504, 516, 519 (1979–1982)
- [Doom Patrol](#) vol. 2 #1–18, *Annual* #1 (1987–1989)
- [Doom Patrol and Suicide Squad](#) #1 (1988)
- [Dragonlance](#) #33–34 (1991)
- [The Flash](#) #265–266 (1978)
- [Flintstones and the Jetsons](#) #19–20 (1999)
- [Funny Stuff Stocking Stuffer](#) #1 (1985)
- [Fury of Firestorm](#) #27, 54 (1984–1986)
- [Ghosts](#) #95–99, 101–102 (1980–1981)
- [Green Lantern](#) #132, 148–149, 151–158, 181, 187 (1980–1985)

- [Green Lantern Corps Annual](#) #1–2 (1985–1986)
- [Gross Point](#) #6 (1997)
- [Gunfire](#) #9 (1995)
- [Hawkman](#) vol. 3 #7–8 (1994)
- [Heroes Against Hunger](#) #1 (1986)
- [House of Mystery](#) #252, 273, 285, 294, 296 (1977–1981)
- [Justice League of America](#) #182, 217 (1980–1983)
- [Justice League Quarterly](#) #6–7, 9, 13–14, 16–17 (1992–1994)
- [Legion of Super-Heroes](#) vol. 2 #267 (1980)
- [Martian Manhunter Special](#) #1 (1996)
- [Masters of the Universe](#) #1–3 (1982–1983)
- [Men of War](#) #17–18, 24–25 (1979–1980)
- [New Adventures of Superboy](#) #36–50, 52–54 (1982–1984)
- [Peacemaker](#) #–4 (1988)
- [Phantom Stranger](#) vol. 3 #1–4 (1987–1988)
- [Power Girl](#) #1–4 (1988)
- [Scooby-Doo](#) #128, 143, 149–150, 153–157, 159 (2008–2010)
- [Scooby-Doo, Where Are You?](#) #14–15 (2011–2012)
- [Secret Origins](#) vol. 2 #11, *Annual* #1 (1987)
- [Secrets of Haunted House](#) #30, 46 (1980–1982)
- [Secrets of the Legion of Super-Heroes](#) #1–3 (1981)
- [Showcase](#) #94–96, 100 (1977–1978)
- [Showcase '95](#) #7 (1995)
- [Star Trek](#) #18, 30 (1985–1986)
- [Sun Devils](#) #7 (1985)
- [Superboy](#) vol. 3 #17–18 (1991)
- [Superboy and the Legion of Super-Heroes](#) #236, 240–242, 249 (1978–1979)
- [Supergirl](#) vol. 2 #14–23 (1983–1984)
- [Superman](#) #376–378, 387, 389, 397–399, 403–404, 406, 408 (1982–1985)
- [The Superman Family](#) #182–194, 215–222 (1977–1982)
- [Superman: "The Computer Masters of Metropolis"](#) (1982)
- [Superman Through the Ages](#) #1 (2007)
- [Super Powers](#) vol. 2 #1–6 (1985–1986)
- [Super Powers](#) vol. 3 #1–4 (1986)
- [Takion](#) #1–7 (1996)
- [Teen Titans Spotlight](#) #9 (1987)
- [Time Warp](#) #5 (1980)
- [Underworld Unleashed: Apokolips](#) □ [Dark Uprising](#) #1 (1995)
- [V](#) #17–18 (1986)
- [Vigilante](#) #16, 19–50, *Annual* #1–2 (1985–1988)
- [The Warlord](#) #55–62 (1982)
- [Web](#) #13–14 (1992)
- [Weird War Tales](#) #53, 65, 68, 74–76, 80–81, 83–84, 91, 98 (1977–1981)

- *Wonder Woman* #258, 290 (1979–1982)
- *World of Krypton* #1–3 (1979)
- *World's Finest Comics* #257, 275–278 (1979–1982)

First Comics

- *E-Man* vol. 2 #8, 10–11 (1983–1984)

Marvel Comics

- *Captain America* #240 (1979)
- *Crazy Magazine* #68–69, 75, 77–79, 81 (1980–1981)
- *Savage Sword of Conan* #181 (1991)

WEBSITE AND SOCIAL MEDIA LINKS

My work can be found at:

Website: <https://www.paulkupperberg.net/>

At Crazy 8 Press: <https://www.crazy8press.com/authors/paul-kupperberg/>

On Amazon at: <https://amzn.to/3rQBLG>

Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/paul.kupperberg>

Bluesky: <https://bsky.app/profile/paulkupperberg.bsky.social>

RAYMOND BENSON

BIO:

RAYMOND BENSON is the author of over forty published books, including **THE MAD, MAD MURDERS OF MARIGOLD WAY** (winner of the IPPY Gold Medal in Mystery, 2022), **BLUES IN THE DARK** (2019), **IN THE HUSH OF THE NIGHT** (2018) and **THE SECRETS ON CHICORY LANE** (2017). Raymond is most well-known for being the third—and first American—author to be commissioned to write James Bond continuation novels. Six original works and three movie novelizations were published worldwide between 1997–2002. His debut 007 novel, **ZERO MINUS TEN**, is being reprinted in the UK in 2023. Raymond’s book **THE JAMES BOND BEDSIDE COMPANION**, first published in 1984, was nominated for an Edgar Allan Poe Award by Mystery Writers of America for Best Biographical/Critical Work. His most recent work in the Bond Universe is the first-ever Felix Leiter novel, **THE HOOK AND THE EYE** (2025).

THE BLACK STILETTO and its four subsequent titles were critically-acclaimed and award-winning serial thrillers published between 2011 and 2014. The e-book anthology, **THE BLACK STILETTO—THE COMPLETE SAGA**, has been a continual best-seller on Amazon and other platforms. The serial is currently being developed as a television series or feature film in Hollywood. Other original suspense novels include **SWEETIE’S DIAMONDS**, **A HARD DAY’S DEATH**, and **DARK SIDE OF THE MORGUE**, the latter nominated for the Shamus Award for Best Paperback Original PI Novel by the Private Eye Writers of America.

Raymond’s tie-in books, **TOM CLANCY’S SPLINTER CELL** and **TOM CLANCY’S SPLINTER CELL—OPERATION BARRACUDA** (both written under the pseudonym “David Michaels”), were NY Times Best-Sellers. He wrote novelizations of the popular videogames, **METAL GEAR SOLID** and **METAL GEAR SOLID 2—SONS OF LIBERTY**, and co-wrote with filmmaker John Milius **HOMEFRONT—THE VOICE OF FREEDOM** (a prequel to THQ’s videogame). He also penned **HITMAN: DAMNATION**, a novel in IO Interactive’s Hitman videogame universe, and **DYING LIGHT—NIGHTMARE ROW**, a tie-in to Techland’s zombie videogame. Raymond is also a sought-after ghostwriter.

Among his work as a game designer, Raymond wrote and designed **DARK SEED II**, based on the works of horror/fantasy artist H. R. Giger. Other computer games for which Raymond was designer and/or head writer include **ULTIMA VII—THE BLACK GATE**, **ARE YOU AFRAID OF THE DARK?** (winner—Newsweek Editors’ Choice Award and Parents Choice Award for Excellence), and **THE INDIAN IN THE CUPBOARD** (winner—Digital Hollywood Awards for Best Children’s CD-ROM Computer Game and Best Overall CD-ROM Computer Game).

Raymond also spent over a decade in New York City directing numerous stage productions and composing music for many shows. He recently won “Best Original Score” from the Vegas Movie Awards for his piano score for the short film, *Ghosts in the Ink* (2019). A noted film historian, Raymond has taught courses in film genres and history at such venues as New York’s New School for Social Research and College of DuPage in Glen Ellyn, Illinois. He writes for *Cinema Retro* magazine, and has presented popular film lectures in the Chicago area with *Daily Herald* movie critic Dann Gire.

The government of Naoshima, Japan, honored Raymond with the erection of a museum dedicated to one of his 007 novels (it was open for eleven years), and he was an Ambassador for Japan’s Kagawa Prefecture for twelve years. He is an active member of International Thriller Writers Inc., Mystery Writers of America, the International Association of Media Tie-In Writers, and a full member of ASCAP. Now an Advisory Board member, he served for sixteen years on the Board of Directors of The Ian Fleming Foundation.

HOW I BROKE IN:

RAYMOND BENSON never planned to be a writer—he fell into it. In the late 1970s and early 1980s, he was a stage director and music composer in New York City, but he had a crazy idea to write a nonfiction coffee table book about the history of James Bond. After pitching the idea to an editor he knew, he got a contract to write the book. It took three years and a research trip to England to meet Ian Fleming’s family and friends and colleagues. *THE JAMES BOND BEDSIDE COMPANION* was published in 1984 and was a hit. This was Raymond’s entry into the door of publishing, although he continued to do theatre and also gained a foothold in the computer gaming industry and began to write and design adventure games for the rest of the 80s and early 90s. Because he had gotten to know the people at what is now called Ian Fleming Publications (who handle all of the 007 literary works), in 1995 they called Raymond out of the blue and asked if he’d be interested in writing new Bond novels since the current “continuation author,” John Gardner, was quitting. From that point on, Raymond became a full time professional writer. After spending seven years writing nine Bond novels, he continued to write original fiction and was also picked by editors to do other kinds of tie-in work, including working for Tom Clancy, the Metal Gear Solid franchise, and more. Most recently, he’s back working for the Fleming people by doing the first-ever “Felix Leiter” (Bond’s American friend) novel. He is also a sought-after ghostwriter.

Not sure any of this will help your students because my entry into Tie-In Writing and publishing in general is so unorthodox and specific that I doubt it could be replicated. But they might be impressed with the fact that if someone can do it, then maybe they can...

MEDIA TIE-IN WORKS:

JAMES BOND

Zero Minus Ten (1997)
Tomorrow Never Dies (1997) novelization
The Facts of Death (1998)
High Time to Kill (1999)
The World is Not Enough (1999) novelization
DoubleShot (2000)
Never Dream of Dying (2001)
The Man with the Red Tattoo (2002)
Die Another Day (2002) novelization
The Hook and the Eye (2025) Felix Leiter

OTHER TIE-IN

Tom Clancy’s Splinter Cell (2004) as “David Michaels”
Tom Clancy’s Splinter Cell Operation Barracuda (2005) as “David Michaels”
Metal Gear Solid (2008)
Metal Gear Solid 2: Sons of Liberty (2009)
Hunt Through Napoleon’s Web (2010) Gabriel Hunt series
Homefront: the Voice of Freedom (2011) w/ John Milius
Hitman: Damnation (2002) Hitman series
Dying Light: Nightmare Row (2016) Dying Light series
Ghostwritten Work (2024)

Ghostwritten Work 2 (2025)
Ghostwritten Work 3 (2026)

Computer games

- 1985 [*Stephen King's The Mist*](#) (Designer/Writer; [Mindscape](#))^[13]
- 1985 [*A View to a Kill*](#) (Designer/Writer; Mindscape)^[13]
- 1986 [*Goldfinger*](#) (Designer/Writer; Mindscape)^[13]
- 1992 [*Ultima VII: The Black Gate*](#) (Story Direction, Head Writer,^[13] Composer--"Love Theme"; [Origin Systems](#))
- 1992 [*Ultima: Runes of Virtue*](#) (Score Co-composer; [Origin Systems](#))^[13]
- 1993 [*Ultima VII Part Two: Serpent Isle*](#) (Co-Writer;^[13] Origin Systems)
- 1993 [*Return of the Phantom*](#) (Designer/Writer; [MicroProse](#))
- 1994 [*Are You Afraid of the Dark? The Tale of Orpheo's Curse*](#) (Story Direction, Head Writer; Composer--"Frederico's Song"; [Viacom New Media](#))
- 1995 [*The Indian in the Cupboard*](#) (Designer/Writer; Viacom New Media)
- 1995 [*Dark Seed II*](#) (Designer/Writer; [Cyberdreams](#))

WEBSITE AND SOCIAL MEDIA LINKS

He can be found at www.raymondbenson.com.

RIK HOSKIN

BIO:

Rik Hoskin is a multi-award winning writer of novels, graphic novels, video games and animation. He's written comics for *Superman*, *Star Wars*, *Doctor Who* and various other properties, and won the Dragon Award for Best Graphic Novel for *White Sand*, which also made the New York Times Bestseller list. He writes SF and horror novels and short stories under his own name and as "James Axler". He also writes video games, where he has served as head writer, and has written animation for BBC television in the UK.

HOW I BROKE IN:

I came in as a comic book writer, where I think the sense of what constitutes a tie-in is slightly different--writing for *Superman* or *the X-Men*, say, is seen more as "adding to the established mythos" than elaborating upon it in the way that writing stories based around a movie or TV show might be. I went from that into writing books as myself and under a house pen-name. I think I've written something like 45 novels, and countless comic books to date, as well as animation and video games.

Writing for *Star Wars* was huge for me, writing comic strips for Han Solo and Chewbacca felt like I was being paid to do the same thing I'd done for free at age seven! I could give

dozens of examples like that, and it's usually writing for things I loved as a child (and probably never grew out of!)--*Star Wars*, *Doctor Who*, *Spider-Man* ... the list goes on and on.

I've enjoyed and continue to enjoy working with so many properties, and shaping the lives of these characters.

TIPS:

The biggest challenge for any freelance writer is if the editor changes, and you're left out in the cold, or if a project you've worked on for a while doesn't actually move forward through no fault of your own.

I've written comic books, novels, video games, animation, and I've worked on everything from *Superman* to *Shrek*, *Disney Princess* to *Deathlands* ... often in the same week!

I've had original material published, too, and, to be honest, the biggest hurdle is finding time to write it between tie-in assignments. Writing your own material is usually on spec, which is to say you're not paid until you land a publisher for it.

When people ask me what I've written, they're more interested to hear I've written *Star Wars* or *Peppa Pig* than an original book like *Bystander 27*, because they have brand recognition for the former.

Does Media Tie-in work require special skills? Not really. I always say, writing is writing--that's what I do, that's what I enjoy. But you do have to become familiar with the world in question, and get into that style, and you need to be able to work with licensors and deliver on what they expect for a particular franchise.

I think also you need to remember that the franchise is more important than you are to the readership. If you do a good job, they shouldn't notice you--it should be seamless and faithful to the franchise.

MEDIA TIE-IN WORKS:

- - 88 [Alpha Wave](#) (2009) [only as by [James Axler](#)]
 - 93 [Baptism of Rage](#) (2010) [only as by [James Axler](#)]
 - 109 [Chrono Spasm](#) (2013) [only as by [James Axler](#)]
 - 114 [Siren Song](#) (2014) [only as by [James Axler](#)]
 - 116 [End Program](#) (2014) [only as by [James Axler](#)]
 - 131 [Freak Pharm](#) (2017) [only as by [James Axler](#)]
 - 134 [Glory's Stockpile](#) (2019) [only as by [James Axler](#)]
 - 135 [Killville](#) (2019) [only as by [James Axler](#)]
 - 141 [Hell Reclaimed](#) (2021) [only as by [James Axler](#)]
 - 142 [Into Delirium](#) (2021) [only as by [James Axler](#)]
 - 143 [Grave Capitol](#) (2021) [only as by [James Axler](#)]
 - 144 [Memory Box](#) (2022) [only as by [James Axler](#)]
 - 146 [Red Letter Daze](#) (2022) [only as by [James Axler](#)]
 - 148 [Caged Goddess](#) (2023) [only as by [James Axler](#)]
 - 149 [Extinction Generation](#) (2023) [only as by [James Axler](#)]

Hercules: The Legendary Journeys Universe

- Hercules: The Legendary Journeys
 - 6 *Storming Paradise* (2015)
- Outlanders Universe
 - 1 Outlanders
 - 47 *Death Cry* (2008) [only as by [James Axler](#)]
 - 49 *Shadow Box* (2009) [only as by [James Axler](#)]
 - 50 *Janus Trap* (2009) [only as by [James Axler](#)]
 - 53 *Infinity Breach* (2010) [only as by [James Axler](#)]
 - 54 *Oblivion Stone* (2010) [only as by [James Axler](#)]
 - 55 *Distortion Offensive* (2010) [only as by [James Axler](#)]
 - 57 *Scarlet Dream* (2011) [only as by [James Axler](#)]
 - 58 *Truth Engine* (2011) [only as by [James Axler](#)]
 - 60 *Planet Hate* (2012) [only as by [James Axler](#)]
 - 61 *Dragon City* (2012) [only as by [James Axler](#)]
 - 62 *God War* (2012) [only as by [James Axler](#)]
 - 63 *Genesis Sinister* (2012) [only as by [James Axler](#)]
 - 65 *Sorrow Space* (2013) [only as by [James Axler](#)]
 - 66 *Immortal Twilight* (2013) [only as by [James Axler](#)]
 - 67 *Cosmic Rift* (2013) [only as by [James Axler](#)]
 - 71 *Judgment Plague* (2014) [only as by [James Axler](#)]
 - 72 *Terminal White* (2015) [only as by [James Axler](#)]
 - 73 *Hell's Maw* (2015) [only as by [James Axler](#)]
 - 75 *Apocalypse Unseen* (2015) [only as by [James Axler](#)]
 - *Hell's Maw (excerpt)* (2015) [SF] [only as by [James Axler](#)]

For more:

https://www.google.com/search?q=rik+hoskin&client=safari&sca_esv=45b2a14af5ca2da4&sxsrf=AHTn8zqvZ44viUPo8le_hZ-AMC8cCxxaxA%3A1745626086608&ei=5iMMaI_vJKvHp84Pm8K1qQY&si=APYL9bv1v0CvcYFu-QWnBUi5JpyfsgCtqhu_1UZsHUinQCBMqGF6yEuATjiLm_nSRvo4pvzf2u2FfrfvvSaWMb7ozMfpr5RdhqjdP2mM8VtwE_JxRO34MFw%3D&ictx=1&ved=2ahUKEwjz36gHtPSMAxXUHNAFHTWrI30QyNoBKAB6BAGUEAA#wgvs=e&wptab=si:APYL9bvcLtOLd4HnlYUGmZAYo11loUbbwWTvtNmjACc4JybRPnNnGc6kgSKIH3gXb0FtTqd3da3ZHiVLjWn8PXfk7qiqvXfzwGshm39WhGsLW0dc6d40LHOVl4xfWwF2Bnr8mAHfbzSw

WEBSITE AND SOCIAL MEDIA LINKS

I don't have any social media, but if you want to link to my author page on Amazon it's here ...

<https://www.amazon.com/stores/Rik-Hoskin/author/B004MX5E0W>

SCOTT PEARSON

BIO:

Scott Pearson is a writer and editor working across multiple genres in both traditional and indie publishing. His published works include short stories and novellas in humor, mystery, horror, urban fantasy, and science fiction. Scott's *Star Trek* fiction appears in a few anthologies and the e-book exclusive *The More Things Change*. He copyedited Simon & Schuster's *Star Trek* novels for ten years and is currently their developmental editor on the novels. He's an editor and occasional writer for the *Star Trek Adventures* roleplaying game and proofreads graphic novels and comic books for IDW, including their *Star Trek* titles. His website is scott-pearson.com, and you can follow him on Bluesky @scottpearson.

HOW I BROKE IN:

I broke into the tie-in market via the *Star Trek: Strange New Worlds* short story anthology contest. The contest was open to anyone who had less than three professional sales, and I had only one pro sale at the time. Starting with *Strange New Worlds II*, I submitted every year and finally got into *Strange New Worlds VII* in 2004. I got in again in with *Strange New Worlds 9*. Since that was my third pro sale, I was no longer eligible for the contest. During those years of submitting to SNW, I'd been kind of burned out on writing, only submitting to the annual contest. Getting those sales reenergized me. And then Marco Palmieri, then the editor of the *Trek* novel line, invited me to pitch for the *Star Trek: The Next Generation* twentieth anniversary anthology, and I got into that. It felt like I'd been called up to the majors. Although three short stories, two short novels, and a role-playing game book are my only regular prose fiction tie-in credits, that's only a small part of my work in the field. I became the freelance copyeditor for the *Trek* novels from Simon & Schuster in 2014, copyediting more than five dozen novels over the course of a decade, and I recently became the developmental editor of the line.

TIPS:

The simplest advice can be the most difficult to follow: You just have to keep at it, even though it can be an uphill battle. The *Star Trek: Strange New Worlds* contest got me some wins when I'd almost given up on getting published. And those wins—and the connections I made with editors and other writers—snowballed into so much more work in the tie-in field as an author and an editor. I've also contributed non-tie-in stories to many anthologies I was invited to through my tie-in connections. The best networking isn't done on purpose; it's just the friends you make along the way.

MEDIA TIE-IN WORKS:

"Full Circle" in *Star Trek: Strange New Worlds VII*
"Terra Tonight" in *Star Trek: Strange New Worlds 9*
"Among the Clouds" in *Star Trek: The Next Generation: The Sky's the Limit*
Honor in the Night in *Star Trek: Myriad Universes: Shattered Light*
Star Trek: The Original Series: The More Things Change
Star Trek Adventures: The Shackleton Expanse Campaign Guide
"Full Circle" in *Star Trek: Strange New Worlds VII*

“Terra Tonight” in *Star Trek: Strange New Worlds 9*
“Among the Clouds” in *Star Trek: The Next Generation: The Sky’s the Limit*
Honor in the Night in *Star Trek: Myriad Universes: Shattered Light*
Star Trek: The Original Series: The More Things Change
Star Trek Adventures: The Shackleton Expanse Campaign Guide

**** For either/both, include your website URL and tags for where the participants in the class can then find you online.

SOCIAL MEDIA LINKS

Bluesky @scottpearson.

Let me know if you want anything else.

SCOTT SIGLER

BIO:

#1 New York Times best-selling author Scott Sigler is the creator of twenty novels, seven novellas, dozens of short stories, and thousands of podcast episodes. He is an inaugural inductee into the Podcasting Hall of Fame. Scott began his career by narrating his unabridged audiobooks and serializing them in weekly installments. He continues to release free episodes every Sunday. Launched in March of 2005, “Scott Sigler Slices” is the world’s longest-running fiction podcast. His rabid fans fervently anticipate their weekly story fix, so much so that they’ve dubbed themselves “Sigler Junkies” and have downloaded over 50 million episodes. Subscribe to the free podcast at scottsigler.com/subscribe. Scott is a co-founder of Empty Set Entertainment, which publishes his Galactic Football League series. A Michigan native, he lives in San Diego, CA with his wife and their wee little Døgs of Døøm.

HOW I BROKE IN:

I got lucky, i.e. I knew a guy. My friend Jonathan Maberry asked if I’d like to write an ALIENS story for the anthology ALIENS: BUG HUNT. Seeing as this is my favorite movie of all time (and the crowning achievement of filmmaking, bar none), I jumped at the chance. My story “Dangerous Prey” led to tie-in short stories for PREDATOR, V-WARS, and to a full-length, canonical novel for the Aliens universe, ALIENS: PHALANX. Writing that book was one of the great joys of my career.

TIPS:

I believe you start with three elements — a passion for particular IPs, being willing to ask if you can write for them, and having thick skin.

Start with the worlds you live and die for, the you know the lore of, that you wait with bated breath for any new element to come out from. Getting to write a tie-in for your favorite franchises is more than business, it's an experience you will treasure. You may have many such fandoms, which is cool.

Once you set your "dream board" of the stories that have touched your soul and made your life better, put in the time to find out who controls it, who decides what the next book/comic/manga/story will be. Reach out to them. Tell them you adore the franchise and you want to create for it. Be patient — finding the decision makers will take time. *Be nice!* These are busy people who bear the responsibility of carrying that franchise's torch. It's a lot of pressure and work for them. Again, *be nice!*

Then, get ready for rejection. This is where the thick skin comes in. Remember how I said "be nice?" You have to be patient, too. Get to know the decision makers. Be up-front that you want to get to know them because you want to create in that universe. Be honest with your intentions. A "no" is one step closer to a "yes." There is no hard-sell in this business. It may take years for you to break into that IP, and that's fine.

MEDIA TIE-IN WORKS:

"Dead Man's Switch"	short story	Predator: Eyes Of The Demon, anthology edited by Bryan Thomas Schmidt,
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ALIENS: PHALANX a novel

"Another Mother"	short story	Aliens vs. Predators: Ultimate Prey, anthology edited by Jonathan Maberry and Bryan Thomas Schmid
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"Dangerous Prey"	short story	Aliens: Bug Hunt, anthology announced and edited by Jonathan Maberr
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"The Hippo II"	short story	V-Wars: Night Terrors, anthology ISBN 978-1631402722 (Oct 6, 2015) IDW Publishing
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"Vacation"	short story	Joe Ledger: Unstoppable, anthology edited by Jonathan Maberry and Bryan Thomas Schmidt,
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"Plants And Animals"	short story	Double Trouble: An Anthology Of Two-Fisted Team-Ups, anthology edited by Jonathan Maberry and Keith R.A. DeCandido
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"Little Murder Machine" short story Joe Ledger: Unbreakable, anthology edited by Jonathan Maberry and Bryan Thomas Schmidt

WEBSITE AND LNKS:

www.scottsigler.com

Get my free, weekly fiction podcast. Search for "Scott Sigler Slices" wherever you get your podcasts, or hit the links at scottsigler.com/subscribe.

I'm on all the socials as @scottsigler. Friend me. Ask me questions there, or email scott@scottsigler.com. I might not answer right away, but I *will* answer. And if I don't respond? *Be nice!* Hit me up again in a few months, remind me you already reached out.

STACIA DEUTSCH

BIO:

Stacia Deutsch is the New York Times bestselling author of more than 350 children's books. Her career started with the original, award winning, **Blast to the Past** series about four kids who time travel and meet famous people in history. Now, she writes mostly chapter book and mid-grade for licensed characters. Stacia's first movie novelization was **Batman: The Dark Knight** and since then, she's written many more movie and TV tie ins. Other books include the **Friendship Code** for Girls Who Code/Penguin, seven novels for **Spirit: Riding Free** (Little Brown/Dreamworks), and **LEGO** short stories. She's also a ghostwriter for celebrities. Under pseudonyms, Stacia has been behind **Nancy Drew** and **Boxcar Children** series.

HOW I BROKE IN:

When I was working on my first novel, I saw an ad for writing Strawberry Shortcake books and thought "I can do that!" I emailed and they asked me about my experience. That was baffling: How do you *get* experience so you can *have* experience? Fast forward a few years after I sold "Blast to the Past" an original children's book series to Simon and Schuster. The editor said that they were looking for people to write young Nancy Drew. Did I know how to write mysteries? I immediately said "I can do that!" And luckily, they let me learn along the way. Once I was in the world of licensed properties, I found that I loved working in other people's sandboxes, with known characters - adding my own twists. There was no going back. It's been 20 plus years that I've been doing this. More than 350 books. I've worked for nearly every publisher. Now, if only someone needed me for Strawberry Shortcake!

TIPS:

The one thing I would advise new writers is to check your ego at the door. I often don't get my name on my work. Editors will sometimes change things after I turn them in, before

publication, without consulting me. If you are bonded to each of your words, or want a big book signing, this kind of work might not be for you. I just want to write.

Be nice. Be fast. Get the work done. Listen to the licensor - it's their vision. Set realistic expectations. Hire writing is awesome, but I also like to remind myself that there are hundreds (more) of other writers who would gladly I what I do, probably for less. I want to be the one that editors think of when they need a children's writer. In order for that to happen, I need to be my best self, and consistently show them what I can do!

MEDIA TIE-IN WORKS:

NEW YORK TIMES BEST SELLING NOVELS (THREE):

Friendship Code: Girls Who Code, Grosset and Dunlap, Summer 2017.

New York Times Best Seller September 2017.

The Smurfs Junior Movie Novelization, Simon and Schuster and Columbia Pictures, Summer, 2011.

New York Times Best Seller August 2011.

Cloudy with a Chance of Meatballs, Simon and Schuster and Sony Pictures, August, 2009.

#1 New York Times Best Seller October 2009.

Nominee: The International Association of Media Tie-In Writer's Scribe Award, 2010.

ALSO:

Build a Bear's The Puppy Promise Plan, picture book, McMillan, 2025.

Frame by Frame: Emily/Emma Stone, biography, Epic Ink, 2025.

The Story of Olivia Rodrigo, Callisto/Sourcebooks, 2025.

Schleich's Horse Club: Three Midgrade Novels, Ameet, 2024-2025.

1) Mystery in Peppertree Woods

2) A Rescue Mission

65th Anniversary Barbie: Her inspiration, History, and Legacy, Mattel and Epic Ink, 2024.

Lego Ninjago Stories, Ameet Publications, 2023-2024.

Also Lego Ninjago activity book: comics and stories.

The Jessie Files, A Boxcar Children Spinoff Series, 4 novels, Albert Whitman/PRH, 2022-2023.

1) The Friendship Feature

2) Talk of the Town

3) A Dramatic Disappearance

4) The Campsite Cold Case

Boxcar Children: The Great Greenfield Bake-Off, Albert Whitman & Company, 2021.

The Boss Baby 2 Movie Novelization, Simon and Schuster, 2021.

Lego Ninjago and Lego City Short Stories, Ameet Publications, 2021.

Boxcar Children Science Fair Sabotage, Albert Whitman & Company, September, 2020.
Spirit Riding Free: Riding Academy Race, DreamWorks and Little Brown, September, 2020.
Spirit Diaries tie-in to TV show, DreamWorks and Little Brown, 2018/2019, 4 books.
Spirit Riding Free: Activity Book, DreamWorks and Little Brown.
Hotel Transylvania 3 Movie Novelization, Simon and Schuster.
Nutcracker and the Four Realms Pool, Disney.
Tangled: Movie Novels, Disney Worldwide Publishing.
Smurfs Movie Novelization: The Lost Village, Simon and Schuster, Summer.
Friendship Code: Girls Who Code, Grosset and Dunlap, Book 2.
Tales from the Scaremaster: Werewolf Weekend, Little Brown, 2016.
Ghostbusters Movie Novelization, Simon and Schuster, Summer, 2016.
Ever After High: Evil Queen's Guide to Evil, Little Brown/Mattel. 2016.
Boxcar Children Celebrity Cat Caper, Albert Whitman & Company, 2016.
LEGO Elves Activity Book 2, Ameet, 2016.
LEGO Elves: Dragon Queen, Scholastic, Fall, 2016.
Ever After High Novelization: Dragon Games, Little Brown, 2015.
LEGO Elves: Quest for the Keys, Scholastic, Spring 2015.
The Legend of the NeverBeast Movie Novelization, Disney and Little Brown, 2015.
LEGO Short Stories, LEGO City, Ameet/Scholastic, 2015.
Nancy Drew and the Magician's Secret, Simon and Schuster, 2015.
Hotel Transylvania 2 Movie Novelization, Simon Spotlight, 2015.
The Book of Life Movie Novelization, Simon Spotlight, September, 2014.
Little Miss Mister Man Guide to Life, Grosset and Dunlap, May, 2014.
Disney Fairies: The Pirate Fairy Chapter Book, Little Brown, March, 2014.
Lego Friends Chapter Books, Several short stories about girls and friendship, Ameet/Scholastic, 2014.
Lego City Activity Book, Scholastic, 2014.
Cloudy with a Chance of Meatballs 2 Movie Novelization, Simon Spotlight, Fall, 2013.
Smurfs 2 Movie Novelization, Simon Spotlight, Summer 2013.
Boxcar Children #133: Return of the Graveyard Ghost, Albert Whitman & Company, Fall, 2013.
Rise of the Guardians: Junior Movie Novelization, Simon Spotlight, October, 2012.
The Dark Knight Legend: Junior Movie Novelization, Harper Collins and Warner Brothers, June, 2012.
Nominee: The International Association of Media Tie-In Writer's Scribe Award, 2013.
Boxcar Children #125: The Cupcake Caper, Albert Whitman & Company, November, 2010.
Nancy Drew and the Clue Crew #27, Cat Burglar Caper, Simon and Schuster, Aladdin Paperbacks, May, 2010.
Dragonball Evolution, Three chapter books and a junior novel. Viz Media and 20th Century Fox. February, 2009.
Boxcar Children #121: Superstar Watch, Albert Whitman & Company, November, 2009.

Batman: The Dark Knight Junior Novelization, Harper UK/DC Comics/Warner Brothers, July, 2008.

Nominee: The International Association of Media Tie-In Writer's Scribe Award, 2009.

Nancy Drew and the Clue Crew #15: Mall Madness, Simon and Schuster, Aladdin Paperbacks, Summer, 2008.

Nancy Drew and the Clue Crew #10: Fall Festival Ticket Trouble, Simon and Schuster, Aladdin Paperbacks, October, 2007.

Winner: The International Association of Media Tie-In Writer's Scribe Award, 2008.

Nancy Drew and the Clue Crew #3: Pony Problems, Simon and Schuster, Aladdin Paperbacks, August, 2006.

WEBSITE AND SOCIAL MEDIA LINKS

Find her at www.staciadeutsch.com. Instagram @staciadeutsch_writes and www.facebook.com/staciadeutsch.

TIM LEBBON

BIO:

TIM LEBBON is a New York Times-bestselling writer from South Wales. He's had fifty novels published to date, and hundreds of novellas and short stories. His latest novel is *Among The Living*. His new novel, *Secret Lives of The Dead*, is out August 2025. He has won a World Fantasy Award and four British Fantasy Awards, as well as Bram Stoker, Scribe and Dragon Awards. The movie of his novel *The Silence* debuted on Netflix in April 2019, and *Pay the Ghost* was released Hallowe'en 2015.

HOW I BROKE IN:

I think my first tie-in project was a Hellboy novel for a line of novels that Christopher Golden was editing at the time. On the back of that I was offered a novelisation for Cabin in the Woods, and then more tie-in work rolled in over the next few years. I think once editors know that you can produce decent quality work on time, you're more likely to be offered such work.

TIPS:

It's pretty difficult to get into tie-in writing unless you've established yourself as a writer with original work. So read a lot, write a lot, hone your craft, and then start trying to put yourself out there for some tie-in properties that really interest you. I've never agreed to write a novel that doesn't excite me

MEDIA TIE-IN WORKS:

Cabin in the Woods - Novelization
30 Days of Night - Novelization
Kong: Skull Island - Novelization

And original novels...

30 Days of Night: Fear of the Dark
Alien: Out of the Shadows
Star Wars: Dawn of the Jedi - Into The Void
Predator - Incursion
Alien - Invasion
AVP - Armageddon
Hellboy: Unnatural Selection
Hellboy: The Fire Wolves
Firefly: Generations
Conan: Songs of The Slain

WEBSITE AND SOCIAL MEDIA LINKS

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TIM WAGGONER

BIO:

Tim Waggoner's first novel came out in 2001, and since then he's published over sixty novels and eight collections of short stories. He writes original dark fantasy and horror, as well as media tie-ins. He's written tie-in fiction based on *Supernatural*, *The X-Files*, *Alien*, *Doctor Who*, *Conan the Barbarian*, *A Nightmare on Elm Street*, *Grimm*, and *Transformers*, among others, and he's written novelizations for films such as Ti West's *X-Trilogy*, *Halloween Kills*, *Terrifier 2* and *3*, and *Resident Evil: The Final Chapter*. He's a four-time winner of the Bram Stoker Award, a one-time winner of the Scribe award, and he's been a two-time finalist for the Shirley Jackson Award and a one-time finalist for the Splatterpunk Award. He's also a full-time tenured professor who teaches creative writing and composition at Sinclair College in Dayton, Ohio.

HOW I BROKE IN:

Back in the nineties, White Wolf published a number of novels and anthologies based on their horror-themed roleplaying games. I'd hoped to write for the company, but I had no idea how to go about it. Then one day I saw an open call for a White Wolf anthology posted online. I was thrilled. Open calls for tie-in projects don't come along very often – usually, they're by invitation only. The stories in the anthology were supposed to take place in the company's *Vampire: The*

Dark Ages game setting, and since I wasn't as familiar with that game as I was the modern version, I almost didn't submit. But I did some research, and the basic concept of vampires in the Middle Ages didn't seem too restrictive, so there would (hopefully) be room for many different takes on the setting. I started writing, and soon I had a submission ready to go. I sent it to the editor, it was accepted, and my story "Seeker" appeared in the anthology *Dark Tyrants* in 1997. It was my first tie-in credit, and it directly led to my first tie-in novel contract to write a novel for White Wolf called *Dark Ages: Gangrel*, which recently came out in a new edition from Crossroads Press. From this experience, I learned that short story tie-ins can serve as effective calling cards/audition pieces for other tie-in projects.

TIPS:

The most common advice I give to writers who want to do tie-ins is to write and publish your own original novels first. Tie-in editors want to work with writers who've already proven they can produce publishable novels and deliver them on deadline. They also prefer that you publish traditionally because that shows you can work with others – an editor, copyeditor, etc. – in the production of a final book. When you write your original fiction, you're the boss and can do whatever you want, but tie-in writing is highly collaborative. Not only do you need to work with staff at the publisher, but you also need to work with a representative of the IP owners.

MEDIA TIE-IN WORKS:

Novelizations

MaXXXine. A24, 2025.

Pearl A24, 2025.

X. A24, 2024.

Terrifier. Titan Books, 2025.

Terrifier 3. Titan Books, 2024.

Terrifier 2. Titan Books, 2024.

Halloween Kills. Titan Books, 2021.

Kingsman: The Golden Circle, Titan Books, 2017.

xXx: The Return of Xander Cage. Titan Books, 2017

Resident Evil: The Final Chapter. Titan Books, 2017.

Novels

Conan: Siege of the Serpent Men. Titan Books, 2025.

Planet Havoc: A Zombicide Invader Novel. Aconyte Books, 2022.

Alien: Prototype. Titan Books, 2019.

Supernatural: Children of Anubis. Titan Books, 2019.

Supernatural: Mythmaker. Titan Books, 2016.

Supernatural: The Roads Not Taken. Insight Editions, 2013.

Supernatural: Carved in Flesh. Titan Books, 2013.

Lady Ruin. Wizards of the Coast, 2010. Eberron

Stargate SG-1: Valhalla. Fandemonium Books, 2009.
Blade of the Flame 3: Sea of Death. Wizards of the Coast, Feb. 2008. Eberron
Blade of the Flame 2: Forge of the Mindslayers. Wizards of the Coast, Mar. 2007. Ebberon
Blade of the Flame 1: Thieves of Blood. Wizards of the Coast, May 2006. Ebberon
A Nightmare on Elm Street: Protégé. Black Flame, Oct. 2005.
A Shadow Over Heaven's Eye. White Wolf Publishing, July 2005. Exalted
Dragonlance, the New Adventures: Return of the Sorceress. Wizards of the Coast, Inc., 2004.
Defender: Hyperswarm. I-Books, 2004.
Dragonlance, the New Adventures: Temple of the Dragonslayer. Wizards of the Coast, Inc., July 2004.
Dark Ages: Gangrel. White Wolf Publishing, 2004. Vampire: Dark Ages

Nonfiction Books

The Men of Letters Bestiary: Winchester Family Edition. Insight Editions, 2017.

Comic Book Scripts

"The Nest." *Kolchak the Nightstalker 50th Anniversary Graphic Novel*. Moonstone Books, 2022.

Short Stories

"Conan: Marked for Death: The Heroic Legends Series." Titan Books, 2026.
"To Sing Deeper Song." *Tales of the Reconvergence*. Hex Publishers, 2023. Unioverse
"Raiders of the Poisoned Plains." *Wendigo Tales*. Pinnacle, 2020. Deadlands
"Skin Man." *Anathemas*. Black Library, 2020. Warhammer 40K
"The Way to a Man's Heart." *C.H.U.D. Lives!* Crystal Lake Publishing, 2018.
"Foundling." *X-Files: The Truth is Out There*. IDW, 2016.
"Her Corner of the Sky." *V-Wars: Night Terrors*. IDW, 2015.
"Across Silent Seas." *Doctor Who: Destination Prague*. Big Finish, 2007.
"The Blade of the Flame." *Tales of the Last War*. Wizards of the Coast, 2006. Eberron
"Collect and Save." *The Transformers Legends*. I-Books, 2005.
"Weapon of Flesh and Bone." (In collaboration with R. Davis.) *The Further Adventures of Xena*. Ace, 2001.
"Seeker." *Dark Tyrants*. White Wolf Publishing, June 1997. Vampire: Dark Ages

WEBSITE AND SOCIAL MEDIA LINKS

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YouTube Channel: <https://www.youtube.com/c/timwaggonerswritinginthedark>

Amazon Page: https://www.amazon.com/stores/Tim-Waggoner/author/B001JP0XFM?ref=ap_rdr&store_ref=ap_rdr&isDramIntegrated=true&shoppingPortalEnabled=true

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Instagram: tim.waggoner.scribe

YVONNE NAVARRO

BIO:

Yvonne Navarro is the author of 20-plus novels, scores of short stories, various non-fiction columns, and a reference dictionary. Her tie-in novels include seven *Buffy the Vampire Slayer* novels, *Aliens: Music of the Spears*, *AVP: Rift War* (with her husband, Weston Ochse), *Supernatural: The Usual Sacrifices*, *Hellboy*, *Elektra*, and more, plus numerous short stories and novelettes in both the *Buffy* and *V Wars* universes. She lives in Tucson, Arizona with her three dogs.

HOW I BROKE IN:

My first novel, *AfterAge*, was published in 1993 and I was working on my second (of a 3-book contract). My agent called me and said my editor was asking if I'd be interested in doing a movie novelization. I had no idea what that was until he explained it. Of course I said yes. My editor had thought of me because she felt my writing was good and was presuming I could meet a deadline. That movie novelization was *Species*, the first of quite a few.

TIPS:

People think I'm insane, but I always recommend a final out loud reading of your manuscript before you turn it in. And not in a monotone-- read it like you're acting it out. You'll find the typos, the weird punctuation, the sentences that are so long you can't breathe by the time you get to the end, and the things that just don't *work*. I read all my work aloud before submitting it... even *Final Impact*, which was 190,000 words. I am not kidding.

MEDIA TIE-IN WORKS:

iction Series

- [Aliens Universe](#)
 - [Reclamation](#) (2017) [SF]
 - 2 [Aliens](#)
 - 8 [Music of the Spears](#) (1996)
 - [The Complete Aliens Omnibus: Volume Four](#) (2017) [O/8,9] with [S. D. Perry](#)
 - 3 [Aliens Versus Predator](#)
 - [Abuse, Interrupted](#) (2022) [SF]
 - [Rift War](#) (2022) with [Weston Ochse](#)
 - [Predator](#)
 - [Predator short fiction](#)
 - [Sly Dark in the Daylight](#) (2022) [SF]

- [Babylon 5 Universe](#)
 - [Babylon 5: TV Movie Novelizations](#)
 - 4 [The River of Souls](#) (unpublished)
- [Buffyverse](#)
 - 1 [Buffy the Vampire Slayer](#)
 - [Paleo](#) (2000) also appeared as:
 - Translation: [Sunnydale Park](#) [French] (2002)
 - [And White Splits the Night](#) (2001) [SF]
 - [Die Blutgräfin](#) (2001) [SF]
 - [Dark of the Moon](#) (2003) [SF]
 - [Buffy the Vampire Slayer \(Young Adult\)](#)
 - 13 [The Willow Files, Vol. 1](#) (1999) [C]
 - 20 [The Willow Files, Vol. 2](#) (2001) [C]
 - 24 [Tempted Champions](#) (2002)
 - [File: Dead Man's Party](#) (1999) [SF]
 - [File: I Robot, You Jane](#) (1999) [SF]
 - [File: Phases](#) (1999) [SF]
 - [Uncle Dead and the Fourth of July](#) (2000) [SF]
 - [File: Choices](#) (2001) [SF]
 - [File: Doppelgängerland](#) (2001) [SF]
 - [File: Gingerbread](#) (2001) [SF]
 - [Wicked Willow](#)
 - 1 [The Darkening](#) (2004)
 - 2 [Shattered Twilight](#) (2004)
 - 3 [Broken Sunrise](#) (2004)
 - [Wicked Willow Omnibus](#) (2004) [O]
 - 2 [Angel](#)
 - [12 A.M.: Generous Presence](#) (2002) [SF]
 - [3 A.M.: Icicle Memories](#) (2002) [SF]
- [Dark Redemption](#)
 - 1 [Highborn](#) (2010)
 - 2 [Concrete Savior](#) (2011)
- [Final Impact](#)
 - 1 [Final Impact](#) (1997) also appeared as:
 - Variant: [Millenium's Dark Embrace](#) (unpublished)
 - 2 [Red Shadows](#) (1998)
- [Hellboy](#)
 - [Hellboy movie novelizations](#)
 - 1 [Hellboy](#) (2004) also appeared as:
- [Marvel metaverse](#)
 - [Elektra](#) (2005)
- [Species](#)
 - 1 [Species](#) (1995) also appeared as:
 - Translation: [La mutante](#) [French] (1995)
 - 2 [Species II](#) (1998) also appeared as:
 - Translation: [Species II](#) [Dutch] (1998)
- [Supernatural](#)

- [The Usual Sacrifices](#) (2017)

Short Fiction Series

- [The Rocketeer](#)
 - [The Red, White & Grey](#) (2014)
- [The Secret History of the World](#)
 - [Freak Show](#)
 - [Chicago, IL](#) (1992) also appeared as:
 - Variant: [Do You Dream?](#) (2002)
- [The X-Files Universe](#)
 - [Love Lost](#) (2016)
- [V Wars](#)
 - [Legacy](#) (2016)
 - [Epiphany \(V Wars\)](#)
 - 1 [Epiphany, Part 1](#) (2012) also appeared as:
 - Translation: [Heimkehr, Teil 1](#) [German] (2019)
 - 2 [Epiphany, Part 2](#) (2012) also appeared as:
 - Translation: [Heimkehr, Teil 2](#) [German] (2019)
 - [The Enemy Within \(V Wars\)](#)
 - 1 [The Enemy Within, Part 1](#) (2014)
 - 2 [The Enemy Within, Part 2](#) (2014)
 - 3 [The Enemy Within, Part 3 \(Concluded\)](#) (2014)

WEBSITE AND SOCIAL MEDIA LINKS

Visit her on Facebook at <https://www.facebook.com/yvonne.navarro.001/> and on Instagram at <https://www.instagram.com/yvonne.navarro1/> .

SAMPLE MEDIA TIE-IN SHORT STORIES:

Here are a few of my media tie-in short stories. They should give you an idea of tone, voice, length, etc.

The Cobbler of Oz

By

Jonathan Maberry

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--1--

“I need a pair of traveling shoes.”

When the cobbler heard the voice he peered up over the tops of his half-glasses, but there was no one there. The counter that separated him from the rest of the town square was littered with all of the tools of his trade—hammers and scissors, awls and stout needles, glue and grommets. However, beyond the edge of the counter there was nothing.

Well, that was not precisely the case, because beyond the empty space that was beyond the counter were a thousand chattering, noisy, moving, bustling, shopping, buying, selling, yelling, laughing people. They were there in all of the colors of the rainbow; green was the most common color here in the Emerald City, but the other colors were well represented, too. There were Winkies in a dozen shades of yellow, and Munchkins in two dozen shades of blue, and Quadlings in scarlets and crimsons and tomato reds, and Gillikins in twilight purples and plum purples and the purple of ripe eggplants.

But there was no one who seemed to own the tiny voice that had spoken.

The cobbler set down the boot he was repairing for a palace guard.

“Hello—?” he asked.

“Sir,” said the voice of the invisible person, “I need a pair of traveling shoes, if you please.”

“I do indeed please,” said the Cobbler, “or I would if I could see your feet or indeed any part of you. Though, admittedly, your feet are necessary to any further discussion on the matter of shoes, traveling or otherwise.”

“But I’m right here,” said the voice. “Can’t you see me at all?”

The cobbler stood up and leaned over, first looking right and then looking left and finally looking down, and there stood a figure.

It was a “figure” even in the Cobbler’s mind, because he could not call the figure a man or a woman because that would never be correct. Nor could he call it a boy or a girl, because neither of those labels would hang correctly on the person who stood there wringing its tiny hands.

“I thought you were an invisible little girl,” said the cobbler.

“No sir,” said the figure. “Neither invisible nor a girl. Though I am little and to my own people I am a girl for I am not yet fully grown.”

“I see that you are quite little, my dear. But why stand down there where no one but a giraffe can look over and see you? Why not fly up here onto the counter? There’s plenty of space,” he said, pushing some of his tools aside.

The little figure looked sad—or at least the cobbler *supposed* that she looked sad, because he had very little experience reading the expressions of persons of her kind. She turned around so that he could see her back, and then she raised her arms to her sides and with a soft grunt of effort expanded the pair of miniature wings.

The wings were lovely to see. Gold and tan in color, with nicely formed primary feathers, as well as all of the requisite secondary and tertiary feathers, and quite attractive emarginations.

However, upon seeing the feathers the cobbler felt his mouth turn into a small round O, and he even spoke that word aloud. “Oh,” he said, faintly and with an equal mix of surprise, and consternation and pity.

The wings slumped and the little figure turned.

“I know,” she said sadly. “They look perfect, but they’re so small that they wouldn’t lift a pigeon let alone a monkey.”

“Ah,” said the cobbler. It was not a great change in his response, but it conveyed a different emotion—sympathy. A winged monkey whose wings were so small she could never ever fly.

The little monkey fluttered her wings so they beat with the blurred speed of a hummingbird, but there was no corresponding change in the elevation of the owner. All that the cobbler could see was a bit of a flutter in the brocade vest the monkey child wore, stirred by a faint breeze from those stunted wings.

Once more the wings sagged back in defeat and the little figure seemed to deflate with them. She hung her head for a moment, shaking it sadly.

“My sisters and my brothers all have normal wings, even my littlest brother who is only two. Momma has to tie a tether to him to keep him from flying out of the nursery window. And Dadda has great wings. Big ones, with a pattern like a hunting falcon. He can fly way above the tops of the tallest trees in the forest and then soar down among the trunks, swooping past our windows. Sometimes he flies past and without even a flutter or a pause he’ll toss walnuts and coconuts in through the window and they land on our beds as if placed there by a slow and careful hand.” She sighed and shook her head. “My wings are almost the same size now as they were after I was

born. They grew a little and then stopped, but I never stopped growing and I'm still growing. Soon I'll be full grown and I'll still have wings that would barely lift a small bird."

Then she drew in a breath and looked up at the cobbler who still leaned forward over the counter.

"And now you see why I need a pair of traveling shoes."

--2--

The cobbler stepped out from behind his market stall and addressed the little winged monkey. He extended a large and callused hand.

"My name is Bucklebelt," he said.

The winged monkey curtsied. "I'm Nyla of the Green Forest clan. It's a pleasure to make your acquaintance, Mr. Bucklebelt."

"And a pleasure to make yours, Miss Nyla." He tilted his head toward his counter. "As it is rather difficult to hold a conversation with you with my counter in the way, and entirely impossible to measure you for shoes, travelling or otherwise, may I assist you by lifting you onto the counter?"

Nyla sighed again and cast a sad glance around the bustling square. "I suppose everyone who is likely to laugh at a nearly wingless winged monkey has already had their fill of snortles and chuckles. I don't see how being lifted onto a counter can cause me any greater embarrassment."

He winked at her. "If anyone so much as sniggers I will tonk them a good one on their noggins in the hopes that it helps them remember their manners. This is the Emerald City after

all, and the Wizard requires that everyone have manners.” Now he sighed. “But of course we both know that for some folks, manners come and go like the phases of the moon.”

She nodded, knowing full well that this was true. Some of the other winged monkeys her age laughed and made jokes about what they called her “butterfly” wings, but they never did that when the adults were around.

With her permission, Bucklebelt lifted Miss Nyla onto the counter. He did it gently and made sure not to set her down on anything sharp. Then he went back around to his side of the counter and climbed onto a stool, for in truth even though he was a grown man, the cobbler was not a large man. Only parts of him were large—his nose was a red bulb, his eyes were as big as the largest blueberries in the southern groves, and his eyebrows stood up like giant caterpillars.

For her part, Nyla was graceful and small, with dark brown fur, a soft gray muzzle and big brown eyes that were the exact color of polished oak. She wore a vest stitched with every color from the Land of Oz, along with a leather satchel that was hung slantwise across her body. The leather was dyed red and green and delicately stitched with a pattern of ripe bananas under lustrous green leaves.

The cobbler noticed the bag and nodded his approval. “That’s good work,” he said. “And if it’s not the work of Salander the Leathermaker then I’m a Munchkin.”

“It is!” she cried, delighted at his recognition. The bag was Nyla’s prized possession. “My grandmomma bought this for me when I started school. You wouldn’t believe how many things I can keep in here.”

“Oh yes I would,” he said with a knowing smile. “Salander is the genius of our age when it comes to leather goods. There’s a saying that if it’s a Salander bag, then you can put six things in a bag made for five.”

“Or even seven or eight,” she said.

He nodded. “Your grandmomma must be shrewd and wise. That bag will never wear out and you’ll never lose anything you put in it. There’s no better place to keep your hopes and dreams.”

That put a smile on Nyla’s face.

“Now,” said Mr. Bucklebelt, “let’s talk about traveling shoes. Exactly what *kind* of traveling shoes are you looking for? Because there are traveling shoes and then there are traveling shoes. Some will get you home and some will get you far, far from home. Some will take you places that you want to go and others will take you to places that you *need* to go—even if you didn’t know that’s where you needed to be.”

Nyla settled herself on a soft roll of yarn, pulling her bag around so that it rested on her lap. She took a moment to compose her thoughts, and then said, “I want traveling shoes that will take me to places I don’t even know about.”

“Ah,” he said, adjusting his glasses. “You want *magic* shoes.”

“But...aren’t *all* traveling shoes magical?”

“Oh no,” he said. “Not at all. Most traveling shoes are very civilized and proper, and as you know when you’re too civilized then there’s no magic at all.”

“How can those kinds of shoes take you to wonderful places?” she asked, confused.

He took a moment before he answered that. “Well, it’s because there are different kinds of magic. In the most civilized places—in gray places where everything is normal--then shoes will protect your feet from ordinary things like stones in the road or nettles in the grass. They’ll keep your feet from burning on the hot sands or from freezing in the snow. And when you’re walking in mud they won’t let squishy worms wriggle between your toes.”

“I don’t mind worms,” said Nyla, but she said it to herself.

Mr. Bucklebelt said, “That kind of traveling shoes will help you run indoors when there’s lightning or help you run fast to catch a boat that’s about to sail. They won’t squeak when you sneak and they won’t flop when you hop. A good pair of traveling shoes—even the nonmagical kind that people wear here in Oz and everywhere where people have feet—will be a comfort on a long journey. And—maybe there’s just the tiniest spark of magic in them, because when you put on any pair of traveling shoes your feet just want to go find somewhere new to walk.”

“Then what about shoes with *real* magic?”

“Ah,” he said sagely, touching his finger to the side of his nose, “that’s another thing entirely. There are very few genuinely magical traveling shoes. In my whole career as a cobbler I’ve seen only three pairs.”

“Three?”

“One was a pair of stalking boots worn by the Huntsman of Hungry Hall. When he put those boots on he never needed horse nor even hounds to find a stag or a wild boar for the village roast. Those boots always found the trail and kept him on it until his prey was within easy bowshot. No one in all the district ever went hungry because of the Huntsman’s stalking boots.”

“Wow!”

“Then there are the dancing slippers of the Ash Princess. The shoes looked like ordinary slippers on anyone else’s feet, but on her feet they transformed into the second most elegant shoes in all the world, and even though they were as soft as calfskin leather they were as clear as polished crystal.” He leaned close and whispered. “Made from the leather of dragon’s wings. With those shoes, the Ash Princess and her prince danced on moonbeams and starlight, high above the heads of everyone else at their wedding.”

“Wait...you said they were the *second* most elegant shoes in the world. What are the first?”

Mr. Bucklebelt sighed very softly, and when he spoke his voice was hushed. “Ah, now...that brings us to the third pair of traveling shoes. The dragon-scale walking shoes. Now there is a pair of shoes, my girl! The finest craftsmanship in all the world. I’m only a humble cobbler—I *repair* shoes—but those were made by the finest cordwainer, the finest *shoemaker* in all the land. Do you know the story? No? Shall I tell you?”

Nyla nodded, her eyes alight with excitement.

“Then tell you I shall, for it is a tale anyone looking for traveling shoes really *should* know.” He settled himself more comfortably on his stool. “This is a very old story because it happened a very long time ago. Back in an age when there were griffins and dragons and herds of unicorns. Back when fish with scales of true gold swam in rivers that flowed to a great sea called Shallasa. Ah, but that was so long ago that most people don’t believe it’s anything but an old story. I know, though, that Shallasa is neither a made-up story nor myth nor even a dream. And yet all we have left of that sea are its bones.”

“The bones of a sea?” asked Nyla. “How can a sea have bones?”

“They don’t look like bones as you and I know them, but everything has a part of itself that remains even when all of this is gone.” He gave her arm a gentle pinch. “When a sea dies it leaves behind a great waste of salt and sand.”

“The Deadly Desert!” cried Nyla in horror.

“Yes indeed. That cruel waste that no one can cross,” he said, nodding gravely. “It stretches beyond our knowing and surrounds all of Oz. No one can cross it and live, and we know this because many have tried. So many. Even heroes and fast horses, even scorpions in their armor and birds on their wings. Nothing that lives can traverse the Deadly Desert. And what a sadness that is because even though the dragon-scale walking shoes were made in what is now Munchkin

Country, the materials—the *key* materials, mind you—came from a land far beyond the Sea of Shallasa. A land not even remembered in fairytales and old songs, more’s the pity. It was a land of tall castles and deep valleys, a place where jewel-birds flitted among the trees and the mountains sang old songs every night at the setting of the sun. It was there, in a place in whose very soil the soul of magic thrived, that is the only place where the silver sequins that were used to cover the shoes can be found.”

“But...can’t someone *make* silver sequins? There is plenty of silver around and—”

“Ah,” said Bucklebelt, shaking his head, “like traveling shoes, there is silver and then there is *silver*. The silver I’m talking about isn’t a cold metal chopped from a mine. No, this is living silver and there is only one source for it. Just one in all the world.”

“What is it?” asked Nyla in a wondering little voice.

He bent closer and his whisper was hushed and secret. “Dragon scales,” he said.

Her eyes went as wide as eyes could go. “*D-dragon’s* scales?”

“Oh yes. When Shallasa was still a shining sea, there were dragons in those far off lands. Only a few, mind you, because even way back then dragons were becoming scarce. But they were there. And there were different kinds of dragons. There were puffer dragons whose exhalations could chase the clouds through the sky and blow rainstorms away into other lands. There were soot dragons that ate fire and slept in the mouths of volcanoes. And, of course, there were silver dragons. Great, gleaming beasts made of living metal.”

“Oh my,” said Nyla. “Were they friendly dragons?”

Bucklebelt laughed. “Friendly? Whoever heard of a friendly dragon?”

“I read about talking dragons in stories,” said Nyla. “Sometimes they’re nice.”

“Those are stories, little one,” said the cobbler. “Stories are made up except when they’re not.”

Nyla blinked. “But...but...” Her face wrinkled with confusion as she tried to understand what Mr. Bucklebelt just said.

He chuckled. “I suppose *some* dragons have been civil, but I don’t know if any of them have ever been *nice*. At least not to edible, crunchable folks like you and me. Long, long ago, though, there were people who found a way to talk to those dragons. Not all of them...but the less grouchy ones. There are old songs—songs so old that half the words aren’t even words to us anymore—about people talking to dragons. High on a cliff or under a mountain or deep in the darkest woods.”

“What did they talk about?”

“About sad things,” said Mr. Bucklebelt, and he felt sad to say it. “The dragons were the last of their kind. Each of them, be it shadow dragon or red-clay dragon or corn dragon, they were the last of their kind.”

“What happened to all the others? To their mommas and daddas and all their sisters and brothers and aunts and uncles and cousins?”

“Dead,” said the cobbler. “All dead. Just as most of those dragons are probably dead now. Bones and dust, like Shallasa the sea is salt and sand. Nothing lives forever. Not even dragons.”

Nyla looked sad. “That’s terrible. Dragons are immortal, they’re forever.”

“Even mountains don’t last forever and ever.” The cobbler took a breath and shook his head as if shaking off sad thoughts. He got up and tottered over to a big chest that had been placed on painted sawhorses. Mr. Bucklebelt fished inside his shirt and produced a golden key that hung from a silver chain. He looked forlornly at the key, then inserted it in the chest and opened the

lock. The cobbler raised the lid and removed several items that he set carefully aside. Then he removed a parcel that was wrapped in the very finest silk. He brought this over to the counter and placed it with great reverence in front of Nyla. The cobbler licked his lips nervously and then peeled back the corners of the silk wrapping to reveal the ugliest pair of shoes the little monkey had ever seen.

They were tiny and battered, with holes in each sole and many signs of damage and wear. And though there were sequins sewn onto them, each sequin was as pale as ash and devoid of luster.

Nyla gave Bucklebelt a puzzled expression. “What shoes are these?”

“Why,” he cried, “these are the dragon-scale traveling shoes.”

“But...they aren’t magical shoes at all. These are just a pair of dirty old shoes.” Tears sprang into the monkey’s eyes. “You’re trying to fool me. You’re making fun of me like everyone else does. I thought you might be different, but you’re just as cruel...”

The cobbler leaned back and laughed. And yet it was not a mocking laugh, or a cruel laugh, or even an embarrassed laugh of someone whose prank has been found out. No, this was a hearty laugh filled with jolly merriment.

“But my girl, these *are* the dragon-scale shoes and make no mistake.”

“How can they be? They’re so old and ugly and small.”

Bucklebelt shook his head. “Don’t be so quick to judge. These shoes have walked more miles than there are stars in the summer sky. They were made for a little princess who wanted to see the whole world before she ascended to her throne to become queen. She wanted to walk on every street, to dance at every ball, and play with every child. She wanted to walk behind the ploughman and stroll the streets with the flower sellers and climb the watchtower steps with the

sentinels. This little princess wanted to know everything about her kingdom so that she could rule with knowledge and understanding.”

“That must have taken a long, long time.”

“The observing took time but not the traveling,” he said. “For with these shoes she could run from Gillikens to Quadling and back twice in an afternoon, and to anyone else that’s a journey of weeks upon weeks. And run she did, because it was important to her to know everything she needed to know before she wore the crown.”

“She must have been a very great princess.”

“A great princess she was,” agreed Bucklebelt, but then a shadow seemed to cross over his face. He lowered his voice. “But a great queen she did not become.”

“Why not? If the shoes could take her everywhere...”

The cobbler looked left and right to make sure no one stood near his market stall, then he leaned close again. “Because the Wizard of Oz came and destroyed all of her dreams.”

“I don’t understand...the Wizard is the savior of Oz.”

“Is he? Is that what they teach in schools these days? O’, sad times. Oz, the great and terrible, came from far away and with his magic, he overthrew the kingdom and set himself up as the wizard king of the Emerald City.” He sighed. “It is treason to say this much, but I must because it is part of the story of the dragon-scale traveling shoes.”

“Oh dear, what happened?” cried Nyla, clutching her leather bag to her chest.

“What happened indeed?” Bucklebelt mused, and he had to fight to keep the bitterness out of his voice. “When the princess returned here after all her journeys she was prepared to be empress of all the land, and a fair and just empress she would have been. All of the lands, all of the people would have been one under her rule, and with the dragon-scale shoes she could have

walked abroad over her entire reign to see that justice was done and that everyone lived according to her laws. We would have had a golden age.”

“Surely she could not have worn these shoes when she was a queen. They are so—”

“Dirty and damaged?” He shook his head. “With the magic broken, they simply show the wear of all those miles she walked.”

“No, I mean that they are so small. If she wore them as a little girl she could not have worn them as an adult.”

“Ah, now,” he said, grinning, “that’s part of their magic. When they were working properly, they grew with her and changed with her. They would have become the shoes of a young woman and then a fully-grown woman. And if she left them to a daughter or heir, those shoes would change to perfectly fit the feet of whoever had the right to wear them. But that sorcery is all broken, as the shoes are broken. The magic in them sleeps.”

Nyla looked confused and sad, and she hung her head.

“Can nothing be done? You’re a cobbler...you repair shoes. Can’t you fix them? Can’t you awaken the magic?”

“Well,” he said, “I have done much to repair these shoes. I’ve tightened every sequin and I’ve done what else could be done. However, there is only one way to fix these shoes, to make the magic within come alive again.”

“How? Oh, tell me please.”

“If I tell you, will you promise to help me fix them?”

“I will!” she said, clasping her tiny hands together. “I will...I *will*.”

He nodded, satisfied. “Even if it means going on an adventure?”

Nyla’s eyes went wide. “Would it be a dangerous adventure?”

“Now, what kind of question is that from a girl who came here looking for traveling shoes? There are dangers in your own garden. There are dangers climbing to the tree house where you live...after all, if you fell, your wings could not save you.”

She thought about it and nodded.

The cobbler smiled. “The only way to repair these shoes—the most wonderful traveling shoes ever made—is to replace the missing scales.”

“How?”

“The only way to replace the missing sales is by finding *new* scales.”

“But there are no more dragons.”

“Are there not? How can you be so sure?”

“How can there be? No one ever sees a dragon. People would talk about it if they did. Everyone would say if they saw a dragon. They’d tell us that in school.”

“School tells you about everything that happens in Oz, that much I know. Schools are great that way,” said the cobbler. “But...they don’t tell you about anything that happens *outside* of Oz.”

“Outside?”

“The dragons never lived in Oz,” he said. “Never ever. Dragons only ever lived in one place.”

“But...but...that’s all the way over the sea. I mean...where the sea used to be. On the far, far side of the Deadly Desert.”

He gave the tip of her nose a tiny little touch. “You are so very correct, my girl. Across the bones of the Sea of Shallasa in the land where dragons once lived there is a single dragon living still.” He raised his eyebrows. “And can you guess what kind of dragon still lives there?”

“A...a...*silver* dragon?”

“Yes indeed. A great and vastly old silver dragon. The very dragon, in fact, whose scales were used to make this pair of shoes.”

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“Oh my!” gasped Nyla. “But the dragon is on the other side of the Deadly Desert. No one can cross it and live.”

“That is very nearly true,” agreed the cobbler, “but it is not absolutely unreservedly true. Except when it’s not.”

“What do you mean?”

He pointed to the shoes. “These are magical shoes as we both know. Magic *traveling* shoes covered in the scales of a dragon. Such shoes can take the wearer anywhere. Across the whole land of Oz, up and down the tallest mountain, and even across the burning sands of the deadliest of Deadly Deserts.”

“But...how?”

“That’s the right question. The dragon-scale shoes let the wearer travel so fast that nothing can catch up—not heat nor cold or anything that troubles the foot or troubles the wearer. Remember, the princess for whom these were made traveled the whole length and breadth of Oz. She went everywhere and anywhere and she did it quick as a wink.”

“But the shoes are broken, the magic is asleep.”

“The magic sleeps,” he said. “However when the right person puts on the shoes it will wake the magic from its slumber. Not all of the magic—oh no, sadly much of the magic of the shoes

was lost when the scales fell off. But even a little magic is still magic, and to cross the sands in shoes like these you only need a little magic.”

“Why hasn’t anyone else used the shoes to find the dragon scales?”

“They won’t fit anyone else,” said the cobbler sadly. “Until they’ve been restored to their full glory, these shoes will remain as small and as ugly as they have been since the Wizard of Oz stole the land from the princess.”

She shook her head, unable to understand that.

“It doesn’t matter,” said the cobbler. “What matters is that the *right* person could wear the shoes and awaken enough magic to cross the desert. Do you know why?”

She shook her head.

“Because in these shoes the journey—even across the Deadly Desert—will only take a few seconds. Your feet will move so fast that the desert won’t even know you’re there.”

“My feet?” Nyla raised one leg to show him her foot. “The shoe was made for girl feet and I have monkey feet. Will they fit?”

Bucklebelt shrugged. He touched the bunched silk and pushed the shoes toward Nyla.

“Why don’t you try them and we’ll both find out?”

Nyla stared at him for a moment and then looked at the shoes. They really did look bad. There were at least a dozen scales missing from each shoe, and the soles looked very thin. It was hard to imagine that those shoes had once adorned the feet of a great princess.

“Go on,” urged the cobbler. “Try them on.”

Nyla chewed her lower lip for a moment, then she reached out to take one of the shoes from where it nestled in the silk. She gave a soft cry at what happened when her fingers touched the shoe. It was like touching something warm and alive. The shoe seemed to shudder under her

fingers and Nyla almost dropped the shoe. But the feeling was not unpleasant. Not at all. In fact, it was as comforting as picking up her pet hamster. The shoe seemed to *want* her to pick it up.

Is that was magic was like? Was it that way for everyone?

Nyla held the shoe, turning it this way and that. At close range the shoe did not seem to be that badly damaged. The holes in the sole no longer seemed to go all the way through. The heel wasn't ground down quite as much as she thought. And not as many of the stitches were frayed as had initially seemed apparent. How strange.

"Try it on," coaxed Bucklebelt.

Nyla did so and to her surprise and delight, the shoe fit perfectly. Even though it had been crafted for a human princess it seemed perfectly suited to her monkey foot. She eagerly reached for the other one and put it on as well. Like the first, it was less weathered and battered than she thought and it fit like a dream.

"Let me help you down," said the cobbler, and he lifted Nyla to the floor. "Now, try walking in them. But be careful...the magic may wake up at any time."

Nyla took a single step and suddenly the cobbler and his stall and the whole market was gone. She yipped in fear and surprise as she turned and looked around to see that she stood by the east gate of the Emerald City.

"But I..." She backed away from the grim-faced guards who stood at the gate. But as she took that backward step suddenly she was in a meadow of wildflowers that grew inside the west gate. It was impossible. A single backward step had taken her all the way across the Emerald City.

She turned her head but was very careful to keep her feet where they were.

She was close to the yellow road that curved and snaked its way back into the heart of the city. That road ended at the market square. Nyla knew that she had to go back to Mr.

Bucklebelt's stall, but how to get there if every step took her too far?

In her consternation she took a half step and suddenly she stood in front of the cobbler's stall. He still sat on his stool, and he wore a great grin that stretched from ear to ear.

"Ah-ha," he said with a chuckle, "and is that a great princess I see before me wearing dragon-scale traveling shoes?"

"I—I—I--"

"That's exactly what I *thought* you would say."

"These are *amazing*!"

"Now," he said with bright eyes glowing in his face, "do you see how a person wearing these shoes could go anywhere? Even all the way across the Deadly Desert?"

"Yes," said Nyla, almost hopping with delight and wonder. "Oh, yes!"

Then she stopped and her smile faded.

"But...even if I could cross the desert, how would I ever find the last silver dragon?"

The cobbler chuckled again and went once more to the chest. He rummaged around until he found a scroll tied with silver cord. He undid the knot and carefully opened the scroll to show that it was a map of such great age that it crackled and seemed on the verge of falling apart. It showed a map of the land of Oz, with the Emerald City in the center.

"This map was made by the great-great-great-great-great-ten-more-times-great-grandson of the cordwainer who made the dragon-scale shoes. See here? That dot is the town square right here in the Emerald City with the four major countries around it. All around Oz was the broad gray waste. To the Gillikens of the north it was the Impassable Desert; in Munchkin Country to

the west it was the Shifting Sands; the Quadlings of the south called it the Great Sandy Waste; and to the Winkies of the east it was the Deadly Desert, which is also what it was generally called here in the Emerald City.”

Beyond that desolation were other places, though, and Nyla had never before seen a map that gave names to those nameless and forgotten places. The Kingdom of Ix, the Land of Ev, the Vegetable Kingdom, Mifkits and Merryland and others. Most fearsome of all was the Dominion of the Nome King, and even Nyla and her people had heard dark things of that terrible place. But the spot that was marked with an X was to the far southeast.

The Country of the Gargoyles.

“Oh dear!” whispered Nyla. “Must I go there?”

“If you want me to fix the dragon-scale shoes, then go you must and go *now*.”

“Now?”

“The shoes are awake,” said the cobbler. “But they are not strong and if you don’t hurry they will soon fall asleep once more.”

She protested and twenty-six different reasons why she was sure that she should not do this occurred to her, but Mr. Bucklebelt pressed the map into her hand and gave her the gentlest of pushes toward the southwest.

Before Nyla could utter a single one of her twenty-six very good reasons, she was no longer in the market square. Nor in the Emerald City nor even in the Land of Oz.

She stood under a sun so hot that it made her gasp, and on sands that were hotter than a bread oven. All around her the flat and lifeless sands stretched away.

She was in the middle of the Deadly Desert.

Nyla took in a huge breath intending to scream her head off—because finding yourself alone in the middle of the Deadly Desert is really an appropriate reason to scream one’s head off—but the air was so hot that it scorched her mouth and throat. She did scream, but it was so tiny and high-pitched that even she didn’t hear it.

There were bones in the sands. Human skulls and the rib cages of animals and some bones that she couldn’t tell what they were from. There were even gigantic bones and Nyla wondered if these were the bones of dragons, or of great fishes that once swam in the Sea of Shallasa.

Nyla felt herself suddenly growing very drowsy and weak and she realized with horror that the terrible heat of the desert was already sapping her strength and her life. She tried to flap her tiny wings, but all they did was tremble and flutter uselessly.

She managed to murmur a single word as she stumbled forward.

“Southeast...”

The desert wind blew past the spot like a hot scream, but there was no one there to hear it.

When Nyla opened her eyes she expected to see that unrelenting desert stretched out all around her, but a cool breeze blew across her face and the ground beneath her feet was covered in green grass. Flowers grew upward on long stems that towered over her like young trees, and butterflies as big as kites danced from blossom to blossom.

“Oh dear,” said Nyla. “I must be dreaming...”

“We are all dreaming,” a voice behind her said. “Everything is a dream.”

Nyla yelped and whirled and then stood quite aghast.

For a moment she was quite sure that a house had just spoken to her. It was huge—many times as high as Mr. Bucklebelt’s market stall—and covered all over in plates of polished metal. A chimney smoked at an odd angle.

However, it was not a house at all and the smoking chimney was not a chimney.

It was a dragon.

A dragon that was as big as a house, with a tail that lay threaded through the grass like a giant snake. A long, long neck rose higher than a chimney and smoke puffed from nostrils that were bigger than feast-day dinner plates. The whole thing, from the tip of the tail to the crest of horns on its massive head, was coated in silver metal. In plates and ringlets, in shingles and in sequins. But as the beast breathed, the metal expanded and contracted the way an animal’s hide would, for this metal was clearly alive.

And yet...

Nyla could see that the metal around the dragon’s face was tarnished with great age, and many of the scales and plates were cracked and uneven. The eyes of the dragon were large and red, but although they may once have been fierce, now those eyes were rheumy with age and sickness.

It broke her heart to know it, but Nyla could tell that this great silver dragon was dying. Even though it was a dragon and not at all a monkey, it looked like her grandpoppa had looked before he climbed into the great tree that leads all the way up to the stars.

“You...you...you...” she said, but that was the only word her mind could think of.

“I...I...I...what?” asked the dragon.

“You’re a dragon.”

The red eyes blinked once and the big head turned to look at its tail and its bulk. “Why, yes. It appears I am. Now how about that? It took a monkey from who knows where to tell me that I am a dragon, when all this time I thought I was a teapot.”

“That’s not what I meant!” insisted Nyla. “It’s just that I’ve never seen a dragon before.”

“Clearly. But, to be fair,” said the dragon, “I have never seen a talking monkey before who didn’t have wings.”

“I...I do have wings,” said Nyla, and she felt the sting of shameful tears in her eyes.

“Let me see them.”

Nyla turned and showed him the tiny wings that sprouted from the brown fur of her back. She fluttered them and then her wings and her shoulders slumped.

“Oh my my my,” said the dragon, and Nyla thought she heard real sympathy in the beast’s booming voice. He sat there in the green field, his silvery body shining with reflected sunlight as fleets of white clouds sailed above his head.

“Do you have wings?” she asked, craning to see over his bulk.

“Alas, my wings are gone,” he said heavily.

“Gone? What happened to them?”

“They broke off,” said the dragon and Nyla thought that he looked a little embarrassed.

“You see...when I was a much younger dragon I had wings so huge, so great that the shadow of them would darken this entire field. I needed them, you see, because I am made of metal and metal is very heavy. Other dragons had smaller wings, like the corn dragon, who weighed very little, or the fire dragon whose body was filled with hot gasses. I was always the heaviest of the dragons, but in my prime I could fly. Oh...how I could fly! I would climb up the side of a

mountain and hurl myself into the wind, and my wings would spread out all the way to the horizon on either side and when I beat my wings the world shook and trembled. I would fly higher and higher on my wings until the world was nothing but a pretty blue marble below me. Ah...ah, those were the days. Those were lovely days,” he said sadly, “but they were long ago. Over the years I kept growing and growing until I was so big that my wings could not even lift me. One day, as I stood atop a mountain preparing to fly, I wondered if I had become too big, too old, and too fat for my wings. But I leaped into the air anyway. My wings beat once, twice and then I heard a crack and a clang like the breaking of a thousand swords. Down, down I went, tumbling over and over—me, the big, old, fat dragon and the broken pieces of my wings.” He sighed.

“That must have been terrible. Did it hurt much?”

“Hurt? No, I’m made of metal and I don’t feel pain. Not in the way flesh and blood creatures feel pain. But I suppose it did hurt here.” He touched one claw to his chest. “To know that I would never fly again was a terrible thing. I wept for days and filled pools with tears of liquid silver.”

“I’m so very sorry,” said little Nyla. “But at least you did fly and you can remember flying.”

The dragon nodded. “And here I am lamenting the loss of my wings when here you are, a little child who should have a lifetime of flying ahead of you, and not even a moment of that joy is open to you. It is I who feel sorry for you, my dear.”

Nyla sniffed back the tears that formed in her eyes. “It’s okay,” she said bravely. “I’ve known for a long time now that I’ll never fly.”

“A ‘long time,’” echoed the dragon. “You are not two handfuls of years old and I can’t even count the millennia of my life. When I was full grown the mountains were not yet born and the desert was a new sea in which the first fish swam. I pity myself like an old fool.”

“No! You’re a dragon,” said Nyla. “The very last of the dragons. I came all this way just to see you and I will remember this moment forever. It is the greatest honor of my life.”

The dragon smiled. “You are very kind to say so. Tell me, though, why did you come on such a long journey? And where did your journey begin?”

So Nyla told the dragon everything, from her own decision to go out in search of traveling shoes to her meeting with Mr. Bucklebelt, to the astonishing speed with which her new shoes carried her across the burning desert sands. The dragon listened with the patience of a dragon and it studied her with the shrewd intelligence of a dragon. Then it bent low to study her shoes.

“Ah,” he said. “Those are truly my scales. I recognize them.”

“You do?”

“A dragon cannot forget its own scales, my dear. We know each and every one of them just as you know every hair on your body.”

“But I don’t! There are too many and besides they fall out and new ones grow.”

“Alas, not for dragons. Our scales may grow larger as we grow, but they do not fall out and if one is somehow lost, it is never replaced. See here.” He coiled his tail around where they stood and she could see that there were several patches where scales had been lost. The skin beneath was also silver, but it looked much more like the skin of a crocodile than that of a dragon. “Once when I was sleeping a long winter’s sleep a thief snuck in and scraped off enough scales to...well, to make a pair of magic traveling shoes.”

“Oh no!” Nyla immediately took off her shoes and held them out to the dragon. “I had no idea that these scales were *stolen* from you. How horrible! How unfair! Here, please take them back.”

The dragon peered at her. “Are you serious? You have come here to find more scales and yet you’d give all of them back?”

“Of course I would,” said Nyla. “If they were stolen from you then they belong to you.”

Smoke curled up from the silvery nostrils as the dragon studied her. “Do you understand what you offer? If I take back my scales, then your traveling shoes will be only ordinary shoes. And in the condition they’re in they won’t want to take you traveling anywhere.”

She nodded slowly. “I...I know.”

“You’d be trapped here. On this side of the desert. Far away from your family and the trees where they live.”

“Yes...but I could never keep something that was stolen...especially something stolen from your poor tail! Besides...my poppa always told me that the winged monkeys are good people. We give our word and never break it, and we never act unjustly.”

“Ah,” said the dragon, “if only all races upon the Earth held to such values then the sun would shine on a happier world.”

Nyla stood, still holding out the shoes.

The dragon extended one claw and delicately touched one of the sequin scales. “You offer a great gift to an old dragon to whom you owe no obligation. You are willing to make a sacrifice that was unasked of you. Noble indeed are the winged monkeys of Oz. Even those with little, little wings.”

With his claw, the dragon gently pushed the shoes back. “Take them, my girl.”

“But...”

“And here...” The dragon used the same claw to scrape a line of scales from his tail. They fell like silver rain. “Take these as well. Take them to your cobbler and let him remake those shoes. It is a pity to see something so perfectly intended look so incomplete.”

Tears sprang into Nyla’s eyes and she could barely speak as she gathered up the scales. Then the dragon handed her a piece of silvery leather.

“Wrap them in this and put them in your bag,” he said gently.

Nyla did as she was told and then she rushed forward and hugged the foreleg of the big creature—for the foreleg was all she could reach.

“Thank you, thank you,” she said excitedly. “Now Mr. Bucklebelt will be able to repair the shoes and I’ll be able to travel everywhere and see everything. I’ll go to places I could never go even if I had full-sized wings.”

There was sadness in the dragon’s eyes, though, when she stepped back from him. “Now listen to me, little Nyla, for there are two things that you must know, and one may break your innocent heart.”

“What is it?” she asked, aghast.

“The cobbler will be able to repair those shoes, but magical shoes are unpredictable. These were made for a special purpose and for a certain person. Once they are repaired the shoes may no longer fit your tiny feet. The shoes may also want to find the feet for whom they were made. Magic is a wondrous thing, but it isn’t always a nice thing.”

Fresh tears burned in the corners of Nyla’s eyes but she fought them back.

“And what is the other thing?” she asked in a tiny, fearful voice.

“There is a different kind of magic in the world, and it’s older and more powerful than sorcery or witchcraft. It’s a magic that comes from the world itself. I will whisper one secret about it to you.” He bent down so that his metal lips were an inch away. “Goodness,” he said, “is always rewarded. Not always in ways you can see, not always in ways you know or expect, but this world loves goodness. It is a thing that many people think is as rare as dragon scales, but believe me, little girl of the trees, goodness shows everywhere.”

Nyla tried to think of how to respond to that. A hundred questions crowded her tongue at once, but the dragon straightened and shook his head.

“The shoes are not yet repaired and the magic that’s in them is starting to fall asleep. I can feel it in my scales. Put them on, little Nyla, and run, run, run for home before there is no magic left to carry you over the burning sands.”

Nyla did as she was told and even though she could feel the power of the shoes, it was indeed drowsy.

“Thank you, Mr. Dragon!” she cried. She clutched her leather bag to her chest. “I hope your kindness is rewarded a thousand times.”

He winked at her.

“Run away, little monkey,” he said. “Run for your life.”

And so she ran.

She ran the wrong way first and found herself on the slopes of a mountain that was covered with snow, but from that vantage point she could see the Deadly Desert. She ran toward it as fast as she could and in a wink-and-a-half she was in the market stall with the astonished cobbler.

“I’m back!” she cried as she dug the leather parcel of dragon scales from her bag. She presented them to Mr. Bucklebelt who accepted them with reverence, his eyes alight.

“They’re perfect!” he declared as he examined them. “Let me have the shoes so that I may sew them on.”

Nyla hesitated—of course she did—and it hurt her heart to have to take off the shoes and hand them over, knowing that she might not get them back. But they really did belong to the cobbler. He had only lent them to her after all.

Even so, the cobbler gave her a strange look as she handed them over.

“You’d give them back to me?” he asked. “Freely?”

“I guess so,” she said, and then sniffed away her tears.

The cobbler held the shoes for a long moment and Nyla was totally unable to understand what emotions flitted back and forth in his eyes.

“There aren’t many people who would give away anything magical.”

“But the shoes don’t belong to me.”

“Some might say that they belong to whoever has them,” said the cobbler. “But...that is another matter. You’ve given them to me freely and I accept them freely. And yet I don’t know that I can recall a single time in all my years when something of a magical nature was given away with such innocence and trust.” He shook his head. “Perhaps I don’t know as much about the winged monkey people as I thought.”

Nyla did not blush because monkeys cannot blush, but she lowered her eyes.

In truth the cobbler's words were as much a mystery to her as the dragon's words had been. They seemed to refer to behavior that was so different from the way her people acted.

"I'm only a little girl," she said because she didn't know what else to say.

The cobbler nodded, but it was more to himself than to her. He set to work on the shoes and Nyla watched him, sitting once more on the ball of yarn. It took more than two hours for him to sew the new scales in place, and as he did so, Nyla saw that the old scales around it suddenly flashed with a new luster. Even the worn sole and heel no longer looked as battered and weathered as before. The cobbler only stopped working once. His eye strayed to the silvery leather in which the scales had been wrapped. He frowned, picked it up, rubbed it between his fingers, sniffed it, stretched it between his hands, then grunted as his bushy eyebrows rose high on his head.

"Did the dragon give you this as well?"

"He used it to wrap the scales," said Nyla. "I suppose he gave it to me. He didn't say he wanted it back."

"Did he not," mused the cobbler distantly, "did he not..." Then the cobbler straightened, fished in his pocket for a coin and handed it to Nyla. "This will take a while longer. Go and get us some fresh strawberries for a snack."

She was off in a wink—realizing that she was very hungry, not having eaten in hours—but she discovered that the strawberry stand was on the far side of the market and there was a long, long line. She fretted as she waited, and danced in agitation because a very fat lady in front of her wanted to examine every single strawberry before making her selection. Two winged monkey boys her own age flew past the stand and then soared high onto a jeweled parapet, where they sat making jokes about her wings and calling them down to her.

Nyla bought the strawberries and trudged back to the cobbler's stall, feeling very low and dejected. And when she returned, she saw that the dragon-scale shoes were completely done.

But they had changed in more than appearance.

"Oh no!" she cried, dropping the strawberries and covering her face. When she could bear to look she saw that apart from the silvery shine that gleamed from every single polished scale, the shoes themselves had grown. They were now slender and graceful and perfectly suited for the foot of a grown woman. A human woman.

Mr. Bucklebelt smiled sadly at her. "Oh, poor little one, I was afraid this would happen. With the magic restored, the shoes have grown to suit the foot for which they were made."

"The dragon warned me that this might happen," said Nyla, "but...oooh! I hoped it wouldn't. Now I'll never go traveling faster than the wind. I'll never run from one end of Oz to the other, and I'll never see all the wonderful things there are to see. I'll always be a little monkey girl without wings and all I'll see is what's down here on the ground."

Yet, even in the depths of her despair, Nyla did not whine and did not shout about the unfairness of it all. She despaired, but she accepted these things. After all, the dragon-scale traveling shoes were not made for her feet.

"I'm sorry, little one," said the cobbler, and she could see from his face that he truly was sorry. "Magic is a funny thing and we can't always predict what will happen."

"But what will happen to the shoes?"

"They will wait for the right feet," he said. "They've waited this long, they can wait longer. That's the way of shoes...they are used to waiting for the right feet."

Nyla nodded. She started to turn away, but stopped. "Thank you for letting me wear them for a little bit. I'll never forget your kindness and trust. And...I got to meet a real dragon!"

“Ah,” said the cobbler, “indeed you did, and that dragon must have liked you very, very much.”

“Why? Oh...because he gave me the scales so you could repair the shoes.”

“Not just that.” Mr. Bucklebelt reached under the counter for something. “That dragon gave you more than his trust. He gave you a very great gift.”

“A...gift?”

The cobbler removed the item from under the counter. It was the silvery leather in which the scales had been wrapped.

“Do you know what this is?”

“Just a piece of leather. You can keep it if you want. I have no need for it.”

The cobbler laughed. A soft, warm laugh.

“Are you so sure?”

He held the material up and Nyla gasped to see that the cobbler had worked on it. The leather had been snipped and sewn and stitched into a pattern that looked like...

“Wings?” she asked in wonder.

“Wings indeed,” said the cobbler. “And magical wings at that, for the gift that the dragon gave you were pieces of his own wings. I don’t know how this leather came to be detached from his wings, or why he would give it up, but as you see there is more than enough here to make a very pretty set of wings.”

The wings were sewn onto a harness that was small enough to fit her. He had her take off her vest, and the cobbler snipped a slit in the back of it. After he’d helped her buckle on the wings, he pulled the silvery leather through the slit so that the wings lay draped over her own

tiny, useless wings. Then he gently tucked each of her wings into pouches he'd sewn into the leather.

Then Bucklebelt stood back and pursed his lips for a moment before he nodded approval.

"They're very pretty. Thank you very much," said Nyla, though her voice was still a little sad. "Now at least people will be able to admire my wings, even if they are only leather and thread."

The cobbler arched one furry eyebrow. "Do you think so little of dragon magic, my girl?"

"W—what do you mean?" stammered Nyla.

"At very least trying flapping your wings."

"No! The leather is too heavy and it will break my little wings."

"Will it indeed? And am I a villain who would make something that would injure a little monkey girl for my own sport? Is that what you think?" His words were sharp, but there was a twinkle in his eye.

"But...but..."

"*Try!*" urged the cobbler.

Nyla took a breath and braced herself against the pain she knew she would feel. She'd made paper wings before and her own wings could barely lift it. And once she had made wings of cloth and sticks and it hurt her own wings so badly that she cried all afternoon.

But she did not want to be rude or appear weak.

So Nyla gritted her teeth and flexed her wings.

And something incredible happened—the silver dragon wings expanded out as high and wide as the greatest wings on the biggest eagle in the forest.

The cobbler clapped his hands in delight.

“It doesn’t hurt at all!” cried Nyla.

“Flap then,” said the cobbler. “See if they’ll flap.”

She tried, still bracing against the moment when her little wings collapsed from the strain.

There was a huge *crack* but it was not of the bones in her wings. It was the powerful flap of her dragon-leather wings.

She flexed again and there was an even louder crack.

And another and another.

When Nyla looked at cobbler for an explanation, she was shocked to see that he was not there.

He was many feet below her, looking up, pointing and dancing with joy.

The wings cracked and cracked and cracked, and up and up and up Nyla went, soaring above the cobbler’s stall, up above the market square, up beyond the tallest spires in the Emerald City. Her laugh was high and clear and it bounced off of the lofty towers of the Wizard’s castle.

The gift of the dragon and the skill of the cobbler brought forth the magic that lay sleeping in the leather. Wings that had broken off of the old dragon now lived again and to Nyla it felt like they were a part of her.

She swooped and soared and fluttered and dove and rose up to meet the golden sun. She flew past the two monkey boys by the strawberry stand and laughed at the goggle-eyed expressions they gave her. Then she swooped back and dared them to follow her.

They goggled a moment longer, then they laughed and threw themselves into the wind. The three of them swirled and chased each other and flew away toward the forest. But as fast as the two monkey boys flew, the little monkey girl flew so very much faster.

The cobbler dabbed at a happy tear in his eye.

Then a shadow fell across his counter and he turned to see a tall figure standing there. It was a woman wearing a green cloak trimmed in black, and the cowl of the cloak hid her face. A battered umbrella was hooked over one thin arm.

“That was a kindly thing,” said the woman. “You changed that child’s life.”

The cobbler’s smile melted away and he hastily adjusted his apron and stood very straight.

“She...she certainly changed mine, my lady,” he said.

The woman leaned forward slightly and placed her hands on the counter. The motion caused her cowl to slip so that her face was partly revealed. She was old and wrinkled, and she wore an eye-patch that shimmered as if covered with oil. Three gray-black pigtailed hung within the shadows of the cowl.

“And has that child changed *my* life?”

The cobbler licked his lips nervously, but he bobbed his head.

“Yes, my lady.”

He turned and opened the chest and removed the dragon-scale shoes. The sight of them, restored and whole, shining with living silver, made the old woman gasp.

“At last...after all these years...”

The cobbler looked right and left to make sure no one was watching, then he raised the shoes and offered them to her, head bowed in fear and respect.

The woman hesitated for just a moment, her fingers seeming to claw the air above the delicate shoes. Then she snatched them from him. She kicked off her own shoes and put the

silver shoes on. Her robes seemed to ripple as if the shoes gave off waves of energy. The strawberries Nyla had bought suddenly withered and turned rotten.

From far above the sound of innocent laughter floated down. The old woman raised her head to listen. “All this time I thought the winged monkeys were nothing more than curious freaks.” Her eyes took on a calculating look. “Apparently they’re useful after all.”

Before the cobbler could ask the woman what she meant, the crone tapped the shoes together once, twice, and a third time and took a single step away.

And was gone.

The cobbler wiped sweat from his face.

Gone, he knew, but not from Oz.

He stood there for a long time, trembling and frightened, considering what it was he had done. And for whom. She had been his princess long ago and might one day be his queen. His allegiance was owed to her.

But he looked up into the sky and saw the little monkey girl with her beautiful silver wings swooping and dancing on the wind. In the end, he wondered, what would be the most powerful magic here in Oz? The dark arts of the witch who once more had her silver shoes, or the goodness of a child?

“Fly, little one,” he murmured. “Fly and fly and fly.”

He sat on his stool and spent all of the rest of the day watching the sky.

HERE ARE LINKS TO TWO STORIES TIED TO THE DIABLO IV VIDEO GAME

<https://news.blizzard.com/en-us/article/23964692/diablo-iv-short-stories-witness-and-the-toll-of-darkness-and-light>

HERE IS A PREDATOR STORY

GAMEWORLD

A Predator Story

by Jonathan Maberry

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1

“Who’s ready to die?”

The words blasted out of the speakers and a thousand voices roared back in one huge, inarticulate bellow of bloodlust.

The club’s owner, Sake Chiba, grinned like a ghoul. He was dressed in a glittering green suit with pinned-back collars and a pair of lizard-skin shoes that cost more than most soldiers made in a month. Hogarth Fix watched him from the competitor benches, shouting when the others shouted, screaming when they screamed.

“Who wants to see blood on this deck?” growled Chiba, pointing a stiff finger at the metal floor on which he stood. The pentangle was not padded or sprung, there were no mats. Only unforgiving steel and paint. All of the colors were bright whites and yellows so that blood would stand out. There was always blood. Most of it was red. Some of it was human. All of it was spilled for pay.

Fix sat at the end of the second row of fighters. He wasn’t on tonight’s card and, with any

luck, wouldn't ever have to step into the pentangle. He was a good fighter, maybe as good as most of the men and women here, but men and women weren't the only things he might have to fight. In the Special Forces, they taught you how to win fights by any means necessary, including a hell of a lot of ruthless, no-compromise hand-to-hand; but they usually sent their operators in loaded down with guns, knives, and explosives. And wrapped in body armor.

Chiba wasn't about that.

Fighters wore spandex shorts. The women were allowed a sports bra. No cups, no pads. Tape on the hands, but no bite shields or Kevlar-4L, no spider-silk limb pads. None of that. Meat and muscle, blood and bone, and the advantages of knowledge and experience.

Against monsters.

Last night the title match featured a big Serbian kid who had served five tours with the Interglobal Soviet People's Army, and who had a win record in mixed martial arts matches on Earth of twenty-eight and one. Moose of a guy. Fix wouldn't have wanted to meet him in a dark alley with anything short of a shoulder-mounted rocket launcher. The Serbian went in as the odds-on favorite and if he had thrown down against any of the other guys on this bench he might have walked out. Instead they shoveled him into a body bag. The parts of him that the tiger hadn't eaten.

If you could call that cocksucker a tiger. Transgenics is a funny thing. The body was tiger, but the jaws hinged open like a snake and the neurotoxin sacs in his mouth were from a puffer fish. The Serb lasted longer than anyone would have guessed once Chiba trotted the beast out of its cage. Eighty-seven seconds. Everyone in the first six rows were speckled red.

That was how this worked. If the Serbian had beaten the tiger, or even lasted the full three minutes, he'd have pocketed enough cash to buy a farm on one of the terraformed moons.

A good-sized farm, too. Maybe grow hashish for the crews of the long-range haulers. Instead the cleanup crew had collected enough of him for burial purposes, and his participation fee—a few thousand—went to his mother back on Earth. Fix wasn't sure what kind of message went with it. Probably airlock failure. That was always popular.

Sake Chiba was still whipping the crowd up for the next bout. He was a big man himself, a former sumo wrestler from New Osaka, who'd retired while he was still on top and invested half his money in promotion and the rest in technologies stocks. He was one of the new class of trillionaires who seemed unable to stop making money. His latest enterprise, *Gameworld*, was technically off the books, but people knew about it. Whispered about it. Bragged about having been there.

Chiba was why Hogarth Fix was here. Not the fights. Not the mutant monsters. Not this fucking crowd of bloodthirsty privileged dickheads who spent insane amounts of money to watch illegal matches.

Chiba.

If you wanted to bet on it, have sex with it, eat it, or kill it, Chiba could set it up. And because *Gameworld* was in “the rocks”—a part of the asteroid belt between Mars and Jupiter that had questionable territorial affiliation—he got away with it.

That was going to change, Fix promised himself. And when it did, Chiba was going to the mat and Fix was going to stroll off with enough money to make sure his kids never had to want for anything. Not ever again. Not after this.

Fix watched Chiba's eyes as he worked the crowd. The man fed on this. Not on the fun, not on the energy, maybe not even on the money. No, he was like a vampire. He fed on the adoration, and that's what this was. People *worshipped* him as the celebrity's celebrity.

“Do you want blood?” demanded Chiba.

People—some of whom were as rich as Chiba—were screaming hysterically, pumping their fists in the air, faces flushed red, eyes wild. One of them, the actress from London who was in those movies about the ice dancer on Europa, started the chant.

“Blood! Blood! Blood!”

The rest of the crowd took it up at once.

“Blood! Blood! Blood!”

Fix glanced around at his fellow competitors. Eighteen men, eleven women, one surgical hermaphrodite. Five of them had won several matches here. This wasn’t the Roman circus, as one of them had told him during training. Sometimes it was human against human. Sometimes the fighters on this bench won out against the trans-G animals. Helga, the troll-like woman next to him, had broken the neck of an orangutan last Tuesday. She still had bandages over the stitches, but she’d won, and when the bandages came off she swore to go back onto the floor to “paint my name in the blood of anyone or anything they send out of the gate. Take that to the bank, newbie.” That’s what she’d told him.

The animals weren’t the only things here that had paid a visit to their local Dr. Frankenstein. Helga’s muscle mass had no origin in nature. The metal struts supporting the Mexican wrestler’s back sure as hell weren’t original packaging. But that wasn’t something the *Gameworld* recruiters told guys like Fix. Not until they’d already signed on. Which meant that half the people on the competitor bleachers were as unenhanced as he was.

The Mexican had talked about it with him the other night. “They need someone to die out there,” he said philosophically, “because people don’t come all the way out here to watch us thumb wrestle. You don’t pay these ticket prices to see two knuckle-draggers batter each other to

a split decision. Fuck that. You got to have something dead on the floor by the end of the night. Chiba's got a reputation to keep up. But... screw it. Who wants to live forever, right?"

That was how it was.

Fix pretended to smile, faked his war chants, shook his fists, and felt his heart hammering against the inside of his chest. He had been a soldier for a lot of years, and a rough and tumble street kid before that. He'd killed with guns and knives and his own hands, and he'd walked off battlefields littered with fallen comrades. But he had never, not in all his life, been this scared.

2

They didn't call Fix's number that night.

Or the next.

Or the next.

"Don't worry," said Helga. "You'll get your shot, sweetie."

"Can't wait," he lied. He was sure he'd told bigger lies than that, but he couldn't remember when.

Life on *Gameworld* was strange. Long periods of calm and even some luxurious living, interspersed with intense workouts and shocking violence. Every day.

This was day sixteen for him. Most fighters, he learned, didn't get their first undercard match for a month or two. There was that much competition to be noticed as having fought for Chiba. They called the dormitory the Box of Scorpions, which was a name that everyone seemed to think was stupid and juvenile but no one could shake. It was mentioned in a lot of the press, and customers could even pay to bunk down with the fighters. A few—only the really tough ones or the abominably stupid ones—paid to train with the team. Everyone else was scared off by the

wording of the personal injury waivers.

The fighters could choose to train at any time. Never against each other, of course. But Chiba seemed able to tap an endless supply of willing sparring partners. Fix spent a lot of time watching the other fighters train, studying their moves, gauging their skill, calculating how much was natural talent, how much was learned technique, and how much came from actual experience. That was one of his gifts, perhaps his most useful one. He could read people. He'd been able to do it growing up in the slums of Gary, Indiana, fighting for food money, fighting for money to keep his three younger sisters fed and dressed and healthy after their single mother rode a needle into the big black. It served him well, even against better fighters, when a judge suggested he box in a local gym or spend six months in juvie. It helped him when another judge suggested that the military might be a better calling than working a prison detail mining precious metals on an asteroid. And it had kept him alive all through his twelve years humping battle rattle around the solar system.

It had not, sadly, helped him figure out that his ex-wife had been sleeping with nearly everyone who had a dick, a pulse, and a good credit rating. That blindsided him as surely as she'd been blindsided by an autonomous-drive UPS glider. Life's a quirky bitch like that.

On a busy Friday morning he climbed into the sparring ring with a new training partner. A black guy with a shaved head and cat's eye implants that were supposed to psych people out. Fix rarely looked at an opponent's eyes. Bad fighters don't know where to look and good fighters use their eyes to fool you. As Fix and his sparring partner—Owl—began moving around, Fix watched the other guy's body.

They moved in a counter-clockwise circle, Owl moving forward with a rocking motion, shifting weight between front and back leg with a lot of springy tension.

He's either a jumper or kicker. Or both.

Owl tried a few experimental jabs to try and provoke a counterpunch from Fix. That was telling. When Owl jabbed there was nothing behind the blows. They were light and fast, but he wasn't even trying to hit. *Not a boxer*, Fix decided. A boxer who could kick moved differently than a kicker who could throw a punch. Boxers had pride in their jabs, and there was always something to them. There was often a momentary set of body mass to make sure all of the PSI went down the arm and into the other guy instead of the way this guy did it. When Fix blocked Owl's jabs the lack of weight placement caused some of the force to recoil against his own mass, and Owl rocked back each time.

Fix filed that away.

Sometimes a good boxer will pivot, even on a jab. Not a lot, but just enough and at high speed to make sure there was some authority to even the lightest punch.

Couple more jabs and he's going to kick, thought Fix. *A low Thai kick to the thighs. Something to keep me from outpacing him.*

It was inevitable. Owl jabbed, jabbed, faked, jabbed, and then kicked. A Muay Thai shin kick. Very, very fast.

Fix evaded it because he saw it coming yesterday. He could have swept the man right there and then. He could also have J-stepped into him, checked the kick on his hip, and done some of what his old coach had called "neighborhood work"—a series of body blows designed to bruise the ribs so bad that breathing would take too much effort. Fighters who lose their wind lose their fights. Owl was good, but he wasn't good enough for *Gameworld*.

Some of the trainers and staff were wandering around, watching the sparring matches. Out of the corner of his eye, Fix saw Chiba come in, and that split second of inattention earned

him a creditable front kick to the gut. Fix rode it backward, letting the kick spend its force as a push, and then he danced sideways and let Owl chase him until Fix caught his breath.

Owl seemed to think he was winning the fight because he charged after Fix with a series of mid-height kicks that would have done a lot of damage had any of them landed. Fix worked his way backward and around, not letting the kicks drive him to the edge of the ring but instead tapping the incoming legs and using the force of his taps to power sideways cuts and jags. The kicks were very fast and as Owl got more frustrated the kicks carried more power. Too much. Fast kicks using snap were okay for a flurry, but heavier smashing and thrusting kicks used more of the kicker's body mass to deliver them, and that drained energy. Fast. Owl was sweating heavily and the match clock said they'd been going for only two minutes.

Then Owl's frustration overwhelmed his common sense and he tried to close the deal with a huge, max-power spinning heel kick. Had it connected it would have knocked out Fix and everyone he was related to.

But it was too big a kick for a match like this. Fix could have gone out for a sandwich and a cup of coffee and been back before that spin brought Owl's heel anywhere near his intended target. The problem was Owl had committed so heavily to it that Fix was going to have to dent him to keep this from getting truly ugly.

Fuck.

He stepped in, chin tucked, shoulder hunched and checked the spin at its source by jamming hard against the thigh. It was where the spin was most vulnerable. And, because there was no other way of wrapping this up, he did some neighborhood work.

He could see the look of confusion and then understanding in Owl's eyes as the man realized how badly he had underestimated his opponent. Fix was in his late thirties and his hair

was prematurely salt-and-pepper. Bad posture and scar tissue made him look like someone who'd been living the hard life. He looked older, slower and smaller than he actually was.

Owl went down to knees and palms, choking and gagging and trying to breathe. Fix sighed and stepped back, feeling sorry for the man.

When he turned away he immediately stopped because Sake Chiba was standing ten feet behind him. The big sumo wrestler was smoking a fat European cigar and grinning.

“What's your name?” he asked.

3

They were in Chiba's office, which was the size of most hotel lobbies, seated on opposite sides of a huge hardwood desk that must have cost a fortune to ship all the way out here, where everything was plastic or metal. One wall was filled with shelves crammed with trophies and awards from Chiba's days as a pro wrestler. The opposite wall was a massive glass aquarium in which transgenically-designed mermaids swam. There were harsh laws about human-animal hybridization, but Fix thought that the upper halves of each mermaid was a real adolescent girl. There was a vague look of self-aware horror in the oversized eyes of the swimming creatures. It was appalling.

Behind the desk was a wall safe with a massive steel door and a complex locking mechanism set with several kinds of biometric scanners. Fix longed to raid that safe, but there was no chance in the universe that he'd ever even glimpse what was inside. More than he'd ever need in ten lifetimes. Shit, even if that vault was stacked floor to ceiling with currency it couldn't be more than a drop of piss to someone like Chiba. The man was worth—according to the financial news—six point six trillion dollars. His beer money would pay every bill Fix would

ever have and still leave enough to buy Texas.

Chiba waved him to a seat and poured them both a good knock of gin over frozen cherries.

“That was a very interesting exhibition,” said Chiba as he settled into his own massive chair.

“Just a sparring match, sir. Owl’s got some nice moves. Made me work for it.”

Chiba grinned. “Bullshit. I saw eleven separate times where you could have hurt him and you didn’t. I could *see* that you didn’t. Not until he gave you no choice.”

Fix sipped his drink, said nothing. Waited.

“Why not?” asked Chiba.

“Just a sparring match,” Fix repeated.

“Ah,” said Chiba, brightening. “You didn’t want to go all out because there were no stakes.”

“That’s part of it, sure.”

“Let me guess the rest. There were other fighters in the room. You didn’t want to school them on how you really fight.”

Fix nodded. “That’s about it, boss.”

Chiba swallowed half his drink and sat crunching a cherry, his eyes studying Fix.

“You’re ex-army?”

“Yes. Been out for a while now.”

“Special Forces, as I understand it.”

“Sure.”

“Where did you see action?”

“Here and there. Lot’s been going on around the system. Mostly by the time they sent us in things had either gone to hell or cooled down. The movies they make glamorize it, but we didn’t do anything too crazy.”

“Oh? It’s my understanding you were a team leader when SpecOps breached the prison ship after it had been taken over by the inmates.”

Fix said nothing. The records of that mission were sealed. No one outside of the military high command should be able to read that file.

Chiba continued, “Then there was the Rubio Cartel on Mars that got wiped out virtually overnight. And the rescue of the ambassador and her entire staff. A twelve-man team goes in and saves the lives of eighty-six people in a hot zone. One hundred and seventeen hostiles dead. Shall I go on?”

“Guess you don’t have to.”

The big man nodded. “And now you’re here.”

“Now I’m here.”

“And why is that, Mr. Fix?”

“If you know everything about me, then you already know why I’m here.”

“Fair enough,” conceded Chiba. “You have three kids. Your wife is dead and you are sinking in debt. Your youngest—is her name Daisy?”

“Daisy,” said Fix hoarsely.

“Daisy. She has cancer. Your health coverage doesn’t begin to stretch far enough to cover the medical bills. Not if you can get her into the new treatment program in Stockholm. You could never hope to beg, borrow or steal that much money.”

Fix said nothing.

“So, while I can understand what might have made you look in my direction—I am known as a generous employer and fight purses *will* stretch far enough to provide for your family—why risk it? You can’t earn enough money if you’re dead.”

“Actually,” said Fix, “I can.”

“Life insurance policy?”

“Yeah. With an off-world danger clause. The way I figure it, either I earn enough and bring the cash home, or I die trying and my estate planner and lawyer make sure Daisy and the other kids are taken care of. As long as I fight, I can’t really lose.”

“You’re not afraid of dying?”

Fix was prepared to lie, because he lied a lot. He didn’t give Chiba a lie in answer to that question.

“Of course I am. But I’m a lot more afraid of failing my kids.”

Chiba finished his drink and poured another, then he sat back and studied Fix for a long, quiet time. A slow smile formed on his face. “I’m not sure I can remember the last time I was impressed by personal integrity.”

“Um... thanks?”

“But I like you. I like the moves I saw downstairs. I like the fire I see in your eyes. And I even like the fear I see there. Ruthless fighters are a dime a dozen. They’re entertaining in the short term but boring overall. You, on the other hand, might be something else. You’re not fighting because you hate everyone, or because you’re dead inside. No, you’re fighting for love. Not sure I’ve ever seen that before. Certainly not on *Gameworld*.”

Fix sipped his drink. His pulse had suddenly jumped.

“I want to offer you a fight,” said Chiba.

“Okay,” Fix said neutrally. “Kind of why I’m here, though, isn’t it?”

“I’m not talking about a brawl with one of the lunkheads in the Box of Scorpions. No... I have a special card coming up and I’ve been looking for exactly the right fighter for it.”

“Why is that me?”

“Because I like what I saw today, and I like what I’ve seen in your military record. You are that rare kind of counter-fighter that is a kind of scientist of combat. It’s there in the after-action reports from your SpecOps missions and it was evident in the way you fought Owl. You analyze, you deconstruct and assess, and then you adjust your own fighting style accordingly. That’s an old samurai skill, and it’s very much the way I used to fight. It’s why I won so many times. It’s why I’m good in business, because I study my opponents and can anticipate what they will do, how they’ll move, *when* they’ll act.”

Fix studied Chiba over the rim of his glass as he took a micro-sip. “If you’re talking about asking me to fight a grizzly or some shit, then I don’t see that as a real career opportunity for me. I trip and fall out of an airlock and the insurance company will still pay off to my kids. I don’t need to be humiliated in some stunt match.”

“Stunt match?” echoed Chiba, mildly miffed. Then he shrugged. “Sure, okay, you got me on that. The rubes love them, though.”

“I’m not a rube.”

“No,” agreed Chiba, “but that’s really not the kind of fight I have in mind. No bears, no tigers, no growth-enhanced centipedes. And... I don’t think I want to waste you on mouth-breathers like Helga or the other idiots you’ve been bunking with.”

“Who’s that leave?”

“Not who,” said Chiba, beaming at him. “It’s really more of a *what*.”

“What in the *hell* is that thing?”

Chiba and Fix stood on a catwalk above the lighted rim of a containment tank. The tank was circular and thirty feet deep with smooth walls and a floor covered with straw and piles of dark green matter that stank like shit. Fix realized it probably *was* shit, despite the color. There were bones and pieces of torn meat scattered around the pit. No bed, no furniture.

A single figure stood in the center of the pit, staring up at them.

“I have no idea,” said Chiba happily.

“How can you not know? You made it, didn’t you? Or your pet scientists?”

Chiba shook his head. “No, I told you, this isn’t one of my genetic toys. Quite frankly none of us know what this thing is. And isn’t that wonderful?”

“Is it... is it... human?” stammered Fix.

Chiba pointed down at the creature. “Human? That? You tell me.”

The thing was vaguely manlike, in that it had two arms and two legs, a muscular torso, a head and two eyes. Beyond that any resemblance to humanity faltered and died. It stood a little over six feet tall and its limbs were packed with dense, corded muscle. It had skin as pale and mottled as a mushroom. The hands were hideous, with long clawed fingers ending in wicked claws. Fix couldn’t see its face because it wore a helmet of strange design, but braided hair hung like dreadlocks down to its shoulders. The only clothing it wore was a pair of trunks made from dark brown leather and some kind of netting that covered its limbs and massive chest. Some of the netting was torn, Fix could see, and there were green lines, like scars, crisscrossing its body, and from a few of these thin lines a more luminous green oozed.

Chiba noticed him looking at that and said, “Blood. My science guys are having orgasms trying to figure out its chemistry. It’s nothing they’ve ever seen, which makes them all very, very happy. They’re badgering me about whether they’ll be able to publish. Which, of course, they won’t.” He grinned. “Possession of an alien life form is illegal. Even way out here in the rocks. It’s one of the few things all governments agree on.”

“‘Alien’...?”

“It was discovered in the wreckage of a crashed ship on the dwarf planet Ceres,” said Chiba. “They’re terraforming Ceres, you know, doing a nice job of it, too. They’ve found a lot of wonderful mineral deposits and a lot of water ice. More than the surveyors said to expect. But they never expected to find anything as remarkable as this.”

“This is incredible. God, how come everyone doesn’t know about this? This changes... shit, it changes everything.”

“Sure, I could sell it to a government or a museum and make a quick billion. But, let’s be real, that is very small change compared to what I can make with this thing in my stable of fighters.”

Fix shook his head. “If you put this... *thing*... on a title card everyone’s going to know about it.”

Chiba snorted. “Oh, I have that covered. We can bounce a video signal out to the rim, jog it around a bit and then send it back as if it comes from somewhere outside of anyone’s territory. Our signal boosters are on military grade stealth satellite pods with EMP and explosive failsafes. Trust me, Mr. Fix, I’ve been doing this for a long time.”

Fix nodded. Someone as rich as Chiba had more than technology on his side. He could afford to bribe, threaten or own key people in the agencies that were supposed to regulate or

arrest people like him.

They stared down into the pit.

“My people tell me that you will need at least a million to pay for your daughter’s treatment over the next few years. And you’ll need half of that to settle debts and care for your other kids. Round it up for inflation and you need two million. Does that sound fair?”

Fix cleared his throat. “Yeah.”

“If you can last three minutes with our friend down there I will pay you nine million.”

Fix wheeled around. “*What?*”

“That is three million per minute. But here’s the kicker, my friend, I want you both alive at the end. Hurt it, break it, I don’t care, but I need it alive because my molecular biologists have a lot of fun things planned with its DNA.”

“What kind of fighter is it? I mean, does it have special skills?”

“It has training,” said Chiba. “It moves like a warrior. It’s incredibly strong and fast, it has excellent reflexes, and it is definitely a killer.”

“Meaning...?”

“Even badly injured and starving it managed to kill seven members of the crew of eleven on the salvage ship that found it. And since I acquired it, I’ve done a few experiments.”

“With people?”

“Not at first. Animals. A cougar, a mountain gorilla. Like that. People came later. Came... and went. Our friend down there seems to enjoy extreme combat. It’s one of his most endearing qualities.”

“Has anyone come close to beating it?”

Chiba shrugged. “In exosuits with military-grade shock rods, yes. Otherwise... well,

we're on the wrong side of the learning curve with him. His injuries are mostly healed, except for a few recent scrapes from our ongoing tests. It's worth nine million to me to put him in a ring with a fighter with your skill set. Someone who can use his brains as well as his fists. Nine million is nothing to me, but it's everything to your family, Mr. Fix, and that makes this a fair contract. You were ready to throw your life away against transgenic animals or bio-enhanced fighters. This is single combat of the most basic kind. No weapons, no armor. Only whatever natural gifts you both bring onto the pentangle. This will be the most important fight in the history of... well... fighting. This will *be* history. And win or lose, you're going to be the most famous warrior in the solar system. So... do we have a deal?"

The creature in the pit raised its head as if it could understand Chiba's words. The lenses on the helmet prevented Fix from seeing its eyes, but he knew if he could there would be nothing there but hatred. He knew that his own eyes were probably filled with different emotions. Need. Desperation.

And fear.

"Yeah," he murmured. "Yeah, I'm in."

5

The prep work for the event took weeks.

During that time Chiba provided Fix with the best trainers, the best sports medicine people, the best food and every luxury Fix might want. Fix turned down the prostitutes and the AI sexbots. He trained and trained, and recorded long videos for each of his kids to try and tell him the things a father would. He repeatedly requested the chance to view any video files of the "tests" conducted with the creature that involved combat, whether against humans or animals.

Chiba refused on the grounds that it would “pollute the integrity of the event.”

With each day Fix felt his tension growing. He slept badly and had to eat antacids by the handful to keep from throwing up his guts. The doctors gave him shots of vitamins and they monitored his health, often offering sleeping pills, dream gas, or medical sex therapy, but Fix bulled through without any of that. This was going to be tough enough without his brain being fogged. After a while, though, he forced himself to try and get more sleep, to meditate, to eat a saner diet of protein-rich foods.

The weeks melted down to days and then hours.

On the morning of the bout, Hogarth Fix woke from a terrible dream of running through a jungle being hunted by something that he could not see. Something that filled the air with flashes of red that tore through flesh and bone and stone and trees. He ran past the bodies of every soldier he had ever known, and although many had died on worlds or moons far away from *Gameworld*, their bodies were all in the dream, freshly killed, slaughtered, skinned, hung up like deer carcasses after a hunt. The invisible thing pursued him all the way into a trap—a cave filled with the skulls and spines of all of those dead. A mountain of them. Fix fell to his knees and looked around at the walls, seeing trophies hung there. The skulls of the great hunting cats, cave bears, elephants, alligators. And more—dinosaurs and other creatures Fix had only ever seen in museums. All dead. All conquered. He sank to his knees.

A sound made him turn, and behind him, in the cave’s mouth, a massive form was appearing out of nowhere. At first there was only a shimmer and then *it* appeared. Monstrously tall, massively built, heavily armored. Dreadlocks whipped back and forth as the creature looked around its trophy room. It was much bigger than the thing in the pit. Impossibly tall. It raised one arm, fist closed, and a set of three wicked metal blades sprang from sheaths built into the

gauntlets. There were smears of fresh blood on those blades. Fix looked down at his own stomach and saw that his shirt and flesh were torn. His guts slid out and flopped wetly to the ground between his knees.

Fix screamed himself awake.

In a happy, chirpy voice the AI system said, “Good morning, Hogarth. It’s fight day. Would you like scrambled eggs and coffee?”

6

Fight day.

There had been a lot of matches at *Gameworld* since Fix agreed to this fight. Humans against humans, humans against transgenic animals, teams against teams. Fix had watched them all, trying to prepare his mind for this. As if that was even possible.

He was going to fight an alien.

Yeah, history.

Shit.

He stood in a shower hot enough to boil a lobster. He lost it in there, too. Weeping and pounding his fist on the wall.

Chiba called him a warrior. Sure. Fix had known a lot of them. Only the fools went into battle without fear, and they were usually the first ones to fall. Most good soldiers were like him. Professional, yes; capable, to be sure; but human. They hid their fear because fear is both personal and contagious. They carved religious symbols into their gear. They wore religious medals or good luck charms. They wrote out death letters. Some took pictures of their loved ones with them; others refused to even name their wives or husbands or children for fear it would jinx

them. Some took confession and others let hot showers wash their tears away in hopes that it cleansed them of excess fear.

Then they got ready for war.

With Hogarth Fix the ritual was all about being quiet. He toweled off and dressed in fighting trunks. He said nothing at all to the corner man who wrapped the tapes around his hands. Before the match he sat on a stool in the locker room, not praying, not thinking, just letting a silence fill him inside. He meditated, drifting right below the surface of wakefulness while his preconceptions dropped like pebbles to the bottom of his pool of awareness. When he heard the game bell, Fix stood and looked into the mirror, into the eyes of the scarred and ugly man who stared back at him. Into dead eyes that told him nothing and would betray nothing to his opponent. There was no hate in those eyes. No judgment, no anger. There was nothing, not even a mirror for the enemy to see his own strengths and weaknesses.

He stood up, turned, and walked out to the war.

7

The crowd was enormous. Every seat was taken and there were people standing in the aisles and crowding the balconies. The bleachers for the fighters were filled with past champions, each of them wearing their victory belts and sashes. Fix saw their eyes, saw the resentment, let it slide off of him. He knew that there were better fighters among them. Stronger, younger, faster, more talented. That was what it was. Chiba had picked him. Over the last few weeks Fix had gone through the agony of doubt, wondering if Chiba could be trusted, wondering if the promoter had picked him as an appetizer, intending Fix to be killed in order to show how tough the alien was. Probably. That was okay. Chiba still wanted a good fight. A long fight. Only record-keepers and

trivia freaks ever really wanted a fight to end in the shortest time. Fans wanted to see the competitors fight it out all the way to the final bell. They wanted to *see* something.

They wanted a war.

That's what Chiba had to want, too. A big, showy fight that commentators could dissect on news programs all over the solar system. A fight that would show human ingenuity and skill against something beyond all human experience, but which would end with the human—with Fix—dead on the deck. Dead or crippled, but the loser either way. That way the ticket or logon price for the next bout would be higher, and there would be no end to the list of fighters who would want to be the one who not only fought an alien, but defeated it. A victory by the next guy was the only possible bigger fight news.

Chiba walked into the center of the pentangle in a blood-red sequined suit, his massive bulk seeming to fill the place. There was a lot of yelling, a lot of rabble rousing. The din became one vast homogenous roar, like white noise turned high. Fix tuned it out. It was irrelevant and therefore a distraction, if he allowed it to be such.

When his name was called, he walked out onto the floor and did what he was expected to do. He raised his arms and danced on the balls of his feet, turning this way and that, grinning like an ape so that every camera could get a good shot. Looking mean. Acting the part.

“And facing our champion, Hogarth Fix, today is a new fighter. New to *Gameworld*, new to the pentangle, new to our kind of fighting,” bellowed Chiba, and a pregnant hush dropped heavily over the chamber. “I can guarantee you, my friends, that this is a fight like nothing you’ve ever seen. Like nothing *anyone’s* ever seen. You are about to witness a fight between one of the toughest men who I’ve had the privilege to know and an opponent so strange, so rare, so new that none of us know what’s going to happen in the next three minutes. I don’t know his

name but once you take a look at him you'll understand why we all call him the *Nightmare Kid!*”

With that a section of the pentangle floor hissed open and a big metal cylinder rose into sight. It was opaque and painted with images from a couple hundred years' worth of horror stories. The cylinder turned slowly so everyone could see. Bug-eyed aliens, lumbering moon-beasts, spiders from Mars, space invaders, bat-winged monstrosities, and more. The creatures of books, comics, and film. Fix recognized some of them and others he didn't.

Then the revolving cylinder dropped back down, revealing the figure of the hideous creature standing there, wrists and ankles secured by heavy shackles attached to retractable steel cables. The monster was dressed in black trunks now, but the torn netting was still there. And now he wore no helmet.

Fix could feel a cold hand of terror reach past his professional calm and clamp icy fingers around his heart. That face.

Dear god, that *face*.

It was every bit the nightmare promised by its nickname. Not even vaguely human, with spiked mandibles that were like some parasitic monster, or a spider, or a crustacean. It hissed at the crowd, and the spiked corners of its lips peeled back to reveal sharp, deadly teeth.

There was one long, lingering moment when all sound in the room suddenly died as the people stared at the thing. This wasn't a publicity stunt and it wasn't transgenics, and everyone seemed to grasp that all at once.

And then the crowd went absolutely wild.

Forty guards with shock rods came trotting out of a side corridor and surrounded the pentangle. The creature turned its head to watch them and there was hatred and something else in its eyes. Not fear, Fix thought, but a wariness. The kind that comes from experience. It

remembered those shock rods and seemed to understand the odds against it. Forty big men in full riot gear. A moment later a ceiling vent opened and a turbo-cannon dropped into sight, its laser sight finding and locking onto the Nightmare Kid. The creature looked down at the spot where the laser sight hovered and then he looked at Chiba, who stood a few yards away.

“That’s right, you little cockroach,” murmured Chiba in a voice only Fix and the creature could hear. “You try any of your tricks and you’ll get worse than you got downstairs.”

The crowd had gone insane. Local and long-range cameras swiveled into position. A senior tech gave Chiba the thumbs up. “All of the subscribers are logged in, boss. We are live from Neptune to Mother Earth.”

Chiba returned the nod and amped up the wattage on his grin.

“Are you ready for blood?” he roared to the crowd.

Their response shook the whole place. Everyone was cheering, even the fighters on the bench.

“Then let’s put three minutes on the clock,” bellowed Chiba, and a large digital display showed the time in seconds. It was a more dramatic countdown. Two hundred and forty.

Chiba stepped off of the pentangle and took position behind six of the biggest guards.

“Shackles off!” he yelled and the bonds disengaged on ankles and wrists and were whipped out of sight beneath the floor, which closed over them.

The monster stood his ground, looking around, cautious, adjusting what he had experienced so far to what was happening now. Fix could understand it and even follow the obvious logic. He had been captured, overpowered, poked and prodded, been given opportunities to fight and had won each time. Maybe Chiba had tried to tame him with the shock rods and other tools. If so, Fix did not believe it had been a successful attempt. Now it was in a protected

enclosure with another possible enemy. Even if it did not know what *Gameworld* was, it could put two and two together. This was a fight.

It turned toward Fix.

On impulse, Fix raised his left arm, fist clenched. It was a salute but also a test.

The creature considered him, then it, too, raised its arm. Fix saw a tiny twitch of its right shoulder before it raised its left. That was very interesting. Did that mean it was right-handed? Did it mean that it was conditioned to salute, and to do it with its right? If so, why did it use its left? In straight imitation?

Maybe.

Fix was right-handed, too.

Chiba yelled out the Japanese word to begin, "*Hajime!*"

The clock started. The crowd roared.

The creature instantly shifted its stance, feet wide, knees bent, body leaning forward, the muscles of chest and shoulders and biceps tensing. Making a show of it as it let out a terrifying challenging roar.

The movement was tribal and ritualistic.

And telling.

Then it attacked.

The monster was fast. Good lord it was fast. For all its size and bulk, it seemed to turn into a blur as it came straight at him, claws slashing toward Fix's throat.

The claws cut only air though.

Fix saw the muscles tense in the creature's thighs and calves, read the coiled power, knew the lunge was coming. Nothing moves without some kind of tell. Not even the greatest

fighters in history. The body is an interconnected series of tightly meshed ligaments and muscles, bones and moveable flesh. When one part of the body moves there is always a compensating flex or shift. The best fighters can minimize this so that they appear to go from zero to full speed without any intermediate process of acceleration. Fix was good at that.

He was even better at reading it.

The Nightmare Kid tore through the spot where Fix had been, but Fix was moving with light, quick steps on an oblique angle. He moved like a fencer, like a tennis player, his weight balanced on the springy balls of his feet, knees bent to act like shock absorbers, everything else loose so as not to drain energy.

The alien whipped around and tried it again, relying on his speed and greater reach to end the fight quickly.

The tips of those nails brushed across Fix's hip and there was a sudden flash of heat. The monster was faster even than he looked, and those nails were scalpel sharp. The creature howled in triumph, owning the moment of first blood. He reared back and bellowed at the crowd.

Fix darted in and to the right and punched him on the outside of the thigh, driving a corkscrew knuckle punch at the juncture of two big muscles. The creature hissed and dropped to one knee but slashed again to chase Fix away from a combination off of that hit.

The crowd screamed.

The Nightmare Kid got back to his feet, chest heaving. Was he angry that his moment of triumph had been spoiled? Fix thought so. Interesting. Very interesting.

The creature leaped at him, getting great height and distance for his bulk, and Fix had to twist away from him, but once more those claws drew lines of fire, this time along Fix's upper back.

Fix immediately countered with a sideways lunge and punch, hitting exactly the same spot. Harder. The creature's knee hit the deck and it launched again from there, trying to slash its opponent's legs out. Fix slap-parried the thing's wrists and hit him with two fast left jabs in the side of the face.

That became the rhythm. The monster tried a dozen different angles of attack, relying on its enormous power, speed, and reach, each time trying to deliver a crippling blow. Each time Fix read the thing's body language and moved with the attack. Those claws, though, found him time and again. Never deeply, but enough to hurt. Fix had to force the pain and the fear that it brought back down to the bottom of his pond of mental stillness.

Each time the Nightmare Kid attacked, though, Fix counterattacked with a left-hand punch, often striking the same spot on the monster's leg. The monster was starting to limp, but it was clearly no slave to pain. It seemed to eat the pain and use it to fuel another attack, and another. If it was tiring, it did not show.

The clock said one hundred and two.

It felt like hours.

Out of the corner of his eye, Fix saw an aid hand a small communicator to Chiba, who covered one ear and listened. Fix saw Chiba's brows knit with some kind of consternation. There was no time to observe more, though, because the alien nearly killed him with a double high slash followed by a savage kick that Fix almost, but not quite, evaded. Instead the kick propelled him into the air, and the monster dove forward to be under him when he fell. A nice trick. Like a cat might do.

Fix tucked and turned and came down feet first, stamping down onto the monster's arms and missing the claws by inches. Fix pitched forward and rolled, came out of it without rising

and spun on the floor, sweeping the monster as it charged after. The Nightmare Kid fell hard and lay stunned, but Fix wasn't fooled. The landing wasn't hard enough to do that much damage. It was a trick and Fix wasn't buying. Instead he backed up and began circling, waiting for the creature to stop playing and rise.

It did, but when it was halfway up Fix attacked, punching it once more in the leg, pivoting backward off the impact so that he was chest to back with it, and then laying into the thing with some hardcore neighborhood work. He drove solid punches into kidneys—if it had kidneys—ribs, under the shoulder blades, into the vulnerable soft spots below the armpits. He worked it fast and hard, torquing his body for maximum power and then bailing fast by skipping backward.

The creature went down onto both knees and for a moment it looked like it was truly dazed.

But it got back to its feet once more and began stalking Fix.

There was something different in its eyes now. Fix wanted to call it a loss of confidence, but that was probably only partly true. It had the muscle and stamina to win this. Fix was breathing heavy and there was still a million years to the end of those three goddamn minutes. Fix was bleeding from a dozen shallow cuts. The alien didn't even look bruised.

It limped, though. There was that.

Seventy-three seconds on the clock.

Christ. Might as well be forever.

Chiba was on the far side of the pentangle and Fix frowned as he saw the big man moving away, heading toward his private elevator, his six men surrounding him. Some of the crowd were looking at Chiba, others were talking on private communicators. More than half the

crowd was no longer looking at the fight.

The Nightmare Kid did not seem to notice any of this. Instead he lunged in again and this time his claws tore into Fix's left forearm, detonating white-hot agony. Fix kicked it in the knee and backpedaled to safety. His arm was hurt, the fingers sluggish, blood welling thickly from two deep cuts.

With a howl of pure animal joy, the monster came at him, driving in toward Fix's left side, confident that its opponent was crippled.

Fix knew that there was a time for playing the game Chiba wanted him to play, and there was a time to fight for his life. For his kids.

He accepted the rush and then shifted left, pivoting to kick at the monster's knee, but then launching a series of blows with his right. With his dominant, much faster right. He'd underused it all through the fight, training the monster to regard him as a left-dominant counter-fighter. Schooling it for this moment.

The creature was tough but it was also strangely naïve. It bought the fiction and had built its strategy around it. And now Fix made him pay for that lack of perception.

As the Nightmare Kid slashed, Fix leaned out of the strike path and hammered its forearm with two punishing blows to the point where the muscles stretched thinnest behind the wrist. Then he stamped on its foot, grinding hard to break bones, then he head butted it, accepting a deep cut on his own forehead to break one of the mandibles. He grabbed with his bad left hand, needing only a marginal grip, and hit the monster with a series of brutal, full-speed snap punches to throat, groin, eyes, throat, heart, throat, temple, and throat. Then he sidestepped, cocked his right leg, and heel-kicked the same point on the thigh he'd been hammering since the fight started. The creature went down and Fix shifted behind him and was one micro-second

away from grabbing its head to try and snap the thing's neck when the wall behind the fighters' bleachers exploded.

The force plucked Fix and the Nightmare Kid up and hurled them into the audience, chased by a storm cloud of flaming debris and bleeding body parts. Fix hit two people in the face and heard necks snap as he fell.

He landed badly and lay there, nearly unconscious, blinking through blood and smoke and madness, taking in what happened next in haphazard images.

There were flashes of red lightning. Or... laser pulse blasts? Something like that. Fix fought for consciousness. People screamed and fell. When a red blast caught someone, they simply flew apart. Customers trampled each other, clawing and fighting, kicking, and biting to escape.

Someone yelled, "It's the police!"

But that was stupid. It was wrong. Hurt as he was, Fix knew that. The police used machine guns and lead bullets, even out here. And they used high-intensity gas guns for microgravity EVA fights. Who the hell used pulse guns outside of deep-sea mining?

Chiba was banging on the button for his private elevator, his face pale with panic, eyes wide. He had a pistol in his hand. His guards were battering at the crowd, using the shock rods to keep them away from the elevator door.

Some of the fighters—those few who had survived the explosion—had grabbed chairs, fallen shock rods or anything else they could grab and were crowding toward whatever had

breached the wall. Fix saw them fall.

One.

By one.

By one.

One of them—Helga, the trollish woman—had a big commando knife, God only knew where she'd gotten it, and with a furious battlefield shriek dove into the smoke.

A moment later she came out again.

But Fix could not at first understand what he was seeing.

Helga hung writhing in the air, her body torn and bloody, dangling in the smoke like a puppet on broken strings.

And then *it* emerged.

Just like in his dream, a thing appeared out of nowhere. There was a shimmer in the troubled air and suddenly a form took shape. Monstrous, unnatural, armed, and armored. It held Helga up and now Fix could see that three steel claws had been thrust entirely through her body and the bloody tips stood out from between her shoulder blades. The creature wore the same kind of helmet that the Nightmare Kid had worn when Fix first saw him. The pale flesh of its body was covered in the same netting, but instead of a simple pair of trunks it wore complex armor, hung and fitted with exotic weapons. Knives and guns and other things Fix could not begin to identify.

The monster was huge. Much bigger than the creature Fix had fought. At least a foot taller and half again as broad in the shoulders. The brute peered at Helga, seeming to take note of her musculature, her scars. It made a series of weird clicks, sounds nearly lost beneath the screaming, and then it flung Helga away. Her dying screams chased her across the pentangle and

she landed with a bone-breaking thud five feet from where Fix lay, the knife still in her hand, its blade smeared with green.

Fix tried to get up, tried to reach for that blade.

Then a shape pushed itself up from beneath a pile of debris and corpses. The Nightmare Kid, bleeding bright green blood, wild-eyed, furious. It looked down at Fix and hissed at him, the three remaining mandible spikes twitching, claws flexing. It took one threatening step toward its enemy and then it stopped and wheeled, looking first toward the much larger killer who was now tearing into the remaining fighters, and then at Chiba, who was crowding into the elevator with his men. The door wouldn't close, though, because of all the people trying to claw their way in.

The Nightmare Kid howled in fury, and all of its rage, all of its hatred shifted from Fix to Chiba. It bolted toward the elevator, slashing people apart even as they fought to get out of its way.

Fix struggled to his feet just as the smaller of the two monsters smashed its way through the crowd and into the elevator. The doors closed behind it and Fix had a brief view of electronic flashes from the shock rods and a spray of bright red blood.

The larger monster was killing its way across the floor. The remaining guards rallied and attacked it with shock rods, and for a moment they seemed to drive it back, though at the cost of many of their own lives.

And in a moment of sudden crystal clarity, Fix put the pieces to all of this together.

The nickname Chiba had given to the alien—the Nightmare Kid—might have been more apt than he knew. From the size of the newcomer, and the superb combat skills *it* demonstrated, and the comparatively smaller size and more naïve skills of the Nightmare Kid, Fix realized that he had been fighting just that. A kid. A younger, less experienced, less dangerous version of the

true nightmare that was slaughtering the most skilled fighters in the solar system. This creature—mother or father—had come looking for its kid. It had attacked a whole space station full of people to protect its own.

And now that kid was fighting for its life, either in the elevator or in Chiba's office. Fighting against armed killers and the brutish champion sumo wrestler. The kid was outnumbered, outgunned, and—because of the last few seconds of the fight—injured.

Before he knew he was going to do it, Fix was up and running, his fatigue forgotten, his pain channeled into some other part of his brain. He grabbed the knife and used it to cut his way to the elevator controls. The customers, already hurt and shocked and frightened by the last onslaught, and by what was happening in the area, gave way, cursing and weeping. And dying.

The elevator opened and Fix stepped inside and punched the button for the office. The walls of the lift were smeared with human and alien blood, and three of the six security men lay in broken heaps on the floor.

Below, even through the doors and distance, he could hear the frustrated roar of the thing's parent. Had it seen its child escape? Was it losing this fight to save it?

No way to tell.

Then the elevator shuddered as something struck the frame. A blast or a fist?

The door pinged open and Fix jumped out and to one side, narrowly evading the swing of a shock rod. He ducked low and cut high and the guard sagged back as blood erupted from his upper thigh and groin.

Across the room Chiba was fighting the Nightmare Kid. Fighting, and winning. The young alien had taken a lot of damage in the elevator fight and was barely able to stand, and Chiba, for all his size, was a champion and a killer. He battered the alien with one after the other

of devastating blows. Even so, the kid kept fighting. It was clear it was never going to stop fighting. Maybe it was the thing's nature, maybe its culture. Whatever. It was losing the fight that would kill it, but it was going to make Chiba earn that victory.

The two remaining guards were torn—help their boss or stop Fix?

They split the difference. One of them rushed over and jabbed the Nightmare Kid with his shock rod, which made the creature stagger down to hands and knees. Chiba used that moment to lunge toward a gun safe bolted to the wall and begin punching a code.

The other guard rushed at Fix, jabbing with the shock rod as he circled for the best angle. Fix had no armor and a metal knife. Not good odds against a professional with an electric weapon. They dueled and darted and Fix saw his moment. The guard tried for a long reach, leaning into it with too much weight on his lead leg. Fix collapsed beneath the glowing end of the rod and stamped out at the man's shin. The guard fell hard and Fix caught him, rolled with him, rolled atop him, and drove the point of the knife through the guard's right eye socket.

He looked up to see Chiba whip the door of the safe open and pull out a heavy caliber navy automatic. He leveled the weapon at Fix and pulled the trigger.

At the exact moment the elevator door exploded inward. Fix, sprawled on the floor, felt the steel door whistle overhead and saw it smash Chiba's desk to pieces.

Then the larger alien jumped out of the shattered elevator shaft. It was covered with bleeding cuts and one eye was swollen shut. Some of its weapons were smashed and melted from multiple impacts of the shock rods. Its hands and chest and thighs were soaked with bright red human blood.

Chiba shoved the remaining guard toward the alien, wrapped a powerful arm around the smaller alien's throat and jammed the barrel against the Nightmare Kid's head.

“No!” roared the sumo champion.

The moment froze.

The big alien stood there, panting with exertion and pain, glaring at the humans in the room. The smaller alien hissed but did not struggle to break free.

The guard gaped in naked terror, his confidence in his shock rod gone.

Fix was on the floor, ten feet from Chiba, two feet from the guard, six yards from the big alien.

He read the scene, read the moment. He understood because understanding the nuances of combat was who and what he was.

He had kids at home that he knew he would never see again. The insurance was there, though. They would be taken care of. It hurt so bad to think that he would never see them again, but at least he hadn't failed them.

So he did what any father would do.

He swept the foot of the remaining guard and while every eye went to that man falling, Fix threw his knife.

He did not throw it at the guard, or at the big alien, or at Chiba, who was too well hidden behind his inhuman shield.

No, he threw the knife to the Nightmare Kid.

The young alien caught it, twisted, biting down on the gun arm of the distracted Chiba and then turning more and using that knife. Using it with the ferocity of a warrior; using it with the precision of a butcher.

No, of a hunter.

Gutting, ending, emptying, destroying.

Chiba tried to scream but there was not enough of his throat left for that. There was no air in his ruptured lungs. There was nothing left of him or for him, and the alien stepped aside to let the heavy body fall.

The guard flung his weapon away, got to his knees and begged for mercy that was not his. Fix slapped away the pleading hands and chopped him across the throat.

Then he fell back onto the floor, spent. Nearly gone.

The big alien crossed the room in a few long strides. He stepped over Fix without even looking at him, grabbed the younger alien, slapped him hard across the mouth, once, twice, hitting him so hard the lights flickered in the Nightmare Kid's eyes. Then the big alien gave the younger one a single, fierce hug and shoved him roughly away, adding one more slap for emphasis.

The younger alien staggered, swayed, but stayed on his feet. He held the bloody knife up and hissed. The bigger alien looked at it, at the blood, and nodded.

Fix watched in horrified fascination as the younger alien rolled Chiba onto his stomach, slit him from crown to anus, tore open the fatty flesh and with a savage grunt tore the entire spine and skull out of the sumo champion's body. It was disgusting and it was terrifying. The Nightmare Kid stood there, panting, admiring his trophy. Then they turned and looked down at Fix.

There was absolutely nothing Fix could do. He had barely outfought the younger one and the adult was so far beyond his skill as to be absurd. This was where he, too, would die.

The big alien studied Fix for a long time. It looked over his head at what was left of Chiba, then at the knife its child held, and at the trophy, then back to Fix.

It gave him a single, small nod.

After a moment, Fix returned the nod.

Warrior to warrior. Parent to parent.

He lay there and watched the aliens move to the elevator shaft and then jump down to where the sound of screams could still be heard.

It took Fix a long time to get to his feet.

It took him nearly an hour to figure out how to open Chiba's safe. As it turned out it was a biometric scan. A full palm print was all it took, and the aliens had left Chiba's hands nicely intact.

He stood for even longer in front of the open safe.

Smiling.

Banana Republic

A PLANET OF THE APES ORIGINAL STORY

By Jonathan Maberry

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"Master Dante!"

The cry roused the orangutan from a light doze and he jerked awake, turning on his stool, spilling scrolls and knocking a wooden cup of fig wine to the floor. Dante snarled as the wine splashed across the papers, and the sound of his fury made the younger ape skid to a halt, one hand on the threshold of the cabin, the other pressed to his mouth. The younger orangutan's hair was windswept and there was rock dust on his face.

“What *is it?*” roared Dante as he stooped to try and slap wine away from the reports he had been reading. “Speak up, Caleb—does a human have your tongue?”

“M-Master,” stammered the boy, “it’s K-K-K-Krastos, h-h-he f-found s-s-something.”

Krastos was the chief engineer of the excavation and a smart and sensible ape. Young Caleb was a second-year seminary student and served as a general assistant at the construction site. There were more than forty students from the School of Holy Law and half again as many manual laborers, all of them working long hours to clear the land and dig the foundation for the planned Shrine of the Tenth Scroll. It was backbreaking work and comforts were few. Dante considered it an honor for them, however, to be part of something so important. And the way in which each accounted himself would allow the senior clerics to take their measure. Some would be asked to leave and return to secular life. Most would, in the end, because serving the will of God and following the true path of the Lawgiver was not for everyone. Not for most. When the toiling was done and the shrine constructed, only a handful of apes here would live there as clerics or servants. Caleb, young as he was, often showed some promise and aptitude, but at the moment, Dante would gladly have sent him to burn ticks off of humans.

“Y-y-you must c-c-come s-s-s-see what he f-f-found,” urged the boy, his words juddering out like automatic rifle fire, hard and discordant.

Dante sat back on his heels, a dripping scroll held carefully away from the other documents, and cocked his head to look up at the boy. There was a strange light in Caleb’s eyes.

“Exactly *what* did Krastos find?” he asked.

The young assistant ran ahead faster than Dante wanted to walk. The cleric was amused by the boy's enthusiasm, though he was still annoyed about the wine on the scrolls. Dante was also curious. This construction site had been well-planned, but the process had been long, arduous, and frustrating. When Dante had first approached the church elders with his scheme, he was shot down three times, and in each case had to burn away weeks or months in lobbying for support. Then, when the council had finally given their grudging approval to build a shrine such a long way from the metropolis of Ape City, Dante had forwarded fourteen different locations, each in a spot that would draw on commercial trade routes, civilian travelers, itinerant scholars, and pilgrims. The shrine, the elders told him, needed to be anchored by a town that would benefit from the increase in tourism, but which would not be marginalized by the presence of a holy place. Politics. It was always politics. Even more than faith, even more than the evangelical demands of their faith, it was politics.

Or, as he privately saw it, it was chimpanzees.

Sure, all of the apes played politics in their own way, and his kind, the orangutans, played it very well—especially since they were the traditional keepers of the faith. But for years now, it had been the intellectual nitpickers, the politically correct, the let's-find-a-common-ground chimpanzees who had slowed the process to a lame shuffle. Even here in Big Rock, which everyone in the world regarded as the mole on the left buttock of civilization, the chimpanzees were delighting themselves by cluttering up what should have been an easy process. And the town's energetic young mayor, Cato, was no friend of the orangutans. Dante suspected that the brash upstart was probably a closet heretic, though proving it would be virtually impossible. Cato was no fool.

Dante frowned at how empty the worksite was. Where was everyone? It was still only late morning and there were enough clouds to keep the day cool even in mid-summer; surely, the lazy louts were not taking a midday rest.

No, he thought as he saw that there were tools scattered around as if dropped during startled flight. *What could be happening?* Caleb had sputtered so badly he hadn't been able to say much more than Krastos had found something and everyone was terribly excited.

Thoughts of what that “something” could be made Dante slow his pace for a few strides, and he cast a quick, uneasy glance toward the east. Big Rock was bordered on one side by a rain-swollen river, on another by impassible marshlands, but rich with fertile grove lands everywhere else. Pecan and peach trees grew in abundance, and the lush woods were heavy with game. But there was a darkness here, too, and a big part of the reason this site was ultimately chosen was to fight that darkness. The lands allotted to the shrine butted up against a series of low, broken hills through which narrow rivers ran. The first of those rivers was known as Boundary Run, and everything beyond it was left unnamed. Not a brook, not a hill, not a grove, not a lagoon was given a name because they were all already labeled. They formed the tip of a longer finger of land into which no sane ape would travel.

The Forbidden Zone. Or, Dante privately conceded, one of them—because, in truth, there were several areas collectively known as the Forbidden Zone. Never *Zones*. Singular, because they represented a single, shared thing. Evil.

Nothing that went into the Forbidden Zone did so because it was drawn by anything save sin, madness, or darkness. And nothing came out of there that was not an abomination in the eyes of God.

The shrine was to be built here as a statement, and one day the church's greatest stoneworkers would erect a monolith on the banks of Boundary Run. It would say these words: "HERE AND NO FARTHER."

And it would say that on both sides, the one that faced the people of the town and the one that looked out across the river. It was a bold statement, and one of Dante's devising. As much as he appreciated subtlety, this was not a time for metaphor. The chimpanzees, of course, spent days debating whether it should read "farther" or "further." Dante wanted to brain the lot of them.

Up ahead, he saw that all of the workers—the laborers, the assistants, the monks and priests and novices—were clustered around the edge of the broad pit that was being dug so they could lay the foundation of the shrine. Caleb was so excited he actually grabbed Dante's hand and tried to pull him, like a child tugging his father along to watch the humans cavorting in the circus. Dante nearly snatched his hand back, but did not, and allowed himself to be pulled toward the throng. As he closed on them, the cleric could hear snatches of the questions they threw at one another in tones of whispered excitement.

"...what is it... what's it for... who put it there... what's it mean...?"

Only when he was within a few feet of the massed people did Dante pull his hand free and call out in a ringing tone, "What's all this nonsense?"

Everyone whirled at the sound of his voice, from the smallest assistant to the largest of the burly gorilla laborers. And every single one of them backed away, bowing in deference. Unlike chimpanzees, the apes here knew their place and they understood respect. Even so, Dante had a certain reputation to uphold, so he glared at them and watched every set of eyes briefly meet his own and then fall away. Even young Caleb suddenly remembered himself and

stood to one side, head down, hands clasped in front of him. Dante gave it all a moment, allowing their silence to be the substance of any lesson this required.

“Step aside,” he said quietly, and the crowd parted like a curtain to reveal the great pit beyond. Dante walked to the edge and looked down to see a lone figure standing in the deepest corner of the foundation hole. Dante recognized the lumpy, sturdy shape of Krastos, senior engineer for the shrine project. A steady ape upon whom Dante thoroughly relied. The engineer stood facing a section of dirt wall, leaning on a long-handled spade whose blade was buried in the hard, dark soil. The distance was too great for Dante to see what the engineer had found, but there was both tension and defeat in Krastos’ posture. A chill swept up Dante’s back and made the hairs on his neck stand out straight as needles.

A single word escaped his lips.

“No...”

#

Dante ordered everyone to leave the dig site and return to their tents for meditation and prayer. They obeyed, but not without throwing lingering looks back at the pit. Their eyes were filled with thousands of questions, and Dante knew that he would have to concoct some kind of answers.

For now, he needed answers of his own. His guess, though, as he climbed down the ladder to the floor of the pit, was that his answers were not going to satisfy their curiosity. No. He knew that this was going to be a problem. Possibly a fatal one for the shrine project. Perhaps even fatal for Big Rock.

Young Caleb lingered, shifting from one foot to the other in his nervous agitation.

“Sh-sh-should I-I c-c-come w-w-w—?”

Dante patted him on the arm and then gave him a gentle shove. “No, my boy, this is not for you. Go on, now, and make sure no one else comes down here. Mind me, and see that I am obeyed in this.”

Caleb straightened as if he’d suddenly been tasked with saving all of apedom from the hordes of Hell.

“Yes!” he said without a trace of a stutter.

Dante watched him go, amused and touched by the young ape’s dedication. But as he turned back toward the excavation, his smile melted away and the coldness was there again. The chill. The fear.

He stepped to the ladder, swung around and climbed down into the pit.

Krastos came hurrying over, his spade still clutched in one hand. The old engineer had massive shoulders covered in graying orange hair, but had lost most of the whiskers around his face. It made him look even older than he was. He nodded to the cleric, then fell into step with Dante as they began walking toward the far wall.

“We thought we’d hit a layer of rock,” said Krastos, jumping right in, “and I ordered the diggers to clear it off. I figured that if it was big enough and solid, then maybe we could level it and use it as the under-floor for the shrine.”

“But...?”

“But it was already level. See there?” Krastos pointed to a cleared section of the ground. At close range, Dante was able to see that there was, indeed, a hard layer beneath the dirt, but it wasn’t raw stone. He went over, bent, and ran his fingertips over the exposed gray-white surface. “It’s concrete.”

Dante snatched his hand back.

“*Poured* concrete,” elaborated Krastos. “Very good quality, too. Industrial. Whoever laid it knew what they were about. I had my people drive rods down through the dirt to establish its size, and it covers nearly half the pit we’ve dug. Flat and nearly square, too. Call it forty yards per side, though it might be bigger because some of it goes under the ground we haven’t dug.”

Dante did not comment on that. Instead, he rose and walked slowly over to the wall. Krastos kept pace with him, and when they reached it the old orangutan sighed heavily. “And... then there’s that,” said the engineer.

The flat concrete pad ran up to the side of the pit, but it was evident the pit itself had been excavated within a few yards of another wall. A concrete wall. “When we found this I cleared everyone else out,” said Krastos quietly.

Dante saw that Krastos had dug out a section of wall fifteen feet wide and ten high. It was all the same dull gray-white. Except where it wasn’t. Except where there were words painted on it in blocky black letters. Dante did not dare speak. Not at first. He turned slowly, looking at the cleared section of wall. At the letters. At the words they formed, running left to right. Dangerous words. Terrifying.

Most of the others at the construction site would not understand what this meant, or what horrors they implied, but Dante knew. Every senior initiate in the sacred order of the Guardians of the Scroll would be able to read those words and understand what they meant. That understanding, and any actions that might be taken as a consequence, were a heavy responsibility. It’s why apes like Seneca, Pliny, Abraham, and even Zaius himself had sworn oaths to die rather than let this kind of evil endure or spread. Seeing it here, on *this* side of

Boundary Run, right at the spot where the Shrine was to be built, felt like a dagger in his heart. He stared at the words and felt the dagger turn.

Naval Air Station Joint Reserve Base New Orleans

Dante snaked out a hand and caught Krastos by the elbow, pulling him close to whisper in the old engineer's ear. "Did anyone else see this?"

"No," said Krastos, moving up to stand very close. "I made them all wait on the far side of the excavation because they can't read it from there."

"Good."

Krastos rested the point of his spade against the concrete pad. "I can bring tent poles and sheeting if you want and build a screen."

Dante nodded. He felt faint and sick and had to brace his feet to keep from swaying.

Here? Of all places, here?

Krastos cut a nervous look at the cleric. "What does it mean?"

Dante licked his thin lips.

"It means that God is testing us," said Dante in a cold little whisper. "It means that God is watching us."

"I..."

Dante turned to him. "Erect the screen. Do it yourself. No one else is to see this. And send for Captain Maximus. Do it now."

Krastos nodded, took his spade and trudged away. Once he was alone, Dante placed both of his hands against the wall beneath the words.

"The one and only God is watching us very closely," he murmured.

Dante saw him arrive.

Captain Maximus was very hard to miss. He was not the biggest silverback Dante had ever met, but he was easily the broadest, with massive shoulders, arms that were packed with muscle, and a brutish face that even scared horses. An old human male had once died from sheer fright when Maximus roared at him. That had been on a market day and everyone in Big Rock laughed about it for weeks. Except the chimpanzees, of course, who managed to find something wrong with anything any ape did who wasn't part of their cabal of snobs.

The big captain did not bother with the ladder but instead dropped from the edge of the foundation wall, landed on all fours, punched the ground once as if to teach it its place, then straightened and strode over to meet the cleric. He wore a black leather tunic but no cap. Studded gauntlets were buckled around his forearms, and he had a pistol and dagger on his broad belt. As he approached, Maximus looked slowly around, surveying the site. He nodded as if satisfied that it was empty. Far above, the clouds had thickened to cover the sky and a false night was already falling. Lanterns cast the whole scene in shades of flickering orange and midnight black.

"Dante," said the gorilla, his voice a deep rumble.

"Captain," replied Dante. They nodded to each other. They were not exactly close friends, but their politics and religious views coincided on every important point, and that made them allies.

The gorilla glanced at the screens. "Krastos found something?"

"Yes."

"What is it? A fault in the foundation? Are we going to lose this site?"

"We may lose the site," said Dante, "or we may not. You tell me."

Dante turned and gestured to the screens. Maximus frowned for a moment, then slapped aside the edge of a curtain and stepped inside. After a moment Dante followed, and he nearly bumped into the captain, who had stopped in his tracks and stood staring at the wall. Although literacy was lowest among gorillas, no one could rise to the rank of captain without being able to read and write. Maximus was well read and shrewd.

Maximus read the words and then wheeled on Dante. “What heresy is this?”

“Again, you tell me,” said Dante.

Maximus walked over to the wall, touching it in much the same way Dante had done. He traced several of the letters and then stopped, but left his thick fingers there. “How is this here?” he asked. “How is it on this side of Boundary Run?”

Dante said nothing.

“The Run is the outside edge of the Forbidden Zone,” continued the gorilla. “There isn’t supposed to be *anything* like this here.”

Dante said nothing.

“We were *told*,” insisted Maximus. “It’s written in all of the books that no evil has set foot in this part of the world.”

“And yet,” said Dante quietly.

Maximus turned quickly and there were dangerous lights in his black eyes. His voice, though, was calm. “And yet,” he agreed.

They were silent for a long time, but much was said in the looks they exchanged. Dante followed the big ape’s eyes as he worked it through. Maximus flicked his eyes toward the screens, beyond which was the excavation for the shrine, and beyond that the small village of tents for the workers. Maximus shifted his gaze toward Big Rock, and then another shift in

the direction where, many hundreds of miles from there, was the sprawling metropolis of Ape City.

Then the gorilla's eyes shifted to two items that stood leaning against the wall. A sledgehammer and a pickaxe. Without saying a word, the gorilla began unbuttoning his leather vest. He handed it to Dante, then took the handle of the pickaxe, hefted its weight in his hands, set himself and swung with all of his considerable strength. The cold steel point of the pick bit deep into the concrete between the words "Naval" and "Air." Chips of stone flew.

Dante, smiling, stepped aside and watched with great interest as the captain attacked the wall. The grunt of the big ape, the whistle of the tool as it whipped through the air, and the heavy *tink* of impact were the only sounds in the world.

#

It took Maximus nearly two hours to smash the wall.

He never once stopped, never paused, and instead worked like a machine, his huge muscles bunching and flexing beneath the rubbery hide and dense black fur. Fissures whipsawed out from the impact points as concrete chipped away to reveal cinderblocks. Once he was at that level, the destruction became easier as the lighter composite building blocks crumbled beneath the savage impacts. A cloud of white dust hung in the air around the ape, gradually coating him so that he looked like a ghost from a midnight horror tale. Like the ghost of "Hector and the Five Demon Men" that was told to children to make them eat their greens.

Then Maximus tossed the pickaxe aside, chest heaving, and snatched up the sledgehammer. He gave Dante a strange and almost manic look and then attacked the edges of the hole, breaking out spikes of rock the way he would knock out an enemy's teeth in combat.

Even though this was only stone, there was a joyful brutality about it that Dante admired. A true soldier of the faith.

Finally, Dante said, “That is enough, Captain.”

The big ape swung the sledge a last time, assessed the damage, and let the tool drop with a ringing clang. The hole was now ten feet high and seven wide. Dust swirled into it and vanished into deep shadows. The gorilla had chopped out all of the letters, though, so that lines of destruction spread out like wings from the hole.

The captain and the cleric moved to the very edge of the hole. The air from inside was cold and surprisingly dry, as if tightly sealed from the moisture of the rich dirt around it. Dante doubted any rain had even seeped inside; there was no smell of mold or rot.

“Who knows about this?” asked Maximus.

“Who knows that we found something?” said Dante. “Everyone in camp. But if you’re asking about what was written on the wall, then it’s the two of us and Krastos, and he knows when to hold his tongue. He’s a good ape, and his loyalties are to the church.”

“This will get out, though.”

“Only if we’re sloppy,” said Dante. “Only if we’re foolish.”

Maximus cut a look at him. “Surely, Cato will find out. His spies are everywhere, and I’m not just talking about the chimpanzees. There are orangutans on his payroll and maybe even some of my lads.”

Dante nodded. “Sad, but all too true. Trust is hard to come by in these troubled times.”

“And Cato is smart, damn him,” growled Maximus. “He’ll know something is happening out here. If he comes out here for an inspection...”

“This is church ground,” Dante reminded him. “Even the mayor has to get permission from the council first, and that’s a bureaucratic process that can take an alarming amount of time... if managed correctly. No, Cato won’t find out about anything specific right away. We may have as much as a week or two before—”

Maximus laughed. “Two weeks? Ha! I bet he already knows something is going on out here. All it takes is for one ape to come in here while we’re sleeping...”

He trailed off, leaving the obvious unsaid.

Dante nodded. “Then we need guards. You say that you can’t trust all of your people, but surely there are *some* who are reliable. Can you pick four or, better yet, six to stand watch?”

Maximus thought about it for a moment, then nodded. “My sister’s husband would walk through hellfire for me, I know that. And his brother. And there are the three river gorilla brothers. You know the ones. They were offered prison or the army, and they’ve been with me for years now. And they’re no friends of Cato and the chimpanzee courts. They’ll do, and maybe one other.” He nodded again. “Yes, I think they’re all trustworthy. And tough, too. They know that you’re my friend, so they think you’re the right hand of the Lawgiver.”

“Useful,” said Dante.

They studied the darkness.

“Mayor Cato could jail us for even breaking down this wall,” said the gorilla.

“A bit late to point that out,” said Dante.

“My point is that we may be playing into his hands,” said Maximus. “We gorillas are strong and you orangutans are devious, but here in Big Rock the chimpanzees outnumber us six to one. Weak as they are, there are enough of them to force us to turn this site over to

them. And they have the legal right to demand it. Cato wants all of this land to expand the farms—farms that are almost entirely owned by his lot. Most of the gorillas have moved out of here because there's no one to fight, no way for a decent ape to make his mark on the world. By the Lawgiver, there are ten gorilla families who are already planting beans. *Beans*, for all that's holy." He gave Dante a curt nod. "You wouldn't even be here if you hadn't somehow convinced the church elders that this was a good spot to build a shrine. You think Cato doesn't resent you for that? And he knows where my loyalties lie, so he lumps us all in together."

"And your point?"

"My point is that we're already playing a dangerous game, Dante. Cato can not only arrest both of us, he'll snatch all of this land. Then anyone who was ever close to us—those who aren't breaking rocks along with us—will be planting beans and banana trees all throughout this region. There won't be a shrine."

Dante considered. "If he becomes aware of what we've found."

"We don't even know what we've found."

"Don't we?" asked Dante. "Besides... had these lands been left to Cato and his farmers, they would have found this place in time. And where would we all be?"

"We'd be standing on the same cracked tree limb ready to fall."

"Would we, captain?" Dante slowly shook his head. "I rather think not. Because Mayor Cato would not react to this place as we are reacting—with reasoned thought and self-control. He would abandon this entire region, even at the expense of his people's financial welfare. He would run screaming like a monkey."

“Or he’d go inside and see what he could use to really overthrow us. Cato is ambitious, Dante. If he had real power—not just numbers, but something more—do you think gorillas or orangutans would have any of the freedoms we currently have? Not a chance of that. The chimpanzees would love to turn us into slaves no better than humans.”

Dante shook his head. “Maybe. And although Cato is smart, I think you overestimate him as much as he overestimates himself. He has numbers, yes, and he certainly has ambitions, but would he go so far as that? I don’t know.”

“I do. And as much as it causes me physical pain to say it, I fear the little bastard. You should, too. You think the church would remain in power if the chimpanzees took control? They’re closet atheists, all of them.”

Dante shrugged. It was a topic often discussed among his fellow orangutans, but he’d never before heard a gorilla say it.

“Cato is dangerous,” Maximus said flatly. “And he will find out about this place, mark me on that.”

“Perhaps he will, but not as quickly as you believe,” soothed Dante. “Cato *thinks* he has the best spy network in town, but believe me when I tell you this, Captain Maximus, *no one* has a better network than the church. No one ever has, and no one ever will.”

The gorilla snorted and slapped the edge of the wall hard enough to knock a big chunk of concrete and cinderblock down. “How can they *not* know? We can’t just bury this and pretend it doesn’t exist. The whole camp knows that something is here.”

“Yes, they do,” said Dante, “but that is all they know.”

“Meaning what?”

“Meaning, that we’ve found something of great importance on a site that has been sanctified and consecrated. Surely, anything found in so holy a place must be of great spiritual importance.”

The gorilla looked at him. “And you think they’ll buy that?”

Dante held up a hand the way clerics often did when quoting the scriptures. ““And when the savages had set his field alight with yellow flames and pursued the pilgrim, Josiah and his wife and their children out into the wastelands. They beheld a thing like unto a tower of flame that spoke in the voice of the Lawgiver, and the Lawgiver said to them, ‘Take heart and do not fear, for I have planted the seeds of your salvation in the very ground.’”

“Oh, very nice,” said Maximus with a harsh laugh. “That’s a quote about finding potatoes to feed them on their flight from the edge of the Forbidden Zone to the valleys near Ape City. How does that...?”

The gorilla’s voice trailed off and a look of understanding came slowly into his eyes. The big ape turned and looked back once more to the wall of screens and then nodded. “Ah,” he said.

“Ah,” agreed Dante. He gave Maximus a long and calculating appraisal. “Many people underestimate gorillas.”

Maximus smiled. “And you?”

“There are wise apes and fools of every stripe, my friend. I’ve learned long ago not to judge but rather to observe and evaluate. And though we have never had an explicit conversation on the subject, it’s my belief that we are of a mind when it comes to what makes the territories beyond Boundary Run ‘forbidden.’”

Maximus grunted.

“Just as I believe we are both adult enough to understand *why* it’s forbidden,” continued Dante, “and why it needs to remain forbidden. The nature of what *makes* it forbidden does, by extension, make this place forbidden as well.”

“Yes,” agreed the captain.

Dante bent and picked up a lantern. “Once we step inside, we are breaking the laws of our own faith.”

The gorilla straightened. “Maybe. But aren’t all things done in the service of the Lawgiver, and to protect his people, sanctified as necessary?”

“Cato would not agree.”

Maximus showed his white teeth in a killer’s grin. “No. I don’t suppose he would.”

Together they stepped into the darkness.

#

The place was massive, cold, dark. Alien.

But familiar, too, at least to Dante. He had never *been* in a place like this before, but the tales told by the older members of the Guardians of the Scrolls had carried him there. Those stories had lifted him and brought him across the borders of the Forbidden Zone, into strange tunnels and through doorways, down flights of dusty stairs, into chambers built by hands that did not belong to any of the great apes.

The very fact of their existence, the undeniable truth of what it all meant, was the very reason the Guardians had been formed in the first place. It was the truth that held their brotherhood together and had shaped their resolve over many hundreds of years. It was a truth they rarely spoke aloud, even among themselves, even when they were behind their own

strong, locked doors. It was a truth they did not dare share with the chimpanzees, and only in the rarest of cases with the most trusted of the gorillas.

It was a truth that should have shaken their faith to its core and made a liar of the Lawgiver. And yet.

It did not.

In very real point of fact, the knowledge that human hands had built those places became the strongest possible reinforcement of their faith. There was no doubt at all about the unrelenting savagery of humankind. There was no doubt that they had been warlike, destructive and, worst of all, self-destructive. They had built weapons that were designed to kill their own kind in staggering numbers. They had built appalling machines that could lay waste to vast tracts of land and poison the soil so that nothing would ever grow again. They had darkened their skies and turned the very weather against their own. Even the wisest of the Guardians could not understand why. How could a species that, despite popular belief, had been capable of advanced thought not have the compassion to provide for their own children by handing over a safer, cleaner, and less dangerous world?

As the two apes stood together in a room that was stacked floor to ceiling with crates of rifles and grenades—enough in that one chamber to slaughter fifty thousand apes—Maximus seemed to catch the thread of Dante’s dark musings. And although neither had spoken more than a dozen words since entering the complex, Maximus touched his hand to his heart and murmured old words he had no doubt learned in church as a young ape.

““And when the human child reached out his hands to beg for bread from its father, he was instead given a scorpion.””

Dante nodded. “The Eighth Scroll, fifteenth chapter, ninth verse.”

Maximus cleared his throat and walked over to one of the metal racks that lined the walls. He curled his fingers around the barrel of a rifle of strange design. Unlike the smooth and elegant designs of the rifles he had always used, this one was all hard edges and ugly lines. He pulled the weapon from the rack and weighed it in his hands.

“It’s light,” he said. “Feels like a toy.”

Dante said nothing and watched as Maximus turned the gun over, making sense of its functions, experimenting with the action. Then the gorilla prowled the room until he found a stack of empty magazines beside an even taller stack of boxed cartridges. In the quiet darkness, there was the harsh, metallic click and rasp as Maximus fed one bullet after another into a magazine... the jolting slap of the magazine as the gorilla rammed it into the body of the gun. The captain glanced at Dante and then walked out of the room, and the cleric followed.

They went into an adjoining chamber whose function was unclear to either of them. There were row upon row of tables on which sat boxes of metal, plastic, and glass, with boards of small squares with letters and numbers on them. Maximus raised the weapon, seating the stock against his hip. He glanced again at Dante, who nodded.

The gorilla’s finger was almost too thick to fit inside the trigger guard.

He pulled the trigger and held the weapon as it roared. Flame and smoke erupted from the barrel and bullets filled the air, punching into the small boxes, exploding them, scattering pieces everywhere. Dante cried out and clapped his hands over his ears, wincing and backing away from the thunder. It took only seconds to empty the entire magazine and silence crashed down at once.

The gorilla stood panting, staring down at the weapon in his hands. His eyes were filled with strange lights. Fear and excitement.

“By the tears of the Lawgiver...” gasped Maximus. “The *power* of this thing. Our best rifles are six-shot. I put *thirty* bullets in that and they all fired. Even after all this time, they fired. A dozen apes with guns like this could... could...”

He swallowed and didn’t finish. Dante came and took the weapon from him, turning it over in his hands. Then he went back into the armory with the gorilla close at his heels. Dante placed the gun carefully atop a case marked “HIGH-CAPACITY MAGAZINES” and stood with one hand resting on it.

“Tell me, my friend,” he began slowly, “what is the greatest danger to apes today? Is it man or is it something else?”

The gorilla walked the length of the room, turned, and walked back before answering. “Man is nothing,” he said. “Not anymore.”

“Is that what you believe?”

The captain nodded. “Man isn’t man anymore.” He gestured to the room. “What man alive today could build this? No, point out any man you’ve ever met who could pick up a gun and know which end to point at an ape? If he pulled the trigger, it would be by accident and he’d likely blow his own foot off. No... man fell, and he fell all the way down to ruin and simplicity and stupidity.”

Dante nodded encouragement. He liked this gorilla.

“If man were to ever reclaim what he had,” continued Maximus, “it would take too long and we are always watching. Always.”

“Yes we are,” agreed Dante. “So where is the real danger?”

Maximus pointed the way they'd come. "It's there," he said. "It's back home. It's in Rock City and in Towering Tree and it's in Simian Shores and Ape City and everywhere else. It's us."

"Us?" echoed Dante.

"Us. Not you and me. Not the gorillas or the orangutans. It's the chimpanzees and everything they believe."

Dante gestured for him to elaborate.

"Cato wants us to farm this region. He has plans to extend the farmlands down south and out west. He wants to cut the hunting woods down to plant grasslands for cattle and sheep. He wants to build dams to flood the swamps so he can stock them with fish. And where will the labor come for all of this? I'll tell you where." He slapped his hand down on a crate with a sound like a gunshot. "*Us*. Gorillas. Cato will take the guns from our hands—as he's always done—and turn us all into farmers. Not just a few, but every last one of us. He might as well geld us while he's at it... the effect would be the same. Cato thinks the world is conquered, that there are no real threats out there and no need for an army, a militia, or even a police force. Oh, sure, he may let a few of us walk around in uniform as tokens, but that's all we'd be."

"Do you think that is likely to happen?" asked Dante.

"Of course I do. So do you. The chimpanzees breed like lice, and the more of them there are, the fewer of us get into any positions of real power. Mark me, Dante: Ape City may be different, Zaius and the elder orangutans may still be in power there, but that won't last. It won't. The intellectuals may be weak as individuals, but there are already too damn many of them." He pointed a finger at Dante. "And be warned. If the military and police numbers go

down, if the chimpanzees crowd us out, how long do you think you orangutans will hold power?”

“Even though we are the guardians of the faith?” asked Dante, smiling.

“Ha. You know that Cato doesn’t care about any of that. Atheist scum. Leave it up to him and every church would be razed and the land given over to pig farmers. He would tear down the statues of the Lawgiver and replace them with corn silos and then we would all have to pray to a new god—Progress. Tell me I’m just being an alarmist, Dante. Tell me I’m wrong.”

Dante sat on the edge of a crate of grenades. “God is God. He is jealous and He is harsh in His justice. That is the law. That is the only law, and it has kept our people safe through the darkest of times.”

Maximus nodded.

“This place was consecrated in the name of the Lawgiver,” continued the cleric. “Everything between the hunting woods and Boundary Run belongs to the church. Every stick, every stone, every blade of grass. All of it is holy ground. And we have been told that the evil lies beyond the water, in the Forbidden Zone. Evil is there and righteousness is here. That is what the elders say, and that is what the law says.”

Maximus was watching, nodding, saying nothing.

“To find such a place,” said Dante, “filled with all of this... a weak mind and a weak spirit would see it and say that the law is wrong, that the church is wrong, that what we believe in is wrong because here is proof to the contrary. Here is proof that evil is everywhere. But I trust in the law, Maximus. I trust in the elders and in the writings of the Lawgiver and in

all that is holy. If this is here, it is because God *put* it here. And if it was put here for us to find, God wants us to have it.”

“Why? Why put *this* kind of temptation in our path?”

“Do you see it as temptation, my friend? Or can you open your heart to see that God has revealed to us a way of purifying His flock and bring His people back to the path of righteousness? Consider the scrolls of the Lawgiver and the passages that talk about separating the chaff from the wheat, of culling the sickly cattle from the herd so that disease does not flourish and our kind diminish. We have been taught to eschew the tainted meat of the deer that wander from the Forbidden Zone. Those are stories that run deeper than what is obvious. We have been taught to protect apekind by cutting away at the impure as a surgeon removes a gangrenous leg.”

He ran his hand along the top of the crate.

“Cato and his kind will bring us to ruin. He will weaken the apes and allow mankind to become strong.” He looked around the room. “Strong again. We will fall and the human will rise again. Or the great apes will become scattered and only those of superior number will survive. And, as you have observed, we orangutans and gorillas are few and the chimpanzees are many. So many.”

“No,” growled Maximus.

“No,” agreed Dante. They sat in silence for a long time, then Dante rose and crossed to the rifle and picked it up. “Tell me, Maximus, how many of the righteous would it take to change the course of history? How many true believers would it take to save Big Rock from itself? From the heresy that is Cato’s plans for this region?”

Maximus took the rifle from him and studied it for a long, long time. “With God and the Lawgiver on our side?” he asked. “Not many. No... not many at all.”

They stood in the lamplight, surrounded by the sacred objects provided for them by a jealous God, and they smiled.