

# Random Thoughts



Happy spring!

I really appreciate this time of year, when the flowers and trees are blossoming, the days are getting longer and warmer, and, if we're lucky, glorious sunshine. I typically lose my motivation over the winter months, finding it difficult to start or finish projects, only wanting to curl up in a comfortable chair, with a snuggly blanket and a book. I probably have a touch of seasonal affective disorder (SAD) - either that or I was a bear in my previous life and still wanting to hibernate in a nice, warm cave until spring!

I have been especially booky recently, spending time talking about books and meeting people who talk about books. One of the events that was particularly inspiring was a seminar on world building. In fantasy, much thought is given to building believable worlds, and this involves not just the physical geography, but also the economics, politics, diet – not to mention the magic and/or the creatures which populate and interact with this world. As with set-dressing in TV and films, when this is done well it is hardly noticeable, but when it is not consistent with the narrative, it can jerk you out of the story or stop you connecting with a character. Certainly something for me to consider as I create worlds in which my characters can play.

## *Questions and Answers*

*If you could travel to any fictional world, where would you go?*

This is such a difficult question.

I generally want to enter the world of whatever book I'm currently reading or TV show/film I'm watching, daydreaming about interacting with those characters and those worlds, and making up stories of what might happen. I have to say, in most of them, I wouldn't last five minutes. I would like to be the warrior-heroine, fighting evil and defeating dreadful monsters, while I actually struggle to get out of bed without throwing my back out! It's why it's called fantasy, right?

If I had to pick one, I would probably like to go back to that period of great change, when Britain moved from a predominantly tribal society to the more town-centric Roman model, then back to a fragmented Anglo-Saxon/Danelaw world. I love all things Celtic and, being a Norfolk girl, I have a particular fascination with Boudicca, so I would probably choose the world of Manda Scott's Boudicca quartet. But give me five minutes and that will probably change!



## *Recent Reads*

Much of what I read involves, sometimes lengthy (I'm looking at you Janny Wurts/Robin Hobb!), series and I find the standalones can linger in the TBR pile. In an attempt to amend this awful habit, I've started going through the back catalogue of a favourite author – Guy Gavriel Kay. I recently finished the Sarantine Mosaic duology and, going back to the importance of world building, his use of language to colour this world is simply sublime.

Another standalone I have enjoyed recently was Amal Singh's *The Garden of Delights*. Not my usual focus, but the problem with meeting people who talk books is that they are always happy to add to your TBR pile! In this case, I'm glad they did. It was a delightful story and, again, the language used wonderfully created a vibrant world.

That's all for now. Don't forget to follow me on my socials for regular updates – just click on the appropriate image below:

