

# *Random Thoughts*



Welcome to my summer newsletter.

I hope you have enjoyed some fine weather and are able to get out into the countryside, where nature is offering her glorious bounty in preparation for the leaner days of winter. I have a bramble bush outside my window and the local birds are frequent visitors to the ripe blackberries.

The theme of this newsletter has been slowly guided towards inspiration, with several key events that have sparked my creative fire. Those who follow my socials will know I have a particular affinity for water, and a long overdue trip to Wales provided me with crystal clear rivers and thundering waterfalls. It was not too hard to imagine water sprites frolicking in the turbulent currents.

I also attended a couple of festivals. First was Book Fest, held at one of the Redwings Horse Sanctuary sites and raising funds by shamelessly parading their cute donkeys. Writers from a range of genres spoke about their writing processes, and how they find inspiration from the Norfolk/Suffolk landscape. A stroll over Nun's Bridge in Thetford offered the beginnings of 16<sup>th</sup> Century murder-mystery.

The following weekend was Dragon Fest, held at the West Stow Anglo-Saxon village. As a fantasy writer, kernels of stories were everywhere; from the dragons ambling around, to the recreated Anglo-Saxon huts, and the storytelling of Beowulf. Not to mention the occasional axe throwing to ignite the inner Viking.

## *Questions and Answers*

*Where do you find inspiration for your stories?*

I, like many writers, find inspiration all around, whether that is the landscape of open moors, secluded forest dells, or lazily flowing rivers. Book and TV/film stories can send me down a rabbit hole of what would happen if those characters were placed in different situations, or different characters placed into that world.

However, poignantly, I have recently been reminded of the power of music. I have a friend who rarely listens to the lyrics of songs (you know who you are, you heathen! 😊), but I find the imagery in some songs hugely inspiring. Being a bit of a rocker, the loss of Ozzy Osbourne (Black Sabbath) a few days after the anniversary of Chester Bennington's (Linkin Park) death has focused my mind on the power of music, and the, sometimes overpowering, emotions and images created when you combine expressive wording with a thumping base line and a ripping guitar rift.



## *Recent Reads*

With so much out there to read, and with bright, new, shiny books always clamouring for my attention, I like to alternate between new stories and authors, and those I am familiar with.

I have recently completed Giles Kristian's Raven Blood Eye trilogy, having read the first years ago and the remaining two lurking on my TBR pile. They did not disappoint. I always love Giles's attention to his characters, so you quickly gain a connection with them and are invested in their trials and tribulations. He also writes amazing fight scenes!

A new author, recommended by the British Fantasy Society, was Annabel Campbell – The Outcast Mage. I was blown away by the engaging characters and fast-paced story, consuming the book and postponing more important things in order to finish it. Of particular note, however, was the magic systems used and the gradual reveal of the consequences of using that magic. I thoroughly enjoyed it, and am now waiting impatiently for the sequel to be written and released...

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

