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Sci-Fi Fan Letter

Reviews of Science Fiction and Fantasy novels by Jessica Strider, a bookseller at the World's Biggest Bookstore in Toronto, Canada. A monthly listing of upcoming fantasy and science fiction books, themed reading lists and author interviews.

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MONDAY, NOVEMBER 10, 2008

Chad Corrie - Author Interview



Novels:

Seer's Quest

Path of Power

Gambit's End

The Adventures of Corwyn

Graphic Novel: *Tales of Tralodren: The Beginning*

website: www.chadcorrie.com

Pitch your latest novel.

My newest novel is "The Adventures of Corwyn". It's a short story collection dealing with the adventures of a bard named Corwyn Danther. He's a pragmatic pacifist who finds himself involved in a host of situations. He tries to find a way out of these predicaments without having to kill anyone and/or getting killed in the conflict itself. I wanted to try a different approach to a fantasy tale and having a character and set up of this nature seemed an unique to go. The five tales were a fun challenge to write and showcase more of the people, places and history of The World of Tralodren®. This is the same world setting shared by "The Divine Gambit Trilogy" and "Tales of Tralodren™: The Beginning" (a graphic novel). You can read more about this book and the rest by going to my website: www.chadcorrie.com. I have sample chapters there to read and even a podcast series talking about Corwyn and other works I've done.

What are your favourite three books?

At that top of the list would be *The Bible*. I read that everyday and am always finding something new in it. As to other books I do enjoy Robert E. Howard's work, primarily his fantasy stories (*Conan*, *Kull*, *Solomon Kane*, *Bran Mak Morn*, etc.). I'm also enjoy reading books about history. I do enjoy comics, however, having found favorites with *Batman*, *Conan*, and *Warlord*.

It's funny but being an author/writer I tend to read a lot of non-fiction to help in my research and/or interests. I don't read a lot of fiction too much these days, save odds and ends I come across and comics, of course.

In the books you've written, who is you favourite character and why?

I think, like most authors, there's a little bit of me in each of the characters I write. I tend to find myself being able to relate with some part of them, however minute. That being said, I think those who come closest to me would be Rowan (The Divine Gambit Trilogy) and Corwyn (The

DAVE GIBBONS at the

WBB!

Science fiction and

Fantasy Books

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About Me

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I work in the science fiction and fantasy section of the World's Biggest Bookstore. I am responsible for planning themed endcaps in store and making sure our sf section is the best in the city! If you want to know more about me, visit my personal blog: www.wyvernsspeakwriting.blogspot.com

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Adventures of Corwyn). Each is close to me in some respects but still not a total carbon copy. I tend to think in a similar vein as Corwyn at times and Rowan is more like I was when I was younger and first started out in writing.

If I had to pick a favorite character, I'd lean more toward Vkar, the first god and credited with the creation, through his wife, of the Tralodren Pantheon (see *Tales of Tralodren™: The Beginning*) at the moment. There is a lot to him—more that will be discovered and presented in future stories, I hope.

If you could, would you change places with any of your characters?

Probably not.

I tend to put most of my characters through the grinder. Conflict is story and so something has to happen to them, and it usually isn't all that pleasant. It's much easier to be the one writing it than having to be the one who is going through it. So I would tend to opt out of taking the place of any character in my books.

If you could live in your fantasy/sf world, would you? Would you live in somebody else's?

As much as I might not look to enjoy character replacement in my novels, I think there are parts of *The World of Tralodren®* that would be interesting to see first hand.

It's such a diverse place and has such history that I would enjoy spending some time just poking around and exploring the place. I don't know if I would want to live there, however, as I've grown rather attached to many things in this modern life and would prefer them over anything else such a fantasy world could offer.

What was the first novel (published or unpublished) that you wrote and how long did it take to write it?

My first novel was "Seer's Quest". It has been a very odd thing in that it has seen publication four times, each time under a different form. The story itself took about 10-12 years to write (I started young) and didn't really have a final form until I self-published it over a decade ago. Then it was published by a new small press, in two different versions (which is a long story there) until finally it's been released in its present form through my current publisher.

Each time the novel was redone it was tweaked a bit and fine tuned so I guess you could add some more years on to that first range I gave, making it close to 15 years total to the form that's out there on the shelves now.

What was the hardest scene for you to write?

You mean besides the opening of every book?

I don't know if I've had a very hard scene to write, but I can think of two instances, one more challenging than the other to write, I guess I can share.

In "Gambit's End", the third book in "The Divine Gambit Trilogy", I had a little bit of a challenge with trying to figure out just how to end the thing. I mean here was this 1000+ page epic and now I had to wrap it up. I didn't know if the way I chose was the best or would work as it as a little bit different that what people might expect.

To compensate for this I opted to add in an epilogue, which I didn't know how that would be received either. However, it was a challenge too as I didn't know how much should be enough to wrap things up. I knew you couldn't go on forever with things, but I still wanted to say as much as I could and get things dealt with as best I could.

In the end I think that tight balancing act was a good thing and made for a nice resolution to the series. I was further heartened when a reader

recently informed me that they liked the way I ended the tale. I think the hardest scene I've written was in a yet to be published graphic novel. It's part of a nine part series I've done about a near future dystopia. I really became attached to one of the main female characters and there was this scene later on in one of the graphic novels where she gets raped. Up until then she had been this wonderful innocent sort of young woman and then this darkness sprang up over her.

It was very hard not just to decide how much to show and how much to leave up to the reader, but just difficult as well as in some ways she had become my daughter and here I was having this happen to her. After that her innocence was lost and she was this different person—harder and darker in some ways than before.

Unfortunately, this was a big part of the storyline for her development and it needed to happen. But I didn't enjoy having her go through it.

Thankfully, there is some good that helps lift her up and to bring her back to almost where she was at the start of the story before the tale draws to a close. If I had to leave her in that dark state I know that scene would have been even harder to write.

What is the strangest question you have ever been asked by a fan? OR Share an interesting fan story.

First off, I really enjoy fans. It's part of what makes this hermetical form of creation a little brighter—knowing that your work is actually getting into people's hands is a nice feeling. And when you're just starting to get your name out there it's an added bonus to know your work is having some penetration into the large scheme of the book retailing world. I've had the privilege of getting to do some events in various states, even going to conventions and such but have yet to have a really strange question asked of me. I also haven't really been approached by too many fans. Most people tend to drop me a line now and then with some sort of little "I liked your book" type deal, but none have really come up to me and done anything of possible "interest" insofar as your question might imply.

What was the most fun book signing, convention, etc. you've attended and why?

I always enjoy conventions and tradeshow as you get to meet a lot of interesting people and often times get to have a wider audience than what you would have in other venues. That being said, I think one of my favorite events was just recently in Rochester, MN. It was just really busy and lots of interesting people stopped by. The books were well received too, which is always nice to experience as an author. And though it was still Minnesota, there was a nice mix of people from all walks of life, who came and stopped by the table. It was one of the most productive and enjoyable experiences I've had since I started participating in book events.

If you still have one, what's your day job?

I get to live an interesting life in that I have been able to work with my current publisher filling in various odds and ends jobs and getting to help with the production of the other books they produce.

This has been very helpful for me in learning more about the production side of publishing and I believe made me a better writer as I now know more of what a publisher wants and is looking for with work and what they go through to get it to press.

Of late I've been helping out with promotions for other authors and learning more of that side of the coin as well. And I get to do most of this without leaving my home office. So I'm learning more about the business and getting paid for it and still being able to have enough time each day to write.

What is your university degree in?

I don't have a degree. I have some college but that's about it. I stepped away from that when I was younger as it didn't really seem to provide a good fit for me and where I wanted to go at the time. I still like to learn, however, and try to increase my knowledge and skills as I am able to keep my rough edges polished and wisdom base ever expanding.

Do you think it is easier to write fantasy or science fiction?

Personally, I find fantasy to be a little easier. With science fiction, depending on the type, you have something that can be more quantified. You're dealing with more physical absolutes that can be measured and are more real to the reader on some level. Because of that you have to really do your homework if you want it to ring true.

In fantasy you can do whatever you want, just about, and it's good. You still need to have some believability and grounding in some type of tangible truth to your world, but when you're talking about magic and gods and other such things you can't really quantify them. Because of this, readers will give you a nice bit of room to wiggle and play about in your setting and tales.

When and where do you write?

I write out of my home office six days a week usually during the early to late morning and then often some more in the early afternoon for a couple hours after lunch.

It's good to keep a pattern/process to your writing, I think, as it helps to train and discipline you. If you don't get into a process, it's hard to stay steady with your work, especially if you work from home.

What's the best/worst thing about writing?

The best thing about writing, for me, is that I get to create. I just really enjoy creating and having an outlet in which to do it is just wonderful. To have other people enjoy what you have created is even better.

The worst thing is that it's a very hermitical process and it takes a long time to get something ready to show someone and even then it takes time for them to digest it and give you feedback. With art or music you can get instant feedback but people have to read your work and then digest it and then get back to you. So it's a slower creative medium in that sense and a more solitude one as well.

What is something you didn't know about the publishing industry before you had your first book published?

The nature of cycles and how the whole game is played. I was just amazed at how much of what is done is very much like a game. There is a whole world within a world in publishing and if you don't learn the game and learn to play it well you will be further outside the inner world looking in. It's also a lot of who you know and how you get that person/info leveraged in your favor. In some ways it comes down to networking more than even having a top notch book as if you have the connections and can influence the influencers you can get very far in stores and other places. And then there is the truth behind some of those best seller sales and other things I won't go into at this time.

All this I didn't really know at the time before I entered into the publication world. Since then, like I said, my eyes have been opened to a really strange and often times paradoxical world.

Do you have any advice for hopeful authors?

Many things I think could be helpful to hopeful authors I've listed on my website: www.chadcorrie.com. Check under the insight page for some thoughts and the FAQ section for further information.

Besides this I can say that if you want to be a published author you have

to have discipline. First and foremost to finish your work. Many don't even finish what they start. If you do that much you're ahead of many. Don't be afraid of edits or editors, they can be your best friend if you can pull yourself away from your work far enough to be objective in your appraisal and consideration/evaluation of it and the editors commentary on it.

Understand that even when you do get published you are just entering into the base of a whole new mountain. In today's market close to 200,000 titles are produced each year and you have to compete with a good many of them. Add to this that just about anyone now days can get published if they have the cash. The rise in PODs and other options makes it much easier to get into printed form so now, as my publisher often says, "anyone can get published." Today's author has to be good at self-promotion and marketing.

Finally, don't let critics, good and bad, get to you too much. If you attach your worth as a writer to what some critic has said about your work (again good or bad) then you have a very fragile foundation upon which you stand. Ultimately, a review is just an opinion. After getting some for my own work I am learning more and more that these too are part of the game of getting published and getting out there in the market.

For example, I've been told by some that they have a strong dislike about some things in my previous work. However, I've gotten emails from people who have read the same books that state they love the book for the very same reasons the others didn't like it. I've gotten reviews in the same vein.

Just take what you can from the reviews to get better as a writer and then let the other stuff be. Ultimately, if you have written a good book then an audience is out there. The challenge is in finding that audience. Thus that need for being more marketing savvy and driven and self-promotion oriented than authors were expected to be even twenty years ago.

Any tips against writers block?

One thing that I have found that works well for me if I should get stuck is to avoid that place #1 and then get away from the environment #2.

Most people tend to write right up to the last thought or word they have. What I found is if you leave a little bit of that idea to carry over to the next day, it gives you a spring board to launch from into the next days writing. This way you can hop right into the "groove" so to speak and not be facing that white page trying to figure out what to do next.

If you should still be faced with a temporary quandary of direction then it might be a good thing to step away from the computer for a moment. Going for a walk. Just doing something else for a little bit has often been a good stimulus for me to generate more ideas, even when I wasn't looking for them.

How many rejection letters did you get for your fist novel or story?

I don't know how many times I was rejected. If you count the time I was using an agent, lots. I know some authors like to keep track of such a thing, but I never really did. I have kept some fun letters of rejection in the past, since I started submitting when I was like 13 years old or so and they treated it like an adult submission (which was fun to read) but I can't tell you off hand how high the tally rose.

Posted by Jessica Strider at 7:30 AM [0 comments](#) [Links to this post](#) 

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SATURDAY, NOVEMBER 8, 2008

[Maria Snyder in Store](#)

Yet another successful signing. Maria V. Snyder, author of *Poison Study*,