

EVERY AUTHOR HAS A STORY

AUTHOR INTERVIEW

Name:

Neal Romriell

Do you have a pen name?

I do not.

Book titles – What are the titles of the books you have written or are currently writing?

Eyes in the Dark is the working title of my debut novel, currently under contract.

I have started work on two follow up books to *Eyes in the Dark* one of which I am about 1/5 of the way through, while the second only has a first chapter thus far.

I also have a High Fantasy Novel, working title *The Witch and the Hourglass*

The title of this interview is 'Every writer has a story'. Tell us a bit about you and your story leading up to becoming an author.

I have been telling stories almost as long as I have been able to talk. But my real love for 'writing' started when I began playing Dungeons and Dragons in high school. I would spend hours world building and designing, then run games for my friends. It is something I still do to this day. I had started writing books in the past but never got terribly far. When the pandemic started, and I found myself at home four or five days a week, I finally started (and stuck to) writing. My wife and daughters encouraged me, and in the end, I finished the first draft of my debut novel in about eleven weeks.

Who or what are your main influencers and why?

My grandfathers were both prolific story tellers. As a child I can remember many a night spent sitting around a fire listening to stories of what life was like for them growing up. My Grandpa Poke would tell us stories from his time in England and France during World War Two. My Grandpa Romriell was a farmer and lover of the history of the American west and would relate stories of cowboys and pioneers to us. I feel it was their influence that led me to becoming a storyteller myself, and in turn, an author.

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What inspired your books?

Eyes in the Dark is a story that involves Cryptids, creatures like Bigfoot or the Loch Ness Monster, that are claimed to exist, but are unproven as to their actual existence. I have long had a fascination with these entities. One night, during the first days of the pandemic lockdown, my youngest daughter and I stayed up late watching videos about cryptid encounters, the idea for the book sprang from our conversations that night. My daughters were a big influence for a few of the characters that appear in the book, including the main character.

Tell us about your latest published book:

Well, at this time it is only under contract to be published. *Eyes in the Dark* follows a young woman named Charlotte who is a member of a secret society that protects Cryptids from being discovered by the world at large. Only a few months removed from her time as a trainee, Charlotte finds herself training a new batch of recruits. When someone of something starts killing local Cryptids, Charlotte, and her team struggle to protect their charges, and themselves, from this mysterious force.

Tell us about your work in progress:

As a father to three daughters, I have a desire to see more strong leading women in literature. To that end, *The Witch and the Hourglass* focuses on a pair of magic wielding women who join a party of adventurers for hire. Initially their main motivation is simply to earn money to start a homestead, but gradually they become smitten with the adventuring life. In-fighting and jealousy eventually tear at the women's relationship, as the group becomes embroiled in a war between a powerful merchant house, and a ruler hell-bent on expanding his realm.

Which part of the writing process do you enjoy, and which parts do you dread?

I am very much a pantsler, someone who does not do much outlining prior to writing. I just sit down at my computer and start typing. That is the part I love the most, discovering where the story is going to take me. This method does however make the editing process a tad more painful. The part I dread the most though is revisions. By that I mean, after you have written your book, then edited it six hundred times, the last thing you want to do is essentially write it all over again (at least parts of it). However, in order to make your book the best it can be, this step is a necessary evil as it were.

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What is your greatest strength/weakness when it comes to writing?

My years of running Dungeons and Dragons games has paid off, as my action scenes have been universally loved by my beta readers and editor alike.

I also have gotten high marks for weaving plot threads together in interesting and creative ways.

I am not good at all when it comes to portraying romance, or romantic relationships.

Do you have a favourite author, and do you write the same genre?

The one author whose library I have read nearly completely is Stephen King. He has his highs and lows, but I consistently return to him, because I love a good scare.

I have not tried writing a proper horror story yet, but I have written a few short scary stories, and would certainly be interested in trying my hand at horror down the road.

How do you measure your success as an author?

I mean, the fact that I am even being interviewed 'as an author' is mind blowing to me. When I started writing seriously in March of 2020, my only real goal was to get the book finished, edited, and then loaded onto KDP (Amazon) so that I could have a few author copies printed to hand out to friends and family. Luckily, I was encouraged to pursue traditional publishing, and just over a year later, I have signed a contract to have my book published. My next success will be holding a physical copy of my book.

Writing is very time consuming; how do you fit it into your daily routine?

I work a nine to five job, which helps. Initially, I would write after everybody else in the house had gone to bed, that way it was not cutting into family time. But over time, I changed things up. I now either write before work, or just after dinner. I usually carve out around an hour each weekday for writing, then go on writing sprints on the weekend, sometimes spending four or five hours at my keyboard. My wife has been extremely understanding in terms of my journey towards becoming an author, and her support helps me keep a good balance between writing and life.

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What advice would you give to someone thinking of writing a novel?

First off, if you are thinking about it, then do not wait, start writing, today if possible. I was forty-three years old when I started and finished my first novel. Over the years I had tried writing a book, and gotten a little further each time, but I had never made it to the finish line. Mark out a time, sit down each day, and write/type/plot, do something that moves your goal forward. Even when you are not inspired, write something anyway. You can always edit it later. Join a writing group on Discord or Twitter and have them hold you accountable! You can do it!

Finally: Your chance to advertise your work.

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You can find me on Twitter [@RomriellNeal](#)

You can check out some of my short stories and blog posts at www.nealromriell.com

And bookmark www.sagestowerpublishing.com for information on *Eyes in the Dark*

Add your photograph to let the readers put a face to the name.

