

they are using a software tool to do the mining, whoever provides the software tools should identify the source material and tell any authors who use their products where they are getting their writing prompts. At a minimum, an author should disclose when they are using a software package to assist in their production of products they intend to sell."

(Which is a lot more of a charitable response than I'd have if it had happened to a book of mine.)

I wasn't aware that any of this was a thing, but I'm certainly going to look into it some more to figure out what exactly is going on here. I did do some research into "writing prompts" and after reading a few of them, I think I now understand why there might be so much sameness in many fantasy subgenres. I used to naively think that the authors loved the earlier work in their favorite subgenre and were merely emulating those stories when writing their own.

Now, I'm not so sure...

Apocalypse Bounty, by Calvin B. Fisher, Headline Books, 2021, \$19.95, tpb.

I'm not a huge fan of post-apocalyptic fiction, but as I've mentioned

many times before in this column, everything that shows up for review gets a read. I don't necessarily finish the book. Sometimes I don't get past the first 5-10 pages. I just read until I lose interest. In this case, even considering the setting of Calvin B. Fisher's *Apocalypse Bounty* (and the fact that it has a prologue that's really just the first chapter), I quickly became absorbed in the story.

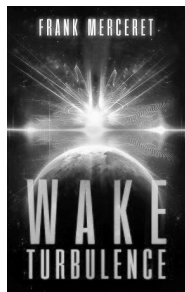
Mark Northfield is a mercenary taking commissions from an organization called the Network, which has a stranglehold on the survivors trying to eke out a meager living in this post-apocalyptic world. The only commissions Northfield takes are protective details to guard people from the feral humans known as Yellowjackets.

The blurb goes on to say: "His only comfort is the memory of his dead wife, and he lives by two final promises to her: never let go of life, and never let the world turn him into someone worse than the man she married. When a vengeful adversary blackmails Northfield into an assassination mission, his hope of keeping both vows shatters."

If the main character in *Every Line of You* is morally bankrupt, Northfield is her exact opposite.

And while there's plenty of action in *Apocalypse Bounty*, it's also a fascinating character study of a troubled man trying to do his moral best in a world where he's the odd man out. The setting owes a lot to...well, every post-apocalyptic story that's come before it, but with enough tweaks to give it a certain freshness. The best of them is the unbreathable air, how people have to deal with it, and how it allows the Network to retain its control over the population, since they're the only ones who can provide what a person would need to survive outside.

Fisher's a new-to-me author, which in this case is no surprise, since *Apocalypse Bounty* appears to be his first book, but I'll certainly keep an eye out for whatever he writes next.



A superluminal alien spacecraft's optical wake blazes over the Indian Ocean and generates a human wake of its own.

If you enjoy hard sci-fi or engineering fiction, you'll love *Wake Turbulence*. The science is real, the characters quirky, and the story compelling.

Available in eBook or softcover
<https://www.amazon.com/dp/1737185822>

Material to be considered for review in this column should be sent to Charles de Lint, P.O. Box 9480, Ottawa, Ontario, Canada K1G 3V2. eBooks (epub or Mobi format only, please) may be sent as an attachment to cdelint@gmail.com. ☞

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