

SEPTEMBER/OCTOBER 2022
ISSUE 1.0

LITERATE-LY MAGAZINE

FROM REVIEWS TO LITERARY NEWS
FROM HISTORY TO HER-STORY
BUILT TO EDUCATE AUTHORS

*Mythological and Modern-Day
Heroes*

Part one of a three-part article: *Yes,
you can self-narrate your audiobook*
by **Kevin G. Chapman**

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The purpose of Essence Publishing is to educate, entertain and provide literary services.

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Uncaged Magazine Book Reviews uncagedbooks.com

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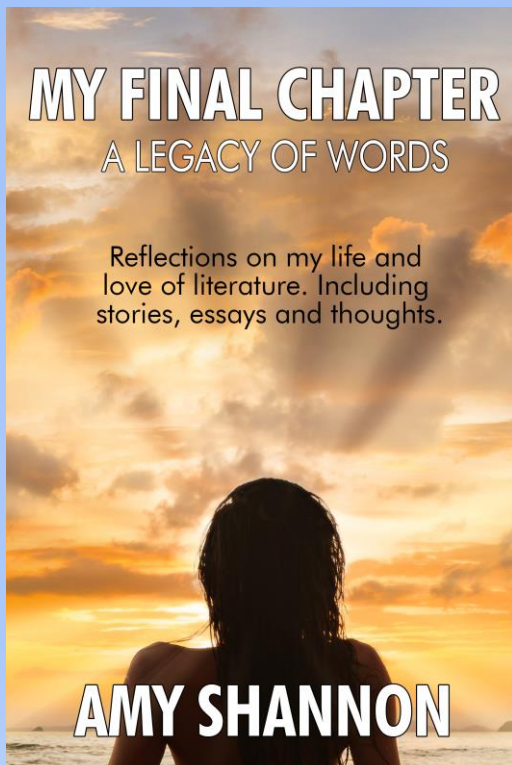
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My Final Chapter: A Legacy of Words By Amy Shannon

The Stories

They span over decades of storytelling

They explore: The dark, The light, and the in-between

The stories cherish interesting characters from different points of view

The stories go back to the 80s (the 1980's)

The stories memorialize those I've lost and honor those in my life

From stories to poetry and plays from essays and from my heart

My final Chapter

Available on Amazon in paperback or Kindle



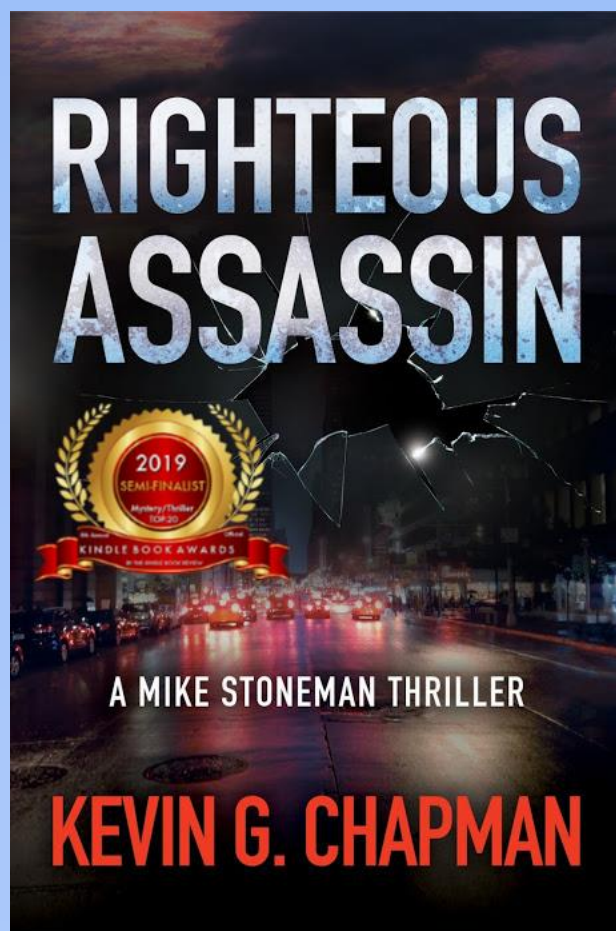
Indie Author Spotlight

Indie Author Spotlight

Kevin G. Chapman

Kevin G. Chapman is an attorney specializing in labor and employment law and an independent author. In 2021, Kevin finished the first five books in the Mike Stoneman Thriller series. *Righteous Assassin* (Mike Stoneman Thriller #1), was named one of the top 20 Mystery/Thrillers of 2019 by the Kindle Book Review and was a finalist for the Chanticleer Book Review CLUE award. *Deadly Enterprise* (Mike Stoneman Thriller #2) was also named a top-20 Mystery/Thriller of 2020 by the Kindle Book Review and made the Short-List for the 2020 CLUE Award. Book #3, *Lethal Voyage*, was the **winner of the 2021 Kindle Book Award** and a Finalist for the CLUE and for the InD'Tale Magazine RONE Award.

Book #4 in the series, *Fatal Infraction*, was named **Best Police Procedural of the year** by the Chanticleer Book Review, and book #5 (*Perilous Gambit*) was published November 24, 2021. Kevin has also written a serious political drama, *A Legacy of One*, originally published in 2016, which was short-listed for the Chanticleer Somerset Award for literary fiction. *A Legacy of One* was re-published in a newly re-edited and revised second edition in 2021. Currently, Kevin is working on a stand-alone mystery/thriller titled *Dead Winner*, expected out in late 2022, and a romantic thriller titled *A Good Girl*. Kevin is a resident of Central New Jersey and is a graduate of Columbia College and Boston University School of Law. Readers can contact Kevin via his website at www.KevinGChapman.com.



Yes, you can self-narrate your audiobook!

(But you'll need to read this first)

Part I

By Kevin G. Chapman

Attorney & Author

www.KevinGChapman.com



IN NOVEMBER of 2019, I was about to publish book #2 in my Mike Stoneman Thriller series, *Deadly Enterprise*. For a year, I had been asked repeatedly whether book #1, *Righteous Assassin*, was available as an audiobook. (OK, mostly the question was “is it available on Audible,” but there are many other places you can purchase audiobooks, as I found out.) The same people asked whether book #2 would be available as an audiobook. At that time, I had not commissioned an audiobook of *Righteous Assassin* because – let’s be honest – it was too expensive. The upfront cost involved to hire a narrator and a studio engineer was far more than what I expected to be my return on investment. I was a fledgling indie author with a small following. Sure, I had a good first book in a yet-to-be-written series, but book marketing it was a foreign language to me, and the audiobook market might as well have been Martian. I was one year into my thriller-writing process, with book #2 almost published, but my total royalties from *Righteous Assassin* in its first year were far less than the capital cost of professionally recording one audiobook, let alone two.

But the voices on the internet kept telling me that audiobooks were a great market, and that the competition was far less than for ebooks and paperbacks. There was money to be made, they said. Don’t be afraid, the Sirens sang. Still, I was hesitant (and cheap!). I then realized that there was another option – narrate my own audiobook. I was an amateur actor in my youth. My

father was a radio sports announcer. I knew how to read into a microphone. Sure – why not? How hard could it be? I read articles on the process, which encouraged me. And so, I ventured forth into the uncharted waters of audiobook production. Needless to say, I had a lot to learn, and I made a ton of mistakes. After reading this three-part article, my sincere hope is that you will make far fewer mistakes should you decide to follow me into the self-narrating frontier.

Equipment and Set-Up

There are dozens of things that must go on your preparation checklist before you will be ready to start actually speaking into your microphone to record your audiobook. The first, and most obvious, is that you’ll need a microphone. Getting the equipment required to capture your voice and transform it into an audiobook should be among your first tasks. You cannot use the built-in microphone on your laptop that you use to make video calls. Trust me (more on that later). In my case, my wonderfully supportive wife got me a professional *microphone* kit as an early holiday present. My *FocusRite Scarlett 2i2* kit came with a professional microphone (I had to buy a stand for it separately), a pop screen (the fabric membrane you always see in between a singer’s mouth and their microphone in documentaries), cables to plug the microphone into the mixer/amplifier, a USB cord to plug the amp into my

laptop, and software for audio recording. On the advice of a writer on the Audible website, ACX.com, I didn't use the software that came with my kit and instead went with the free "Audacity" software that is more designed for narration (as opposed to music production). Loading the software on my laptop was a breeze. I bought a boom mic stand (which was a mistake – better to have a table-top mic stand) and a music stand to hold my manuscript. Equipment? Check.

I read a dozen online articles about how to create a home studio in my basement. Many pundits suggest setting up your studio in a clothes closet, where the dense fabric will absorb sounds and muffle any echo. Closets are also generally without windows and are in quiet places in your home. I, however, did not relish in my basement? There was carpet on the floor, but the walls were mostly empty, and the ceiling was low and smooth. The answer was – blankets. Several strategically placed hooks allowed me to completely enclose half of my poker table in heavy fabric. The table surface was already soft felt. I couldn't do anything about the ceiling, but my little make-shift studio was good enough, as long as nobody walked across the floor in my kitchen, directly above the studio, which caused the floorboards to squeak. I did some audio tests and they sounded just fine. Studio? Check.

Creating Characters and Voices

So, you have your recording equipment and your home studio, so now you're ready to start narrating, right? Oh, please. As Rodney Dangerfield said in the immortal line from *Back to School*, "You're leaving out a whole lotta stuff." The next things you're going to need are voices. Well, unless your book is a self-help non-fiction entry that can be narrated entirely in your own natural voice, or maybe a memoir with no dialogue. For fiction, you will need to distinguish the voices of your characters. Sure, you can just read it flat and rely on your dialogue tags

("Mike said") to let your reader know who's talking. But that's not going to make an engaging audiobook. You don't necessarily have to create unique voices for every character who speaks in the book, but your principle character will need a voice. You will also need to find each character's attitude and speaking style. Aside from the pitch and timbre of a voice, each character should have a distinctive style of speaking, helping the listener get a mental image of the character as soon as he or she speaks. Simple? No.

I found out very quickly in my narrating journey that the voice you think you had figured out in chapter one tends to evolve and morph over the course of a long book. This is especially true if you are, like I was, narrating over several weeks. A professional narrator in a studio booth has an incentive to crank out the book quickly and is trained to be able to read for hours without losing vocal quality.

An amateur narrator, with a day job, can't do that – either logistically or vocally. After about ninety minutes of narrating, my voice started to get scratchy, even while drinking tea with honey and lemon. So, by day fourteen, Mike Stoneman's voice sounded very different from the character who comes upon a body partially eaten by tigers at the Bronx Zoo in chapter one.

After self-narrating several books, I figured out a system for maintaining consistency in my voices. These worked for me, and may work for you, but no matter what, you need to practice. I tended to work on voices during my daily commute to work. In the solitude of my empty car (before I started working from home during the pandemic), I had time and license to experiment. Here are a few other ideas:

Pattern voices after characters you know well

One of the easy ways to replicate a voice over time is to pattern the voice on an actual voice. It could be your boss, or a coworker, or your mom. It can also be an actor's.

characterization in a movie or a television show that you watch regularly and can repeat easily. For me, the answer was *Star Trek*. I'm an admitted Trekkie geek. While my Mike Stoneman character was a unique creation (which I now wish I had done differently), most of the other characters' voices came from *Star Trek*. Jason Dickson, Mike's tall, Black, early-thirties partner, has the voice of Captain Benjamin Sisco as performed by Avery Brooks in *Deep Space Nine*. My Captain Edward "Sully" Sullivan was patterned after Chief O'Brien.

As I needed new characters, I visualized the voices of other *Star Trek* characters and tried to duplicate them. By doing that, I was able to have in my head what the voice was *supposed* to sound like. That way, I was much more able to get it right (or close enough) from chapter to chapter, particularly when a character went many pages without making an appearance. (Another hint: keep a crib sheet reminding yourself which characters have which voices.)

Differentiate opposite-sex characters

As a male narrator, voicing female characters was the most challenging aspect of self-narrating. Many of my women started sounding alike, particularly in scenes with multiple women. The key for me was to change the pitch, the amount of breath, and the volume of each female character narrating. Many of my women started sounding alike, particularly in scenes with multiple women. The key for me was to change the pitch, the amount of breath, and the volume of each female character. A little throatier, a little softer, and you have a more sensual voice. A little higher, a little sharper, and you have a hard-hitting female cop. Even when patterning after real people or existing characters, give each a unique sound

Don't do accents (unless you really mean it)

When I wrote the text of the books, I often threw in a character from somewhere that came with an accent. In the written word, a small variation can signal the accent. (

When the lady says "y'all" and she's from Georgia, your reader can fill in the proper voice.) In an audiobook, trying to voice an accent is much, much more difficult. Practice constantly. Then practice more. Record the accent and have people who will give you honest feedback tell you whether it's decent. If it's foreign, find a native speaker to give you a read on whether you have it down well enough to avoid offending your readers.

There are many more tips on this subject in dozens of how-to articles, and I encourage you to go read them. Preparation is critical.

You Need a Script

Now you're finally ready to start reading, right? Go ahead. Try to open up your book – the one you spent a year or more writing – the one you know backwards and forwards – the one you've read three dozen times between he drafting and the editing. You could recite this book in your sleep, right? Try it. Read the first chapter aloud without any prep. See how many times you have to stop and re-read a line because you got it wrong the first time. How often do you start reading a line of dialogue without realizing that the character who is speaking is not the character you thought it was? How often do you reach the end of the sentence and see the dialogue tag, "he said awkwardly," and realize that your voice didn't sound awkward at all?

How frequently do you realize that there was supposed to be an emphasis on a word that you didn't get right? If you're like me, the number is much higher than you would have guessed before you started.

The problem is that your book is written to be read, not to be spoken. (You will find that you'll start writing with the audiobook narration in mind after a while.) When reading, our brains can retroactively fill in the emotion, or the emphasis, or the character's voice, even when you don't necessarily know at the start of the line. But you can't read a script that way. This is why screenplays are written differently. At the start of each line, the character speaking

is identified, along with any emotional cue or other stage direction. “[MIKE. ANGRY AND SHOUTING.] Sully, I told you this would happen!” When narrating the audiobook, you won’t read the capitalized and bracketed text, but it’s there in your script to clue you in on how to read the line. It is essential to create your script before you start reading (or at least create segments as you go through your book).

Is it a pain in the rear end to take your precious book and carve it up into a script? You bet. But it will save you a ton of time and give you another chance to work on your characters and mentally visualize your voices. It’s worth it.



There Will Be Editing Involved

As you work through your audiobook production, you will need to edit your tracks. It’s unavoidable. You will flub words and lines and have to re-record them, then cut out the errors. You will need to remove excessive silences or insert space if you read something too quickly. You will need to adjust the volume and then eventually do the post-production mastering. That can wait for now but keep it in mind. We’ll talk about the technical production issues in the next installment, and I’ll tell you about the *horrific* mistake I made when recording *Righteous Assassin* (for the first time). Yes, it was that bad, and it’s definitely one you will not make after reading the next article in this series.

(Part II coming in November)

Kevin G. Chapman
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The After Show with McKensie Stewart & Amy Shannon



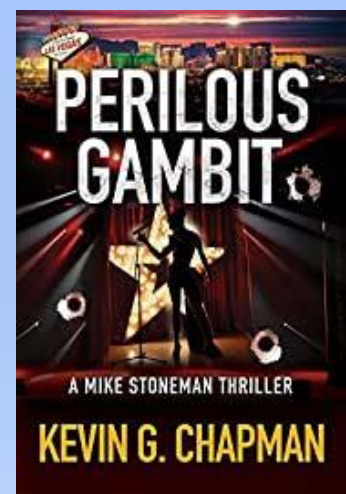
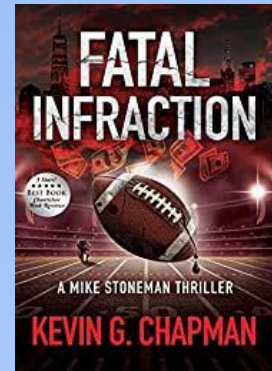
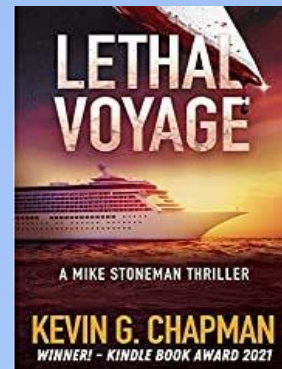
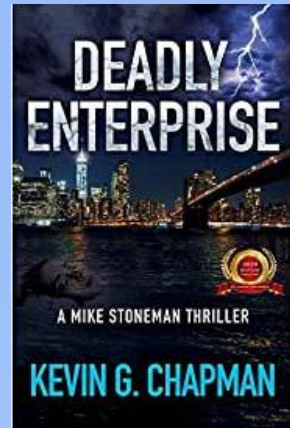
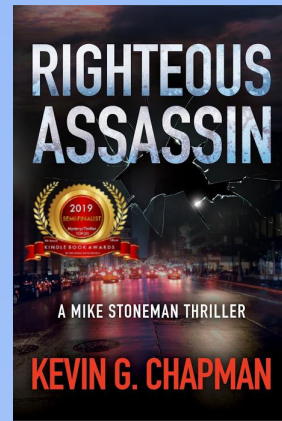
The After Show with McKensie Stewart and Amy Shannon is a podcast platform created to help authors promote themselves and their work. The mission of the Literary dynamic duo is to educate and assist authors, no matter their experience. The hosts will provide writing tips, and expert advice from the hosts, and other guests. Guests will include authors, writers, editors, publishers, and many more from those within the literary world. The After Show wants to help people share their stories with the world.



AUTHOR KEVIN G CHAPMAN

The Mike Stoneman Thriller Series

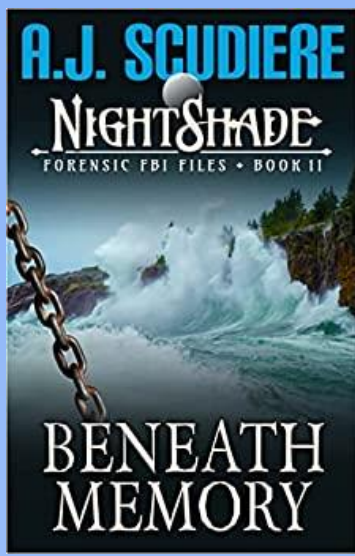
NYPD homicide detective Mike Stoneman and his partner Jason Dickson, are on a bumpy path as partners. They are thrust together to track a diabolical serial killer in Righteous Assassin. They doggedly insist on investigating the murder of a drug-addicted prostitute, over the objections of the top brass, in Deadly Enterprise. Then, after an embarrassing shootout in a Brooklyn hotel at the end of Deadly Enterprise, the Commissioner tells them to get out of town and away from the New York press, so they try to take a vacation. With Mike's love interest, Medical Examiner Michelle McNeill and Jason's recent girlfriend, Rachel Robinson, they board the Colossus of the Ocean for a relaxing cruise to Bermuda. Unfortunately, the cruise ends up being a Lethal Voyage. Back from their adventure at sea, Mike and Jason dive into the murder of controversial NFL Quarterback Jimmy Rydell in Fatal Infraction. Is Jimmy the victim of a racist attack? Was he collateral damage in a mob-run point shaving scheme? Or is there another answer? And why was his body dumped on the Central Park Carousel -- frozen? Mike and Jason need to solve the case before it tears the team, and the city, apart. Then, when they travel to Las Vegas for Jason and Rachel's wedding, Rachel's kid brother is accused of the murder of a fellow drag performer. Mike and Jason have to prove his innocence in order to save the wedding. Mike decides to take a big gamble. Their very lives depend on a Perilous Gambit!





**AMY'S
BOOKSHELF
REVIEWS®**

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A.J. Scudiere- Beneath Memory

5 Stars

The wait for the release was worth it!

What an absolutely grand story in Beneath Memory by A.J. Scudiere. This is the eleventh book of the NightShade Forensic Files series. This is the last book she has published in this series. And even though they are standalone books, the books are so "binge" worthy. It's not just a robbery, it's a heist, and the clues are opening up more questions than answers. More secrets are revealed, and it is an action-packed story. The plot drives the story, but the characters, everyone is important to the story.

*Suspense,
Forensic,
Paranormal*



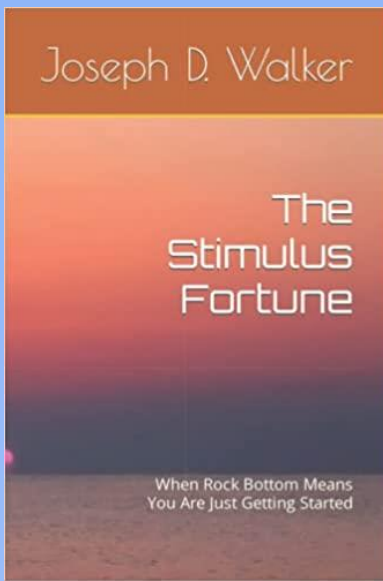
GranRan- The eSmith Eye Story

4 Stars

*Children's
fairytale*

Another grand fairytale

What a grand story in The eSmith Eye Story by GranRan. Here the reader is again, in Fairytale land, eSmith, falls in love. (eSmith is a gray fox). I read the first fairy tale, eSmith Short tales, and enjoyed it. Each tale tells a unique fable of the interactions with other creatures. The characters ranged from foxes to dogs, roosters and other animals. There is a hitch to eSmith getting the "girl", he must deal with Zeke. And there are other tales in this book, including a bonus tale. Enjoy this read, I know I did. The illustrations were of vibrant color, adding depth to the fables. This book would be perfect to read to a child or have the child read it back. I am a definite fan of this author! This author has a great imagination and I'm glad it's being shared with stories. The fairytales brings the reader on a superb journey. I believe that all adults should read children's books, it gives you a new perspective on life, and imagination.



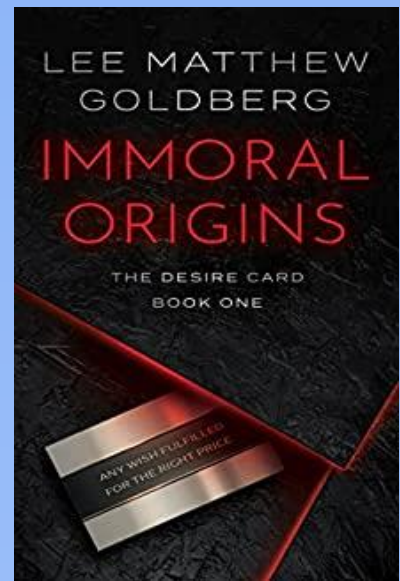
Joseph D. Walker- The Stimulus Fortune: When Rock Bottom Means You Are Just Getting Started

5 Stars

Brave and powerful

What a great read in *The Stimulus Fortune: When Rock Bottom Means You Are Just Getting Started* by Joseph D. Walker. Walker is a medically retired Staff Sergeant and shares his story. This book gives a lot of information about his life, the ups, downs, tragedies and triumphs. He is very frank about his divorce, and eventual addiction to opiates. After he retired, he ended up homeless, and living in his care. Some how, this brave man, not only pushed through to move forward and help himself, he shares his story. This story is well written, and you can feel the emotions behind the words that he wrote, when sharing failures, successes, and continuing to live one day at a time. Sometimes you hit rock bottom more than once, and the hope is to take that as another chance to rise.

*Nonfiction,
self-help*



Lee Matthew Goldberg- Immoral Origins

5 Stars

Brilliantly chilling

What a superb story in *Immoral Origins* by Lee Matthew Goldberg. I am a definite fan of this author! Whatever this author writes, I want to read. The characters had a lot of depth, and were very realistic. This is the first book in *The Desire Card* series. It is definitely a heart-pounding, whats-going-to-happen-next thriller. Here we are, 1978 NYC, more precise, Hell's Kitchen. The reader is introduced to Jake, and he is a raw and intense character that leads the reader through this fast-paced, action-filled story. Organized crime, death, impending doom, and survival is brought into this multi-layered story. Both thrilling and intriguing, all the way to the end. The characterizations are engrossing and dynamic. I just love, love, love this story. Masterfully written! This author not only tells the story but shows it with words as well.

*Suspense,
Thriller*



desperate to be believed, and for their abuse to be stopped. This author brings the story to life. The characters had a lot of depth and were very realistic. This book deserves a second read! (and maybe more). It is a very touchy and maybe a story that is wished by some to be unwritten, but you can't unwrite this, and I applaud the author for writing this awe-inspiring story. I have fast become a big fan of Remakus. Wow! Simply masterful. Masterfully written! This author not only tells the story but shows it with words as well.

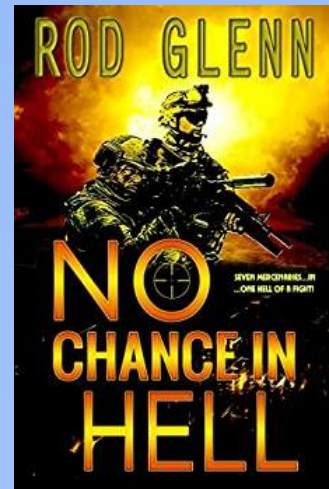
Bernard Leo Remakus- The Paraclete

5 Stars

Thriller

Thrilling

What a chilling story in *The Paraclete* by Bernard Leo Remakus. I wasn't sure what the meaning of the word, Paraclete meant, so I looked it up. It means, "the Holy Spirit as advocate or counselor." And once I knew what that meant, as I am not familiar with all the ins and outs of the Catholic church, only by reputation, I sat back and read this chilling story. This story tells about the Catholic church, their running, and the ranks within the church. Then, as many are reminded of the history weaved in their reputation with priest-turned pedophiles, the story came to life, as lives were destroyed. Though, it's based on real events, or the real reputation of the church, the story itself, brings a lot of depth, emotion, and truthfulness to the heartache and betrayal of these young children. What a remarkably well written, story that brings out such emotions and captures the defiling of the young, who are



Rod Glenn- No Chance In Hell

5 Stars

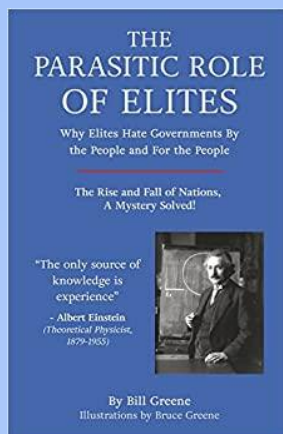
Horror

Very intense and raw! A thrilling (and chilling) read!

What a terrifying and magnificently chilling story in *No Chance In Hell* by Rod Glenn. It's not just about war. It's not just about defending; it's about surviving the enemy of monsters ... damned Devils.

Rod Glenn- No Chance In Hell

Major Guthrie is on a secret mission, black ops to be exact with his team over seven soldiers, and this is unlike anything they've ever faced before. I've read Glenn's Sinema series, so I was not surprised, but I loved this so much. The battles against Hell, and the battles were hell, and the need to survive, not just for their own sake, but for humanity. It's a story told before, but not like this. No, never like this and I've read thousands of books. So, I never know when I read one of his stories, which one gets killed first. I am a definite fan of this author! Whatever this author writes, I want to read. This author brings the story to life. You could almost feel like you were in the middle of the battle. This is a magnificent story that kept this reader turning the pages. Both thrilling and intriguing, all the way to the end. Yes, it's the end of the world as we know it..



*Nonfiction,
History,
Politics,
Economics*

Bill Greene- The Parasitic Role of Elites

5 Stars

The history of history!

What a remarkable and intriguing title in *The Parasitic Role of Elites* by Bill Greene. I haven't read work from this author before, and I enjoyed this title. It's interesting how this author's mind works, and how he examines the history of nations, some surviving while looking into other's demise. This book gives a lot of information about economics, prospering, and failing nations. There is a lot of ideology that Greene explores, especially with the events happening in the United States. It gives us a new perspective of how American prospered, but also in many ways, didn't succeed, especially when it came to the gravity of corruption, immigration, and what could possibly be next. It's not always easy to look "under the hood" to see what is wrong, or even expose it to the rest of the world. Even if some don't agree with everything in the book, it is an interesting read, especially if you have a like for politics without the politicians, and economy's rise and fall, and failures. Recessions, depressions, and whatever could happen next. Greene writes his views well, and backs up his statements with truths, and facts.

The Great Mongolian Bowling League of the United States of America

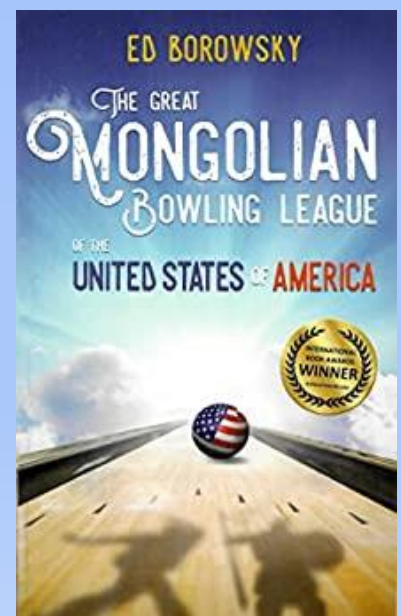
By Ed Borowsky

<https://www.edborowsky.com>

Fate is a funny thing because again, how could two old Jewish guys ever come together with two young Mongolian immigrants?

HAROLD KUSHNER and his roommate of thirty years, Murray Schwartz, are average senior citizens facing down their mortality in a trailer park in Land O' Lakes, Florida. Two self-professed "best Jewish bowlers ever" wind up contestants in the first-ever Great Mongolian Bowling League Tournament in the U.S.A. The rivalry becomes a high-stakes roll-off as Harold approaches "perfection" (defined in the bowling world as three 300-score games in a row) despite a fix set by the alley's mobster owners. As the reporters and camera crews swarm to cover his amazing feat, Harold finds himself in a life review spanning back to his Bar Mitzvah and a past incarnation as a Mongolian warrior in the era of Genghis Khan, as he ponders profound questions we all ask as we near the end of our lives: Did my life have meaning? Did I fulfill my potential? Was I a good person?

Can Harold roll perfection to help his new Mongolian friends and live to tell the tale? The uncanny action unfolds in this beautiful comedy illuminating that although we come from worlds far apart, we share a common humanity. The outcome will impact millions... and strike you right in the heart.

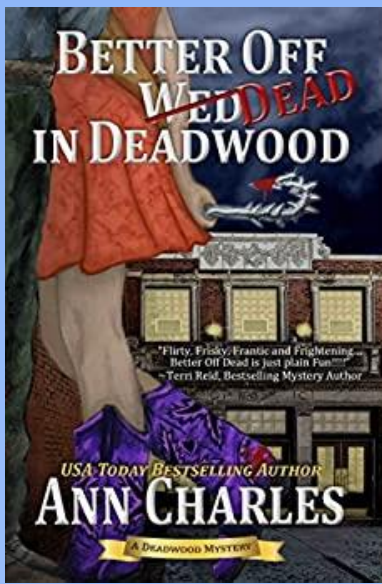




UNCAGED BOOK REVIEWS

PROMOTING INDIE AND SMALL PUBLISHED SINCE 2016

UNCAGEDBOOKS.COM



Better Off Dead in Deadwood – Ann Charles

Blurb

*Ghost,
Mystery*

One dead body. One century-old haunted opera house. One zombie musical. One pissed-off detective.

Will Violet “Spooky” Parker keep her tail out of trouble, or will she end up as one of Deadwood’s walking dead?

**Uncaged Review:
5 Stars**

This is a fun series and the fourth book in the series is as fun as the first three. There is an overall arc running throughout the series so far, and it will continue on, but this wasn’t a book with a cliffhanger, at least not the typical tear-your-hair-out kind of cliffhangers. Violet is still trying to get Cornelius to finalize the hotel sale, she’s still hanging with Doc, she’s getting in trouble with Cooper, her new boss wants to use her in an ad campaign, she is still encountering creepy things and ghosts and she’s still on the outs with Natalie.

A lot of things are answered in this book, and a lot more questions are popping up. The humor and snark is back in force, and it’s a fun way to spend some time. This book didn’t slow down and the action scene at the end was creepy and nail-biting. Easily recommended series.



Shadows and Twilight – Jamie A. Waters

Blurb

*Fantasy,
Romance*

The only way for darkness to thrive is to destroy the light...

Sabine owes her life to the two demon brothers who helped keep her hidden from the fae for the past ten years..

**Uncaged Review:
5 Stars**

The fourth book in this series has Sabine and her companions having to venture into the Underworld for the next artifact. This is their most perilous adventure yet and their time is up and will have to go because the King of the Underworld is Bane and Dax’s father, Kal’thorz – with Dax going to have to face trial and probable execution. Sabine will need an alliance with the demons, to be able to go up against her father, and to do so, she’ll have to fight with more than what she has to get in and out alive with all her companions.

You learn more and get a lot more answers in this book from lingering questions. The author does a fantastic job keeping this intricate storyline moving along at a reckless pace and still delivering a well-thought-out world and storyline. The main story arc continues, but it doesn’t leave the reader on a cliffhanger. Admirable job by the author keeping this story and series as good as the last book, if not better.



Shadow Bound – L.A.

McGinnis

Dark

Blurb

Fantasy

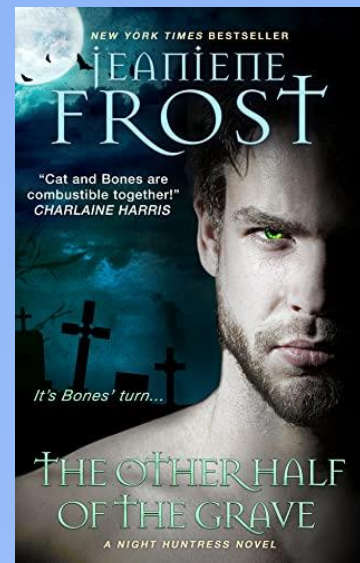
For a hundred years, a queen was promised. Now that she's arrived, war is not far behind.

New Orleans is about to become very bloody.

Uncaged Review:
5 Stars

The second book of this series really ratches up the tension and secrets. Some things are answered as Seraphina begins to come into her powers. Learning more of who she is and becoming stronger with her allies. There is a lot of danger, action and hard-hitting sex scenes – enough to keep you flipping pages quickly. There isn't any filler characters here, everyone has a purpose to propel the story forward. There is not a lot of wasted pages in this book.

Luther and Cyrus are in great form, and Deston is the vampire that the reader falls for. The romance is spot on, and in this addition to the series, you find out more background of the clans and Seraphina's history. This is the book that ties the first one and the series together. Can't wait to start the next one.



The Other Half of the Grave –

Jeaniene Frost

Paranormal,

Blurb

Romance

From the New York Times bestselling author of the Night Huntress series comes a thrilling new look at the iconic origin story of Cat and Bones, as experienced by Bones...from the other half of the grave. Cat had her say. Now, it's Bones' turn.

Uncaged Review:
5 Stars

Like everyone else in the paranormal romance world, we've all read the Night Huntress novels and when the author announced this book, it immediately went up on preorder. Most of this series is from Cat's point of view (except for the offshoots), and the author gives us a treat with this re-write of the first book, Halfway to the Grave, this time in Bone's point of view. And she gives us more background on Bones, and much more insight into his mind that we never had before. Even though it's the same plot as the first book, it's also a brand new book.

I think I liked this one better, and I'll explain. The original series, just got better and better with each book. This one already has that accomplished and then some. If you're a fan of this series, you will experience Bones so much more, and will make you fall in love with him all over again. I would definitely love to experience more of this world from Bone's POV.



The After Show with McKensie Stewart &
Amy Shannon

The After Show
with
McKensie Stewart
&
Amy Shannon



Write to Reel

The After Show with McKensie Stewart & Amy Shannon has a segment called “Write to Reel” where the Literary Dynamic Duo reads and examines a book that has had some form of a “reel” (movie/show/streaming episodic show etc....) created. The Duo reads the book and watches the “reel” and on episode 10 of each chapter (season) discusses it on the segment.

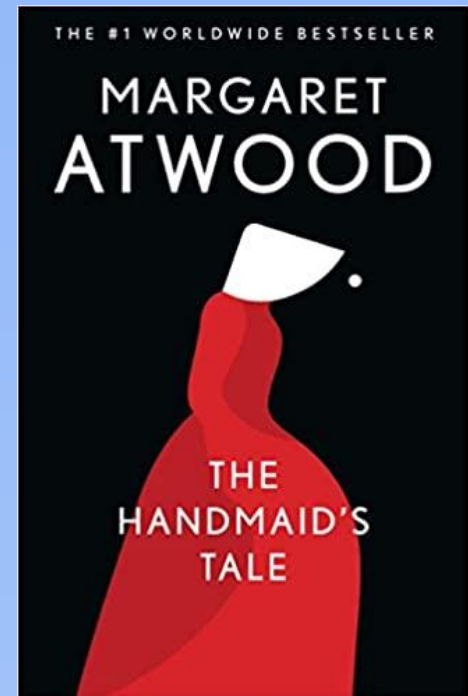
The After Show with McKensie Stewart & Amy Shannon is a podcast that runs every Friday at 6:30 Eastern Time Zone on Blog Talk radio and other podcast streaming sites.

Write to Reel: The Handmaid's Tale by Margaret Atwood

Genre: Dystopian, drama, women

About the Book:

In Margaret Atwood's dystopian future, environmental disasters and declining birthrates have led to a Second American Civil War. The result is the rise of the Republic of Gilead, a totalitarian regime that enforces rigid social roles and enslaves the few remaining fertile women. Offred is one of these, a Handmaid bound to produce children for one of Gilead's commanders. Deprived of her husband, her child, her freedom, and even her own name, Offred clings to her memories and her will to survive. At once a scathing satire, an ominous warning, and a tour de force of narrative suspense, *The Handmaid's Tale* is a modern classic.



The Review:

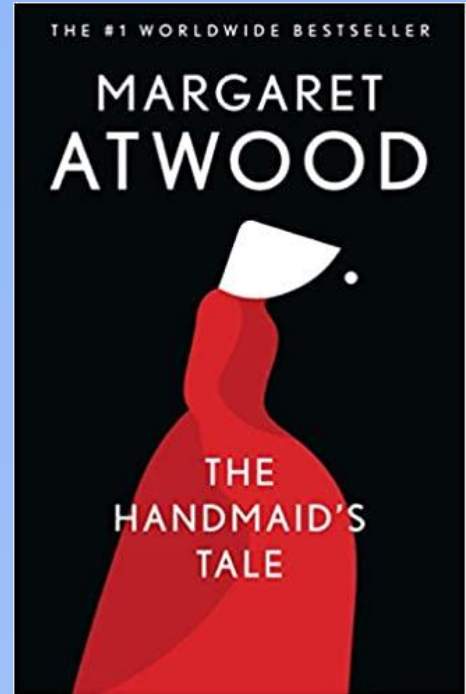
5 Stars

Incredible dystopian story that just makes you really think.

What a remarkable story in *The Handmaid's Tale* by Margaret Atwood. This is the first book of Atwood's that I've read. I have to admit it's been on my bookshelf for quite a while, and I have been meaning to read it, but other reads came first. So, I finally sat down and read this book. At first, I wasn't sure what the story was about, what a Handmaid was, and then, you figure it out as you go along. This is a world when women weren't anything but baby making machines for other women who was one of the "Wives" who couldn't have children. The world had been taken over, by powerless men with guns, yes, the rise of the Republic of Gilead has begun. Here she was in this town that used to be a university town. The handmaids wore red with white hats with wings that covered most of their faces. There were also what she referred to as the "Marthas" which pretty much were the cooks, and others, had names. Even the handmaids, who could remember, once had names, now they were referred to as Of (and then the name of the man they belonged to, at least until a child was born, or the handmaids were no longer able to have children.

Margaret Atwood - The Handmaid's Tale cont'd

Offred lost her name, her child, her husband, and her mother, but she holds on tight to those memories. Even though sometimes she tells her story how she wishes it was, but then she tells it how she remembers it. How she lived it. I know there is a show based on this, and eventually, I will watch it. If you have watched it, read the book too. If you haven't watched it, I recommend reading the book first. Masterfully written! This author not only tells the story but shows it with words as well. And the ending is very unpredictable.



The Show: On Hulu

A religion-based autocracy has taken over most of the United States, renaming the country Gilead. In this country, women are second-class citizens. Anyone trying to escape is punished. One such person is June, who is captured while trying to escape with her husband and child and is sentenced to be a handmaid, bearing children for childless government officials. As a handmaid, June is renamed Offred. This is her story.



Literary Censorship

Historical Book Burnings

By Amy Shannon

China (213 BC) The first recorded book burning, and it was ordered by the Chinese Emperor, Qin Shi Huang.

Nazi Book Burning:

In 1933, Nazi student groups burned books publicly because they were "un-German." On this one date, the book burnings were done in 34 universities. These books were written by Jewish and Liberal writers. It was to symbolize the power and censorship of the Nazis. (Holocaust Encyclopedia).

Iran Book Burning:

In 1946, when the Iranians defeated the Kurdish government, they burned all the books that were written in the Kurdish language, and also banned any teachings of Kurdish.

The United States of America.

And Yes, book burning has also happened in the United States. Binghamton, NY 1948. US, 1956 (Wilhelm Reich's books). United States, 1973 a school board in North Dakota burned 32 copies Slaughterhouse-Five by Kurt Vonnegut and 60 copies of Deliverance by James Dickey. Pennsylvania, 2001, Harry Potter Books were burned.

Germany, 2006

Copies of The Diary of Anne Frank were burned,



and a riot was incited, causing racial hatred.

Tele Viv, Israel 2008

Orthodox Jewish students burned copies of the New Testament.

Burning is supposed to be more "symbolic" than simply banning books or challenging them.

Banning Books.

The American Library Association has its own website, and there are different lists of the books that were banned in different years. And on some of those lists, the same books were listed. This is still happening. Children's books are being banned in schools. Parents should decide what book their child can read or can't read, or the parent reading to them.

In a lot of the research, one of the most banned "topics" was about the LGBTQ community. Children's books about same-sex parents raising children. Others were about finding their own identity, whether it was gender-based or not, or sexual orientation, or just trying to figure things out. Some books were about teenage suicide, not to promote it, but to share the reality of it, and help someone see that they are not alone.

The Smithsonian Magazine, did an article, about book banning and burning, and they quoted "author Barbara Tuchman said in her 1980 address at the Library of Congress, 'Books are the carriers of civilization. Without books, history is silent, literature dumb, science crippled, thought and speculation at a standstill. Without books, the development of civilization would have been impossible.'"

Amy's Bookshelf Reviews



Amy's Bookshelf Reviews has been reading books (forever) and writing reviews for any author of most any genre since 2014, with no apparent end in sight.

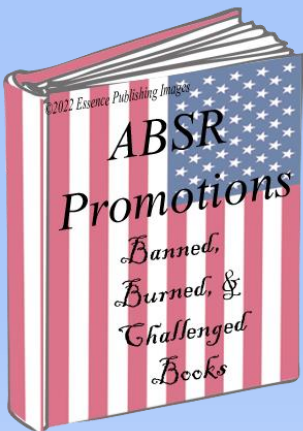
Amy's Bookshelf Reviews does have other features and options for authors. Amy's Bookshelf Reviews even does Video Reviews.

For "legacy authors" (repeat authors) who want a review, just send an email, and you'll get your title on the VIP Legacy Author shelf, unless you are in a hurry and want another shelf to be on.

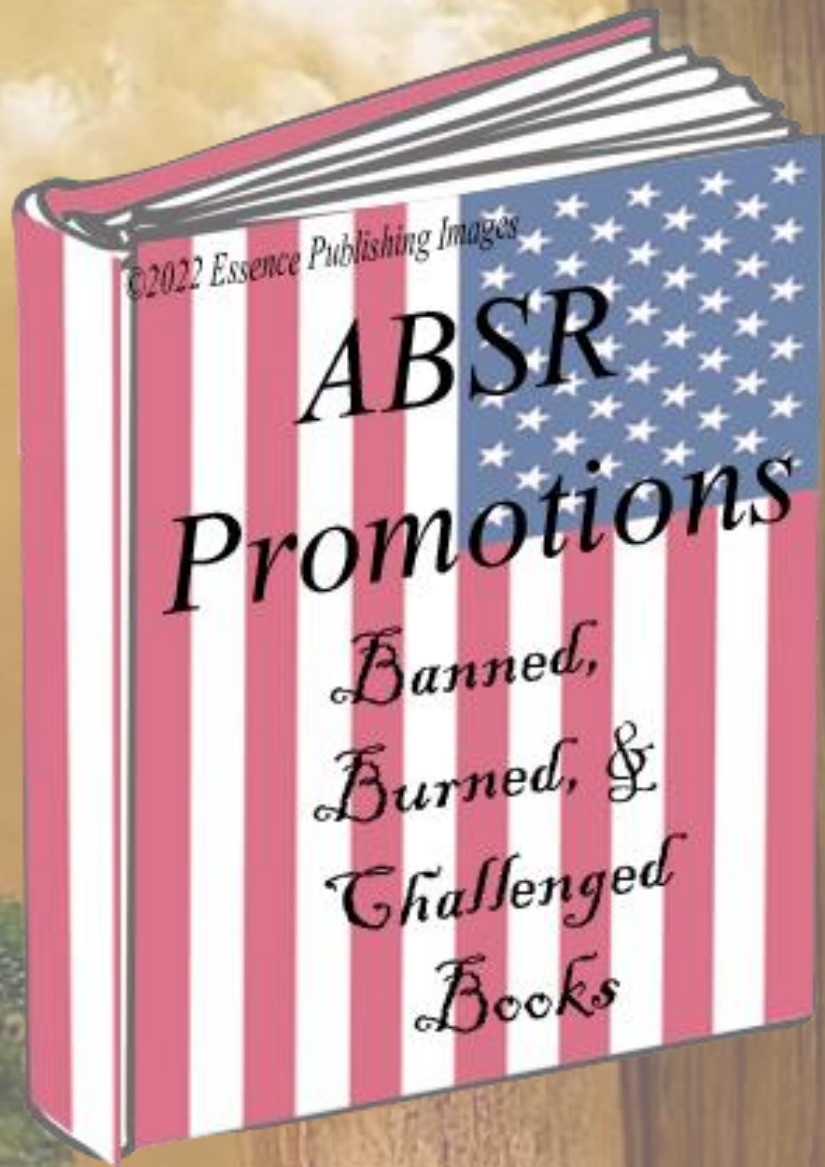
For "legacy friends" (repeat representatives), who want reviews for their clients also have options, and some are already designated as priority or preferred legacy friends.

So, check out Amy's Bookshelf Reviews, and if you need assistance, there are how-to videos on navigation and how to request a review if you're a new author to the site.

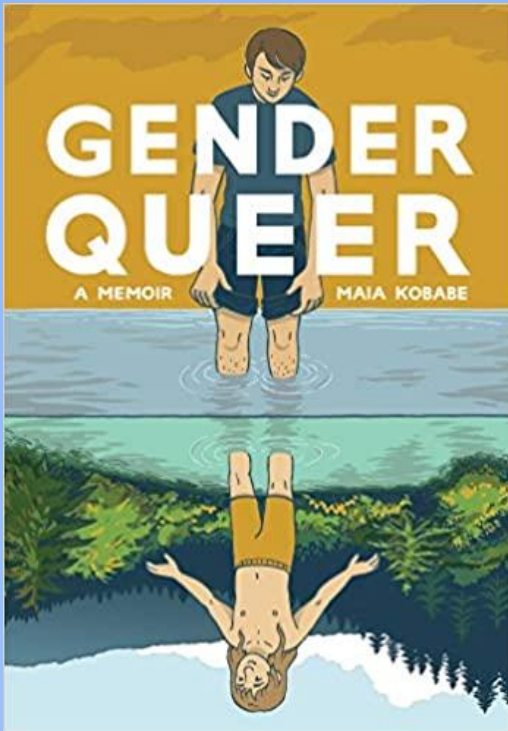
Amy's Bookshelf Reviews is a not-for-profit business and does not charge for reviews, but donations and gratuities are always welcome to keep the site up and running and to allow Amy's Bookshelf Reviews to purchase books to make the review a "verified purchase" on Amazon.com



Amy's Bookshelf Reviews happily reads banned, burned or challenged books. Have you read a banned book? #reviewsmatter #FReadom #Right2Read #ABSRBannedBooks There are lists of Banned Books on a few of my websites, and this one tells you where you can also buy it.



**Featured Banned, Burned,
Challenged or Controversial
Books**



Maia Kobabe - Gender Queer: A Memoir Graphic Novel

About the Book:

In 2014, Maia Kobabe, who uses e/em/eir pronouns, thought that a comic of reading statistics would be the last autobiographical comic e would ever write. At the time, it was the only thing e felt comfortable with strangers knowing about em. Now, *Gender Queer* is here. Maia's intensely cathartic autobiography charts eir journey of self-identity, which includes the mortification and confusion of adolescent crushes, grappling with how to come out to family and society, bonding with friends over erotic gay fanfiction, and facing the trauma and fundamental violation of pap smears.

Started as a way to explain to eir family what it means to be nonbinary and asexual, *Gender Queer* is more than a personal story: it is a useful and touching guide on gender identity—what it means and how to think about it—for advocates, friends, and humans everywhere.

The Review:

5 Stars

Interesting memoir with excellent graphics within the graphic novel

What an interesting memoir in the form of a graphic novel, in *Gender Queer: A Memoir* by Maia Kobabe. I read this book because I saw that it was on a few lists as a banned book. When I sat down to read it, I read it in two sittings. I learned a lot that I didn't know about someone who was born female, but didn't really want to be male or female, just who Eir was. The "Eir" is not a typo, Maia Kobabe uses e/em/eir pronouns. The book has wonderful graphics, and a lot of note and thoughts of the author, and how e met others, some were like Eir and others identified themselves as either lesbian or gay, or bisexual. For a while, Eir identified as bi, and there were a variety of gender identifications that Maia thought maybe would work, but they did not. I understand the title being "Gender Queer" and I found that this was a book that anyone confused about identity should read, even those who are young and trying to figure things out. I enjoyed this read, and as I said, I learned a lot. I also liked that Maia read so many books, and the titles that stood out, were listed so others can read those books as well. I was proud at the ending, finally feeling good with body, soul and clothes, and wearing them with pride. There may have been a couple of graphics that showed nudity or sexual situations, but nothing that should deter people from reading this book, especially people trying to figure out things about the body people live in.

Amy's Reel True Crime Reviews



The Autopsy of Bob Crane (2021)

About the Show:

Examining over 700 pages of original police reports together with crime scene photographs and video to try and work out who would have wanted Bob Crane dead. Some believe his brutal divorce battle had something to do with it, others that the mob had got to him, but everyone agreed Bob's addiction to sex and filming his own sex tapes had something to do with it. On the afternoon of June 29th, 1978, "Hogan's Heroes" star Bob Crane's body was discovered bludgeoned to death.

"The official Reelz synopsis says, "Forensic Pathologist Dr Michael Hunter reopens one of Hollywood's most famous cold cases, examining over 700 pages of original police reports together with crime scene photographs and video to try and work out who would have wanted Bob dead. Some believe his brutal divorce battle had something to do with it,



others that the mob had got to him, but everyone agreed Bob's addiction to sex and filming his own sex tapes had something to do with it.""

5 Reels One of the most famous Hollywood Unsolved Crimes

In watching the different shows over the years, and reading different books about how and why Bob Crane was killed, there is still no answer. On June 29, 1978, Bob Crane was brutally murdered with what police assume was his missing tripod. He was bludgeoned twice in the head, and then strangled with an electrical cord that was cut from an appliance in the living room. Bob Crane's body was found by a female friend of his, who called the police. Bob Crane's body was kept in the bedroom while police and technicians were in and out. It wasn't until later that day, that his body was removed. It was said that the investigation and evidence were contaminated by an unsecure crime scene. Over the years, there was speculation, some even ridiculous about who killed Bob Crane? His friend, John Carpenter was arrested in 1992 and went to trial in 1994. He was acquitted of all charges. Carpenter, died four years later.

It's a murder that will probably never be solved. Bob Crane was only 49, and yes, he had a history of sex, and video and still pornography, but he was at the turning point where he wanted to change his life around, and he never got the chance. He is still dead, his children without a father, many without a friend. The question still and will always remain, who would want Bob dead, and then do it?

5 Reels definitely from Amy's Reel Reviews.

The Autopsy of Bob Crane (2021)

Website: <https://writeramyshannon.wixsite.com/amys-reel-reviews>

Genre: True Crime, Unsolved, Hollywood True Crime, Murder of Bob Crane

<https://www.imdb.com/title/tt14803424/>

Other Links:

<https://reelreviews.com/shorttakes/crane.htm>

A movie based on his life: <https://www.imdb.com/title/tt0298744/> "Auto Focus" Starring Greg Kinnear



The Documentary created by Amy's Reel True Crime Reviews:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=CvG3MDxSXLk&t=3s>



The image is a painting of a rural landscape. In the foreground, a dirt path winds through a field of tall grass. To the left, a large, leafy green tree stands prominently. In the middle ground, a small house with a thatched roof is visible, partially obscured by a large, vertical wooden plank that runs down the right side of the image. The sky is filled with soft, white clouds, and the overall color palette is warm and golden, suggesting a late afternoon or early morning setting. The text "Writing 101" is centered in the middle of the image in a bold, black, serif font.

Writing 101

Writing Tips

Amazon Author Page

- Photo. Either of yourself or something related to your books. If it's of your face, don't have a busy background.
- Bio: Make it interesting, but give as little or as much detail as you want to share with your readers, even a little tidbit about yourself.
- Books.
 - Yes, make sure that your books, all formats, are linked to your author page.
 - Make sure that all editions of the same book are linked to each other. (If not, follow amazon's instructions in their help menu).
- Blog. If you have a blog that contains an RSS feed, link it to your amazon.com
- International sites: Several Amazon International sites have their own author pages. **Note, some international sites are in their native language, but the formats are the same, so you can pretty much figure out what to do where. I've used google Translate by copy and pasting the text to confirm translation. Here are the links to the direct sites.
 - US: <https://authorcentral.amazon.com>
 - UK: <https://authorcentral.amazon.co.uk/>
 - Germany: <https://authorcentral.amazon.de/>
 - France: <https://authorcentral.amazon.fr>
 - Japan: <https://www.amazon.co.jp/ap/>
- If you have book trailer videos, you can also upload them to your author's page.
- If you have more than one penname, you cannot link the two accounts or put books on either site, but you can mention the penname in your author bio.



Mythological and Modern-Day Heroes

“A hero is an ordinary individual who finds the strength to persevere and endure in spite of overwhelming obstacles.” Christopher Reeve

Comic books, movies, television, and story books all have a depiction of the superhero from the planet Krypton, also known as Superman. Superman aka Clark Kent lived a double life. Superman wanted to have a normal life, while also saving the world. Superman’s quest was for more peaceful earth. Though on Earth, he had superpowers, if his planet had not exploded, he would be an ordinary being. Superman has been portrayed in the movies with different renditions of the hero. The story of Superman remains the same in most contexts. Superman is a superhero who fights for good against evil.

Superman, while being almost immortal, has a tragic flaw. His flaw is green kryptonite, which renders him powerless. Superman’s fight is for “truth, justice, and the American way.” He not only wants to put criminals away, but with the use of his superpowers, he can save people’s lives when he hears their cries for help.

Superman’s mythos fits the characteristics of a true hero. He has almost supernatural powers and he uses those powers to help others. Superman fits into the mold of what a true hero is, though he has powers, he is not immortal. He’s brave. Though he can be cocky in some instances when he knows his powers will protect him, he is also noble. He acknowledges authority even though his powers are greater than the leaders above him, and he obeys the laws of the countries, as well as the laws of humanity. No matter the danger or the unknown danger, he always risks his safety for others. He is truly moral and honest and he believes in the law. He could take over the world with his powers, but he chooses not to. Superman has integrity and puts others’ needs before him.

Superman exemplifies the dynamic of being a hero. He is not just a hero because of his powers. He is a hero because he does his best to protect people. He is alone in the world because there is not another being like him. He lives among mortal men and women, and cannot be a part of that life. His quest is ongoing in order to fight evil and those who wish to destroy the Earth or even just the laws of the planet.

“An orphan from the doomed planet Krypton, adopted by an elderly childless couple in the apple-pie community of Smallville, Superman emerged as an inspirational if improbable comic book character in an America still clambering out of the Depression,” (Gilchrist, 2006). In 1938, the Superman comic book was created. Superman was not fighting simple criminals who wandered the street, but he was fighting super-villains who had similar powers to him, making the fight much more challenging. The symbol he wears on his chest is as easily identifiable and recognizable as the peace sign and Smiley face.

Superman cannot be everyone’s hero, even his own, since he cannot prevent the human body from being sick or dying. Superman cannot save his own [adopted] father’s life when he falls ill. Superman sees his own limitations and sometimes, he feeds on those when they make him angry or frustrated. Different adaptations told the story of Jonathan Kent’s (Superman’s father) death. This loss affects the hero because of how he lost “his biggest tethers to Earth and his human life,” (New York Times, 2009)

Mythological and Modern-Day Heroes (Cont'd)

Another one of Superman's weaknesses is his connection to human beings, and his longing to be one of them.

There is a "universal hero pattern" or "monomyth," (Leeming, 1990, p. 217). There is a process that the hero follows in his lifetime. Superman epitomizes the characteristics of a quest-driven hero. He has a goal, which is to save the Earth and its inhabitants from those who wish to overpower or do harm.

In any mythological quest, the purpose is to not stand still or be motionless. If a hero was motionless, he would not be a hero. A hero must grow and strive to do things for others to help them or save them. The journey is something that is outside what is normal and comfortable for the hero.

They strive to grow and overcome obstacles along the journey adds to the challenge when the hero reaches the goal. The fight between good and evil is not always the purpose of the quest, sometimes, it is just growth or protection. Everyone must grow and heroes not only grow but come to terms with their limitations, mortality, and weaknesses or flaws.



The hero's story must bring the audience in and allow them to root for the hero. Even when the audience knows that the hero is going to survive the climax, it is the wondering how the hero will overcome the obstacle and then deal with the aftermath that keeps the audience attached to the hero.

Amy Shannon

[The Official Blog of Amy Shannon](#)



A painting of a rural landscape. In the foreground, a dirt path winds through a field of tall grass. To the left, a large, leafy green tree stands prominently. In the middle ground, a small house with a thatched roof is visible, partially obscured by a large, vertical wooden beam on the right side of the frame. The sky is filled with soft, white clouds, and the overall color palette is warm and golden, suggesting a sunset or sunrise. The text "Reviews Matter" is centered in the middle of the image.

Reviews Matter

Reviews Matter Yes, they do!!

By Amy Shannon

Yes, book reviews matter. Promotion. Praise for authors. Marketing. Selling points on book buying sites such as Amazon or Barnes and Noble.

Authors. You need reviews. I know, because I am/was an author, and because I spend my time reviewing other's books, I don't go out and seek reviews. So, yes, you need reviews. They can be used for promotion of your book, and someone who wants to buy your book may look at the previous reviews (if there are any) and decide to buy or not buy your book. If you're an author, you probably read as well. Do you leave reviews for the books that you read? I leave a review for any book that I read, whether I chose to buy it myself for my own read, or the books that I have been sent to review. (Under a 3 gets sent back to the author).

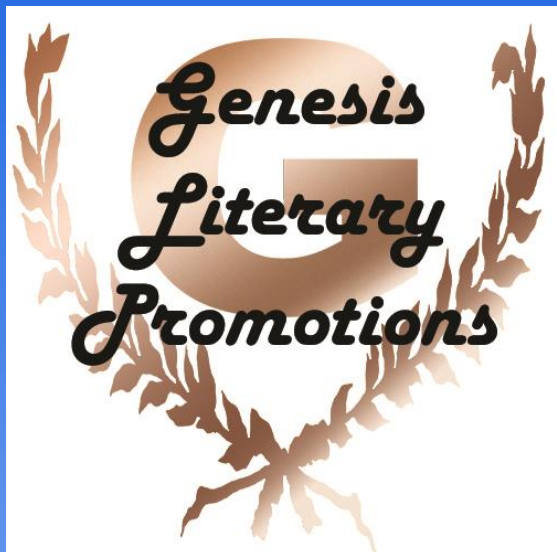
When I write a review, I let the author or the author's representative know that I did. Even if I buy a book for my own read, I let that author know as well, even if they don't care or don't answer. If I can, I tag authors when I post my reviews.

Readers. If you read a book, and whether you like it or hate it, leave a review. It doesn't matter if it's a paperback, hardcover, mass production paperback, Kindle or another type of book. Even if you don't purchase a book on Amazon, you can leave a review. I do that with books that I buy elsewhere, such as a local bookstore or second-hand store, where you can get a lot of books for a small cost, even those hard-to-find books, or books you never knew existed.

Yes, Reviews matter If you read, write a review. It doesn't have to be pages long, just a few short lines will do.



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