

A NEWSLETTER FROM AUTHOR JB CAINE

THE BUSY QUILL

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THE WHOLE STORY: FOR THE LOVE OF SERIES

Have you ever had that feeling of near-grief at the end of a book series, TV series, or movie series? Boy, I have. More times than I can count (I'm still not over "Supernatural"...), but I keep going back for more. What is it about a series that makes us willing to take on that grief time and time again?

I'd like to think it's because watching or reading a series is like visiting old friends. We have comfort in their familiarity, whether we like the characters or hate them, and if we take the time to dive into that world, we're also invested in the outcomes of the various conflicts the characters face. Need proof? Check out any fandom if a series isn't given the ending it deserves (I'm looking at you, George R. R. Martin...).

Which sort of brings me to another point: the creation of a series often means (if you're successful as a writer) the creation of a community of people who share that same investment and want to interact in that world and share their voices. Developing a fandom is the ultimate mark of success

for any writer (at least in my opinion). The first success is to share the stories in our souls, but second--the big one--is to have people love them.

If you have a series that you love, please let that author know...and I think I can say on behalf of all of us that a good review from a fan is more precious than gold.

MY FIVE

THIS MONTH: BOOK SERIES (TRILOGIES OR MORE)

1. *The Incarnations of Immortality* (Piers Anthony)
2. *The Amelia Peabody Mysteries* (Elizabeth Peters)
3. *The Chronicles of Amber* (Roger Zelazny)
4. *Harry Potter* (JK Rowling)
5. *The Kane Chronicles* (Rick Riordan)

runner up: *The Vampire Chronicles* (Anne Rice...but only the first 4 books. *Memnoch the Devil* was awful.)
Any recommendations for me?

WHAT'S NEW THIS MONTH:

Do you have Kindle Unlimited and would like some ideas of some YA books with STRONG HEROINES to stock up your TBR? Check out this link or follow the QR Code! <https://books.bookfunnel.com/strong-heroines-in-ku/70aj1qiwn2>



FREE

SUMMER SIDE-QUESTS:

I was blessed this summer to be able to do a nearly month-long road trip with my family, and most of it was exactly what you might expect: cool places to stay, amazing sights, visits with friends and family, and a handful of mishaps which will make great stories for years. But being the over-curious, slightly rebellious sort, I did manage to stumble across an accidental solo quest.

Over the Fourth of July weekend, we found ourselves in Staunton, VA in the heart of the Shenandoah Valley. What I didn't know when I booked our stay is that our hotel had, in decades past, been both an asylum and a prison. And while our building had been restored and was lovely, several of the buildings had to be renovated and were abandoned. If you're interested, I'd strongly suggest researching this place! It also serves a great breakfast.

THE BLACKBURN INN

During my stay, I discovered that this month's guest author, Whitney Zahar, found inspiration in this very same location, and set her story *THE SAFE ROOM* within its walls.



As you might imagine, I took dozens of photos during my exploration, and wasted no time in flipping them into black and white to maximize the creepy. It's been said that some people visiting the inn have heard faint moans of "home..." Whether you believe that or not, this old campus is an amazing place for a spooky tale!

FEATURED AUTHOR: WHITNEY ZAHAR

JEC: WHAT'S A ONE-SENTENCE HOOK FOR YOUR LATEST BOOK?

WZ: It's the story of sisters, mental illness, and navigating hard, hidden history with respect and dignity.

JEC: WHAT DO YOU WANT PEOPLE TO TAKE AWAY FROM YOUR STORY?

WZ: I want people to learn about a very dark chapter in Virginia's history, but I want people to realize that eugenics happened everywhere. I hope my book can serve as a jumping-off point for people to learn more, which is why I included sources. I also want people to understand that things that are not easily seen have tremendous impact on people's lives, and we have to be willing to create those.

JEC: How does the setting of add to the message of *THE SAFE ROOM*?

WZ: Sometimes, the setting can be as much a character as anything else in the story. I felt, like Aria in the book, that I had to go to the location, in order to ground the story in something real, because the horrors of eugenics and systemic racism, sexism and classism are very real. While I can't enter the DeJarnette State Sanitarium, I could visit the old Western State Hospital complex, and it was very powerful walking those grounds. Wherever possible, I try to transport my readers to a time or a place, either through my research or my personal explorations. safe, respectful environments for people to be seen and heard.

