

A NEWSLETTER FROM AUTHOR JB CAINE

THE BUSY QUILL

www.jbcaine.com


NOT QUITE CHILD'S PLAY: WRITING FOR MIDDLE-SCHOOLERS

Finding your writing voice for a project has a lot to do with knowing your audience, and nowhere is this more true than in the world of writing for kids. It's not always easy for adults to write in a way that will resonate with an age group that is caught between the innocence of childhood and the ennui of adulthood. Here are some items to consider:

- Age-appropriateness...this includes scaling the themes, language, and conflict. Some themes that resonate in middle-grade stories are friendship, family, identity, adventure, and self-discovery.
- Relatability...it's all about your characters. Finding an authentic voice for tween characters means knowing how they sound and how they think (while maybe subtly edging in some life lessons disguised as epiphanies). Consider what a 12-year-old might find funny as opposed to an adult's humor. It also means representing diverse characters, which is always important, but particularly for younger readers.
- Attention span...You really have to grab middle-grade readers from the very first page (dare I say: *from the* .

opening sentence?). They need a hint of character and conflict from the very beginning, and they also love vivid descriptions that helps their young imaginations paint pictures in their minds.

I confess that writing a middle-grade series is a goal of mine...a hint of my work-in-progress is in the image above!

MY FIVE

THIS MONTH: AUTHORS WHO WRITE FOR TWEENS

1. *Rick Riordan*
2. *J.K. Rowling*
3. *Max Brallier*
4. *Robert Beatty*
5. *R.L. Stine*
6. Disclaimer: There are probably a lot of other middle grade writers I should read. These are just some I know and like. Any recommendations?

WHAT'S NEW THIS MONTH:

Can't get enough of YA Sci-fi and Fantasy?
Check out the YA SCI FI AND FANTASY BOOK SALE!

https://books.bookfunnel.com/age_of_fantasy_ya_scifi_fantasy/mup0x2eaps



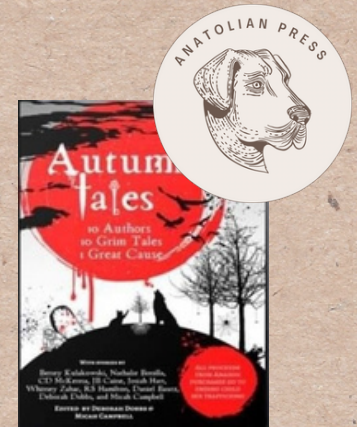
AUTUMN TALES 2 COMING SOON

Last October, I had the privilege of being one of eight authors included in Anatolian Press' first horror anthology, AUTUMN TALES. In itself, it was exciting and educational and fun.

But that was only the beginning. You see, 100% of all profits for AUTUMN TALES were donated to Collective Liberty, an organization dedicated to the fight against human trafficking. We were all thrilled to be able to donate our time and art to such a worthy cause.

And this year, we're doing it again! Not only that, we have twice as many authors participating! That means twice as many thrills and chills, and hopefully a lot more money raised for Collective Liberty.

I'll have much more to share with you in September as we prepare to launch AUTUMN TALES 2, but for now, here's a little sneak peek of my submission:



FEATURED AUTHOR: DANIEL BAUTZ



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

DB: A mysterious figure, a hidden history, and the ghostly legend of the Phantom Funeral Coach spin a web of mystery that puts the fate of Lucas in the hands on an unlikely due, 12 year old, Aristotle James and his husky, AJ.

JEC: ARISTOTLE JAMES IS A BIG DEPARTURE FROM YOUR RECENT HORROR STORIES. WHAT PULLED YOU INTO THE MIDDLE-GRADE GENRE?

DB: Middle-grade fiction is the reason I started writing. Reading in my youth is where I found the passion for storytelling and formed what I find to be alluring in fiction. Adventure, growth, understanding your world and how you relate to it, how everyone can be a hero, and courage isn't bound to age. I hope my stories can have the same impact on the next group of readers as the author I read from the middle school library had on me.

JEC: TELL ME ABOUT A PARTICULAR AUTHOR OR SERIES THAT REALLY IMPACTED YOU AS A YOUNG READER

DB: Jacob Two-Two and the Hooded Fang was a massive book for me. Mordecai Richler's book felt different than other Middle-grade books. The author respected kids and their ability to learn and understand. Of course, I must mention two other authors I discovered around the same time who are huge inspirations: Edgar Allan Poe and Washington Irving. The first for showing me the beauty of words, even in the grotesque and macabre, the second for showing me how humor and horror are entwined.