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WILLIAM MEIKLE PRESS PACK



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ABOUT WILLIAM MEIKLE

I'm a sixty-something Scottish lad from Ayrshire originally. I'm a graduate of Glasgow University, in Botany, after which I had a career in IT in London, Aberdeen and Edinburgh before leaving the rat race behind. I now live in a small fishing town on the eastern side of Newfoundland on the Atlantic shore with whales, bald eagles and icebergs for company.

I didn't chose writing, it chose me. The urge to write is more of a need, a similar addiction to the one I used to have for cigarettes and still have for beer. It's always been there, in the background. I wrote short stories at school, and dabbled a couple of times over the years, but it wasn't until I was in my 30s that it really took hold.

Back in the very early '90s I had an idea for a story... I hadn't written much of anything since the mid-70s at school, but this idea wouldn't leave me alone. I had an image in my mind of an old man watching a young woman's ghost. That image grew into a story, that story grew into other stories, and before I knew it I had an obsession in charge of my life.

So it all started with a little ghost story, "Dancers"; one that ended up winning a prize in a national ghost story competition, getting turned into a short movie, getting read on several radio stations, getting published in Greek, Spanish, Italian and Hebrew, and getting reprinted in The Weekly News in Scotland.

Since then I've sold over 300 short stories, including appearances in the likes of NATURE and THE WEEKLY NEWS among many others, and I've had over 30 novels published in the horror and fantasy genre presses in the USA, with more coming over the next few years.

I went full time in 2007. Haven't starved us yet.

The biggest influences on my particular style of writing would have to be the reading I did as a teenager in Kilbirnie in the early-seventies, before Stephen King and James Herbert came along. I graduated from Superman and Batman comics to books and I was a voracious reader of anything I could get my hands on; Conan Doyle, Alistair MacLean, Michael Moorcock, Nigel Tranter and Louis D'Amour all figured large. Pickings were thin for horror apart from the Pan Books of Horror and Dennis Wheatley, which I read with great relish. Then I found H P Lovecraft and things were never quite the same.

Mix that with TV watching of Thunderbirds, Doctor Who, the Man From Uncle, Lost in Space and the Time Tunnel, then later exposure on the BBC to the Universal monsters and Hammer vampires and you can see where it all came from. Oh, and Quatermass. Always Quatermass.



A lot of my work is still particularly Scottish though. My series character THE MIDNIGHT EYE is a Glasgow PI who gets involved with the occult and monsters. He works out of a flat above Byres Road, smokes like a lum and drinks like a fish. I have a lot of fun with him and he appears in three books and numerous short stories and novellas of mine.



My current work is largely focused on creature features, in particular the S-SQUAD series from Severed Press. The series is up to book #18, with more coming, and features a team of swearsy Scottish squaddies facing up to big beasties around the world. Think Dog Soldiers meets Aliens through a Ray Harryhausen lens and you'll get a feel for them.





PULL QUOTES

One of the premier storytellers of our time - FAMOUS MONSTERS OF FILMLAND

Scotland's Greatest Horror Writer - GINGER NUTS OF HORROR

BROKEN SIGIL...has a strong and interesting story. The dread is mostly in the unseen, with little violence or gore. It's all very subtle, and following a satisfying conclusion, very rewarding. - SCREAM Magazine

THE GHOST CLUB is... a collection of stories that was thoroughly entertaining, presenting a series of clever and canny exercises in style and subject matter by an inventive and accomplished writer. - PETE TENNANT, BLACK STATIC #62

THE GHOST CLUB is... a massively ambitious anthology of stories 'by' classic authors as imagined by the extremely talented William Meikle. Massively entertaining, too.' - Simon Clark, author of the award winning The Night of the Triffids

THE WATCHERS SERIES is... very well-written. The language is rich, and I found myself carrying the book everywhere, and taking slightly longer over lunch than I should have, as I just had to know what was happening! - The Dracula Society

THE DUNFIELD TERROR is... another masterpiece from Mr Meikle – one that should grace the bookshelf of any fan of those genres, or simply those who appreciate fine writing. - THE SCI-FI AND FANTASY REVIEWER

FUNGOID is... a fast paced ecohorror thriller that delivers on all fronts. The large cast of characters combined with Meikle's tight plotting and a keen eye for dialogue bring a real cinematic feel to the narrative. By focusing more on the fast based plot rather than getting bogged down by over characterisation Meikle has created a real page-turner. - GINGER NUTS OF HORROR

For anyone who loves great storytelling and well crafted stories THE QUALITY OF MERCY and Other Stories is for you. For Sherlock Holmes fans this book is an absolute must and I highly recommend it.- FAMOUS MONSTERS OF FILMLAND



F.A.Q

1. Where do you get the ideas for your novels? Do you sit down and think of plot possibilities or do the stories come to you?

For me it's mainly inspiration. I wouldn't write at all if the ideas didn't present themselves in my head. I find I get a lot of ideas clamouring for attention all at once. I write them down in a notebook that never leaves my side, and sometimes one of them gathers a bit more depth, and I get a clearer image. At this stage I find myself thinking about it almost constantly, until a plot, or an ending, clarifies itself.

Once I've written down where the story should be going it quietens down a bit. Then, if I find myself still thinking about it a couple of days later, I'll probably start writing the actual story. At any given time I have about 20 ideas waiting for clarity, two or three of which might end up as finished works.

That's the inspiration part. And that continues when I start putting the words on paper. I've tried writing outlines, both for short stories and novels, but I've never stuck to one yet. My fingers get a direct line to the muse and I continually find myself being surprised at the outcome. Thanks to South Park, I call them my "Oh shit, I've killed Kenny" moments, and when they happen, I know I'm doing the right thing.

There is also a certain amount of perspiration, especially in writing a novel. But I find if it feels too much like work, I'm heading in the wrong direction and it usually ends up in the recycle bin.

And, yes, there's a certain degree of desperation in that I want to get better, to make the big sale, to see my name in lights, all that happy stuff. But I try not to think about that too much. :)

2. When you wrote the first book of your Watchers series, 'The Coming of the King', had you planned the book to be the beginning of the series? Or did the series come together from the first book?

The Watchers trilogy, my retelling of the 1745 Jacobite Rebellion in Britain. Bonnie Prince Charlie, and all his highland army, are Vampires and are heading south to claim the British throne. The "Watchers" of the title are the guards of the old Roman wall built



by Hadrian, now reinforced to keep the vamps out. It is constantly patrolled by officers of the Watch, two of whom become the main protagonists of the series.



I got the idea on a walk along what is left of the wall, and by the time I'd had finished my walk and had a few beers the main thrust of the trilogy was fully formed in my head. Think "ZULU" or "Last of the Mohicans" with vamps and you'll get a feel of what I was trying to do.

And by then I also already knew what the ending would be, and that it would be a trilogy. It dumped almost complete in my head all at once.

3. Do any of your book series seem more special to you than the others and if so, why?

A: Derek Adams, *The Midnight Eye* is probably the one I have most fun with. He is a Bogart and Chandler fan, and it is the movies and Americana of the '40s that I find a lot of my inspiration for him, rather than in the modern procedural.

It's all about the struggle of the dark against the light. The time and place, and the way it plays out is in some ways secondary to that. And when you're dealing with archetypes, there's only so many to go around, and it's not surprising that the same concepts of death and betrayal, love and loss, turn up wherever, and whenever, the story is placed.

Plus, there are antecedents - occult detectives who may seem to use the trappings of crime solvers, but get involved in the supernatural. William Hjortsberg's *Falling Angel* (the book that led to the movie *Angel Heart*) is a fine example, an expert blending of gumshoe and deviltry that is one of my favorite books. Likewise, in the movies, we have cops facing a demon in Denzel Washington's *Fallen* that plays like a police procedural



taken to a very dark place.

And even further back, in the "gentleman detective" era, we have seekers of truth in occult cases in John Silence and Carnacki. Even Holmes himself came close to supernatural conclusions at times.

I love exploring this sub-genre this for myself, in the Midnight Eye Files stories, in a series of Carnacki stories, and I even got a chance to have Holmes fight a Necromancer in Edinburgh in an anthology appearance in Gaslight Grotesque. It seems there is quite a market for this kind of merging of crime and supernatural, and I intend to write a lot more of it.

4. Do you have a particular favourite character from any of your stories and if so, why are they special to you?

A: I guess it has to be something particularly Scottish, and Derek Adams again. THE MIDNIGHT EYE is a Glasgow PI who gets involved with the occult and monsters. He works out of a flat above Byres Road, smokes like a chimney and drinks like a fish. I have a lot of fun with him and he appears in three books and numerous short stories of mine. (The starting point is THE AMULET, and it's out in print and ebook at all the usual places.)

5. How difficult did you find it to break into the published world and have ebooks made life easier in this respect?

Back in the very early '90s I had an idea for a story... I hadn't written much of anything since the mid-70s at school, but this idea wouldn't leave me alone. I had an image in my mind of an old man watching a young woman's ghost.

That image grew into a story, that story grew into other stories, and before I knew it I had an obsession in charge of my life.

So it all started with a little ghost story, "Dancers"; one that started by winning me 100 pounds in a ghost story competition, then ended up getting published in All Hallows, getting turned into a short movie, getting read on several radio stations, getting published in Greek, Spanish, Italian and Hebrew, and getting reprinted in The Weekly News in Scotland.

So, the first story came easy. It was only after that the rejections started to come in. But I'm nothing if not stubborn. I've been at this since 1991 and can't see myself stopping



now.

As for the ebooks... it's just another method for me to deliver the story.. I've been published in print, ebook, audio, and on film and I've read stories at storytelling evenings in a variety of bars. I'm sure when the time comes for media to get delivered straight into people's brains that I'll be ready with something to publish that way too.

6. What are your all time favourite books?

A: Tarzan is the second novel I remember reading. (The first was Treasure Island, so I was already well on the way to the land of adventure even then.) I quickly read everything of Burroughs I could find. Then I devoured Wells, Dumas, Verne and Haggard. I moved on to Conan Doyle before I was twelve, and Professor Challenger's adventures in spiritualism led me, almost directly, to Dennis Wheatley, Algernon Blackwood, and then on to Lovecraft. Then Stephen King came along.

There's a separate but related thread of a deep love of detective novels running parallel to this, as Conan Doyle also gave me Holmes, then I moved on to Christie, Chandler, Hammett, Ross MacDonald and Ed McBain, reading everything by them I could find.

Mix all that lot together, add a hefty slug of heroic fantasy from Howard, Leiber and Moorcock, a sprinkle of fast moving Scottish thrillers from John Buchan and Alistair MacLean, and a final pinch of piratical swashbuckling. Leave to marinate for fifty years and what do you get?

A psyche with a deep love of the weird in its most basic forms, and the urge to beat up monsters.

As for the actual favorites... here's five. Ask me tomorrow and you'll get a different list :-)

Falling Angel – William Hjortsberg
Weaveworld – Clive Barker
The Maltese Falcon – Dashiell Hammett
On Stranger Tides – Tim Powers
Ghost Story – Peter Straub

7. Would you say strong plots or well developed characters are more important to you in a story? What would spoil your enjoyment when reading a book?

A: They're both equally important in my eyes. That said, I've written some pulp novels that are almost pure plot, and some stories that are mostly character, but balance is the



important thing; whatever serves the particular story you want to tell.

As for what spoils my enjoyment -- preaching a personal opinion through a character's mouth rarely works well and takes me out of a book immediately. That, and characters who do things just to serve the plot rather than act as a normal person would.

8. Do you ever find time to read other people's novels now?

A: Not as much as I should. I have a big pile of books to be read, and a NOOK full of e-books that I need to get to. But there's always another story to write that takes over.

I do read quite a lot of short stories though.

9. If you got the opportunity, which one of your novels or series would you like to see as a film? And which actor/actress would play the main character?

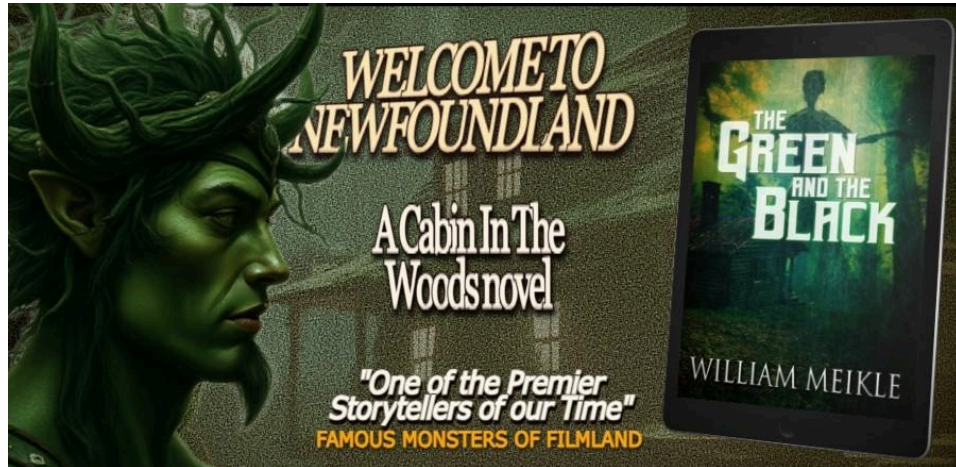
I'd love to see BERSERKER filmed. Vikings vs Yeti... what's not to like? A dream pairing would be Alexander Skarsgård as Tor, our hero, with his dad Stellan Skarsgård as the ship's captain.





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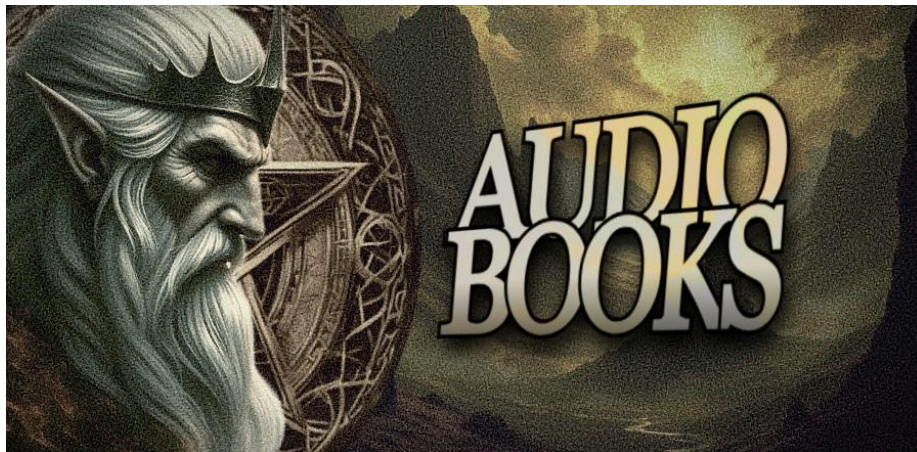
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