



Library podcast

An evening with Seanan McGuire

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[00:00:36] What happens if someone tries to get. Well that's going on. They go in through here. Oh yes. So we're not all going to die in the zone.

[00:00:43] No we're not all going to die in the zombie apocalypse that's a perfect way to start. Thank you so much for coming tonight. My name is Misha Stone and I'm a reader services librarian. Thank you so much for coming out for an evening with Seanan McGuire. I'm fairly certain that the frog got you. Before we begin I do want to acknowledge that we are gathered together on the ancestral land of the Coast Salish people So together let us honor their elders past and present. We thank them for their stewardship of this land. I feel extraordinarily honoured to have Seanan McGuire here tonight. Yeah. Seanan McGuire who also writes as Mira Grant is a prolific writer of books essays and delightful idiosyncratic tweets. Shannon was the winner of the 2010 John W. Campbell Award for Best New Writer and her novel feed as Mira grants was named as one of Publisher Weekly's Best Books of 2010 and 2013. She became the first person ever to appear five times on the same Hugo ballot. Really I don't think you'll ever be outdone so the novella every heart a doorway one the twenty sixteen Nebula Award for best novella. And she also won the American Library Association's Alex award twice in 2017 for every hard doorway and 2018 for down among the sticks and bones and this makes her the first author to win the award in two consecutive years. Neil Gaiman is the only other author to have won this award twice. I know. Seanan McGuire opens Doorways for us as readers into so many rich strange exhilarating and memorable worlds. I know tonight will be no different.

[00:02:26] Please welcome Seanan McGuire This is a very odd microphone has interesting echoes So hello everybody I'm sorry the frog was not able to come. He lives in North Carolina and would like to stay there. Turns out frogs are not big on air travel. Also not big on frogs on planes. Everyone else on the plane

[00:02:53] Though we did just have a lady fly from Australia to Scotland and discover a python in her shoe when she got home. I'm I'm really happy about her new friend a little jealous I'll admit I tried to lure lizards into my suitcase every time I go to Disney World and they just will not be. They do not

want that. So the way that this generally works is you ask questions and then I answer them I will answer honestly whatever it is you ask. However I will not necessarily give you the answer that you thought you were going to get.

[00:03:23] My go to example is I had someone come to one of these events and upon hearing that I would answer any question I was asked put his hand up and said Oh yeah how many yeast infections have you had. And what he received for his trouble was a ten minute lecture on systemic misogyny.

[00:03:39] So if you try to be a jerk I assure you I am a bigger asshole than you are and I have a microphone.

[00:03:48] So it's best for all of us if we don't try to play asshole chicken.

[00:03:54] I will attempt to refrain from swearing it does not come naturally to me and there are no children in the room so if you're listening to the Seattle library podcast since I assume they don't have the technology to bleep all of the horrible things I might say just try to mentally substitute the names of Pokémon. I know you've heard them you live in Seattle.

[00:04:12] Yes there is one kid but she's fine with swearing.

[00:04:18] The kid looks thrilled to have been pointed out so thank you I appreciate it. Sure she appreciates it. Hello I'm your childhood trauma. It's nice to meet you. Mild childhood trauma was Bob Saget.

[00:04:29] So I was 16 when I got to hear him do the aristocrats wave on stage. That leaves a mark you do have to. We can run mikes for questions. If you do not get the mike I will repeat your question. So that goes on to the podcast. You do have to ask questions though or I will talk about whatever comes into my head. You may not enjoy that. I'm currently 13 seasons into Grey's Anatomy. I started two months ago.

[00:04:58] We have redefined binge watching and not in a healthy way.

[00:05:02] Yes. The question is I've heard you talk about the Black Death Song that you sang to the people at the CDC. Could you tell us a little bit more and maybe sing us to refrain from the song. So I feel like everyone should have something that they feel very very passionately about that has absolutely no relevance to the modern world because it gives you something to get excited about at parties without possibly starting a political fight. And mine is the Black Death in Europe. I am really passionately invested in the Black Death. I do not feel that it was your senior pestis. I think that we have too much empathy alarmist epidemiological and anthropological evidence supporting another causative agent for it to have been why pestis. I actually belong to the school of thought that says that it was a novel hemorrhagic fever that travelled up the Nile River to Massena Italy and then made the jump from there. There is a lot of evidence to support that including the climate of the time and weirdly enough the dove coats in England and because I am me and there is something really wrong

with me. I decided that the best way to make this argument so that other people could understand it would be to write a six and a half minute long Schoolhouse Rock style song about the spread of the Black Death through Europe. This is part of why I am not very fun at parties. It is on a C.D. I put out that the city is currently out of print. I am not going to sing a six and a half minute long song about the anthropological origins of the Black Death in Europe because I like you too much for that but it opens with the Black Death arrived in Europe back in thirteen forty seven and for several hundred years it just kept sending folks to heaven.

[00:06:41] It spread out from Massena and hit hardest in the summer and if you were in the path of plague it really was a bomber. Well we blamed it on the rats and we blamed it on the fleas we were ignoring crucial facts about the spread of the disease and I think it's time we called for a more thorough inquisition because it's clear that the black death possessed a droplet based transmission and it goes on like that to explain more and more about how this works.

[00:07:05] And if you enjoyed feed part of how I was able to consult with the CDC to write feed was because the secretarial pool at the CDC had encountered the Black Death Song. And upon confirming that I was the author of the blacked out song suddenly could find doctors who were willing to talk to me about the zombie apocalypse.

[00:07:22] So your hobbies can have uses kids they're just not necessarily linear ones. Yes

[00:07:31] So the question for the podcast was you know this this individual became a fan of my work after and counting several of my short stories in anthologies edited by John Joseph Adams. Can I say a little bit about my working relationship with John and whether we're going to collaborate more.

[00:07:44] We'll pretty much definitely collaborate more because I am a vending machine. I came from the fanfic minds. That's really where I learned how to write was by just generating massive quantities of Buffy the Vampire Slayer porn so much Buffy the Vampire Slayer porn and in fanfic. It is not uncommon to have what we call figure funds where he or fic exchanges where you have to write essentially a bespoke piece effect so you'll be given prompts and elements that you have to incorporate and then you have a relatively tight deadline on which to get this done that it can go to your recipient. And it turns out this is perfect training for writing stories for themed anthologies because you're functionally doing that anyway you're just doing it in a preexisting fan universe. So John and I will absolutely work together again because he knows that he can call me on Monday to tell me he needs a story on Friday. And if I'm not overbooked since I do like him already I'll probably be able to do it.

[00:08:41] As for our working relationship one of my most treasured possessions is a rejection letter from John Joseph Adams from 2003 when he was still the editor of the magazine of fantasy and science fiction. He really wishes I would stop telling people this because the letter opens with Dear Mr. McGuire

[00:09:00] I really do treasure it. I'm like oh John look what you did. He hates that but no he is.

[00:09:06] He is delightful he's worked with me enough to have a sense of my idiosyncrasy maybe was idiosyncrasies. Thank you.

[00:09:16] My idiosyncrasy is prose wise and can say I want you to do a story for me and I don't want you to do this thing that I've seen you do before which is great because we all have our lazy little habits. And if you call me on Monday for a story on Friday the odds that I'm lazy go way way up I'm already working my butt off for you. But I have been in so many of his anthologies and it is joyful. He was also the first person to allow me a hat trick because in wastelands to both Shawna Maguire and Mira Grant I have stories.

[00:09:45] I felt a little bad about that. I'm like I'm taking someone's slot but at the same time I'm like Hey Shannon and Mira together at last. I'm like Stephen King and Richard Bachman only I'm open about it.

[00:09:59] So you know I love John he is a delight and he really does believe in nurturing and uplifting new authors. He was one of the first editors to really start working with me. You know when I was when I was getting started and didn't have much of a reputation for short fiction. So if you work well with him he'll work well with you.

[00:10:17] What are some of your favorite or most memorable responses to some of your research inquiries.

[00:10:22] So when I was there's a microphone involved now I don't have to restate the question it's magic. When I was doing research for feed I wanted to do a scientifically based zombie novel and there are absolutely going to be non-scientific aspects of any zombie novel because zombies are not scientific. But I wanted to get as close as I possibly could. Which is why I was consulting with the CDC and I would call about once a week for a good three four months and go hey if I did this this this this this this and this could I raise the dead.

[00:10:55] No. Okay. Call back in a week.

[00:10:58] Hey if I did this this this this this this this this and this could I raise the debt.

[00:11:03] No. OK. And finally I called and said if I did this this this this this this and this could I raise the dead. And the response was Please don't do that

[00:11:15] And that's kind of how I knew that I was on the right track with with Kelly's Amber Lee like you know you're going in the right direction when the doctor sounds quite that dismayed.

[00:11:24] It is magical. The other nice research thing I haven't done anything with it yet because this really was just an excuse for me to get my hands on the third deadliest snake in the world but I went

to a reptile park in Australia with a note from one of my old her pathology professors and a copy of The New York Times list and pretty much just went in and went Hi.

[00:11:42] I'm a New York Times best selling author I've been trained to handle venomous reptiles can I milk your Taipan. And they let me

[00:11:52] Which was great. The hype had they handed me it was the Ron Jeremy of type hands like you pick this sucker up and he had fangs popped. Two seconds later you know oh baby baby oh baby where's my mouse. And he had no interest in biting humans because he had figured out that attempts to bite humans kept him from his mouse.

[00:12:09] They also had a big tank of these beautiful sea snakes which are the deadliest snake in the world but they would not let me milk those. Something about dead before you hit the ground.

[00:12:20] But that was my best research moment.

[00:12:24] I have been a fan of yours for a long time. One of the things I really appreciate is the classical style of

[00:12:34] Plot that you do. It goes up. It goes back down. You will continue to read it because it is wonderful. What my question is what is the farthest you've gone from that standard arc either have gone or are interested in going honestly if you read the Paris atoll trilogy.

[00:13:03] I I firmly believe because I've studied the classics enough to have strong opinions about useless things that there are two places where a cliffhanger is appropriate. The end of the first book of a two ology and the end of a second the second book of a trilogy. You can also get away with one cliffhanger per long ongoing series but that is much more baking by feel with parents ontology. I sold a do ology wrote the second book and realized that I had actually written book two of a trilogy. So we added a third book to the contract. So Paris histology book one ends in a cliffhanger because it's book one of ideology and then book two ends in a cliffhanger because it is book two of a trilogy and that means that rather than doing the standard arc it kind of goes up stop up stop

[00:13:55] I really like the parasitic allergy books there. Their concept is a little bit of a hard sell for some people because it requires accepting that most of America would voluntarily swallow tapeworms but historically there have been times when most of America did voluntarily swallow tapeworm.

[00:14:08] So I don't feel that it's such a press such a stretch. I just think people want it to be because it's kind of gross.

[00:14:17] I'm getting to read listened to because I listened to your audiobooks the Toby books think you love them so much and I wonder when use well when you start a series or when you start writing

a new book. I guess that's the process question. Do you know where it's going when you start writing or are you one of those authors it's like what the hell is my character doing. I don't know.

[00:14:38] So there are people who say that there are two schools of writing the plotters who sit down and go a b c d e f and the Panzers who go a banana boat fish.

[00:14:50] I'm actually kind of in the middle I'm what we refer to as The Crocodile Hunter. So I just sort of wander through the swamp looking for the plot and when I find it I jump on it and wrestle it for a while. But the best description of my process is taking a trip to Disneyland. If we were to go to Disneyland together we would go in knowing that we wanted to have lunch at the French market. We wanted to ride the haunted mansion. We wanted to go on Star Tours at least twice and we wanted to be back in our hotel by 9:00. Everything in the middle is up for grabs. So it's those middle parts that I discover as I go along. I always know how the day is going to begin and how the day is going to end. In the case of something like Toby that's actually more like plotting a two week trip to Disney World. I know where we're starting the trip I know where we're ending the trip and I know where each day takes place because I had to make our meal reservations. So we're at Animal Kingdom on Monday and we're at Hollywood Studios on Tuesday. I really like Disney kids you tell and we're at the Magic Kingdom on Wednesday. And so that leaves me enough freedom that I don't get bored. I can still decide things I'm not just following a recipe forever but I also have those big moments and those big landmarks already marked on my map I'll hit them and that way I'll be able to get to the next one I don't get lost yes.

[00:16:10] So I actually found you through Tumblr because someone reposted a birthday a birthday and ending that made me cry in the bus. So like thanks for that. You're welcome. One of the top moments of my bus life. Where did the birthday and ending come from.

[00:16:23] So Tumblr for those who don't know is a microblogging site that did not intend to be fandoms new home but then Russia shut down live journal and we infested like locusts and Tumblr is it's a fascinating place.

[00:16:39] It's very good there it's very good. Those of us who spend a lot of time on it call it a health site and yet we don't leave. And my birthday's January 5th. I enjoy birthdays. I enjoy adult birthdays because I get to decide what I do. This year what I did was have a cake with a ganache made entirely of candy corn. My friend Amanda put 10 pounds of candy corn in a food processor pulsed it added heavy cream pulsed it again and then put it on a cake

[00:17:06] Writes it. It was magical. I think we're all going to die five years sooner than we would have if we hadn't eaten it.

[00:17:13] But I'm okay with that and several years ago on Tumblr I had someone send me a happy birthday. Asked so I replied Thank you so much.

[00:17:22] Yay Happy birthday. The problem with Tumblr is that when you respond to one ask everyone goes oh shit this person responds to asks and you get 10 more so you answer 10 more.

[00:17:32] But now it's the next day and the Happy Birthday asks are still coming in and after about two weeks of Happy Birthday Shawn and Happy Birthday Shawn and I just declared that I was the birthday and ending and then someone asked if they could be in the birthday on anything and it has turned into this weird public art project that's like half Kathy Lu mythos half the care bears gone feral. So if you show up if you ask to come into the birthday anything which can't right now the birthday and ending is currently closed to new admissions because I have 90 of them in the queue that I have to get through. But if you ask to come into the birth in ending the birthday which speaks entirely in the third person and entirely in capsule we'll say welcome to your birthday child who has been so long awaited. The doors are open. Don't go over there that's bad. We don't like it when you go over there the blood pit is full of sharks.

[00:18:21] Please enjoy the blood pit.

[00:18:23] Here is your birthday gift your birthday gift to be something ridiculous and then it goes here is your place at the table. Here is your conical hats. Welcome to the birthday welcome to the birthday welcome to the birthday and ending.

[00:18:33] And it's a silly thing that has meant a remarkable amount to some people because the birthday does not judge the birthday loves you. I did have to ask the people stop requesting admission for dead pets because again once you do something once 90 people want you to do the thing and I'm like yeah I'll get that there's a human writing this whose cat died and I'm tired of telling you that your cat's welcome to the birthday all cats are in the birthday stop. We also had to stop admissions for dead people who did not request to be in the birthday themselves because that felt a little too much like Mormon posthumous baptism to me like you are now in an aggressively queer friendly Haunted Cornfield surrounded by blood crayons and sharks. I just. This is a little inappropriate if you didn't want to come.

[00:19:20] But that's the birthday and I love the birthdays and people have made me cross stitches of the birthday I have ribbons that I give out at conventions that say Welcome to the birthday and end income and enter and be home. And it's really nice how important it's been to people.

[00:19:33] I've really been enjoying that you're your comics work recently. Thank you.

[00:19:37] I worked for Marvel.

[00:19:40] You totally sold out Nightcrawler at the comic shop today by the way. I'm sorry. They were sold out of Nightcrawler at the comic shop so.

[00:19:49] But I'm curious how how has been working with artists and and how that's changed your process. Or like just stuff you've discovered or how you're enjoying it.

[00:20:00] I was super fortunate in that several years ago John Rogers from kung fu monkey and Mark Waid who's a comic book author.

[00:20:08] They have a comic company together called Thrill bond that does or did for a while web comics are currently reassessing their business model and they contacted me and said Hey do you want to do a comic for us. And since the last 10 years of my life have basically been me standing outside the Marvel offices with a big sign that says I won't leave until you love me. I of course agreed immediately. Anything that makes me look better to the comic people and Mark is a master of the form. He's been doing this since I was a kid so he gave me all of his guides on how to write for comics. Some of his scripts to model off of and really taught me how you set up a comic script and he did a good enough job that I haven't had to modify that for working with artists which is wonderful. The basic is when you're describing a panel only describe describe the generic the general the generic you are in an auditorium. It should be raised. Theater style seating approximately little more than half a little under half a full that sort of thing. And then you call out the specifics that are going to matter during the scene to come. So I might say there is an individual in an orange shirt sitting about six rose up to librarians move through the crowd with microphones.

[00:21:24] There is one person under 18 in the audience and those are being called out because I'm going to want my artists to get those specifically the rest of it. You leave as freedom for them because the more free they feel to really interpret the scene and make it their own the better things are going to go for you. And that also really helps working with Marvel because a huge number of their artists are English as a second language. So some of the nuance is not necessarily going to get through on the first pass and knowing that the less detail that you're counting on them to be able to understand without having to reach out to you the better. I've got a great working relationship with one who's doing amazing Nightcrawler but it took us a little while to figure out. He didn't understand some of what I was saying because I was using words he hadn't encountered before and he didn't know if I was going to be an asshole if he contacted me and said hey what is this mean and that's a that's a concern he has to have right. Especially when you're working with a white American artist with a super Irish name like if I tell this lady that I don't know what she meant by this is she gonna get all weird racist on me.

[00:22:34] I understand that my artists know their job better than I do.

[00:22:38] So I try not to get in their way while also making my needs very clearly known.

[00:22:45] So in the amazing Nightcrawler if you managed to pick up a copy you'll see that the Stepford cuckoos all have a very specific all have very specific haircuts and none of them have the same haircut. They're all complimentary. That was called out that was very much enforced on him or if you read my spider Gwen she is drawn with exactly the same amount of sexualization as Peter Parker.

[00:23:07] If you wouldn't put Peter Parker in a pose you don't poke Wednesday see in that pose. And that's something that my artists and I talk about a lot.

[00:23:15] I'm going to leave this as open as you want it to be. How do you feel about talking about mental health in the public sphere.

[00:23:20] How do I feel about talking about mental health in the public sphere. I think you kind of have to.

[00:23:26] So I'm originally from California and I had enormous quantities of therapy before I turned 18 yo California we give you a therapist for your sixth birthday and I think that there is an unfortunate tendency to blame but not account for.

[00:23:46] With mental health oh so and so of course they failed they're depressed.

[00:23:49] Well I'm depressed too. You can work through things you can have limitations because of your mental health but you do need to make those clear to people you need to say this is how much work I can do this is how much crowd I can handle and the more open and upfront you are about the person that you are the better it will be for everyone that you're working with and the more patience and tolerance you're going to encounter.

[00:24:15] There's also a huge amount of stereotyping around mental health of all kinds all non neurotypical cities. You know I have obsessive compulsive disorder. I am so tired of the idea that OCD means you clean everything all the time. For some people that's the reality. My mother who lives with me is here she's kind of snickering at the thought of me cleaning anything ever you know getting me to do the dishes is practically a land war in some undiscovered continent.

[00:24:43] But because I talk about it I'm like Look I have OCD these are the steps I have to take. This is the information I have to have. Conventions know that when they invite me it's it's very upfront and they are thus more patient with the places where I'm limited.

[00:24:59] It also means that they know the places where I'm likely to try to break myself because I think I can take on too much Michelle Baker who wrote the Arcadia project has BPT which is a cousin disorder of OCD it's not the same but they're in the same basic family of rewiring as in the brain and it's one of those disorders that people have so many illusions about and so many preconceptions and prejudices about. I'm incredibly proud of her for talking about it publicly and for being willing to take on those questions and be a part of it.

[00:25:32] I don't think a world where we know each other is ever a bad world and the big thing I always took away from therapy is that it's a reason not an excuse. You know I have to finish my checklist before I go to bed even if I'm up until 2:00 a.m.. That's not an excuse for me to be an asshole to you the next morning because I didn't get enough sleep. I need to plan my day better. But you also need to know if you come over to visit and you decide that you're staying later than we had

arranged that I may go to my room and start doing the final items on my checklist because I need to be in bed by 11:00 so that I can sleep enough we're better able to deal with each other and we're better able to be kind to each other when we know the strictures that everyone is working within you have the microphone you get start. I do have the microphone so I'm a new fan so I actually discovered you like

[00:26:26] A month and a half ago and I read all the way we're children series and I was like huh. And you just talked about the black death and I'm so excited because I wrote my senior thesis about typhoid.

[00:26:36] Right. You're my new favorite. Thank you.

[00:26:39] You are my new favorite. And I went on when I lived in England. I went on disease tourism.

[00:26:46] Did you see the dove goats the dove coats are one of the strongest pieces of evidence that it can't have been your senior pastors because you can chart the spread of the brown rat across England by following the dove code construction.

[00:26:56] I feel very bad because I did not know that I went to the plague village and EEM. Oh I love that village. Yeah. OK so we're buds. All right. This is great. I'm very excited now. So anyway I just had to say that that was amazing. Yay disease. Also because I am a new fan I don't I've never read any of your other books you said the way we're children series so this is about that the only other portal fantasy I've ever read besides your series has been Narnia that I. That's of I mean that's a total fantasy Yeah. OK so how did you get inspired. Like what inspired you to write those books because they like floored me.

[00:27:37] I have never read anything like them and I talk about them all the time and I love them but I can't describe what they're about without saying Narnia you know.

[00:27:48] Well what inspired me to write them was not getting paid which was known it was magical. Lee Harris who is one of the editors at dot com contacted my agent and said hey we're launching a new novella line and we're trying to get some authors people have heard of for our first wave of novellas so that they'll take us seriously as the new publishing imprint. And we'd like Shannon and Diana was like okay cool and we're not going to pay her we would like a little more information please. And what it was was the talk com was trying out a new model for their novellas where you could if he wanted declined to have an advance. A traditional advance in exchange for a higher royalty rate. So sort of like being an indie author you'd get paid as if you were an indie but you wouldn't have to do any of the copy editing design prep packaging that indie authors normally do. And I was in a very fortunate place right at that specific moment in that I didn't actually need the money. You know you always need money but I was not like oh the amount that I'll get for writing a novella is going to change my life.

[00:28:55] So I said OK if they're not paying me does that mean they're not allowed to tell me what to write. And my agent went yeah that's how I interpret it too. OK cool

[00:29:07] I'm going to write the X-Men only it's all of those characters that got screwed over by portal fantasy fiction from 1960 through 1995 K..

[00:29:20] And my agent was like Sure honey whatever makes you happy.

[00:29:25] And getting back to I write songs as well I'm a filk musician which is the folk music of science fiction and fantasy. I wrote a song several years ago called Wicked girls saving ourselves which was the title song of my album wicked girls which was the first ever single artist filk collection to be nominated for a Hugo Award and wicked girls is explicitly about those characters. So it's about Dorothy and Alice and Susan and Lucy and all of these characters with classic portal fantasy and the chorus is Dorothy Allison's Susan and Jane when windy Dorothy Alice and windy and Jane Susan and Lucy were calling your name is all those lost girls who came out of the rain and chose to go back on the shelf.

[00:30:06] Tinker Bell says and I find I agree that you have to break rules if you want to break free to do as you like.

[00:30:11] We're determined to be wicked girls saving ourselves. And I always kind of wanted to make that into a story. And that became every heart a doorway. Obviously it's not those characters whether public domain or under copyright because I like not getting sued but it's the iconography of those characters it's the idea of people who went to that kind of world. But really the inspiration was they're not going to pay me so I can do whatever I want.

[00:30:35] I know you've talked about how your books get sold for a movie TV. You don't have any influence on those stories go so I was wondering if you had ever written a TV pilot or plotted or original TV or movie series. I'm sorry I missed that little bit that once things are optioned I have no control over them right.

[00:30:54] So I was wondering if you had ever written something separate like your own TV pilot or your own movie where only spec script anything like that.

[00:31:00] No not not not at this time. The way the TV works it's really kind of fascinating because they will option everything under the sun like TV wants to snap up as much as they can get their hands on and then they make virtually none of it.

[00:31:16] They just sit there not making it forever.

[00:31:19] If something gets made and if something is then successful the chances that you can start writing your own scripts go way way up. I used to write one act plays in college. I'm working on a

Broadway musical with Catherine Valenti. I'm not going to say that I would never write anything for television. But right now I haven't yet.

[00:31:38] Right now I'm just hoping that something actually presses record on the camera and pays to rewire my house one of the things that pops up on my Internet once in a while and makes me laugh so hard I cry is a little Twitter story you told once pulling a lizard out of a guy's. I just wonder how many people who haven't heard it and maybe they'd want to hear it. So I really just want to watch you say it.

[00:32:03] That's fair. That's fair.

[00:32:04] So I would like to note that it is a neurological reality that most teenagers do not have a very strong sense of self-preservation because the part of the brain that controls real comprehension of consequences doesn't finish growing in until you're 25 and that is not a slight on anyone who has not yet developed those brain structures. I kind of envy you but I took maybe a little longer than most to figure out the consequences were real. So from the time I was 16 to I was 22 I volunteered with a reptile rescue organization and that means that we were the people you would call if there was an alligator in your backyard. Now I was living in Northern California at the time so 99 times out of 100 it was not an alligator it was an iguana.

[00:32:54] If you were to collect a hundred of those one remaining times 99 out of 100 of those times it would be a weird monitor lizard and then one at once a great great wild twice in the entire times with reptile rescue it was an actual alligator and those were very exciting days for everyone involved yes we had a good time on those days we didn't need therapy after them at all.

[00:33:19] And so one night we get a call from a local urgent care saying that we have a man down here with a lizard in his leg and we go OK.

[00:33:29] There's a lizard on his leg. Yes there's a lizard in his leg. OK we'll come down there to get the lizard off the guys. Doug like whatever. And why can't you just take the loser off his leg. It's a lizard. Yeah they were right. We were wrong. So we roll down there and there is in fact a dude on the table at the urgent care who has stabbed himself in the leg with a bowie knife. He was camping on Mt. Diablo which is a local national park. You know it's worst camp there. He was camping. He was drinking an alligator lizard about yay long got into his tent and he thought that the best way to get rid of these small fast agitated lizard was to try to stab it with a bowie knife while it was on his thigh. This did not work out well for him. As soon as he had created this beautiful chasm in his leg the lizard went great a hole and went into it. And the lizard basically entered the hole in his leg flipped around and stuck its head back out. So that it could hiss at people who attempted to interfere

[00:34:29] With what it was doing. And that was very distressing for everyone

[00:34:34] At the urgent care. And that was very amazing for everyone from Reptile Rescue. I have some big regrets about this part of the story because this is where I now acknowledge my age which is I am 42.

[00:34:49] This happened in about 1997.

[00:34:51] You know we did not have in 1997 we did not have cell phones with cameras in them. There are no pictures to corroborate any of this. I actually wince a little.

[00:35:01] Every time someone brings up this Twitter story because I I well I didn't tell it to go viral I told it because a friend was having a bad day and asked me to tell a funny animal rescue story the number of strangers who have called me a liar because of the reptile rescue story has been delightful I'm like you guys do realize I live for money right.

[00:35:18] I don't live for free.

[00:35:20] That's that's like asking a supermodel to put on but floss underwear for free. She's not going to do it it's granny panties or a payday.

[00:35:31] So little lizards you know sticking his head out hissing at us and we're all kind of staring like Oh my God I wish we had a camera. This is the best thing that's ever happened the dude is like bleeding.

[00:35:39] The doctors are going this is not the best thing that has ever happened.

[00:35:42] This is awful and we can't figure out how to get the lizard out of this guy's leg like this. It's a lizard we don't know how big it is because most of it is inside him.

[00:35:50] It's hissing alligator lizards bite really hard.

[00:35:54] It is not a pleasant sensation to be bitten by an alligator. Stop it Mom.

[00:35:59] Mom stop this. I'm not going to let you come to these things anymore if you're going to start laughing at childhood stories I'm not even telling. I know exactly why she's laughing

[00:36:13] But so we're looking at this lizard do his his. And finally I went. Do you have any latex gloves. You know we have latex gloves. Great. So I put on two latex gloves walked over to Lizard and stuck my thumb right in front of his mouth and alligator lizards are really aggressive. So he went home. It's a scary challenge your eye bit my thumb as hard as he could. This was not pleasant but at least I had two levels of gloves and then I got to Jack Horner the lizard out of this dude's leg.

[00:36:38] It was like pulling a palm out of the pie went over to the sink held my thumb underneath the water ran water lizard dropped off picked up the alligator lizard said he has tasted human flesh he

cannot be returned to the wild popped him into a jar took him back to reptile rescue and he lived there for the next seven years till he died of old age. We named him Bowie

[00:36:59] He sired so many baby we know he was a he because we gave him some other alligator lizards try to figure it out clearly you don't have strong gender identity they mostly just have to lay the eggs or not.

[00:37:09] He did not but he made a lot and then he started eating his girlfriends. So we decided that he was tired of being a father and he got to live alone for the rest of his long alligator lizard life. We did not give him any more girlfriends after that but we did give him a bunch of Jerusalem crickets which are crickets about yay big. They're terrifying looking and he would say. He would do them damage

[00:37:37] Argued our guy. That was great. Are you OK there Mom.

[00:37:46] I was wondering about the story that your mom wants to tell apparently.

[00:37:52] So I when I was much younger than that like eleven I had an alligator lizard named Jade who I kept in a completely inappropriate territory. I deserved what I got. I had in one of those little box terrarium. You

[00:38:05] Can get it like PetSmart. I was eleven. I didn't know no one knew but Jade was great.

[00:38:10] I fed her hot dogs and baloney and crickets and she was fine with it but she hated me. She. Well she hated everyone she was a tiny lizard made of hate.

[00:38:19] And I would try to get her acclimated to humans and convince her that we were cool and she should like us and I would do this mostly by taking her out of her enclosure due to hold an alligator lizard you want to get their belly on the curve of your thumb and then pin them down with your other fingers so that they can't bite you. Because that is all they want to do in this world is bite you. So I was holding Jade and petting her back and try to calm her down as I would do for far too much time every day. And the cat knocked over the hermit crab enclosure it's another hermit crabs loose in the living room

[00:38:51] And I don't like that because hermit crabs despite being relatively small weird little crustaceans have a magical talent for getting into places they shouldn't and then dying and making this astonishing smell. So I started frantically trying to gather up the hermit crabs near my I'm still holding Jade as I'm going like this. So she latched onto my lower ar onto my upper arm so hard she clamps down like this was the moment she had been training for her entire life. And I started to scream because it hurt really badly. So Maya and my at the time stepfather comes charging out of the room where he'd been taking a nap convinced that I am being murdered that you know a battalion of bandits has broken into the house I'm dying and what he finds is me running in circles around living room screaming hi sorry. I'm sorry

[00:39:43] Let you go just let go. I'll let you go. It's okay. I lied

[00:39:50] We got her off my arm and that bitch spent the rest of her life in a tank for what she'd done but that is why my mother was laughing.

[00:39:58] I'll let you go I'll let you go. Gonna put you in an enclosure.

[00:40:05] It was a great blood blister. It was really impressive. I wish I had a picture of that too.

[00:40:11] Would you like an actual book question. Sure. OK

[00:40:15] So in the encrypted books why do it does verities family still call cryptic scripts. What is their opinion of the difference between normal creatures and crypts and why don't they just call everything people if they're people.

[00:40:35] Well they call everything people if you're intelligent they call you people but they have to be able to differentiate and the cryptic life label is used to distinguish between things that are currently acknowledged by science and things that are not so they call cryptic scripts because science doesn't admit that they are there. It's a reminder that they have to keep on functionally protecting the masquerade.

[00:40:58] Language is fun so I recommend your books to everyone.

[00:41:05] Thank you. But whenever someone asks oh who do you recommend Shana McGuire or what do you recommend of her. I go

[00:41:15] Free.

[00:41:18] So I was wondering if you if someone was completely new to your work and liked all of the genres that you write what would be the first book that you would tell them to pick up.

[00:41:28] I would say Rosemary and ru because it is my first book and therefore it is my roughest book. And if you start there I just get better and better.

[00:41:39] It is amazing how quickly I it turns out that publishing 45 novels in 10 years you improve at a remarkable rate whereas if they start with like every heart then I am clearly very good at my job and you go back to Rosemary and Rue and you're like What the shit.

[00:41:56] I'm still super proud of her as Mary Andrew. I think it stands up but there are choices I made in it that I wouldn't make today. You know linguistically speaking I grew up in California in the 1980s 1990s. There are words that I did not know were ablest until after the first several Tobi books came out and I am not saying yay censorship it's not censorship.

[00:42:18] It's choosing the words you use. I like it when I throw rocks at readers on purpose not by accident. And there are a lot of accidental rocks in the early Tobi books because I didn't know that those words were hurtful but you get to see that the usage of those words drop off and the prevalence of queer characters go through the roof.

[00:42:36] It's amazing.

[00:42:39] So yeah. Rosemary Andrew is usually my my go to for if you like everything I do. That's where to begin.

[00:42:46] I like it when all the questions are in a cluster because then both microphone people have to scuttle. So earlier you mentioned you were working on a Broadway musical. Are you allowed to tell us anything about that. So Kat and I are adapting another author's intellectual property. We do not yet have the license but we do have permission to continue with development until we have produced five or six songs that we can then go and present to the author in question and his agent.

[00:43:14] And if they approve they will allow us to proceed. I'm very excited. It's been a really fascinating process. It got a little sideline we're a year behind because cat had a baby and my cat died and that kind of messed up everything but the average development cycle on a Broadway show is six to eight years anyway so we're not super concerned yet. The day we get the license I promise you it will be unavoidable. If we weren't going out on the podcast I would tell you what it is. But since we are going out on the podcast I don't want to do anything that might endanger us actually getting that licensing is super important to me that we be able to keep going forward because it's gonna make people look at us so funny.

[00:44:02] I wanted to ask about the cover work for the encrypted series as you were just talking about the comics and how you made sure not to sexualize the female comic characters more than the Midlands and I noticed that the covers for it are some pretty stereotypical buxom thin waist women. I was curious about that decision making process.

[00:44:25] Have you read the encrypted books unlike four. Okay so one thing that you probably know by now is that they're completely accurate.

[00:44:33] Verity who is the girl in pink on the very first cover that cover is a snapshot of a moment where she is working as a professional ballroom dancer and working as a waitress at a strip club.

[00:44:45] But also if you look at the picture despite that she is wearing shoes you can't fight in you know she's got good muscle definition she's not a thin little waif she actually looks like she does the athletic things that she does. Ali fell who has traditionally done those covers was my choice.

[00:45:02] I campaigned for him and it was partially because my first series with DA which is still ongoing is the October day books. And if you look at those Tobey is styled like Harry Dresden you

know they set her up she is presented as if she were a male urban fantasy hero and that is completely accurate to her as a character she is not someone who does perform femininity very well she usually resents it. VERITY on the other hand is doing weaponized femininity and as you move through those covers Ali has been very very good about presenting the characters in ways that are accurate to them. Sarah and Shelby both of whom have appeared on covers are much more covered up. Shelby is much more practical she's wearing the kind of field gear that you get on someone that is working as a naturalist in the environments she's in Alice looks like she just escaped from an episode of Mad Max but that is also accurate. The only cover I would say breaks character accuracy really is tricks for free which is antimony posing on a roller coaster looking much more sex kitten than is necessarily accurate.

[00:46:08] But I 100 percent overcompensating Lee for giving of that cover because it was not done by Allie fell it was done by Lee Moyer who was brought in very very late in the process because Ali's liver gave out so we hit the point of you have about two weeks until cover deadline why isn't Ali answering email Oh he's not answering email because he's in the hospital and he might die.

[00:46:34] So Lee was able to step in and do that cover very fast very little time for revision. So

[00:46:44] It's kind of what Sony and Doyle list problem right. Like on a doilies level I forgive that cover completely because there is no way it could have been any better than it was.

[00:46:54] It's a beautiful piece of art that's not a perfect character study on a what Sony and level.

[00:46:59] I don't know maybe she thought she was about to get laid on top of a roller coaster and Tim Lee would be totally down for that.

[00:47:07] I love those covers I do. They are definitely pinups. They are definitely much more in the cheesecake arena but he's been so good about not pushing the characters past where they're cheesecake points would be and it was important to me that we have that immediate visual distinction from the Toby books because every book gets bad reviews period. I have one star reviews some of which I've looked at and gone wow I went to high school with you and some of which I looked at and went OK that that's fallen that's.

[00:47:38] But the worst reviews I have received and the only ones that have really made me kind of want to fight with the reviewers have been the ones that reviewed the books as if they were a book they were not.

[00:47:49] So like feed is not a very good horror novel. It's a political science fiction thriller. It's not a good horror novel.

[00:47:57] The Toby books are not good paranormal romances and I have had negative reviews of the Toby books because there wasn't enough fucking in them and I'm like Where in the world did you look at this book and get the idea that there would be a lot of fucking in it because it's not in the cover

and it's not in the cover text and it's not anything I've said about it like I do not have a laurel Hamilton blurb going hot. What I have is Charlene Harris you know who I adore but she is basically my grandmother going. I enjoy this very much. I'm like. Charlene writes really good sex but she doesn't put that in blurbs so I wanted to have that immediate.

[00:48:35] This isn't a Toby books that people wouldn't be going in and reviewing them as well. This is not a Toby book really. What else isn't it's

[00:48:45] So they make me happy.

[00:48:47] Unfortunately Ali will not be doing the cover for imaginary numbers that a witchcraft may well be his last unless there is a big reversal in his health it's the dance of microphone.

[00:49:01] So I started watching this show starving vs. the forces of evil.

[00:49:04] Based on your recommendation staffers of the forces of evil so good so good that everyone else should do. But I noticed a reason why when I watched the show you might enjoy it because of all the corn and I was wondering if you could explain why you're so fixated on corn fields and a lot of your Twitter and it was obvious in a short story you wrote the dawn and dusk story. If there was a particular origin story behind that or you just read like corn I really like corn mazes.

[00:49:33] I really like haunted attractions. It turns out that at night at night in a corn maze I am entirely one color and that color is the color of the corn because I start very pale and then I darken as I go down and that's what happens to corn stalks in an ill lit corn maze so I can disappear in a corn maze in less than 30 seconds. If you take your eyes off of me I'm gone and I actually have a beautiful series of pictures of my baby sister that was taken in a corn maze where they had lost me and she went and backed up against an innocent Cornwall so that mom could get a picture of her being cute and what she instead get what you have is just imagine my arms coming out frame one. Too

[00:50:22] As I'm grabbing her from behind and pulling her into the corn. It was the best nights.

[00:50:28] It was the best night but I watch a lot of horror movies I love horror movies and corn is creepy. It's really tall and it makes weird rustling noises and you don't know what's in there with you maybe it's me.

[00:50:41] Could be it's terrifying. It owns states.

[00:50:45] Corn is everywhere but there's also a Twilight Zone episode where a small boy with magical powers wishes people he doesn't like into the cornfield. And I had a boss when I still had a day job I work for the phone company who anytime he asked me to do something I didn't want to do I'd look at him and he'd go stop wishing me into the cornfield and that just sort of became a thing. Believe me if I could wish people into the cornfield the cornfield would be very full. So recently you started working with Marvel's

[00:51:20] And and not long before that you wrote a short story for the truth beyond paradox collection with onyx path. Yes. How does your process change when you're working in an established world.

[00:51:35] So I come from the fanfic minds. It doesn't really.

[00:51:39] The only change is that now I have editorial telling me what I can and can't do. Which is fine because I know these aren't my toys and its editorials job to make sure that they remain consistent and they remain solid and don't start to fall apart. Onyx path was weird because so

[00:51:59] I try not to speak ill of my publishers but I'm a big mage nerd.

[00:52:07] I played so much mage the Ascension which is part of why I did. Truth the um paradox and I am specifically a massive order of Hermes nerd.

[00:52:17] I spent 15 years going through a checklists that I had a player character from every house of Hermes. This included one character having twenty three year in-game quest to read found House Luxor because that was the only way I could have a house Luxor.

[00:52:32] P.s. And in the order of Hermes at the end of your apprenticeship when you graduate you fake the death of the self you were before you became an apprentice and then you take on a new name and you move forward into your new life with your significant new name.

[00:52:47] And so all of the characters in that story because it was a story about her medical practices all of the characters in that story had very carefully chosen richly significant names and then without telling me Onyx path made Tucker ization is a kickstarter reward level and changed the names of several characters without asking me which my mom got to hear me say some words she didn't know I knew when I got a copy of that anthology.

[00:53:12] So that was not fun. I don't like it when the IP holders don't seem to understand their own world as well as I do.

[00:53:23] You don't get to ask questions Mom you're my mother keep continuing in the theme of working in other people's worlds.

[00:53:33] I saw that you have um the uh um the book set in.

[00:53:42] Well the one with the fake Salt Lake City delegates. Yeah. Yes. Dead deadlines. It's delightful. Thank you.

[00:53:50] What would what was the biggest thing that you changed or added to the dead lambs world in that story so dead lands is a weird wild west role playing game which is a lot of fun.

[00:54:05] I enjoyed an enormous amount but it was so written by straight white dudes like that No no shame.

[00:54:13] You are who you are. But they did not consult with anyone so they were like

[00:54:18] The go stands cracked open the world and the horsemen of the apocalypse rose and suddenly there are monsters everywhere and racism was solved.

[00:54:27] I don't think that's how racism works at all.

[00:54:35] Mostly because even if you somehow magically remake the minds of everyone in the world. Systemic and generational inequality still exists and that's the thing that's gonna have to be overcome.

[00:54:47] Jazz hands. So I actually addressed that a little more than the other authors had that I mean a little because this is someone else's IP and when you're working in someone else's world you can only go so far on issues they don't really want to deal with and they didn't want deadlines to be political.

[00:55:04] I honestly feel that saying it's the Wild Wild West but there is just no racism it's magically all fixed is political. But you know you had to kind of threat that line. So that was the thing I changed the most. But really the dead lands book. I love it.

[00:55:19] It makes me very happy because if you look at the cover it has an evil pumpkin and a giant wasp on it. And that's about as on brand as you can get without also throwing in an I heart Stephen King T-shirt and maybe some candy corn you can ask questions if you want Mom it's OK mom.

[00:55:39] So my mother asks Are you forever done with feed which is a great question to come from your mother because she hears me rant about this all the time and yet she still means it sincerely. I am never done with anything but if my publishers don't commission more it doesn't matter.

[00:55:52] You know there are two volumes of indexing because forty seven North hasn't asked for a third right now orbit has not asked for the sequel to into the drowning DB right now orbit has not commissioned anything further in the newflash universe. If you want to see more books in a setting you have to buy the books in the setting that already exist in the case of newflash. I must politely request that you not buy the omnibus because the omnibus does not bring in as much money either for me and hence the paying of my power bills or for my publishers so that makes it look like interest has waned even though they are still making sales.

[00:56:31] I always feel like a jerk when I have to go please pay my power bill but that actually is a big part of my job is please pay my power bill.

[00:56:40] I have a question about into the drowning deep I'm a humongous lead large fan and I'd be very happy if you did another one.

[00:56:48] I would really like to do another one.

[00:56:50] This this copy has actually been around the planet. I chose it for my little C. Hora postal book club so that's brilliant. It went from I sent it down to Arizona. Then it went to b c and then it went to Portugal Spain and then Singapore and it took about a year with all the while image and the reading and because I put all this all this in it and I have a notebook I should show you. Anyway we had a massive massive discussion about everything but one of the biggest things that enthralled me and that we talked about a lot was all the scientific stuff and I want to know about your research and what you what was because it comes across so clearly that you did some and and I'd like to hear a little bit about that.

[00:57:45] So I actually talked to about a dozen Marine biologists from all over the world specializing in different areas. The most fun was my friend Kate. She's my friend now it's wonderful who studies specifically brittle sea stars and their poetry in motion.

[00:58:00] You know when we see them in a bucket they just look like a tangle of sad chord but when you see them moving Gosh it's amazing and it's from her that I learned about the crab buckets and also the sheer number of fish that live in the butts of other fish.

[00:58:15] There's a whole genus of fish that does nothing but live in the asses of sea cucumbers. That's their goal.

[00:58:21] That is bad.

[00:58:22] That is a bad life but so mostly it evolved I taught a lot of aquariums I talked to a lot of marine biologists I went to a couple of research institutes I did go out on a couple of boats but not for very long because I can't sleep on boats so that does not go well for me.

[00:58:38] There is an octopus trainer named Melanie who I need to find because I think she may be my separated at birth twin that my mom never told me about she looks exactly like me and that's wonderful because when I go to any aquarium where she has worked during the lifespan of the resident octopuses they come out and put on shows for me.

[00:58:58] They will be doing ballet in the water because Melanie's back Melanie is back and I'm like yes I am your God. Dance for me

[00:59:08] If I get to right out of the swallowing sea which is the sequel for that I've actually talked to a bunch of amusement parks and zoos and I've done some tours backstage to see how things are put together and how they isolate the various areas because the sequel is basically Jurassic Park but with mermaids.

[00:59:26] The first one was Jaws but with mermaids it's kind of a nightmare wasteland of a series and I love it.

[00:59:33] Beyond the research process was just so great. I got to touch so many weird fish and so many weird fish touched me.

[00:59:40] Did you get to go to an autopsy not a human not on this case.

[00:59:47] I did get to watch the necropsy a giant squid a young giant squid but still the smell was amazing such good smells not good.

[01:00:00] So I'm going to back a question I'm talking about. You mentioned indexing and sequels and stuff and other than buying books. What is the best way to let publishers know that we're interested more because I love indexing. I've listened to the audio books so many times more.

[01:00:15] So the best way to. Here's a fun thing because this is a conversation every author I know has a lot where it's the you are not personally responsible for my career you're not. That's not your job. You're a reader you get to read you get to enjoy what you enjoy. At the same time however if you want to enjoy specific things if you want to know that an author you like the work of or are personally invested in and will continue doing the things that you enjoy. You do need to take certain steps because the publishers don't listen to us.

[01:00:48] You know if I say to my publisher I had 20 people tell me that they wanted a sequel. My publisher actually here's my mom wants a sequel.

[01:00:57] They don't believe us. So the best ways to make known that you really do want to see more are basically by the book. If you can buy the book New that is the single best way to send a message to the publisher that it's something you want to see more of.

[01:01:13] Not everyone's in a position to do that especially not when things are coming out in hardcover.

[01:01:19] So if you can't buy the book if you're checking it out from your local library that is a wonderful thing too because libraries do send Circulation reports to our publishers leaving reviews and I mean honest reviewers if you hate the books say you hate the book.

[01:01:32] But since most readers won't even engage that far. If you leave a review at all that signals that there is some passion and some interest.

[01:01:41] And then finally write to the publisher directly in some way. If you can find any contact information on their Web site reach out to them like that so that they don't feel as if they're being called out in public.

[01:01:53] You can also tweet them or Facebook them and just say you know hey at 47 North loved indexing hope to see more.

[01:02:00] It means so much more coming from you than it does coming from me that I do have to recommend that if you want to see more of something you haven't seen in a while. Indexing is in an awkward space because 47 north is obviously it's Amazon Publishing its Amazon serials. They're never gonna let those go out of print. So no one else will ever pick up book 3 but there is always a chance. And if they get enough feedback they might still go that way.

[01:02:25] I haven't told them no.

[01:02:29] So speaking of us all having our own unique reading interests. So I'm probably preaching to the choir here. But I did want to put out a plug and I promise it'll be related for SPL as your next five books form where you can ask them to recommend five books to you because two years ago I submitted a list of the books that are my favorites and said that you know I tend to really like weird fiction and sci fi and that I like fantasy but I tend to prefer magical realism over high fantasy or things with ladies in bikinis and dragons on the cover and that I especially like things with strong women and LGBTQ characters and so they did respond to me and started off by saying that they looked for weird fantasy novels with a minimum of chainmail babes on the cover and that was how I found out about every heart of Dory.

[01:03:20] So if you're looking for new ways to describe your books you could consider that one. Thank you SPL.

[01:03:30] I've been getting a lot of ads recently recommending I buy a book called middle game.

[01:03:37] I sadly don't think I'm going to do that.

[01:03:44] Sure. So I know that you write under Shannon McGuire and mirror grand and I'm curious to why you developed that second name and how the works. I've only read Shannon McGuire books so how they differ.

[01:03:58] Well it's true. I'm going to talk about myself in the third person for a moment because otherwise this sounds even weirder. Shannon writes urban fantasy modern portal fantasy and sci and short fiction meet and also superhero fiction.

[01:04:14] Now Mira writes biomedical science fiction thrillers what this means is that while Shannon sometimes trends into science fictional topics especially in short fiction she doesn't have to do any research. Shannon makes shit up Mira spends four years talking to scientists Sean and makes more shit up. Mira tries to stab Sean and in her sleep. No not really.

[01:04:39] We have mostly managed to avoid this tonight which may be a record for me at a recent uni. But as to why there are two of me.

[01:04:45] Sadly the patriarchy exists urban fantasy which is my primary genre and I love urban fantasy makes me so happy I was a folklore and mythology major and urban fantasy is basically the fairy tales of the modern world is widely dismissed as a girly genre and a lot of people assume that it's all vampire porn.

[01:05:05] Now there's nothing wrong with vampire porn. I read a lot of vampire porn I've written vampire porn but the entire genre is not vampire porn. There's a huge breadth in urban fantasy but simply and provably these are things that you can look up it's not just impressions. Urban Fantasy written by men is consistently viewed as being more literary and having more actual worth than urban fantasy by women.

[01:05:31] A thing I can't prove but my publisher agrees with me as a probable assessment I'm the only person still standing from my urban fantasy your group.

[01:05:39] Now of course I like my books but I read all of the books in my urban fantasy or group because I'm a nerd and I am not so far.

[01:05:49] Astonishingly head and shoulders above everyone else in my your group that I should have been the only one to make it. There were several people performing on my level but they didn't make it. They all had female names and they all had main characters who were styled like women on their covers and we honestly do feel that people thought I was a guy to begin with and were thus willing to pick up my urban fantasy on the assumption that it wouldn't be vampire porn. Because of all this other urban fantasy authors including Carrie Vaughn and Tanya Huff have encountered strong resistance when trying to move into male dominated subgenres. A lot of men hashtag not all men but a lot of men feel that if you've written urban fantasy everything you do will be fluffy. Everything you do will be somehow magically vampire porn. So when we approached orbit with the newsflash trilogy with feed deadline and blackout with those were not their names at the time they had terrible punny names. So thanks to Dong one song for fixing that. But when we approached them they pretty much went. You want us to give you money for an untested Urban Fantasy author to break into a male dominated genre. Where people are going to have preconceptions based on her name because they've already seen it on vampire form. Yeah we won't do that. She has to be someone else. We chose a distinctly female pseudonym for the newsflash trilogy even though that actually may have hurt my initial sales because there are a lot of guys who won't read biomedical written by women because I kill so many women. I have a very strongly female cast because I write a lot of girls but that also is a world where a lot of people die and it reads differently when it's a woman slaughtering women than when it's a man slaughtering women. So I wanted people to feel when I started knocking off the girls like I was doing it for plot reasons not because it was funny.

[01:07:57] I have had more than twenty five twenty five is where I stopped counting. Men come up to me at book signings to say that feed is their favorite book that I have in some way changed their lives.

You know I. You've helped me reconnect with the genre or you made me think about things different or whatever. Big praise big joy. The stinger in those 25 cases was and I would never have picked it up if I had known you were Shawn and McGuire so that is why there are two of me.

[01:08:27] Because misogyny is real and it sucks and it's not always conscious. We all have so many unconscious biases that we're living with and unpacking every day. And that's hashtag not on the air but also hashtag not all women. You know we all have to live and deal with this society that we're in. As to how I keep the two you know functional I mostly don't. I don't think I've used mirrors Twitter account in years I only still have it to keep people from camping it. I have forgotten the password to her email account my agent is mad at me

[01:08:59] But the name is is basically a branding thing. Back in the 1990s Disney Walt Disney started Touchstone Pictures and they did it solely so that no one would ever be able to utter the sentence. WALT DISNEY PRESENTS Reservoir Dogs and that is basically what the Mira Grant name is for at this point is let's never say that sentence shall we. So I think the librarians want me to stop.

[01:09:25] Is there anyone that had anything pressing that didn't get answered and you want it all going once going twice the original names of the news flash books were news flash the Morning Edition and deadline news because we all go for terrible puns. They were then changed to feed blackout and deadline in that order. And I am very grateful to Connie Willis for writing a book called deadline which came out in paperback a month before Book 2 of the newflash trilogy because it caused my editors to reverse those titles so that it became feed deadline blackout. And that's good because deadlines make me crazy. I don't. I don't mean that in a pejorative sense. I own my own sanity but deadlines. I do not do well with deadlines and so I was not looking forward to writing a book called Deadline. Like I don't think I can open a file that says deadline every day.

[01:10:23] And I didn't have to. I wrote feed then I wrote blackout and then I wrote blackout again.

[01:10:32] It was perfect.

[01:10:39] Ok lots of blank staring I think I'm going to sign things for you now I've got a table over here. The university bookstore is selling books.

[01:10:45] If you did not bring your own please feel free to buy books because it does feed my cats and my cats will eat me if they are not fed. I am Shannon Maguire. This is your public library. That's my mother. That's my table. Good night

[01:11:02] This podcast was presented by the Seattle Public Library and Foundation and made possible by your contributions to the Seattle Public Library Foundation. Thanks for listening.