

# Spotlight on: Michael Bailey

## October 2017

### Biography



Michael Bailey is a professional writer from Falmouth, Massachusetts who kind of hates writing bios.

Michael has been a working writer since 1998. In 2013, Michael ended his tenure as a reporter at the Falmouth Enterprise to focus on his creative writing. In September 2013, Michael released his debut YA novel [Action Figures](#). Every book in the series has landed on Kindle top ten best-seller lists, and *Secret Origins* was the number one book on two Amazon best-seller lists (June/July 2016). His first adult novel, [The Adventures of Strongarm & Lightfoot](#), a humorous fantasy adventure, was released in 2015.

Over the years Michael has contributed several articles to [Renaissance Magazine](#) and other local publications, and has since 2004 worked on the writing staff of two New England-based renaissance faire production companies: Pastimes Entertainment and the Connecticut Renaissance Faire.

Follow Michael online at [innsmouthlook.com](http://innsmouthlook.com).

[Find Michael's work through the Sharon Public Library!](#)

### Interview

**1. Having read over your bio, I'll bite—why do you say that you “kind of hate” writing bios?**

*I am not by nature self-promotional. I dislike talking about myself because I always feel like I'm somehow bragging, and I hate braggarts. This is admittedly a bad trait for an indie author to have, seeing as a big part of the job is self-promotion, so it's been a bit of a hump I've had to learn to get over.*

**2. How did you train yourself to get over that sticking point? Practice, professional coaching, reassurance from friends and fans? As someone who has had difficulty self-promoting, what words of advice would you offer to other indie authors with this problem?**

*I did a lot of research before I released my first novel and knew going in that I'd have to be a little more aggressive about promoting myself if I were to succeed as an indie author, so part of the process for me was simply psyching myself up to be more talkative about my work, and then experimenting with my new approaches so I could balance personal comfort with the necessary evil of self-promotion. When I talk to other aspiring and new authors about promotions, I encourage them to experiment until they find their own happy medium,*

*and be prepared to make mistakes and feel awkward along the way until they hit on the right formula. I do also tend to suggest they take a measured approach to self-promotion, because hard sell tactics and flagrant carnival barker-level self-hype rarely go over well with audiences.*

**3. As an indie author, how do you go about marketing your work? Obviously you have a website—did you build that yourself? Do you use social media as well? word-of-mouth? other resources?**

*Marketing for me is an ongoing learning experience. I experiment periodically with new approaches to see what works well enough that I can add it to my regular practices—which, at present, are focused on maintaining my website and social media presences. My [website](#) is a Wordpress pre-fab job, which is great for keeping the ongoing maintenance down. The site automatically cross-posts to most of my social media accounts ([Facebook](#), [Twitter](#), [Tumblr](#), etc) so that's less work there. At the advice of fellow author [Remy Flagg](#) I started up a weekly newsletter and I'm still feeling my way through that. The only other notable thing I do is make the first books in my two series available for free in advance of releasing a new novel, and I promote that through several website and e-newsletters that promote free e-books. It's proven a great way to attract new readers, and every time I've done a free giveaway, I've seen sales of the subsequent books spike.*

**4. You have published books in both print and electronic forms. Do you have a preference for one or the other? How come?**

*As a reader I still love print books. There's a tactile quality to print books e-readers just don't have, and I always love having a big library to admire. As an author, however, I like e-books because they essentially make me more accessible to potential new fans. Readers are far more likely to take a chance on a \$3 e-book than on a \$15 print edition. E-books account for the vast majority of my sales in any given year.*

**5. Some people think that electronic publishing is the way of the future, and of course predictions of the print book's demise have been relatively frequent since e-publishing took off. Do you think print books will go extinct? Or, at least, that e-publishing will eventually end up dominating the market?**

*The publishing industry seems to be in constant flux. Every month I read something new about how a particular format is dominating the market and every month it's slightly different, so I personally don't invest myself in any one format over another. Every format has its fans and I don't expect print, e-books, or audiobooks to go extinct anytime soon—nor do I think any one format will so dominate the market that indie authors can afford to ignore the others.*

**6. Describe your writing style in five words or less.**

*My writing style has been described as "snark fiction."*

## 7. And how would you define “snark fiction”?

*My writing style is generally a little sarcastic when it comes to tropes and clichés of the genre I write in. I’m always poking fun at the conventions of superhero stories and fantasy epics and playing with readers’ expectations, but not in a way that suggests I hate those trappings. I try not to go full “wink-wink nudge-nudge” too often because that can take readers out of the story, but I can’t approach tired elements of a given genre’s formula with a straight face, either.*

## 8. So you like to poke (gentle) fun at tropes and conventions. Are there any subjects that are completely taboo for you?

*I won’t say I would never write something simply because I don’t want to limit myself by taking tools out of my toolbox, but love triangles are among the tropes I don’t want to touch, even for the sake of poking fun at them. They’re tired and overused, especially in YA fiction. I regard love triangles as a cheap, lazy way to generate artificial drama and I want nothing to do with them.*

## 9. I understand that you will be releasing a new title this month. What can you tell us about that?

*The new book is The Adventures of Strongarm and Lightfoot: Blades of Glory, the next installation in my humorous fantasy series. The heroes of the series cross paths with a party of celebrity adventurers and find themselves vying for the same job, to recover a possibly magical artifact from a gang of bandits. But, as is often the case with the protagonists, there’s more to this job than first meets the eye and they soon find themselves in way over their heads.*

## 10. Where can we find your new work to read it?

*My new book will be available on [Amazon](#) on print and Kindle edition, and on my website in print, mobi, and epub formats—and anyone who buys a print edition directly from me will get a signed copy.*

### **Michael’s Top 10 Books**

**[I Am Legend](#) by Richard Matheson.** *One of the best horror stories ever, and it has what I consider one of the most powerful last pages of any novel ever.*

**[American Gods](#) by Neil Gaiman.** *My favorite work by my favorite author.*

**[Ready Player One](#) by Ernest Cline.** *This book is like someone took my entire childhood and turned it into a dystopian sci-fi novel—except it’s not a total downer like a lot of dystopian sci-fi.*

**[Anno Dracula](#)** by **Kim Newman**. A spiritual sequel to Bram Stoker's [Dracula](#) in the vein (ha) of Alan Moore and Kevin O'Neill's [The League of Extraordinary Gentlemen](#). The sequel, [The Bloody Red Baron](#), I think is a deeper story, but the first novel of the series is a much more fun read.

**[The Clockwork Century series](#)** by **Cherie Priest**. A steampunk alt-history series in which the Civil War is still going on and zombies walk the land. The series peaks early with the first two books, [Boneshaker](#) and [Dreadnought](#), but the world is well-realized and the characters are engaging.

**[The Dresden Files series](#)** by **Jim Butcher (book 1: [Storm Front](#))**. It takes a few books for this urban fantasy series to really get moving, but when it hits its stride, it's addictive.

**[The Amazing Adventures of Kavalier and Clay](#)** by **Michael Chabon**. Without question the most beautifully written book I've ever found. Chabon's prose is absolutely astounding and adds such weight to the story, inspired in part by the men who created Superman, Jerry Siegel and Joe Shuster.

**[The Passage](#)** by **Justin Cronin**. A horror/post-apocalyptic future tale that begins with one of the most emotionally devastating opening chapters I've ever read.

**[If Chins Could Kill: Confessions of a B-Movie Actor](#)** by **Bruce Campbell**. The cult actor hilariously recalls his early days, including the amusingly tortuous experience of filming the *Evil Dead* movies that made him semi-famous.

**The Works of H.P. Lovecraft ([Volume 1](#) and [Volume 2](#))**. There are dozens of stories available in any number of collections, and it's worth it for any horror fan to read them all, but my favorites include "The Shadow Over Innsmouth," "The Call of Cthulu," "The Dunwich Horror," and "Pickman's Model."