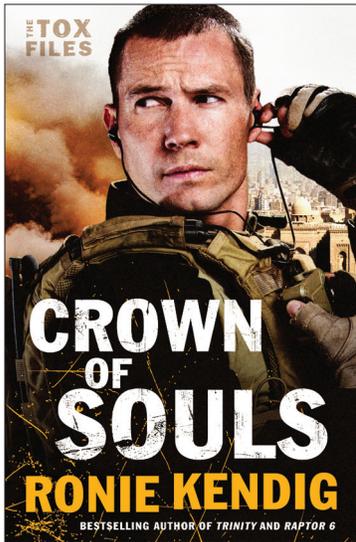


QUESTIONS & ANSWERS WITH RONIE KENDIG



Crown of Souls

THE TOX FILES #2

by Ronie Kendig

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1. In *THE TOX FILES*, you write in a slightly different vein while maintaining your Rapid-Fire Fiction brand of writing and the paramilitary element. What coerced you into writing archaeological threads in your stories?

After writing a dozen paramilitary novels, I was looking to do something new, to shake up my “complacency” and rediscover my love of writing. Don’t get me wrong—I’ve always LOVED writing, but I like to do new things, so when I was doing some creative mulling (otherwise known as Facebook trolling), an author I follow posted a picture of an ancient site and said it was located in the oldest, most continually inhabited city, then asked readers to find out where it was. That hooked me! I was game—procrastinating, I mean, percolating my story—so I dove into the hunt. Which invariably led me to Aleppo... and the Aleppo Codex. And as they say, the rest is history.

2. *Crown of Souls* received a Top Pick from RT Reviews, and in their blurb they mention the extensive research done for this series. How have you done this research?

Over the past three years, I have had so much fun delving deep into history and learning about other cultures—which is one of the greatest ironies of life, since as a kid in high school, I hated history (and math, but let’s not linger on negative experiences). It has been so fascinating to read about how one event or general impacted a country and other countries. I’ve had the great benefit of meeting a real Doctor Cathey, who has multiple PhDs, has led digs in Israel, and is not only a great intellect, but he’s got some mad-crazy creative skills, too. I’ve had so much fun with this series and exploring the past and its impact on our future.

3. How did you come up with the title of the novel and its artifact?

I wish I could claim credit for *Crown of Souls*, but in researching and talking to the real Dr. Cathey, he read a passage from some ancient writing that could, essentially, be translated “crown of souls,” and there birthed the title and its artifact.

4. *THE TOX FILES* is named after the main character, Tox. How did you come up with that?

There are people in our lives who are truly toxic and challenge us, but I thought—what if that was actually a character’s name? How would that drive the story and the plot? Not to mention, it just plain sounds cool.

5. The quote by Nietzsche is a theme of *Crown of Souls*. What made you choose this?

The full quote—“He who fights with monsters might take care lest he thereby become a monster. And if you gaze for long into an abyss, the abyss gazes also into you.”—seemed like such a perfect segue into the development of Tox’s character. He has long believed he’s toxic, so it was a natural progression for him to examine the “monster” within himself.

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