



Cry of the Raven

THE RAVENWOOD SAGA #3

by Morgan L. Busse

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QUESTIONS & ANSWERS WITH MORGAN L. BUSSE

1. What is a theme or idea you explore in *Cry of the Raven*?

I've always wanted to write about a married couple and show how two people can be strong in their own right and even stronger together. When one spouse is down, the other can help lift him or her up. But I also wanted to be realistic in how I wrote the married relationship—the ups, the downs, the fights, the triumphs. I think I accomplished that with *Cry of the Raven*.

2. What part of this series surprised you the most when you were writing it?

The characters always surprise me. I usually know the big events in the story and lead the plot toward those events. But as I write, it's like the characters come alive. They tell me why they think and act the way they do. Even the villain has her own hopes, dreams, and hurts. It's as if they are real people, and I'm telling their story.

3. As you're world-building, you need to create a place that's recognizable enough for readers to join you, but also different from what other authors have done before. How do you balance that?

I'm a huge history lover! Because of that, I'm always drawing inspiration from history, cultures, and civilizations. As a world-builder, I find it helpful to look at how our own world came to be, and then use that as inspiration for my novels. For example, in my RAVENWOOD series, I based the Dominia Empire on Genghis Khan and the Mongol Empire. I studied how he led his people, how he inspired his people to fight, and how he went about conquering the lands.

In my steampunk novels, I use a lot of pieces from the Victorian era to shape my worlds—from the rise of science during that time period, to the clothing styles, to modes of transportation (both real and made up).

I find combining something familiar and my own imagination helps ease the reader into my worlds.

4. What is the most difficult part about writing for you?

Writing the first draft. I'm a really slow writer, so it takes me months to write the first draft. That means being disciplined enough to sit down every weekday and write. Sometimes it feels like I'll never finish the story. But after a couple of months, and as I approach the ending, it's all worth it.

5. How does your faith impact how you approach storytelling?

I love writing about people who are faced with hard choices full of darkness and despair, and then find the light. I don't set out to write those stories; they just happen. When I start writing about a character, they begin telling me about their past, their fears, and that they don't know how they're going to keep going. As I keep writing, the light starts to seep into their life, and I get excited because I know it's God working in the background.

Yeah, it's fiction, but I see this all the time in real life, and I love that it shows up in my writing as well. My favorite scenes are the ones when a character finally comes face-to-face with God and realizes that they were never alone. God was always there with them. I love those scenes because I want the reader to realize how much God loves them, and that no matter how dark life becomes, He is always there—helping us, carrying us.