



Media Kit



Bio:

I have never found enough fantasy adventure with threads of beauty, romance, and wonder.

I grew up in the California hills with my four siblings, building forts in the oaks.

The fuzzy-sweet smell of acorns and moss complemented the perfume of lupines and golden poppies under the summer sun. We didn't have TV but instead listened to the night-song of crickets and dreamed of our day's adventures. We hunted ground squirrels with our home-made bows, but never got any; rode our Red-flyer wagon down our mountain; and roamed the hills far and wide.

I learned to read early, and entertained my brothers and sisters with many stories. They loved *Narnia*, *The Young Trailers*, and extraordinary fantasy. Robin McKinley's *The Blue Sword* enthralled me.

Now I enjoy family, old bookstores, and hiking the wild.

I wrote *Falcon Heart* and my other books for all of us who enjoy fantasy adventure with threads of myth, romance, and mystery.

Words hold so much power.

History:

Since I began *Falcon Heart*, I've attended conferences and devoured how-to books from James Scott Bell to Sol Stein, including Deborah Chester's *The Fantasy Fiction Formula*. While writing

the *Falcon Chronicle* adventure, I have journeyed with the fascinating stories of my writing group, Fantasy for Christ, and many authors both traditionally and Indie published.

Immersive fantasy adventure like *Falcon Heart* and the rest of the *Falcon Chronicle* series releases the imagination to the beauty of new worlds. Worlds that hold fast to truth and goodness in the face of evil, and explore the mysterious forces of love, fear, hatred and hope.

Blurb for Falcon Heart:

The first book in a historical YA fantasy series, [Falcon Heart](#) is a medieval adventure where a heroine struggles for her people and her place, similar to Sherwood Smith's *Crown Duel*. Set in the time of Stephen Lawhead's *King Raven* trilogy, the *Falcon Chronicle* series explores what happened when an early form of martial art reached Britannia in the hands of an enslaved stronghold first daughter.

A band of Arabic slavers kidnap Kyrin Cieri and murder her mother on the coast of Britannia. Forced to sail for Araby with an exiled warrior from the East and a peasant girl closer than blood, Kyrin learns Subak to protect them.

She vows to face the blade that killed her mother and gain justice for her blood. For Kyrin must return to her father's side and take up her keys as Cierheld's stronghold first daughter.

On the caravan march to Oman, a strange dagger of Damascus steel shaped like a falcon pursues Kyrin through tiger-haunted dreams. She escapes from the raiders of the sands only to be embroiled in the secrets of the caliph's court.

Kyrin's master wants many things of her. But first he must make her his tool and the caliph's.

To keep her friends from a lingering death, Kyrin Cieri, keeper of the keys, takes up justice against hate and a dagger against her master's sword. She can save them . . . if she can pay the price the falcon dagger demands.

Stories like Kyrin's give shape and mystery to historical fantasy—to its many roots and to its flowering in the twenty-first century. Words hold so much power.

What wall bars you from love, from mystery, and from courage? Is it a lack of clean fantasy, fear of trying something new, or... ?

Crossover: Find the Eternal, the Adventure.

If you wish to contact me about *Falcon Heart* or my other novels for a book review or for more information, send your email here:

azaleadabill@gmail.com

Thank you!

Interview Questions/Author Q and A

Q: You say you write clean YA fantasy adventure—what is that?

A: Words hold a lot of power. I have never found enough clean fantasy adventure on digital or physical shelves. And by clean fantasy, I mean fantasy adventure with a sense of the mystery and beauty of life, and of our Creator, who gave this life to all of us. Also, clean fantasy adventure always has a kind of "romance" about it, in addition to the usual romance thread. "Romance" in this context means in the old sense of the supernatural, the heroic, and the mysterious. I want to add more of this type of great romantic fantasy to our entertainment.

Clean fantasy releases the imagination to new worlds: to hope, despair, weakness and strength, evil and goodness under suns near and far. It weaves human experience into myriad adventures and explores the chain-breaking force of true relationships in the face of evil. I think clean fantasy can exist in most fantasy sub-genres. Except you would not find them in erotica or horror fantasy. I've never wanted to travel there.

To my heart, the clarion-clear call of fantasy adventure is hope. Hope despite fear.

Q: What is *Falcon Heart* about?

A: *Falcon Heart* is an immersive medieval YA fantasy with threads of wonder, romance, and mystery woven in. Fans of Anna Thayer's *The Traitor's Heir* (The Knight of Eldaran series), Lisa T. Bergren's River of Time series, and Patrick Carr's *The Shock of Night* (The Darkwater Saga) would enjoy *Falcon Heart*.

It is the tale of Kyrin Cieri, stronghold first daughter, who fears a blade after her mother is murdered and seeks courage. Kyrin's dreams of a tiger and a captive falcon lead her into a deadly conflict of revenge, compassion, and intrigue between the Caliph's slaver and those Kyrin loves.

The Falcon Chronical is an immersive fantasy of assassins and war, friends and enemies, betrayal and love. Kyrin fights for her freedom, her heart, and to save her people. If you enjoy YA fantasy adventure, try *Falcon Heart*.

Q: Kyrin Cieri journeys from Britain to Arabia in *Falcon Heart*. Did you find the research daunting?

A: Reading Wilfred Thesiger's account of Arabia, among others, was so interesting I did not have time to think of being daunted. Other books about early Britain also drew me in.

After a lot more research, when *Falcon Heart* was going to my editor, readers brought a few questions to my attention. The research felt daunting then, as if *Falcon Heart* would never be finished.

Q: Medieval Tae Kwon Do and weaponry and warfare play large roles in *Falcon Heart*. Where did you learn about these?

A: I have practiced martial arts and archery, and I've also worked with hand weapons a little. The fight scenes in *Falcon Heart* are a combination of research and my own learning of weapons and hand-to-hand fighting.

Q: How long did *Falcon Heart* take to write?

A: I started writing before college on a different novel, but I stopped after a few chapters. Later, I realized I gave up too easily. Then when *Falcon Heart* began to grow in my mind, I told the Lord I would not quit until it was finished unless he made it clear he wanted me too. So I wrote around school, an illness, and work.

For four years of the last fifteen, I wrote seriously. With my novel at four hundred pages and growing, Jeanette Windle, author of *The DMZ*, helped me see that I had drawn the bones of *Falcon Heart* and a sequel, *Falcon Flight*. The first half of the manuscript went to my editor soon after as *Falcon Heart*.

Q: What was your most difficult obstacle to writing *Falcon Heart*?

A: Two things threatened to stop me: uncertainty that *Falcon Heart* would reach readers beyond family and friends, and my conviction that this sentence or that word could be tinkered into better shape.

Q: What is the theme of *Falcon Heart*?

A: Overcoming fear. Fear of uncertain life, fear of loss, and fear of love and the vulnerability it brings. In a word, fear of growth.

Q: What inspired you to write such a fantasy of fear, struggle, and hope?

A: Don't laugh! I saw some early *Xena, Warrior Princess* episodes and Kyrin's story sprang from what Xena stirred in my imagination. She fought evil and was brave but not invincible.

Xena also made me sad for how much deeper a character she could have been, for how much she missed as a person. Kyrin's story has few similarities besides the surface aspect of martial art, since Kyrin's Subak is portrayed without requiring gravity's suspension. (You can laugh now, if you know real martial art.)

If you like clean fantasy adventure, you will find pictures, peeks, and *Falcon Heart* at www.azaleadabill.com.

Q: Are you writing more fantasy novels like *Falcon Heart* and *Falcon Flight*?

A: Three companion stories to finish out the Falcon Chronicle series are in the works. Gathered under one title, *The Falcon Dagger*, these three continue Kyrin's story of courage. They are the epic tale of a monk's battle against his soul for the freedom of Northumbria, how an armsman discovers a mysterious lost sword and gains his true love and, entwined with the spreading impacts of Kyrin's unarmed martial art, the final fate of the falcon dagger.

Currently I also have a file of lined story cards (converted recipe cards) where I jot down scenes and story ideas. Most of my story ideas are fantasy, not in the same place or time as *Falcon Heart*. Sign up for my newsletter for more information.

Q: *Falcon Heart*'s characters live rich, varied lives. Is Kyrin, Tae, or Alaina modeled on a real person?

A: Yes, on more than one person. Because all people play more than one character role. And no one's personality is simplistic.

Kyrin's fears and her battle to overcome in order to live well, resonate with me. Also many facets of the lesser characters and their struggles in *Falcon Heart*.

Some readers may glimpse parts of themselves in the story. But that is what a good book does. All the characters we travel with reflect part of us, unless they are completely alien. And even aliens in Sci-fi are not usually *that* alien, or we put the book down.

Q: You mention clean fantasy—what does that mean to you? Do you plan to write more clean fantasy adventure?

A: I define clean fantasy adventure as any story that includes the timeless things that our spirits thrive on: things like truth, loyalty, sacrifice, and love, with the mystery of life and a sense of joy, without getting into unnecessary details of muck and evil.

To my mind, fantasy adventure always reflects something of the epitome of sacrificial love that happened in our history. This reflection in *Falcon Heart* springs from the mystery and power behind the peregrine falcon as a symbol, and the bird's brave sacrifice, an idea that works through Kyrin herself, and is revealed when she answers the final call to grasp a falcon's courage.

As to writing more clean fantasy adventure, I don't think I can avoid it. Fantasy enralls me. I write facets of what I see and dream about, and I see truth active in many ways this world, and in the written worlds that I imagine by extrapolation from ours.

I don't define "fantasy" as it is sometimes used, having to do with deceit or self-delusion, but I use it in the sense of C. S. Lewis's "Mythic Fantasy" as he speaks of it on page 66, 67 in *An Experiment in Criticism*.

Surely the author is not saying [about Mythic Fantasy] ‘This is the sort of thing that happens?’ Or surely, if he is, he lies? But he is not. He is saying, ‘Suppose this happened, how interesting, how moving, the consequences would be! Listen. It would be like this.’ ... The *raison d’etre* of the story is that we shall weep, or shudder, or wonder, or laugh as we follow it. ... Admitted fantasy is precisely the kind of literature which never deceives at all.”

And as J. R. R. Tolkien says in, *On Fairy-stories*,

When we can take green from grass, blue from heaven, and red from blood, we have already an enchanter’s power—upon one plane; and the desire to wield that power in the world external to our minds awakes. ... The peculiar quality of the ”joy” in successful Fantasy can thus be explained as a sudden glimpse of the underlying reality or truth. It is not only a “consolation” for the sorrow of this world, but a satisfaction, and an answer to that question, 'Is it true?'

Yes, with Lewis and Tolkien I believe clean fantasy adventure contains many truths that point to absolute truth on a spiritual level.

Crossover: Find the Eternal, the Adventure.

Discover clean fantasy at www.azaleadabill.com