

From Cyber Security to YA Fantasy Realms

LAUREN LOUISE HAZEL'S JOURNEY

Exploring Myths, Inspirations, and the Literary Fantasies that Fuel a Dual Life of Security and Sorcery

In the enchanting realm where cybersecurity meets the mystical realms of young adult fantasy, we discover the multifaceted Lauren Louise Hazel. By day, she maneuvers the intricate landscapes of cybersecurity, but when the sun sets, she wields her pen to craft compelling tales that transport readers into captivating worlds.

From the onset, it's clear that Lauren's literary passions were nurtured by a childhood surrounded by books. Her father, a benevolent enabler of her love for literature, ensured a steady supply of books even without demanding pocket money, nurturing a fervor for storytelling that echoes through her work today.

The influences shaping Lauren's penmanship are as diverse as her interests. Classics like *Lord of the Rings* and *The Hunger Games* reside comfortably alongside the works of Haruki Murakami and GRR Martin in her hall of inspiration. This fusion of timeless epics and modern sagas forms the cornerstone of her imaginative prowess. In a candid revelation, Lauren shares her dream guest list for a literary gathering, envisioning a soirée ignited by the wit of Stephen Fry and the secrets whispered by GRR Martin about the true end of *The Song of Ice and Fire*. A blend of charm and intrigue, surely.

Her literary tastes traverse the spectrum, from the intensity of classics like *Wuthering Heights* to the lighter romcom realms of Sophia Kinsella. Yet, Lauren's creative ventures gravitate towards the young adult fantasy domain, a realm she frequented since her dad stood in line for a first edition of *Harry Potter and The Goblet of Fire*.

Amidst musings on her writing routine, favorite characters (Princess Leia holds a special place in her heart), and guilty pleasures (chocolate being the indispensable writing companion), Lauren opens a gateway into her latest literary offerings. 'The Reign of the Occult', her inaugural foray into the mystical realms, presents a riveting urban fantasy that earned acclaim for its dark allure and captivating characters. The recent release of *The Burning Bandit* further

showcases her storytelling prowess, a testament to her eclectic inspirations and studies of Asian culture. With the sequel *The Queen of the Underworld* looming on the horizon, Lauren Louise Hazel invites readers on a journey where danger and intrigue intertwine, promising another immersive venture into her vivid imagination.

As we delve into an excerpt from *The Reign of the Occult*, the intensity and suspense unfurl a taste of Lauren's gripping narrative, drawing readers into a world teetering on the brink of chaos. Join us as we explore the depths of Lauren Louise Hazel's literary universe, a realm where cybersecurity meets enchantment, where heroes battle demons, and where her tales come alive, beckoning readers to lose themselves in the magic of her storytelling.

You're organizing a party. Which two authors, dead or alive, do you invite?

I would invite Stephen Fry, because I feel like he'd throw a brilliant party! I love his books on retellings of mythology like *Mythos* and *Troy*. Both informative and easy to read. I would also invite GRR Martin to see

if I can get him to tell me the real end of *The Song of Ice and Fire* (I'm still mad on how *Game of Thrones* ended).

What genres do you especially enjoy reading?

I read a lot of different genres depending on my mood. Sometimes I enjoy something light and upbeat. Sophia Kinsella is my favourite author for romcom books.

I also read classics like *Jane Eyre* and *Wuthering Heights*. *Wuthering Heights* is much more intense than it looks at first glance.

All my works so far have been young adult fantasy books, so I read a lot of that. I made my dad queue at midday to get a First Edition of *Harry Potter and The Goblet of Fire* as a kid.

The only genre I don't read is horror because I'm a coward.

Which writer would you want to write your life story?

I would get my sister to do it. She is an accountant and not a writer, so it would be two bullet points long and illustrated with stick figures!

What moves you most in a work of literature?

What moves me the most in literature is connecting to individual characters and feeling invested in their journey. There's no better feeling than starting a book and knowing you are going to love it. I want readers to experience that when they read my novels

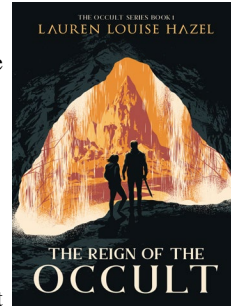


PHOTO: Hazel's Top Titles.

– I want people to want more!

What book are you planning to read next?

Next on my very long list is *Book of Night* by Holly Black. I'm hoping to get lots of reading done over the holidays.

What is your favourite writing snack?

Chocolate.

What is your writing routine?

I have a writing desk set up at home. I always have coffee and snacks next to me. I always listen to music as I'm writing, and I'm surrounded by notepads with all my ideas and lists on.

Who is your favourite character?

Princess Leia from *Star Wars*.

What books have you released?

My first novel, *The Reign of the Occult* was released last year. It's a thrilling and shuddering urban fantasy. It is the first book in the *Occult* series, which will be a trilogy, and has received great reviews.

I also recently released *The Burning Bandit*, which is a sprawling and original fantasy adventure. It was inspired by my studies of different aspects of Asia, including architecture and warriors. It was a lot of fun to write and develop.

What is up next for you?

I have already finished the manuscript for the sequel of *The Reign of the Occult*, which is called *The Queen of the Underworld*. It's due for release in July 2024 and is now open for pre-order!



PHOTO: Lauren Louise Hazel: *Crafting Fantasies by Night*, *Securing Realms by Day* – *Bridging Worlds with Words and Imagination*.