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(Chris Gregory)

And now, the show you've been waiting for. Welcome to this live recording of the Writing Worlds podcast. We are at the Cymera Festival in Edinburgh, officially launching the podcast.

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(Emily Inkpen)

Writing Worlds is a podcast all about writing and specifically about creating the imaginary worlds in which we set our stories. So if you're a writer or a reader interested in the ways in which writers create their stories, you are in the right place.

0:00:54

(Chris Gregory)

My name is Chris Gregory, he him, and I'm an audio drama producer and director.

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(Emily Inkpen)

And I'm Emily Inkpen, she her. And I'm an audio drama writer and director, novelist and short fiction.

0:01:05

(Chris Gregory)

And our special guest for this live recording in Edinburgh is Edinburgh-based writer of speculative fiction, Lyndsay Croal. Lyndsay is a novelist, short fiction writer and audio dramatist. Lindsay, welcome to Writing World. Thank you for having me. Well it's great to have you here with us today. We should say that we are also joined by a fantastic live audience. Hello, Chimera Festival live audience.

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(Speaker 23)

Feel free to make noise, yes.

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(Chris Gregory)

Thank you live audience. We hope you'll be getting involved in our discussions and silly games today alongside Emily and

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(Emily Inkpen)

Lindsay. Yes, be afraid. Don't be afraid, it's fine. I thought you were going to say be very afraid. I wasn't going to double down on that.

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(Chris Gregory)

Indeed. But before the silly games, Lindsay you have a new book out don't you? Can you tell us about Dark Crescent of which you have a copy right there?

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(Lyndsey Croal)

Yeah so this is Dark Crescent and this is my second collection and it's a collection of dark and seasonal tales inspired by Scottish folklore. I'm just going to read like this slight blurb which is an omen of spirits dances across the sky, a lonely woman befriends a sea witch as the world ends, the last whale in the world travels north in search of hope. A grandmother seeks revenge on the sea monster that took her family. So yeah, all tales inspired by strange superstitions, omens, all inspired

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(Lyndsey Croal)

by Scottish folklore with a beautiful cover which people online will be able to see but in here by Jenny Coots, so with Luna Press Publishing as the

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(Chris Gregory)

publisher. I promised Jenny that we would mention. People who do covers for books, they're just so important. We shouldn't judge books by covers.

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(Lyndsey Croal)

Oh but we do. We do. We really do. I've been very lucky with my covers.

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(Chris Gregory)

And somewhere in the book is a novella based on Daughter of Fire and Water, which was originally an audio drama which we made together a few years ago, didn't we?

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(Lyndsey Croal)

Yeah, so I mean Daughter of Fire and Water was kind of the initial inception of this book I guess. It's where I started writing more and more about Scottish folklore stories. It was also at the back of a novel I'd been writing at the time and I ended up exploring these stories a bit more. But once the audio drama was done I just couldn't... there was bits of the story of the characters breed as story didn't... it didn't feel quite finished because audio drama is a quite specific

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(Lyndsey Croal)

form. You've got like the way we did it we had two episodes and you've got a certain way of

telling it. And I loved that. I loved what we did with the audio drama, but I thought there's a bit more to her story so I expanded it into a novella which is at the end of the book.

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(Chris Gregory)

Yeah, and that all came out of Scottish folklore, characters from Scottish folklore, you mixed in some, I suppose we'd call it cli-fi, climate fiction, and it was just a glorious thing to work on. We did it during lockdown didn't we? Yeah, everything remotely, yeah. Yeah, which was really good fun. But I mean, we've mentioned that folklore was an inspiration. Your work covers the whole gamut of speculative fiction.

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(Chris Gregory)

But today, in honour of Dark Crescent, we are going to focus on the folkloric. So is world-building a big part of the work you do when you're writing stories inspired by folklore?

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(Lyndsey Croal)

Yeah I think it's slightly different than some of those... So I also write sci-fi and horror and of course there's sci-fi and horror in this book as well. But I think when you're using a folklore as inspiration there's already some of the world already created there for you. There's quite a lot about landscapes and nature that you have to draw from and of course living in Scotland there's already a lot of that like rugged landscapes world, things like

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(Lyndsey Croal)

that. So when I'm writing folklore the decisions I make are usually about okay I start you know with a character and the adaptation of what particular folklore creature I'm going to use and then thinking what kind of genre suits this story better. So I ended up looking at, there's like second world fantasy stories, there's urban fantasy, more gothic, more contemporary horror, dystopian, all that kind of stuff. So yeah, they usually start for me with like the character and an initial setting and at that point I think, okay, they usually start for me with the character and an initial setting, and at that

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(Lyndsey Croal)

point I think, okay, where is the rest of this world coming from? And they're usually very Scottish in some way. But yeah, so it is an important part. But I think when it comes to my other writing with sci-fi, I have to start off a bit further with the world and think about the setting in a slightly different way. So it's an interesting exercise to do it differently with

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(Lyndsey Croal)

folklore because there's expectations there and kind of things there

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(Chris Gregory)

already to work from. Yeah, based on real places. I mean we are in a city today that could have been designed for a fantasy film. It's almost one of those places where if you described it people wouldn't believe it. You mean there's a volcano right in the middle of the city?

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(Emily Inkpen)

Yeah I mean it hasn't been very busy for a while but yes. I mean actually I've been talking about folklore and everything as a world builder for science fiction. It's quite interesting looking at folklore and thinking what folklore would exist in a science fiction world, in like a world that's set in the future because folklore doesn't go away and it layers so it's almost like when I'm writing my worlds now with a sort of you know knowing a bit more

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(Emily Inkpen)

about folklore and having spoken to people about writing folklore it's sort of like well where are the folk stories in my world? Even though everyone's using you know pops guns and there's spaceships and there's God knows what else like the folklore wouldn't have gone anywhere it would still be there and people would have superstitions about certain things and yeah yes it's like folklore itself is another layer that you can put on top of other worlds.

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(Lyndsey Croal)

I read a book recently actually by Ren Hutchings, A Breakable World, which I think is out in July, August this year, but it very much has sections which is talking about folklore and kind of traditions and some superstitions and there's like little almost hints of like witchcraft and tarot and the occult and I think that was really interesting because it's like a very sci-fi space opera world but as you say like has brought in people have new traditions that are probably based on some sort of folklore. And that's how storytelling evolves.

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(Lyndsey Croal)

It's like it starts off from being told around the fire and all of a sudden you know years later you're still telling different versions of that story.

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(Emily Inkpen)

Yeah folklore about the alien species on the planet. Because folklore is something about you know creatures. Imagine if you moved to a planet and there's these random creatures that you've never come across and the tales that could come out of those alien

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(Chris Gregory)

creatures. Dragons and monsters. Dragons and monsters. You sort of touched on this a little

bit but do you see the world of folklore as a single world or a collection of worlds that fall under this general umbrella term? We could talk about worlds don't we but you know we take I guess we take bits from lots of different lore and culture don't we, when we create our worlds?

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(Lyndsey Croal)

Yeah, I mean I guess you can have like, every country has folklore and even every region has their own folklore. So like the islands in Scotland has really rich folklore, like Shetland, Orkney have some very specific stories that are told and even within those they diverge in how they're told. So when I was doing like research for the book the worlds of like even the Selkie myth which is very well known has lots of different interpretations of the Selkie and there's different like the classic one of the

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(Lyndsey Croal)

seal skin being locked in a chest and sometimes the sometimes the selkies being more trapped, sometimes they're a little bit more dangerous and dark. So I think like there's a lot of creative freedom when engaging with folklore because of the sort of already the storytelling worlds have different versions of the truth, whatever we want to call it. And then obviously exist, you know, other cultures around the world have their own folklore. I think one of the things I found really interesting when speaking to

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(Lyndsey Croal)

other authors who engage with folklore in different regions and cultures around the world is how similar some of the origin myths are or some of the creatures have very strong similarities. We have our own mermaid, we have our own vampire in Scottish folklore, but they didn't come from the original pop culture. These were stories that were told before we had Twilight. I know there was more. Dracula.

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(Lyndsey Croal)

These are storytelling that has happened before, you know, made into mainstream and I think that's really interesting to engage with those worlds and like have the connections between different cultures and how they cross over.

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(Emily Inkpen)

And you can almost see with certain things, like I know that vampires are common across a lot of cultures. I read somewhere it's probably like folklore itself but this comes from anemia and the fact that people suffer from anemia and they suffer from anemia all over the world but it was sort of a how do you explain the fact that people have this thing and so it's like oh there must be a creature that's coming in the night and draining their blood. That's what makes it a sort of universal kind of complex and that's given rise to this you know yeah

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(Emily Inkpen)

and that was really interesting it's like this is a human problem as opposed to a regional problem.

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(Speaker 22)

Yeah that makes sense.

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(Lyndsey Croal)

And everyone experiences seasons and there's a lot of like similarities between islands and you know coastal regions folklore as well because the sea is so dangerous and appealing in some ways at the same time.

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(Chris Gregory)

Yeah and weather as well. I mean weather, you don't do a big journey in the winter, you save your big journeys for the summer. You know, storms, there's a whole folklore around storms and that's all part of our world isn't it? Weather and climate. It's not just landscape. So and Emily your worlds are touched by politics and alliances.

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(Emily Inkpen)

Oh it's the big politics yeah. But geography as well and like there's a whole archipelago that's surrounded by a aquatic alien life form and all of the people on this archipelago have sort of weird quirks. I'm not going to call them magical capabilities but they are kind of magical capabilities and it's sort of blamed scientifically on the aliens that are around this area. Always blamed the aliens. Always blamed, yeah but I mean like they this is all widely disputed but yeah like having that sort of there's a

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(Emily Inkpen)

creature that lives there it affects the water and the way you know people are raised in this archipelago and the people are different and therefore there are beliefs that have sprung up on all of the islands and they all have their own identities and everything. So even in this far future setting I think it's definitely a place for disputed stuff and layers of belief.

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(Chris Gregory)

I want to think about writing and inspiration for writing because it's that spark that we need isn't it to start to create a story. So the question really is what comes first for you? Is it characters and stories or is it the worlds that your stories are set in that inspire you?

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(Lyndsey Croal)

I mean most of the time for me it's I get like a strong image of a character and a lot of those stories kind of stem from that but in some ways the folklore was also informing like the characters so when I was thinking oh I want to write and what I love this folklore I want to write a story based on this folklore but I really couldn't start writing the story until I had a character and I decided who the protagonist was going to be so

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(Lyndsey Croal)

for me like that that's important and in this book, some of the stories came really much easier and I had a character straight away and I wrote it in a day. And one of the stories, one of my favorite stories in here took me like seven months to write because I just had to spend time thinking about why, what the character is doing

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(Lyndsey Croal)

and how the folklore relates to that. And you already do kind of have that like initial hook of like the strange creature and what are they doing and then I would try and think about you know why are they in this setting in the first place and yeah I don't know why some of them came out like almost spec like more sci-fi or dystopian. A lot of them ended up being about isolation and like throwing yourself into the sea because it was mostly written during lockdown. So that maybe gives a hint into my mindset.

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(Lyndsey Croal)

But I think a lot of it was like, sometimes even the stories were informed by ones I'd written already because I wanted the collection to feel... It happened organically initially and then as I was kind of finishing the collection and filling in the gaps for stories I wanted there to be like overlaps and callbacks to other stories so some of them do exist in my head in like the same world at least whether it's a future in the past or some island nearby where another

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(Lyndsey Croal)

folklore creature has happened so that made it kind of a bit more cohesive whereas when I'm writing sci-fi stuff they don't always... well it's different It's like a different way of coming up with stories. So I don't know if that answered the question, but yeah, that's the kind of process.

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(Chris Gregory)

What about you, Emily? I mean, are you driven by stories, driven by...

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(Speaker 6)

By characters.

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(Chris Gregory)

Characters.

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(Emily Inkpen)

All the way, characters. And I still remember there was a key relationship in the Dex legacy and all these characters have been rattling around in my head since I was 15 and then I still remember the time I was laying on my exercise mat, wasn't exercising that's procrastinating on my exercise mat with good intentions, and I was laying there and suddenly I realized this character wouldn't be involved with this one it would be with this one instead and as soon as I got that relationship it was like flicking a domino and everything just fell into place.

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(Chris Gregory)

It started tumbling.

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(Emily Inkpen)

Yeah and I just lay there and I was like you know when like a room sort of like there's a camera effect in movies where the sort of like the background sort of drops away and you sort of focus on the face and the background's sort of moving there's like a...

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(Chris Gregory)

There's a name for that isn't there? I can't remember.

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(Emily Inkpen)

But yeah it was like that and I was just laying on this exercise mat and it was like and yeah it was yeah that was exciting.

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(Lyndsey Croal)

Sometimes you just need to wait for that moment to come like I'll be fighting with a story for ages because something's not quite right and then you're like sleeping and it comes to you just before you fall asleep and it's really annoying. But also great.

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(Emily Inkpen)

It's just like it falls into place.

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(Lyndsey Croal)

It's the nice moment.

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(Emily Inkpen)

You've just got to have faith that it's going to happen one day. If something's not working, it's like... But getting that trust is so hard.

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(Chris Gregory)

So I mean that's always a question when I interview a writer. It's always a question about when that inspiration, when that idea comes. How do you capture it? There are these moments aren't there? When you're just drifting off to sleep your body goes into this liminal space. That's often when inspiration comes. I mean do we have writers in the room? Are you? You're all being? Yes we're getting some nods. Oh oh oh an elbow and a nod there.

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(Chris Gregory)

And it's really interesting who gets ideas when when you're out on a walk or something? Yeah yeah. I mean that's another space I think that, you know, you get these ideas and it seems to me that it's a kind of cruel reality that most of the points where we are most susceptible to ideas, we haven't got an easy access to a laptop to tap the eyes.

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(Emily Inkpen)

Yeah, for me it's in the shower.

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(Chris Gregory)

Don't take your laptop in the shower.

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(Emily Inkpen)

You can't take your laptop in the shower. You can't take paper in the shower. And then you've got soggy hands and you're like, you're soapy. And it's, you know, that's not good.

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(Lyndsey Croal)

So that's a very long-winded way of saying, how do you capture your ideas? Yeah I admit I'm very chaotic when I, as a writer, I don't really have a routine and I've tried and I'm not good at it and I think I can write when the inspiration strikes basically but when I get an idea I need to like, it's like exercising it from my brain and even if it's a very quick, I need to like, it's like exercising it from my brain. Even if it's a very quick, here are some notes, here are some plot points, and this is how it'll end,

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(Lyndsey Croal)

and this is his character, or if it's just a quick image, like a few sentences that come to my head. And if I get enough down, I can return to it when I'm feeling like I've got time to do it.

Often the ideas come when I don't have time to sit down on my laptop and do that. Although the slight difference in that, so a lot of Dark Present, I went on a writing retreat for a month with the Hoth-Larndon Foundation so I definitely

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(Lyndsey Croal)

recommend it for anyone who's like applying, who's a writer, you can apply and they send you to a castle for a month.

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(Speaker 21)

That was the castle?

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(Speaker 20)

The castle, yeah.

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(Chris Gregory)

I remember the Instagram posts were top notch. There's a picture of a castle and

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(Lyndsey Croal)

Lindy wrote I live here now. I mean it's very cold I went in November I'd maybe recommend maybe not going in the winter but there was no internet apart from at the very top of the place. They had like a rule of silence where you had to kind of not speak to one another between like I think it was nine and six which is when you had dinner.

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(Chris Gregory)

Just for the listeners at home, the look on Emily's face there.

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(Emily Inkpen)

Well no internet because I rely on Google searches to be able to do things.

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(Lyndsey Croal)

And the idea of not being able to, I mean this is starting to sound a bit like a cult, I'm not gonna lie. Yeah, I mean it was refreshing because you're like, I find it very hard sometimes to focus on, like there's so many inputs, and I thought I would find this really stressful and to be honest the first week was kind of hard because like you're adapting to, like I had the week, the month off work which was really nice, my work were able to give me that and you know it's fully funded which is great and they bring you food, they cook for you. It's like it's honestly unreal. I don't know, everyone should apply. It's great. It's run by the woman, well not anymore but she like left it in her will as a writer's retreat. The

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(Lyndsey Croal)

Heinz Beans like person? The people who owns like Heins basically. She was a big creator. So that's what funds it and it's in outside Edinburgh. But anyway, being there I decided to put together the collection while it was there and I'd written most of the stories but it was just really nice to have that forced silence and forced sitting down at your laptop. I brought a bunch of reference books on folklore and I worked out by doing that where the GACs were and I wrote quite a few of the final stories at the castle there and that was a different routine because I'd never really forced myself to like sit down

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(Lyndsey Croal)

and have that extended, I never had the luxury really to have that extended period of time to like sit for eight hours and write for a month basically and I wrote my novella that comes out next year there as well. It was very productive but I came back and I've not written anywhere near as much since. So I don't know I just I find time.

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(Chris Gregory)

Do you get spoiled when you've got a castle? I think so.

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(Emily Inkpen)

It might have ruined you as a writer. It's like no I need eight hours of silence every day. I need a castle and I need a chef.

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(Lyndsey Croal)

I need people hours of silence every day, I need a colossal and I need a chef. I need people bringing me food.

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(Chris Gregory)

There's not ramparts, I can't do that.

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(Emily Inkpen)

That's my high maintenance writing behaviour.

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(Lyndsey Croal)

I don't think I can sustain that. Generally my writing routine is, I often go to cafes because I need to, I don't know, somehow I find cafes focus me because of what's going on and I have music on and I'm sitting writing, editing, but usually it's I have to write a story down once I get the idea and if I don't it'll live in my drafts forever until I find it. And I'm like what was this random note I left behind?

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(Chris Gregory)

It made sense at the time.

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(Lyndsey Croal)

It made sense at the time, but if I leave it too long I forget. So yeah, I'm not great with the old Richard Nettles.

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(Chris Gregory)

Okay, so we did mention games didn't we? So should we have our first game? Yes, let's play a game. Now this name, this name, this game, you gave it away. This game is called the name game. I always try to make our games as intuitive as possible. Emily invented this one, I think. Writers in the room, how many of you have struggled to come up with names for the places, people, things in your fictional worlds. Yeah, yeah. So I mean I think this is a thing. So this game is going to challenge your ability to come up with names for things. And I say yours, I mean Lindsay and Emily. So this is

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(Chris Gregory)

Lindsay Kroll versus Emily in pen. We don't normally like to be adversarial but I think we're going to be honest. So I'm gonna come up with some things, currently don't have names and you are going to come up with the names for these things.

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(Emily Inkpen)

Yeah we don't know what these things are yet. That's the beautiful thing about it.

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(Speaker 15)

Yeah.

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(Chris Gregory)

But I do. You do. Because it would be shit if I didn't. And really kind of made up on the spot. So I have delved into two quite diverse worlds. The world of Scottish folklore, you'll be pleased to hear, and the world of Emily's Planet in The Dex Legacy, which is the audio drama that we make, and it's also some books, and Emily has lived in this world since she was 15 years old. The planet's called, rather

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(Chris Gregory)

unimaginatively for this game, SP714. It is, yes. Designation is a to... I mean I think you could work on that but... There's a reason for it. There's always a reason. Yes. At this point I should say, so tell us the reason. No, no, no, let's do the game. That's for another episode. So Lindsay,

I'm going to come to you first and that's going to mean you get a little bit more time to think. So, I would like you to think of an island. And this island is misty, mysterious. It's off the west coast of Scotland and there's some mountains, there's all sorts of things going on in

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(Chris Gregory)

this mysterious beautiful island. I mean it could be inspired by an actual island off the west coast of Scotland and that's entirely up to you but I don't want you to call it, I don't know, Sky for example. It's been done. And so there's always a side order. Burger first, that's the island. Fries will be the name of the main town on this island. Poultry wouldn't be acceptable for example. You can't think of anything else. But say don't think of a polar bear. All you can think of is a polar bear.

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(Chris Gregory)

Lindsay you can think, you can scribble. Do you need a notebook? Do you need a pen? Yes please. Where do you have one though? I don't have a pen. I'll use my phone. Are you sure? So well organized. So Lindsay's thinking of a folkloric mythical island off the coast of Scotland. Emily, SP714. Yes. There is an island. There's an there are no doors, but next door to Dex Island is called? Nadris. It's called Nadris. Yes. Now Nadris has signed some sort of deal with Dex Island. Yeah. Dex Island are going to provide them with a, this is much more technologically advanced because it's sci-fi. Some sort of defense initiative. And so multi

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(Chris Gregory)

million pound or whatever the currency is, defense system. And they're gonna give it a name that is kind of appropriate to Nadris and the culture of Nadris. So I want you to come up with the name that they give to this defense system. Okay. Yeah. So we had the Maginot line didn't we? Yeah. And things like that. Think of a name for this defense system and I'd also like you to think of the name of the defense minister in Nadris. The defense minister? Who signed this deal

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(Chris Gregory)

with Dex Ireland. That's interesting. Yeah so it's yeah. Is this a monarchy? Just do it. Okay. Yes boss. It's that kind of game, apparently. So no pressure at all. At this point I'm going to get out the special gold-plated egg timer. And for the sake of the audience at home, I'm putting it on the table in front of Lindsay and Emily so we know how long they've got to go. Excellent. Emily so we know how long they've got to go. So yeah, while you're thinking of that, audience, is there anyone who has like approaches to naming things that you'd like to share with us? I mean,

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(Chris Gregory)

how do you go about naming things? Do you have like a system for your fictional worlds or

is it? We have an overwhelming number of people here not making eye contact. I'm well. You are well very back of our Downsview City Auditorium. Could you say your name and tell us a little bit about the worlds that you create?

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(Lindsey Stirling)

Yeah, I'm Lindsay Stirling and I also write kind of Scottish-based sort of fantasy adventure stories. And I think probably the main thing when I'm doing names I love to get my Gaelic dictionary and look up meanings for things and just use local languages to help make place names. That's what I'm doing right now.

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(Emily Inkpen)

That's what the other Lindsay is doing right now.

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(Chris Gregory)

Have you got a Gaelic dictionary on your phone? Lindsay Croll has got a Gaelic dictionary on her phone.

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(Emily Inkpen)

Well at least one of us is prepared today.

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(Chris Gregory)

That's amazing. Just between you and me, do you think that's cheating?

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(Lindsey Stirling)

No. Good answers.

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(Chris Gregory)

And do you have novels that are published? Yeah.

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(Lindsey Stirling)

So tell us a little bit about... Sure, well my novels they're kind of... I tend to describe them as Lord of the Rings but a little bit Scottish for young adults. So the first one's called Eagle's Guard and the second one's called Eagle's Path and I'm working on the rest of the series just now. Just sort of classic quest across the land

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(Lindsey Stirling)

magic, eagle riders, a bit of Scottish mythological

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(Lindsey Stirling)

creatures. Amazing.

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(Chris Gregory)

Yeah.

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(Speaker 18)

That's fantastic.

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(Chris Gregory)

Well, I'll put a link in the show notes for the podcast so that other people can find them.

Thank you so much. Anyone else want to talk a little bit about their world building? No. I can see that the sounds have almost passed the gold-plated egg timer. Who would like to go?

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(Lyndsey Croal)

Lindsay are you? I'm not ready. I'm still back. Hang on yeah I'm ready. You're ready? You're ready.

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(Emily Inkpen)

Okay. Okay. We could get Emily to go first. Yeah yeah I could go first. Yeah? Yeah, sure. So, Emily, the Natris defence system. The Natris defence system, okay, so the reason they needed this is because the people who were on Dex Island before Dex Island moved in were called Bovrak, they were the Bovraki, really, really aggressive people who were just constantly lobbing bombs in various directions. They're just incredibly antagonistic people. So they kept firing weapons at Naddrus and Naddrus were just fed up with it. They're a bigger nation

0:30:36

(Emily Inkpen)

and they just don't want anything to do with these people. So Dex Island designed for them, or Dex Industries as it was then, designed for them a kind of automated defense system that meant that if they detected anything coming over it would beat them and like explode the thing you know before it's not an original idea this happens in military all the time. I think Donald Trump's trying to build one at the moment. Yes exactly they're a really good idea so it makes sense to have one but I think it would probably be called and I've never thought of this before so this is all brand new

0:31:07

(Emily Inkpen)

but I think it might be called the Peacekeeper Initiative because anything involving missiles

that can be described as peaceful is is kind of a marketing trick and I quite like it. It's a bit tongue in cheek isn't it? It's very cynical so I like this so the Peacekeeper Initiative and the Minister who signed the deal. Okay so one of the things that I do when I'm naming things I go for phonetics, very sort of phonetic patterns and things. So I know

0:31:35

(Emily Inkpen)

that Queen Kelia is the Queen of Nadras for a portion of the story. So what I can do when I'm under pressure is write the name and then I know that if I rearrange those letters it's gonna be in the ballpark sound-wise. So you're just coming up with an anagram of Kaliya? Yeah so it's Minister Aleki. And then you can sort of be like, okay, it's like, cause my idea is that you can hear somebody's name in the world and you can be like, Oh, that's a very North Jack name. Or that's a very, a Terran name. And you can almost, as soon as you, you, you

0:32:16

(Emily Inkpen)

read a person's name, you can almost position, you can put them in a place and know where they come from.

0:32:23

(Chris Gregory)

Which I guess we do in our place. Yes. And know where they come from. Which I guess we do in our world. Exactly.

0:32:25

(Emily Inkpen)

You can sort of guess broadly where. It's regional so you can spot patterns and so that's what I like to do. So yes Peacekeeper Initiative and Minister Alecki was the person who signed the deal with Nathaniel Dex and they are a nation that has an unusually positive relationship with Dexameth.

0:32:47

(Chris Gregory)

And that's naming things. Can we get a round of applause for our amazing panel? Overwhelmingly enthusiastic. Very, very. So we will be gauging the volume of the applause for Lindsay's... Lindsay Crawl?

0:33:06

(Speaker 15)

Yes.

0:33:07

(Chris Gregory)

You've been looking at your Gaelic dictionary online?

0:33:08

(Lyndsey Croal)

Stressfully looking at my phone, looking at my dictionary. Yeah, no, mine is not quite as complex as yours. But yeah, so I do, when I think about Scottish folklore and islands and things like that, I often think about the landscape of what that evokes. And that's a lot about Gaelic naming, like culture anyway. so I grew up in the Highlands there's a lot of like specific descriptions of like place there so I thought about that and I did also try and come up with an acronym but not acronym. You didn't go that route?

0:33:36

(Lyndsey Croal)

Not acronym, what's the word? Anagram. But the anagram's not working. So I went with like you mentioned the mist in the mountains and I thought about like kind of a misty land and I love the word Har which I think is more of Scots than Gaelic. Which is the mist that comes in off the probably more of the East Coast. Yeah we'll see on the East Coast. So I thought like land of Har would be like Harland or something. And then the main town is just kind of I imagined it in the middle beneath the mountains and everything's a little bit

0:34:09

(Lyndsey Croal)

foggy so Moorglass which translates to big grey. So Harland is the island? Harland without a D. And then Moorglass. I like Moraglass better than Harlan. I was still working on that one. That's poetic as well. It's sort of soft. Yeah. So Gaelic a round of applause for Lindsay and her names.

0:34:49

(Emily Inkpen)

That was definitely louder. I think Lindsay won. Yeah.

0:34:59

(Lyndsey Croal)

I'll mention because I had a YA book that was Scottish folklore on an island and I'd already used that idea so I couldn't pretend that I'd come up with that.

0:35:10

(Chris Gregory)

We don't allow recycle.

0:35:11

(Lyndsey Croal)

Because the island was just Trua which is like an anagram of, well there was two islands, there was Trua and Ishka and Ishka kind of means water in Gaelic and Trua is an anagram of water and it was all about water so like that's the kind of thing I think about the connections between words. Maybe I'll steal more glass for a future thing.

0:35:32

(Chris Gregory)

Definitely should, that's fantastic.

0:35:34

(Emily Inkpen)

Every time we do this in SB714 it goes in and it becomes kind of a thing.

0:35:38

(Lyndsey Croal)

Yeah, I'm waiting for the Peacekeeper initiative to go down.

0:35:40

(Chris Gregory)

Yeah, it's got to be mentioned. man. I suppose you've come up with the really nice thing about this game the way that we play it is that you kind of describe, you show your workings, you describe what you've done, how you've reached these names, which I think is really useful for people listening because everyone does this in different ways don't they? But do you have any other, apart from cheating and using a garlic dish, do you have, Lindsay and Emily, do you have other advice on naming?

0:36:14

(Emily Inkpen)

I think I'd rather do the phonetic stuff. Phonetic? Yeah. Yeah, because sometimes I'm just sitting there, and you know like, I always feel like a cheat because some writers are like oh I'm paying for days over names and I just sit there and I go blah blah and I roll like sounds around in my mouth until something comes out that I like and then I go yeah alright and then that's the name. And then that's it and it's really like it's as complicated as that.

0:36:43

(Chris Gregory)

Yeah, what about you Lindsay? Have you got?

0:36:45

(Lyndsey Croal)

Yeah, I mean when I'm writing sci-fi I've previously just looked at like astronomical terms and to name things and like build off of that in terms of like naming the ship and also like deep sea stuff. I'm writing a deep sea book at the moment and I've been like had to name the station and the and the submarines and things like that and I went for like very nautical words like the like shells and one of them's

0:37:11

(Lyndsey Croal)

named after like quite a scientific word so I often look up things and then I see how it sounds like I speak out loud and make sure it like sounds okay. You chew it. Yes exactly. Yeah sometimes words just come to me but like most of the time I'm looking at reference things.

0:37:28

(Emily Inkpen)

I like it when they're fun to say. Or confuse people.

0:37:34

(Chris Gregory)

It sounds good in the audiobook, doesn't it? Time is ticking on, we're going to move on to another game here and one of the things about our fantasy and sci-fi worlds and the characters in them is sometimes that not all of the characters make it to the end of the story. It is sad. Some of the endings that these characters have, their deaths or demises, can be brutal, visceral, macabre, all of the above and more. And so this next game is called Would You Rather? And it nods to that uncomfortable truth that

0:38:13

(Chris Gregory)

not all the characters make it to the end of our stories. Brutal, shocking and often really quite creative ways that people meet their ends. And in this game what we're going to do is pit two ends of characters against each other. So this is one that Lindsay and Emily have had time to prepare and think about. And those of a nervous disposition may wish to leave the room at this point because this can get quite gunky and unpleasant.

0:38:46

(Speaker 12)

A little bit gloopy.

0:38:47

(Chris Gregory)

Gloopy is the word that you've used.

0:38:49

(Emily Inkpen)

That's a word my mother uses to describe my work.

0:38:52

(Speaker 7)

Gloopy.

0:38:53

(Speaker 17)

Gloopy.

0:38:54

(Speaker 11)

Yes, yeah.

0:38:55

(Emily Inkpen)

Yeah, she has a gloop scale.

0:38:57

(Chris Gregory)

And you're at nine out of ten on the gloop scale.

0:39:02

(Emily Inkpen)

Yeah, some of my work is very gloopy.

0:39:03

(Speaker 5)

Yes.

0:39:04

(Speaker 16)

Yeah. 9 out of 10 on the Gluck score. Yeah, some of my work is very jippy. Yes.

0:39:05

(Chris Gregory)

So, Lindsay, what is the unpleasant, spectacular, heroic death or demise that you've brought for us today?

0:39:15

(Lyndsey Croal)

Yeah, so I feel like I need to give a bit of context and also that this is a spoiler for one of the stories because it's hard not to have a death that's a spoiler.

0:39:22

(Speaker 12)

Yes, this character doesn't make it.

0:39:26

(Lyndsey Croal)

I think it's kind of clear from the start what's going to happen hopefully but there's a folklore creature called the maril from Shetland folklore that kind of tips over boats and it looks like an angler fish and it's quite a gruesome sea monster and in this story this sea monster has been wreaking havoc and has destroyed ships and

0:39:45

(Lyndsey Croal)

there's a grandmother who sits on the shore, has been watching this monster take all her family but no one will listen to her when she says we need to take a more subtle approach. So her plan is to basically when the sea monster destroys and eats people it spits out their

bones and they wash to shore so the beach is just littered with bones obviously and she gathers those bones initially as a mark of respect but when she realizes that it's the only thing that the sea monster can't consume she creates a boat made of bones and armor made of bones and she

0:40:18

(Lyndsey Croal)

sails out to meet the sea monster, lures it to eat her and the boat and when it does obviously like chokes on the bones but in doing so she sinks to the bottom of the sea in her bone armour to rest forever encased in bones. So it's a beautiful death. She's sought her revenge, she knew how it was gonna end for her and she kind of exists in this story it's sort of a happy ending because there's a hint that she kind of lives on in the sea spirit. As an uncased in bones. It's a bit of a strange one. It's called To gut a fish first gather its bones. So it's a bit explanatory in total. So that's the death.

0:40:56

(Speaker 15)

You thought of that yourself? I did, yeah. Bone ship.

0:41:00

(Speaker 14)

I was going to mention it slightly away.

0:41:02

(Emily Inkpen)

Yeah, that's pretty heroic.

0:41:04

(Lyndsey Croal)

That's a heroic test.

0:41:06

(Speaker 14)

Poetic.

0:41:08

(Lyndsey Croal)

Yeah, just imagine.

0:41:10

(Emily Inkpen)

With a potential to be remembered in history. Yes.

0:41:16

(Lyndsey Croal)

That's good. And no one would listen to her because she was just the model for the collecting toys. Yeah.

0:41:22

(Chris Gregory)

Anyway, that's that.

0:41:24

(Emily Inkpen)

So, Emily yeah follow that okay so it's a mind in contrast is reasonably straightforward and sometimes I do have really like you know convoluted slow burn deaths okay this this like yeah this one happens in see like episode 2 of the Dex Legacy so I decided to go back and it's a sword in a battle situation so pretty pretty standard you know like you know animosity going on and one of my characters Ren has a sword because swords are definitely okay in

0:41:56

(Emily Inkpen)

sci-fi. This is controversial in some circles. In some circles they say no it can't be. Yes swords are fine and yeah he brings this sword down on this person's shoulder and slices them all the way through and it comes out around his hip. And he's a very strong person and he just lets his anger out on this and it just goes through him like butter. And so there's this moment where this person is aware of the fact that they've just been sliced through and then their top half sort of

0:42:31

(Emily Inkpen)

slides sideways off the bottom half and their organs sort of drop out of them and they land in a meaty pile and then obviously at that point they're dead but there would have been a moment of like oh and then death. I would say oh I mean I imagine it would probably be a few more expletives than that would cross their minds but yeah so that's my option. Yeah, meat pile.

0:43:02

(Speaker 5)

Thank you.

0:43:04

(Chris Gregory)

Yeah, I'm back. yeah meat pile. Thank you. I will be getting shows of hands. So poetic bony death at the bottom of the ocean, immortalised in bones. Or sliced in two from shoulder to hip. I'm going to just have a little think about this.

0:43:38

(Emily Inkpen)

Lindsay, which one would you choose?

0:43:40

(Lyndsey Croal)

I think the C, to be honest.

0:43:47

(Chris Gregory)

I mean, I'm not being biased about that. It would take a bit longer wouldn't it? One of the factors in this game is get it over with.

0:43:53

(Lyndsey Croal)

But the pain would be so gruesome because I don't know you hear that drowning is supposed to be peaceful but I don't know if that's the venue. Isn't she eaten? No she's not eaten. The Maril eats the ship. She jumps out of the way and jumps misses, sorry I should have said that more clearly, and sinks to the bottom of the sea with the sea monster. So she's not eaten because she's encased in bones.

0:44:18

(Emily Inkpen)

The thing is she's also lost everyone that she loves before this. So she's ready to go? Yeah. Ready to go but also is experiencing intense grief. To get to that point where she's ready, she's had months of losing people. But meet Kyle. But meet Kyle. Listen, this is the essence of the game. I mean I just have a low tolerance for guts. I'm actually, normally I go for the elongated ones and the opportunity to sort of potentially live up a myth. I'm a great one for being able to strike a pose on the way out. But on this occasion, I'd go meat pile.

0:44:55

(Emily Inkpen)

I would go meat pile.

0:44:59

(Chris Gregory)

Meat pile. So Emily is going to be sliced in half. Angle cut. And what was your going? I'll go for a sink in my armour of bones.

0:45:16

(Emily Inkpen)

Okay, so you've each gone for your own. We've each gone for our own. That's a surprise, normally I go for the other person's but this time I'm sticking with...

0:45:26

(Chris Gregory)

Yeah, yeah. I'm not sure. Anyone from the audience would like to express a preference here?

0:45:33

(Emily Inkpen)

Or should we do hands like Sherlock Holmes?

0:45:36

(Chris Gregory)

Yeah. Okay, so, um, sliced in two.

0:45:41

(Speaker 13)

Meat pile?

0:45:42

(Speaker 12)

Meat pile.

0:45:43

(Chris Gregory)

And take us... Meat pile? Meat pile. I mean, I hope, just for those listening at home, no hands have got up.

0:45:52

(Emily Inkpen)

We're just getting shakes.

0:45:55

(Chris Gregory)

People who actually put their hands towards the floor. No man, no, yeah okay. And just so I can square this off properly, show of hands for the bone, bony water demise.

0:46:10

(Emily Inkpen)

Oh see, unanimous, see okay. See I think my description, I think my description was just a bit too visceral.

0:46:17

(Chris Gregory)

And that's called defeat. Do I get a prize now? And your prize is to be a coast in bones.

0:46:27

(Chris Gregory)

And dropped into the Firth of Forth.

0:46:31

(Lyndsey Croal)

It came up with the idea, that's why I have to live with.

0:46:34

(Emily Inkpen)

Well, sadly I'm really glad I don't win that one. So everyone's a bony hero? Yeah. You'd have a whole party down there I think.

0:46:52

(Chris Gregory)

Well I don't think we've ever seen as comprehensive a defeat as that. I mean to be fair normally we don't have an audience so we don't get to vote on it. No, no, yeah but even so, gosh I wasn't expecting it to be unanimous. I should have really sold it a bit more shouldn't I? get to know people these days are really shy of being sliced in half times of change when I was a lad people would have been glad of being sliced into it. Absolutely! Swords on battlefields all the way.

0:47:25

(Speaker 5)

Yeah.

0:47:27

(Chris Gregory)

Now, we are, I mean it's difficult to know with all the fun games we've played, that we are getting to the end of our live show.

0:47:37

(Lindsey Stirling)

Yes.

0:47:38

(Chris Gregory)

And if you're over the harrowing nature of the game we've just played. Lindsay, can you tell us how people can find out more about your work and buy a copy of Dark

0:47:50

(Lyndsey Croal)

Crescent? Sure, so when you get Dark Crescent and all the usual book places are direct from Lunar Press Publishing and it's also here at Chimera Fest for folks who are at Chimera Fest. And the listeners Hall. The listeners at home won't be here. The listeners at home won't be here, but the people in the room it's in the Creators Hall and at Blackwell's. And you can also find all my stuff

0:48:12

(Lyndsey Croal)

by my website which is just www.lindsaycroll.co.uk and I'm on Boysify and Instagram now, obviously.

0:48:20

(Chris Gregory)

We don't talk about Twitter anymore.

0:48:22

(Lyndsey Croal)

No. We don't talk about Twitter anymore, do we? No, we could have all been here.

0:48:25

(Chris Gregory)

And a jolly good thing too. You mentioned it's Luna Press. Yeah. Tell us a little bit about Luna, because Luna, fantastic press, aren't they?

0:48:37

(Lyndsey Croal)

Yeah, they're based in Scotland. It's Francesca T. Bardini who runs Luna Press, absolutely brilliant press. I'm very fortunate to work with them. All the books they put out are put out with so much care and they're so active in the Scottish and UK literary scene. A lot of fantasy, a lot of dark stuff as well. Yeah, you can just go look at their website, there's loads of great books. They also publish a lot of non-fiction stuff too as well'm writing craft and some Tolkien books for example. They've won lots of awards so yeah they're just lovely to work with.

0:49:09

(Chris Gregory)

Yes absolutely absolutely and before Dark Crescent tell us about other things, your other books. Have you decided? There is a stack. Have you decided on your death?

0:49:22

(Emily Inkpen)

No, question. You post pictures of your published works, it's like you've got a shelf.

0:49:32

(Lyndsey Croal)

Mostly short fiction so far. But yeah, have you decided on your question? It's a wee short novella. And Limelight and other stories, they're both out with shortwave publishing in the US. They're dark science fiction stories, more in the vein of like Black Mirror or Twilight Zone. So very different, still dark, but slightly different vibe. And then my next book is a Gothic horror novella coming out from Luna Press next year as part of their series.

0:49:58

(Lyndsey Croal)

Scottish Gothic, ghosts, weird moths, haunted house.

0:50:03

(Speaker 11)

Weird moths?

0:50:04

(Emily Inkpen)

Weird moths haunted house

0:50:37

(Chris Gregory)

there's a cave underneath all third and castle where I did my writing retreat and spiders and the ceiling was too low so famously with that's where the weird yeah I mean I just think that's possibly the most horrific thing that anyone said not just during this recording.

0:50:46

(Emily Inkpen)

Bone, death, sliced in half, weird moths?

0:50:52

(Chris Gregory)

That thing on a summer evening when you accidentally leave the window open you come back to your room and it's just full of moths and you can hear the room before you go in there it's buzzing.

0:51:04

(Lyndsey Croal)

In horror you're supposed to write what you're scared of as well, so like spiders, weird moths.

0:51:09

(Emily Inkpen)

I'm okay with moths, I've never had a problem with moths.

0:51:11

(Lyndsey Croal)

They're just a bit strange when they swarm, I don't know.

0:51:13

(Speaker 10)

Do they swarm?

0:51:14

(Lyndsey Croal)

I'm not sure, no.

0:51:16

(Speaker 9)

In my book they swarm.

0:51:19

(Chris Gregory)

Not quite sure about the collective term for moth. This is where a strategic Google would be really important too. collective time for Moth a herd. And audio drama, Daughter of Fire and Water available on the Alternative Stories and Fake Realities podcast soon to be available, you don't know this yet, soon to be available on our new Specfic Radio Theatre podcast which is different audio dramas that we make, usually one-off stories. Subscribe, search Specfic Radio Theatre in your favourite podcast app. Emily, how do we find out more about you and your work?

0:52:00

(Emily Inkpen)

So you can find me anywhere at Emily Inkpen, emilyinkpen.com, you can find out about my writing adventures but mostly it's in audio drama, The Dex Legacy, all about SP714 being sliced in half in various ways. And yeah, it's good fun. So if you want to find out anything more about that stuff, emilyinkpen.com, there is also thedexlegacy.com that will take you to specifically that area, but you can get to it through my website.

0:52:30

(Speaker 8)

And yeah, I think that's it.

0:52:32

(Chris Gregory)

So it just remains for me to say, Kaimera Festival live audience, thank you very much for being here. Give yourself a round of applause.

0:52:40

(Speaker 5)

APPLAUSE

0:52:42

(Chris Gregory)

Linse Kroll, thank you very much for being a wonderful guest today and bringing the winning death.

0:52:48

(Speaker 7)

Thank you for having me. And might I say the best names as well?

0:52:50

(Chris Gregory)

Oh, God, I overdid really badly this time round, didn't I? Emily, stop whinging and thank you for being with us here today.

0:53:03

(Emily Inkpen)

Yeah, I was here.

0:53:08

(Speaker 7)

Round of applause for Emily and Lindsay. Thank you.

0:53:12

(Chris Gregory)

I've been Chris Gregory. This has been the Writing Worlds podcast.

0:53:15

(Emily Inkpen)

I've been Emily Inkpen.

0:53:16

(Lyndsey Croal)

I've been Lindsay Croal.

0:53:17

(Chris Gregory)

Goodbye and thank you for listening.

0:53:19

(Speaker 6)

Yay!

0:53:22

(Speaker 5)

Thank you, everybody. Thank you for listening to the Writing World's podcast. If you'd like to find out more about

0:53:56

(Chris Gregory)

our guests or our presenters, Emily Inkpen and Chris Gregory, please check out the links in our show notes. If you'd like to listen to other Alternative Stories podcasts, including our drama series The Decks Legacy, Wasteland, Burnout or Specfic Radio Theatre, you'll find all the links you need in our show notes. Burnout or Specfic Radio Theatre, you'll find all the links you need in our show notes. Writing Worlds is presented by Chris Gregory and Emily Inpen and it's an Alternative Stories production.

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