

Interview with Robert C. Auty, author of *Trance Warriors*

Today, Tyler R. Tichelaar of Reader Views is pleased to be joined by Robert C. Auty, who is here to talk about his new novel "Trance Warriors: The Siege of Scarn."

Robert spent his formative years living in Canada, but now resides near his birthplace of Lancaster, England. "Trance Warriors" came into being some six years before this book was published, in the form of a two-page premise drafted in the midst of writing a completely different novel, and grew into what you see now. Self-taught, Robert is currently busy writing the sequels to "The Siege of Scarn." When he is not busy writing he enjoys walking in the Yorkshire Dales and Lakeland Fells.

Tyler: Welcome, Robert. I'm excited to talk to you about your new fantasy novel. To begin, will you tell us a little bit about the fantasy world that you've created?

Robert: Hi Tyler, nice to meet you. The fantasy world I've created? Well, as a world it is un-named, at least for the present, though it has several similarities to our own world. In this book I have introduced The Grynn Kingdom on Middle Isle and the Horan Empire on the southern continent. This world is peopled by different races from our world and from pure fantasy. Traditional fantasy figures, like dwarves and elves, hopefully with a few new, unique traits, as well as races from our earth's history. These races although perhaps not named as they were in their time, are hopefully recognisable by the reader. The land itself has been shaped by cataclysmic events that become clear as the story unfolds.

Tyler: Tell us about Connor, the main character. What makes him tick, and why is he attractive to readers?

Robert: Connor is one of the Trance Warriors of the title, although ignorant of his heritage to start with. He is brave, a consummate warrior, handsome, and, for the most part, honorable. His true lineage is hidden from him and, initially, he is not much more than an outlaw, admittedly, one with an unusual power he understands little about.

Tyler: Will you tell us what that power is, or at least what makes Connor realize he has a power, or will that be giving away the plot?

Robert: Connor is a Trance Warrior, which gives him the ability to enter the trance and kill thousands of enemies in what we would perceive as the blinking of an eye. But his ability is tempered by his lack of knowledge of his skill initially, and this ignorance has the potential to kill him.

Tyler: One of the reviews on your website refers to Connor as an anti-hero? Do you see him as an anti-hero, or is he truly heroic?

Robert: I enjoy getting reviews, both good and not so good, as it's always interesting to see how other people see your work. The review you refer to placed Trance Warriors firmly in the 'Conan' mold, and Connor as a Conan-like anti-hero. I'd, at least in this first book, call Connor a reluctant hero, rather than an anti-hero.

Tyler: Robert, after Connor, who is your favorite character in the book and why?

Robert: Janice would fill that description. She is Connor's woman. Headstrong and, at times recklessly brave, she struggles and succeeds in a man's world. She is more than she seems and has a major role to play in the coming sequels.

Tyler: What is a Trance Warrior? Why does Connor want to be a Trance Warrior?

Robert: Your own reviewer has described it best so far. Trancing is the ability of a man to 'warp time' and thus gain an immense advantage on the battle field. There are many problems for these warriors, because when in the trance, they 'walk with the gods,' as it is described in 'The Siege of Scarn' at one point. And since they are not gods many limitations and problems arise for them. Much more about trancing is explained and revealed in the second book.

Tyler: Would you explain what you mean about warping time? How is that an advantage on the battlefield?

Robert: As I mentioned in an earlier answer, Tyler, Connor can enter the trance and, to him, it seems as if everything becomes still, while he still moves, and thus he is able to destroy enemies by the hundreds and thousands if he chooses. But this power is dangerous to him and anathema to his honor code. In the second book much more detail is added to the explanation of this power.

Tyler: Connor is fighting against a hidden evil. Will you explain how he is aware of the evil and how it is detrimental to his world?

Robert: Connor becomes aware of the evil as the story unfolds, meeting new friends and gaining valuable insights from them. Without giving too much away, Connor knows that if the evil gains dominion of his world then everyone will die, or worse become a part of the evil.

Tyler: Will you tell us a little bit about the history of Connor's world and its gods? Why are these important to Connor's mission?

Robert: Connor's world is built around the animosity between the twin brother gods, Scarn and Scarl, whose eternal battle has all but destroyed several races and left large parts of the lands under the sway of the evil Kaitomi, of whom you can read more in the book. Connor's role revolves around his connection to the twin gods, and his actions will ultimately decide the outcome of the battle between the brothers.

Tyler: Robert, gods and twins are common in myths. Would you say there is a specific world mythology that specifically influenced you, and if so, how did it influence your creation of a fantasy world?

Robert: I think the first book was an amalgam of ideas gleaned from many hundreds of fantasy stories and several original ideas that shaped it. As the second book took shape several very specific mythological and historical ideas wove themselves into my story, namely Norse mythology, medieval styles, vampire like evil, slavery and a few others. As for the twins concept, it was a convenient and a good avenue to explain the evil and to separate the good from the evil.

Tyler: Robert, you've lived in North America and in England. Does the history of England, which includes the medieval period, influence your writing? Do you think your location has been an advantage to your writing that someone living in the United States, for example, might not have?

Robert: Since most of the book is very firmly 'fantasy,' I think it matters little where I am located. Incidentally, I was very pleased by the Reader Views review as the reviewer picked up on the fact that the 'Scarn warriors' are loosely based on the Native American Indians. Several historical periods and peoples are featured in the books; their presence in Connor's world is explained as the story unfolds.

Tyler: Connor has his own personal demons. What are those demons and how do they motivate his actions?

Robert: Most of Connor's 'demons' are to do with the devastating loss of his perceived family and the subsequent revelations about his true heritage. Too, he has great doubts about his own abilities and, sometimes, abhorrence when faced with some of the tasks he is set.

Tyler: Robert, what do you feel makes your fantasy world stand out among all the other fantasy worlds that have been created?

Robert: While most 'fantasy' novels of this ilk owe allegiance to "The Lord of the Rings," I hope I have created a new world with enough diversity and excitement to add something to the genre.

I wrote it in a style I would choose to read. A negative review stated that it was sparse and barely adequate at the beginning, while positive ones have described it as fast paced, and several people have said reading it was like watching a movie. The latter comments are very pleasing as I have always read books quickly, skimming over long, drawn out descriptions of scenery and the like, to get to the heart and action of the story.

Tyler: You mentioned earlier that you created dwarves and other typical creatures in fantasy stories, but added a twist or made them distinctive. Will you give us an example of how you did so?

Robert: The dwarves have an interesting power that grants them a special weapon, and gives them a devastating edge when gathered in large numbers, but I'll leave it to readers to find out for themselves. It is first seen in an exciting battle scene that one reader said was the most vivid and exciting he had read! The elves are introduced while in a particularly bad way; again I will leave it to the reader to discover how and why they were sundered.

Tyler: Which books, authors, or films would you say influenced you the most in creating your own fantasy world?

Robert: I would have to say the sadly departed David Gemmell's books have been my biggest influence. Many others as well though, very obviously Tolkien, David Eddings, Julian May, Stephen King, Christopher Stasheff, and several others.

Movies have had little bearing. Although the adaption of "The Lord of the Rings" to the big screen were, for the most part, brilliant, especially the second, "The Two Towers." And the film, "The 13th Warrior," has had a little influence on the second book.

Tyler: Do you enjoy fantasy films, even if they have had little impact on your writing? Have you imagined "The Siege of Scarn" being made into a film? Any guess on who would play the roles of Connor and Janice?

Robert: I enjoy most films and particularly fantasy films. I have envisioned "The Siege of Scarn" as a movie. I recently saw the brilliant, boys own romp, 300, and one particular actor in that film caught my eye—Michael Fassbender took a great part and I genuinely think he would make a superb Connor. As for Janice, I am undecided, although whoever it was would have to take on a duel role, at least for part of the story...and I know you'll ask, but you'll have to read the book!

Tyler: Our reviewer at Reader Views commented that the book was full of blood and gore, but she enjoyed it nonetheless. Do you find it difficult to write battle scenes and fill them with blood and gore? How do you make a battle interesting to your readers so that they are fascinated by it, even the ones who are squeamish?

Robert: I really enjoyed penning the battle scenes, and the siege writing. This is sometimes where I personally think other books fall down. From my own experience, and talking to others enthusiasts in the genre, you can find other stories flitting about away from battle to story building and character building, then back to battle, and then away again. Whereas I have tried to keep to the siege in my book, admittedly from many different viewpoints, but concentrating entirely on the fighting and effects of the battle for most of the second half of "The Siege of Scarn."

I really enjoyed "The Two Towers" movie, but I would have loved to see the siege at Helm's Deep as a seamless feature. As for gory or bloody, when you include swords, spears and arrows, there's going to be lots of it. But I hope I've tempered it with enough humanity and pathos to smooth the way. And I think I have considering the reviews, including the Reader Views review, where I received comments like, "I don't normally enjoy reading this type of book, but..." usually followed by positive comments despite the "blood and gore."

Tyler: What do you most enjoy about writing fantasy?

Robert: The freedom of imagination, in a fantasy world anything is possible. It removes the limitations of time and location. Allowing you to create almost any situation you can imagine.

Tyler: “Trance Warriors” is only the first book in the series. Will you give us a hint of what is to come next in the series and when we can expect the second volume?

Robert: I can tell you the second book is at the final editing stage and will be titled “Connor's Folly.” It follows Connor to new lands and adventures and reveals a potentially much greater threat than was first revealed in book one.

I have provisionally planned four books in the series, book three is very roughly written and book four grows every day in my head.

Tyler: Thank you for joining me today, Robert. Before we go will you tell our readers about your website and what additional information they might find there about “Trance Warriors: The Siege of Scarn”?

Robert: Thank you too, Tyler. You can go to www.trancewarriors.co.uk where you can find all things Trance Warrior, and links to the many places it can be bought, including Amazon.com, where it has recently made an appearance. Anyone can contact me directly from this site, via an e-mail link.

[Read Review of Trance Warriors](#)