



The Long Way Home

The first book in the Earth Legacy series

Q&A

Q. Where did the inspiration for this book come from?

A. I used to read all the usual suspects when I was younger, and now that I have two children of my own who enjoy me reading chapter books to them I'm re-discovering books such as the Narnia series and Tolkien's "The Hobbit", as well as finding new ones such as Cressida Cowell's "How to Train Your Dragon" series. As I'd recently completed and published my first book, a non-fiction work, and had always wanted to create a full novel (I have one which is stalled part-way through) I decided that the time was right for a children's story which I could share with my kids whilst they were still of an age to enjoy it. So I think all those different authors I've read over the years have contributed various bits of inspiration, but also my kids and how they react to the stories I read.

Q. What readers are you targeting with this story?

A. That's really hard, because different children – and adults – respond to very different styles and equate styles with age-range. I think this book appeals broadly to ages up to early teens, but if someone likes a book – regardless of their age – then they shouldn't be put off reading it by someone else's opinion of who it's aimed at. I have the early chapters available for free on my website, so readers can make up their own minds.

Q. There's a pretty strong eco-theme. Are you on a mission here?

A. Yes! I love nature and "the outdoors", I feel passionately that we all need to try a lot harder to reduce our footprint on this planet or we will simply eradicate much of what we depend upon for our wellbeing. So I've unashamedly woven the eco them deep into this story. In the subsequent books I'll continue this, and add in some pointed questions about human nature and the nature of society too. My aim is to get people to think and analyse, and to draw conclusions for themselves... although I admit that I can't help thrusting my own opinions in there at times too.

Q. The main character seems like a man of the people rather than a spoiled prince, is his character based on anyone?

A. No, but I didn't want our main man to be aloof and unaware of the everyday trials and tribulations of "normal" life. I needed someone who saw the world through the same lens as the rest of us. Beside which, it's fundamental to the plot that the aristocrats, if that's the right word, of Gondwana aren't and have never been set above the rest of the population – they are the ideal: a benign autocracy.

Q. Except for Prince Brandon! We leave him pretty early on, are we going to meet him again in the next book?

A. Oh yes. Assuming Prince Xanda gets home of course, I wouldn't want to give away the plot! The story needed a reason behind it all, something to shake the peace and tranquillity of the status quo, and Prince Brandon is that agitator. He's the bad penny. But is he truly a "bad person", or is he a product of his environment just as Prince Xanda is?

Q. Spoilers!

A. Indeed.

Q. This seems to be your first novel, how long have you been working on it?

A. It's the first fictional work I've published, yes, though I've been writing quite a lot in recent years. *The Long Way Home* actually didn't take too long to write – the story flowed quite easily for once. I think I penned the first words back in July 2013, so start-to-finish was about six months – pretty good going!

Q. What other projects do you have in the works?

A. I have started on the sequel, but also an adult science fiction story which is currently called "Avast!". *Avast!* will be a bit different, but I'm afraid that if you want to know more then you'll just have to wait...



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