

Full Author's Notes

From

Committed, Book 9

The Ascension Myth

Author Notes - Ell Leigh Clarke

March 25, 2018

Thank yous

Massive thanks as always goes out to MA, for not kicking me out of the Kurtherian Universe. (Keep reading to see what that's all about...!)

Huge thank yous also go to Steve "Zen master" Campbell and the JIT team who work tirelessly to make sure that all slips are caught and corrected, the files are uploaded on time, and the sacrificial chickens and Pepsi vats are in order for when the manuscript is released to the 'Zon.

Thank you so much guys :)

Reviewers

Massive thanks also goes out to our hoard of Amazon reviewers. It's because of you that we get to do this full time. Without your five-star reviews and thoughtful words on Amazon we simply wouldn't have enough folks reading these space shenanigans to be able to write full time.

You are the reason these stories exist and you have no idea how frikkin' grateful I am to you.

Truly, thank you.

Readers and FB page supporters

Last, and certainly by no means least, I'd like to thank you for reading this book... and all the others. Your enthusiasm for the world, and the characters, is heart-warming. Your words of encouragement, and demands for the next episode, are the things that often stay in my mind as I flick from checking the facebook page to the scrivener file when I start each writing session.

It used to be that caffeine was my drug of choice.

Now it's you.

Thank you for being here, for reading, for reviewing, and for always brightening my day with your words of support on the fb page. You rock my world, and without you, there really

would be no reason to write these stories.

Thank you.

E x

MA gets all gooey and romantic

The other day MA and I were talking about the Giles 3 book and beyond. As you know Giles and Molly's stories inter link.

Anyway, part way through the conversation I happen to mention who might be getting together right towards the end of the season arc.

MA: OMG! (*in a genuine valley girl voice*) I'm so glad they're getting together.

Ellie: but you're not into the romantic kinda stuff.

MA: I know! But I'm really excited about these two. I'm *soooo* glad.

Ellie (frowning): really?

Now just to put this into context, this is the guy who told me absolutely NO. LOVE. TRIANGLES. (Apparently that kind of drama stresses him out).

This is also the guy who spent - what? - all of 300 words on the BA/Michael get together.

And now he's excited about a couple of my characters getting together? WTF?

And for those who are entrenched in the Jolly (Joel and Molly) vs Miles (Molly and Giles) shipping, it wasn't one of those conversations. It was about another couple... just so you know there is still much to happen there before things are resolved.

Oh the dramas.

<<MIKE EDIT: Wow, there is pulling back the curtain to allow others to see some of the blood, sweat and tears of the publishing world... And then there is pulling back the THAT'S THE DAMNED SHOWER CURTAIN YOU TOOL!

Heheheh... I said 'tool.'>>

* * *

Poker and Trading

I tell people that the reason I moved to Austin was for one particular poker game.

They don't believe me.

But actually it's not that far from the truth.

It's was a BIG deciding factor when I came here to cat sit my friend's kitties. Her friend met me to give me the keys to the apartment and show me round and she invited me to her weekly poker game.

Full disclosure: at this point I'd never played a game of poker in my entire life. (Nor have I played many games. Card games or otherwise. Screwed up childhood etc etc)

Anyway, I had a blast just sitting and watching. What struck me was just what an awesome group of people there were here. Everyone was super helpful and keen to explain things to me. (They said it was coz I was a girl... but I've always been a girl and never felt that included.) What also struck me was that there was a real sense of community.

And the more I watched, the more I could see that this was the sense of community I'd been looking for all the time I was feeling isolated in LA.

So fast forward several months and I still hadn't played a single game. And then the season started and my friend got me on the list for their tournaments. I think I've played in four now. It's going well. I'm starting to remember the hands, and I end up hanging on in there until about half the players have been knocked out.

I'm sure a big chunk of this is beginners luck but I'm learning a tonne every week. It's fun. And it's my dose of interacting with humanity each week. (It was a good decision moving to Austin.)

Anyway, what quickly became apparent is that poker is a life skill.

<<MIKE EDIT: OMG! Did you just now make it that learning POKER is up there with ... Important stuff? I'm calling you out for elevating a card game to LIFE SKILL.>>

Applying to all kinds of things in business and life. I'm watching how my decision-making process on projects is shifting and being influenced by the way of thinking I've needed to adopt to take on the poker tournaments.

I'm also starting to understand the weird psychology underneath why people do certain things, like attach to pots, keep calling even with a losing hand, putting more into the pot than you can expect to get back (in terms of the expectation value...bad bets).

And I'm starting to see patterns in why people have moods and get stressed out – even if they're cool people away from the poker table. It seems that a lot of guys get angry and

frustrated when they get knocked out. It's a strange phenomenon. I mean, the odds are that even if you're a decent player you're not going to win your money back. You only get a cash prize if you place in the top four. And it's not a lot of money either way.

And yet there seems to be a frustration when one doesn't win.

Plus, things tend to get tense at certain points in the game.

When blinds are about to go up at the end of a round.

When there are a certain number of people left before everything moves to one table.

When people lose chips(!)

I've noticed more than a few folks get funny and disappear straight after they get knocked out. It was a shock at first and it's taken me a few weeks to expect it when it happens.

If poker is a reflection of life, these are interesting data points.

Some of the guys have taken to teasing me when I get knocked out and get excited about where I placed in the rankings. Apparently I should be more moody and flip a table over or something. Ha! Never going to happen... but watching it all is helping me to understand humans a bit better.

* * *

My dentist is a closet geek

You may have seen on facebook that the crowning of the teeth continues. One of them has resulted in a root canal and been giving me no end of pain.

I've noticed a few folks in the comments making dental porn jokes, but I'm sorry to report there has been no dental porn here in Austin. This dentist is a little more earnest and doesn't have the same sense of humor as Dr. Mojito so I haven't mentioned it to him.

But when I asked to see my x-ray of a particular tooth he did get quite excited.

Then, the other day when he couldn't get me numb, he went and grabbed a text book to explain to me why (in theory!) I should be numb.

When I asked for some ibuprofen, when his fancy injections weren't working, he sent the nurse to grab some. She asked me for the dosage. I told her 400 mg. He was like: "hang on, who is the doctor around here?"

It was hilarious. And he had a point.

We talked about the memes that do the rounds on facebook:

Please do not confuse my medical degree with your google search.

He pulled out this one:

Patients will be charged extra for annoying doctor with their self-diagnosis found on the internet.

That was me.

He's also confessed to taking naps in his office at lunch time, but then talks about going out drinking with his friends all the time. I think that secretly he's a geek who lives a double life. His friends think he's a party animal. And at work he's just the boss. And then he has this really geeky quality that he seems to suppress.

Or maybe that's what my writer's mind is extrapolating.

Anyway. No dental porn conversation with this one.

But on the point of ibuprofen – I've ended up taking a boat load of pain killers for dental pain recently. I feel like I was just getting back on track and then this hit. I did a bit of reading about NSAID (Non-steroidal Anti-Inflammatory Drugs) the other day. (Not on the internet though!)

I knew ibuprofen is really bad for us but I wasn't sure exactly why. Turns out it attacks the intestinal track, amongst other things, causing lesions and leaky gut even. I wonder if this has been why I might be feeling sub-par.

I read up about some alternatives and order up some more supplements.

Turmeric.

I knew it was good for inflammation generally, but in a high enough dosage it can act as a pain killer.

It just arrived in the post while I was writing these notes. (Thank you Amazon!) Going to give it a try.

Fingers crossed.

<<MIKE EDIT: Seriously? Shit, I've been taking it for a while (not always every day) but certainly didn't think it was bad for us. *Dammit!* Now I have to worry.>>

* * *

Ellie vs the Red monkey

Writing is hard. It takes huge amounts of focus for long period of time.

To the outside world it looks like we're just sitting at a laptop all day. Vegetating.

The reality is very different.

And it's taken me a loooong time to really internalize this.

I've had writer friends who have explained that it can be as physically hard as running for hours. There's sciency stuff to support these claims.

Anyway, in an attempt to make it easier, lots of us use things like caffeine and adaptogens, just to keep going. (Caffeine is mostly off my list these days).

I've had a long interest in biohacking: how to increase human performance, physically and mentally. I've tried all kinds of supplements to this end, but for the most part have tried to get off anything that isn't natural and life supporting.

Yesterday was different though.

Yesterday was Saturday and between dental pain from a root canal on Monday and general exhaustion and lethargy I hadn't written anything all week.

As a writer who lives and dies by the word count this was BAD.

Instead, I'd been binging on Netflix and trying to recoup enough to get some serious work done. I even ended up watching the series of *Limitless* for a bit of vicarious motivation.

Combine utter frustration with watching that show and of course certain things re-enter the mind. I remembered I have a cupboard full of biohacking stuff that I'd stopped taking. (Some of the side effects of these things include lights dancing in front of the eyes, and extreme exhaustion equivalent to jetlag spring to mind).

Anyway, as I said, yesterday I just needed to get SOMETHING done.

So I took something I'd bought called Red Monkey.

It certainly got my ass moving. I'd written over 8k words on the new Giles book by lunchtime.

However by the afternoon I was kinda burnt out again, so I ate some carbs and tried to chill. And watch some Netflix... That's when the lights started dancing, migraine style. Needless to say, despite my desire to go for a run or walk, I was bed-bound for the rest of the day. I took TWO naps before I eventually surrendering and went to bed for good... only to wake up around 11am the next day.

The moral of this story – everything comes with a price. 8k words on the page may have cost me a few hundred brain cells.

And though I haven't thrown those pills away, I think I'm going to be sticking to my adaptogen laced “coffee” and XCT oil for the foreseeable future.

<<MIKE EDIT: Ellie could lose a few million brain cells and I'd still be woefully overpowered in a thinking contest with her.>>

* * *

Plates vs Bowls

I feel like since moving to Austin I'm gradually putting down roots.

Not permanent-never-going-to-move-again kinda roots. But I've been making more of an effort to make friends and go out and stuff. I must say, it's actually a tonne easier here than in a lot of places I've lived. Partly because southerners are so damn friendly. And partly because Austin is just an awesomely inclusive community. I'm loving it.

In the past few weeks I've even purchased things that one might need if one is staying more than a few months. Things like bathroom scales. A dehumidifier. Another set of glasses, and extra bar stools so that friends can sit at the island and play Cards Against Humanity when I get around to having them over for drinks.

(Granted, the stools are still in a box from when they were delivered. But they're there and ready).

I've even learned to use the dishwasher!

Yup.

You read that right.

I had one in the apartment in LA. And most places I was airbnb'ing before. But my calculations on how much effort it would take to figure it out, plus buying the right capsule things to put it in, plus loading and unloading... I just figured it was more efficient to wash them by hand.

But then the other day I was like: *Come on Ellie. You can adult. Figure this shit out.*

<<MIKE EDIT: "You can adult." BWAahahahaha.... I think this is a fabulous term.>>

So I did. I remembered to add dishwasher tablets to the shopping list and a few days later I ended up stacking it up with dirty dishes that I'd left and not washed up... and figured out which buttons to press. (Turns out there's just one – the 'on' button – and I need to push it twice).

It was surprisingly easy.

So I've been a dishwasher convert for the last week!

But this brought me on to another self-revelation.

I'm definitely a bowl girl.

Given a choice... I'd faaaar rather eat from a bowl, than a plate.

Even to the extent that this morning I hadn't put the dishwasher on (because my noise cancelling headphones had needed charging and I can't bear the noise on the inside of my skull while I'm in the apartment) and so all the bowls were locked in the dishwasher.

Choice 1: lift one out and wash it.

Choice 2: use one of the 20 plates sitting in the cupboard.

And it was a difficult decision.

I opted for a plate... but man, I gotta tell you... not happy. The cauliflower doesn't taste the same, and things tend to move around too easily, even when you've got a knife.

(Sometimes I watch myself and I wonder: how have I managed to survive so long?)

Anyway, yeah. This is what I'm mulling as I'm sitting here eating and writing these author notes.

Yeah, I'm gonna live alone forever...

<<MIKE EDIT: Doubtful, but I CAN imagine someone making a TV show about you.>>

* * *

MA is kicking me out of Kurtherian

So call me paranoid but this is definitely thing.

<<MIKE EDIT: It is NOT a thing. It is me making sure my collaborators can fish (look it up.)>>

Ever since I started writing with MA, well two weeks after we published the first Molly book, MA has been trying to get me to go out on my own and publish.

Yep. Without him.

I've never understood it.

<<MIKE EDIT: See note above, I've only explained this a bajillion times.>>

It makes (a million times) more financial sense for him to have me write in his universe for... well, forever.

<<MIKE EDIT: I'm actually good with this, but I just feel guilty some times cause of all that money coming my way and no, I'm not changing the percentages, you are already coming out ahead.>>

And as a collaborator I'm probably the lowest maintenance there is. Certainly in terms of ROI and maintenance, I'm a pretty efficient bet.

So I always get suspicious when he harps on about how I need to publish my own universe. My own books.

He says it's because he wants to see me succeed on my own.

But I always wonder if he's just trying to get rid of me.

Like today.

We were talking about author notes and he said I needed to mention the new universe I'm building so that you know what's going on. Even if it's just a little bit of insight. It feels like he's trying to get rid of me. (Why would anyone want to get rid of me though?)

Anyway, in case he's planning on axing Molly and/or Giles... Here's the low-down on the Ellie'verse.

I'm midway through Book 1 of the new Bentley Jones series. This is tech-mag. So scifi but fringe science more than hard science. It's set in the future in another sector of space away from earth.

It's also funny as hell. (Well, it makes me laugh anyway... and since the cards against humanity escapade, I've realised I have a pretty dark sense of humour when let off the leash! Who'd have thought?)

I'm also working with a friend and collaborator, Rex, on another series, which is set a few hundred years earlier.

It's still sci fi-ish, but the protagonist is a chick who can touch things and "read" the object's past/ future. I'm loving reading it. In fact, I find it not only incredibly relaxing and entertaining to read, even though I worked on the beats with him, but I find myself hassling him for the next segment for entirely selfish reasons. Obviously I'm keen for you to get to read it, too. (We're going to start publishing as soon as we have a few episodes in the bag, so you won't be waiting around.) But when I hit him up for status updates... it's primarily motivated by my own desire to read it.

And as you know by now, I'm not a reader.

So I'm guessing/(hoping?) that you'll also find this series pretty special.

<<MIKE EDIT: See, was that so fucking hard? I bet you aren't worried about going out of Kurtherian Gambit, you are secretly scared of sharing your projects with your fans. YUP! That must be it!>>

I'm head down working on Giles 3 right now. Those mysterious talismans aren't going to

find themselves. But they are going to explain exactly what's going on in the final Molly arc.

If you haven't already caught up with our rogue space archeologist, I recommend catching up with that story line pretty soon, as it's about to become super relevant to our girl Molly.

That is, as long as MA doesn't kick me out of Kurtherian...

<<MIKE EDIT: Nope.>>

E x

Author Notes - Michael Anderle

Written March 25, 2018

First, THANK YOU for not only reading our story, but reading our Author Notes as well. We can't do what we do, without you reading our work(s) and enjoying them.

I Have a Confession!

I really, REALLY didn't want to go down the Sean Royale getting married arc in these stories.

Ellie has been working on this for a while, and I had to trust her, but I didn't necessarily WANT us to go there.

Especially with this other character Katrina.

<<Ellie edit: you maybe should have mentioned this BEFORE we started this arc in the last book perhaps? (eyeroll) >>

<<<MIKE EDIT: I DID ... perhaps I wasn't loud enough?>>>

I have to admit; I was wrong.... That's right, I typed it. (and I'm sure Ellie will mention this in the audio notes again... (Or stay very quiet like it isn't a big deal.))

<Small aside, are you listening to the audio books? We have quite a few out, check out our Molly books!>

So, I was in Texas during Spring Break with the two college guys coming back for a week (that was a strange experience all on its own.) I'm speaking with Ellie and there is an opportunity to read book 09 early so I ask for it.

I was messed up (sleepy) from the time zone and the whole allergy stuff. I started the book at night, enjoying myself but finally had to admit that sleep was going to win. I picked it back up the next morning right away, and then again a little later that morning when I was reading on the couch.

DAMMIT! Ellie had me. Actually, she had me back at the beginning and the whole arc with Sean was a fucking blast. I called her later that day to congratulate her on such a fun ride. I enjoyed the story, but hadn't finished it yet and had to admit that to her.

(I was working on a project that I got in over my head.)

So, now that I've finished the story I have (not the finished version). I will admit there are MANY laugh-out-loud moments.

But, the one that probably takes the cake for me was when Molly pulled Sean aside as he was standing at the front of the Church.

She is getting ready to blast him out of there, and he says he can't. He needs to take care of Katrina and if they leave, she is as good as dead.

So, Molly starts to reach for her gun, to (I assumed) cap one in Katrina's head to help her along.

Now, I may be a bit morbid, but I found that funny as hell. Molly is so focused on Sean, that she has NO issues capping his supposed bride in order to help him out.

Friends will lie for you. Good friends know where the bodies are buried. Molly is obviously a good friend!

<< Ellie Edit: OMG. I didn't think anyone would notice that! It was such a throw away line, and I figured most of y'all speed read so you know... It amused me when I wrote it too. >>

Wednesdays and Poker

So, Ellie and I have a standing conference call on Thursday's. It's like at 3:00 PM her time, 1:00 PM my time. (She is in Texas (Austin), I'm in Las Vegas. Note how I stipulate the state before the city for her, and all I do is mention the city for me. I don't know how many people KNOW where Nevada is, but mention Las Vegas and they get it.)

Anyway, we are talking during our call, and we are going back and forth about a lot. Now, Ellie is NOT looking real spunky.

<< Ellie Edit: spunky in English means something else entirely! :-0 >>

In fact, she is looking rather less energetic than normal. Not that I'd let that change my opinion on if I could put one over on her. Even if she is running on four cylinders, she's still smart enough to carry on two conversations and chew gum.

<< Ellie Edit: I'd been up aaaaaaall night and was exhausted. >>

But, I digress.

So, we are chatting about stuff and she mentions 'blah blah blah, can't focus...' and I smirk. Why do I smirk?

Because I *know* what day of the week it is, and she has mentioned her new obsession that is both geeky, fun and involves statistics and people reading.

Our Favorite English Author™ loves *POKER*.

<<Ellie Edit: did you just trade mark me?>>

<<<Mike Edit: Yes, yes I did.>>>

So, this is our conversation over the Zoom line as I see her struggle trying to keep her eyes open. They keep glancing to the side (I'm assuming she needs caffeine.)

Me: Did you go to poker last night?

Ellie: (She perks up, like just mentioning the game and the party puts her into a new mindset.) YES!

Me: So, that explains why you are wiped out, stayed up late did we?

Ellie: (Eyes narrowing, realizing that I busted her.) *Yes...* (Then, she re-animates) Oh Oh! You had to see it, I got into the final hands, and some of the guys...

Ellie goes on to explain how some of the players react, and whether or not she understands the emotions that they are going through when they have lost their pot. (Pots, I might add, she took from them.)

Oh, she understands the emotions intellectually, but whether she agrees on the efficacy of those feelings and allowing them to affect the person is a completely other discussion.

What is so compelling for me about her poker stories (and this is Ellie in a nutshell) is she didn't know ANYTHING about Poker before (or if she did, it was very little) and now after a handful of times playing, she is making it to the final game.

I would have been playing with the kids over in the corner, hoping the seven year old didn't call me on my pair of eights and high King!

I had a great five minutes as she recounts the stories from her poker night. Then, I ask her about her Cards Against Humanities night from a week or two back, and she laughs telling those stories.

I just want to say "*I Tried.*"

I tried to get Ellie to record a Cards Against Humanities game with her author friends and put it up for all of us to listen, but she doesn't believe it will happen.

I'm rather bummed.

Stay with us as Molly has to do something she has been training for her entire life. She has to save her system from doing the unthinkable.

And it will take all of the intelligence, teamwork, family connections, spiritual

understanding and guns (that's right, GUNS) to accomplish nothing less than...

Saving the world.

Ad Aeternitatem,

Michael Anderle