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Subject: Bells and Language  
Posted by [jmeadows](#) on Wed, 15 Oct 2008 22:20:05 GMT  
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Bells and Language

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Subject: Re: Bells and Language  
Posted by [Black Bear](#) on Wed, 15 Oct 2008 22:34:01 GMT  
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Great post, Robin, the language stuff is fascinating. Not least because I tend to get irritable with authors who make up words for making-up-words-sake--a category which you emphatically do NOT fall into. Susan's put her finger on it--you're giving us glimpses of a sound and a language, which is a very different thing than just tumbling out some random jumbles of unpronounceable letters to remind people that they're reading a fantasy novel... Very cool.

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Subject: Re: Bells and Language  
Posted by [jmeadows](#) on Wed, 15 Oct 2008 22:50:25 GMT  
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Love this post. I find the 'hearing' fascinating, especially when it translates to music as well. Music does tell stories, even without lyrics. Maybe especially without, since the stories people hear might be different...but similar. Movie soundtracks work for a reason!

I can't wait to hear what you're working on in Finale, Robin, and the stories your music tells.

This talk on Damarian language is making me realize it's been way too long since I've read Sword and Hero. They're some of the first genre books I read and helped me fall in love with SFF. I think it's time for a reread.

Quote:but I believe in the sound the bells make being to the greater glory of something greater than human, and if the Christian god likes the noise they make that's a mark in his/her/its/their favour, and common ground.

A quick search of biblegateway.com says yes. (Hope that link works. Looks like it should.)

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Subject: Re: Bells and Language

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Posted by [Robin](#) on Wed, 15 Oct 2008 23:15:39 GMT

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Black Bear wrote on Wed, 15 October 2008 18:34: Great post, Robin, the language stuff is fascinating. Not least because I tend to get irritable with authors who make up words for making-up-words-sake--a category which you emphatically do NOT fall into. Susan's put her finger on it--you're giving us glimpses of a sound and a language, which is a very different thing than just tumbling out some random jumbles of unpronounceable letters to remind people that they're reading a fantasy novel... Very cool.

Oh good. Thanks. I agree about Fantasy Words made up to be Fantasy Words. You need a sense that they come from somewhere. It's like landscape: you can only believe in the tree if you believe the ground it's growing in.

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Subject: Re: Bells and Language

Posted by [Robin](#) on Wed, 15 Oct 2008 23:22:30 GMT

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jmeadows wrote on Wed, 15 October 2008 18:50: Love this post. I find the 'hearing' fascinating, especially when it translates to music as well. Music does tell stories, even without lyrics. Maybe especially without, since the stories people hear might be different...but similar. Movie soundtracks work for a reason!

I can't wait to hear what you're working on in Finale, Robin, and the stories your music tells.

\*\*\*\*\* [Sorry, I don't understand how to quote INSIDE a quote without becoming part of the quote . . .] Just remember I'M NOT A REAL MUSICIAN. What I'm writing are weird little morsels of facsimile music. :) Since I signed off on this entry, I decided I didn't have enough brain for real work so I've been Inputting Finale, which is rote stuff I'm trying to \*drive into my brain HOW TO DO.\* And the thing I've been inputting is Bag #2: Bagatelle, subheading Nothing Like Beethoven. :)

This talk on Damarian language is making me realize it's been way too long since I've read Sword and Hero. They're some of the first genre books I read

\*\*\*\*\* Oh cool! :)

and helped me fall in love with SFF.

\*\*\*\*\* Oh, cooler! :)

I think it's time for a reread.

Quote:but I believe in the sound the bells make being to the greater glory of something greater than human, and if the Christian god likes the noise they make that's a mark in his/her/its/their favour, and common ground.

A quick search of biblegateway.com says yes. (Hope that link works. Looks like it should.)

\*\*\*\*\* Well if that's ALL it can come up with it's a bit sad. And I don't really feel bells need a lot of pomegranates to get their point across. . . .

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Subject: Re: Bells and Language  
Posted by [jmeadows](#) on Wed, 15 Oct 2008 23:31:46 GMT  
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Robin wrote on Wed, 15 October 2008 19:22

\*\*\*\*\* [Sorry, I don't understand how to quote INSIDE a quote without becoming part of the quote . . .]

It's okay. Probably more poking at code than you want to do. Fortunately, I read Robin. ;)

Quote:Just remember I'M NOT A REAL MUSICIAN. What I'm writing are weird little morsels of facsimile music. :)

So...like flash fiction! (1000 words or less!)

Quote:\*\*\*\*\* Well if that's ALL it can come up with it's a bit sad. And I don't really feel bells need a lot of pomegranates to get their point across. . . .

You would think there'd be more! (I actually did. What I thought was there wasn't. Shows what I know!) There are music topics elsewhere, which indicates the Christian God \*does\* appreciate music, so maybe there was just a disturbing lack of bells back then.

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Subject: Re: Bells and Language  
Posted by [Black Bear](#) on Wed, 15 Oct 2008 23:36:24 GMT  
[View Forum Message](#) <> [Reply to Message](#)

Robin wrote on Wed, 15 October 2008 19:15

Oh good. Thanks. I agree about Fantasy Words made up to be Fantasy Words. You need a sense that they come from somewhere. It's like landscape: you can only believe in the tree if you believe the ground it's growing in.

Well put, I fully agree.

And when it goes horribly wrong, you get this instead... :) "They're like swords, but AWESOMER!!"

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Subject: Re: Bells and Language  
Posted by [jmeadows](#) on Wed, 15 Oct 2008 23:38:27 GMT  
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Black Bear wrote on Wed, 15 October 2008 19:36  
And when it goes horribly wrong, you get this instead... :) "They're like swords, but AWESOMER!!"

And no one wants to be mocked by XKCD!

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Subject: Re: Bells and Language  
Posted by [Susan from Athens](#) on Wed, 15 Oct 2008 23:50:25 GMT  
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I love how you start answering my question (and I can't tell you how gratified I am that you chose to address it or how truly fascinated I am by the resulting thesis):

It's mostly by ear, I'm afraid; which is to say not terribly discussible; which increasingly appears to be the way I do everything.

and then you go on to explain and discuss most clearly. By ear is a wonderful explanation, because the language does "sound" right and as Black Bear's wonderful cartoon indicates we have all battled our way through forrests of boringly complex, incomprehensibly sounding pseudo languages. This does sound right.

I can't remember if I deliberately chose the to-our-ears backwards addition of a vowel to make a noun gender masculine, for sol and sola, or if that 'came'; the way the

names for Mathin and Tsornin and Narknon did. I was writing SWORD in my early unreconstructed feminist phase, however, and it's the sort of thing I would do; mix it up for the sake of the mixing.

I'm glad it's not just me it sounds different to. I often find that Greek which is most masculine oriented as a language (worse even than French) needs pulling up by its hair to sound decent and you have to really work with it to translate it into English, particularly anything that is in the least gender or racially sensitive (and then have to spend a large chunk of time explaining to your client why you had to make those changes and how unacceptable it would be in English to say it as it is in the original).

So it sounding difficult in my ear was not just me and Greek. But I like the fact that this is still a minor thing that slightly gets you out of your comfort zone and thus makes you think about things you take for granted rather than bashing you over the head to make its point.

Thanks for another fascinating post and I hope the computer troubles clear up. I feel for you because mine is giving signs of incipient breakdown or was for a few days. I took some steps and things seem to have improved, but this could also be the calm before the storm.

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Subject: Re: Bells and Language  
Posted by [L.R.K.](#) on Thu, 16 Oct 2008 00:13:52 GMT  
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This post was so interesting - and exciting!

So much to think of, ponder and - so to speak - digest.

In one way, I feel so sorry for you - are people already demanding a sequel to "Chalice"? Does it make you nervous writing "Pegasus" that as soon as it's available people will expect a sequel to that too? Have you said anything about "Albion"? (If you have mentioned more than the name, I've missed it.)

I understand what you mean when you say that you can only write what you are given; it is/was the same way for me. Except that I was never given a plot! - only glimpses of scenes and/or dialogue; sometimes I didn't even know who the people were! It was like a rather fun puzzle to piece things together. (Of course, my book has no plot - it's more like a collection of short stories/sketches featuring the same people - "people" also meaning the furry/feathery - or people around them.)

I wonder if the Damarian might have a slightly Persian feel to it? Of course, I don't know Persian, so I might be completely talking through my hat; Urdu is made up basically of four languages:

Arabic, Persian, Turkish and Sanskrit and I might be utterly mistaken as to which are the Persian parts! (A fun thing for me, was when an Iranian girl, who was visiting her sister here in Sweden, was asked what she had done/seen and she answered something something "kishti" something something "jazira"; "kishti"=boat & "jazira"=island.)

Oh dear, that's my taxi-driver husband home for his dinner - I have no time to check what I've written - hope there are not too many & awful mistakes! :)

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Subject: Re: Bells and Language  
Posted by [livvispatula](#) on Thu, 16 Oct 2008 00:15:12 GMT  
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Hey, I \*liked\* the unfinishedness of the ending of Sunshine. It just means that her story isn't over yet. Even if you don't write a continuation of some sort, Sunshine still goes on. I like that better than locking her up in some sort of happy-ever-after.

This is not to say that a prequel or sequel or whatever wouldn't make me ecstatic. ;)

Quote:\*\*\*\*\* Well if that's ALL it can come up with it's a bit sad. And I don't really feel bells need a lot of pomegranates to get their point across. . . .

The pomegranates were just symbolic decoration, really. It was the bells that were important: so you could tell if the High Priest was surviving his encounter with God.

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Subject: Re: Bells and Language  
Posted by [Julia](#) on Thu, 16 Oct 2008 00:15:15 GMT  
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By now, it seems that I will be simply echoing what everyone else has already said, but I truly found the language [and music] discussion/explanation/stuff terribly fascinating! [not that whatever you post isn't always fascinating. But you know. This was especially so. Particularly because of my interest in language and linguistics and all that sort of thing, but also just as a reader who has a whole new aspect of that world now revealed to her, at least in part.]

All of which is really just to say: wow, and thank you.  
Hooray.

:)

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Subject: Re: Bells and Language  
Posted by [Maureen E](#) on Thu, 16 Oct 2008 00:16:29 GMT  
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Robin wrote on Wed, 15 October 2008 19:15Black Bear wrote on Wed, 15 October 2008 18:34Great post, Robin, the language stuff is fascinating. Not least because I tend to get irritable with authors who make up words for making-up-words-sake--a category which you emphatically do NOT fall into. Susan's put her finger on it--you're giving us glimpses of a sound and a language, which is a very different thing than just tumbling out some random jumbles of unpronounceable letters to remind people that they're reading a fantasy novel... Very cool.

Oh good. Thanks. I agree about Fantasy Words made up to be Fantasy Words. You need a sense that they come from somewhere. It's like landscape: you can only believe in the tree if you believe the ground it's growing in.

There's a Tolkien quote somewhere which I am going to butcher because I was an idiot and didn't write it down. But it goes something like this: You can certainly have a blue sun in a story. But there must be a reason for the sun to be blue and the reason must make sense in that world.

Very challenging, in my opinion, and something people struggle with on occasion.

I've been taking Russian for five semesters now and I've noticed that my understanding of English grammar has gone up quite a bit. I know know what the difference between a direct and indirect object is, for instance.

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Subject: Re: Bells and Language  
Posted by [Krystolla](#) on Thu, 16 Oct 2008 01:33:15 GMT  
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I never thought about bells as being a relatively young instrument. I guess I thought of them as a refinement of drums, and those are the oldest of all. Now I have a sudden urge to look up music history . . .

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Subject: Re: Bells and Language  
Posted by [Aerin Starwalker](#) on Thu, 16 Oct 2008 02:52:38 GMT  
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I know my God (teh Christian God, who is male, BTY) loves music, and bells make beautiful music. There must be a reason all the old fancy churches have them. Yo won't find them in use in

the Old Testament much, the Israelites were nomads after all.

But religion aside, bells just lend such grandour to anything, they make things seem more important to you. They make such an uplifting sound, or sounds.

I think that having giving your lands or worlds their own language adds such a nice depth to said land or world. And Robin's very lucky to be able to hear such things. We can't all be Tolkiens, who write stories to showcase their languages!

And now I too, wish to go read Hero again and Sword again. And I have no time to do so. Bah!

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Subject: Re: Bells and Language

Posted by [SoltGoes31](#) on Thu, 16 Oct 2008 03:06:43 GMT

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Two things. First, I'm kind of sad that bells are going to factor so large because right now my feeling towards bells and bell ringing is 'that's kind of cool.' I don't have any particular enthusiasm for them. The problem here lies in the fact that I will inevitable read the book as soon as it is out, and most likely end up with an "OMG BELLS ARE THE COOLEST THING EVER MUST GO OUT AND RING" attitude afterwards. And there just aren't enough hours in day for that. If there wasn't going to be a book I could remain in blissful semi-ignorance. I still haven't gotten around to taking riding lessons now that I'm back at school.

Secondly, on the same note, I have read Chalice (surprise, surprise). Several weeks ago, actually, but I only just got around to posting. Important background detail: I have always hated honey. Hated it. Passionately. Since I was but a wee little lass. But after reading Chalice I thought to myself 'well, honey is pretty cool stuff, and I haven't tried any in years.' So I decided to give it another try, and it turns out that honey is, in fact, the greatest anything ever. So now I owe Robin thanks for both the honey and the riding lessons.

Speaking of religion, you should check out the Baha'i. If I were going to be religious, I'd be Baha'i. Here's the very basics of it: <http://info.bahai.org/bahaullah-basic-teachings.html>

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Subject: Re: Bells and Language

Posted by [Jenny Rae Rappaport](#) on Thu, 16 Oct 2008 03:21:31 GMT

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Wait, ALBION, what is ALBION?

Do other people know what ALBION is about? Did this detail just fly past my head one day? =)

PEGASUS=something with pegasi in it

BELLS=we read the beginning

ALBION=? A magical history of Britain?

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Subject: Re: Bells and Language

Posted by [Reading Angel](#) on Thu, 16 Oct 2008 04:57:21 GMT

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As a linguistic geek, I've always loved how the Damarian language gives the impression of being an actual language that is actually spoken and not just "oh, I ought to throw some native vocabulary in here" on the part of the author. I also absolutely adore the scene in Blue Sword where Harry learns the language\*! My favourite scene in a book probably ever. Also, the way the words are used because there simply isn't a concept which directly translates rather than to show off your language-smithing skills.

\*My greatest annoyance with any work of fiction ever was the Disney Pocahontas movie where they meet and magically speak the same language! Arg! No! The thrill of the movie up until that point was waiting to see how they'd handle the fact of speaking different languages!

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Subject: Re: Bells and Language

Posted by [Guest](#) on Thu, 16 Oct 2008 07:31:06 GMT

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About a month ago, on a Tuesday evening at 8pm I left work and walked across the city center (which happens to be called Cathedral Square) and there is a Cathedral there. And someone (several someones more likely) were ringing the most impressive peal of bells.

I listened for about 15 min while I walked back to my car in surprise - I didnt know they did bell ringing there (they chime the hours but I thought it was automated) and it was FANTASTIC and I thought of Robin, and how much you would have loved hearing it.

And it was special because with reading Robins blog, and hearing more about how bells are rung, I could \*appreciate\* it more than it just being a nice sound, and for some reason that made me feel good.

So I look forward to your Bells book!

And FWIW I find the concept that people hassle you to write sequels or other books about x quite astonishing (because I would be dumbstruck with awe should I ever actually be face to face with any author LOL).

I \*love\* your books and they have given me such pleasure and enjoyment (and continue too) and it sounds all fangirl and gushy but its just how they make me feel. There is good reason why Blue Sword is my no#1 comfort read - its got me thru some dark patches.

So I look forward to any new directions you take us in with anticipation!

(and I have a new convert - I have a bee mad friend who I leant Chalice too and she is asking for more to read)

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Subject: Re: Bells and Language

Posted by [Susan from Athens](#) on Thu, 16 Oct 2008 09:13:01 GMT

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Krystolla wrote on Thu, 16 October 2008 04:33I never thought about bells as being a relatively young instrument. I guess I thought of them as a refinement of drums, and those are the oldest of all. Now I have a sudden urge to look up music history . . .

Bells are most ancient. It is change ringing of said bells that is relatively recent. But there are other patterns of ringing bells that are very old indeed. The monks at some monasteries Mount Athos continue a millennium-old tradition of calling to prayers by beating not a bell, but a plank of wood with a mallet, so yes, definitely a variation of a drum. It makes a lovely sound, but not as carrying as a bell.

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Subject: Re: Bells and Language

Posted by [scarhandpiper](#) on Thu, 16 Oct 2008 10:18:10 GMT

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Robin wrote on Wed, 15 October 2008 17:22

Quote:but I believe in the sound the bells make being to the greater glory of something greater than human, and if the Christian god likes the noise they make that's a mark in his/her/its/their favour, and common ground.

. . . and pipes, too. They are also mentioned in the scriptures, having been created some 5 centuries BC.

I'm going to add my vote to the majority here, to say I loved the language bits in Hero and Sword, being a student of multiple languages, and this blog entry was absolutely fascinating! It's so interesting to get a glimpse into how you write/learn languages/create stories. Thanks, Robin.

I re-read Blue Sword on a yearly basis and don't mind if there isn't a sequel because the original is so good.

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Subject: Re: Bells and Language  
Posted by [holmes44](#) on Thu, 16 Oct 2008 11:08:10 GMT  
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you guys just reminded me that at church sometimes my daughters ring the church bell to tell people that the service is starting. i am just so used to the bells ringing at the church hour that i did not think about it until this blog.

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Subject: Re: Bells and Language  
Posted by [Robin](#) on Thu, 16 Oct 2008 11:48:05 GMT  
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[quote title=jmeadows wrote on Wed, 15 October 2008 19:31][quote  
You would think there'd be more! (I actually did. What I thought was there wasn't. Shows what I know!) There are music topics elsewhere, which indicates the Christian God \*does\* appreciate music, so maybe there was just a disturbing lack of bells back then. [/quote]

(There would have been bells: just not CHANGE RINGING bells. What surprises me is that it took so long to invent change ringing.) Surely \*any\* HUMAN god, I mean god of HUMANS would appreciate music?? We're \*so\* music oriented, even those of us who aren't. :) But it's like stories. We have to tell stories. Words are music too. And music is words. . . .

[stopping now before I drift off into a sibylline alternate reality . . . ]

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Subject: Re: Bells and Language  
Posted by [Robin](#) on Thu, 16 Oct 2008 11:51:16 GMT  
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Black Bear wrote on Wed, 15 October 2008 19:36Robin wrote on Wed, 15 October 2008 19:15

Oh good. Thanks. I agree about Fantasy Words made up to be Fantasy Words. You need a sense that they come from somewhere. It's like landscape: you can only believe in the tree if you believe the ground it's growing in.

Well put, I fully agree.

And when it goes horribly wrong, you get this instead... :) "They're like swords, but AWESOMER!!!"

LITERAL SNORK. You know how 'snork' (or variations thereof) is supposed to be 'the noise you make when you laugh while drinking tea/coffee to the immediate detriment of your computer keyboard'? Yes. But I forgive you. I LOVE xkcd. I dunno, maybe I need 'They're like swords, but AWESOMER!!!' as my signature line (if signature line is what I mean)

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Subject: Re: Bells and Language  
Posted by [AJLR](#) on Thu, 16 Oct 2008 11:54:54 GMT  
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Robin said: Quote:You may remember I said that PEGASUS seems to be running long?

This gives me great joy! Even though - and this is obviously entirely guesswork - in that case it's probably not going to be available to us McKinley-junkies until Christmas 09?

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Subject: Re: Bells and Language  
Posted by [Black Bear](#) on Thu, 16 Oct 2008 12:06:39 GMT  
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[quote title=Robin wrote on Thu, 16 October 2008 07:51]Black Bear wrote on Wed, 15 October 2008 19:36

I dunno, maybe I need 'They're like swords, but AWESOMER!!!' as my signature line (if signature line is what I mean)

I think maybe you do!! Shall I do a "Tips and Tricks" on how to add a signature line? :)

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Subject: Re: Bells and Language  
Posted by [scarhandpiper](#) on Thu, 16 Oct 2008 12:20:40 GMT  
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[quote title=Black Bear wrote on Thu, 16 October 2008 06:06]Robin wrote on Thu, 16 October 2008 07:51Black Bear wrote on Wed, 15 October 2008 19:36

I dunno, maybe I need 'They're like swords, but AWESOMER!!' as my signature line (if signature line is what I mean)

I think maybe you do!! Shall I do a "Tips and Tricks" on how to add a signature line? :)

YES!!

---

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Subject: Re: Bells and Language  
Posted by [skylark](#) on Thu, 16 Oct 2008 12:25:12 GMT  
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I am - interested? that people get upset when there are loose ends in your/Robin's stories. One of my own special pet peeves is when authors go through and create this marvelous world, and this exciting adventure with fantastic characters!...and then frantically spend the last 20 or so pages carefully winding everything down to a neat and tidy ending where everyone gets their wish.

Life doesn't work that way! Stories shouldn't work that way! So I actually really enjoy the loose ends.

Also - don't know if this is true. But. When I was in Russia, the guides told me that in the Russian orthodox church there is a belief - myth? - that bells are a way of speaking directly to God. And that different rings and sizes of bells say different things to God. I think I recall that the bigger the bell, the more God would listen? But this should be looked up. I am often wrong and/or crazy.

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Subject: Re: Bells and Language  
Posted by [Jennie](#) on Thu, 16 Oct 2008 14:27:24 GMT

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Oh god, my love for XKCD knows no bounds. He also has a fun "blag" to read. I love the bells; I love what we've read of Bells, and I love hearing about Connie, and Jennie, and Roland and the various inhabitants of the barn. I'm getting married next week and have arranged to ride the three days before because I am delusional and think I won't be too busy. Of course, I've also arranged (I think) for someone to go to your book signing for me as a wedding present. He will be bearing Chalice. We get back one day too late from our honeymoon. (It is important to note that I nearly asked my soon to be husband how difficult it would be to make sure we could make it...before the reality of ticket changing penalties raised its ugly head).

Great entry--I love reading about the writing itself, and as someone who is quite obsessed with words and language, the richness that yours brings to the stories you write is one of my favorite things.

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Subject: Re: Bells and Language  
Posted by [AJLR](#) on Thu, 16 Oct 2008 14:59:06 GMT  
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Jennie wrote on Thu, 16 October 2008 15:27: It is important to note that I nearly asked my soon to be husband how difficult it would be to make sure we could make it...before the reality of ticket changing penalties raised its ugly head.

Now that is true dedication to the 'McKinley in the UK' cause, Jennie. I salute you! :)

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Subject: Re: Bells and Language  
Posted by [jmeadows](#) on Thu, 16 Oct 2008 15:58:06 GMT  
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Robin wrote on Thu, 16 October 2008 07:48  
[stopping now before I drift off into a sibylline alternate reality . . . ]

Oh, please keep going!

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Subject: Re: Bells and Language  
Posted by [Black Bear](#) on Thu, 16 Oct 2008 16:49:15 GMT  
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RE: Sig line tutorial--

you had but to ask, and it is done. :)

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Subject: Re: Bells and Language  
Posted by [Robin](#) on Thu, 16 Oct 2008 23:19:09 GMT  
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I wonder if the Damarian might have a slightly Persian feel to it? Of course, I don't know Persian, so I might be completely talking through my hat; Urdu is made up basically of four languages: Arabic, Persian, Turkish and Sanskrit and I might be utterly mistaken as to which are the Persian parts!

\*\*\*\*\* It's definitely in the Urdu-Arabic-Persian-Turkish-Sanskrit range but I GUARANTEE I know less about this than you do. It's one of the things I keep meaning to pursue. . . .

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Subject: Re: Bells and Language  
Posted by [Robin](#) on Thu, 16 Oct 2008 23:20:30 GMT  
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Hey, I \*liked\* the unfinishedness of the ending of Sunshine.

\*\*\*\*\* THANK YOU.

It was the bells that were important: so you could tell if the High Priest was surviving his encounter with God.

\*\*\*\*\* \*\*Yeep.\*\*

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Subject: Re: Bells and Language  
Posted by [Robin](#) on Thu, 16 Oct 2008 23:26:56 GMT  
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I'm going to add my vote to the majority here, to say I loved the language bits in Hero and Sword,

being a student of multiple languages, and this blog entry was absolutely fascinating! It's so interesting to get a glimpse into how you write/learn languages/create stories. Thanks, Robin.

\*\*\*\*\* Jodi Meadows has been bugging me for YEARS ( . . . wait . . . the blog is only thirteen months old . . . ) to talk more about the process of writing. Yeah yeah yeah yeah yeah YEAH. :)

I re-read Blue Sword on a yearly basis and don't mind if there isn't a sequel because the original is so good.

\*\*\*\*\* LOL! Thank you!

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Subject: Re: Bells and Language  
Posted by [jmeadows](#) on Thu, 16 Oct 2008 23:29:45 GMT  
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Robin wrote on Thu, 16 October 2008 19:26

\*\*\*\*\* Jodi Meadows has been bugging me for YEARS ( . . . wait . . . the blog is only thirteen months old . . . ) to talk more about the process of writing. Yeah yeah yeah yeah yeah YEAH. :)

Haaah! I'm sure it feels like years. Maybe thirteen years! (But I don't think I got brave enough to bug you about it for at least a couple months. So maybe more like ten or eleven years.)

But oh, yes, yesterday I had my face this close --><-- to the screen, reading. Yaaay, she's talking about writing! Victory at last.

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Subject: Re: Bells and Language  
Posted by [Robin](#) on Thu, 16 Oct 2008 23:29:54 GMT  
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AJLR wrote on Thu, 16 October 2008 07:54Robin said: Quote:You may remember I said that PEGASUS seems to be running long?

This gives me great joy! Even though - and this is obviously entirely guesswork - in that case it's probably not going to be available to us McKinley-junkies until Christmas 09?

GEEZUM GODS WOMAN. I won't get it turned \*in\* till this time next year, if I'm/we're LUCKY. PUBLISHING it takes ANOTHER YEAR. We're hoping for 2010, okay?? FIRE is \*next\* autumn

(we hope).

[goes quavering off into a corner to collapse in a heap]

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Subject: Re: Bells and Language

Posted by [Susan from Athens](#) on Thu, 16 Oct 2008 23:34:30 GMT

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Robin wrote on Fri, 17 October 2008 02:29: GEEZUM GODS WOMAN. I won't get it turned \*in\* till this time next year, if I'm/we're LUCKY. PUBLISHING it takes ANOTHER YEAR. We're hoping for 2010, okay?? FIRE is \*next\* autumn (we hope).

[goes quavering off into a corner to collapse in a heap]

There, there, Robin. No pressure (give her some space her fellow forum attendees. Let the woman breathe). We want books, but in order to get books we need you to be fully functional. Care about you as a person? No, why should we :) ? We care about the books! More books! Soon! But NO PRESSURE! Take your time... For the next few seconds you will be PRESSURE FREE! :)

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Subject: Re: Bells and Language

Posted by [Vikkik](#) on Thu, 16 Oct 2008 23:52:39 GMT

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Robin wrote on Fri, 17 October 2008 00:29

...[goes quavering off into a corner to collapse in a heap]

Okay, who broke Robin???

\*breaks out the smelling salts and emergency chocolate\*

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Subject: Re: Bells and Language

Posted by [scosborne](#) on Fri, 17 Oct 2008 00:17:16 GMT

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[quote title=Robin wrote on Wed, 15 October 2008 20:15]Quote:

Oh good. Thanks. I agree about Fantasy Words made up to be Fantasy Words. You need a

sense that they come from somewhere. It's like landscape: you can only believe in the tree if you believe the ground it's growing in.

From a cultural landscape perspective (it's what I do, cultural landscape history and eventually, landscape architecture), I really like your way of describing what I would call a "sense of place." It's a simple enough phrase, but any cultural landscape historian/geographer attaches a sort of mystic reverence to the idea of "place", because it is so intangible and yet clearly the most important aspect of any landscape (the whole is more than the sum of its parts).

Just plugging in language or fantastic creatures and epic geography into a plot does not a good fantasy make. They have to be essential to the story - so I really loved hearing how the characters and the language and the story all announce themselves in your head.

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Subject: Re: Bells and Language  
Posted by [Laura](#) on Fri, 17 Oct 2008 00:35:36 GMT  
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Robin wrote on Thu, 16 October 2008 19:29

GEEZUM GODS WOMAN. I won't get it turned \*in\* till this time next year, if I'm/we're LUCKY. PUBLISHING it takes ANOTHER YEAR. We're hoping for 2010, okay?? FIRE is \*next\* autumn (we hope).

[goes quavering off into a corner to collapse in a heap]

Wait, wait, wait. Does this mean that with Dragonhaven, Chalice, and Fire, you will have put out three books in three years? This is a cosmic event! It'd be like 2 Haley's Comets in a week!

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Subject: Re: Bells and Language  
Posted by [L.R.K.](#) on Fri, 17 Oct 2008 03:28:39 GMT  
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Robin wrote on Fri, 17 October 2008 01:19

I wonder if the Damarian might have a slightly Persian feel to it? Of course, I don't know Persian, so I might be completely talking through my hat; Urdu is made up basically of four languages: Arabic, Persian, Turkish and Sanskrit and I might be utterly mistaken as to which are the Persian

parts!

\*\*\*\*\* It's definitely in the Urdu-Arabic-Persian-Turkish-Sanskrit range but I GUARANTEE I know less about this than you do. It's one of the things I keep meaning to pursue. . . .

Oh, that is really interesting - it's sort of the flavour of the thing! "Mazahan" made me think of "Shah Jehan" (The Emperor who built the Taj Mahal) and "Jehengir" (his father). ("Jehan" means "world" by the way, and since I know - from prayers &c - that the word "duniya", which also means "world" is Arabic, that possibly "jehan" is Persian...But it's all guesswork of course! I'm no linguist, although words really interest me - not grammar - but where they come from, the way they might change &c. Not enough to actually study the matter though!) I don't think it's necessary to know a language to catch the flavour - it's like when one knows what language is being spoken, although one does not know a word of it...

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Subject: Re: Bells and Language  
Posted by [Jennie](#) on Fri, 17 Oct 2008 03:51:42 GMT  
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AJLR wrote on Thu, 16 October 2008 07:59Jennie wrote on Thu, 16 October 2008 15:27It is important to note that I nearly asked my soon to be husband how difficult it would be to make sure we could make it...before the reality of ticket changing penalties raised its ugly head.

Now that is true dedication to the 'McKinley in the UK' cause, Jennie. I salute you! :)

Well, yes. I did hand carry my copies of Sunshine and Blue Sword across the Atlantic because trusting them to a container ship made me twitchy. Those books are important. Plus, I will actually end up in Manchester--it may actually be **\*\*easier\*\*** to change a ticket than to take the train down later! Obviously, what I should do is agitate for a McKinley event at my (soon to be) local bookshop.

But, I would never do that if it would in any way delay the next book. :)

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Subject: Re: Bells and Language  
Posted by [livvispatula](#) on Fri, 17 Oct 2008 05:44:39 GMT  
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Robin wrote on Thu, 16 October 2008 19:20It was the bells that were important: so you could tell if the High Priest was surviving his encounter with God.

\*\*\*\*\* \*\*Yeep.\*\*

Yeah. You don't want to mess around with God. He's serious business.

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Subject: Re: Bells and Language

Posted by [Susan from Athens](#) on Fri, 17 Oct 2008 08:21:03 GMT

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L.R.K. wrote on Fri, 17 October 2008 06:28

Oh, that is really interesting - it's sort of the flavour of the thing! "Mazahan" made me think of "Shah Jehan" (The Emperor who built the Taj Mahal) and "Jehengir" (his father). ("Jehan" means "world" by the way, and since I know - from prayers &c - that the word "duniya", which also means "world" is Arabic, that possibly "jehan" is Persian...

Well the culture of the Mughal emperors was Persian, but they Turco-Mongol in descent and Uzbeki in derivation, so it was a real melting pot. But the only Arab came from the Koran, given that they were a Muslim culture. Shah Jahan was a direct descendant of Timur (i.e. Tamburlaine), one of the quintessential wild "barbarian" horsemen / conquerors of Central Asia(sorry, my head is a trivia trap).

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Subject: Re: Bells and Language

Posted by [AJLR](#) on Fri, 17 Oct 2008 10:48:34 GMT

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Robin said: Quote:GEEZUM GODS WOMAN. I won't get it turned \*in\* till this time next year, if I'm/we're LUCKY. PUBLISHING it takes ANOTHER YEAR. We're hoping for 2010, okay?? FIRE is \*next\* autumn (we hope).

[goes quavering off into a corner to collapse in a heap]

Oh woe unto me for I added anguish to the Hellgoddess' existing daily portion... ::rends garments, tears hair, scatters ashes upon self::

My ignorance is obviously total as to the timing of these matters. :(

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Subject: Re: Bells and Language  
Posted by [L.R.K.](#) on Fri, 17 Oct 2008 11:01:33 GMT  
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Susan from Athens wrote on Fri, 17 October 2008 10:21L.R.K. wrote on Fri, 17 October 2008 06:28

Oh, that is really interesting - it's sort of the flavour of the thing! "Mazahan" made me think of "Shah Jehan" (The Emperor who built the Taj Mahal) and "Jehengir" (his father). ("Jehan" means "world" by the way, and since I know - from prayers &c - that the word "duniya", which also means "world" is Arabic, that possibly "jehan" is Persian...

Well the culture of the Mughal emperors was Persian, but they Turco-Mongol in descent and Uzbeki in derivation, so it was a real melting pot. But the only Arab came from the Koran, given that they were a Muslim culture. Shah Jahan was a direct descendant of Timur (i.e. Tamburlaine), one of the quintessential wild "barbarian" horsemen / conquerors of Central Asia(sorry, my head is a trivia trap).

Actually, I find this interesting. :)

(My ancestors were Persian-speaking Pathans from Afghanistan; my great- or great-great grandfather moved into what was then India, before it became Pakistan. I'm a Muslim and therefore know a few Arabic prayers and have recognized a few words in Urdu - such as "duniya"...)

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Subject: Re: Bells and Language  
Posted by [AJLR](#) on Fri, 17 Oct 2008 11:28:39 GMT  
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L.R.K. wrote: Quote:Actually, I find this interesting.

(My ancestors were Persian-speaking Pathans from Afghanistan; my great- or great-great grandfather moved into what was then India, before it became Pakistan. I'm a Muslim and therefore know a few Arabic prayers and have recognized a few words in Urdu - such as "duniya"...)

That's fascinating, L.R.K. Is your family still particularly multi-lingual or do you find you've all settled on one or two languages that are the most useful?

One of my colleagues at work comes from Peshawar and has three languages within his immediate family there, all used more or less frequently - that's apart from English! Puts me to shame...

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Subject: Re: Bells and Language  
Posted by [Mrs Redboots](#) on Fri, 17 Oct 2008 11:30:58 GMT  
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Robin wrote on Thu, 16 October 2008 12:48

(There would have been bells: just not CHANGE RINGING bells. What surprises me is that it took so long to invent change ringing.) Surely \*any\* HUMAN god, I mean god of HUMANS would appreciate music?? We're \*so\* music oriented, even those of us who aren't. :) But it's like stories. We have to tell stories. Words are music too. And music is words. . . .

I thought change-ringing was mathematics, not music - or do I mean mathematics, not words? It's relatively uniquely English - other European cultures, I gather, play tunes on their bells.

Quote:[stopping now before I drift off into a sibylline alternate reality . . . ]

Oh please, feel free.....

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Subject: Re: Bells and Language  
Posted by [tylik](#) on Fri, 17 Oct 2008 22:28:47 GMT  
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but I feel that change ringing patterns ought to have ancient alchemical meanings&#8211;that while practise nights are for practise, formal ringing should reflect something or other cosmological&#8211;you know those beautiful medieval charts of How Things Work, with the earth in the middle and the empyrean surrounding everything.

Was change ringing ever tied into the canonical hours? (Or was that too Catholic?) Because that would give an entry-point, I would think - there must be a way to convert between the canonical hours and the planetary hours, and once you've gotten into the planetary system you'd have correspondence tables enough to paper an entire house, and could pull in herbs and body parts and occasions and heaven only knows what else.

I've wondered about the language (especially of Damar) and the names as well. Mirasol most recently... because it makes me think of Girasol, to turn to the sun, which rather works for her. (I have wanted to keep bees about forever, but have so far kept only orchard mason bees, which are wonderful, but not really the same. Though they are very friendly, and would often sit on my front step and sun themselves. Woe to anyone I caught about to step on my bees!)

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Subject: Re: Bells and Language  
Posted by [L.R.K.](#) on Fri, 17 Oct 2008 23:16:38 GMT  
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AJLR wrote on Fri, 17 October 2008 13:28

That's fascinating, L.R.K. Is your family still particularly multi-lingual or do you find you've all settled on one or two languages that are the most useful?

In Pakistan, you mean? Well, quite a lot of them live in Multan, and they speak Multani or Saraiki as their first language, some live in Karachi and speak Punjabi - apart from Urdu, of course, which is the common, educated language; there has to be one, since there are so many languages and many of those are incomprehensible to those who do not speak them. I myself can understand Punjabi so-so, well enough to follow a conversation most of the time - Multani on the other hand...well, I recall I was so glad whenever there turned up a word I understood! I don't know if anybody in the family knows Persian anymore, and if they do, very likely they learnt it in school - my family are pretty much Pakistanis by now. What languages does your friend from Peshawar speak? Is one of them Pushto? Now, that is a language that's impossible for me to understand!

As for me, Urdu is my third language, after Swedish and English, and I cannot read or write it (it uses basically the Arabic alphabet, with additions like a letter for "p", which the Arabic does not have). I came to it rather late, too - I knew phrases like "how are you" and words like "cat" and "dog"; my mother being from Finland and my parents having met in Sweden, we actually spoke English (of sorts :) ) at home. I learnt most of my Urdu by watchin Indian movies!

---

Subject: Re: Bells and Language  
Posted by [Robin](#) on Fri, 17 Oct 2008 23:48:09 GMT  
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Wait, wait, wait. Does this mean that with Dragonhaven, Chalice, and Fire, you will have put out three books in three years? This is a cosmic event! It'd be like 2 Haley's Comets in a week

\*\*\*\*\* Well, I had help with FIRE. :) But . . . yes. And we're shooting for four with PEGASUS, but only if it STOPS running horizon-chasing long. . . .

---

Subject: Re: Bells and Language

Posted by [Robin](#) on Fri, 17 Oct 2008 23:52:33 GMT  
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(My ancestors were Persian-speaking Pathans from Afghanistan;

\*\*\*\*\* This is so romantic I can't stand it. I know, I know, the real world is NOT romantic (much).  
But are there any stories of your family's life there?

---

Subject: Re: Bells and Language  
Posted by [Julia](#) on Fri, 17 Oct 2008 23:54:28 GMT  
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AJLR wrote on Fri, 17 October 2008 06:48Robin said: Quote:GEEZUM GODS WOMAN. I won't get it turned \*in\* till this time next year, if I'm/we're LUCKY. PUBLISHING it takes ANOTHER YEAR. We're hoping for 2010, okay?? FIRE is \*next\* autumn (we hope).  
[goes quavering off into a corner to collapse in a heap]

Oh woe unto me for I added anguish to the Hellgoddess' existing daily portion... ::rends garments, tears hair, scatters ashes upon self::

My ignorance is obviously total as to the timing of these matters. :(

You forgot the chocolate chip cookies and groveling. That always seemed to work back in the lj manifestation of Days In The Life.....  
:)

---

Subject: Re: Bells and Language  
Posted by [Robin](#) on Fri, 17 Oct 2008 23:56:43 GMT  
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Mrs Redboots wrote on Fri, 17 October 2008 07:30Robin wrote on Thu, 16 October 2008 12:48

(There would have been bells: just not CHANGE RINGING bells. What surprises me is that it

took so long to invent change ringing.) Surely \*any\* HUMAN god, I mean god of HUMANS would appreciate music?? We're \*so\* music oriented, even those of us who aren't. :) But it's like stories. We have to tell stories. Words are music too. And music is words. . . .

I thought change-ringing was mathematics, not music

\*\*\*\*\* I'm going to say it's both. The methods are mathematically based, but the noise is music. The maths is the carrier, like panniers on your bike, or the medium, like words.

- or do I mean mathematics, not words? It's relatively uniquely English - other European cultures, I gather, play tunes on their bells.

\*\*\*\*\* English, slightly spread to the Commonwealth. But only countries with an English connection change-ring, ie America, Australia, NZ (hmm, and South Africa. Those sneaky English).

Quote:[stopping now before I drift off into a sibylline alternate reality . . . ]

Oh please, feel free.....

\*\*\*\*\* Well, wait'll I get going on voice, and On Fairy-Stories.

---

Subject: Re: Bells and Language  
Posted by [Julia](#) on Fri, 17 Oct 2008 23:58:11 GMT  
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Robin wrote on Fri, 17 October 2008 19:56  
\*\*\*\*\* Well, wait'll I get going on voice, and On Fairy-Stories.

[/quote]

Oh YES, PLEASE!  
:)

Subject: Re: Bells and Language  
Posted by [Laura](#) on Sat, 18 Oct 2008 00:08:05 GMT  
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Robin wrote on Fri, 17 October 2008 19:48

Wait, wait, wait. Does this mean that with Dragonhaven, Chalice, and Fire, you will have put out three books in three years? This is a cosmic event! It'd be like 2 Haley's Comets in a week

\*\*\*\*\* Well, I had help with FIRE. :) But . . . yes. And we're shooting for four with PEGASUS, but only if it STOPS running horizon-chasing long. . . .

I admit, I had Pegasus in the back of my mind as well but was afraid I'd make your brain explode if I counted it on my list.

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Subject: Re: Bells and Language  
Posted by [L.R.K.](#) on Sat, 18 Oct 2008 06:10:18 GMT  
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Robin wrote on Sat, 18 October 2008 01:52

(My ancestors were Persian-speaking Pathans from Afghanistan;

\*\*\*\*\* This is so romantic I can't stand it. I know, I know, the real world is NOT romantic (much). But are there any stories of your family's life there?

Well, the stories are rather fairy-talish, I must say. The origins of our clan/tribe &c; why my great-or great-great grandfather moved to (then) India in the first place. I need to refresh my memories of these to get the real romantic feel to them - as such stories should be told! :)

Sometimes one wonders how much is fact and how much is fiction - but in a sense I don't really care! The real world can sometimes be overrated, don't you think? :)

In '77, when we drove from Sweden to Pakistan, we went through Afghanistan. I (sadly) don't remember this, but it seems our car got stuck somewhere and we met some Afghans and Pappa mentioned that we were "Khans" and they said so were they, and inquired which tribe we belonged to - and when that turned out to be the same, they were delighted and offered us hospitality and wanted us to come and stay with them. We didn't stay, of course, since we had to move on - but yes, any true Pathan knows what tribe they belong to!

Back to stories - there used to be a really strong tradition of oral retelling; some of my aunts and uncles - when they told stories you sat there spellbound! Once my Aunty Zarmina told us of a horror movie she's seen, and we listened, scarcely able to breathe! Sadly, this is falling into disuse...I don't think hard facts are somehow really important in that culture - people remember events like births or marriages by other events like: "Oh, that was the year when---" It's fun when one discovers that things that one takes for granted, are thought of completely differently somewhere else. Once I was explaining to some relations how much difference there is in seasons in Sweden, how dark it is in winter, and how light in summer. "Oh", one of them said, "how do you tell time then? Do you follow the clock?" - "Why, yes", I answered, surprised - was there another way? (I've actually noticed a significant lack of stress in Pakistan...)

Well, now I think I've justified my claim of being a Babblor! I hope there was at least something interesting in all this... :) (And I'll try to get hold of/refresh my memory of, some good actual stories!)

---

Subject: Re: Bells and Language  
Posted by [AJLR](#) on Sat, 18 Oct 2008 09:01:19 GMT  
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L.R.K. wrote: Quote:In Pakistan, you mean?

I meant more your immediate family, in Sweden, but I think you've answered that. :) And re speaking English as a halfway house, yes, my brother recently came back to the UK after living in Belgium for several years, in the Flemish-speaking region. He says that the different Flemish dialects are so hard to understand that very often Flemish speakers from different areas use English instead when talking together...:) My brother apparently has an Antwerpen accent, as that was the area he was in.

L.R.K. wrote: Quote:What languages does your friend from Peshawar speak?

I think Urdu, Punjabi and I'll have to ask about the third one. Will let you know.

And I'm really looking forward to hearing some of your family stories, when you have a moment.

---

Subject: Re: Bells and Language  
Posted by [AJLR](#) on Sat, 18 Oct 2008 10:45:55 GMT  
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Julia wrote: Quote:You forgot the chocolate chip cookies and groveling. That always seemed to work back in the lj manifestation of Days In The Life.....

No, what I need is to reboot the link between my brain and my fingers...:) It obviously crashed when I got so excited thinking about PEGASUS developing long. I should have remembered Robin saying only a week or so ago that she works through three drafts and of course that was only the beginning of the second one.

[Sorry, Robin!]

---

Subject: Re: Bells and Language  
Posted by [anef](#) on Sat, 18 Oct 2008 14:13:51 GMT  
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Oh, is Albion set in Sunshine's world? That would be excellent! I have just re-read it and really wanted to find out more about its history, and when it split off from ours (some time around the Romans? I'm guessing because you use Carthaginian as a swear word, and there doesn't seem to be any Christianity - was maybe Constantine not converted?) The first time I read it I totally missed all the language clues, and reading it the second time was a revelation. Also I have a suspicion that some of the background characters may actually have been sent by Sunshine's father. OK, enough groundless speculation. Just to say that I loved Chalice (on first reading) and Sunshine (more on second reading than on first).

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Subject: Re: Bells and Language  
Posted by [Lucy Coats](#) on Sat, 18 Oct 2008 15:51:34 GMT  
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Where do I start here? Quite simply, I guess... I AM SO HAPPY TO KNOW ALL THIS STUFF! Thank you, Robin. 'Making up' languages in books is a funny old business, and it's fascinating to know how someone else goes about it. I'm glad you sort of do it by the seat of your pants and 'ear' too. My last book involved having the 'spell language' in gaelic. I am a celt, but a) I don't speak it and b) I can't pronounce it without a lot of looking up and spitting out of bits of my mouth I don't usually use. I did try really hard to get it 'right', but when people come at me and hiss that I got the past participle of some verb wrong, I hiss back that it's set in an alternate reality where it's DIFFERENT. There are no rules but your own.

I love all your Damarian words--a 'britti' forinstance is something I can see absolutely in my mind's eye, flying up and up into the blue. I am of the firm opinion that when a really good writer invents something new, then somewhere, in some other place, it springs into existence. Somewhere,

somehow, all the stories (even the scary ones) have their own reality. And for all those who follow your work, Robin, each of us will have their own separate mind pic of what the landscape, and the people who reside there, look like. I think that's wonderful and a tribute to the power of how your imagination works on and stimulates ours. I guess that's why the publishing date of 'the next' is of immense interest to all here! I also guess that the pressure, leading to collapse, panting in corners etc, is huge. Take your time (know you will ;) ) anticipation is never a bad thing--adds honey sauce to the eventual arrival of the next book--whatever and whenever it comes. For the Lawd's Sake--we've only just had Chalice!! I will be possessing my soul in patience till 2010 and on. I don't want to speak for anyone else, but I don't think anyone will disagree if I say that we know whatever comes will be worth the wait, whether bells, pegasi or albion! Meanwhile, have a strong cup of herb tea with some of the ever scarce honey and BREATHE!! No pressure to do so of course!! :->

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Subject: Re: Bells and Language  
Posted by [Jeanne Marie](#) on Sat, 18 Oct 2008 22:23:38 GMT  
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Ahem. This might all be much more than anyone wanted to know &#8211; feel free to skip! But, being a Catholic church musician, I have, at times, looked into what the church says about music, and what it does with music, musicians, and musical instruments. So I thought I&#8217;d comment on Robin&#8217;s remarks:

&#8220;Surely \*any\* HUMAN god, I mean god of HUMANS would appreciate music?? We're \*so\* music oriented, even those of us who aren't. :) But it's like stories. We have to tell stories. Words are music too. And music is words. . . .&#8221;

I looked up a number of things, and have two full pages of quotes from various documents of the church and of other folks who think and write about church and music stuff regularly: quotes regarding music, mostly, and a few interesting tidbits about bells. The one that I think is most relevant to Robin&#8217;s comment follows:

&#8220;The liturgy is identified as the preeminent place for God&#8217;s activity in bringing human beings into union with God. &#8230; Thus the fundamental purpose of worship music in [Catholic] liturgy is to transform human beings in grace.&#8221; (From &#8220;From Sacred Song to Ritual Music: Twentieth Century Understandings of Roman Catholic Worship Music&#8221; by Jan Michael Joncas, The Liturgical Press, 1982, Pg 33-34)

This idea of being transformed (deification) by our participation in liturgy is a notion of which I am particularly fond. And, to me, that notion answers the question (round-aboutly, perhaps), of whether or not God appreciates music.

Karl Rahner wrote (in difficult German, which I read in difficult English&#8230;) about the reasons we all look for God. Rahner speaks of us all being hard-wired to search for God, to search for

meaning beyond what we can perceive with our senses. We are hard-wired for this because, at our deepest being, we are made in the "image and likeness" of God, and filled with God's breath. We are therefore all already connected to God, by virtue of the fact that we are alive at all. This idea then of liturgy or other prayer experiences being designed to bring us into union with God, to my mind, becomes logical; we are already made up of "God-stuff"; (highly technical theological term, I know), and so we are always striving for that RE-union with God. Sometimes, we know it when we get there, other times not so much. But, Catholic churches have always believed that participation in the sacraments, particularly in the liturgy, is one way of unification with God. And, as Joncas says above, his thought is that music's primary purpose in worship is to accomplish this union.

Another document says it this way:

"We can analyze any kind of music and tease out its rhythms and its tonalities: and yet it will still carry us beyond itself, leading us through the interplay of symbols until we are not only carried beyond the music but beyond our very selves. In its complexity, music accompanies humankind on its journey, in its actions, in its listening to the word, and in its response, its effort to open itself up to the Lord: humankind complete; body, heart and spirit." (From "Music and liturgy: The Universa laus document and commentary" by Claude Duchesneau and Michel Veuthey, translated by Paul Inwood (The Pastoral Press, 1988, pg 91). Does this equal appreciating music, for God or for people? I say yes!

About bells specifically, official documents don't speak a lot about instruments other than the voice and the pipe organ, but bells are one of the few things that are blessed or consecrated to their work. And, the ritual used for doing so is almost identical to the ritual used for dedicating an altar.\* (and apologies for the lofty text, this is from a "lofty text" kind of source; and the rite is pretty old! There is more modern text/instruction for this rite, but its in a book I don't have handy.)

The Rite of Blessing of Bells:

"The bishop in white vestments first recites seven psalms with his attendant clergy to implore the Divine assistance. Then he mixes salt with water, reciting prayers of exorcism analogous to those always used in the preparation of holy water, but making special reference to the bell and to the evil influences of the air--the phantoms, the storms, the lightning--which threaten the peace of devout Christians who come to the church to sing the praises of God. Then the bishop and his attendants "wash" (lavant) the bell inside and out with the water thus prepared and dry it with towels, the psalm "Laudate Dominum de coelis" and five others of similar import being sung meanwhile. These are followed by various unctions [anointings with oil], those on the outside of the bell being made with the oil of the sick in seven places, and those on the inside with chrism [a special perfumed oil] in four places. In the accompanying prayers mention is made of the silver trumpets of the Old Law and of the fall of the walls of Jericho, while protection is asked once more against the powers of the air, and the faithful are encouraged to take refuge under the sign of the Holy Cross. A form is used introducing the patron saint: "May this bell be

hallowed [holy], O Lord, and consecrated in the name of the Father, and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit. In honour of St. N. [whichever saint is to be patron to the bell] Peace be to thee. [I love that the bishop is offering peace to the bell!]" Finally, the thurible with incense and myrrh are placed under the bell so that the smoke arising may fill its cavity. Then another prayer is said of similar purport to the last, and the ceremony ends with the reading of the passage in the Gospel concerning Martha and Mary.&#8221; (from The Catholic Encyclopedia online)

Someone in the forum also mentioned/asked if bells were used to mark the canonical hours (the hours in the day when monks were called to prayers), and yes, bells were used for that (they still are, at many Benedictine abbeys I&#8217;ve visited). Here&#8217;s another fun quote on the use of bells: &#8220; &#8220;At first [church bells&#8217;] role was to alert the faithful that it was time to gather in the church, but bells were also used to solemnize certain moments in the Mass, moments during the day, certain days [of the year], certain events in the life of the parish or in the life of the church, but [sic] also events taking place in the community (fire, death, storm&#8230;) or the nation (war, victory&#8230;).&#8221; (From Music and liturgy: The Universa laus document and commentary&#8221; by Claude Duchesneau and Michel Veuthey, translated by Paul Inwood (The Pastoral Press, 1988, Pg 119)

Hope folks enjoyed this!  
Smiles,  
Jeanne Marie

\*Catholic documents speak about the altar being a manifestation of Christ, and so altars are blessed/consecrated before they are used. I&#8217;ll also note that the sequence of actions in the ritual of blessing/consecration for bells and altars parallels the rite for baptizing people. I think all of this is very significant!

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Subject: Re: Bells and Language  
Posted by [Jeanne Marie](#) on Sat, 18 Oct 2008 22:28:15 GMT  
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Oh, and another thing:

"I&#8217;m not a musician&#8225;&#8225; the way I am a story writer, but it fascinates me that if you can (apparently) &#8216;hear&#8217; one thing, you&#8217;ll probably be able to &#8216;hear&#8217; another thing, just because hearing is familiar."

Yes. It's interesting, I also work this way. I'm a terrible sight-reader, but I memorize music very well, and part of the reason is because I hear it in my head so clearly (and take mental photographs of the music page too, but that's another sense!). I best learn vocal music of any sort

in context - a solo line with the accompaniment, a choral piece with the other parts.

I do think that learning to pay attentino to the things we "hear" with the inner ear is an important skill, whether you're a writer or a musician! :)

Smiles,  
Jeanne Marie

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Subject: Re: Bells and Language  
Posted by [Julia](#) on Sat, 18 Oct 2008 22:50:15 GMT  
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[quote title=AJLR wrote on Sat, 18 October 2008 06:45]Julia wrote: Quote:No, what I need is to reboot the link between my brain and my fingers...:) It obviously crashed when I got so excited thinking about PEGASUS developing long. I should have remembered Robin saying only a week or so ago that she works through three drafts and of course that was only the beginning of the second one.

[Sorry, Robin!]

Well, you can't be faulted for being excited and anticipatory [I][if that is what I mean. Very tired at the moment. Less than two hours of sleep. But spent the morning watching the sunrise on the beach-- so it was worth it.][I]! And I, too, had forgotten that Robin had said that about the three drafts. There's just so much to look forward to! All things very wonderful. woohoo!  
:)

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Subject: Re: Bells and Language  
Posted by [Grinkler](#) on Sun, 19 Oct 2008 02:48:52 GMT  
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I had an email once&#8211;years ago now&#8211;that went on in the standard pleasing fashion about my books and my FAQ&#8211;this was long before the blog&#8211;and how enjoyable it was to have a glimpse into a working writer&#8217;s life. Except for the bells, she said. The bells were really boring. She skipped over the bells. And I&#8217;m sitting there thinking, and you&#8217;re telling me this why&#8211;?

It's kind of hilarious to me what people decide to tell the people they admire. Heehee.

Which also reminds me of how people keep talking about how the fact that they read certain books of Robin's when they came out shows how old they are...Well, Robin, I've been seriously

reading your books since Spindle's End came out eight years ago, and I WAS IN THE SEVENTH GRADE. I am a youngin', if that makes you feel any better. :)

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