

Entrevista con Paul S. Kemp

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Let's start with, what was your experience with *Star Wars* before the *Crosscurrent* project?

I saw *A New Hope* with my dad in 1977 and got hooked. I collected the action figures, the trading cards, and even watched the (cringe) TV holiday specials. Then I fell way from it for a time, but the prequels (and the *Clone Wars* animated show) brought me back (in truth, saying it "brought me back" is a bit of an overstatement, because you can't ever really get away from *Star Wars*. It's such a worldwide cultural phenomenon that *Star Wars* references creep into darned near every other pop culture phenomenon you'd care to name (from *Family Guy* to *Robot Chicken* to *Lost*, here in the U.S.)).

Anyway, after all that I read a ton of material (from the various Essential Guides to the EU novels) to really get back into the nuts and bolts of the setting. That was a blast. It's also been interesting to see how consistent the 'feel' of the galaxy, across all mediums, has remained over the years.

You wrote almost 10 *Forgotten Realms*' novels, and now you are part of the *Star Wars* universe. Do you enjoy writing for a shared world more than your own stories?

Not more, no, but I certainly like it just as much. I've often heard/read others opining that shared world fiction has significant creative constraints. But I haven't experiences that in the lines I've written in (*Star Wars* and the *Forgotten Realms*). In both cases, I've been able to tell the stories I've wanted to tell, which is exactly what I'd be doing were I writing non-shared world fiction.

But writing in a shared world does offer some unique advantages and challenges. Perhaps the largest advantage is the existence of a large and loyal fanbase. *Star Wars* fans have been awesome and have made this whole process very enjoyable for me. Among the biggest challenges, of course, is the enormous amount of pre-existing detail that comes along with a shared world. I have to ensure that anything I write is consistent with that detail.

So the upshot is that I have no preference between the two. Both are enjoyable creative experiences for me.

You have experience writing in a shared world, but how was your experience with *Star Wars*, a franchise that not only have followers in the US but in all over the world. Being *Crosscurrent* your first *Star Wars* novel, did you feel any 'pressure'?

I felt enormous pressure. But then, I always feel pressure when I'm writing a novel. In the end, I'm asking readers to part with their hard-earned coin to read something I've written. It is essential to me that what I've written be worth that coin. I have to earn the audience with every book. And when I'm writing in a shared world setting, it's also important to me that the story feel like a story told in the setting (as opposed to me shoehorning something into the setting). All of those things were magnified for *Crosscurrent* because *Star Wars* is such a worldwide phenomenon.

I can imagine that there is a big research before start writing *Star Wars*, is a big universe, well stablished. How long is that process and what implies?

It is a lot of information to take in. To prepare for *Crosscurrent*, I immersed myself for a

good six or eighth months in the various Essential Guides from Del Rey and any number of online resources.

For those who played the videogame *Jedi Academy*, it's great to hear again from Jaden Korr. We met him before when him was just a padawan, and now he's an established Jedi Knight. Why did you pick him for this story? I can see that when young, he was seduced by the dark side of the Force, was a difficult padawan, now he is still a doubtful man, more like he has an existential crisis.

You've got it exactly. *Crosscurrent* does find Jaden in the midst of his existential crises. He is, in spiritual terms, in danger of "losing his religion." The entire point of the book is to show Jaden's journey from a man tormented by doubt to a man who comes to see doubt differently.

I picked Jaden as the protagonist because he had never before featured in a novel and was, therefore, largely unknown to the readership. His name was known from *Jedi Academy*, but very little else. Given that, he provided me with a character who existed in the lore of the setting, but who was mostly a blank slate who would come at the readers new. That appealed to me a great deal.

The time travelling plot is a part of the story that came to an end in *Crosscurrent*. Is there some chances that this will still be part of a sequel? It feels like it was just an episodic event, that only bring Jaden to the answer he was seeking, but nothing that can disturb the path of the galaxy.

Not likely. Honestly, the time-travel element caused some raised eyebrows and I had to make sure everything was "cleaned up" by the end. For me, it was just a powerful storytelling device to use to bring Jaden revelation (meaning, if the Force had to bring someone forward in time in order for Jaden to get over his personal existential crisis, what does that mean might be in store for Jaden's future? After all, that's a lot of trouble to go to for one Jedi).

When reading the last chapters of the novel, I feel like I was reading a horror novel. It was great for the setting, we were before a new threat for the galaxy, and it needed to be that way. It's maybe a type of writing that you also like?

I love horror, especially the dread-inducing variety (like H.P. Lovecraft) as opposed to the gore-filled variety. That said, I'm not averse to gore, as the reveal of "Mother" in *Crosscurrent* shows. Heck, most of my fiction, whether in *Star Wars* or the *Forgotten Realms*, has elements of horror in it to one degree or another.

***Crosscurrent* has been very well recieved. I personally enjoyed it very much and I'm looking forward to the sequel. Congratulations Paul and thank you for your time. There's something you want to say to the peruvian and spanish *Star Wars* fanbase?**

Really, I'd just like to say gracias. I really appreciate the support and interest. It's been a great experience for me and hope to continue in the *Star Wars* line a long time.

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