



## QUESTIONS & ANSWERS WITH PATRICK W. CARR

### 1. What inspired the idea behind your book?

I considered writing a fantasy critiquing the whole idea that life and the universe happened by chance. I'm so glad I didn't do that. It would have been way too preachy. About three years ago, long after I'd given up on the first idea, I had an inspiration for a whole new direction with the story. I was reading my Bible and this verse, "God is in the lot," jumped out at me.

### 2. What message do you hope readers take away from the book?

The book carries a lot of allegorical references in it, but I think my favorite message is that everyone is special. I believe we all hold within ourselves the capacity, not only for evil, but for great nobility. This is one of the themes that stretches across all three volumes of the trilogy.

### 3. Why did you choose a medieval time period?

When I first started *A Cast of Stones* under a different title, I had actually toyed with the idea of approaching it as an alternative European history kind of work, but decided against it. However, there was never any other choice for me but a Medieval setting for my writing, which meant sometime between 500 – 1500. Anything prior to that period, and I would have been dealing with the vestiges of the Roman Empire and anything after that, I would have had to take in to account the effects of the Renaissance. I didn't want to mess with that, so I at last settled on 14th century Europe. But at the same time, I also wanted to build a mythos that was unique to my world, which meant I had to drop in little bits from my imagination here and there. So, there is strong medieval influence, but it's definitely not what you would call historical fiction in any way.

### 4. As a debut author, what was the hardest part about writing your novel?

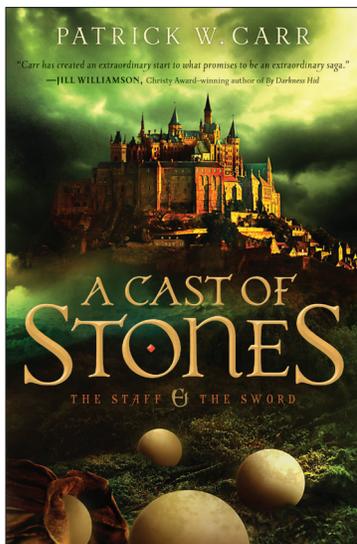
Self doubt. There were times when I despaired of being able to bring the images and feelings I had in my head out to the keyboard. I struggled to find the right combination of words to communicate what I was trying to portray and what I was trying to have the reader feel. A good example is in the second chapter. I really fought to get everything just so. When my wife read it and cried, I knew I'd hit the mark. She's not one to be overly sentimental.

### 5. How do you balance a full time job and a writing career?

I try to have a disciplined schedule. This isn't really my strong point, so the fact that I ever got published is a testament to how driven I've been to tell this story. I try as much as possible to take advantage of those periods that I would usually consider down time. For example, if I'm taking the boys to Scouts, I'll just park at the coffee shop next door and crank out a few words instead of spending the majority of the time traveling back and forth.

### 6. Your main character, Errol, is a drunkard. What led to that unusual choice for a hero?

I needed somebody flawed for a variety of reasons. Drunkenness is a very visible flaw, so it lent itself to powerful description. What I thought most important was the reason behind his drunkenness, which I think is the most powerful scene in the first book. I received a bit of flak early on. I even had one person from a contest tell me no one would be interested in a book with a drunk as the main character. The challenge was to make him sympathetic. People, in general, are complex. I tried to make my characters the same way.



#### **A Cast of Stones**

THE STAFF AND THE SWORD #1  
by Patrick W. Carr

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