

# Interview Q&A

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## Michael Breen

### **Why did you choose to self-publish?**

It wasn't so much of a "choice" as it was a decision not to give up. I approached a number of agents and didn't get any bites. I don't blame them — I don't fit the mold of what's popular at the moment. But once that happened, I feel like I opened up a bit more creatively. I no longer had to worry about pitching it for a certain type. I could do the cover I wanted to do; the website I wanted to do; the sequel I wanted to do without having to worry about any of the gatekeepers. Luckily, they're no longer necessary. There are so many options now to just do it yourself, which suits me more, honestly. Plus, I enjoy the whole business aspect of self-publishing. I get bored easily, so it keeps things interesting.

### **What are some themes of *Ever the Night Road*?**

Family relationships play a big role. You learn pretty early on that Dagny lost her family when she was a child. Her brother got sick, and her half-sister drowned with everyone else when the river flooded. Shortly after I wrote the first draft, I found out that I have a half-sister by doing one of those DNA tests. She lives about twenty minutes away from me in the city next door and I was able to connect with her and start developing that relationship. I gotta say, it's probably one of the crazier things to happen in my life. Life can sometimes mirror art pretty dramatically.

### **What are your thoughts on the importance of setting?**

Hugely important. I tried to make the City in *Ever the Night Road* its own character. I wanted to give it quirks, dangers and comfort. Physicality that you could feel. I tried my best to make it feel alive. A place where you know things are happening, even if we're not talking about them.

### **Where do you get your ideas?**

A trigger helps, like listening to certain types of music. Soundtracks — John Carpenter and Pan's Labyrinth are popular in my rotation at the moment; or something nostalgic — punk music from when I was a little younger. Looking at fantasy art can sometimes work. And lots of coffee helps (the more manic I get, the better). Then I just try to grab an idea, riff on it awhile without any self-censorship, and see what happens. Usually something does.

The idea for my second book, *Jud*, had been with me for some time. It was the book I had meant to write first in this series, but once I started, I realized I wanted to slow things down with Dagny and get into her character and background first. Anyway, with *Jud*, I wanted to write my "labyrinth" setting story, but try to change it up somewhat. So I had this idea of a shifting city where walls and roads can randomly change, and buildings can suddenly appear — some that haven't been seen for hundreds of years. A chaotic, ruler-less city. Maybe that's been done before. I don't know. But I'm excited about it.