



Wannabes

Michael Logan

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From the winner of the inaugural Terry Pratchett First Novel Prize comes a new satire.

Celebrities are mobbing London's laser clinics as a deranged wannabe bumps off A-listers, believing he can absorb their powers and become famous by taping their tattoos to his body.

Washed-up pop star Jackie Thunder isn't joining the stampede. Jackie figures that if he can get on the killer's hit list, without the inconvenience of actually being murdered, he'll gain the publicity needed to reignite his career.

But there's more at stake than Jackie can possibly imagine. Guiding the killer is Murmur, a minor demon with his own agenda to make a name for himself, and Jackie becomes an unwitting pawn in a decades-old plot to destroy great music through murder, mayhem and manipulation.

With humanity's collective soul at stake, how far will Jackie go to reach the top?

Wannabes Details

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Author : Michael Logan

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From Reader Review Wannabes for online ebook

Tom Mazzone says

Wannabes by Michael Logan was a fun read. It's the story of Z list celebrity singer Jackie Thunder and his quest at re-gain his lost fleeting fame. Jackie wants to be famous so bad that he is more than happy to be bait for a serial killer that is bumping off the A list stars. Jackie is even willing to (unbeknownst him) to allow himself to be managed by Murmur, the rising demon from Hell who controls an X-Factor like pop show pulling the strings on who makes it in the music world. It is a well written novel, the highlight for me was the relationship between Jackie and fellow Wannabe Marie, it was a pleasant tender touch.

Melki says

"Nothing speaks to the human soul more than music. If we take away this inspiration, we remove the bedrock they build their other achievements upon."*

There may be a Rock and Roll Heaven, but there is NO music in Hell. Satan HATES it! So much so that he's sending an envoy upstairs to get rid of musicians.

Let's say hello to Murmur, shall we? He's a minor demon who would love some recognition. Nothing would make him happier than to see his image on the cover of *Fire & Brimstone*. And now, he's about to leave his old job in *Souls Receiving* for a plum new assignment topside. His task? Kill as many musicians as possible. Murmur is there when all the great ones bite the dust - Buddy Holly, Hendrix, Keith Moon, Lennon, Paul McCartney . . . (McCartney, you say? Well, duh - of course he's dead. He's the only one who's barefoot on the cover of *Abbey Road*!) But somehow, the music isn't dying. Murmur needs to concoct a whole new plan. A devious, diabolical plan. . .

If you can't kill the music, how about making it a whole lot shittier?

I really enjoyed this one! Logan brilliantly mocks the music industry and celebrity culture in general. There are marvelous descriptions of the underworld and Satan's golfing attire. The characters are likable and sympathetic, even the demons and serial killers. AND, there's a kick-ass battle between good and evil for a finale.

Very funny and just the teensiest bit heartwarming. Highly recommended!

Oh, and as far as my ordering that Jeff Buckley CD . . . the devil made me do it.

*Murmur

Donna says

Satan hates rock n roll. He thinks that it brings humans on earth too much pleasure so he sends an agent up to the surface to destroy it. It begins with the Buddy Holly plane crash. Murmur then continues his rock n roll genocide with Hendrix, Elvis, Lennon, Cobain. However, Murmur cannot not stop collecting great music: The Beatles, Hendrix, Led Zeppelin and Pixies, too name just a few. He is tired of killing musicians. He will destroy music another way: by creating a TV music talent show. Cue Murray Murdoch (Simon Cowell). Just bloody hilarious. There is also a murderous sub plot running through the novel where by a failed contestant on the talent show is convinced, through the voice of his dead mother, vicariously through Murmur, that if he murders celebrities and cuts of their mystical tattoos, he will gain the power of fame. Yes, it is that bonkers. But the funniest thing is God. He likes to visit earth in a tribute band with Hendrix, Janis Joplin and Keith Moon. God? He manifests himself as a young Robert Plant. A music agent, and a Angel, by the way, wants God to intervene and stop the dominance of Murray Murdoch. God says he cannot intervene. To which the agent replies, "But you revived McCartney when Saran killed him in that car crash." God: " But I liked The Beatles." Agent: " Well you could have fucking killed him again after The Frog Chorus!" Absolutely bonkers. Absolutely hilarious. Absolutely brilliant. Please, please make it into a TV show.

Patti says

Michael Logan was kind enough to let me read an advance copy of this book.

Damn, it's a good one!!!!!!

It was an absolute hoot and I found myself laughing out loud quite a number of times.

The writing is excellent, the characterizations spot on. Logan has a way of making you feel sorry for characters that usually evoke no sympathy whatsoever. I've also found my new favorite quote: "Humans did far worse things to each other than demons could dream up."

Highly recommended.

Scott says

Michael Logan totally nails it with his latest novel! Mr Logan allowed me to read an advance copy and I was swept away by his skillful descriptions and how he works historical accuracy into the story, and the dark humor that winds its way throughout the story. I felt an emotional drop after I finished the book, it was that good, and this book goes on my All Time Favorites list. I am urging all of my friends, especially the ones with a hand in the music business, to read this book ASAP. If you know any musicians this book would be an excellent gift!

Lilyn G. | Sci-Fi & Scary says

You ever hear some of the trash on the airwaves over the last ten years or so, shake your head, and wonder mournfully what happened to good music? Why this slide into auto-tuned mediocrity that is only occasionally peppered by the voices of people with true talent? Well, Michael Logan, like many of the rest of us, has, and his answer to this riddle with both amuse and horrify you. The devil did it. Why's that

horrifying, you say? Well, because it's disturbingly believable, that's why! You know it's complete bull, yet at the same time, you find yourself nodding slowly and thinking "I can see that."

Well, to be fair, it's not the devil himself. Satan doesn't really do grunt work. Instead ruining music is a task given to a low-level demon named Murmur, who is determined to make a name for himself by getting rid of all the talent in the music industry. He doesn't want humanity getting any closer to God, and fulfilling this task will propel him up from obscurity.

Logan's writing talent is obvious in Wannabes and I'm glad to see this variation on quirky humor/thriller from him. The characters are believable, the action doesn't feel super fast-paced, but it still keeps your attention, and there's enough nods to major figures in music that those who have a true love for the subject will find themselves sitting back in their seat, sighing, and thinking wistfully of 'the good ol' days'. Towards the end there's some pokes at religion that I'm sure will put the panties of religious fundamentalists in a bunch, but I found it all to be good fun.

Wannabes takes you from low-key amusement to snickering delight as it takes on the current state of the music industry, and how it got to be the festering pile of excrement that it is. At the same time, Michael Logan gives you characters you can root for once they get their stupid out, a dash of romance in the form of a racially diverse coupling (cue boneheaded racists joining in the religious fundies in the tantrum pile), and leaves you with a bit of hope that maybe, one day, somehow, the music industry can start producing actual good music again one day.

Oh, and then there's the mental image of God rockin' it on stage with Hendrix in guitar duels. Can't forget that.

Disclaimer: I received a copy of this book free from the author in exchange for an honest review.

Michael Logan says

If you ask anybody who has written, painted, composed or otherwise created something, they will likely tell you it is impossible to judge objectively the quality of their own work. So, I cannot give you an objective opinion of this book, since I wrote it.

However, since I spent many long hours working on this over the course of three years, I am awarding myself five stars for effort. And, to be blunt, this is by far and away my best novel. This is the book I am most proud of out of all those I have written, which is a large part of the reason I decided to put it out as an e-book.

There are other reasons, such as the Apocalypse Cow sequel not coming out until June 2015, which would create a three-year gap between books, but fundamentally I just want to get this out into the world.

Clár Chonghaile says

Michael Logan gave me an advance copy of this book, and told me not to worry if I didn't get around to reading it straight away – I was preparing to move from Nairobi to London with my family, and I really

didn't think I was going to be able to finish it quickly. I read it in two days. I couldn't put it down. I realized that Michael had another fabulous book on his hands. I also realized I could never again have a conversation with him about music because I was now so intimidated by his encyclopaedic knowledge and faultless taste. I am ashamed to say I should probably classify myself alongside those shallow people who value paint-by-numbers music and who are ruthlessly vilified in this novel. I still found the book hilarious.

I don't usually read funny books – I like my fiction dark and disturbing -- but I make an exception for Michael. I loved "Apocalypse Cow", despite it being about zombie-like cows. I usually like my zombies on TV, with a side of Will Smith.

"Wannabes" did not disappoint. It is caustic, irreverent, absolutely off-the-wall crazy, and yet thought-provoking – sparking bonkers “what ifs” that will fizz away in your brain long after you've closed the book, making you smile and keeping you awake late into the night.

The basic premise is wacky – wacky enough to make you wonder initially if it can work. I admit I was doubtful when I started to read – a devil, abroad in the world of man in 1959, with a mission to kill off good music? But the story soon drew me in and this is because Logan's characterization is spot-on. Whether he's writing about devils, humans or angels, he makes us empathize with the most outrageous or even antipathetic individuals. He makes the reader laugh with his caustic commentary on celebrity culture, sordid self-obsession, and the often soul-crushing search for fame.

The basic plotline is incredible (or is it?) – a serial killer intent on slashing tattoos off celebrities and pasting them to his own skin in a desperate bid to absorb some of their headline-grabbing powers, a washed-up, one-hit-wonder who sees this as an opportunity to relaunch his moribund career, and a demon with his own agenda to wipe out good music. However, this sublimely ridiculous storyline is the perfect vehicle for a well-paced piece of searing social commentary. Buy it, read it, enjoy it, tell your friends, and get ready to bask in the kudos when they praise you for your clever recommendation.

Paul says

Poor old Jackie Thunder has passed his prime. His glory days are long gone and he is fading into obscurity with every passing headline. He steadfastly refuses to give up on fame without a fight though. Jackie is prepared to do just about anything to remain in the public eye. His media blitz isn't going as smoothly as he could have hoped, and every decision he makes appears to guarantee failure. He's just been voted out of the latest Z-list edition of Celebrity Big Brother for singing too often, not great when you're a singer. He then finds himself splashed across the front covers of the tabloids for all the wrong reasons. To make matters even worse, he is all but broke and has been forced to move back in with his mother. Throwing caution to the wind, Jackie decides the best/only option for success is to court the attention of a serial murderer. Jackie is determined to stay famous, or die trying.

Hidden beneath all the dark comedy, Logan deftly picks apart the nature of celebrity culture. The seemingly ever-growing obsession with fame in the 21st century is placed under a microscope and ruthlessly dissected. Jackie Thunder in particular is a bit of a self-obsessed twit, but you can't help but warm to him. Yes, he has an ego the size of a small country that runs rampant from time to time, but underneath it all, he's not a bad person. He has fallen foul of the trap that seems to capture so many nowadays, he equates celebrity and fame with happiness. Jackie thinks that if he can bask in the loving glow of society it will make everything better. The unfortunate thing is that he is not the only one who thinks like that. There is another person who has had a similar thought. The difference is that this other individual is quite prepared to go much, much further than Jackie to achieve the adoration they crave.

There is also nice little supernatural edge to proceedings. Turns out that Hell is directly involved in the music industry, though probably not in quite the way you would think. I'll not give anything away, it would spoil the surprise, but suffice to say you'll never be able to view X Factor in the same way again. As Jackie fights to survive, a much bigger battle is also taking place. Hell better watch their back, the forces of Heaven have a few musical surprises of their own.

I've always been a bit in awe of authors that manage to pull off that difficult trick of writing effective humour. It strikes me as being one of the darkest of dark arts. Logan certainly has skill in this department, and he blends the biting satirical with the delightfully nonsensical with ease, creating a wonderfully entertaining mix. If anything, this story is perhaps a trifle more restrained than the madness of Apocalypse Cow, but there is still plenty in Wannabes that will raise a smile. Jackie's mum is a particular delight, she reminds me of my own dear old ma :)

Michael Logan has managed two for two with his novels so far. Genuinely humorous writing with a diverting premise, I enjoyed rattling through this novel in a couple of sittings.

There is a phrase that has just sprung to mind – “daft as a brush”. It's used to describe someone who is known to do and say silly things. I think we may have to extend this definition to include those who write silly things. Michael Logan falls squarely into this category, long may this continue.

Wannabes is self-published by the author, and is available now. Apocalypse Cow: World War Moo* will be available next year.

* I'll admit I'm a little in love with that title and wish I had thought of it. Damn you Logan!

Mark Wilson says

Wannabes is a wonderfully nasty, unexpectedly warm, funny, insightful, and clever satire that should feel like a fusion of John Niven's Kill Your Friends and Second Coming, except that Logan's Wannabes is much funnier, infinitely more skilfully-written and wholly more relatable than Niven's work.

Logan's writing is invigorating, inventive, wholly engaging and oozes satirical insights throughout. This is a writer unhampered by over-editing or expectations who simply writes the very best stories he has to tell. Logan's passion for his work screams from the page. By the book's end he has managed to pull the reader into the murky, classy, imaginatively filthy worlds of the music business, Heaven and Hell, and the psyche of a predatory serial killer.

Logan writes these characters extremely vividly and engages his reader so skilfully, that he or she comes to care about even the filthiest, most depraved of them, simply due to his passionate writing and his skill in presenting many-layered characters, whom Logan makes you empathise with and invest in, despite their flaws and sometimes crass behaviours.

With Wannabes Logan is an exciting new voice and joins a new breed of Indie and Hybrid authors, such as Ryan Bracha, Gerard Brennan, Keith Nixon and Craig Furchtenicht, in producing quality, engaging, hugely imaginative and original, modern-feeling literature that oozes skill and creativity.

For me, Logan is my literary find of 2015 so far.

Phil Jones says

A surprisingly enjoyable read. I say surprising as I initially felt after a couple of chapters that I was not going to like this book, but Mr Logan took the book to new dimension as it became clear that the book was the story of good versus evil in via an old singer (Jackie Thunder) on his way down the ladder of success. He had had a massive number 1 hit and had been a household name a decade earlier, but we meet him as he is being voted out of the stories version of Celebratory Big Brother and we also have a celebrity serial killer (Gareth) seemingly being urged by the spirit of his recently departed mother to kidnap celebrities and skin their tattoo's, in the belief that the tattoo's posses the power to turn a person into a superstar. In between these two is the Simon Cowell-esque Maxwell Murdoch whose talent shows are monopolising the music scene and slowly strangling all of the true beauty and talent from modern day music. There are many characters you will recognise, tons of cool musical references and we hear of the "true" stories behind the deaths of Hendrix, Joplin, Cobain etc ...Oh and I mustn't forget two other major characters in the book, Phyllis (Jackies wise agent) and Murmer...you will have to read the book to discover who Murmer is.

towards the climax of the book there is a monumental battle between good and evil featuring surprise guest appearances from Jimi Hendrix, Keith Moon, John Entwistle and someone resembling Robert Plant...hilarious.

The book isn't a modern day work of Literary Art, but if you are looking for a funny book full of killings, musical references and good vs evil, then this is the book for you

Seth Levine says

Full disclosure: I know the author. However, as I don't particularly like him unless I am drunk, I feel able to give an objective opinion on his work.

I read Apocalypse Cow before I'd met Michael, drawn to it in a Nairobi bookshop by the tagline "forget the cud, they want blood". Whilst not normally an avid reader of books about zombie cows, after skimming a few pages, I realized that Apocalypse Cow was about zombie cows in the same way Slaughterhouse 5 is about an alien zoo. Which is to say, I enjoyed it enormously. I was therefore pretty excited when Michael released a book about a subject closer to my heart than environmental degradation: music - specifically, the correlation (or lack thereof) between music, talent and celebrity.

As with Apocalypse Cow, in Wannabes Michael manages to pull off a rare feat - a satirical book with genuine heart. Wannabes is hilarious and so entirely of its time that it should be placed in a time capsule for future generations who want to know what it was to live in an era when Simon Cowell existed and thrived. For satire such as Wannabes to work, there has to be a genuine love of that which is mocked - in this instance, Michael's heart-felt plea for the primacy of great music over packaged product shines through the novel. As with Apocalypse Cow, Michael shows an eye for character and dialogue that elevates a very clever plot device to the level of a thoroughly enjoyable read. (And yes, canny consumers, I just joined Goodreads and this is my first review. However, I have aspirations of my own when it comes to publishing a novel and am therefore an essentially bitter human being - I have no desire to see Michael succeed anymore than he already has and regret any contribution this review might make to that end)

