



Addleton Heights and GWP

I had the honor of reading an advance reader's copy of Addleton Heights by author George Wright Padgett. In addition to that honor, I got to interview him for the release celebration!

Who did the cover art? How did you find them?

God bless the internet. I discovered a fantastic Italian artist by the name of Michele Giorgi (<http://michelegiorgiillustrator.com>). I have a commercial graphic art degree and have done my covers in the past, but Addleton Heights was different. This novel is solidly situated in the steampunk genre, so I wanted a classic romantic image with all the flourishes. While I do plenty of layout and design, I'm no illustrator; it's an entirely different discipline, so I sought out someone with those skills.

I came across Michele's art on the internet when I was a third of the way through the first draft and fell in love with his style. He hadn't had any book cover commissions at that point, but I took a chance and contacted him in the hopes that he'd try something different. I emailed him with highlighted samples of his work which struck the tone I was looking for.

Many of the Steampunk images I'd come across to that point were often dark and grimy. I love those murky atmospheres, but wanted to go a completely different direction in an effort to make the book stand out. The end result is an image of bright sunny day in January with the snow gently falling to the ground. It's wonderful contrast to many scenes contained within.



Is there any possibility of a graphic novel using the same illustrator in our future?

That would be amazing! I'd love to see that happen someday. Michele, if you're reading this, I'm 100% up for it.

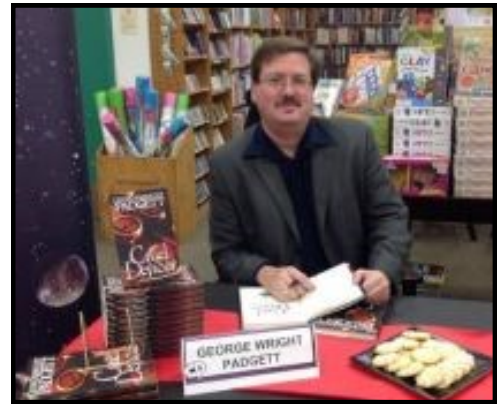
How much research was involved with writing a Steampunk novel set in the turn of the century (1901)?

That Believe or not, I found myself doing as much research on this novel as I did for the space clone mining novel Spindown (www.georgewpadgett.com/spindown). I tend to get caught into these perfectionist cycles where I compulsively need to know everything about the subject before putting anything on the page. The idea being that the more that I can understand the world that the characters exist in, the easier it is for me to immerse the reader into the scene. The end result is great because I get to transport the audience into the center of wherever I'm taking them; the downside is it's a slower process. For instance, because I tend to go overboard, I now know all about the migratory birds of the Nantucket/Martha's Vineyard area though there's only two or three mentions of birds in the entire novel.



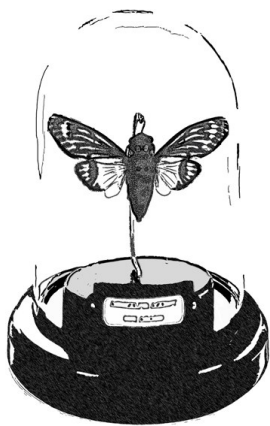
The City Districts
1. The City 2. Market 3. Exchange 4. Court 5. The Square 6. The Palace 7. The Theatre 8. The Church 9. The Arsenal
10. The Dock 11. The Wharf 12. The Quay 13. The Basin 14. The Harbour 15. The Canal 16. The Pier 17. The Jetty
18. The Barracks 19. The Prison 20. The Hospital 21. The School 22. The University 23. The Library 24. The Museum
25. The Observatory 26. The Observatory 27. The Observatory 28. The Observatory 29. The Observatory 30. The Observatory

I'm not complaining; I love learning so the research was fun. A huge component steampunk stories is their connection to history/alternate history, so I spent time studying about the area's whaling oil industry losing out to Pennsylvania coal as a source of energy, the use of immigrants for the transcontinental railroad, Queen Victoria's death later in the month the story takes place, the Boxer Revolution in China, etc. Weapons play an important part of the story, so I spent time with weapons expert Drew Heyen to make sure everything was authentic. Hopefully there's enough history in the book to satisfy the cravings of those that are looking for it, but not too much as to bog down the story for those that have come to it looking for a mystery-action experience.



How was writing *Addleton Heights* different than writing your other books?

First of all, it's the first full-length work that I've written entirely in first person narration, meaning we only see what our detective hero, Kip sees and thinks. He tells us everything we need to know. He has this delicious deadpan sense of humor mixed with a bitter melancholy. Life has been hard on him and he's developed all of these colloquial sayings that he spouts out when describing things. These 'Kipisms' (as I came to call them) were a blast to write.



Also, I wanted to be true to the genre while offering something enjoyable to those uninitiated to steampunk stories. While the steampunk genre doesn't officially have any set rules, there are elements that help to frame the story. As the story developed, I sent chapter sections to a group of beta readers for feedback. Doing it while the novel was written, allowed for me to tweak it as I went to ensure everything was 'firing on all cylinders'.

As a bonus, one of beta readers, a fellow writer, Christian Roule was well versed in the genre. More than once, he'd respond to what I'd submitted to him by saying, 'It needs to be steampunk-ier here'. He and others helped me balance the story and not overwhelm it until it became a gadgets manual.

I love that you cross genres and have not pigeon-holed yourself as a storyteller. When did you first meet the world of Steampunk? Did you find the genre or did the genre find you? (Did you read something Steampunk that inspired *Addleton* or did *Addleton* birth itself in your brilliant brain that resulted in needing the Steampunk label post development?)

Years ago I was signing books at a science fiction convention with some other authors. We were sitting across from a friendly booth of steampunk 'makers'. They were selling all of these fantastic clothes and enhancement components (cogs, gears, and whatnot). I asked fellow author, Leo King (www.foreverwhere.com) who was next to me 'What this steampunk thing was all about?' He proceeded to educate me in the ways of alternate Victorian history. It was such a fresh concept to me, and I've been a fan ever since.

As for the story of *Addleton Heights*? The concept that serves as the core mystery (finding the Jason character) was an idea that I when I was seventeen. I've carried the idea around with me all of that time until it found a home in this novel.

How was writing *Addleton Heights* different than writing *You write every sub-genre of the science fiction realm... are there dragons in our future?* (I, for one, would love to see what you came up with involving dragons...)

Kern

Dragons, huh? Currently I'm hard at work on a kind of time travel hide and seek adventure called Drift Pattern, but I do have a rough draft for a story which involves dragons (dragonwolves to be exact) and people using them for transportation. The working title of this fantasy-ish tale is 'Kern'. Maybe we'll see that in a few years.

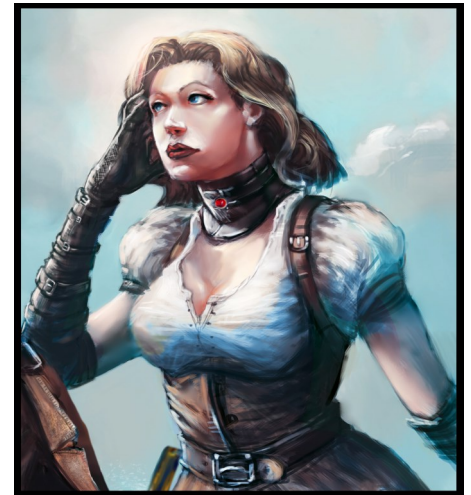


As a woman, I adore reading Janae. She's bold and fierce, but not without flaws. She is not flat, but dynamic. She's not all wonderful, nor is she a ninny.

Tell me about her and your experience writing her.

I'm fortunate to have a number of strong women whom I admire in my life. I wanted to pay homage to these ladies by avoiding writing some messed up 'damsel in distress' trope.

Enter: Janae Nelson. She is a force of nature! She's my favorite character that I've ever written. I spent a lot of time to achieve a balance within her of being strong without forfeiting her femininity. I was careful to make sure that no man ever rescues her in the story; that she would save herself. I attempted to turn the stereotype on its head by having the damsel do some saving of her own when the male lead gets tied to the metaphorical train tracks.



If Addleton Heights were to become a major motion picture tomorrow, who would your ideal cast be?

Oh, this is a tricky one... When I write I do 'cast' the characters with actors from movie roles and people that I know (I even print out photos for reference as I'm writing about them).

The problem with sharing this type of thing with a reader is that it's unlikely that we visualize the same exact 'players'. If I envision a grisly Kurt Russell for an old sea captain character, but you imagine an unshaven Dustin Hoffman for the same part, then I reveal who I've chosen in the role, does it reduce or nullify your experience? As with painting, what's on the canvas is a conversation between the artist and the person witnessing it. The viewer's interpretation is neither 'right' nor 'wrong', but in the same vein, the creator of the art shouldn't have exclusive say once the paint has dried. In that same spirit, I humbly must decline to answer here and leave that to the reader's imagination.

You're typically a one book storyteller, completing a story in its entirety at the first go. But I'm dying for more Addleton Heights – is there a continuing series in our futures?

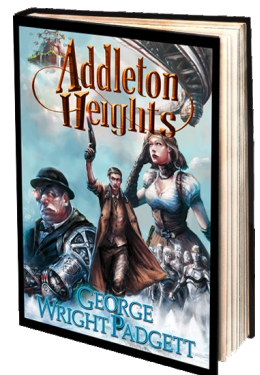
Detective stories are typically based on a single event; if it's a who-done-it the question is who the murderer is and possibly the 'why' of the mystery. One thing that's nice about these types of novels is that once the case is solved there can be another one right behind it. So we may see Kipsey again someday.

How can readers order posters and prints of the book cover and map to go with their copies of the book?

By contacting my publisher, Grey Gecko Press (www.greygeckopress.com) or by visiting www.georgewpadgett.com

Warmest thanks for your interest and support of Addleton Heights.

GWP



Order your copy of George's steampunk detective masterpiece from www.amazon.com , www.barnesandnoble.com , www.greygeckopress.com , and everywhere else that sells quality books.