

Stephanie A. Cain - Media Kit

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Author Bios and Fun Facts

2-line

Stephanie A. Cain writes epic & urban fantasy. She lives in Indiana, works at an historic landmark, and is a proud crazy cat lady.

Short

Stephanie A. Cain writes epic & urban fantasy novels. She grew up in Indiana, where much of her urban fantasy is set. She works at a museum and dreams of living somewhere without winter. A proud crazy cat lady, she is happily owned by Strider, Eowyn, and Eustace Clarence Scrubb.

Medium

Stephanie A. Cain writes epic & urban fantasy. She is the author of *Stormsinger*, *Stormshadow*, and *Sow the Wind*. She grew up in Indiana, where much of her urban fantasy is set.

She spends her work time at a small museum doing historical research, giving tours of a Victorian man-cave, and serving as a one-woman IT department. A proud crazy cat lady, she is happily owned by Eowyn, Strider, and Eustace Clarence Scrubb.

In her free time, she enjoys hiking (except for the spiders), bird-watching, and reading. She enjoys organizing things and visits office supply stores for fun. She owns way more movie scores and fountain pens than she can actually afford.

Long Bio

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She graduated from Purdue University before the turn of the (21st) century with a Bachelor of Arts in History and Creative Writing, with a Medieval Studies minor. She also has two-thirds of a Master of Library Science, but ran out of money and enthusiasm for grad school at about the same time. Despite this, her years of work in libraries were not wasted--besides having a lot of librarian friends (everyone should have at least one) she also spent a great deal of time hanging out in the stacks at 398.2, which gave rise to many of her urban fantasy stories.

She currently works at the General Lew Wallace Study & Museum, where she spends her time doing historical research, giving tours of a Victorian man-cave, and serving as a one-woman IT department. She hopes to be the first of her coworkers to actually read *Ben-Hur*.

Stephanie has attended various author fairs around Indiana and participated in a panel discussion called "Reach Your Readers: How to Survive and Thrive in the World of Self- and E-Publishing" at the Allen County Public Library Authors Fair in 2014. She has written a blog series called "Self-Pub 101" about her journey to becoming an indie author. Her favorite authors are J.R.R. Tolkien, C.S. Lewis, Elizabeth Moon, Tamora Pierce, Garth Nix, and Robin McKinley.

A proud crazy cat lady, Stephanie is happily owned by Eowyn, Strider, and Eustace Clarence Scrubb. In her free time, she enjoys hiking (except for the spiders), bird-watching, visiting wineries, and collecting anything with owls on it. She likes to unwind by playing World of Warcraft and Skyrim. She enjoys organizing things, is overly fond of 3-ring binders, and visits office supply stores for fun. She owns way more movie scores and fountain pens than she can actually afford.

She can be found online at StephanieCainOnline.com, at Twitter as @stephanie_cain, and on Facebook as StephanieCainFiction. She also spends far too much time on Pinterest as WriterSteph.

Speaker Introduction

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Five Fun Facts About Stephanie A. Cain

1. I've visited 47 states in the U.S.--all except Alaska, Hawaii, and Delaware.
2. I currently have 3 cats and 1 foster cat, but at one time I was up to 10 cats, after I took in a stray who had kittens. Because she liked to hide under the wardrobe, all 7 of her kittens were named after characters from the Chronicles of Narnia.
3. I once went to Mexico by accident. My best friend still hasn't forgiven me.
4. My favorite place in the world is Shades State Park in Montgomery County, Indiana.
5. If I could live anywhere in the world, I would like to live on Tobago in the West Indies.

Press Release

Stephanie A. Cain

Cathartes Press

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Hi-Res book cover:

Hi-Res author photo:

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

CRAWFORDSVILLE, Ind.--Stephanie A. Cain is pleased to announce the publication of her latest epic fantasy novel, *Stormseer*. This novel completes the first trilogy in her Storms in Amethir series, which focuses on the story of Princess Azmei of Tamnen as she attempts to end a war between her kingdom and a neighboring country.

Cain published the first installment of the series, *Stormsinger*, in August of 2013, and followed that with the March 2014 release of *Stormshadow*. She has also published an unrelated epic fantasy novella, *Sow the Wind*, which was also released in 2014. She plans to continue the Storms in Amethir series and is currently at work on the next novel, titled *The Weather War*.

She credits her family for her decision to become a novelist, and to write fantasy in particular. "My dad read out loud to me from the time I was a baby, and some of the books I remember hearing are *The Hobbit* and the Lord of the Rings, of course, the Chronicles of Narnia, and Lloyd Alexander's Prydain Chronicles. So I had an early grounding in the classic works of the fantasy genre." Cain's maternal grandmother, Phyllis Waye Boone, was also a writer. Boone spent decades researching and writing a local history/memoir of New Richmond, Indiana, which Cain is currently editing for publication later this year.

Cain works as Visitor Services Coordinator at the General Lew Wallace Study & Museum in Crawfordsville, Indiana, where General Lew Wallace wrote his novel *Ben-Hur*. Cain says the job is a perfect fit for her. She received her Bachelor of Arts from Purdue University in West Lafayette, with a double major in History and Creative Writing.

***Stormseer* Book Synopsis**

The kingdoms of Tamnen and Strid have been at war for decades. Princess Azmei of Tamnen left her family for a treaty marriage to end that war—but an assassin's blade destroyed her plans. Protected by her presumed death, Azmei hunts the person trying to destroy her family.

Commander Hawk of the Tamnese army was captured by the Strid after being left for dead on the battlefield. After years as a prisoner of war, he is finally ransomed—only to find he has no place left in the world. His parents are dead and his command has long since been given to another. At loose ends, he agrees to an undertaking for the crown—seek out the truth about Princess Azmei's killer.

Yarro Perslyn has been captive to the Voices in his head for most of his short life. The only family who ever cared for him was his sister Orya, and she disappeared. Now the mysterious Voices in his head are saying something new. They are real, and they want Yarro to free them.

Princess, prisoner, and prophet collide in the embattled region between the two kingdoms. But will they be in time to prevent more death, or will the rising storm break them all?

Stormseer Sample Chapter

Prologue

Lord Arisanat Burojan stared down at the concentric terraces of the quarry, trying to gauge how much higher the water had risen since his last visit. At least fifteen feet. Perhaps twenty. The foreman had a crew manning the pumps during daylight hours now, diverting the water downhill to the manor and the village. It wasn't a long term solution, but it bought time.

Time for what, Arisanat had not bothered to tell anyone. He had barely admitted it to himself, despite what he had already done. There were some lines no man ever intended to cross.

Then again, there were some things no man was meant to bear.

The water in the bottom of the quarry was stunningly blue. His sister, the sculptor, told him it had something to do with the color of the stone and how light reflected up through the water. Arisanat just thought it was deceptive, as so few things in nature were. Usually nature was forthright about its desire to destroy you. Stone crushed you. Cold stole the breath from your lungs. Avalanches buried you alive. But the quarry--the source of Burojan Family's wealth--the thing they had looked to for generations to supply all their needs--the quarry waited until they had nothing but it, and then it tore itself open and began to flood.

Of course, there were bogs north of here, up where the foothills gentled into flat moors before reaching the sea, where the ground seemed solid until a man or a horse had gotten far enough he would never escape. Then the surface of the ground opened up and swallowed you. Arisanat had never seen it, but he had heard stories from those who had.

Still, he had never expected to be betrayed by the thing he had loved most. Just as he had never expected to have the person he loved most stolen from him.

"How much?" he asked finally.

The man who stood next to him at the quarry rim had been waiting, perhaps not patiently, but in silence, for several minutes. The man looked nondescript: he was dressed in plain wool, neither too expensive nor too cheap; he was on the short side but sturdily built; he had a scruff of a beard but his hair was tidily cut. He did not look like he was here for a clandestine meeting.

"Five thousand," the man said. "In gold."

Arisanat raised an eyebrow. "I expect you to want it in mixed coins from varying kingdoms, so it won't be traceable."

The man barked a short laugh. "My master doesn't worry about people tracing things."

"Perhaps I do," Arisanat replied.

"You don't need to worry if you deal with my master." The man's words were confident rather than bragging. That ought to comfort Arisanat. He had, after all, decided he would hire only the best.

But a decision like this didn't come easily to a man like him. He had expected to spend his life in quiet non-brilliance, taking satisfaction in the fine grade of marble he shipped from his quarry to the palaces and manors of three kingdoms. He had expected the most difficult decisions ahead of him to be what addition he made to Burojan Manor with stone he had quarried with his own hands.

He had not expected his little brother, his brilliant strategist brother, to be swept away from him.

Venra had been twenty-six. He had been in command of the entire eastern Kreyden District. He had been everyone's darling. King Marsede, the generals, the soldiers, everyone had loved him. Even Princess Azmei and her brother had loved Venra. Arisanat's throat tightened. Or at least they had, until he died. Then they forgot him, just like everyone else.

"I will pay your master's price."

The man bowed. "It will be as you say, Lord Burojan." He paused. "You understand the high cost involved in what you propose?"

"Of course I do," he snapped. "I have already paid with the currency dearest to me. What your master demands is only gold."

Only gold, he said, as if the Burojan fortune was still what it once had been. As if the quarry were not nearing the end of its life. As if the ultimate price of this agreement would not be the life of a monarch.

The man bowed again. "It will be as you say," he repeated.

"When?"

"When the timing is right. Opportunities always present themselves."

"If no opportunity arises in the next month," Arisanat said, "create one. Razem has already lived to be older than my brother, and he must die after his father. I want them both dead by Longday."

The man opened his mouth. He may have meant to agree or protest, but Arisanat didn't care. He cut the man off before he could speak.

"Remember what fate befell the last assassin I sent."

The man cleared his throat. "My master will wish to know if this is revenge we are performing for you, or a coup."

Arisanat looked at the man with no expression. His face was as cold as the stone.

"Why not both?"

Chapter One

Azmei Corrone, known to most now as Aevver Balearic, had long since realized she was a poor postulant to her chosen god.

She stared across the rooftops of the city, her throat clogged with memories and emotions. The setting sun made her wince, but she didn't turn away. This was her first daylight glimpse of her home in three years, and she would drink it in as long as she could.

She shouldn't be here. If she were truly the obedient apprentice she had tried to be--the obedient apprentice the god of peace would have her be--she would have stayed down below in their room on the inn's first floor. But to be in Tamnen City, within sight of the palace where she had grown up, and not see it--that was impossible. She had slipped away to the roof of the inn as soon as the inn staff brought Master Tanvel's bathwater.

It would be so easy to make her way to the palace and declare herself. She would be welcomed back with open arms. It was common knowledge that the princess' death had taxed the king's health. More troubling still were the rumors that Prince Razem still mourned his sister, going about dressed in dark clothes and snapping at people for no reason and drinking himself to sleep each night. She had not kept away for this.

Azmei swallowed with difficulty and pulled her knees up to her chest, resting her chin on them. The palace looked no different. The white stone walls soared gracefully over the city, towers proud and strong, banners flying to ensure the people of Tamnen City that their monarch was within and all was well in the world. If she squinted, she could picture herself and her brother, standing on one of the balconies.

There was no soft footfall to give her warning, but Azmei sensed the air shift around her a moment before Tanvel's hand came down on her shoulder. He squeezed gently. "I told you to stay in the common room," he said.

"I know. I'm sorry, Master Tanvel." Her voice was choked.

Tanvel sighed through his nose and sat next to her. "I would have spared you this, at least, Aevver. You are the most courageous young woman I have ever met, but it would be better if you did not seek pain needlessly."

"I failed them," she whispered.

"You did what you thought was best." His voice was sharp. "What I thought was best. For all our investigation, we are still uncertain who paid the Perslyn contract on your life."

"Perhaps we should have let my father decide what was best." Azmei closed her eyes. "Razem is out of control, they say."

"And your father ill." Tanvel's hand fell away from her shoulder, but he didn't move. "I have heard the stories. More even than you have." He was silent for a moment. "Would it comfort you to know that your father was apprised of every detail of your assassination--and how it failed?"

She jerked her head around to stare at him. "You--told him?" Hope bubbled inside her chest, mixing with relief and guilt.

"I thought it best that the world believe you dead. Your father, however, was owed the information that someone was attempting to destroy him, and that we could not determine who was behind it. He also deserved to know Razem was not his only heir." Tanvel's bearded face gave away little emotion, but he slanted a look at Azmei that warmed her. "I thought, too, that if I had a daughter such as you, I would want the truth of it, however hard. So I told him that you were sore wounded and thought it best to stay in hiding. He agreed."

"Then Razem also--"

But Tanvel was shaking his head before she finished the question. "Marsede meant to tell no one. Your brother is not skilled enough to portray this rage for so long. He would have recovered too quickly from your death. Everyone knew how close you were."

Her relief shriveled as quickly as it had grown inside her. "Razem will never forgive me," she murmured, and looked back at the sunset.

"Perhaps not. But he's a fool, if that's the choice he makes." Tanvel's voice was implacable.

"Have I lived up to your expectations so well, Master?" She didn't look at him. She didn't want him to know how badly she craved his approval. She knew she was only deceiving herself if she thought he didn't already know.

"You have done well, Aevver." They watched the sun sink slowly behind the city walls. Neither of the spoke again until it was nearly full dark. Then Tanvel cleared his throat.

"That is why we are here. The Shadow Council has received word that King Marsede treats with Strid, via an intermediary, and that a tentative truce is on the verge of being forged. Knowing of the matter's personal importance to you, they sent us here." He paused. "They have chosen your final test."

Azmei gulped. Her final test. The last hurdle she must pass before being accepted as a Dedicate to the god of peace. There had been times in the last three years when she could easily imagine living the rest of her life as a Shadow Diplomat. The fellowship she had found among the Aspirants was so very different from the largely isolated life she had led before. Yet she had made promises, and she was not one to break promises. When this test was over, Azmei would have to choose. And she had no idea what choice to make.

Could she truly live as the Shadow Diplomats did? She loved the fellowship among the Aspirants, and she loved the freedom and strength she had found in herself over these past three years. But could she truly dedicate her entire life to anything other than the kingdom she had been born to serve?

Azmei had learned many things during the past three years on Ranarr. She had learned to like fish rolls and tepid tea. She had learned to be physically still and silent for hours at a time. She had learned her way around the sea passages under the towering limestone island.

She had never learned to enjoy communing with the god of peace. And if she could not worship the god she professed to follow, could she ever truly deserve her place among the Shadow Diplomats, who served him by delivering swift death when negotiations failed?

Was that what held her back? After months of soul-searching, she still wasn't sure. It might be that she was afraid of committing herself. It might be that she didn't truly believe the god of peace--or any of the gods--would ever wake from their slumber. It wasn't as if the god spoke to her. As far as Azmei knew, he spoke to no one. It could be that the god of peace slept just as deeply as all the others. She

couldn't imagine how the world would shake if the gods ever woke from their slumber. Once upon a time, she had hoped to see it. Now, she wasn't so sure.

"Your thoughts are far from this moment." Tanvel's voice was vaguely reproofing. Her tendency to lose herself in her thoughts was still her weak spot. She could spend hours trying to tease an answer out of a tricky situation.

"I'm sorry, Master," she murmured. She straightened her back and gazed out across the darkened city. "I am wondering what this test will mean for me. I am considering that whether or not I pass this test, I will have a decision to make. I am weighing the god's will in my heart."

"You aren't giving any thought at all to whether or not you will pass this test?"

She heard the amusement in Tanvel's voice, but she thought--she hoped--she also heard approval. It made her smile, though she still didn't look at him.

"I will pass this test, Master Tanvel."

He grunted. "Good."

It was true that he hadn't given her any of the specifics of the mission, but that didn't matter much. She would always strive to do whatever her teacher required of her. She knew he would never require anything unreasonable or impossible. He had earned that trust, just as she had earned her confidence.

"What is my assignment?"

Instead of answering, Tanvel stood and motioned for her to precede him back inside the inn. Azmei stole a final glance at her city, then ducked back in the window. The hallway inside was deserted. It was a narrow servants' corridor, and at this time of night, when meals were being served in the common room and beds being turned down in the private rooms, there would be no one here.

"The time has come for you to finish what you started," Tanvel said softly as he led the way back down four flights of stairs. His hand hovered at her elbow, just barely touching the thin linen of her sleeve. "You must make your way to Meekin to deal with House Perslyn."

Azmei managed to not flinch. The Patriarch was one thing, but she didn't relish the idea of dealing with Yarro Perslyn. The descriptions she had heard from his sister Orya--the woman who had once been Azmei's friend and who had tried to kill her--made Yarro out to be a young man with severe needs. It was possible he was mad, though Orya's words made it sound rather more complicated than simple madness.

"And what will you be doing, Master?" she asked.

Tanvel glanced over at her, but he left the matter for her to think over. When they got to their room, she stopped just inside the door.

"You must have some errand here in the capital, or you would at least travel part of the way with me."

Tanvel rubbed a hand down his jaw. "I will be attempting to keep your father alive."

He refused to explain his statement until after she had a bath and a meal. Azmei bathed as quickly as possible. When she was dry, she dressed and combed her hair. It would dry wavy. It always did. But she clipped it out of her face before peeking out of the door. Tanvel was waiting, a tray of food balanced on one hand while the other clutched two mugs of ale.

"It's about time. I'm famished," she said, and stood aside so he could enter.

"And impertinent," he said, his lips curving in a rare smile. "One can still see hints of Princess Azmei in Aevver Balearic, from time to time." He surprised her by bending to brush a kiss against her temple as he walked past. "Your father and brother might consider you much changed, if they were to see you now, but I daresay they would still recognize you. Now. Come. Sit and eat while I explain what we are both to do."

She obeyed as he unrolled a map of Tamnen across the table.

"I know it must be difficult being back here," he said, his voice even. "But you have been trained well, and your time in Tamnen City is nearly finished."

"I wish you weren't staying here alone," she said miserably. They'd been over all of this, but she couldn't shake the feeling that he needed her here.

"We cannot risk your being recognized, and I will need to infiltrate the palace if I wish to have any success at guarding your father."

"This is all too vague. If we knew for certain who contracted the assassination--"

"--or who was carrying out the contract, yes, I know," Tanvel broke in. It occurred to Azmei that he was treating her much more like an equal than a student. When had that changed? Sometime since their arrival in Tamnen, she was certain. "But the information is reliable. We know the Perslyn family bid on the contract, and we know they lost." He smiled grimly at her. "Partly thanks to our success in rooting out Perslyn operatives in Ranarr."

She knew he was right. Since her apprenticeship to Master Tanvel, they had been focused on discovering how deep the Perslyn network ran and how far it stretched. Certainly it was widespread in Tamnen, but Azmei had been shocked at how many tendrils of the network they had discovered in Ranarr. At least they were certain the assassination plot had not come from Strid. She and Tanvel had actually gone there as part of her father's peace negotiations, though her father had not known it. It had been too great an opportunity to pass up, and it had proved a worthwhile effort.

"Still. I don't like leaving you."

"Do you think you have gained so much skill in three years that you can head off any dangers that might threaten me, with my thirty years of experience?" Tanvel's voice was mocking, but he was still smiling at her. Azmei flushed at his teasing and ducked her head.

"No, but even you can't see what's sneaking up behind you."

"I have a friend or two here in Tamnen City. I will not be entirely alone, even if I will be without my apprentice." Tanvel pushed a bowl of soup across the table at her. "Eat up before it gets cold." He settled into a chair, holding his own soup bowl under his chin.

"Do you have any instructions for my task in Meekin?" Azmei asked, reluctant to let the subject drop but knowing she had pushed it as far as she could.

"Find out who paid the Perslyn to kill you. If you can, gather the evidence the king will need to deal with them legally. We know none of the Nine will go down without hard evidence."

"If it is one of the Nine," Azmei said, though they were almost certain it must be.

Tanvel pressed his lips together. "At the very least, satisfy your own curiosity." He sipped his soup. "Then kill the Patriarch."

Azmei swallowed. She had been preparing for three years to kill the Perslyn Patriarch, but there was still a part of her that was unsure she could manage it. "And then?"

Tanvel's smile turned sad. "Then you will have a decision to make, my young Aspirant. If you succeed in killing the Patriarch, the Shadow Council will accept you as a Dedicate. You will be allowed to work on peace missions without my constant supervision." He sipped his soup again. Azmei wondered how he did it without getting his beard wet.

"I confess," he went on, "I wish I had the liberty of overseeing your test. I would never be permitted to pass judgment, but I would take pleasure in seeing how well I had taught you."

"Don't you already know that, master?" she asked, holding his gaze. "All I have done these past three years is to be a credit to your teaching."

"And you have done it well," he assured her. He was silent for a moment before clearing his throat. "You will have no aid in Meekin. There will be an observer, of course, but you will not know who it is. Be certain, though, that whatever you do will be noted."

Azmei drained her soup. "You said I had a decision to make," she said, and the words echoed back to her from their first meeting, when he had told her she must decide whether to publicly survive the assassination or go into hiding and play dead. He had always left the difficult decisions to her. It was one

of many reasons that she loved him--he never treated her as if she were incapable of making those decisions, even if she made the wrong choice.

"I did indeed." Tanvel set his bowl aside and took a long pull from a tankard. "You may return to Ranarr as a Dedicate to the god of peace. Or you may return to Tamnen as her princess. Once we have destroyed the Perslyn brood in its den and uncovered its patron, there will be no more reason for you to remain in hiding. You will be free to live the life you had planned for yourself."

Azmei stared at him, wishing he hadn't said it. Of course it had occurred to her, but wishful thinking was one thing. Tanvel presenting it as an option was another thing entirely.

"The life my father had planned for me, you mean," she murmured.

"Perhaps so, but it was the life you were prepared to live, before you met me." Tanvel was watching her. Azmei couldn't identify the strange gleam in his eyes. Did he want her to remain a Shadow Diplomat? Did he think she should return to her old life? And if she did, should she marry Vistaren as planned? Would it truly make any difference in the war now?

Azmei lifted her own tankard. "What do you think I should do, master?"

She saw the surprise bloom in his eyes. She had asked his opinion many times in the past three years, but it was obvious he hadn't anticipated the question. He turned his gaze down into the depths of his tankard, jaw working.

"I...do not know," he said finally. His voice was low. "You are the finest student I have ever trained. True, you have stronger motivation to learn than any of the rest of my students. But you have an aptitude for intrigue and understanding people. It would serve you well as a Shadow Diplomat, even though you lack faith in the peace god." He licked his lips. "And yet..." He looked up to study her face. "And yet, I think the world could use a queen such as you would be. You were already well on the path to being a fine queen for the Amethirian Empire. You won Vistaren's loyalty and the loyalty of two of his finest servants. You charmed the Ranarri people, who are seldom impressed by outsiders. I believe you would be good for this world."

Azmei stared at him. Never had he spoken to her like this before. She felt her throat tighten and fought against a sudden upswelling of emotion.

"And there is this: as queen, you might be in a position to end the war between Tamnen and Strid. As Shadow Diplomat, you almost certainly never would."

Having spoken his piece, Tanvel sucked down the rest of his tankard of ale and stood. "Do not think on it overmuch, Aevver. Get through the test. Things may look much different after you have had your justice."

Sample Interview Questions

1. How long have you been writing? What got you interested in writing?
2. What inspired you to write the Storms in Amethir (AM-uh-theer) series?
3. Who do you think would enjoy your books?
4. Why did you choose to self-publish?
5. What's your routine when you sit down to write?
6. Do you plot your novels out ahead of time?
7. How long does it take you to write a book?
8. Which of your characters do you think is most like you?
9. What's your favorite thing about being a writer?
10. What's the hardest part about being a writer?