

Book Proposal: *Kyri*

Todd Fiorentino

toddfior@yahoo.com, 732-595-6064

Overview:

This is the story of Kyri (warrior name: Mask), a 17-year old orphan brought up by monks, trained in weapons and *Fade* magic. While defending the monks, Mask meets Yarrow, princess of the elves and falls in love. Together, they fight against the evil Galbriath Kiln led by Duke as well as Veins, a sinister mage and the Hobs/hobgoblins. As their love grows, new threats appear when Veins' brother, Isop the alchemist, creates cross-bred monsters in the forest and opens a gate to the demon world. The monks, dragons and elves must come together against this evil force or be shattered into fragments. As prophesied, a lightning staff is created during a storm and Rift, Mask's spiritual master, whittles it to shape. This sets the stage for a struggle over who will possess this powerful magic item, which could tip the scales in this war. The battle becomes metaphysical when Rift enters the spirit world and demons travel to Mask's realm. As the undead threaten to sweep south, Mask and Yarrow fight to preserve forest magic, the monks' way of life and the pursuits of dragons.

Audience:

Kyri is a fast-paced novel with strong world-building, characterization and plot twists. This would appeal to readers who skew younger, ages 13-17. However, many adults read YA fantasy as well so a secondary market would be 18+. For those who enjoyed the *Willow* series on Disney, *Kyri* would be a hit. It has the comedic feel of that series while delving into fun fantasy elements like the undead, vampires, succubi and dragons. *Kyri* intentionally avoids tropes such as warring kingdoms, orcs, kings and queens, etc. This is a story for those who like to peer outside of fantasy writing norms. A lesbian relationship forms during the story; scholarly dragons share lore and insight; light humor is injected into situations that often seem pretty serious. All of this would appeal to the 13-17 year-old market of YA fantasy readers.

Competition:

Legends and Lattes by Baldree is pretty close in terms of a competitive book although *Kyri* has more fight scenes. While the stories are wildly different, the themes (trying to put down the sword, being different or cast out by society) and comedic elements correspond. There are also some similarities to *Hall of Smoke* or *Winterlight*. More classically, the Lloyd Alexander books, in general, are close to *Kyri*, though Alexander does tend more towards childrens' fantasy (there are some PG-13 elements in *Kyri*). Also, in a classic sense, folks who enjoyed *A Princess of Mars* could get onboard with *Kyri*. The quick pace, plot changes and world-building are commonalities. In general, the competition is YA fantasy without any sci-fi, contemporary or dystopian elements blended in. For readers who crossover from sci-fi to fantasy, *Kyri* would attract fans of the *MurderBot Diaries* by Martha Wells because of the high action terse style with some humor.

Biography:

Kyri was originally written as a graduate thesis for the MFA in Creative Writing Program at City College of NY, Harlem. This process will conclude in December of 2026 when Todd receives his degree. Todd has an undergraduate degree from UMASS, Boston: Philosophy major, English minor (focus in professional writing). Todd writes young adult, sci-fi, speculative and fantasy.

Marketing/Promotion:

I split my time between Williamstown, MA and Bay Ridge, Brooklyn, NY both of which have active literary communities. We also vacation in Brattleboro, VT, which is loaded with bookstores. My main network is through CCNY in Harlem which offers workshops, forums, author roundtable events, etc. where I have learned a great deal and met many interesting folks. I have also taken classes at SUNY, Albany, Graduate English Department. I have intentionally avoided trying to publish excerpts or chapters of *Kyri* in the hopes of getting a book deal although I am posting an audio file of the first chapter (soon) on my website: www.toddfiorentino.net to build interest. I am available to help market and promote the book to the general public through my social network (online and in-person), school network plus throughout Brooklyn and Williamstown as a local writer; I was thinking that Renaissance Fairs would be a great place to sell the book. Regarding social media, I have a friend who works in video for Google and a family member who makes movies so I'm sure they can help me to wind up social media platforms like Instagram, youtube and TikTok. With their help, I'm sure that I could launch some high quality audio/video and gain followers. I could also have the actor who is doing the theatrical reading of chapter 1, continue with chapters 2 and 3 to hook readers.

Pitch:

We've come to expect kings and queens and massive battles from the fantasy genre. *Kyri* doesn't deliver that. Instead, we visit dancing dragons, monks on the fiddle, blueberry wine, lyrical poets, a wisecracking alchemist and an evildoer who floats between worlds. With a cast of characters that will make you laugh and situations to scratch your head at, *Kyri* will keep you guessing until the very end.

This is the story of *Kyri* (warrior name: Mask), who becomes indebted to the monks after her parents are killed and they take her in. Despite being only 17-years old, she trains and becomes a great warrior, helping the monks to defend against invaders. It is a story of courage and transformation as Mask falls in love with Yarrow, the elf princess, and wonders if one day they can put down their arms. As the people she values most are threatened, Mask must risk everything to save those who have shown her love in this life.

Genre: YA Fantasy

Manuscript Specifications/Timeline:

The novel is 46,600 words. Editing and sharpening would be completed in collaboration with publishing house.

Outline:

Dockside

Mask

Oren

Rift

Yarrow

A Message

The Hobgoblin's Den

In the Cube

Duke and Cax

Day Two

Cax's Plan

Rings and the Tree

Ran

The Staff

The Alchemist

Dockside and Dalymoor

Command

Gnash

Negate Magic

Portal

Veins

Cax

Dragonblade

Exile

The Dragon Council

Prisoner Trade

Fade and Shadow

The Hills

Food for the Hounds

Tobias and Rye

Lightning in the Mountains

Battle at the Elven Palace

Secret Passage

Hell Dogs

Ice Rats

Isop's Bungalow at Quivering Brook

Outside the Dragon Stronghold

Druid of the Southern Wood

Green Fire

Raid on the Bungalow

Dark Fortress

Bungalow

Old Friends

Adventurer Soup

Monks and Elves Rejoice

A Warning

Promotion

Departing

Pizazz

Gurzide

The Western Woods

A Little Known Town Called Josan

The Vice Closes on Luen

Mawren

Damon and Aladria Aligned

Gaseous Form

Western Woods

The Dead Lands

A Feast

Take the Bite

The High Druid

Delivering the Antidote

The Ruins

Luen is Saved

A Letter to Wixle

On-the-Run

Damon and Midnight

Mest Pog

Druid Elders

Dragon Council

The Elf Palace

Wixle's Letter

Hunt for the High Druid

The Bite

Rise of Mawren

In Position

Ambush

The Lowry Sand Dunes

Beginning of Chapter 11:

CHAPTER ELEVEN

A New Evil

A Warning

Mawren was reading a story to a circle of young dragons in the Hall of Books. The dragons were squirming and interrupting and carrying-on as young dragons do.

“Well, what did you think of that?” said Mawren, closing the book.

“Very exciting, but a bit unrealistic,” said Milstout, a gold dragon. “I mean, once the desert marauders rode for a few hours, they would’ve realized it was a mirage, c’mon!”

“Maybe, maybe,” admitted Mawren. “Alright, time for bed everyone, see you next time,” and she hurried them out.

“You sensed me,” came the voice from a chair behind a stack of books.

“Yes,” said Mawren, “but I don’t remember inviting anyone over.”

“Oh, I often pop in places unannounced, usually for carnal reasons, you see, I feast on men; the problem is, when I’m done, I always have to stop myself from killing them... between you and me, girlfriend, sometimes I don’t stop myself.”

“I can’t imagine it’s carnal reasons for coming here, what should I call you, just succubus?”

“Not ‘just’ Mawren, I am queen of the succubi, you will call me Aladria. Now we know each other.”

“But I don’t feel like I know you, Aladria. Where are you from?”

“Always the researcher, Mawren, clever dragon. Do you think I don’t know what you’re doing? Let’s be clear. Don’t tangle with me, Mawren, the northlands are now off-limits. I don’t want to see a single dragon north of these mountains. It is the land of the undead now, understand? See all those books behind you? None of the knowledge in your Great Hall will save you... from me. I don’t trust you, red dragon.”

“Aladria, you are rather full of yourself.”

“Listen, Mawren, I know the truth about you. Friend of the gods, yes? Where are those gods now?”

“Perhaps you didn’t register as a big enough threat to draw their attention?”

“Wrong, mighty red dragon of Mount Xon, they are afraid. They may be immortal, but did you know the gods can be turned? Yes, I can turn them.”

“I question that, Aladria.”

“Do you question the safety of your young dragons, sleeping soundly in this crater; the same crater that I floated through as a gas then suddenly appeared? Can you imagine a little bite between the scales? Can you imagine vampire dragons flying around your home?”

Mawren removed her spectacles. “Be careful, Aladria, the dragons have been here for thousands of years, there’s a reason for that—we’re hard to kill.”

“Heed my warning, Mawren, read your books, stay in the south.” Aladria turned to gaseous form and floated away. Mawren looked at where the succubus had been. Her pouty face, sweet fanged mouth and long sensuous legs poking out from behind the stack. Aladria was going to be a handful.

Summary:

Following the demise of King Kizan, the realm has fallen into anarchy as various forces vie for power. Kyri's family is fleeing the north in search of a new life when raiders strike.

Her parents slaughtered, Kyri wanders the forest aimlessly. She finds a blood-red mask that falls off a theatre cart. Monks decide to take the 17 year old in and train her as they are embroiled in a battle with the Galbraith Kiln (shadow fighters) and Hobs (hobgoblins). As her fighting style improves, she becomes Mask -- the warrior -- protector of the monks and their way of life.

A mage named Veins and his brother, Isop the alchemist, give the Kiln an edge in the war; Isop makes bastardizations in the wood, crossing creatures with magic. Elfkind and Dockside, the dragon, come to the monks' aid. Mask's spiritual master Rift teaches her magic and the ability to Fade to avoid strikes. One of the elfkind is Yarrow, princess of the elves; Yarrow and Mask fall in love. A tree is struck by lightning and a special staff is made fulfilling a prophecy—the lightning staff.

Rift is killed by Veins, but as a mystic, he does not die. Instead, he is trapped in Limbo. Dockside is killed in battle and the dragon council is angered at being drawn into war. The arch dragon, Nemagorian, is cast out in anger and the dragons send a message to the monks and elves.

In exile, Mask seeks Nemagorian, a mature silver dragon, knowing his power is immense. She strikes a bargain with the dragon and rides atop his back now with the lightning staff. The Kiln and Hobs have turned their attention to the forest torching the elf palace and causing mayhem. Nemagorian and Mask are too late to save it; Yarrow narrowly escapes out a secret door.

Isop and Veins plot in the southern forest at Quivering Brook. A new potion recipe appears in Isop's spell book and he takes it as a sign. He believes an evil god is courting them. He is wrong, and instead, a demon climbs out of Isop's cauldron. Damon, the demon, practically enslaves Veins and Isop and tells them to brew more Gate potions so he may travel freely and to build him a dark fortress on monk lands. Enslave the monks, he says.

Meanwhile, Damon has been instructed by Beelzebub, ruler of the 9th plane of hell, to find the lightning staff, which may rival his lute. Although Damon is lord of the frost giants in this realm (Damon has been using the void, an evil intelligent ethereal substance, to travel among realms), he finds himself perhaps in over his head when Yarrow strikes him with a nearly mortal hit from her bow. Despite an onslaught by Nemagorian and Mask, in his craftiness, Damon uses the frost giants as a distraction and makes off with the lightning staff.

The thieves guild in Gurzide has heard of a new power object and sends two thieves, Tobias and Rye, to find it. While camping, Tobias tells Rye that a berserker killed his brother (for a dancing sword) and he's been looking for him ever since. The thieves meet Wixle, druid of the southern wood, who offers to guide them to the staff, but only if they agree to one week of servitude. They do and Tobias and Rye steal the staff from Damon as he is recovering.

Mask and Yarrow express their love for each other in the dragon stronghold. Mask learns some important lore from Mawren, the intelligent red dragon who maintains the Hall of Books. Mask communes with Rift from the moonlit crater and learns, he is alive, though on the run in the spirit world. The gods are watching Rift's actions in Limbo as they decide if he can join them or if he should be sent to hell.

With Veins and Isop charged to build a dark fortress on monk land, and Mask and Yarrow wanting to check on the monks, the story funnels towards the plains.

Mask and Yarrow find the monks imprisoned and enslaved. Yarrow cuts the cages open while Mask finds her old Weapons Master, Luen. Deciding to try and sell the staff to Veins and Isop, who they learn of through Wixle (he has been keeping tabs on Isop and Veins), the thieves go to the plains as well. At the monk compound, they all meet up. The druid knows Yarrow from a previous encounter; Mask expresses her determination to help Rift in the spirit world and protests the selling of the staff.

In a split second decision, they team up and become a unified band of adventurers, jumping into the boiling cauldron/Gate potion at the monk sanctuary just before Veins and Isop discover them. Beelzebub opens a portal and draws the adventurers to him; he plays them a song on his lute. They go to sleep save Wixle, who downs an awakening mushroom tincture.

Beelzebub prepares his "adventurers soup" and opens a portal to have Damon over for dinner. On the other side, Nemagorian has returned to the monk sanctuary with reinforcements. He has found King Dalymoor and Oren in the forest and they, in turn, captured Veins and Isop. Putting two and two together (Mask had told Nemagorian of her discussion with Rift in the spirit world while riding on Nemagorian's back) Nemagorian realizes Mask and Yarrow must've gone through the portal/cauldron filled with Gate potion, so he dips his tail in and is instantly transported.

Wixle picks the lock on his cage and shoves Beelzebub off a cliff just as Nemagorian flies through Beelzebub's portal (instead of Damon). Nemagorian chomps the ruler of hell in his maw. The monks and elves rejoice over their victory upon their return through the portal.

Mask recounts the loss of her parents with Yarrow. Yarrow reminds Mask what they are fighting for during her time of sorrow. Tobias and Rye prepare to leave, but decide to sell the lightning staff to the monks for 300 gold bits before doing so. Wixle says he must return to the forest to help it heal from Isop and Veins' sick magic. Yarrow considers what life would be like if she stayed with Kyri in the monk lands.

Mawren, the great red dragon and scholar, reads books to the young dragons at Mt. Xon. When the babies leave, she is visited by Aladria, queen of the succubi, who drifts in using gaseous form. Aladria informs Mawren that the north is now under the control of an undead army, and not to interfere, or else.

The void appoints Damon as the new ruler of hell and sets him up on the 9th plane. Tobias heads north to settle an old score with a berserker who killed his brother. Damon visits Aladria in the ruins of Kizan and forms an alliance. He promises to return with his dogs and

chariot to help take the north and grow the void. Farin, leader of the thieves guild, is disappointed with Rye and Tobias for selling the staff to the monks. Baxter, a thief in the guild, hatches a plan to poison Luen and take the staff back.

Wixle heads to a rendezvous with Yifkuhu, high druid of the forest, to make sure the gem of healing is safe. He tries to fix the forest on the way, but becomes ensnared in magical vines. Tobias reaches the hilltown of Josan. He bellies up to the bar at a local tavern and drinks far too much. He loses focus on his mission to find the berserker and ends up sleeping at Billy and Fran's hut. This turns out to be a mistake as they work for Aladria and have been commissioned to bring healthy morsels/flesh to the old castle of Kizan that stands in ruins.

Baxter poisons Luen with a vice spider and steals the staff for the guild. Mawren sends word via falcon to Mask and Yarrow that evil rises in the north. Mask decides she must chase down an antidote by following Wixle into the woods; Yarrow will go to Mawren. Damon returns with his dogs and chariot; the vampire nest is awakened to begin turning the villagers of the north and raising an undead army. As Yarrow's arm heals, she rides to Mt. Xon. Mawren gives Yarrow a new bow as Damon had used magic to snap her elven bow. Mawren commissions Yarrow to scout the north and find out the extent of Aladria's power. The dragon council will not authorize any missions without more information.

As the rumors spread, Vic, a vampire general, is sent to the thieves guild to procure the staff. Mask discovers Wixle trapped by vines and frees him. After encounters with the ice rats and barbarians, Yarrow finds her way to the ruins of Kizan, but not before witnessing a village being turned by vampires. Billy and Fran, the secret pagans, transport Tobias to Aladria, who puts him in a cage. Midnight, a second vampire general, is sent to find Mask as the void believes her to be a threat.

Seeking ingredients for an antidote for Luen, Mask and Wixle reach the high druid, Yifkuyu. He gives them the necessary ingredients and tells Wixle the gem (that controls all healing in the realm) is still safe with him despite the Hobbs and Kiln. Unknowing that Midnight is eavesdropping on them, the vampire general gains important information. Midnight ambushes Wixle and Mask, grabbing Mask and disappearing.

As Yarrow infiltrates the castle, her fact finding mission morphs into an assassination attempt as she sees Midnight appear holding Mask and Tobias in the cage. She readies her bow and silver tipped arrow, but does not have a clean shot. Aladria chides Mask, but offers her what she believes is a wonderful deal: Give me one bite of your neck and you will be transported back to Luen with the antidote to save him. Aladria believes once bitten that Mask will, in time, turn to her side and strengthen her forces. Yarrow takes the shot, but Aladria has already sunken her fangs in. Mask appears with the monks with puncture marks on her neck. Yarrow scores a critical hit and frees Tobias, slaying Aladria. The vampires scatter and she escapes.

Luen is saved, but at a high price. The monk healers decide to restrain Mask until they can learn more about what it means to be half succubus. Yarrow returns to the land of the monks and tells Mask to bite her, so they can be together forever. Mask resists this for the moment; Yarrow breaks Mask out of her confines and they run off into the woods.

Wixle and Tobias become sort of pen-pals, writing to each other. Tobias is desperate back in Gurzide with no work as the thieves guild believes he and Rye botched the lightning staff job. Yarrow tells Mask that she must go to the elven palace, as it was in flames when she left, and she wants to see her brother, King Thistle Dalymoor.

Damon returns to the castle of Kizan and finds Aladria dead and the vampires sullen. Vic tells him that the Sisters of the Succubi wish to visit and mourn. Vic presents Damon with the lightning staff. Midnight shares the information he gained in the western wood—a gem that controls all healing in the realm is held by the high druid. Without healing, thinks Damon, nothing could stop their rampage in the north; without healing, the elf assassin would've still had a broken arm and Aladria would still be alive. Damon decides to embark on this quest with Midnight.

Vic will liaison with the Sisters. Mistress Mest Pog and the Sisters of the Succubi appear and engage in ritual acts with Aladria's body. Once complete, they set out to take various strategic towns in the north. Mest Pog reaches the town of Scelbak and wastes no time drinking in the blood of their lord mayor and taking control. The other Sisters follow suit.

After Mask's abduction, Wixle seeks guidance from Yifkuyu, who contacts the druid elders. They surmise that the vampires may know about the gem as well, though they are unsure. The elders offer a plan in case the gem is in jeopardy. They also offer information that they've obtained on the evil in the north. Rather than make a stand together, the elders advise a split approach that involves more stealth and strategy. Yifkuyu is charged with damaging Damon's spell hand, if he comes, and Wixle will guard the void in case their goal is to throw the gem in. They advise against open battle and tell them the goal is for the gem to remain in this realm at all costs.

Rye, who has also been without work from the guild, has taken to studying esoteric subjects. In his quest for knowledge, he heads to Mawren's Hall of Books, the best library in the land. Mawren takes him in as a sort of research assistant, and together, they study the succubi, the void and other topics.

King Thistle Dalymoor is overjoyed to see his sister, Yarrow, alive. He greets Mask and asks how they survived. Mask is compelled to tell the tale of Aladria's bite and Thistle shows concern for his sister. Mask interprets the concern as disapproval, which is entirely wrong, and she runs off into the woods. Yarrow follows and finds Mask in a wheat field feeding on a deer. Mask tells Yarrow she is ashamed and Yarrow comforts her. They discuss their dreams of going to the south, to the Lowry Sand Dunes, and escaping the complicated relationships and evil that lurks.

Wixle writes back to Tobias and tells him that he will journey to the void, which has become a massive black puddle, almost mirror-like, stretching even beyond the castle of Kizan and into the ruins. With each evil act it grows acting as a sort of intelligent transport device to other realms, planes and nothingness. Tobias decides to travel to see Rye at Mt. Xon and then check on Wixle in the ruins.

Midnight and Damon plunge into the woods, but the trees are dense and they must abandon their chariot. Damon cuts the hell hounds loose and Wolfy picks up a scent, which leads to an oak tree. Yifkuyu, in ocelot form, hides in the tree, waiting. The ocelot calls on Obre', the Wood Spirit, to help him and he does. Obre' strikes two of the hell hounds before Damon severs the animated branch with a lightning bolt. The ocelot leaps onto Damon's head and bites deeply into his spell hand. As the ocelot runs for cover, Hammer, the third hell hound, chomps down on the cat and the high druid is no more.

Yarrow and Mask make love on the wet earth with the sun beating down on them. When their naked bodies finally separate, Yarrow has a bite mark on her neck. She is now half-succubus as well. Mask and Yarrow feel tuned up, as the change takes hold. They are faster, stronger, more keen. But, they also thirst for blood. Yarrow realizes that she never reported back to Mawren; she doesn't even know that Aladria is dead. They decide to journey to Mt. Xon. Mawren finally convinces the Dragon Council to act on the evil in the north.

Reports of black funnels of smoke rising from the towns and an undead army on the march has compelled the leadership. An attack party of Mawren, Nemagorian and Vecsop is decided on. Their goal is to strike Aladria's stronghold and rescue the elf if possible.

Wixle reaches the void and lays in wait. He is above a cliffside road where he spied chariot tracks. He believes this will be Damon's route if he has obtained the gem. Wixle prays that Yifkuyu lives. On the hillside, he talks to the mountains, the stone and the sand. That night, Mask and Yarrow reach Mt. Xon, as they both have incredible stamina as the result of their new powers. Mawren welcomes them and they give Mawren the news. Mawren tells the two "bloodsuckers" to get to bed. (Big day tomorrow, kind of thing.)

Wixle lays ambush as the chariot races up the roadway, but Wixle is quickly outgunned by Hammer (the one hell hound who was not injured), Midnight and Damon. He finds himself pinned down in the cliffs. He invokes a spectral hound to counter Hammer, but it's not enough.

Just as all is nearly lost, Nemagorian and Mawren descend from the clouds. On their backs, Mask and Yarrow. Damon gives a resounding call and the Sisters of the Succubi appear. Mask strikes Midnight with a silver razor ring and the vampire falls. Damon hits Nemagorian with lightning from the staff, but as the silver dragon crashes, he strikes Damon with his tail sending the gem and staff flying. Mawren lights Hammer on fire with a cone of flames and Yarrow finishes the job with an arrow to the head. Mask leaps off the crashed Nemagorian and decapitates the ruler of hell. The Sisters of the Succubi join together and form a massive power beam shooting Mawren out of the sky. Vecsop plunges from the sky and severs Mest Pog into two halves with her powerful bite. The Sisters and the two injured hell hounds scatter into the hills. Wixle uses the gem to partially heal the dragons and they return to Xon.

At the Hall of Books, they are surprised to see Tobias with Rye. It turns out that Tobias and Rye also dreamed of going south to live near the Lowry Sand Dunes. In the morning, Vecsop takes Mask, Yarrow, Wixle, Tobias and Rye south to live out their dream. They end up at a place with a sign that says, "Supper at the Scupper," an old boat that's been converted into a pub. They joke and make fun of each other. When a scuffle breaks out at the bar, Tobias walks

over to investigate. There, he sees the floating sword and the berserker with the braided beard—the one who killed his brother. Tobias taps him on the shoulder.