

The Little Creative Interview
with Maxwell Alexander Drake

Let's Meet...

Maxwell Alexander Drake

Maxwell Alexander Drake is the Lead Fiction Writer for Sony Online Entertainment's newest Massively Multiplayer Online Role playing Game - EverQuest Next! EverQuest is one of the oldest MMO franchises in the world. Drake's Genesis of Oblivion Saga is an epic fantasy saga that has won multiple awards including the 2009 Moonbeam Young Adult Fantasy Award Winner for Excellence in Literature and the Dragonroots Magazine Best New Fantasy Saga of 2009 Award Winner. Drake also teaches Creative Writing at writers conferences and fan conventions, including the 2014 San Diego COMIC-CON, where I was lucky enough to attend.

1) When did you first begin expressing yourself creatively and how?

I have always been a teller of tales, even as a child. I love creating stories in my head, and sharing them with others. As an only child, my imagination was my best friend most days. I wrote my first book, *The Warlords Dust*, when I was twelve. It is a wonderful story of a group of adventures heading into a magically destroyed land to discover the cause. The world will never see it because... well... it was written by a twelve-year-old, and it's not all that good.

2) From where do you draw inspiration for your work?

Everywhere. More now than ever, I find my mind taking in weird details as life happens around me, mulling them over, and storing them for future use. I can't shut it off, no matter how I try. Playing video games, watching movies and TV, reading... everything feeds my imagination, and I never know where the next spark of an idea will come from.

3) What work are you currently most proud of?

I get asked this a lot, and my answer is always the same: I am happy only with the project I am currently writing, everything else is just garbage! One of my flaws is that I am a very driven, very self-critical individual. So, while everything I have ever published is running around a 4.5 out of 5 stars, and I have won a few awards on past projects, when I re-read anything of mine, all I can see are the flaws, and all the areas I could have done better. I study grammar every day, and I am continuously pushing myself to learn more of my craft. Which is great for my stories, because it means that with each, I am a better writer, better crafter of grammar, better story teller than I was with the last. It just makes it really hard for me to appreciate anything I have done in the past.

4) What advice would you give to others about the creative side of what you do?

This industry has a 99.9% failure rate. I feel the reason for this is that most who fail do not realize two things. One: whatever skill you think you have, it's not good enough. Creative writing is NOT the same language as we speak. Creative writing is also not a talent, it's a skill. As with all skills, it takes 10,000 hours to become a professional. So, the first thing people need to grasp is that their first book is just a practice run. Learn from it, but throw it away. Same with their second, third, and probably fourth. Don't get hung up on them, just learn from them, grow, and get better at the craft before you even worry with "breaking into the industry." Two: this is not a sprint, it's a long-distance run. It takes an average of thirteen years to become an over-night success. Translation: you have to bust your hump writing for an average of thirteen years, without any financial gain or notoriety, before anyone will even recognize you as a professional writer. And most people can't stomach that kind of commitment. They try once, perhaps twice, then quit because they did not hit it rich fast enough. And if you've been paying attention, you will see that both of those pieces of advice tie in together.

5) What advice would you give to others about the business side of what you do?

Be open and constantly on the lookout for opportunities, you never know what one random meeting with the right person will lead to. Be grateful and humble, a writer's attitude has a huge impact on their success – both to those who pay you for work, and to those who purchase said work. And, always read your contract thoroughly.

Maxwell Alexander Drake

www.maxwellalexanderdrake.com

Lead Fiction Writer for

Sony's EverQuest Next

<https://www.everquestnext.com/media?category=ebook>

Author of the award-winning

Genesis of Oblivion Saga

www.genesisofoblivionsaga.com