



This Thing Of Darkness by Allan Batchelder.

History tells us that William Shakespeare died in April of 1616.

Or did he?

What if the "William Kemp" who set sail from England for the New World in April of 1619 was actually the bard in disguise?

How would he adjust to life in the Virginia Colony? How would he interact with the Powhatans?

And what if he was forced to do battle with a monster out of legend?

This is the story of Shakespeare's second life.

Review by C.T. Top Contributor: Star Trek. 5.0 out of 5 Stars. William Shakespeare, frontiersman.

Reviewed in the United States on May 3, 2022-Verified Purchase

THIS THING OF DARKNESS by Allan Batchelder is a high concept novel if I've ever heard one: What if William Shakespeare faked his death and tried to make a new life in Jamestown? It's an interesting promise that I am arguably spoiling a bit of a reveal but is the chief reason to pick up this fascinating novel.

Its title and events certainly give this the appearance of a horror novel but it also works very well as a character study. I am happy to recommend it without further bringing any elements of its plot in on the basis of its research and authenticity of human feeling. Which is not something I normally say about a monster stalking a bunch of English settlers.

The premise, as quirky as it may be, is something that is grounded by "William Kemp" whose true identity is something that the story eases into but leaves plenty of clues to from the beginning. William has his reasons for wanting to fake his death and flee England that we gradually discover through the judicious use of flashbacks but the point is that he is not someone who easily fits into the ranks of the new colony.

Partially due to the reasons that he fled, partially due to his high intellect, his irreligiosity (mostly expressed in a lack of interest in regular churchgoing--a horrible offense then), and his fear of being discovered, he lives at the edge of the community. He makes association with other outcasts, though, and forms his own little community that leaves him content for a time.

There is something out there in the woods, though, and William's imagination draws parallels between Grendel and his own Caliban, especially when signs that it's a kind of cannibalistic monster. Is it a werewolf, 16th century serial killer, troll, or something wholly new? The locals, as you can imagine, are quick to blame the local Powhatan. Even William is skeptical of his own mind at work when he notes that a perhaps more likely explanation is some of the released criminals at work in the colony combined with the victims' bodies being feasted on by animals' postmortem.

If I were to make an odd comparison, this reminds me a bit of the John Cusack Edgar Allan Poe movie, *The Raven*, except much better. That movie suffered from making its titular celebrity the center of the murders as well as forced into their investigation. Here William is a reluctant detective and doesn't have any skill at it but is moved by the fact it personally threatens him as well as those people he cares about. I appreciate all the effort Allan Batchelder takes to humanizing the Bard with his regrets over his failed marriage, relationship with a prostitute named Luca, and the jokes of plagiarism made about him.

This is the rare book I state is just extremely good from start to finish and is one that benefits extremely from its prose. While not William Shakespeare himself, he manages to create a believable enough man that could theoretically come up with England's greatest plays. A somewhat roguish man but never so much as to be unbelievable for the time period. A somewhat darker and more morose version of *SHAKESPEARE IN LOVE*'s take on the Bard perhaps. The supporting cast is solid too and I cared enough about them to want to see whether they became monster chow.

Highly recommended.

Product Details:

Paperback: 224 Pages

Publisher: Macabre Ink (May 3, 2022)

Language: English

Fiction (Literary)

Amazon Print:

https://www.amazon.com/This-Thing-Darkness-Allan-Batchelder/dp/1637898274/ref=tmm_pap_swatch_0?_encoding=UTF8&qid=1652030605&sr=8-1

Kindle:

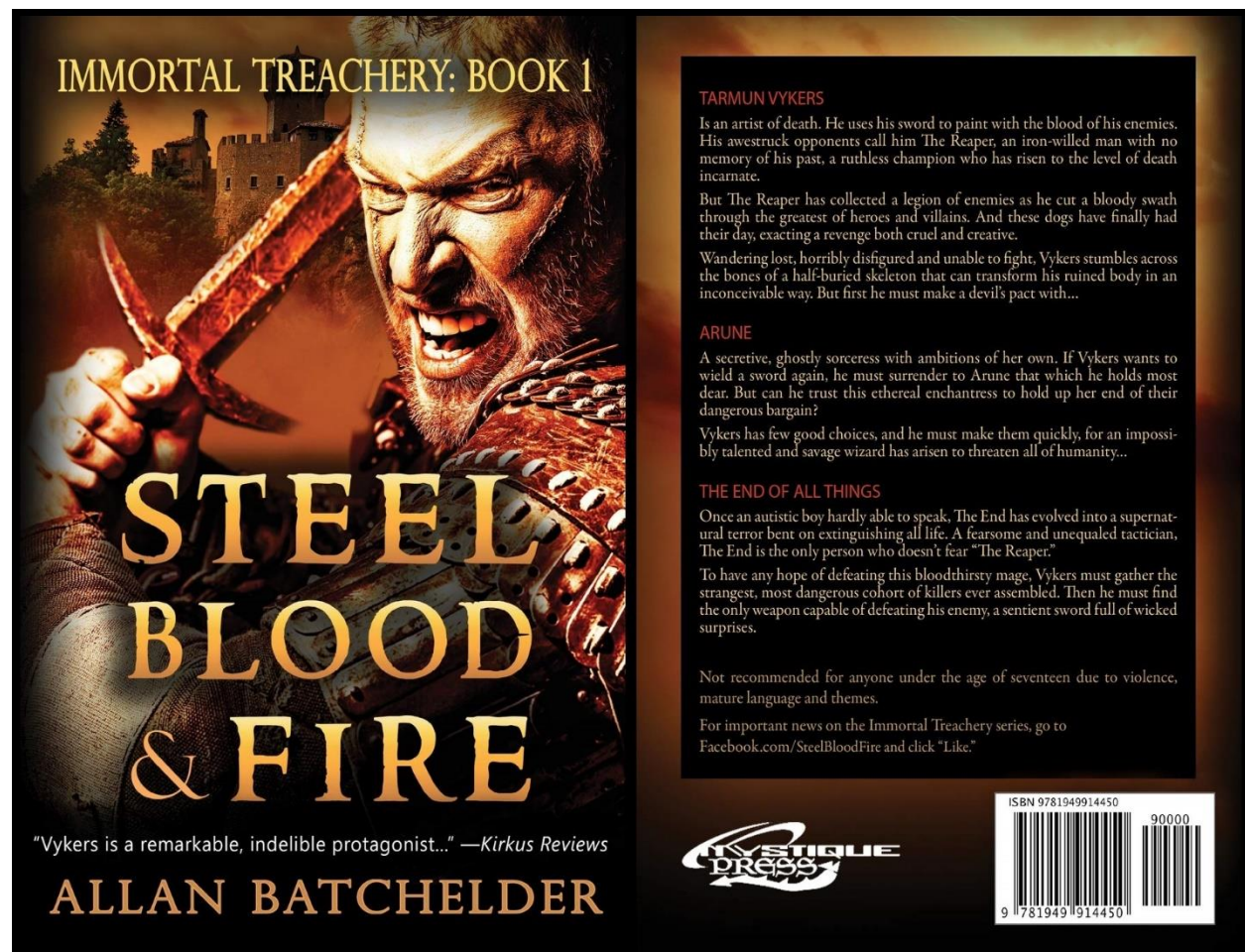
https://www.amazon.com/This-Thing-Darkness-Allan-Batchelder-ebook/dp/B09QC4S5VQ/ref=tmm_kin_swatch_0?encoding=UTF8&qid=1652030605&sr=8-1

Audiobook:

https://www.amazon.com/Audible-This-Thing-of-Darkness/dp/B09YVPNJ6G/ref=tmm_aud_swatch_0?encoding=UTF8&qid=1652030605&sr=8-1

Ratings:

https://www.amazon.com/This-Thing-Darkness-Allan-Batchelder/dp/1637898274/ref=tmm_pap_swatch_0?encoding=UTF8&qid=1652030605&sr=8-1#customerReviews



Steel, Blood & Fire by Allan Batchelder.

Immortal Treachery Book 1.

TARMUN VYKERS: His awestruck opponents call him The Reaper, an iron-willed man with no memory of his past, a ruthless champion who has risen to the level of death incarnate.

But The Reaper has collected a legion of enemies as he cut a bloody swath through the greatest of heroes and villains. And these dogs have finally had their day, exacting a revenge both cruel and creative.

Wandering lost, horribly disfigured, and unable to fight, Vykers stumbles across the bones of a half-buried skeleton that can transform his ruined body in an inconceivable way. But first he must make a devil's pact with...

ARUNE: A secretive, ghostly sorceress with ambitions of her own. If Vykers wants to wield a sword again, he must surrender to Arune that which he holds most dear. But can he trust this ethereal enchantress to hold up her end of their dangerous bargain?

Vykers has few good choices, and he must make them quickly, for an impossibly talented and savage wizard has arisen to threaten all of humanity...

THE END OF ALL THINGS: Once an autistic boy hardly able to speak, The End has evolved into a supernatural terror bent on extinguishing all life. A fearsome and unequalled tactician, The End is the only person who doesn't fear "The Reaper."

To have any hope of defeating this bloodthirsty mage, Vykers must gather the strangest, most dangerous cohort of killers ever assembled. Then he must seek out the only weapon that can defeat this terrible adversary...

THE EPIC BATTLE: Behold the greatest clash of men, monsters, and Fey that the kingdom has ever known. Vykers, at the head of his outnumbered contingent, launches a desperate attack against The End, with the fate of the world hanging in the balance.

But The End is a creature worthy of his name. He has forged a secret weapon, a wicked and terrible instrument that will break through Vykers' defenses and exact a devastating toll.

Only one thing is certain, this extraordinary battle will end in a way that no one could have predicted!

Are you a fan of: Grimdark, Joe Abercrombie's First Law series, Steven Erikson's The Malazan Book of the Fallen, Glen Cook's Chronicles of the Black Company, or Patrick Rothfuss' Kingkiller Chronicle? If so, grab your copy of Steel, Blood & Fire now!



5 Stars: This book has a very well thought out plot engaging the reader in unexpected twists and turns including love stories and epic battle scenes involving twenty-four well developed characters.

Steel, Blood & Fires opens with unspeakable violence as Tarmun Vykers, A.K.A, “the Reaper” a legendary warrior is in the stocks (in bonds, under guard). One must be warned that this is a work of dark fantasy, horror and mythology with adult language and graphic violence.

Author Allan Batchelder has done very well laying out this book with easy-to-follow headings (much like the way a play production might be laid out). The story pivots back and forth from what is happening with his main characters: the legendary warrior named Tarmun Vykers, Aoife Cestroenyn (An A’Shea or “Mender,” sister of Anders), D’Kem (a washed-up Burner), Janks & Company, Long, A.K.A, Long Pete, Spirk Nessno (An idiot and friend to Long), Anders Cestroenyn (the self-proclaimed “End-of-All-Things) and Arune (A spectral Burner who shares Vykers’ body).

I would like to share a quote from this book that will help draw you in without spoiling the story. This quote come from one of the chapter four headings titled ‘The End, On the March’.

...After seeing his general off, Anders climbed a small hillock and surveyed his host. What they lacked in training and skill, they more than made up for in numbers and ferocity. Either his magic had worked especially well upon his unwilling draftees, or humans were all more savage than they cared to admit. Looking out upon them, he saw them huddled in large, teeming masses around myriad bonfires. They were always ravenous for food, of course, but also for sex and violence. The End-of-All-Things would be happy to destroy them all, once they had served their purpose.

...Pivoting to his left, he held out his arms and a slave laid the infant into them. It was a funny looking thing, this child. And would get funnier still, by the time Anders was through with it. He had decided, after some thought, that it was time he created something for a change. He would be the end of all things presently in existence, but this child would be the first of his new race, beings made specially to serve and obey him. Worship would not be required, as he felt he would probably kill large numbers of them whenever he got bored. Perhaps he should also create a competing race and pit them against one another!”

A must read for those who want to remain on the edge of your seat.

Editorial Review (Book Marketing Global Network).

Product Details:

Paperback: 438 Pages

Publication Date: December 15, 2018

Publisher: Mystique Press

Language: English

Fantasy (Epic “Grimdark”)

Fantasy (Dark)

Amazon Print:

https://www.amazon.com/Steel-Blood-Fire-Immortal-Treachery/dp/1949914453/ref=tmm_pap_swatch_0?_encoding=UTF8&qid=&sr=

Kindle:

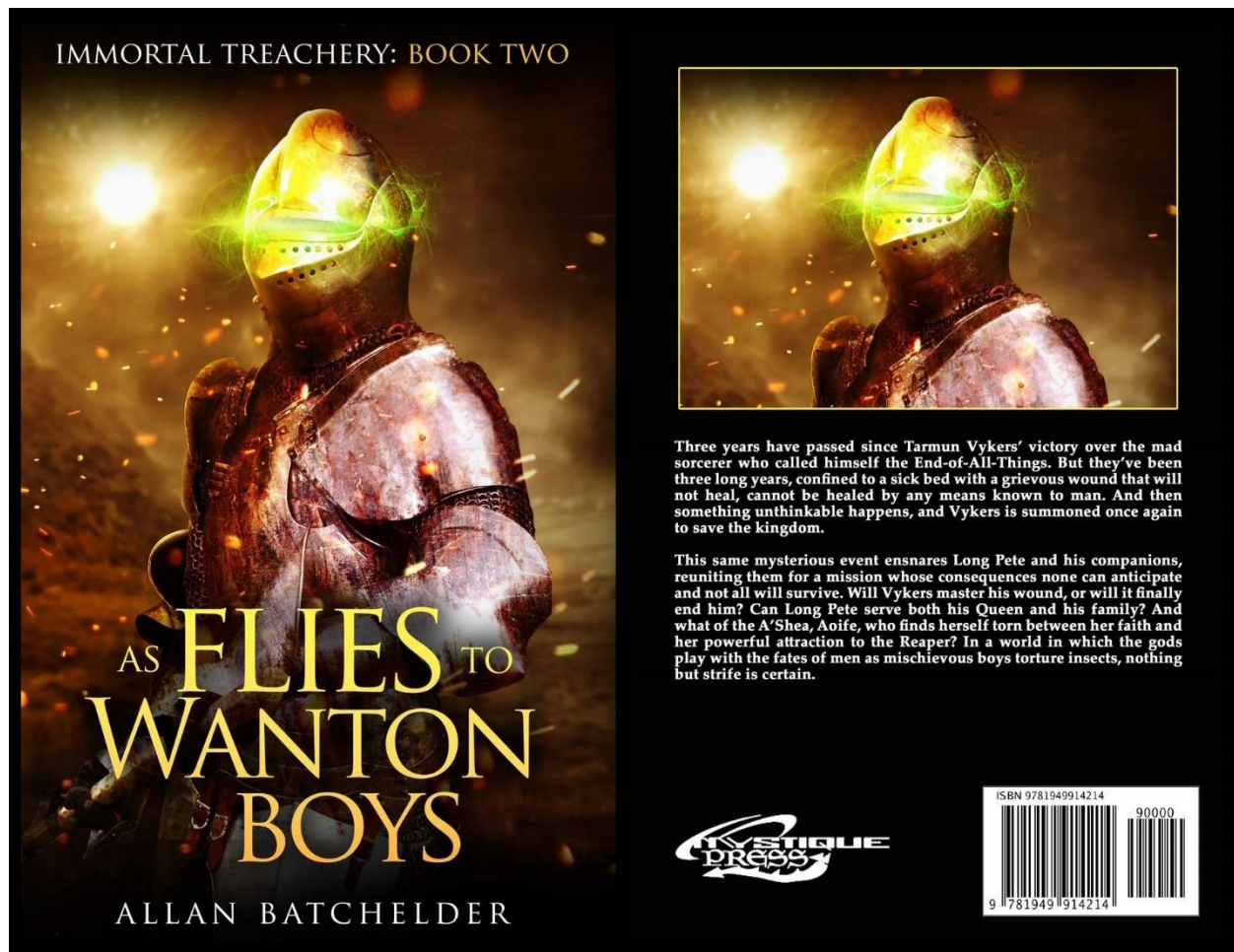
https://www.amazon.com/Steel-Blood-Fire-Immortal-Treachery-ebook/dp/B07LDL9PWD/ref=tmm_kin_swatch_0?encoding=UTF8&qid=&sr=

Audiobook:

https://www.amazon.com/Steel-Blood-and-Fire-audiobook/dp/B07RBSH9CX/ref=tmm_aud_swatch_0?encoding=UTF8&qid=&sr=

Ratings:

https://www.amazon.com/Steel-Blood-Fire-Immortal-Treachery/dp/1949914453/ref=tmm_pap_swatch_0?encoding=UTF8&qid=&sr=#customerReviews



As Flies To Wanton Boys by Allan Batchelder.

Immortal Treachery Book 2.

Three years have passed since Tarmun Vykers' victory over the mad sorcerer who called himself the End-of-All-Things. But they've been three long years, confined to a sick bed with a grievous wound that will not heal, cannot be healed by any means known to man. And then something unthinkable happens, and Vykers is summoned once again to save the kingdom.

This same mysterious event ensnares Long Pete and his companions, reuniting them for a mission whose consequences none can anticipate and not all will survive. Will Vykers master his wound, or will it finally end him? Can Long Pete serve both his Queen and his family? And what of the A'Shea, Aoife, who finds herself torn between her faith and her powerful attraction to the Reaper? In a world in which the gods play with the fates of men as mischievous boys torture insects, nothing but strife is certain.

Product Details:

Print Length: 553 Pages

Publication Date: December 15, 2018

Publisher: Crossroad Press

Language: English

Fantasy (Epic "Grimdark")

Fantasy (Dark)

Amazon Print:

https://www.amazon.com/Flies-Wanton-Boys-Immortal-Treachery/dp/1949914216/ref=tmm_pap_swatch_0?_encoding=UTF8&qid=&sr=

Kindle:

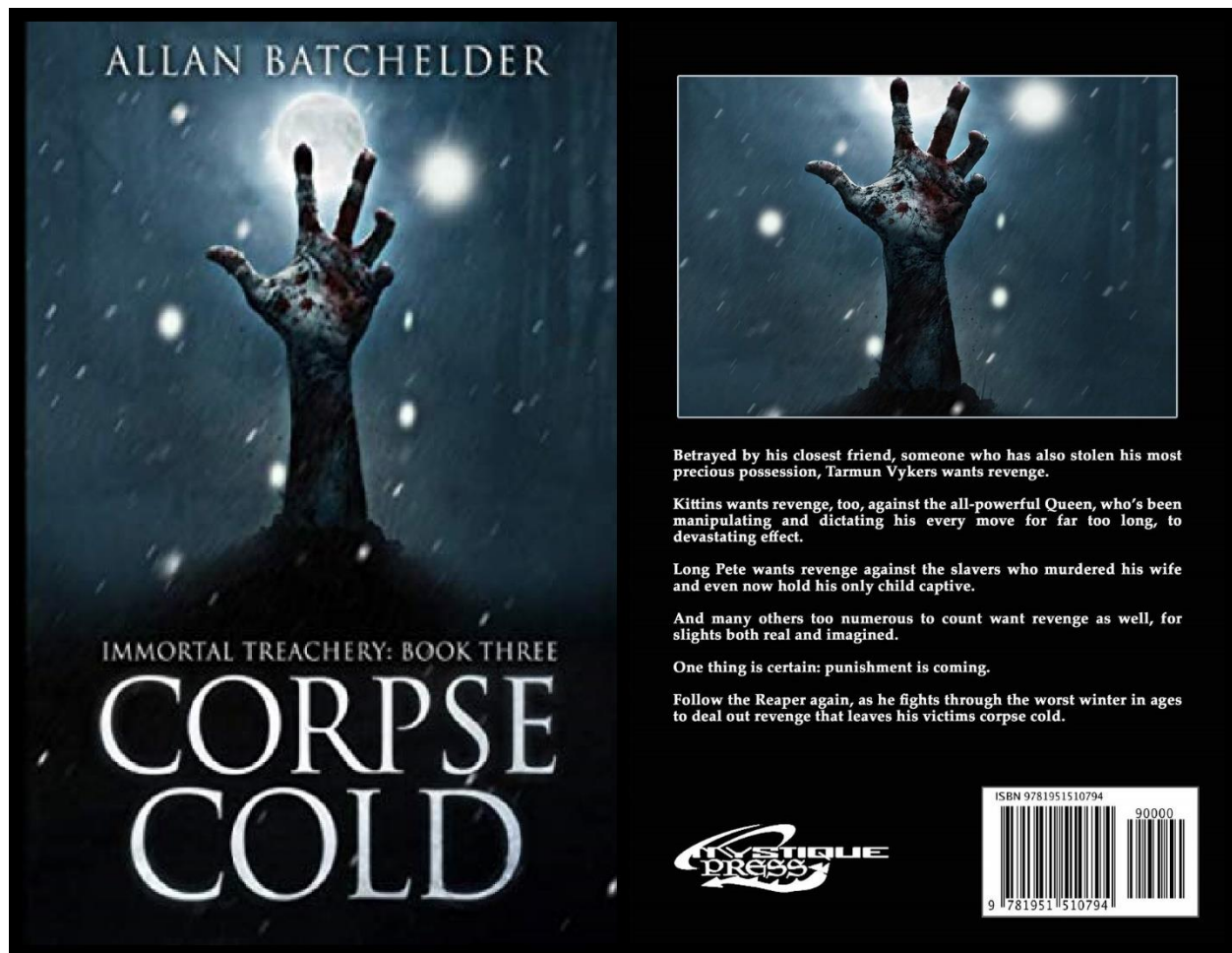
https://www.amazon.com/Flies-Wanton-Boys-Immortal-Treachery-ebook/dp/B07LDLQBW3/ref=tmm_kin_swatch_0?_encoding=UTF8&qid=&sr=

Audio Book:

https://www.amazon.com/As-Flies-Wanton-Boys-Treachery/dp/B08QDNKKJF/ref=tmm_aud_swatch_0?_encoding=UTF8&qid=&sr=

Ratings:

https://www.amazon.com/Flies-Wanton-Boys-Immortal-Treachery/dp/1949914216/ref=tmm_pap_swatch_0?_encoding=UTF8&qid=&sr=#customerReviews



Corpse Cold by Allan Batchelder.

Immortal Treachery Book 3.

Betrayed by his closest friend, someone who has also stolen his most precious possession, Tarmun Vykers wants revenge.

Kittins wants revenge, too, against the all-powerful Queen, who's been manipulating and dictating his every move for far too long, to devastating effect.

Long Pete wants revenge against the slavers who murdered his wife and even now hold his only child captive.

And many others too numerous to count want revenge as well, for slights both real and imagined.

One thing is certain: punishment is coming.

Follow the Reaper again, as he fights through the worst winter in ages to deal out revenge that leaves his victims corpse cold.

Product Details:

Print Length: 392 Pages

Publication Date: December 15, 2018

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Language: English

Fantasy (Epic "Grimdark")

Fantasy (Dark)

Amazon Print:

https://www.amazon.com/Corpse-Immortal-Treachery-Allan-Batchelder/dp/1951510798/ref=tmm_pap_swatch_0?encoding=UTF8&qid=&sr=

Kindle:

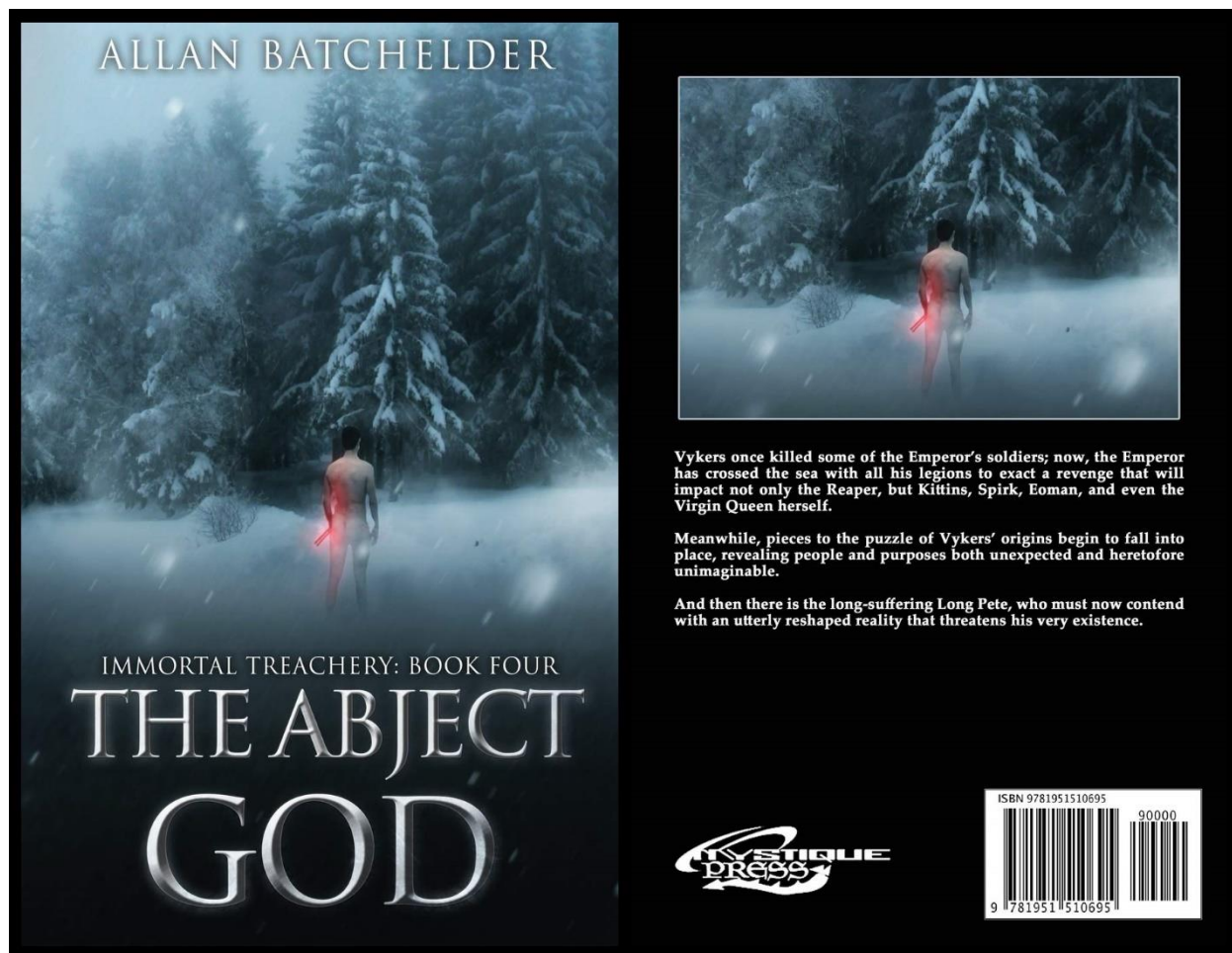
https://www.amazon.com/gp/product/B07LDLDNRM/ref=dbs_a_def_rwt_hsch_vapi_tkin_p1_i4

Audio Book:

https://www.amazon.com/Corpse-Cold-Immortal-Treachery/dp/B0916JSZ27/ref=tmm_aud_swatch_0?encoding=UTF8&qid=&sr=

Ratings:

https://www.amazon.com/Corpse-Immortal-Treachery-Allan-Batchelder/dp/1951510798/ref=tmm_pap_swatch_0?encoding=UTF8&qid=&sr=#customerReviews



The Abject God by Allan Batchelder.

Immortal Treachery Book 4.

Vykers once killed some of the Emperor's soldiers; now, the Emperor has crossed the sea with all his legions to exact a revenge that will impact not only the Reaper, but Kittins, Spirk, Eoman, and even the Virgin Queen herself.

Meanwhile, pieces to the puzzle of Vykers' origins begin to fall into place, revealing people and purposes both unexpected and heretofore unimaginable. And then there is the long-suffering Long Pete, who must now contend with an utterly reshaped reality that threatens his very existence.

Product Details:

Print Length: 403 Pages

Publication Date: December 15, 2018

Publisher: Crossroad Press

Language: English

Fantasy (Epic "Grimdark")

Fantasy (Dark)

Amazon Print:

https://www.amazon.com/Abject-God-Immortal-Treachery/dp/1951510690/ref=tmm_pap_swatch_0?encoding=UTF8&qid=&sr=

Kindle:

https://www.amazon.com/gp/product/B07LDLTKFS/ref=dbs_a_def_rwt_hsch_vapi_tkin_p1_i0

Audio Book:

https://www.amazon.com/Abject-God-Immortal-Treachery-Book/dp/B0973DC3VX/ref=tmm_aud_swatch_0?encoding=UTF8&qid=&sr=

Ratings:

https://www.amazon.com/Abject-God-Immortal-Treachery/dp/1951510690/ref=tmm_pap_swatch_0?encoding=UTF8&qid=&sr=#customerReviews



The End of All Things by Allan Batchelder.

Immortal Treachery Book 5.

Tarmun Vykers, the Reaper, has battled his way across time and two continents, toppling kingdoms and empires alike and killing untold thousands in the process. And he has never really known why.

But he's about to find out.

And with this new knowledge must come a reckoning—with the Queen, who has manipulated Vykers every step of the way, with the Emperor, who would take what is rightfully the Reaper's, and even with the gods themselves.

It is time for the Reaper to do what he does best.

Product Details:

Print Length: 457 Pages

Publication Date: October 30, 2019

Publisher: Crossroad Press

Language: English

Fantasy (Epic "Grimdark")

Fantasy (Dark)

Amazon Print:

https://www.amazon.com/End-All-Things-Immortal-Treachery/dp/1952979595/ref=tmm_pap_swatch_0?encoding=UTF8&qid=1602529251&sr=1-1

Kindle:

https://www.amazon.com/End-Things-Immortal-Treachery-Book-ebook/dp/B07ZTR3K6Y/ref=sr_1_1?dchild=1&keywords=The+End+of+All+Things+by+Allan+Batchelder&qid=1602529251&s=books&sr=1-1

Ratings:

https://www.amazon.com/End-All-Things-Immortal-Treachery/dp/1952979595/ref=tmm_pap_swatch_0?encoding=UTF8&qid=1602529251&sr=1-1#customerReviews



About Allan Batchelder: Allan is a professional actor, educator and former stand-up comedian. In addition to Steel, Blood & Fire, As Flies to Wanton Boys and Corpse Cold, he's also written plays, screenplays, online articles, dialogue for computer games, greeting card sentiments and more.

Steel, Blood & Fire has been praised by Kirkus, Midwest Book Review and Fantascize.com. Allan holds a Master of Fine Arts in acting from the National Theatre Conservatory and a Master's in Teaching from Seattle Pacific University. He is a huge fan of Shakespeare, Steven Erikson, Joe Abercrombie, Glen Cook, George R.R. Martin, Tad Williams, and R. Scott Bakker.

Allan lives in Seattle with his wife and son, where he enjoys walks on the beach, reading in the garden and puttering around on his computer. Oh, and naps. He LOVES naps. In fact, he's probably taking one right now.



Amazon Author's Page:

https://www.amazon.com/Allan-Batchelder/e/B00AXP2EKQ/ref=sr_ntt_srch_lnk_1?qid=1496859326&sr=8-1

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<http://www.immortaltreachery.com>

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<http://www.facebook.com/steelbloodfire>

Twitter:

<http://www.twitter.com/TarmunVykers>

Author's Page At Book Marketing Global Network:

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