

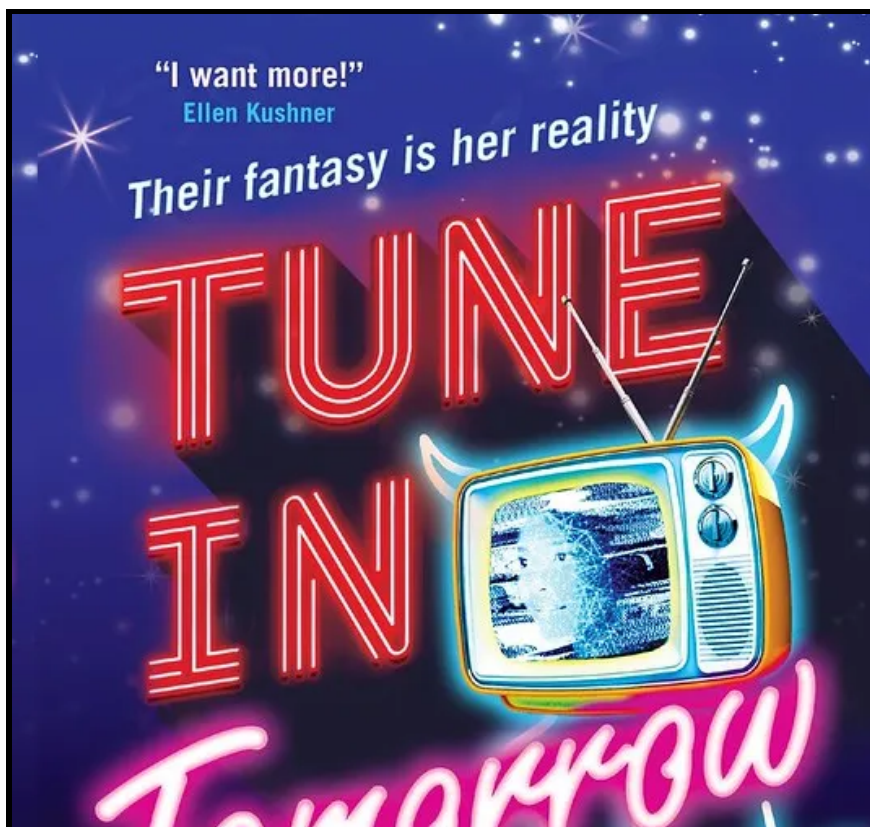
Whatever

FURIOUSLY REASONABLE

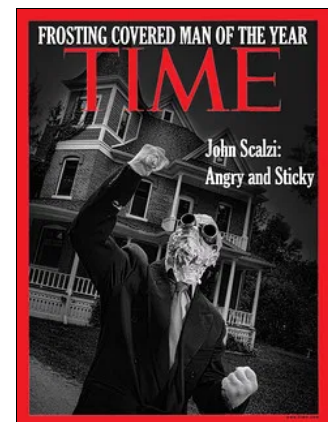
The Big Idea: Randee Dawn

Posted on August 26, 2022 Posted by John Scalzi 1

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WHATEVER



Taunting the tauntable
since 1998

John Scalzi, proprietor
– JS

Athena Scalzi,
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About the site

Whatever Days



Life is short... but TV is forever. Author Randee Dawn plays with a fantastical variant of this sentiment with her new novel ***Tune In Tomorrow***.

RANDEE DAWN:

Who wants to live forever?

One great thrill we get from writing and reading fantasy, science fiction or even horror is about imagining creating and watching creatures who toy with mortality. Ancient demons, immortal gods, fae with unknown lifespans, potions that turn back the clock. We're fascinated with tweaking time – and simultaneously terrified by it.

Time weighs on me now more than it did in my 20s or 30s; there are more “never gonna do that” listings in my bucket list column than there used to be. Mostly because there's no time. My body tells me that. My patience is shorter, my attention span shifted. I get cranky at things that waste my time, because they feel like theft.

When I first started writing *Tune in Tomorrow*, a book that

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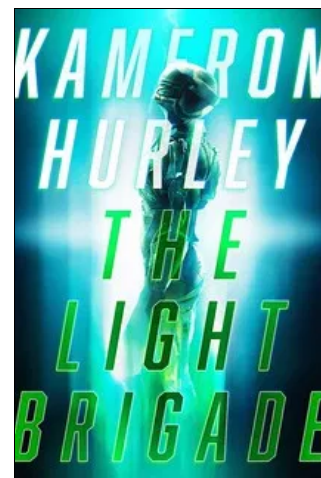
The Big Idea

muses on what a reality TV show/soap opera created by mythical creatures, for mythical creatures – but starring humans – would look like, I confess that I didn't give *the nature of time* much thought. After all, *Tune*'s a funny book (if I've done it right) full of slapstick, puns and backstage shenanigans. I'm an entertainment journalist and trust me, I've seen some stuff.

But time was always part of the story. The title even harks back to classic cliffhangers soaps relied on, suggesting the answers you crave will all be there if you tune in ... tomorrow. Many soap actors devote their careers to one character, one show. So what would it be like to work among creatures who live for hundreds, if not thousands, of years – who'd want you, a puny human actor, to stick around longer than their molting cycle? What would it like for them to confer a “prize” (an “Endless Award,” in the book) for your talent that gave you immortality – so long as you were employed on the show?

Weirdness would ensue, to say the least.

In one way, it's an ideal solution to the conundrum of never being able to die: immortality, but conditional. Exit when you're ready (in my world, you don't turn into a heap of dust with all your years accruing at once) and live as long as you want. After all, immortality ranks up there with almost everybody's top three super wishes (right after flying and invisibility). You could do All! The! Things! You could invest your money wisely and spend hundreds of years tending your portfolio. You'd be wealthy and ... forever young. Or young-ish.



What's the Big Idea?

Authors explaining the big ideas behind their latest works, in their own words. See the latest Big Ideas!

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About

A Brief Biography of John Scalzi

Availability for

But I wanted to explore what this would feel like beyond a thought experiment. Long life is a double-edged sword, something people my age are only starting to comprehend. We've already read the moaning and groaning of creatures like vampires, who're purely exhausted with all the chasing down of victims, the sameness of meals every day. Anne Rice's *Interview with the Vampire* got it right – it takes stamina to be a bloodsucker decade after unending decade, until Buffy catches up with you.

For humans, this is exponentially more horrifying. Mortality introduces stakes to a life (not wooden stakes, we've moved on from vampires now), while immortality removes them. Like a river you've stepped out of, the world moves on without you. Loved ones and friends die. Politics, entertainment, culture, medicine – everything goes on, while you stay fixed in place. Actors in the book stop going back to the “real” world on the other side of the Veil, living full time on sets and in dressing rooms, with the occasional jaunt to protected areas of the fae world. Meanwhile, the real world becomes its own alien landscape, made all the more so because they no longer participate in it. They're like *Severance*'s “innies” – cut off from anything but their jobs.

I feel this pain, now that the car I'm driving has crested the hill of middle age and is heading faster and faster toward ... well, you know. There's a line from *The Breakfast Club* that used to make me well up like a baby when I watched it as a teenager: “When you grow up, your heart dies.” Tragic! Unfeeling adults, lazy and comfortable! Yet that's not it – as I understand now, it's not that your heart dies, but you become less relevant to the world even as you live in it.

Interviews, Appearances,
Writing Work and
Optioning Existing Work
Books and Other Projects
by John Scalzi

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Whatever Everyone Else is Saying

mearsk on Universal
Yums: August 2022
Review

Kerstin Ludwig on The
Big Idea: Randee Dawn

Granny Roberta on
Universal Yums:
August 2022 Review

Everyone on TV feels like they could be your kids' or your grandkids' age. The soundtrack of the zeitgeist – Muzak, music in movies, lyrics – is not *your* music. Technology advances come and go so fast they're like quicksilver in your fingers. And then you learn that three of the four *Golden Girls* were in their late 40s or early 50s on the show. You're behind the times, not ahead or even in the middle of them.

The world moves on.

It takes more effort to remain in touch these days. It's tempting to stay in my own version of a dressing room, to withdraw and engage. To understand only the things I already know and say "enough." To stop listening to new songs or watch new movies. So I actively push back. I listen to Billie Eilish (who's already mainstream). I think about what it's like to grow up as *this* generation, in *this* version of the world. I try to taste the world as it is, not as I want it to be, so I won't get stuck. So my heart won't die.

One character in *Tune in Tomorrow* is terrified of losing their position on the show, and that fear makes them do terrible things. To be thrown out into the cold, into the "real" world, is a horror that justifies them doing anything to protect their station. But it's not sustainable. Something has to change. It may take a newcomer, a rising star to upend the way "forever" has always worked.

Because the way "forever" has always been, doesn't have to be ... forever.

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Tune in Tomorrow: The Curious, Calamitous, Cockamamie Story Of Starr Weatherby And The Greatest Mythic Reality Show Ever: Amazon|Barnes & Noble|Indiebound|Powell's

Visit the author's [website](#). Follow her on [Twitter](#).

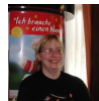
Category: **Big Idea**

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1 Comments on “The Big Idea: Randee Dawn”

Kerstin Ludwig

August 26, 2022, 10:27 am



I do not think that “live forever” is a thoilught through concept

We're talking of billions of years.

The future of our sun is set. She will grow, as her fuel gets burned up, swallow the inner planets up to Mars and then collapse to a white dwarf.

How is it to live through that? First walking over a burning planet, over rivers of lava, no home, just a barren burning world, seeing the sun growing day by day and eventually engulfed in flames, suffocating because there is no oxygen anymore.

And then you either get swallowed into the white dwarf, with its intrnse gravity, to burn trillions of

Quantick

Whatever Just Happened

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years more.

Eventually, the white dwarf flickers to a black dwarf.... and with the proton decay eventually you get released. Just to fall free without any direction, any light in eternal darkness until the universe freezes to death.

If hell has a blueprint, it is "living forever"

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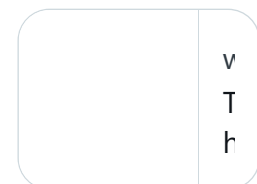
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· 20m

Folks! I am a *big idea* today! (Or at least "Tune in Tomorrow" is.) Thanks to @scalzi for loaning me his Big Idea platform to talk about "Tune"-ing in on whether immortality is a curse, a blessing -- or both. [#BigIdea](#) [#fantasy](#) [#BookTwitter](#) [whatever.scalzi.com/2022/08/26/the...](#)



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· 43m

Happy International Dog Day.

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