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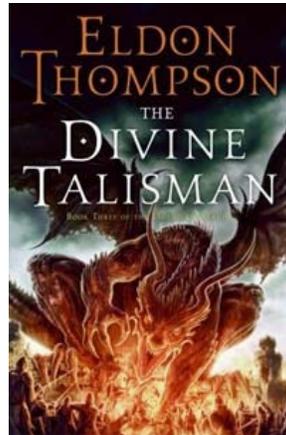
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December 5, 2008

eldon thompson, five questions, interviews

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Five Questions: Eldon Thompson



[Eldon Thompson](#) is easily the biggest author I know—literally! The man is a lean tank, all muscle and SoCal tan. Women at conventions turn their heads when he walks by.

I hate him for that.

Thankfully, he is a gentle, kind author. Otherwise he could control every convention panel with a look!

I've known Eldon for 11 or 12 years. When I originally began the dedication website to Terry Brooks that would eventually become the official site, Eldon wrote me asking if I knew how to contact Terry for a screenplay project. I didn't then, of course, but Eldon

and I remained friends anyway. Now, after all of these years, Eldon has sold that screenplay to Warner Bros. for a live-action movie of Brooks' **The Elfstones of Shannara** and Eldon has gone on to publish three fantasy novels—**The Crimson Sword**, **The Obsidian Key** and **The Divine Talisman**.

Below is *Five Questions with Eldon Thompson*. Enjoy!

Suvudu: When did you start writing? Why do you write?

Eldon Thompson: I first remember dreaming up stories at the age of 4. I specifically recall asking my dad to teach me to read so that I could begin writing these stories down. I write for a lot of reasons, but mostly because the "voices" tell me to. (They get rather obnoxious when I try to ignore them.) When I'm not writing, I tend to talk the ears off of anyone who will listen... so I guess you could say I'm trying to be courteous to others by keeping my thoughts busy.

S: Describe your writing day? How many words/pages do you write a day on average? Breaks? How much time do you spend editing and how do you go about it?

ET: I do my best to write first thing in the morning, before real life has a chance to get in the way. I'll generally get in a good 2 or 3 hours before my brain turns to slush, at which point I head to the gym to get the blood moving again. Afterward, I'll sit down for another 2 or 3 hours before (again) my brain turns to slush. Time permitting, I'll eat dinner, check email, and attend to other such tasks that I've already put off for too long, then go to bed thinking about tomorrow's scene. I aim for anywhere between 1500-2000 words a day, beginning each morning with an editorial review of whatever I wrote the day before. At the end of the week, I'll take a day in which I won't write anything new, but simply read through the entirety of the week's work. I find that this pattern of "editing as I go" helps me to better keep track of where I am in the story, and provides for a cleaner first draft.

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S: How many books did you write before you signed your first book contract? How did you get that contract? Via agent? Industry friend? Writer's retreat? Slushpile? Other?

ET: I've lost count of the number of manuscripts I wrote and discarded before being granted a book contract. To this day, I can't really tell you what my agent or editor was thinking when they gave me that opportunity. I hope it wasn't merely drug-induced. I did spend many years educating myself through college courses and writers' conferences, making friends along the way who later served as professional references. And when it came time to seek an agent, I did my homework in order to find one who I felt would be receptive at that time to my type of work. I could say a lot more about what I went through on the road to publication, but it's difficult to do so without sounding discouraging to other aspiring writers. There's got to be an easier way, and I hope they find it.

S: What advice would you give beginning writers? What is the best way to break into the industry?

ET: I've heard it said that if you can think of something to do with your life other than write, then do that instead, because professional writing is a lonely business of rejection and criticism, no matter how many books you write, awards you win, or copies you sell. Though it sounds a bit pessimistic, I'm not sure I could dispute this statement. What helped me was to put aside most thoughts of publication and the industry and to focus instead on my love of writing itself. If you can't NOT write, then you've probably got a talent worth developing. Read everything you can get your hands on, write regularly, and take educational courses if at all possible. Others will let you know when you're ready to begin reaching out to agents and editors. The only thing you truly have control over is the craft itself — which is just part of the equation when it comes to industry achievement. The rest is mostly a matter of luck and perseverance. Knock on enough doors, and one is bound to open up to you. An aspiring writer's first job, then, is to make sure that his or her work is in the best possible shape for when that opportunity presents itself.

S: What are you currently working on? When can we expect it?

ET: In addition to a number of screenwriting projects, I'm currently outlining a novel featuring Kylac Kronus, a fan-favorite character from my *Asahiel* books. When anyone can expect it depends on: (a) whenever I manage to carve out enough time to finish it, and (b) whether I can successfully blackmail my agent and editor into giving me another crack at this publishing gig. Thankfully, there's no shortage of books out there for people to read in the meantime.

You can find more about Eldon and contact him at www.EldonThompson.com!

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