



May/June 2026

Issue 1



Hello, and welcome to this inaugural edition of my bi-monthly newsletter.

I'll be using this to let everyone know how my latest works are coming on, and I will also include posts and articles from my website blog pages.

Currently, I am in the middle of updating the Forgotten Wings series, and I have a big feature on that to start with.

Don't forget to visit my [official website](#) for more posts and articles.

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You can also see a lot more of my posts and articles on my [official website](#)

Updating the Forgotten Wings series

Let me start this piece with a confession. When I wrote “My Wings be Forgotten” it was my first novel, and I had absolutely no idea of where I was going with it. Look, I did not know at all how to write a novel. The whole thing was very — sorry — novel.

So, as you can imagine, I did not properly plot it out (I generally only sketch-plot anyway, usually with an idea of where I need to end up but there was less of that even in this case) and I certainly did not know I was going to be writing a series off the back of it. The last words of the book were “And I’ll tell you all about that next time. Angel’s promise.” It was only at that point that I realised there would be a follow-up. And it was only while writing that (True Angel) that I realised there would be another.

It finally dawned on me that I had a series.

And I kept going, eventually producing six of them and completing a full draft for a (as yet never published) seventh in the series. A fair collection!



Previous edition covers of the Forgotten Wings series

I kind of run out of steam a bit at that point, unhappy with where everything seemed to be going and not seeing how to regain control of the path my characters were on. So, I switched to other projects, got lost a bit in the dark corridors of doubt and the mud of depression, and the series stayed stuck on permanent hold, even if I never meant that to happen.

I think to understand where I was at, I need to go back a step and take you a little deeper into my writing process. This involves going backward and forwards, creating links between events that help ensure that everything 'adds up' at the end. I think it is where I do the 'clever bits', and without it nothing is ever balanced up correctly.

But now I have learned the hard way that my process for single books did not work when applied to a whole series, where parts were published and 'set in stone' before the next titles

were written. Some threads subsequently forced me down paths which, given the freedom of the unpublished, I would have changed or redirected. I increasingly found that my characters wanted to develop, needed to even, in ways that I had not provided room for. And some of my subplots were running the risk of becoming overly complicated dead ends.

Yes, I admit it. Some things about Sapphira and friends I only realised years after I first published!

So, what to do about it all? Too many 'wrong' doors had been selected, and it seemed the only reasonable thing to do was to retrace my footsteps, go back and adjust things, choose better routes. But that meant taking my beloved book-babies off the shelves and making edits. Each book would have to go in for surgery, have certain points removed and new ones added.

I needed to firm up Sapphira's relationships with Mother and Father (know in simplistic terms as God and the Devil), and I also had to establish exactly who her birth mother was and how that affected her life. There were abilities of her demon form that needed to be played with (and that included more interesting sex scenes!)

The Last Titan was renamed *This Sacred Heart* as I felt the original title had become rather overused and cliched. The new title also reflects a theme being further developed by what Sapphira discovers written on a goddess' heart.

There was the cosmetic 'surgery' side too: New covers!



New edition covers of the Forgiven Wings series

But these edits still needed to amount to a tidy-up and not a complete rewrite. I wanted the original stories to still be there at the core, the words I had written to not be completely erased. I still like those words!

Edits to the earlier books were generally quite subtle. I just needed to shift the trajectories a little, and when you do that early enough on a journey, you only have to change direction a little

bit. But these course corrections would inevitably lead to bigger changes in the latter books in the series. Well, that was the main intention of it all!

And on top of that, entirely new ideas have sprung up in the intervening years, some of them reflecting how our modern world is continuously changing and challenging our ideas on what is really fantastic and what is actually now possible. Mostly though, they are created in the strangest and sometimes darkest corners of my author-brain.

The last book in the series currently drafted will be the Throne of Hades. I do not think this will be the last one, but once that is published later this year, I will be dying to get back to some of my other projects for a little while.

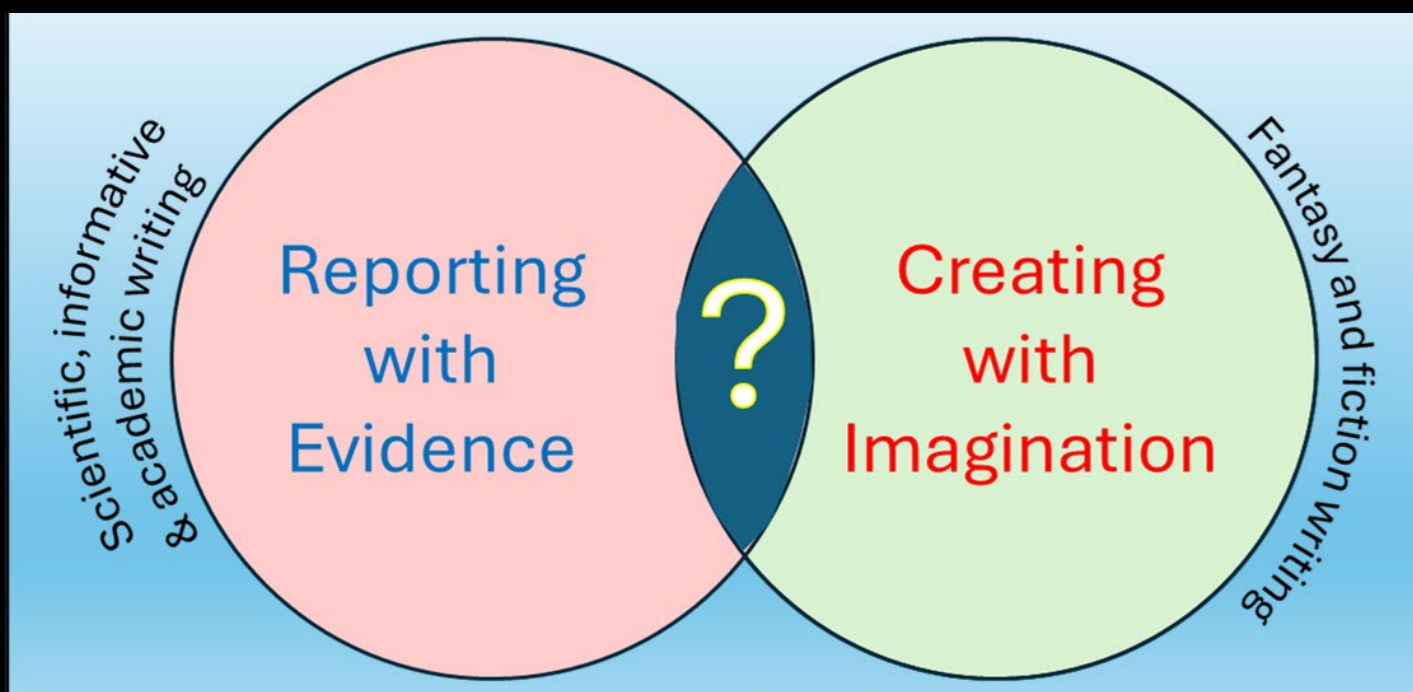
So Sapphira will continue onwards. But after all this work, she is going to be an even better version of herself.



A writer in the middle

In this article, I briefly examine what it is like to write in two entirely different worlds. On one hand, there is the creative fictional world that promises adventures and surprises. On the other, people who conduct assessments and technical design reviews need to write in a completely different way.

I am someone with a foot in both camps, and I believe there are great differences but also quite a few similarities to be considered. So, here then is my 'compare and contrast of the two writing positions.



For all of my adult life, from my first university right up to the moment that I am typing this up on my keyboard, I have been professionally positioned on the STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics) side of the fence. I even have a PhD which makes me a bit of an expert in what I do, I guess.

“What madness is this?” you ask. “Are not Alyson Madden-Brooker who tells stories about angels and demons?”

Yes, that is me too. I write fantasy, a little sci-fi, magic realism. I gleefully mix characters together to examine the illogical chemistry of love and romance.

But don't we all have different sides to our lives, different dimensions into which we stretch? Of course we do. In me it's probably a little more extreme. I am a person that does not exist only as one thing. I see myself as both an artist and a scientist, both a fantasy and a creative author (To be honest, the last time I did a full personality test the assessors went away puzzled. It was like I was two different people.)

And for decades and decades in my work I have been writing reports, performing studies, referencing evidence and trying to never veer from the real and practical. It's my 'day' job. But the other side of me, the other girl in me, needs her space and freedom too. She needs to create. And mostly, she is the far happier version of me.

So, what is the same between them?

You would think that it is a case of '*Never the twain shall meet*' the existence of two universes, one of matter and the other antimatter, and neither of these should ever touch for fear of the collapse of the known universe!

Well not quite! There are a few things that are always going to be the same. Even if they are 'differently' the same! So here is my list of what the two different worlds of writing have in common.

1. We have to write for an intended audience. There are certain norms of writing 'behaviour' that need to be adhered to. Of course, the styles are different, but we still must have a style, (though this tends to be tighter and narrower in technical report writing where personal expression and creative delivery is somewhat suppressed!)
2. There must be a narrative flow to take the reader along on a journey. There must be a beginning, a middle and an ending (albeit us 'techies' may describe it as introduction, main body and conclusion).
3. We must do our research. Oddly enough, even in the full flow of vampire attacking fantasy, we can get pulled up by not knowing the right year that a particular model of car was introduced! (I confess that I am far less rigorous in my creative writing. The world I am presenting is often how I feel it should be rather than how it is!)
4. We still agonise over the correct choice of word, grind our teeth over Oxford commas, and cry hard when the computer messes up our beautiful page format.
5. We strive for consistency. For technical writing we align with standards or make formal definitions to take forward. For creative writing, our internal universe still needs to make coherent sense, so even made-up rules of magic need to be kept to.
6. We sob — always — when a mistake is found five minutes after publishing.

And the differences?

After taking on board the above list, I have to at least go through the matter-antimatter list.

1. Technical reporting leads the reader to a defensible and usually predictable conclusion. Fiction writing is all about dropping surprises on the reader, making unexpected (though not unbelievable) twists and turns. Surprises are often frowned upon in the 'real' world, and if something comes up during an assessment, we ensure 'spoilers' are put out before the report whenever that is allowed.
2. The aim of fictional stories is to promote emotional reactions. The aim of a technical report is to deliver information, devoid and separate to any feelings on the subject.
3. The often quoted "show not tell" maxim does not apply to technical reporting where we *tell, explain* and *justify*. In storytelling, we want the reader to experience through the characters via their behaviour and dialogue rather than be directly told something. (I am not a full fan this "rule", as it's only really a guide that should be used intelligently, and not an absolute.)
4. Pain caused and ultimate body-count is allowed to be way higher in fiction!
5. Technical reports tend to be checked and authorised as part of internal QA procedures. I don't need to hunt for editors and beta readers!

How does one cope with a foot in both worlds?

Well, I do have to have a flexible outlook and just occasionally some nimble feet. As a consultant, I need to work (and write) for my livelihood. As a person, I need to write fiction for my soul. I am always acutely aware that the writing is done differently, for different reasons and different audiences.

An advantage for me is that I have been 'power-using' many of the interesting features built into Microsoft Office for more than three decades and I can take those skills into my fiction writing (and I whipped up the diagram for this article in ten minutes using PowerPoint, so it's not just Word).

The thing I demand of myself in both worlds is that I work hard, maintain professionalism and never let my own standards drop.

I try to be a decent person in both my worlds.

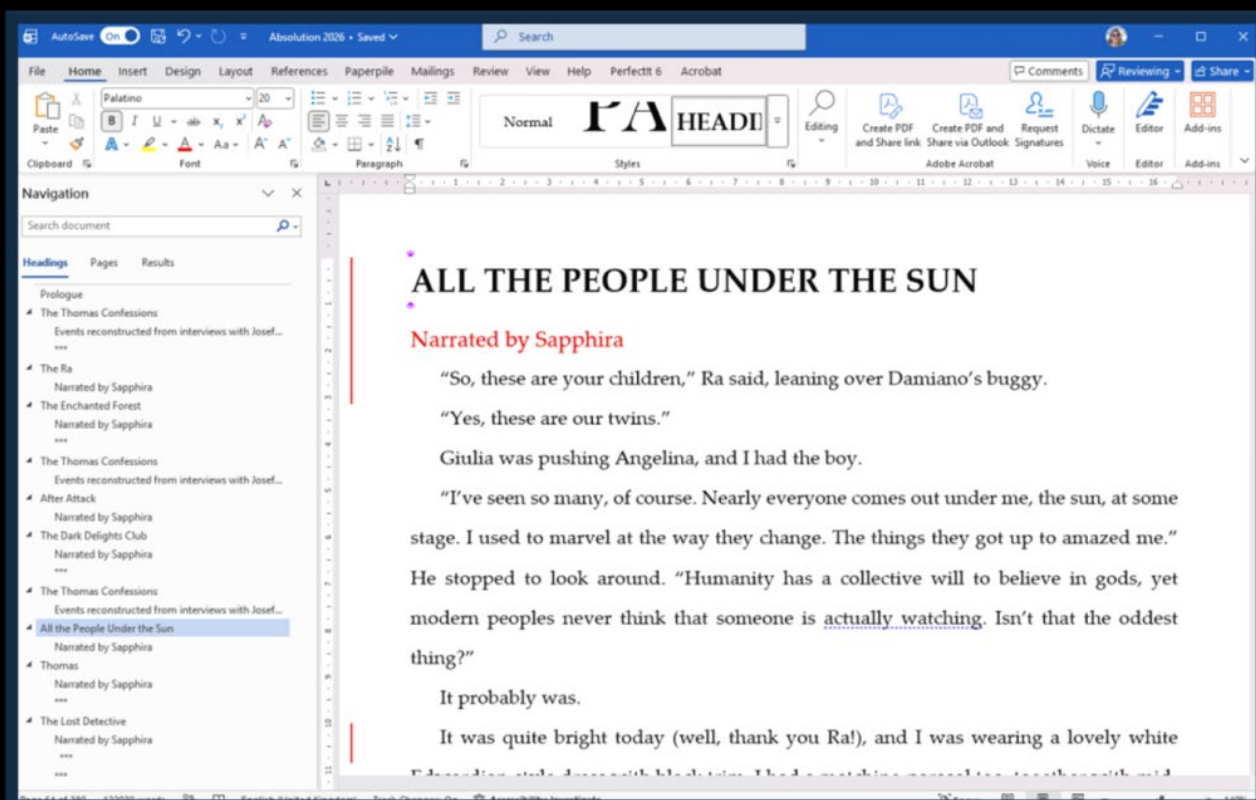
Navigating your novel with word processors

I have recently seen someone ask about ways to navigate quickly and easily to the correct part of the story they are working on. For that reason, I thought I would share the method I have been using for many years when writing my novels.

If you just have a book reaching towards 80,000 words (or a lot more!), finding your way around the various chapters can be a pain. I often need to make additions, check consistency and of course the frequent “how did I spell his name again?” search. Scrolling around until you find the section you want is a terrible pain.

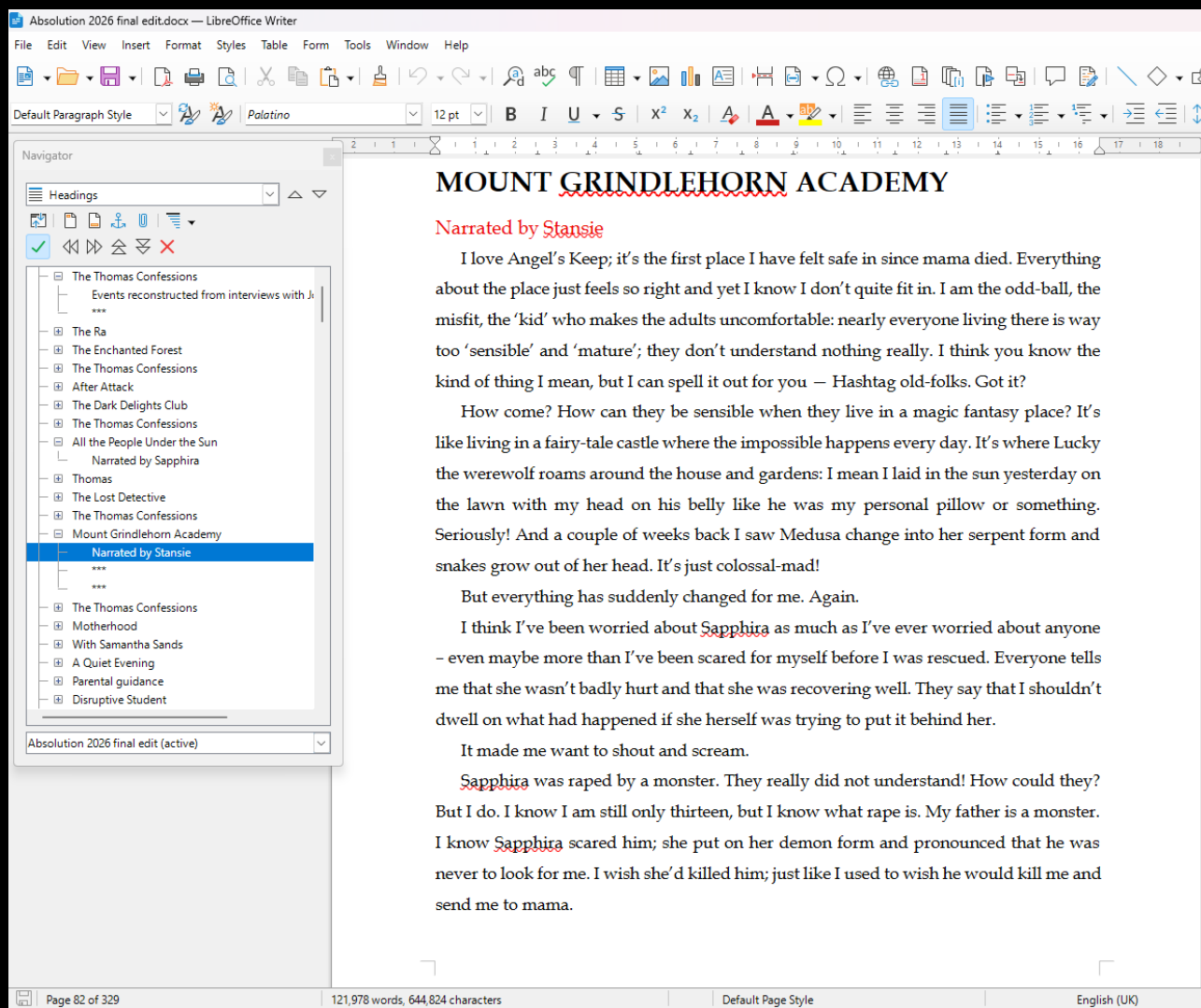
My approach to making things easier is to apply a **heading style** to each chapter title and then navigate using the navigation sidebar. It means I can just click on the chapter I want and instantly be taken there. *Simples!*

Here are screen shots of it in use, firstly on **Microsoft Word** (which is the tool I usually write with) and secondly with **LibreOffice** writer. In both cases you can see the navigation bar on the left.



Example of navigation with Microsoft Word

Word processors such as **LibreOffice** writer also provide the same function.

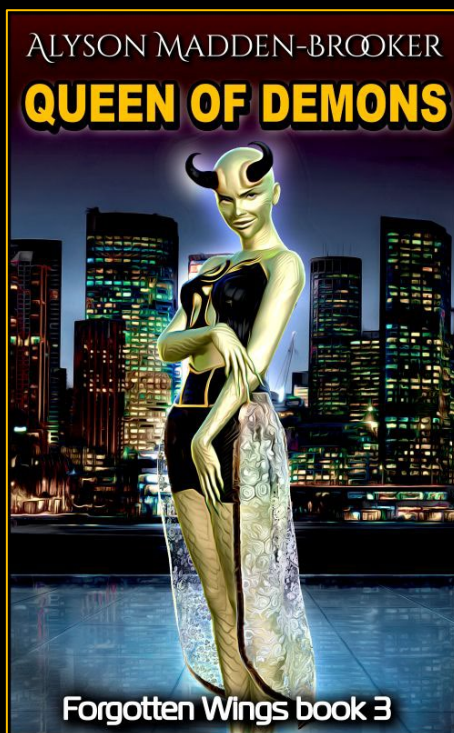
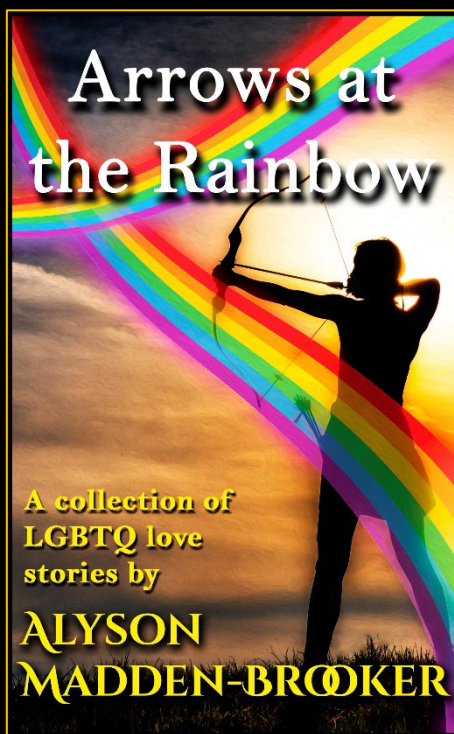
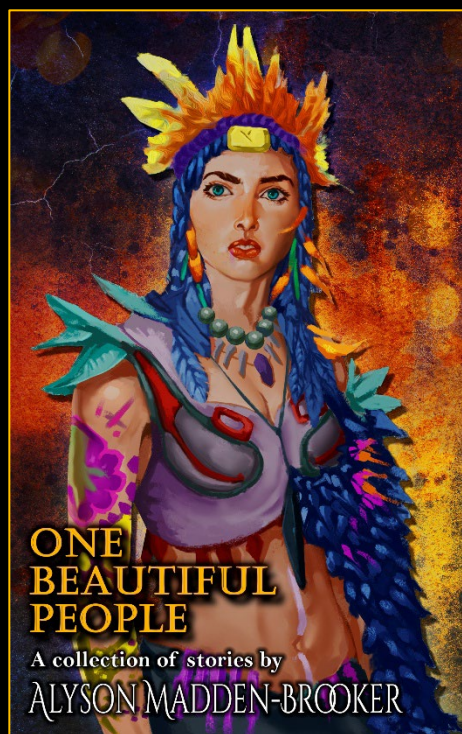


Example of navigation with LibreOffice writer

Note that in LibreOffice, the navigation bar is a separate window, so you may have to find it and drag it to where you want to see it! Another useful trick with this system is to apply a heading style to chapter / scene breaks if you use them, at least during the drafting stage. If you look in the above screenshots, you can see I have entered these breaks with three stars (***) and as they have heading style applied to them, they then show up in the list and can be immediately moved to for working on, which is really useful in long chapters.

Current Bookshelf

All my books are available on [Amazon Kindle](#).



Forthcoming publications

Absolution (Forgotten Wings 5) is to be published in the May / June window (I am just doing final-final edits and formatting.)



Seek no forgiveness!

When you are a fallen angel with a duty to keep the world safe, it never simply rains but it pours!

Sapphira inadvertently clashes with the Church when she confronts a demon practising the blackest of magic, and quickly finds herself up against an entire legion of rogue Angels.

Meanwhile, there is a deadly mythical monster in the lake and another in the strange tunnels that thread under Rome's streets.

Could it get any worse? Well, the sun has declared himself a ticking bomb and is ready to erase all the planets in the solar system.

Just how can all this be connected?

While mayhem and destruction explode at the end of her blade, the Queen of Demons, her family and friends must fight for their lives. And within this sea of problems, maybe only the gods know the rules ...

The book will be available on Amazon Kindle (free on Kindle Unlimited)