

THE NOVELS

THINGS THEY BURIED

Named to *Kirkus Reviews'* Best Books of 2019

IPPY Gold Medalist 2020

New Apple Literary Official Selection 2019

Kindle Book Review Finalist 2019

available on [Amazon](#)

Under the dirty streets of Ismae's greatest port city, an old nightmare waits for Sylandair and Aliara, one that is stealing Dockhaven's children, one only they can end.

When the pair escaped their owner and abuser years ago, they left him behind in a ball of blue flame, but as more children disappear near the city's desalinization plant, their suspicions turn to the predator they believed dead. Accompanied by their less-than-reliable puka scout Schmalch, they delve into the forgotten depths of the patchwork city. Their search will lead to a twisting world of corruption and experimentation, uncover horrors greater than any they imagined, and summon memories they never wanted to exhume.

A dark science fantasy action adventure, *Things They Buried* is the first full length novel of Ismae, a world where science sometimes appears as magic and history as myth, where monsters make themselves and heroes are wholly unintentional.

This novel contains adult themes and violence.



Authors
Michael R. Swanson
& Amanda K. King

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THEY EAT THEIR OWN

available on [Amazon](#)

A new year has begun, and the annual Sower's Festival gala is brimming with Dockhaven's elite and their entourages. Some attend for the spectacle, some for the exotic indulgences, some to augment or gamble away fortunes. Others come to play opening moves in more subtle competitions, ones that will not realize their endgames for months to come.

After a winter of convalescence, Aliara Rift wonders whether she is ready to return to the Thung Toh and if her remade body will betray her. Her mate, Duke Sylandair Imythedralin, has many concerns, the foremost being the looming destruction of the only home in which the two of them have truly felt safe. Together they will thwart land barons, politicians, and assassins as they navigate their way through a single day in Ismae's greatest port city.

They Eat Their Own is the second Thung Toh Jig, a science fantasy action adventure following members of Ismae's preeminent covert organization as they execute contracts for Dockhaven's most powerful and ruthless citizens.

This novel contains adult themes and violence.

THE NOVELS

A GOOD THIEF

available on [Amazon](#)

Surviving on the streets of Dockhaven took quick hands and the instincts of a gutter rat.

Schmalch was a good thief, just not a lucky one. Thanks to the rain, he hadn't even picked enough pockets to stay drunk and sleep dry. If only he could earn a spot on a crew, he wouldn't have to spend his days scrounging anymore, but every opportunity he had went keel-up.

When a simple pickpocketing goes awry, two strangers offer him another shot at a crew—if only his luck doesn't sink him again. Schmalch may just want a few coins and a safe place to sleep, but a secret lab, an unwanted prophesy, and a fancy pistol will lead him to a back-alley deal that will change his life forever.

A prequel to the award-winning *Things They Buried*, *A Good Thief* follows Schmalch on a gritty adventure down some of the nastier byways in Dockhaven, the planet Ismae's greatest port city.

This novel contains adult themes and violence.

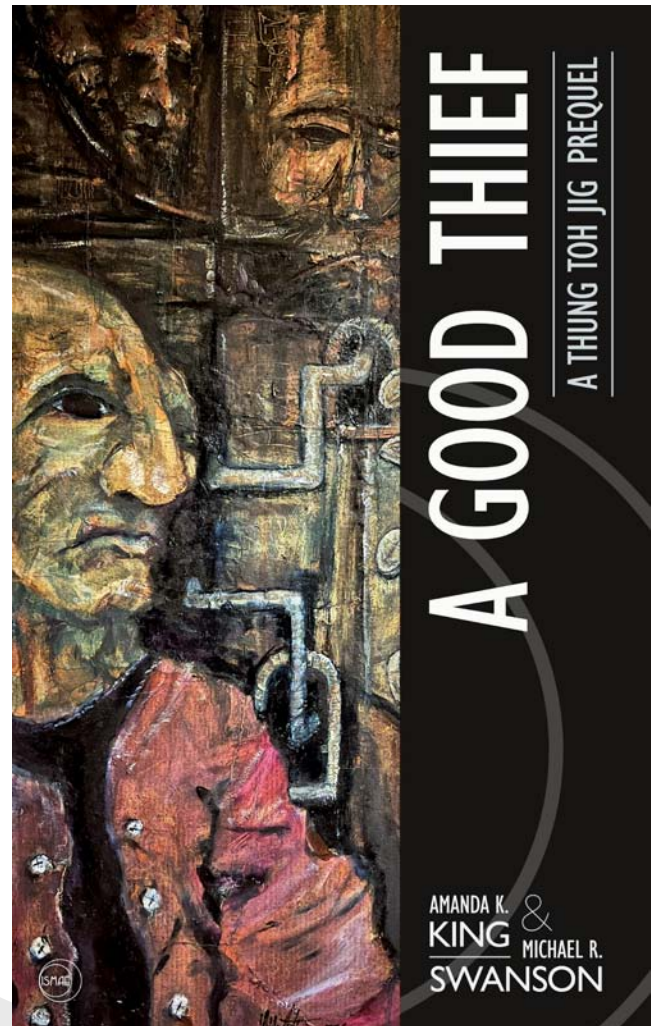
PRAISE FOR A GOOD THIEF

"Perhaps slightly less dark than the novels, *A Good Thief* is nonetheless an excellent blend of originality and genres. Part fantasy, part heist thriller, all unique. A fun, fast read that speaks to the huge potential of the authors and the world they've created, it's a wonderful novella."

The BookBeard's Blog

"The Ismae series is one of those series I recommend to anyone who will listen."

**Steve Caldwell,
The Bookwurm Speaks**



"With King and Swanson at the helm, you know you are in good hands. ...As expected, this novella turned out to be pretty gloss."

Sam Cooke, bookstagramer @readnext

"I've said it before and I'll say it again, these Dockhaven stories are my favorites in indie publishing and showcase what makes indies great—originality, grit, and daring that are just too rare in traditional publishing."

**Bryan S. Glosemeyer,
author *Shattered Gates* series**

PRAISE FOR THINGS THEY BURIED

"...uses dazzling worldbuilding and a hodgepodge of characters, cultures, and fantastic species to tell a powerful, human story. ...the authors introduce a variety of unfamiliar humanoid species... as part of the complex setting as well as a nuanced mix of magic and science. The worldbuilding is nearly flawless in its execution, which will entice readers to immerse themselves in the story... The intriguing plot makes excellent use of its primary characters, resulting in a breathtaking, harmonious read... An empathetic, complex, and offbeat tale."

***Kirkus Reviews* (starred)**

Named to *Kirkus Reviews*' Best Books of 2019

"King and Swanson pack their absorbing debut horror fantasy with brisk action, acute tension, and detailed worldbuilding... Readers who appreciate dense worldbuilding will be gratified by the complexity...[the details] leave readers wanting to know more... The creepy threats and fierce fights in this densely imagined novel will gratify fans of dark fantasy, especially those who want real depth in between thrills."

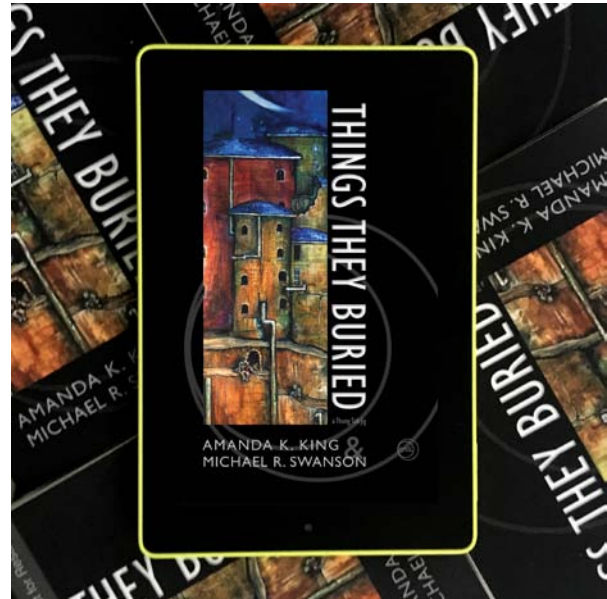
***BookLife* (Publishers Weekly indie division)**

"*Things They Buried* is one of those books that combines creative world building with fantastically drawn out characters...sci-fi and steampunk elements intermixed with the lowest of fantasy elements in such a way they just fit, even when they shouldn't...up there with some of the great fantasy settings."

Steve Caldwell, The Bookwyrms Speaks and Fantasy Focus (Amazon)

"This Science Fantasy has some great Grimdark elements... The world is utterly original, but what gives the book its depth and intimacy is the way in which the main two characters grapple with--and avoid--their shared history of abuse. As a reader I'm a sucker for great world-building and these two have done a ton..."

Averyn Ryce (Amazon)



"This is how you write a dark fantasy world! This is how you deliver diverse and complex characters to your readers."

Sam Cooke, bookstagramer @readnext

"...if I told you it was a sci-fi/fantasy/horror/thriller/crime story mix, that would sound like it's way too busy...but somehow it works...grubby and realistic and fantastical and thoroughly believable."

John Wikman (Amazon)

"...a dark and dangerous journey through a richly developed world populated by carefully crafted characters...making the reader feel truly engrossed in the scenes and action."

David Boston (Amazon, Goodreads)

"...so very well written it kept me enthralled until the very last word. I was loathe to see it end."

Bj (Amazon)

Available on
Amazon

THE AUTHORS

AMANDA K. KING

Both a reporter and a communication consultant in previous lives, Amanda spent way more years than she wants to admit writing news stories and marketing drivel for other people. Her part-time fiction turned full-time when she and Michael started *Things They Buried*. She is a fan of words and grammar and enjoys exploring how perspectives and circumstances shape the way different people deal with the same world.

Born in Middletown, Indiana, she now lives in Irvington, an east-side Indianapolis neighborhood, where she gardens and herds cats. When not writing, Amanda can be found concocting images for the [@IsmaeBooks](#) Instagram page.

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MICHAEL R. SWANSON

Michael divides his time between writing, music, woodworking, and gardening. While he enjoys exploring our world, his imagination draws him to others. An indie songwriter who has turned his efforts toward prose, Michael focuses on imagery and emotion in his fiction, sometimes even bringing to life characters who have been with him since childhood.

Born in Jamestown, New York, he lives in Indianapolis' east-side neighborhood, Irvington, where he plays music and builds things from wood. Michael can be heard carefully pronouncing all the "Ismae words" for the Glossary on [ismae.com](#).

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THE DROSS



- King & Swanson started writing *Things they Buried* on February 19, 2015, and published on February 19, 2019, though it was purely coincidental.
"I hadn't realized until I was cleaning out our *Things They Buried* OneNote notebook and found the original treatment of Aliara's first chapter," King said. "I was pleased to find that while content improved vastly, the concept remained consistent: the idea of people struggling to make sense of what happened to them as children—but on a different planet and with lots of scares and stabbings and monstrosities."
- King & Swanson commissioned concept art from Indiana illustrator, Jacob Walker. ("Aliara Rift" featured in lower left.)

"We've been fortunate to work with such a great talent," Swanson said. "A lot of Jacob's work is featured on [our website](http://www.jacobwalkerart.com/). We'll be adding more as well as floor plans, maps, and diagrams used while writing."
<http://www.jacobwalkerart.com/>

• *They Eat Their Own*, the follow-up novel released in early 2020, features many of the same characters and some new ones. Taking place largely during one night, King & Swanson call it a "who's-gonna-do-it" mystery.

- *A Good Thief*, a prequel to *Things They Buried*, was released in late 2023, filling readers in on what Schmalch was up to before the first novel. Schmalch was an unexpected reader favorite from previous Thung Toh jigs.

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King & Swanson's cover artist, Michael B. Fee, is a long-time friend and one of their favorite artists. When they realized the story was becoming a novel, there was no question of who King & Swanson wanted to paint the cover image.

Fee has shown his artwork across the country, from New Orleans to San Diego. Find out more about his art at michaelbfee.com



FEE