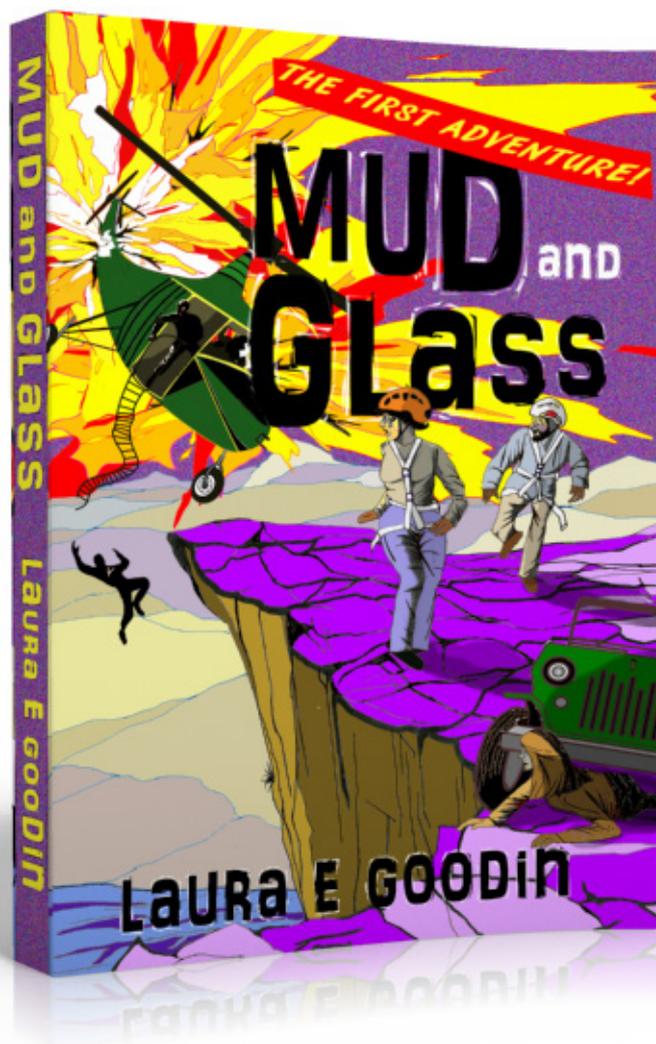




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Mud and Glass

Author: Laura E. Goodin

Genre: Contemporary Adventure

Print ISBN: 978-1-922200-86-0

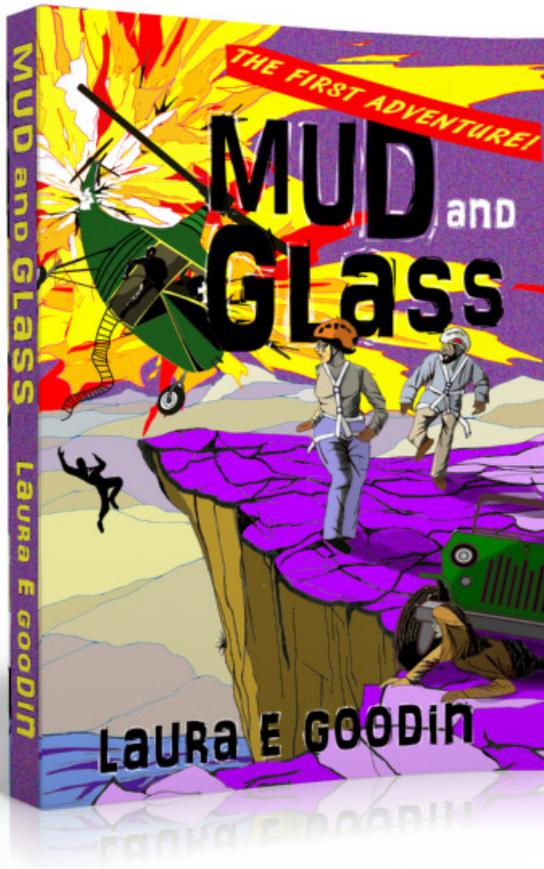
Author Bio

American-born writer Laura E. Goodin has been writing professionally for over 30 years. Her stories have appeared in numerous publications, including Michael Moorcock's *New Worlds*, *Andromeda Spaceways Inflight Magazine*, *Review of Australian Fiction*, *Adbusters*, *Wet Ink*, *The Lifted Brow*, and *Daily Science Fiction*, among others, and in several anthologies. Her plays and libretti have been performed on three continents, and her poetry has been performed internationally, both as spoken word and as texts for new musical compositions. She attended the 2007 Clarion South workshop, and has a Ph.D. in creative writing from the University of Western Australia.



Laura E. Goodin

About *Mud and Glass*



Life is fairly workaday for Dr Celeste Carlucci, a professor at Krasnia's finest university, until her best friend and colleague Pace involves Celeste in her research.

Before long, Celeste is being shot at from a hovering helicopter, attacked on a moonlit mountain path, and followed by shadowy minions – on the trail of the Littoral Codex, an ancient and indecipherable book.

The race is on to figure out its secrets. On one side are Celeste and her colleagues, armed with nothing but enthusiasm, brilliant minds, and the principles of geography. Against them are the repressive university governors and their jackbooted campus security guards; the rich and power-hungry Praxicopolis family; and a renegade group of researchers, the Littoral League.

Will this ragtag bunch outwit their foes before it's too late?

Sales Points

- *Mud and Glass* will be launched with a US tour, where the author is likely to attract international recognition.
- Goodin's use of middle-aged protagonists provides a unique twisting of convention.
- Is likely to contribute to the increasing popularity of the adventure genre, which has often been overlooked.
- The political commentary within the university setting will resonate with readers.
- Blends wit and charm in a delightful satire that will carry readers on an adventure until the very end.



Praise for Laura E. Goodin

Hijinks in the groves of academe! Concerning matters of tenure, footnotes and post-grad research, along with a secret underground society of librarians, a mysterious Codex in need of a key and an evil Board of Governors seeking total domination of (first) the university and (then) the universe. Shades of Tom Sharpe! A barrel-load of fun!

— Richard Harland, award-winning author of *Worldshaker* and *The Black Crusade*

“*Mud and Glass* is a glorious comedic romp, scything through the sententiousness of the academic world while showcasing modesty, courage and cleverness as virtues. Storytelling rules aren’t so much ignored as imprisoned, beaten up and twisted into outrageous new shapes. Our hero finds love in the arms of a lecturer in the Dramatic Arts – of course she does – but, more importantly, learns to love herself. And through it all Goodin captures perfectly, and with affection, the absurdity of academic life. I’ve not read comedy this clever since Jasper Fforde.”

— Russell Kirkpatrick, author of the acclaimed science-fiction trilogies *Fire of Heaven* and *Husk*

Laura E. Goodin’s *After the Bloodwood Staff* is a rousing, rollicking adventure that simultaneously celebrates and deconstructs rousing, rollicking adventures. By adding modern depth and humor, Goodin takes the old H. Rider Haggard template and creates something utterly fresh and fun. Anyone who loves classic derring-do (or loves rousing and rollicking, for that matter) shouldn’t miss it.

—Steve Hockensmith, New York Times bestselling author of *Pride and Prejudice and Zombies: Dawn of the Dreadfuls*

After the Bloodwood Staff explicitly pays homage to classic adventure tales, but at the same time cocks numerous snooks at them. With its thoroughly unheroic hero, its obsessive expedition leader, its colourful ensemble of hangers-on and antagonists, and, at its centre, the enigmatic, capricious staff itself, the novel rollicks along, maintaining a delicate, hilarious balance between twenty-first century pragmatism and a yearning for a nobler past. Good fun.

—Margo Lanagan, award-winning author of *Sea Hearts*, *Black Juice* and *Red Spikes*

Book Excerpt

“Dr Kortnoz?” I said as we started driving. My voice was shaking. “Did you know you were risking all our lives?”

Kortnoz pulled the vehicle over and twisted in his seat to look at me. “I promise you, I didn’t know they’d been monitoring me.”

“Who?” My voice cracked. “Why are you so calm? Why aren’t you calling the police?”

“I can’t risk it getting out that we’ve found the box. It’s the missing piece to a lifetime of research. It’s my shot at the Delmarva Geography Prize. It’s the answer to a question that has haunted humankind for centuries: who wrote the Littoral Codex, and what does it mean? And once the cops know – well, a lot of other people will know. And it’s not time yet.” Pace nodded in support.

The Littoral Codex – the ancient book so impenetrable that in three hundred years nobody had even figured out what language it was in before research had ground to a frustrated halt. It had been variously proposed that it was the solution to the quest for a unified field theory, the gateway to alternate universes, the secret to making a great meat pie, whatever you wanted most to know.

After a moment I said, “Get real. The key to the freaking Littoral Codex just happens to be hidden in a cave that you just happen to find that just happens to be conveniently close to Purple Bay University. You don’t think someone’s pulling your leg?”

“There have been stranger coincidences in academia,” he said solemnly over his shoulder. “Remember how Grady Turkle discovered the Turkle Group of antibiotics because he hadn’t cleaned out his fridge while his wife was away on business? And what about Sharwa Haddad, who got caught up in a minor avalanche in the Pillar Mountains, and while she was digging herself out, found the snow cave of the last surviving speaker of the presumed-extinct language she’d been studying for twenty years? And then there’s –”

“There have been stranger coincidences in academia”

“That’s okay, Ty, you don’t have to justify yourself,” said Pace with a savage look at me. “You’ve been right so many times before.”

“Who are the helicopter people, anyway?”

“I’m pretty sure it’s the Littoral League, led by Dr Honeycott.”

“Norella Honeycott? Impossible,” I said flatly. “She died in a hang-gliding accident last year,” I said.

“Staged,” said Pace. “To free her from university life so she could pursue her real passions.”

“And those would be?” I said.

“First, the secret to the Littoral Codex, and second –” Kortnoz paused, then said miserably, “me.”

Interview Questions

1

What inspired you to write *Mud and Glass*?

It started out as a NaNoWriMo novel, and I jumped in with only one intention: to have fun writing something over the top, full of intuitive leaps and hilarious exaggerations. Well, two intentions: that, and get to 50,000 words by the end of November. I tend to be a slow and careful writer, but for once, I just flung myself into it and busted out the word-count. It was an extremely uncomfortable experience, because I was just drafting without worrying about what the story was “supposed” to be doing. The characters and setting were taken from a wacky little story about sentient ooze I’d written a few years earlier that I’d really had fun with (and it won the short-story competition at a convention that year).

2

The novel has some references to totalitarian regimes. Do you feel this is particularly important in the current political climate?

In *Mud and Glass*, I used the university setting as itself – a university something like the universities I love, albeit in a slightly alternative world – and as a microcosm for the broader issues confronting us on all sides: the assault on intellectual freedom, civil rights, economic and social equity, and basic human respect. The choices the characters must make have a resonance for the choices we must make in the real world: will we fight? And in what ways? What might the cost be, and are we ready to pay it?

3

What's the significance of choosing to set the novel in a university?

Some of my earliest memories are of my mom taking me to her university, where she was pursuing her bachelor's (as a single mom with two tiny kids), and sitting in on her classes before I could even read. I spent my entire childhood watching my mom finish her bachelor's, then get a string of professional certifications and a master's degree, and finally, a PhD. My own years getting my bachelor's degree were stressful but also an incredible adventure. I got my master's degree while working one full-time and two part-time jobs, and did the whole thing through a haze of fatigue, but it was still entirely exciting to be finding out new things that nobody had ever researched before. My PhD process was a glorious and ecstatic foretaste of heaven, from beginning to end. I'm currently teaching at two tertiary institutions, and I absolutely love teaching undergraduates and postgraduates alike. In other words, second only to libraries, universities are my happy places. They're full of eccentricity, adventure, passion, curiosity, conflict, discovery, heroism – the people at universities who care about such things are playing for the highest stakes possible: the fate of humanity. What better place to set a story?

4

Tell us why we should pick up *Mud and Glass*.

Mud and Glass is both a hilariously on-target satire of academia and a stirring fable of resistance in the face of a nascent totalitarian regime. It's an adventure story where the geeky heroes battle equally geeky villains, and courage comes in the most unexpected forms.

Product Information

Order Information

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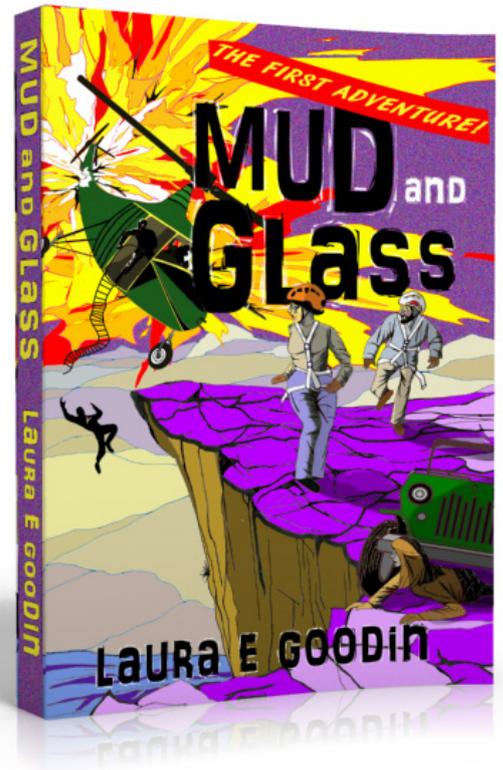
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