

# Self-Publishing Tools, Tips, and Techniques

Presentation to the Boulder Writers Alliance,  
May 14, 2016

These slides are available online at

<http://www.dvorkin.com/selfpub/bwa.pdf>

Based on the forthcoming book. For details, see

<http://www.dvorkin.com/selfpub/>

# Self-Publishing vs. Traditional Publishing

## Pluses and Minuses

### The Very First Step

#### Self-Publishing

- When you're satisfied with your book, it will be published. Your publisher (you!) loves it.

#### Traditional Publishing

- Breaking in is very hard, and it's getting harder every year. Staying in is also hard and getting harder.

# Self-Publishing vs. Traditional Publishing

## Pluses and Minuses

### Paying Money & Earning Money

#### Self-Publishing

- You pay for editing, layout, production, and marketing.
- You only earn money if the book sells copies.
- E-book royalties are 30%-80%. You decide for print.

#### Traditional Publishing

- Publisher pays all costs.
- Big publishers pay you money up front.
- E-book royalties are 25%, 6%-15% for print edition.

# Self-Publishing vs. Traditional Publishing

## Pluses and Minuses

### Publicity, Exposure, Marketing

#### Self-Publishing

- Little chance of getting important reviews.
- No chance book will be in major bookstores; small chance it will be in small bookstores. Online sales only.

#### Traditional Publishing

- Fair chance of getting important reviews.
- Very good chance book will be in major and minor bookstores, supermarkets, etc.

# Self-Publishing vs. Traditional Publishing

## Pluses and Minuses

### Subsidiary Rights Sales (mmpb, movie, foreign)

#### Self-Publishing

- Very hard to sell these.
- But you keep all the money. (Possible agent fee.)

#### Traditional Publishing

- Some chance that the publisher will sell these rights.
- You typically only get 50% of the money.

# Self-Publishing vs. Traditional Publishing

## Pluses and Minuses

### Your Book's Appearance

#### Self-Publishing

- The book has your perfectly chosen title.
- You have full cover control.

#### Traditional Publishing

- Publisher chooses the title—often a really dumb one.
- Publisher creates the cover—often an embarrassing one.

# Self-Publishing vs. Traditional Publishing

## Pluses and Minuses

### Your Book's Content

#### Self-Publishing

- Write what you want, when you want, length you want.
- You approve all edits.

#### Traditional Publishing

- Books must fit tightly defined marketing categories as to content and length. Publishers are reluctant to publish different types of book by an author.
- You can reject their edits, but in practice you'd best not.

# Self-Publishing vs. Traditional Publishing

## Pluses and Minuses

### Selling Copies

#### Self-Publishing

- Your book remains on sale forever. You own all rights.
- Selling a few thousand copies is very, very good and earns you a very nice amount of money.
- You reissue your old, traditionally published books.

#### Traditional Publishing

- Print copy is on sale for 3–4 weeks. E-book may remain on sale—but as a ploy for publisher to hold onto rights.
- Selling a few thousand copies is a disaster. Publisher dumps you. Agent is slow to return your calls.
- Publisher only interested in your old books if you're Stephen King. (In which case, why are you here today?)



# The Nail in the Coffin

- 1975: 71 first-class, independent publishers on my list for sf
- 2016: The Big Five
  - Hachette, owned by Lagardère (French)
  - HarperCollins, owned by NewsCorp (Australianish)
  - MacMillan, owned by Holzbrinck (German)
  - Penguin Random House, jointly owned by Pearson (British) and Bertelsmann (German)
  - Simon & Schuster, owned by National Amusements (American!)

Okay. My Mind's Made Up.

Self-publishing is the way to go.

What do I do now?

# What This Talk Is Based On

- We've edited, formatted, and published 30 client books.
- I've formatted and published 13 client books.
- We've reissued 12 of our own traditionally published books
- And self-published 11 of our own original books.

*Note:* I'm a Windows user.

# Three Publishing Sites

- **Smashwords**
  - E-books in every conceivable and inconceivable format
  - Online sales at Smashwords.com, Barnes & Noble, Apple's iBooks store, Kobo, library distributors, and many more
- **Amazon**
  - E-books, mobi (Kindle) version
  - Online sales in USA, UK, Germany, France, Spain, Italy, Netherlands, Japan, India, Canada, Brazil, Mexico, Australia
- **CreateSpace**
  - Print edition
  - Online sales at CreateSpace.com, all Amazon sites above, Barnes & Noble online site, a number of others worldwide

# And How Much They Pay

- Smashwords
  - 85% of whatever Smashwords receives
- Amazon
  - 35% or 70%, depending on cover price, country of sale
  - In addition, VAT is taken out in some countries.
- CreateSpace
  - The sky's the limit.

# What Does Self-Publishing Cost You?

- From nothing at all to far too much
- If you hire good help, \$500–\$2,000
- Cost areas:
  - Editing manuscript for spelling, grammar, usage, consistency, continuity, and structure
  - Designing and creating a cover
  - Print edition layout
  - Conversion to e-book edition(s)
  - Uploading print & e-book editions to online sites

# Cost Areas

- First two are the most costly, most neglected.
  - You don't think you need editing.  
You almost certainly do.
  - Quick & dirty and/or amateurish covers are common. They're a terrible idea.
- Last three are the most feared, but the easiest to do yourself.

# Editing

- Badly written/edited books are published by major publishers. Editing staff cut because of costs. Editing is outsourced or not done at all.
- A good editor finds continuity errors, inconsistencies, incorrect references, etc.
- \$500–\$1500 in our experience



# Covers

- Photoshop or Gimp, or ...
- Avoid amateurish art, cluttered look. (Google *bad book covers* for examples of what not to do.)
- Experiment. Liberate the artist within.
- Look for art and images online or use your own.
- Pay a cover designer if necessary, but shop around.
- For e-book covers: 96 dpi, at least 1600 X 2400 pixels, but maintain the 2:3 ratio.



The Arm

and

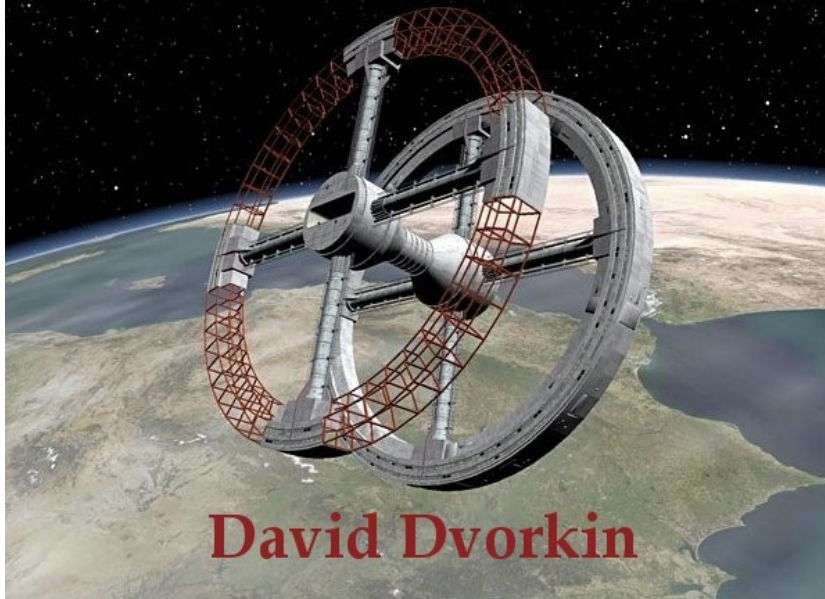
Flanagan

**David  
Dvorkin**



TIME  
and the

SOLDIER



David Dvorkin







*Self-Publishing*

*Tools, Tips, and  
Techniques*

*David  
Dvorkin*





*Chance  
Encounter*



*Tony Medeiros*

# Images Sources

- Shutterstock.com (not free, very high quality)
- Free sources (check carefully)
  - Wikimedia Commons  
[https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/Main\\_Page](https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/Main_Page)
  - The British Library  
<https://www.flickr.com/photos/britishlibrary/>
  - The Metropolitan Museum of Art  
<http://www.metmuseum.org/art/collection>
  - The Getty Trust Open Access Collection  
<http://search.getty.edu/gateway/landing>  
Click on “See all open content images”



- Free sources (cont.)

- The Rijksmuseum

- <https://www.rijksmuseum.nl/en/explore-the-collection>

- National Gallery of Art

- [https://images.nga.gov/en/page/show\\_home\\_page.html](https://images.nga.gov/en/page/show_home_page.html)

- Google Art Project

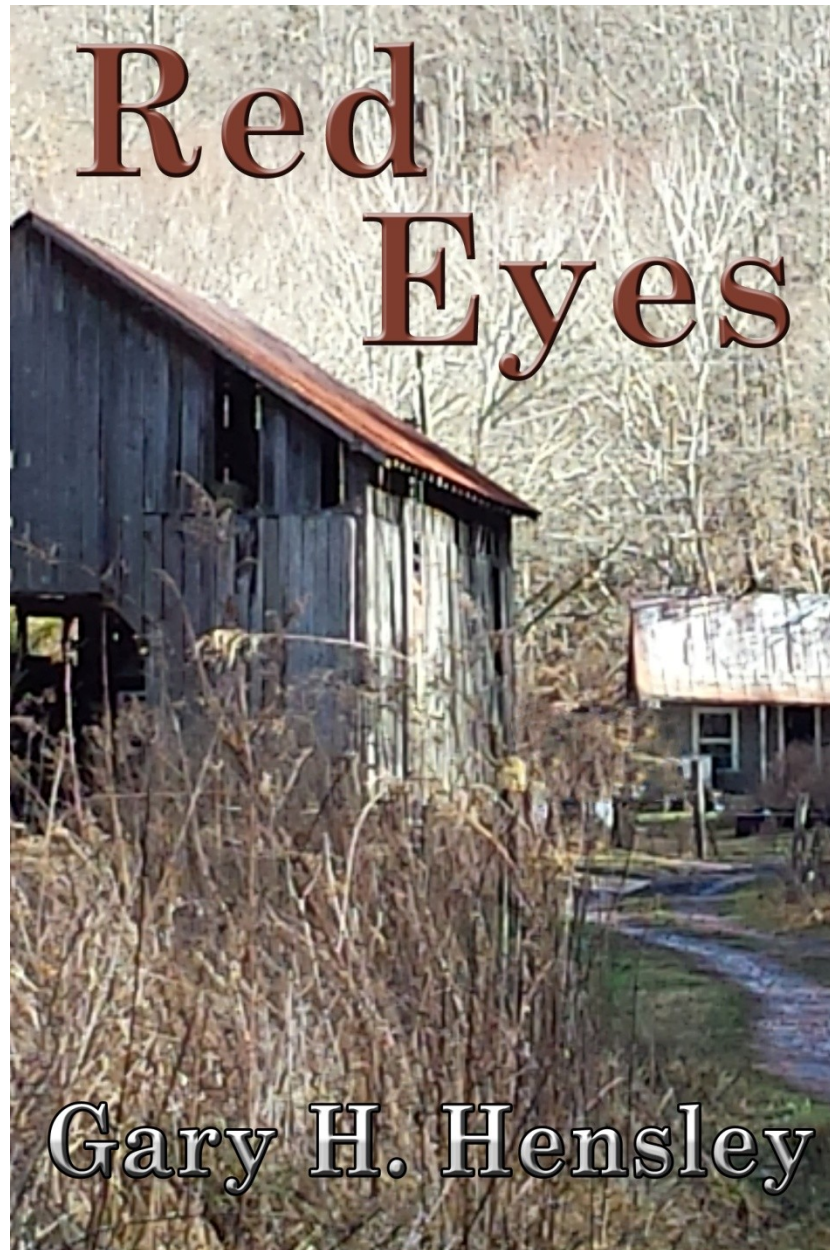
- <https://www.google.com/culturalinstitute/project/art-project>

- New York Public Library Public Domain Collections

- <http://www.nypl.org/research/collections/digital-collections/public-domain>







# Red Eyes

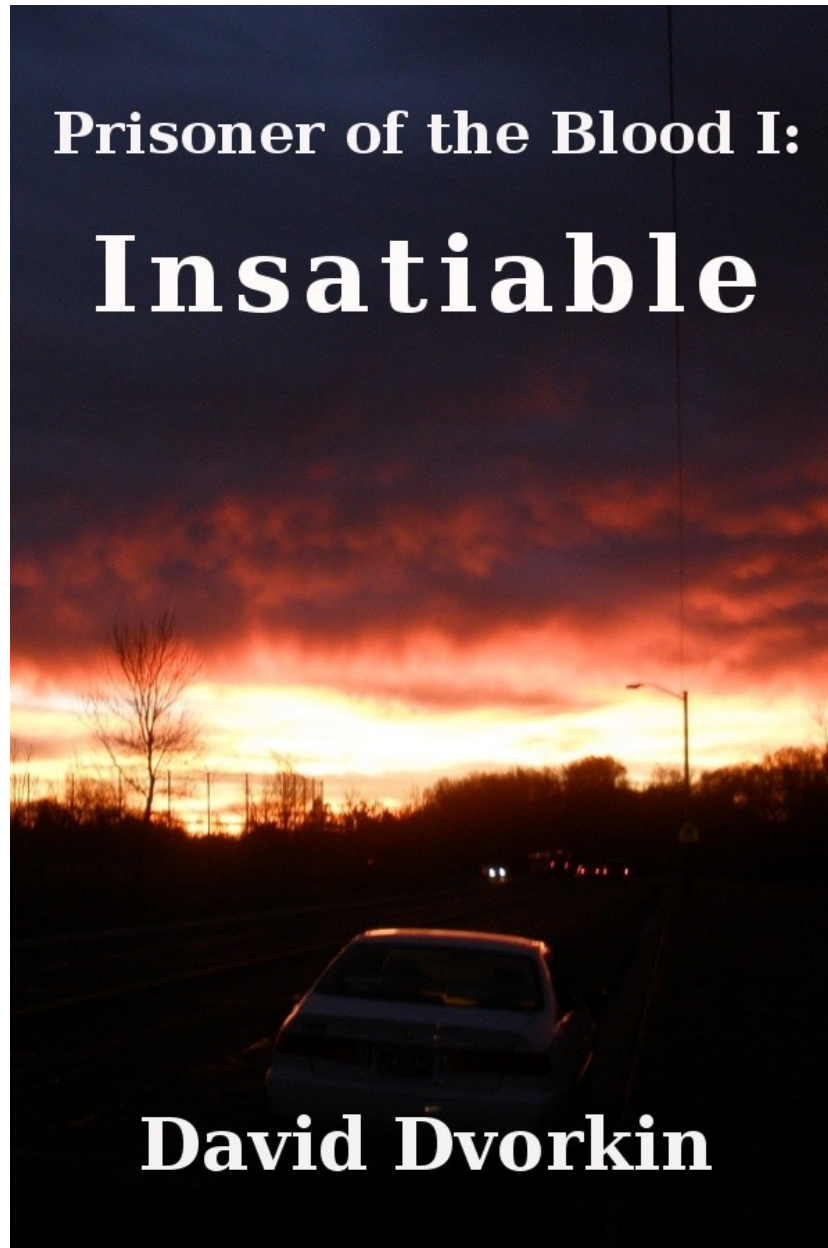
Gary H. Hensley





**Prisoner of the Blood I:**

# **Insatiable**



**David Dvorkin**





A photograph of a stone archway in a dark, possibly underground, setting. The arch is made of light-colored stone blocks. A bright, glowing light source is visible through the opening of the arch. Several red, blood-like splatters are visible on the stone blocks surrounding the archway, particularly on the left and right sides and below the opening. The overall atmosphere is dark and ominous.

**David Dvorkin**

**Prisoner of the Blood II:**  
**Unquenchable**

# Print or E-Book Edition

- Always do both.
- There is a large, non-overlapping readership.
- Libraries and bookstores are markets for print editions.
- Visually impaired readers love e-books.
- Digital gadgets, such as smartphones, are a target for e-books.



# Invent a Publisher



# Print Edition

*Note: This discussion is for CreateSpace.*

- Avoid internal color. Huge increase in cover price. Grayscale internal images.
- Images (internal and cover) must be at least 300 dpi. Check Word's Save As settings.
- Use endnotes instead of footnotes.
- New section for each chapter.
- Use 6" X 9" book size (industry standard and favorite).
- We prefer cream paper and glossy cover.

# Print Edition (cont.)

- Get Word templates here:  
<https://forums.createpace.com/en/community/docs/DOC-1323>
- For the interior PDF, install Primo PDF (freeware).
- Don't let CS do your e-book.
- Order a printed proof; don't proof online. Correct the Word file, recreate PDF, reupload.
- CS sets the minimum price. Anything above that is your profit.

# Print Edition Formatting

*Children  
of the  
Undead*

by

David Dvorkin

# Print Edition Formatting (cont.)

Copyright 2012 by David Dvorkin

All rights reserved.

ISBN: 1479295000

ISBN-13: 978-1479295005

# Print Edition Formatting (cont.)

## CHAPTER ONE

Lily Morgenstern Flicker groaned. "Christ, look at this place."

"The sooner we start," Jerry Morgenstern said, "the sooner we can put it on the market. You take the bedroom closet. I'll take the hall closet."

"You're taking the easy one."

Jerry sighed. "Let's not argue, now that it's finally over. Okay, we'll switch. I'll take the bedroom."

"Wait a minute. That's where all the valuable stuff is. Maybe I should take the bedroom, after all."

"Jesus Christ."

Jerry was about to say more when he realized that his sister was looking with horror at something behind him. Her face was pale, her mouth was open, and her eyes were wide.

He spun around and found himself facing his father. Jerry's expression began to resemble his sister's.

The old man was dressed in the suit he had been wearing when the coffin lid was closed on him. The undertaker's caked-on makeup still covered his face, but it was cracking and falling off in pieces. Or maybe it was his skin that was falling off. Jerry couldn't tell for sure.

"Still bickering," his father said. "You kids will never stop. What are you doing in my condo?"

"Who are you?" Lily asked.

# Print Edition Formatting (cont.)

*David Dvorkin*

"I've been dead for a week, and already you've forgotten me? I'm not surprised. I told your mother it would be that way."

"But you're dead," Jerry said. "You can't be Dad."

"I was dead. Didn't like it. Told them I was going home."

"You can do that?" Jerry asked. "When you're dead?"

"You think I was going to let them tell me what to do? What are you doing in my condo?" he repeated.

Ignoring him, Jerry said to Lily, "It's some sort of scam. This guy's pretending to be Dad so he can get hold of the condo and sell it."

"Sell it?" the older man said. "Of course not. We're going to live in it, just like always."

Lily looked around the place, her nose wrinkling. "You call this living?"

"We?" Jerry said.

"I had to walk all the way from the cemetery," his father said. "In my condition. Why didn't you leave my car there?"

"We didn't think you'd ever need it again," Lily said. "We, um, we got rid of it."

"You sold it? I bet you didn't get enough for it. You always let people take advantage of you. Where's the money?"

"We gave it away," Jerry said. "To a charity. It was for a good cause."

"You mean someone told you it was for a good cause, and you believed them," his father said. He shook his head from side to side. His neck creaked and cracked, and small bits of leathery tissue floated down.

Jerry was afraid the head would fall off. He was torn between an urge to leap forward and hold the head in place and an urge to run like hell.

"You were always so naïve," his father said. "Such a good brain, but so naïve. Brain," he repeated. "I'm hungry." He turned away and opened the door of the refrigerator. The refrigerator was empty. "Where are the pickled peppers?"

# Print Edition Formatting (cont.)

*Children of the Undead*

"Pickles?" Lily said.

"Piper's Pickled Peppers. We always keep a jar or two in here. I love them." He turned back toward Jerry and glared at him accusingly. "Did you eat them? Just because you work there doesn't give you the right to eat up all the Piper's Pickled Peppers."

"I didn't touch the damned things."

"Watch your language when you're in my house!" Jerry's father stepped forward threateningly.

Jerry stepped back. "After you, ~~ex~~, after you left, there was a lot of old food in there. We had to get rid of it."

"You threw away the Piper's Pickled Peppers?" his father roared. "What's wrong with you?"

"I'll get you some more, okay? Never mind that right now. You said ~~we're~~ going to live here. Who's ~~we~~?"

The front door opened and a woman walked in.

She looked like their mother but less so than the old man looked like their father. He looked like a dead man fresh from the coffin. She looked like a dead woman who was very ~~unfresh~~. Bone showed through here and there on her face, and the dress she had been buried in hung limply on her in a way that made Jerry suspect that she was mostly bone underneath it. If this was a scam, the makeup was remarkable.

"I'm exhausted," she said. "That was a long walk." She noticed the brother and sister, and her face contorted stiffly into what could have been an expression of pleasure.

"Lily!" she said. "Jerry! It's so wonderful to see you children again!"

Before Jerry could react, she had stepped forward and embraced him.

He responded automatically by putting his arms around her. On one side of her back, he could feel her ribs and the spaces between them. The other side felt normal. Up close, the smell of decay was staggering.



# Print Edition Cover

- Covers are full color, unlike the interior.
- Wraparound cover. Depends on number of pages, book dimensions, type of paper.
- Get cover template here:  
<https://www.createspace.com/Help/Book/Artwork.do>
- Cover must be uploaded as a PDF file.

*"An eye-opening view of life on the streets and beyond, a journey from the pits of darkness to a life of hope."*

*Jose Lopez, Board Member, First Steps for the Blind, Kansas City, MO*

*"Cry Purple is a story from the heart...a riveting memoir that will take you on a rollercoaster ride filled with sadness, adversity, pain, joy, and finally, peace."*

*Christy Bean, Freelance Editor, Kansas City, MO*

*"I don't see much beautiful stuff.' These poignant words from the title chapter pretty much sum up the first two-thirds of this book. By turns, it's fascinating, informative, horrifying, heartbreaking, and hopeful. The author's straightforward style makes her account of the brutality that she endured all the more hard-hitting. How could she possibly have survived all that with any optimism and resilience left? Yet she did, and to an amazing degree. I found the chapters about her two young children particularly moving. The shortest chapter, 'And He Is Only Three,' brought me to tears. It may not be the only part of this book that will have the same effect on you."*

*Leonore Dvorkin, Author and Editor, Denver, CO*

*"Christine McDonald's Cry Purple is a fascinating tale of salvation and redemption from a life of addiction, crime, and homelessness. The most inspiring story I've ever read. A must-read filled with hope!"*

*Terrence James, Intake Specialist, St. Louis, MO*

*"Surviving a hostile world, damaged emotionally and physically, Cry Purple chronicles a shattered life, rebuilt through sheer determination, courage and faith."*

*Sharon Walker, Raymore, MO*

**Barcode  
Location & Size  
2" X 1.2"**

*Cry Purple*

*Christine McDonald*



*Christine  
McDonald*



*Cry Purple*

*One Woman's Journey through  
Homelessness, Crack Addiction and Prison  
to Blindness, Motherhood and Happiness*



# E-Book Edition

- Start with corrected Word file from previous step, so that print and e-book are identical.
- Simplify the formatting. Eliminate sections. Use page breaks between chapters.
- Use Calibre (<https://calibre-ebook.com/>) to create .mobi (Kindle) version for Amazon.
- Upload formatted Word file to Smashwords (see Smashwords Style Guide).

# E-Book Edition (cont.)

- Correct Smashwords Meatgrinder errors.
- After Smashwords conversion, download their ePub version and run it through the validator:  
<http://validator.idpf.org/>
- If there are validation errors, use Calibre to create an ePub version and upload that to Smashwords, overriding their ePub version.

# E-Book Edition (cont.)

- Use the free Kindle for PC program to check the mobi version, Adobe Digital Editions for the ePub version.
- For educational purposes, install the Sigil editor (<https://sigil-ebook.com/>) and look inside your ePub version.



# Your Web Site

- It's a single marketing tool for your books, your services, and mostly for you.
- Have a single site, not one site per book.
- URL is your name, if possible, and .com, if possible.
- Include the URL in your e-mail sig line, on your business cards, in your social network profiles.
- Photos, essays, links page, hobbies, poems, ...
- Keep it simple. Few images, no Flash, clean design, and simple navigation.



# David Dvorkin



[Like](#) [Share](#) 45 [Follow](#) [Tweet](#) [+ reddit this!](#)

[E-mail](#) • [Blog](#) • [Twitter](#)

[Résumé](#)

[Leonore Dvorkin's Web Site](#) • [Leonore's Blog](#)

[Books and Short Stories](#) • [Essays](#)

[Language Services](#) • [David's Cover Designs](#) • [Help with Publishing in E-Book Format and Print](#)

[Editing and self-publishing clients](#)

[Photographs](#)

[Hate Mail](#)

To make a payment to me via PayPal, use this link: [paypal.me/DavidDvorkin](https://paypal.me/DavidDvorkin)  
To make a payment to Leonore via PayPal, use this link: [paypal.me/LeonoreDvorkin](https://paypal.me/LeonoreDvorkin)



**Hate Mail**

To make a payment to me via PayPal, use this link: [paypal.me/DavidDvorkin](https://paypal.me/DavidDvorkin)  
To make a payment to Leonore via PayPal, use this link: [paypal.me/LeonoreDvorkin](https://paypal.me/LeonoreDvorkin)

**Links**

**Tell a friend about this page**

**The Day Job • Online Store • Print on Demand Publishing  
Building a Good Author Web Site • Our Headquarters • Recipes**

For information about multilingual language translation, please click **here**.

**Adapt on Demand LLC**, providing computer support to the disabled community

The books of author **Gary Sloan**

**Site Map/Index**



Google™  Search

Web  www.dvorkin.com

## Children of the Undead



*Click on cover image for larger version.*

A social and political satire disguised as a comic novel about zombies and pickles. Or possibly the other way around.

They're back, and they want to eat your brains. Again.

"Go in there."

"Hell, no. I'm going to send someone stupid in there with a pickle."

It's brains served with a side of pickles, hold the mayo. A terrifying tale of parents, children, brothers, sisters, friends, bosses, employees, wives, ex-wives, friends' wives, Republicans, study bacteria, zombies, tentacles, politics, religion, giant screaming earth mothers, and the armpit and other regions of Hell.

And pickles.

"Children of the Undead is engrossing—for its fast-moving story, for its wit and humor, for its sometimes biting political and social commentary, for its general intelligence. I highly recommend it."

## Purchasing Links

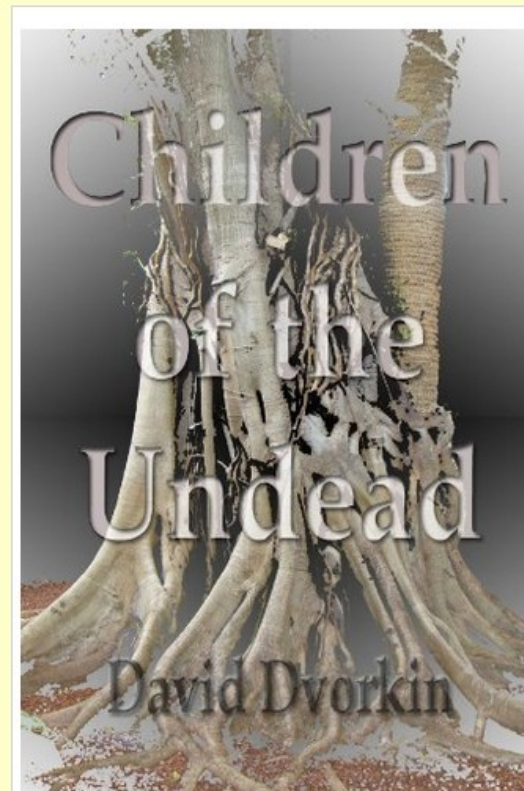
### E-Book

- Amazon
- Barnes & Noble
- Apple
- Kobo
- Google
- Libiro
- Smashwords (numerous formats)

### Print Edition

- Amazon
- Barnes & Noble

## Click Below to Read a Sample



BUY

SHARE

PREVIEW >



index.html

```
66
67 <div id="sample_frame">
68   <h4>Click Below to Read a Sample</h4>
69   <iframe type="text/html" width="336" height="550" frameborder="0" allowfullscreen style="max-width:100%" src=
   "https://read.amazon.com/kp/card?asin=B0097YGG62&preview=inline&linkCode=kpe&ref_cm_sw_r_kb_dp_82bSwb19WXQ0V"
   >>/iframe>
70 </div>
71
72 <div id="links_div">
73
74   <h3>Purchasing Links</h3>
75
76   <h4>E-Book</h4>
77
78   <ul>
79     <li><a href="http://www.amazon.com/dp/B0097YGG62">Amazon</a></li>
80     <li><a href=
81     |"http://www.barnesandnoble.com/w/children-of-the-undead-dvorkin/1113028539?ean=2940045139212&itm=1&us
82     ri=david+dvorkin">Barnes & Noble</a></li>
83     <li><a href="https://itunes.apple.com/us/book/children-of-the-undead/id586696794">Apple</a></li>
84     <li><a href="http://www.kobobooks.com/ebook/Children-of-the-Undead/book-zn4w54eczEOfXY2qgfVJPg/page1.html"
85     >Kobo</a></li>
86     <li><a href="https://play.google.com/store/books/details?id=304HBgAAQBAJ">Google</a></li>
87     <li><a href="http://www.libiro.com/david-dvorkin-children-of-the-undead-epub/">Libiro</a></li>
88     <li><a href="http://www.smashwords.com/books/view/263268">Smashwords (numerous formats)</a></li>
89   </ul>
90
91   <h4>Print Edition</h4>
92
93   <ul>
94     <li><a href="http://www.amazon.com/Children-Undead-David-Dvorkin/dp/1479295000/">Amazon</a></li>
95     <li><a href=
96     "http://www.barnesandnoble.com/w/children-of-the-undead-dvorkin/1113028539?ean=9781479295005">
97     Barnes & Noble</a></li>
98   </ul>
99
100 </div>
</div>
</div>
```



Kindle Store > Kindle eBooks > Literature & Fiction

**i** You purchased this item on September 8, 2012.  
[View this order](#) | [Loan this book](#) to anyone you choose.



# Children of the Undead Kindle Edition

by David Dvorkin (Author)  
★★★★★ 3 customer reviews

See all 2 formats and editions

- Kindle**  
\$3.99
- Paperback  
\$12.95 Prime

Read with Our **Free App** 4 Used from \$12.07  
11 New from \$10.65

This wasn't your run-of-the-mill zombie apocalypse. The dead were digging their way out of their graves, but they weren't after brains. They wanted their homes and families and jobs back. Not that they would object to the occasional nice serving of brains, especially if it came with a side of pickles.

Read more

Length: 309 pages Enhanced Typesetting: Enabled

**Kindle Delivers: Daily Deals**  
Subscribe to find out about each day's [Kindle Daily Deals](#) for adults and young readers. [Learn more](#) (U.S. customers only)

Print List Price: ~~\$12.95~~  
Kindle Price: **\$3.99**  
Save \$8.96 (69%)

Buy now with 1-Click®

Deliver to:  
David's Kindle

Send a free sample

Deliver to:  
David's Kindle

Give as a Gift

Add to List

[Enter a promotion code or Gift Card](#)

Share **<Embed>**

## Product Details

- File Size:** 692 KB
- Print Length:** 309 pages
- Simultaneous Device Usage:** Unlimited
- Publication Date:** September 8, 2012

## Share or embed a free Kindle book preview

By sharing this free book preview or embedding it on a website, anyone can read a sample of this book with just one click – no need for them to sign in or install an app. [Learn more](#)

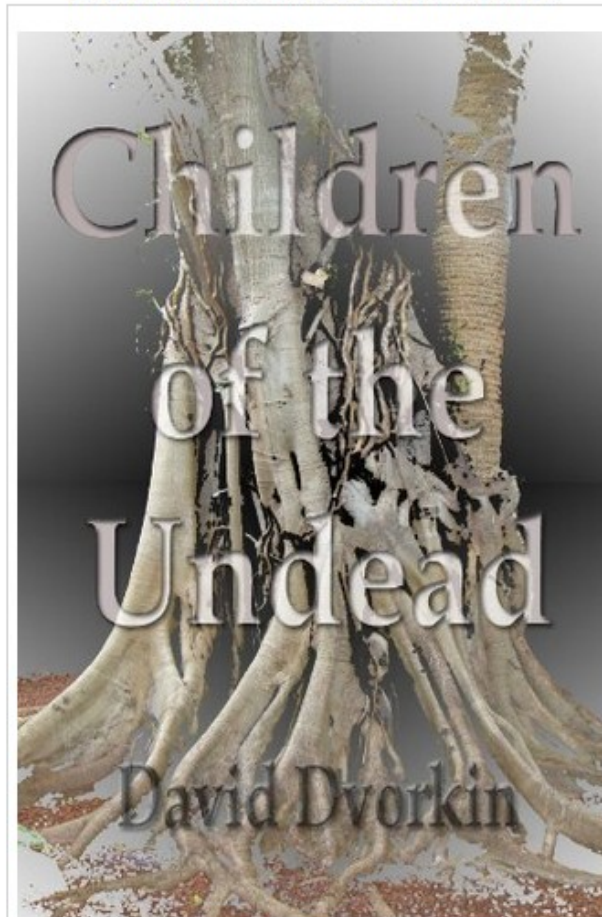
Get a link (URL)  Embed on your site (HTML)

```
code=kpe&ref_=cm_sw_r_kb_dp_SFUnxbRCS1N9D" ></iframe>
```

By linking to the URL or embedding the HTML code above on your site, you agree to [all of the terms found here](#).

- ▶ [Add Amazon Associates ID to earn advertising fees \(What's this?\)](#)
- ▶ [See more options](#)

**Live preview:** Click on the cover or buttons to try it.



[BUY](#) | [SHARE](#) | [PREVIEW >](#)

Size: 336 × 550 (Actual size shown)