

From Great Inspiration Come New Heroes

Canadian Author draws upon Spider-Man and other superheroes for inspiration in his latest thrilling action novel.

WATERLOO, ONTARIO, CANADA, March 16, 2021 /EINPresswire.com/ -- Mark Leslie's latest novel, *Fear and Longing in Los Angeles* follows the continuing adventures of Michael Andrews, a small-town Canadian bumpkin attempting to live a normal life in large city America. Of course, it's hard to deal with the reality that every full moon he turns into a wolf. The curse comes with the side-effects of enhanced senses as a human, and Andrews stumbles his way using those superpowers to help others, following in the footsteps of Spider-Man.

"I have always been a big fan of Spider-Man," Leslie says. "Like Peter Parker, I was a nerdy and scrawny teenager." Leslie was inspired by Spider-Man's desire to use his powers to help others. Much of that philosophy permeates the overall feel of his character Michael Andrews.

"The idea for Michael Andrews came from a call for stories to an anthology," Leslie says. "The editor wanted to see stories about the 'man behind the monster.' I had recently visited Manhattan for the first time and wondered what it might be like to live with a werewolf curse when stuck in a major metropolitan center. How would you logistically operate the changes?"

"So, the idea came to have this man wake up naked in Battery Park, with a bullet hole in his leg, the taste of human blood in his mouth, and no memory of what he'd done the night before while he had been romping around the city as a wolf. This left him with two issues. To figure out what he'd been involved in. But, more urgently, to find some clothes and get back to where he lived. I wanted to explore what it was like for the human living with such a condition. And that's where some other characters from the Marvel Universe came to mind."

As Leslie explains, since the man was a lycanthrope, he imagined that, even as a human, he might possess extraordinary canine senses. Inspired by characters like Daredevil and Wolverine, Michael Andrews is able to track by scent, smell emotions off people, and hear their heartbeats. He also has enhanced strength and agility.



Mark Leslie Author

And, like Spider-Man, Andrews is a meek and mild-mannered person, not cut out for the hero life. "You have this Alpha Wolf who is really a Beta Human," Leslie says. "And trying to make his way in the Big Apple." And, in the same way that the web-slinger cracked jokes as a way of dealing with his nervousness and insecurity, so, too, does Michael Andrews share a sardonic and humorous perspective.

The novel *A Canadian Werewolf in New York*, which came out in 2016, takes place in a single New York day between dawn and nightfall as Andrews gets caught up in a day filled with petty thieves and muggers, kidnapping thugs, a needy ex-girlfriend, and another wolf stomping all over his territory.

Andrews returned in the summer 2020 novella *Stowe Away* which finds him on a train bound for Stowe, Vermont from Manhattan, off to help a friend in need, while trying to protect an innocent child from a human predator. Readers have summarized that story as "Planes, Trains and Automobiles meets Logan," recognizing the inspiration drawn from the superhero Wolverine in that cross country quest to bring a child safely to a location, and the humorous antics of the classic John Hughes Thanksgiving misadventure.

In this latest adventure, which is the second full-length novel and third book in the "Canadian Werewolf" series,

Andrews heads to Los Angeles to work on a movie set and to try to get away from the pain of being rejected by his true love. After meeting a mysterious woman who carries deep secrets, he learns that, if New York is the city that never sleeps, then L.A. is where you have to sleep with one eye open. There's something even more cut-throat than Hollywood executives lurking in the



Mark Leslie as Spider-Man



Fear and Longing In Los Angeles

shadows.

In one scene, Michael Andrews also interacts with actress and indie musician Alicia Witt (Mr. Holland's Opus, The Sopranos Nashville, Law & Order: Criminal Intent). Witt, who Leslie conspired with in 2019 for a marriage proposal in Toronto (she wrote and performed a song he used to propose to his girlfriend with), agreed to allow him to write her as a character in the novel, and also to share lyrics from a couple of her songs in the book. It's her music and impactful lyrics that have a dramatic effect on the main character's decision to move on and find new love. "Alicia is so amazingly generous and compassionate," Leslie says. "I love her music and I adore her spirit, and I was thrilled when she said, upon previewing the scene in which I had her speaking with Michael, that those are things she might actually say."

When teased about the titles of his books sounding like cheeky references to the names of well-known movie and books (An American Werewolf in London, Fear and Loathing in Las Vegas), he smiles and mentions it's a very purposely way of ensuring potential readers know there's a bit of tongue-in-cheek humor injected into his urban fantasy thrillers.

Leslie says that the chapter titles in the novels are also tongue-in-cheek nods to familiar phrases and pop culture. The next book, which takes place as a direct sequel to Fear and Longing in Los Angeles is called Fright Nights, Big City. And yes, he affirms that's a nod to an 80s movie starring Canadian actors Michael J. Fox and Kiefer Sutherland.

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