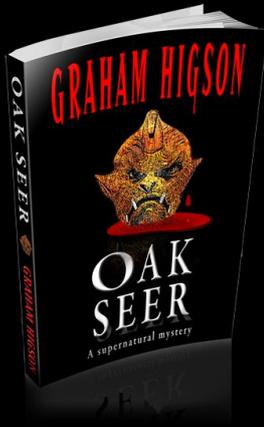


Interview with the author of Oak Seer: A supernatural mystery



What are the most important elements of good writing? According to you, what tools are must-haves for writers?

Top of my element list is to have a basic knowledge of what makes a story work. I realise there are armchair aficionados who would disagree that Aristotle's 3-act principle is crucial to telling a good story, but the point is that it can be applied to any tale, and it puts the beginning, middle and end in there - and in the right order, thus preserving structure. It becomes a scaffolding to hang the details on.

The most important must-have is a spouse/partner with a good job!

What motivated you to write?

Wanting to tell stories, taking other people to places they would otherwise never go. As a pre-school child my parents encouraged me to read, which enabled me to have excitement and adventure. Wanting to be able to write was an ambition I had at an early age. I only wish that I hadn't allowed the mechanics of living to interfere for so long with producing this particular novel.

What was your favourite book when you were a child?

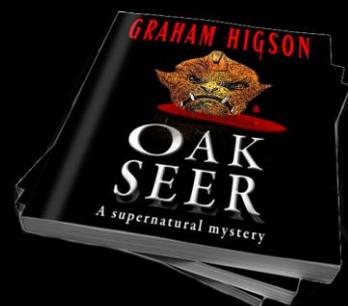
The Magician's Nephew by C.S. Lewis. This is a prequel to *The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe*. It has a boy and a girl as the protagonists, and deals with other worlds, bad things, and moral implications. Good triumphs over evil, and love wins in the end; that's just as it should be.

How long did it take to write Oak Seer?

It took five months. I found my original 1994 manuscript for *Quercus Necromancer*, made a list of the bits I wanted to retain for this version, and rewrote the story with a revised structure.

What influenced its creation?

It began in September 1988, while in hospital. I needed to imagine something that would help me get to sleep amidst all the extra-loud night-time hospital noises, so I would disappear into a fictional world where a passionate-

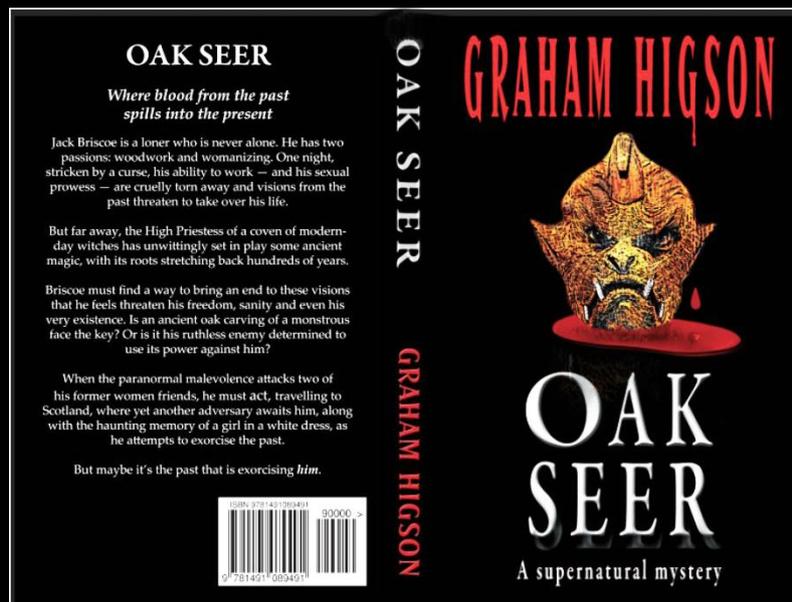


almost obsessive-woodworker was being haunted by a grotesque, phallic carving with arcane powers. For some years I had been aware that some people can see the past simply by touching objects, and it was this, combined with the character's almost spiritual appreciation for period oak, that kicked off the story. Strangely, whatever I dreamt up (and there was some weird stuff), I was surprised, shocked even, to find it had basis in folklore and, in some cases, reality.

Incidentally, it worked, I got to sleep (I don't frighten easily).

What is the message in your book?

That is up to the reader. It will have different meanings according to what is happening to that person. But if pushed, I would say the underlying message is that some occurrences are pre-determined, and that not everything in life can be explained.



[Back to the Oak Seer page](#)