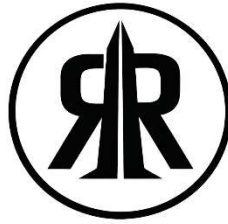


May Newsletter



Welcome everyone,

Okay, so if you're reading this, it means you came back – or finally found out about it through the foghorn I've been blaring on social media. Nice, that's a great way to reflect on a fantastic month and kick off the next one. With our second newsletter ready to go, I'm excited to share where things stand. Let's get started!

Where I Am in the Saga

If you've managed to make it this far without realising May is a release month, then kudos. So here's where we are across the saga(s):

- **'til the End of the World: New in Town (Year One · Volume I)** is now available in both eBook and paperback. The first five episodes have been polished and revised. It's been an incredible journey, finally seeing these stories in print, in a real book – rather than in the imaginary world of the computer. Episode VI's beta has also been released, as I look ahead to Volume II (Where Loyalty Lies), which will be published on 4th December 2026.
- **Sinners & Saints**, the next release in the Heroes & Demons saga, has been patiently waiting in the wings, while 'til the End of the World made its debut, but it's finally its time in the sun. The penultimate book in the saga, ARCs will close partway through June, so grab your free early release copy in advance if you can. Work will soon get underway for Fall & Flood, the final book in the saga, releasing next year (on the 10th anniversary of Heroes & Demons).
- **Echo**. With summer approaching, I can let you know that Echo is finally through its first draft. The last of the standalone New Knights novels is being edited and polished as we speak, and I have to say (as always), I'm excited for this one. Taking things in a bit of a different direction—more of a techno-noir thriller with soul, so to speak—make sure to check back for updates as we get closer to its October 2026 release.

Behind the Curtain

For this month's peek behind the curtain – there's no wizard here, I can tell you – I thought I'd celebrate 'til the End of the World's release by sharing some of the key influences behind it. Now, it's probably no surprise, but the major influence was *Buffy the Vampire Slayer*. I first discovered it when I was in my final few years of primary school, and though I was likely far too young at the time, I was

engrossed from the moment Darla's fangs sank into that random guy (who went on to spend many years on CSI: New York, don't you know?).

The very basic premise – young people too inexperienced to be thrown into a world of monsters, demons, and threats haunting their town – and the 'working from the high school library' were heavily influenced by this model. Perhaps that's why in its early versions, it seemed somewhat like a carbon copy. Granted, with foul mouths and a northern British sensibility.

Then I started planning it from beginning to end. All seven years. My way, without network interference, cast walkouts, or shady behind-the-scenes issues. I began to see what it could become. It could be a story that doesn't condescend to those growing up. It could show how many of us grow older—painful, messy, and full of grief and trauma. There are no resets, no retries, no resurrections in life.

And behind all that, a simple truth struck me – these stories, seemingly cool on the surface as a teenager, when reflected upon, are tales of grief. Grief for childhoods not experienced. Frustration with the forces beyond our control that steer us, whether beneficial or not. In this light, *Buffy* is not a superhero – but a child soldier conscripted into a war by people who keep their hands clean. How can anyone grow up in such circumstances and be okay with it?

Growing up marks the end of one world and the start of another. It's a long and painful journey. As I matured, so did the story, and I hope you'll see that although there's a sense of nostalgia here and this is a love letter to the stories I grew up with, they are not filtered through rose-tinted glasses. They are aware. We know the world continues after these characters fight the final battle, but what we learn is what it cost them.

Spotlight

Three spotlights this week:

Book Spotlight: 'til the End of the World: New in Town (Year One · Volume I)

Have you heard I've got a book out? No? Great, well, I do! I don't need to say much more because I'll include a photo and a link for you to check it out if you like. But really, spotlight shone, and here y'are. If you enjoy it and feel inspired, please do leave a review on either Amazon or GoodReads.

Character Spotlight: Amy Donaldson

Our character spotlight for the month is on one of my favourites – and someone who bridges many eras of the Rick Rawes storytelling universe: Amy Donaldson. A force of nature, she seems, having appeared as an adult in Avalon: Faerie Tales (and is set to make her full return in the upcoming The New Knights crossover event), and now her origins are explored through her role as a fifteen-year-old in 'til the End of the World.

You'll see a clever, capable young person finding her way into womanhood. Sweet, caring, and ultimately a bit naïve – but with intelligence to match everyone at her school. We know she will grow into a powerful magic user and Director of MOO. How she becomes this person will be explored over the seven years leading up to the End of the World, while her adult self will continue to show that even when you save the world, the job is never finished.

Plus, she loves Jaffa cakes, long walks on the beach, and Whitney Houston. Just coz.

Music Spotlight: It's the End of the World (As We Know It) by R.E.M.

This REM hit is the 100% unofficial theme tune of 'til the End of the World, and has been the backbone of the series since its inception. The surface-level upbeat tune and lyrics, despite the overall topic, highlight that mixture of dark gallows humour and spirit in the face of overwhelming darkness, like going to IKEA on a Bank Holiday weekend. And nothing says early 2000s teen energy quite like a throwback banger that defiantly sticks a middle finger up to that darkness.

Current ARC Opportunities

To summarise:

- ARCs for **'til the End of the World: New in Town** are now closed, though this is because the book is out this week (did I mention?)
- The ARCs for **Sinners & Saints** remain open until June 26th, after which they'll close. You can pick them up at [\[insert link here\]](#) for free, in the hopes of a review
- My new ARC page is available now at [\[insert link here\]](#), where you can apply to be part of the team on an ongoing basis – with a simple form and sign up for future releases

Something New for You

Thanks again for all the support you give. This time, I thought I'd share a little snippet of the upcoming Echo, which has recently been completed. Please remember, it still needs to go through the full editing process, but as a tease, here is a section from our first chapter, set deep in the Ladybower woods on a cold October morning.

He stopped dead.

Beyond their tent, in the exact centre of the clearing, there lay a large shape. A shape which had not been there the night before. A shape that was large enough to be a small bear. Only it wasn't. Instinctively and without even being much of a NCIS fan, Jacob knew what that crumpled form was. The only thing it could be.

A body.

He didn't know whether to cry or scream or run for his dad, but his still rational mind told him no. His curiosity drove him slowly forward towards the form. The figure lay as though sleeping, some distant half-remembered introductory first aid video reminding him of the recovery position, on the side, legs cocked, one hand up near the head. The figure was clearly a man.

The man was nude and even without knowing the weather forecast, Jacob could tell he was not sleeping. His dark skin was ashen, the soles of his feet almost brilliant white as though he'd walked through chalk. He could only see half a face, the other side obscured by the carpet of amber leaves. It was a face he fleetingly recognised.

Jacob did call for his dad, who in turn called for the police. Jacob did enjoy the camping trip, even though it had been cut short.

And Jacob started believing in ghosts.

Until Next Time

A lot is happening this month, with even more to come. Thanks again for your support, for following along – and hopefully for enjoying some, if not all, of the stories I've shared. And feel free to get in touch if you'd like, drop us a line. It, as always, means the world.

'til the End

Rick Rawes

31st May 2026