

Cover Artist: David W. Murray '76

This issue's cover art was meant to resonate with Clennon King's Hollywood feature story (page 16). Not doing it for you? How about if we told you that David Murray's skills help turn visual art into performing art on film? Among other things, Murray has worked as an animation background artist for Disney. There's your connection. Murray applied for the job when a friend applied. "The test was to copy a photo of a background from a Disney movie. I did one from *Bambi* and one from *Lady and the Tramp*." He and the friend were hired. The cover illustration is just that, however: a cover illustration. It's the cover of Murray's novel, *Majesty* (available online at DWMurraybooks.com). We've asked the author/illustrator/dad-of-three to comment a bit about the cover illustration, among other things:



A background in painting at The Putney School gave this issue's cover artist the skills to be a background illustrator for several major animated film features.

The sketch was done with an HB lead pencil. The color illustration is pretty small—approximately 11x14 inches—and was done in acrylics. I started it during work on *Lilo & Stitch* in 2001 and continued to doodle on it during *Brother Bear*. Guys at the studio wanted to know, "What the heck movie are you working on?" I finally finished the picture in Adobe PhotoShop® and was able to enhance the color and lighting effects. I was just going for a scene in the book, something active with a lot of detail. It doesn't have a name.

I attended the Rhode Island School of Design and got my B.F.A. in illustration. I've always been able to draw but Linn Bruce was the first to introduce me to painting at Putney. At any rate, I knew at Putney that I would pursue a career in art and started to look seriously at art colleges.

I had a lot of favorites at Putney: Ed Shore, Sven Huseby, Jack Noon, Jeffrey Campbell. But I suppose I made the closest connection with Linn as a teacher. There were other favorites but, after 30 years, my memory is a little foggy. My least favorite part of Putney was Barn, but in retrospect I have many colorful memories of the experience.

When I graduated from RISD, I became a fashion illustrator and enjoyed seeing my drawings in the *Boston Globe* and *Herald* newspapers. When I started work at Disney Feature Animation in Orlando, I was a background painter and, like the rest of the crew, enjoyed seeing my work on screen. But over the years I was always writing screenplays and manuscripts and today I find that writing is my real passion. For me there is no greater joy. My other interests are jogging and I also help coach baseball.

It was a friend from college, who was applying at Disney as a background painter, that suggested that I apply as well. Coincidentally, the friend was also the best man at my wedding and he and I both started work at the same time.

There are more movies now than ever that have dark and evil themes. For example: *Saw*, *The Hills Have Eyes*, *The Craft* (another term for Satanism), *The Devil's Own*, *The Devil's Advocate*, *Sin City*, *Dahmer*, *Doom*, *Hannibal*, *Halloween*, *Underworld*, *Friday the 13th Part 11*—the list goes on and on and on. With an insatiable appetite for films that blatantly portray Satan and evil, no matter how evil or grotesque, there is still a sensitivity to those who would make films honoring God and goodness.

Considering the glut and ever-growing popularity of horror films, I consider movies like *The Passion* and *Narnia*, merely a meager attempt at "equal time." Although I wrote *Majesty* to be fun and entertaining, it is indeed a Christian fantasy which depicts magic and sorcery as dangerous and seductive powers with disastrous consequences—a message that is strangely foreign to our youth today. 🍷