

TITLE INFORMATION

THE CHALLENGER

ANDERS AASLUND

I can play along. Be Imogen Hart, the Planetwalker. Imogen Hart, the aerobatics champion. But all of that comes second to my most important mission: to learn why Ellinor Bowman died.

Things are going wrong for AI nerd Imogen Hart. Her best friend takes her own life just as they prepare to set foot on planet Alamea—mankind's new home. When the ruling elite aboard the colonial spaceship Conestoga attempt to rewrite the past, Imogen connects the dots and uncovers an age-old secret that threatens the future of a quarter of a million passengers.

Her destiny shattered, Imogen must employ every dirty trick in her arsenal and fight for the truth. But shaking things up turns out to be much more dangerous than Imogen ever imagined—and time is running out.

Fans of Andy Weir's *Artemis*, Marie Liu's *Warcross*, and Veronica Roth's *Divergent* will enjoy this science fiction adventure and the carefully crafted world of Conestoga.



8,5" x 5,5"

KEY SALES INFO



Series

The Planetwalker Trilogy



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Categories

Young/New Adult
Science Fiction
Space Colonization
Strong Female Lead



Themes

Powerful friendships, family, determination, predestination, authoritarianism, upheaval, artificial intelligence, resistance

QUICK QUESTIONS, FAST REPLIES

Fav authors?

Too many to name them all, but off the top of my head: Arthur C. Clarke, William Gibson, John Irving, Tove Jansson, Michael Ende, Chuck Palanhiuk, Stephen King, Neal Stephenson, Zadie Smith, Becky Chambers... etc. ad infinitum.

Why go self-publishing?

I was bored with the time and effort it takes to try and publish the regular way. If one puts all that work into actually publishing the book instead, it's probably about as much labor, of not less. Also, I like the creative freedom it entails.

Where do ideas come from?

You tell me. For me, they just fall into my lap when I least expect it. But the idea is just the seed. You have to water it, nurse it, make it grow. That's the real work. Ideas are easy. Making them become something is hard.

You're Swedish—why English?

The simple reason is: because I can. Once I got my first short story in English published, I knew I could do it. There are of course other considerations. All languages have strengths and weaknesses, and it's a lot of fun discovering what they are through writing. Another reason, the one most writers probably don't want to talk about, is marketability. Swedish speakers number around 12-13 million. English is slightly more popular, and thus the dream of being able to quit my day job was born.

You sure you can write well enough in English though?

Yes.

What inspired "The Challenger?"

World events of the past decade. I can't help but feeling that the lessons of the 20th century went in one ear and out the other, and here we are, embracing the strongman ideologues and proto-fascists once again. When a leader can openly lie with impunity and is applauded for being blatantly chauvinistic and unpleasant, we're in trouble. I wanted to write something for younger readers that talks about the rise of authoritarianism, and how easy it is to be fooled by its attractions in an age of great change. The problem with democracy is that it can be used to dismantle itself, and if you do it step by step, nobody's the wiser until it's too late.

I'd say Timothy Snyder's "On Tyranny" was part of the inspiration for the story. Also, I love Arthur C. Clarke's "Rendezvous with Rama," in my opinion the best science fiction novel ever written, and I wanted to pay homage to it in some way.

Who should read "The Challenger?"

Anyone who's a bit nerdy, curious, and likes taking things apart to see how they work. Introverts, extroverts, and people in between. Big idea kind of readers, what if readers, readers who enjoy it when the protagonist's battles have enormous consequences. And readers who are bored of dystopia, love triangles, and

inexplicable superpowers. Anyone who wants some semblance of realism in their sci-fi young/new adult books.

What's your writing method like?

We're pals. No, I mean that. I've learned the hard way to structure my ideas, my drafting, my writing, and my editing, and now it works astonishingly well. I need a story structure with story beats before I start writing. I write intuitively, meaning that I butcher the story structure as I go along. And I spend far more time editing than I do writing. I love the editing part of writing, so it makes sense for me to blurt out a terribly written draft and then edit it to as close to perfection as I can.

Thank you, I don't have any more que—

I almost forgot: The Challenger is part one of a trilogy. Yes, I couldn't resist the trilogy trap. But I've planned the overarching storyline from the get-go, and I knew exactly how the whole thing was going to end before I even began structuring The Challenger. I think it's because you know how TV shows used to run 11 seasons with 25 episodes in each and nobody, not even the writers, knew what was going on or how it would end? Yeah, I really hate that, so I decided early on to—

I'm late for a meeting

ABOUT THE AUTHOR



Anders Aaslund has been writing since childhood. Quite how it happened, no one knows, but he enjoys lovingly creating characters and making them miserable.

Hailing from Karlstad, Sweden, Anders received his Bachelor's degree in media and communication studies from Karlstad University, after which he promptly set out to not work in the field. It failed and eventually, the circle closed: he now works as a communications officer with his Alma Mater.

He writes brainy science fiction space adventures for new adult readers. "The Challenger" is his debut novel and was inspired by world events of the past decade.

Anders continues to live in Karlstad with his wife, but dreams of owning a house in Italy. When he's not writing, traveling, cooking, and reading take up most of his time.

CONTACT INFORMATION

anders@andersaaslundfiction.com

andersaaslundfiction.com

[instagram.com/andersaaslundfiction](https://www.instagram.com/andersaaslundfiction)

[facebook.com/andersaaslundfiction](https://www.facebook.com/andersaaslundfiction)

twitter.com/andersfiction

+46(0)73-637 25 85