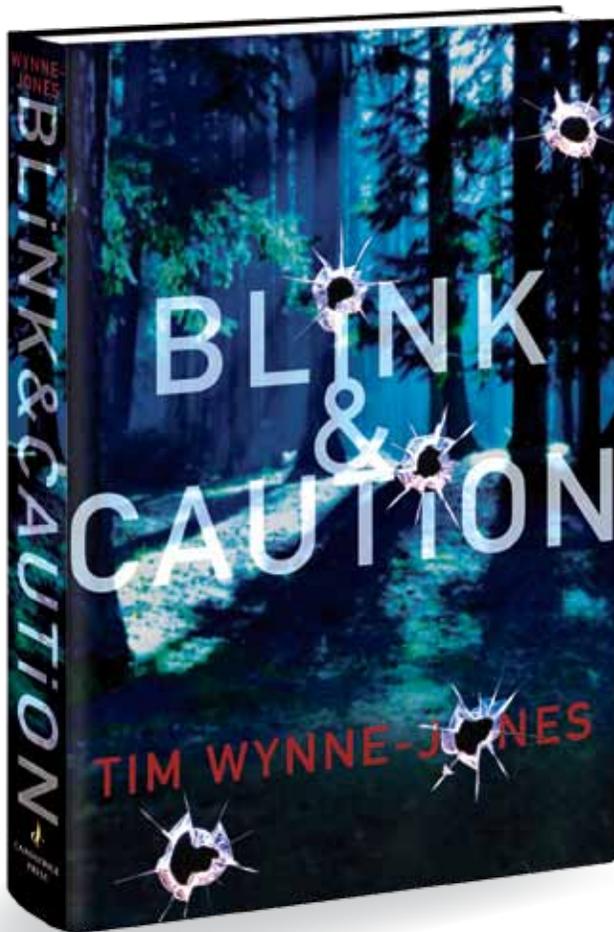


FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Blink & Caution



*“Blink & Caution is a thrill ride to the end—
suspenseful, heart-pounding, and with no
mercy for the tenderhearted.”*

—Rita Williams-Garcia

*“Noir crime suspense that’s terrifying and
authentic, and also that rare thing: deeply,
intensely moving. . . . Don’t miss reading this one.”*

—Nancy Werlin


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Two street kids get tangled in a plot over their heads—and risk an unexpected connection—in this heart-pounding thriller by Tim Wynne-Jones.

Boy, did you get off on the wrong floor, Blink. All you wanted was to steal some breakfast for your empty belly, but instead you stumbled on a fake kidnapping and a cell phone dropped by an “abducted” CEO, giving you a link to his perfect blonde daughter. Now you’re on the run, but it’s OK as long as you are smart enough to stay in the game and keep Captain Panic locked in his hold.

Enter a girl named Caution. As in “Caution: Toxic.” As in “Caution: Watch Your Step.” She’s also on the run from a skeezy drug-dealer boyfriend and from a nightmare in her past that won’t let her go. When she spies Blink at the bus station, Caution can see he’s an easy mark. But there’s something about this naive, skinny street punk, whom she only wanted to rob, that tugs at her heart, a heart she thought deserved not to feel.

Charged with suspense and intrigue, this taut novel trails two deeply compelling characters as they forge a blackmail scheme that is foolhardy at best, disastrous at worst—along with a fated, tender partnership that will offer them each a rare chance for redemption.

BLINK & CAUTION

by Tim Wynne-Jones

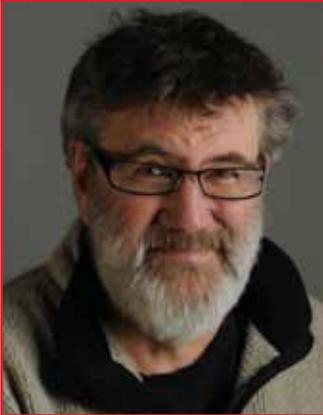
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\$16.99 (\$19.00 CAN)

352 pages, age 14 and up

Tim Wynne-Jones Q&A



Did Blink and Caution's stories come to you separately, or did you begin with one and find the other?

An excellent question, because I wrote Blink's entire story first, with not a sign of Caution anywhere. The poor guy; I stranded him totally alone in a huge mess, which is probably why Liz Bicknell, my editor, didn't like the story at first—didn't like the Blink story as a stand-alone. But the thing is, Caution was always there in my mind, in this *other* book I was going to write. I just couldn't decide which story I would write first. Duh! The subconscious is a funny thing. It's there feeding you good stuff, but you have to actually *notice*. As soon as I started writing Caution's story and weaving it into Blink's, the fireworks started. And of course she changed everything for both of us. I mean, for both Blink and me.

Blink & Caution deals with two seemingly contradictory themes: coincidence and destiny. Do you believe both forces are operating simultaneously?

Every story begins with a coincidence. You are there to witness something happen. If you weren't there, then maybe the high point of your day would be a truly great pastrami-on-rye sandwich for lunch. Lucky you! A story is going to pit you against forces you've never had to deal with before. A story might put you in real jeopardy. A story means you're probably going to go *without* lunch. As for destiny . . . well, destiny is what you make of coincidence, right?

The use of second-person narrative is rare. What drove you to use it for Blink's story?

A story starts to come to you in a voice. This was the voice that came to me when I started writing Blink. I half dismissed it at first; *I can fix this later*, I told myself, while giving myself the freedom to just let the story come out, scene by scene. Then I had a revelation: the story was in the second person because there was somebody talking to Blink! I wasn't saying *you* meaning "dear reader." I was using *you* to mean a persistent voice in Blink's head, someone who cares for him and cannot really alter what happens to him but is there with him constantly. Someone who thinks about him all the time. When I realized this, there was no fixing to do; I just had to give myself over completely to the voice.

What inspired the vivid descriptions of the setting in Blink & Caution?

Setting, for me, is always a lot more than backdrop. I always want a sense of place in my stories, an inevitability of space. Where you are affects who you are in huge ways, and this is never truer than when you are living on the street. Equally, being out in the wild affects who you are. In both cases you are living on instinct and on your wits. That is not just where Blink and Caution find themselves; it is who they are.

The teenage voice is so strong in this book. What were you like as a teenager?

I was nothing like Blink or Caution. I was a kind of smart nerd, but not all that smart, and not entirely nerdy—so kind of a nebbish with occasional moments of chutzpah. Which is really weird because I'm not Jewish! Seriously, I was the kind of person who looked as if he were hanging with the in crowd but wasn't really, so I spent a lot of time observing people. We moved a lot when I was

Tim Wynne-Jones Q&A

growing up—a *lot*. So I was always entering a scene from zero. You see a lot when you're the new guy. And you develop an ear. Any new crowd speaks a foreign language, and until you know what it means, you're an outsider. An outsider is a good thing for a writer to be, even if it's lonely.

The author's note at the end of Blink & Caution is a statement about your view on guns. Can you elaborate on why you decided to include that at the end of the novel?

I'm not against guns. I live in the country where lots of people hunt, and those I meet are completely responsible about it. They get angry when anyone suggests that there should be tighter gun laws because they themselves don't need to be governed about the way they treat firearms. They know perfectly well how dangerous a gun or rifle can be if it isn't treated properly. They don't like being grouped with the yahoos and idiots who end up shooting each other or themselves. They don't like being included with the people whose "hidden" handgun is found by a six-year-old kid who accidentally blows his head off. I get that. Nobody wants to be thought of as a moron. They also don't want to be associated with criminals. I get that too.

But those who uphold the adage that "Guns don't kill people; people do" blindly refuse to face the fact that when a gun goes off, stuff happens. You don't hear anyone say "Sticks don't kill people; people do," although that would be a lot truer, because if you started whaling on someone with a stick, you would really have to work at it if you planned to off them. But with a gun, one bullet is all it takes. The extraordinary event I have fictionalized here with *Caution* did happen in much the same way that I've described it. And I won't let anyone pretend that this freak accident didn't end in reality with someone dying just because they don't want to face the fact that a gun is a death waiting to happen.

What do you hope readers will take away from the book?

Well, I certainly don't want to lecture to anyone as I did in the answer to the last question! This book was not written as a lesson. It's a thriller, and it's a love story—the first love story I've ever written, really. And it's also a story about following something that grabs you and holds you right to the end. It's about actively working to *make* something bad end—taking that first brave step toward changing your life. Where will it take you? Well, that's the story. There's a brilliant line in Stephen Sondheim's musical *Sunday in the Park with George*: "I chose, and my world was shaken—so what? /The choice may have been mistaken, the choosing was not." I love that. And I love it when characters choose to act, to shake the dice, to take that first shaky and frightening step toward something better. If there's any "message" in the story—and believe me, I don't start out thinking about this stuff—then I guess that's it: Choose. Act. But mostly, I hope this book is a really good read!

About Tim Wynne-Jones

Tim Wynne-Jones is the author of more than thirty-books, including novels, picture books, and three collections of short stories. He has won the Governor General's Literary Award for children's literature twice and the Canadian Library Association Children's Book of the Year Award three times, and has been short-listed twice for the *Guardian* Children's Fiction Prize. His books have been published in fourteen languages.

In addition to writing books, Tim Wynne-Jones has written a dozen radio plays for CBC, one of which, *St. Anthony's Man*, received an ACTRA Award. He also wrote the book and libretto for an opera, *A Midwinter Night's Dream*, composed by Harry Somers, which premiered at the Milk International Children's Festival of the Arts at Toronto's Harbourfront in 1988. It has been remounted several times, most recently in 2003 at the Bluma Appel Theatre in Toronto, and a CD of it was released in 2006. He also wrote the book and lyrics for the musical *Mischief City* with composer John Roby, which premiered at the Young People's Theatre in Toronto in 1990 and was remounted at the Ottawa School of Speech and Drama in 2009.

Among the author's lyric-writing credits are five songs with blues phenom JW-Jones on his album *Midnight Memphis Sun*. Tim Wynne-Jones also co-wrote sixteen songs for the Jim Henson/CBC television program *Fraggle Rock* along with composer Phil Balsam.

Tim Wynne-Jones has taught the at MFA Program in Writing for Children and Young Adults at Vermont College for the past eight years. He also teaches through the correspondence program at Humber College and has taught extensively in Canada, especially at the Banff Centre. Tim Wynne-Jones and his wife live in Ottawa and in a country home near Perth, Ontario. They have three grown children.

Also by Tim Wynne-Jones



The Uninvited

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—*Publishers Weekly*

BLINK & CAUTION

A Letter from the Editor

Dear Reader,

Editors are optimists—gamblers, even. We lust after the Great Novel, whether a debut or the masterwork of a glorious career—the story that leaves us breathless, altered, ready to say to a fellow reader, “Wow, you have to read this!”

Blink & Caution is Tim Wynne-Jones’s twelfth novel for teens and it’s That One. With two characters you can’t help but love, and a tragic death underpinning the action, *Blink & Caution* is impossible to put down, sometimes terrifying, and ultimately cathartic. I recommend it wholeheartedly to teens—and adults—who crave fascinating characters, fabulous, intricate plotting, and even a love story rolled into one “heart-pounding thrill ride,” as Rita Williams-Garcia calls it.

Tim Wynne-Jones has won many awards in his career—*The Maestro*, *The Boy in the Burning House*, and *Some of the Kinder Planets* have each earned numerous accolades—and I am looking forward to seeing *Blink & Caution* join their ranks in 2011.

Yours
in fiction,



Liz Bicknell
Associate Publisher and Editorial Director