

Interview with Jenna Johnson

Fall 2011

Quickly, give us the title and genre of your book and a 30-word or less tagline:

It's really a series, entitled "The Last Werewolf Hunter", and it consists of three books- Cry for the Moon, Behind Blue Eyes, and More Golden Than Day.

How did you come up with the title of your book or series?

It's called "The Last Werewolf Hunter" because that's what the main character turns out to be. . . the last werewolf hunter in the world.

Who is your favorite character from your book and why?

My favorite character is Zach Trewick, who is the main character. The whole series is told in first-person, from his point of view, and he has the kind of personality that makes him hard not to love. He's very honest about his opinions (which he's full of), he can be silly and lighthearted sometimes, but he'll also cry if he has to and he can have some pretty deep thoughts at times. I like him very much.

How about your least favorite character? What makes them less appealing to you?

I think my least favorite character is Marc Doucet. He turns out to be such a total dirtbag after pretending to be so very helpful and kind, and then tries to put the blame on somebody else.

If you could change ONE thing about your novel, what would it be? Why?

I don't think I would change anything at this point. I've been told a time or two that the scene at the beginning of the first book when Zach's grandmother kills a rabbit is a bit more disgusting than it really needed to be, so if I had it to do over again then I might redo that part and tone it down a bit, if only because I don't want to give readers a false impression of what the rest of the series is like. But for the most part, I'm happy with the work as it stands.

Give us an interesting fun fact or a few about your book or series:

The series started out as a short story that I wrote when I was still a teenager, so it's done a lot of growing and developing over the years till I finished it a few months ago.

Do you have any unique talents or hobbies?

I like doing all kinds of things. Other than writing, I've tried everything from rock climbing to painting. My curiosity is insatiable.

How can we contact you or find out more about your books?

The best thing to do is to visit my website, and you'll find just about everything you ever wanted to know about me and my writing. There are free samples and complete short stories, poetry, interviews, commentary, and articles I've written. The link is www.williamwoodall.org

What can we expect from you in the future?

Right now I'm working on a new novel which is set to be released in March 2012. I don't want to give away too many details, but it's another expansion of a short story that fans enjoyed especially well and asked to hear more about. I pay attention to what readers tell me they'd like to read.

Any tips for readers or advice for other writers trying to get published?

I have seven points that I try to keep in mind for myself.

- a. Write about what you love, regardless of whether anybody else thinks it's important or not.
- b. Always put everything you've got and your whole heart into every book you write
- c. Be as nasty and cruel as you possibly can to your characters because that's exactly what will bring out their inner strength and make readers love them,
- d. Remember you're a novelist, not a propaganda writer. Fiction is not the place to get on a soap-box and grind axes, no matter how worthy and important they are.
- e. Every single word in your story should be there either to advance the plot or illuminate your characters' personalities. If there's anything that doesn't do that, cut it out.
- f. Never use a difficult word when a simple one will do just as well, and don't use non-English words when an English word already exists.
- g. Finally, don't get discouraged. Good things come to those who work hard and never give up.

Is there anything else you'd like to say?

This is marketed as young adult material, but there's some real depth in it which gives an adult reader something to enjoy about it, too. I think all great books are ageless; they're something a child can enjoy, but there's also something in them that an adult can love just as much.

And now, before you go, how about a snippet from your book that is meant to intrigue and tantalize us:

"There are only three questions a man ever needs to ask: What is the nature of God, what things are worth living for, and what things are worth dying for. And the answer to all of them is the same: only love." Spoken by Zach Trewick, seconds before he jumped in front of a man holding a loaded rifle, to try to save his girlfriend's life. You'd have to read the rest of the story to find out what happened next.