

Interview with Marie Symeou

Fall 2011

Please tell us a little about yourself.

Well, let's see. I like to write young adult fantasy novels for the most part. But I've always believed that a truly great story should be ageless. That is, there should be something in it that even a young child can enjoy, but it should also have themes that an adult can feed on as well, although they may not be the same things. That's what I try to do in my work. I want it to appeal to a universal audience as much as possible. My stories almost always contain a low-key Christian theme, but it's not always obvious unless you know what to look for.

What is your book about?

My book is a three-part series called "The Last Werewolf Hunter", about the adventures of a boy named Zach Trewick who is born into a family of werewolves, but, for his own reasons, decides that he doesn't want that kind of life for himself. His family refuses to take no for an answer, and he's left with no other option but to run away from home. That choice leads him on an adventure which will take everything he's got, as he struggles to decide what he really believes and how much he's willing to sacrifice for the sake of his ideals. Not to mention how much he's willing to sacrifice for the sake of the people who have cost him so much already. Although it's about werewolves, that isn't really the main theme of the story. It's more of a coming-of-age story that focuses on Zach's development as a human being.

How long did it take you to write?

I started seriously working on it in 2008, and then it was finished in 2011, so it took me 3 years to write it, give or take a little.

What inspired you to write this novel?

I've been a high school teacher for several years, and some of the kids I've worked with have had to face pretty awful things. I've always been humbled by the courage many of them have, and you might say I was inspired by every child who ever had to stand alone against impossible odds, and somehow made it anyway.

When did you decide you wanted to be a writer?

I've always known I wanted to write, ever since I was old enough to pick up a crayon. I started telling stories almost as soon as I knew how to talk.

What part of writing do you struggle with? Character, plot, description or dialogue?

I don't know that I would call it a struggle. Some things are more challenging than others, but it's never been anything other than fun. I tend to be a perfectionist who might spend half an hour choosing exactly the right word to convey what I mean, and sometimes that bogs me down too long when I ought to be moving ahead.

Did you have a professional editor?

I did professional editing before I ever became a writer myself, and I still do it for other writers. So no, that's one thing I've never needed. I know what people say, that no one can do their own editing and not look like an amateur. That's good advice for most people, but if you have the skills and the knowledge to do it yourself, there's no reason why you shouldn't. Poor editing in my books is one thing I've never even once been accused of.

Do you edit as you write or wait until your book is finished?

Both. I cut and paste and edit as I go along, and then when I'm finished I lay the book aside for a few weeks to let it cool off. Then I go back and start reading it myself from page one and changing anything that needs improvement. I do that at least three times for every book I write, and sometimes more. Like I said, I'm a perfectionist. lol

Are you currently working on any projects?

I'm currently working on a new novel which is due to be released in March of 2012. It hasn't been named yet, but it's another young adult fantasy novel about a boy who lives in an abusive home and wishes for something better in life. What he gets isn't at all what he expected.

Any advice for new authors?

Never give up. Writing is an art, and it can take years to polish your skills. You'll also find that once you finish a book your job is only just beginning. You'll have to learn how to do marketing and promotion, and to put yourself out there in the public eye more than you may be used to. It's very rewarding, but there are a lot of bumps in the road. Don't let them discourage you.

Do you listen to music while you write? If so, what type of music?

Sometimes I do, but not often. Usually anything else going on around me is a distraction from trying to focus on the writing itself. But in certain moods I do like to listen to classical music, or something instrumental. It's the lyrics of a song that tend to distract me more than the music does, for some reason. I like Pachelbel's Canon in D (that's my favorite, in fact), or Vivaldi's Four Seasons, or Fur Elise, or something else soothing and quiet that I can play in the background.

Best time of day to write?

It doesn't seem to matter, but I tend to do most of my writing in the morning while my mind is fresh.

Top 3 authors?

J.R.R. Tolkien, C.S. Lewis, and George MacDonald.

Top 3 novels of all time?

The Silmarillion, by J.R.R. Tolkien, The Last Battle or possibly Perelandra, by C.S. Lewis, and At the Back of the North Wind, by George MacDonald.

Top 3 movies of all time?

The Neverending Story is probably my all-time favorite. I don't know that I could think of anything else to compare it to. The novel of the same name by Michael Ende is wonderful, too.

What do you read the most? Fiction or non-fiction?

Some of both. Usually fiction for pleasure, but I have a lot of non-fiction reading that I have to do for other things.

Is your book in Print, ebook or both?

Both. The series is for sale in the original three books for the Kindle ("Cry for the Moon", "Behind Blue Eyes", and "More Golden Than Day", in that order), and then there's also a print edition which contains all three volumes in one book. The print edition is available in either hardback or paperback editions, and it's simply called "The Last Werewolf Hunter: The Complete Series".

Where can your readers contact you? Links, etc.

The best place to do that is through my official author's website at www.williamwoodall.org , **where you will find reviews, commentary, articles I've written, free short stories and poetry, and all kinds of other things. I always like to hear from fans.**