

Bitten By Books Interview Q&A

BBB: What do you find the most challenging aspect of writing?

NH: The leap of faith. The trust that, when I knock on my characters' doors to ask them to come out to play, they'll be home and raring to go. And that I'll be able to keep up with them!

BBB: What is the most rewarding aspect of writing for you?

NH: Hands down, it's hearing from readers. One sweet woman wrote telling me she was having a bout with non-clinical depression, and that reading *La Vida Vampire* had her laughing within a few pages. To know reading my book helped her to shift her energy was an honor!

BBB: What made you decide to start writing or decide you wanted to become an author?

NH: I've written since I was at least three years old - I used to ask my mother to write my stories as I dictated. So, for me, it wasn't a matter of deciding to write, it was a matter of deciding to write for publication.

BBB: What do you feel are the benefits of the new electronic readers such as Kindle to the environment?

NH: You know, I don't know anything about them firsthand. I understand from friends that they are fantastic, and I'd love it if e-readers made a contribution to conservation. I think printing on recycled paper is a step forward as well. I have to admit, I love holding a physical book.

BBB: What impact do electronic readers create on the bottom line for Authors in the end? Do you feel they have a negative impact or positive, or no impact at all that you can see?

NH: Anything that encourages people to read - and makes it easy within their lifestyles - can only be a plus. As for the monetary bottom line, again, I don't have firsthand knowledge about it. I was delighted to learn from a fellow writer and Kindle user that *La Vida Vampire* was available in that format.

BBB: Your book *La Vida Vampire* that released in April from Berkley is based on a character named Francesca "Cesca" Marinelli. Is there a reason you decided to go with a vampire in this book versus any of the numerous paranormal creatures out there?

NH: Oh, yes! Cesca was originally conceived when I watched a peanut butter commercial and misheard a line referring to a “Princess Vampire video.” I knew I had to be hearing wrong, but I also knew I’d heard it for a reason. The line made me laugh, and idea wouldn’t let go, so I grew it and shaped the concept until Cesca was fully born. I went from never intending to do a vampire (because so many others were doing them so very well!), to bonding with Cesca and her merry band.

BBB: Tell us about the obsession Cesca has with surfing.

NH: Obsession? Big grins! In a way, I suppose Cesca is obsessed with surfing. She was an unusually self-determined and athletic young human woman for her time, and came out of her coffin with the same traits. She (rather regally) informed me that she loved to play in the ocean, and had essentially body surfed before it had a name. Now she wanted to surf with a board, and since she was a part day-walker, she darn well would. My answer? Why not? Clearly, surfing is an aspect of her desire to blend in 21st century society.

BBB: Are you working on any different series with other paranormal creatures in the works outside of the current series?

NH: I am! I’m working on a series idea starring several paranormal characters, but the concept is very much in the What If and Why Not stages. This gestation stage is a time when I hold silence rather than talking about it.

BBB: What's next for Cesca will there be more books in the series?

NH: I hope there will be a good number of books in the series, but the next one features Cesca “protecting” a vampire stand-up comic wannabe while working with Saber to figure out who is sucking the life from and killing vampires. The current title is *Last Vampire Standing*, and it will be released in May 2009.

BBB: What genre would you classify La Vida Vampire? Urban Fantasy, Horror, Paranormal a mixture?

NH: Definitely not Horror! I’ve seen it described as Urban Fantasy and Paranormal Romance, and I call it a paranormal mystery romance. I also call it Vampire Lite, but there are other paranormal elements, so it’s a mixture.

BBB: What is your favorite time of day to write?

NH: Since my hubby has retired, it’s whenever I grab the time and space! I tend to write in a better flow in the afternoon and evening, or rather late at night/ early in the morning.

BBB: What is your favorite paranormal book of all time?

NH: Oh, Rachel, I don't know that I can choose one! Lynn Michael's *Nightwing* was groundbreaking, in my opinion, but I have a list as long as my arm of paranormal authors and books I adore!

BBB: If you could be any paranormal creature, what would it be and why?

NH: Wow, difficult choice! I'm particularly fond of mermaids and dragons, so perhaps a merdragon? One that can shape shift to human form. What? I gotta have my Starbucks!

BBB: Where do you find your inspiration when writing? Do you have somebody who inspires you?

NH: Being in St. Augustine alone inspires me, but my oomph comes primarily from the characters and their story of the moment. I love "going out to play" with Cesca and the gang – or whatever characters I'm writing at the time. A long list of people inspire me – my mother, my children, my husband, my readers, my author friends. I'm a sucker for success, and cheer the triumphs of others. That's inspiration!

BBB: When is your next scheduled book signing?

NH: The very next one will be at the Romance Writers of America "Readers for Life" Literacy Autographing on Wednesday, July 30 at the San Francisco Marriott. The event is open to the public, and runs from 5:30-7:30 p.m. in the Yerba Buena Ballroom. I'll be doing two signings in September, one in Jacksonville, FL at the Riverside Art Festival, and the other the next weekend at the Florida Heritage Book Festival. The full info for my July-October signings is on my web site.

BBB: How true are the rumors that you are an expert surfer?

NH: The rumors are entirely false. (Darn it.) However, it is entirely true that I have my own board now - a 7 foot, 10 inch longboard - and I'm fantastic at wiping out!

BBB: Who is your favorite secondary character in your series?

NH: I love Maggie and Shalimar Millie, Cosmil and Pandora. However, I think Saber is still my fav. Not because he's the hero, but because I love the way he and Cesca play off of one another.

BBB: What did you do before you became a writer? Do you write full time?

NH: I do write full time now, and have since before I sold *La Vida Vampire*. However, I have a Master's in Education – Speech and Language Pathology – and I practiced in both clinical and public school settings in the Tulsa, Oklahoma and Dallas, Texas areas. I also taught a variety of standard subjects at a small private school in Dallas before I returned to writing full time.

BBB: What is your favorite holiday and why?

NH: I think my fav holiday would have to be the Christmas season. It's almost guaranteed that my daughter and at least one son will be with us during that time, and I have great fun with my children. It's also a time of both reflection and renewal, of gearing up for a new year, for spring, for another burst of growth. And, yes, I love the sparkling lights, too.

BBB: Do you have any pearls of wisdom you would like to share with our readers here today?

NH: Since I firmly believe that readers compound their wisdom with every book we read, I'll just sincerely thank you for supporting writers ... and ask a question. What are the various genres that you read, and what do you take away from those genres? I'd truly like to know!

I thank the ever-gracious Rachel for inviting me to BBB, and I thank you all for being here!