

Can you tell me the theme/metaphors/symbolism in this book?

No. Ask me an “English class” question and my parental side comes out, saying “your teacher expects you to find this for yourself, not ask me for the answer.” Sorry!

How did you get published?

In my twenties I started working on novels, and would sporadically send out query letters and sample chapters, but never got anything more than a form letter rejection. So I gave up and concentrated on improving.

When I finished Bitten, I had an instructor look at it, to see how well I was progressing. He offered to recommend it to an agent, and things happened very quickly from there. Within a couple of months I went from being unpublished to having multiple book contracts. So it was a long empty road, with a very quick stop at the end!

How long have you been writing?

Since I *could* write, and I've been coming up with stories for longer than that. My first published novel came out in 2001 and I've been writing full-time since 2002.

Where do you get your ideas?

This is probably the question writers hate most. Part of that is because half the time we don't even know where an idea originated. Once you start writing a lot, the ideas come so fast and furious that getting one is never an issue. For me, they come from everywhere: newspaper and magazine articles, a chance comment, a blurb for a new movie or just...my head.

Some examples? Elena: from an X-Files episode. I didn't like their portrayal of werewolves and wrote a short story about a female werewolf of the type I preferred. Dime Store Magic: research on witches. The more I read on the witch hunts, the more I wanted to do a modern-day version. Jaime: an article on John Edwards, the TV spiritualist. I read it and thought "what if someone like that really could hear ghosts?" Broken: someone talking about the missing "From Hell" letter. I thought "what if the letter really was 'from Hell'?"

What inspires you to write?

I think it's the opportunity to tell my own stories. As a child, I started writing because I loved reading, and writing meant I could make up the stories I wanted to hear. Part of that still holds true today...although I'm no longer the only one reading them!

Why do you write about the supernatural?

I've been fascinated by the paranormal since I was a child. I blame it on too many Saturday mornings watching Scooby-Doo. By now, I have no idea why I'm so attracted to it.

As a genre, though, the attraction for me is the chance to write something fantastical that's still easily understood. If I say "vampire" 90% of people know what I'm talking about. It's not total "fantasy." But because most people agree vampires don't exist, I'm free to play with the conventions as I want, something I can't do in, for example, crime novels.

What are best and worst things about a writing career?

The main "up" is that I'm doing something I love. That main "down" is the pressure, something I didn't foresee. When you get the chance at a career you've dreamed of, and that you love having, it's great. Then you realize you can lose it very easily—what happens if that first book bombs, or you can't write a second, or you hit book eight and the ideas just dry up...or the market for this kind of fiction dries up? Scary stuff.

Can you give me an expanded personal bio?

I was born in Sudbury Ontario in 1968. My parents moved me to London, Ontario when I was nine months old and I lived there until I married. I'm the oldest of four kids. Typical middle-class background for that period—Dad worked in the office of a big company, mom stayed home. No artistic types in my family—music, art, writing etc were hobbies, not jobs.

I went to the University of Western Ontario for psychology, with plans to become a clinical psychologist. On the brink of grad school, I realized that such a career would mean very little time to write for many years, so I switched paths and went to Fanshawe College in London for computer programming.

While getting my education, I married and had my daughter. Then I took a 9-5 job programming for a bank and continued writing. I sold Bitten in 1999. Had two more kids before it was released in 2001, which meant something had to give and I quit my job to write full-time, which I've been doing ever since.