

I'm interviewing veteran vampire romance author and editor Nancy Kilpatrick, a couple of whose early stories appeared in my fanzine THE VAMPIRE'S CRYPT. (I have links on my website listing the contents of each issue of the zine and a link leading to the distributor who sells all 25 issues.)

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Interview with Nancy Kilpatrick:

1. What inspired you to begin writing?

My grandfather gave me a typewriter when I was eight years old. I began hunting and pecking and wrote child stories. By my teens I was writing teen-angst stories and Why-Does-God-Let-This-Happen essays. I didn't have an agenda to 'be a writer', but had always written, and one day I realized that this is what I did all the time, so I must be a writer. Writer by default! <G>

2. What genres do you write in?

Most of what I've written has been in the horror and dark fantasy genres and a good chunk of it is vampire fiction. I've also published stories that are mystery, fantasy, erotica, oh and that one science fiction story! I've also published one non-fiction book, **The goth Bible**. Like most writers, I will tackle anything that interests me but the interest has to be in the project itself, and I find my interests tend towards the darker types of fiction.

3. Do you outline, "wing it," or something in between?

It depends on what I'm writing. My first novel (written in 1975), I winged it. I've published a total of eighteen novels and learned early on that because this fictional form requires such a huge investment of time and energy, it's good to know where I'm going in the story, although I might not go the route I'd envisioned, or even reach the conclusion I'd anticipated.

For short fiction, I don't outline per se, but I do more or less think out the plot. Sometimes I jot notes. It often goes something like this: in "The Vechi Barbat" a short story published in the World Horror Convention book 2007 when I was a Writer Guest of Honor at the convention--which has recently been reprinted in the anthology **By Blood We Live--**, I knew I wanted to write about an eastern European vampire and I knew I'd be working with mythology. I did some research and found enough information that I became fascinated with the idea of someone caught between the modern world and the world of the past as still lived in parts of Europe today. That gave me the parameters for that story and I just needed to think about how to portray that type of vampire and how the mythology around that vampire would impact on a girl leaving her village for the modern world.

4. What authors or works influenced the background and traits of your vampires?

I'm not sure how to answer that. Back in 1975 when I wrote **Bloodlover**,

my first vampire novel, there hadn't yet been anything modern published that significantly altered the vampire from what had come before. Anne Rice, Chelsea Quinn Yarbro, Fred Saberhagen and Stephen King were just about to publish pivotal vampire novels that would define the different directions the undead would take, the first three changing the face of the vampire. **Bloodlover** did not get published until 2000 (and has just been reprinted by Mosaic Press in 2010) and it became the 4th book in my **Power of the Blood** world. But when I wrote it in the '70s, it was set in 2006 and had a lot of sci fi elements like moving sidewalks, computers, cryonic suspension. As time moved on, I had to rewrite that book quite a number of times because science fiction became science fact. Finally, I turned it into a flashback novel, set in the 1960s. But the idea of the vampire and a human having an intimate and erotic relationship hadn't been done very much and certainly not in the way that I did it. Now, of course, you see it all the time, but that was then.

Then there's my erotic horror novel series **The Darker Passions**. The first book, **Dracula**, allowed me to blend the original novel utilizing Stoker's characters and plot and some original dialogue and expand on it with my ideas which involved adding the scenes between the scenes so it became highly erotic and also tongue-in-cheek humorous. That book was published in 1993. Anne Rice's Beauty series was published in the mid-1980s. I'd read the three books and couldn't for the life of me figure out why Rice didn't combine vampires and erotica in a series similar to the Beauty books, since that combo seemed a natural connection for her. It was for me. I suppose in a way you could say that the Beauty series was at the back of my mind when I pitched **The Darker Passions of Dracula** to Masquerade Books in 1990. The publisher liked the idea, wanted a series, so it became **The Darker Passions** series, the titles **Dracula; Frankenstein; Dr. Jekyll & Mr. Hyde; The Fall of the House of Usher; The Picture of Dorian Gray; Carmilla; The Pit and the Pendulum**. Oddly, **Francis Ford Coppola's Dracula** was released in 1992, when my novel was at the printer's. I guess we both wanted to see an eroticizing Dracula! <laughing>

I can't identify any specific authors who have influenced me because in a way, everyone I've ever read has shaped me. I'm a firm believer that the more you read, the more unique your writing will become, which flies in the face of a common notion that doesn't seem right to me at all, which is: if you read other writers doing something similar to what you're doing, you will be imitative. To me, every piece of writing slides into the foundation of who I am as a writer and as a person and how I see myself and the world around me. The ways I synthesize and then utilize all that I experience is what makes me an individual, distinct. I think unique writing comes from that place.

5. Please tell us about the premise and contents of your new vampire anthology, **EVOLVE**.

**Evolve** is an anthology I've wanted to edit for a very long time. The year before, I'd co-edited **Tesseract Thirteen** with David Morrell--the ninth anthology I'd edited--but because of how that horror/dark fantasy anthology went, there were no vampire stories in it. Yet I'd found seven vampire stories in the roughly 200 submissions that I thought offered an innovative approach to the undead, showing a new vampire progressing into the immediate future. Because I've read so much and seen so many movies, I know where the vampire came from and how he/she got to here. I tried to impart a bit of that knowledge to the writers and suggested they check out the past and present vampire further and

then speculate: where can this go? They did that, and more than met my challenge. I'm thoroughly delighted with the results. The writing in **Evolve** is excellent. The scope of the writing styles and the variety of settings and plots means there's something for everyone and yet the whole is a gestalt. But, this is not a young adult book, it's meant for everyone. The vampire moves into the near future and I think vampirophiles will be really happy with **Evolve**.

6. What is your latest or next-forthcoming book (or both)?

I'm editing another anthology but I don't want to talk about it yet, since I haven't formulated the premise in a way that I can communicate it well. The idea just sold a couple of weeks ago. It's not the right time to say more.

My next book out is a graphic novel. This will be composed of the three comics I wrote the scripts for in the 1990s for the **Vamperotica** series, which are based on three of my inner-connected short stories, which will also be included. We're hoping to have a music tie-in as well. That's out in August. We're still tossing around the title for the graphic novel but it looks like **Nancy Kilpatrick's Vampire Theatre**.

7. What are you working on now?

I've written about 24 short stories in the last 24 months and I've got a bunch more short stories promised. I'll be dealing with the anthology, which will be my third in the last 24 months, so I guess that's one a year for three years. I also teach online writing courses for a college and mentor for a university on an ongoing basis. And I travel a lot, 24 trips out of town in the last 24 months, with 4 trips already planned for the rest of 2010. I never have any of the big blocks of time needed for novel writing that I used to have. I've got three novels-in-progress and am gouging out time for myself to focus exclusively on one of those for a month, so that I can move it along.

8. What advice would you give to aspiring writers?

You must develop that rhino-hide you hear about. This is a tough business, sometimes nasty, and rejection is more prevalent than acceptance. If 20 rejections in a row will crush your spirit for more than a day or two, get out of this business and save yourself. The writing world requires talent, inspiration and perspiration mixed with a healthy dose of luck, luck I believe which is created through the perspiration part. If you keep at the writing and keep submitting, you will have success. But you'll likely face a lot of rejection en route and it's your job to stay hopeful, flexible and work-oriented without hardening your soul, meanwhile developing a tolerance for people not appreciating what you do. Tastes vary from editor to editor and that is out of your control. Eventually, if you persevere, you'll find an editor who does appreciate what you write.

A friend of mine has a story he tells which I think reflects this well. He wrote a story, sent it out, got a nice rejection but the editor wouldn't publish the story because he felt it was too similar to Stephen King's **It**. Next submission, similar comments--too much like **It**. The author suffered six rejections in all, each saying it was a good story but resembled **It**. The seventh editor bought the story with a letter that said, "I love this! It reminds me of Stephen King's **It**."

9. What's your website URL? Do you have a blog?

My website is: [www.nancykilpatrick.com](http://www.nancykilpatrick.com)

I tend to blog on Facebook!

The Evolve site is: [vampires-evolve.com](http://vampires-evolve.com)

Some recently published and upcoming short fiction.

Vampire:

"Bitches of the Night" in **Blood Lite**

"The Vechi Barbat" in **By Blood We Live**

"Traditions in Future Perfect" in **The Bitten Word**

"Vampire Anonymous" in **Vampires: Dracula and the Undead Legions**

Other:

"The Promise" in **Hellbound Hearts**

"The Age of Sorrow" in **The Living Dead**

"Sara" in **Campus Chills**

"In Winter" in **Darkness on the Edge**

"The Windows to the Soul" in **Don Juan and Men**

"The Ghoul Next Door" in **Blood Lite 2**

"Hungry All the Time" in **Kolchak 3**

"Hope and the Maiden" in **The Bleeding Edge**

"Sympathy for the Devil" in **Chilling Tales**

"In Memory of..." in **Brighton Shock**

"Mozakia" in **The Moonstone Book of Zombies**

"Zombified" in **Bits of the Dead**

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