

»ALAN BookChat« as of Thu Jul 31 02:04:18 2008 GMT (33 KB)

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Matt S. from x.x.x.38 cleared the room 4 hours ago

Matt S.: Hello everyone! The Chat featuring Cynthia Leitich Smith will begin at 9:00 PM (Eastern). Come back at that time to join the conversation!

Constance from x.x.x.6 joined the chat 3 hours ago

Constance from x.x.x.6 left the chat 3 hours ago

theboarpig from x.x.x.68 joined the chat 3 hours ago

theboarpig: ok, look forward to it

theboarpig from x.x.x.68 joined the chat 2 hours ago

CynLS from x.x.x.224 joined the chat 93 minutes ago

David Gill from x.x.x.242 joined the chat 92 minutes ago

David Gill: lalalala

CynLS: lalalala yourself.

David Gill: :)

CynLS: :)=

David Gill: haha

David Gill: I like that one

CynLS: my pleasure. off to grab iced tea. be back.

David Gill: k

David Gill: brb

CynLS: I'm here now.

Matt S. from x.x.x.38 joined the chat 83 minutes ago

David Gill: back

Barb from x.x.x.209 joined the chat 66 minutes ago

David Gill: Hi, Barb

Barb: Hi David and all

CynLS: Howdy!

David Gill: How is everyone this evening?

CynLS: Great, thanks!

MaryP from x.x.x.132 joined the chat 64 minutes ago

Matt S.: Everything is well here in KS>

Matt S.: .

David Gill: Mary!

MaryP: Hey David!

MaryP: hi Cyn!

Barb: Everything is great in British Columbia too

CynLS: Hi Mary!

David Gill: What's the weather like in BC, Barb?

MaryP: Wanted to stop in and add my cheers for Tantalize (and Cyn too!)

Barb: Cool and wet

CynLS: Thanks, Mary!

Barb: Great web site changes Matt

Matt S.: Thank you. I am still working on a few things here and there, but you know how that goes.

David Gill: My clock says it's time to start....

David Gill: Ready?

CynLS: Sure.

David Gill: Okay

David Gill: Everyone, thanks for joining us tonight for a live chat...

David Gill: with Cynthis Leitich Smith...

David Gill: author of Tantalize and a whole bunch of other books...

David Gill: I'm a bad typist, btw

David Gill: Please ask one question at a time...

David Gill: and wait for Cyn to type "GA" at the end of her answer before asking the next Q

David Gill: Ready

David Gill: Set

David Gill: Who would like to start us off?

Barb: Ok - Your bio on the cover says you love monsters - tell me more

CynLS: I love make-believe monsters....

CynLS: or at least the idea of them...

CynLS: I'm considerably less (as in not at all) fond of the real-life kind...

CynLS: but what I think makes fictional monsters work is their potential for metaphor...

CynLS: you can in some ways be more real, more direct with them...

CynLS: than you can with fictional people...

CynLS: if I wrote a book about, for example, a girl with a "drinking problem"...

CynLS: and didn't have that monster metaphor....

CynLS: I'd have to be a lot more subtle. GA.

David Gill: Can you describe the moment (s) that you decide to mix food and monsters?

CynLS: I'd always wanted to write a story set in a restaurant...

CynLS: I'd worked in a couple in my late teens...

CynLS: to make money for college...

CynLS: and I'd long wanted to write a Gothic fantasy....

CynLS: because it's my favorite kind of book to read...

CynLS: If you're going to revisit a well-known mythology...

CynLS: like werewolves or vampires, it's important to add a fresh twist...

CynLS: or fresh blood, if you will...

CynLS: although vampires are thought of as more drinkers than diners...

CynLS: juxtaposing the two added some originality, or so I hoped.

CynLS: ga

David Gill: Next?

MaryP: Do you like to cook as well, Cyn? Your menus were great.

CynLS: The credit for the menus goes (at least partially) to Greg...

CynLS: AKA my husband and sometimes co-author...

CynLS: we spent hours scouring Romanian, Texan, Italian, and other...

CynLS: types of cookbooks for inspiration, with a particular...

CynLS: attention to historical recipes...

CynLS: hence, the squirrels. ga

David Gill: I loved the blood sausage and baby squirrels in honey cream sauce

CynLS: p.s. I can cook four things. ga.

David Gill: Next ?

Barb: What is it about Gothic fantasy that draws you?

CynLS: I'd like to say that I'm creepy....

CynLS: but really, I'm fairly wholesome and chipper...

CynLS: I think it's a combination of escapism and really...

CynLS: high stakes stories...

CynLS: Big-time good versus evil kind of stuff...

CynLS: very dramatic but also inspired by our own...

CynLS: seemingly everyday lives. ga

David Gill: Next ?

MaryP: Is Eternal a sequel to Tantalize. Will we see Quincie again?

CynLS: Eternal is a companion book, featuring different main characters...

CynLS: and going to the heart of the vampire hierarchy...

CynLS: but the casts of Tantalize and Eternal will crossover in a third book...

CynLS: Blessed, which will pick up where...

CynLS: Tantalize leaves off with Quincie at Sanguini's...

CynLS: It's a building storyline in the universe. ga.

David Gill: Since we've brought up the new titles, do you know release dates yet?

CynLS: We're looking at March 2009 for Eternal...

MaryP: (Congratulation on Blessed btw! I just saw that announcement!)

Barb: Wow - more books to add to my to read list. and I await the answer to David's question

CynLS: Blessed isn't scheduled yet (and is in progress)...

CynLS: and there will also be a Tantalize graphic adaptation from Kieren's POV (also not yet scheduled)...

CynLS: But two short stories in the universe will appear...

David Gill: Galleys for Eternal at ALAN in San Antonio, I believe

CynLS: shortly. "Haunted Love" is in Immortal (BenBella, Aug. 2008) and...

CynLS: "Cat Calls" is in Cabinet of Curiosities (Candlewick, 2009)--July, I think.

CynLS: And yes, I'm told galleys at ALAN, and I await cover art (any moment, they say).

CynLS: ga

Barb: What do you hear from readers about this book? (Tantalize)

theboarpig from x.x.x.68 joined the chat 45 minutes ago

CynLS: It's been interesting because it's my first "proper" YA...

CynLS: (Rain Is Not My Indian Name (Harper, 2001) is a tweener)...

CynLS: I've gotten the occasional letter on the younger books--but mostly from parents, grandparents, etc. (plus of course teachers/librarians)...

CynLS: But older teens are VERY communicative...

CynLS: Several messages a day, especially via MySpace.

theboarpig: which do you prefer writing: YA or tween?

CynLS: It sounds stereotypical, but the girls overall are more invested in the love story...

CynLS: and the boys in the murder mystery...

CynLS: some of those who're not as strong of readers struggle with the unreliable narrator at first...

CynLS: but they generally figure it out (the ah-ha moment) over time...

CynLS: I think it's important to introduce that though, the UN.

CynLS: I'll transition to the tween YA question now...

CynLS: For me, it's really about the character....

CynLS: I follow them to the age level...

CynLS: and of course write for my own inner reader...

CynLS: I think my inner child(ren) is 7, 12, 15, and 18...

CynLS: but I intend to continue writing upper YA for the foreseeable future.

CynLS: Among other things, I'm fairly in love with the audience.

CynLS: ga

MaryP: The graphic adaptation of Tantalize is fascinating. How did that come about?! You've never done a graphic novel before have you? Was it a challenge?

theboarpig: also gives you more topic latitude, right?

CynLS: Thanks! It was my idea actually. And yes, this will be my first. As for the challenges, we're still in progress...

CynLS: but I learned to read on comics and picture books, so in some ways....

CynLS: it's like returning to my first "language."

CynLS: On tweens v. upper YA...

theboarpig: and a picture's worth a thousand words. :~)

CynLS: I think both are great audiences, but there is more leeway...

CynLS: for stretching the reader more (like with an unreliable narrator or alternating POV or whatever).

CynLS: ga

CynLS: I may do more graphic novels, depending on how this one works out. I like the idea of the...

CynLS: unexplored viewpoint. With Kieren's story, I'd already written the first first draft from his POV...

David Gill: Next?

CynLS: so I'd put some serious head-time into it. But it was fun to do more with the structure that had evolved...

CynLS: over the course of the prose. GA

Barb: I want to go back to your response about monsters - and how it allows you more leeway with metaphor - are there issues in our world that you particularly want to address

MaryP: How fun do explore another viewpoint too!

CynLS: I'd always wanted to write a book that dealt with alcoholism, and dependence more broadly, though I didn't realize that's part of what...

CynLS: I was doing with Tantalize until it was well underway. I'm a "let the theme rise" author...

CynLS: I think it's a way of opening the discourse without getting too personal...

theboarpig: ah, vampires are addicted to blood...

CynLS: readers can think through the decisions Quincie makes from a bit more of a distance...

CynLS: because she's in this intensely fantastic world...

CynLS: GA

David Gill: Next?

David Gill: How did you become such a force on the internet?

MaryP: Cyn, what is your writing schedule like? With all the traveling and everything else you do, how do you find time to write?!

MaryP: (very related questions!)

CynLS: I'm awakened by the alpha cat at 8 a.m. sharp, and I'm online generally...

CynLS: until about 11 a.m. Some of that is responding to correspondence...

theboarpig: You are a prolific blogger!

CynLS: and some of it is blog-related, though the blog is mostly formatted two months...

CynLS: in advance...

CynLS: so I don't have to work on it every day....

CynLS: from there I do some combination of lunch/working out/errands...

theboarpig: which show you are also quite organized. :~)

CynLS: and write for at least three or four hours in the afternoon...

CynLS: Greg and I break for dinner, and then he needs to get his writing time in...

CynLS: usually from 6 to 8 or 9...

CynLS: and so there's extra time there for me to work on my manuscripts as well...

CynLS: I generally don't write on the road, but...

CynLS: I do read while I travel...

CynLS: and that helps. I also read before bed...

CynLS: It's typically one novel and a small stack of picture books a day...

CynLS: which I know may sound excessive but I read thoroughly and quickly...

Jamie from x.x.x.85 joined the chat 29 minutes ago

CynLS: it's the closest thing I've got to a superpower...

David Gill: Hi, Jamie

CynLS: and my feeling is that it counts as writing time. GA

CynLS: Hi Jamie!

MaryP: (!! in awe !!)

theboarpig: wow

Jamie: Hey Cynthia

David Gill: One book per day. <bows>

Barb: Wow - a novel a day - it took me two days to read your novel.

CynLS: LOL! It's no big...

CynLS: everyone has their things, that's mine. GA

MaryP: That is way more than a "thing" I think. I bow to the queen too! (cyn, sorry I have to shove off early--must pick up hubby at airport)

theboarpig: do you read much "supernatural" fiction? Or do you prefer to stick to other genres since you write SN?

David Gill: thanks for coming, Mary

Jamie: One book per day. That's amazing.

David Gill: Next ?

Barb: I do have a question about the characters in the book - was Brad based on someone in literature or your life?

CynLS: Is it okay if I ask a question?

CynLS: I'll answer Barb's first...

theboarpig: sure

CynLS: Brad is his own beast, so to speak...

CynLS: The earliest working title was "Brad, the Impaler"...

CynLS: to remind myself of the Dracula relationship, which is more developed in the future books...

VVV from x.x.x.152 joined the chat 21 minutes ago

CynLS: and to remind myself to include some humor to lighten the mix...

David Gill: No author has ever asked a Q before. I'll have to check manual.....

theboarpig: do you keep a character notebook? if you meet someone interesting you capture them, so to speak.

CynLS: though I wasn't going to go strictly tongue-in-cheek or do a comedy per se...

CynLS: but he does bear a certain physical resemblance to a figure in children's-YA literature...

CynLS: I had attended a speech he'd given, and thought...

CynLS: you know, you'd make a great vampire...

deb from x.x.x.71 joined the chat 20 minutes ago

CynLS: I wish I were organized enough to keep a character notebook...

CynLS: most of my notes are written on my hands, napkins, etc., though they do all go into a folder from there.

CynLS: But I do carry a little notebook with me in my purse...

brenna from x.x.x.223 joined the chat 19 minutes ago

Jamie: Have you picked out Quincie's middle name yet? The last time you were pondering Patricia.

CynLS: just in case I'm not driving or otherwise doing some perilous when inspiration strikes.

CynLS: I'm still working on Quincie's middle name. I think I definitely have to reveal it in book 3, don't you?

theboarpig: LOL do not drive when the muse strikes

deb: Tell me about your original inspiration for this great story. Where were you when the idea popped inot your head? Some Cool spot in Austin, no doubt.

CynLS: It appears to be a subject of some speculation. I had one, but now I'm thinking we need something more intriguing or more revealing.

CynLS: The original inspirations were a juxtaposition of my wanting to write a restaurant and a Gothic story...

deb: Then.....reveal.

CynLS: but it came together in my head when I grabbed my camera and started walking South Congress and the...

Jamie: Of course! It's the question that keeps people up at night!

CynLS: surrounding neighborhoods. I remember shooting (with the camera, it's Texas, so I clarify) people...

deb: Shootingha!

CynLS: and trying to decide what kind of creature they might be. Later, when I did it again, I was much less subtle...

CynLS: I'd walked up to someone, and say, "Excuse me, but you'd make a great werewolf, can I take your picture?"

deb: Have you always been a goth gal?

David Gill: Ha!

CynLS: It was on those walks focusing with the camera that let me see the street I (then) lived on in a new light...or darkness.

theboarpig: some guy with a wicked 5:00 shadow?

CynLS: I'm not hugely Gothic myself, but I've very Gothic friendly. Along that walk, I stopped in at a local beauty shop...

CynLS: that allegedly was run by living vampires (like the ones mentioned in the book). They were very friendly actually...

CynLS: but I did keep my eyes on the scissors. GA

Barb: So who is the figure in YA literature that you mentioned in your response re Brad

deb: 5:00 Shadow, chest hair, and some crazy long finger nails

CynLS: Oddly enough, everyone was very flattered to be asked. I love this town.

CynLS: Such a good question, Barb. Find me in person with a glass of red wine...

CynLS: and I may be persuaded to tell you. GA

Barb: If you will be at ALAN I will do that

CynLS: I will be at ALAN. :)=

deb: The restaurant...did you model it after one in particular, or a composite of others.

Barb: Great! I look forward to a glass of wine with you

CynLS: It's a date, Barb! And Deb...

deb: Wine! Did you day wine? I'm so there.

CynLS: as "research," Greg and I hit every Italian restaurant in town....

Jamie: Did any of the people you took pictures of inspire a character?

CynLS: but it's a composite, along with hints of the decor from Brad's mansion and of the castle to appear in Eternal. Very foreshadowy.

theboarpig: love your definition of research

CynLS: Oops, minor spoiler.

deb: Love the spoiler.

CynLS: I do tons of pre-writing--submersion at its best.

CynLS: And Jamie, there wasn't a main character from the pics, but a lot of the walk-ons started that way. As you know...

deb: Do you interview your characters?

CynLS: folks dress rather colorfully at Sanguini's, but real-life S. Austin itself has quite a cast.

CynLS: I do interview my characters. I also write letters to and from them.

deb: Do they seem to take on a life of their own as you begin to get to know them better?

CynLS: And I pick out music for each one. The most fun, though, was shopping for their clothes, oddly enough.

CynLS: They do have a life of their own. Blessed will be the...

deb: Have they ever surprised you? Scared you? Creeped you out?

CynLS: first book I've written where I had any idea what would happen beforehand...

CynLS: and that's basically pre-writing from 2002 on at work...

theboarpig: have any of your characters ever taken over? I mean you intended for them to be minor but they protested and won?

CynLS: Quincie absolutely freaked me out when she was tempted to go after four-year-old Megan...

CynLS: and that was, I think, my editor's favorite scene.

deb: Yeow!

CynLS: Clyde has earned a persistently bigger role...

deb: What does that say about your editor? Just kidding.....

CynLS: He started as a comic relief character and will play a much bigger role in the graphic...

CynLS: So will Quincie and Kieren's English teacher, Mrs. Levy (also a bigger role in Blessed).

CynLS: You know, English teachers....

CynLS: And my editor has a deeply creepy side. It's one of the things I love most about her.

CynLS: GA

deb: It seems that TANTALIZE is such a shift from your earlier stuff, cyn. Were you ever concerned about taking such a big shift? Or did you always just trust the sotry and the characters?

theboarpig: were you tempted to write under a different name?

deb: Dang, I hate it when I see a typo after I've posted...

David Gill: (that's what I love about Cyn's editor, too)

theboarpig: for tween vs. YA?

CynLS: The first time I said that I was going to do a Gothic YA next...it was right after Indian Shoes...the event coordinator asked if I were kidding...

CynLS: and one of my best friends did sit me down and say she thought I was too tender-hearted for the market...

deb: Creepy editors are good. We like creepy.

CynLS: and many people thought that the Native youth lit community would be resistent or feel abandoned...

CynLS: although I'd say my Indian audience has followed and cheered with particular enthusiasm...

deb: Smart audience....

CynLS: In some ways, it makes you a new kind of role model, you know. To defy the expectations...

CynLS: But as for the book itself, I just kept my focus on the task at hand. I enjoyed it. I played with it.

David Gill: About one minute left

CynLS: And fortunately, I had a background in realism to serve as a springboard into fantasy.

deb: So, would you say to a fledging writer to write what speaks to them? Don't worry so much about market trends?

CynLS: GA

David Gill: Last Questions?

Barb: I have so enjoyed this chat with you Cynthia - I look forward to a chat at ALAN - I have a hungry two year old demanding dinner and most go and get it on the table. Thanks again for the fabulous answers to questions. Keep on writing!

CynLS: Oh, and no. I didn't consider a pen name. It's hard enough for a "Smith" to stand out in the world. GA

deb: When will we get to do this again?

CynLS: Thank you, Barb! It was a pleasure!

theboarpig: Thanks for inviting me, Cynthia. See you back on MySpace. It's been a pleasure

CynLS: I would tell a fledgling writer to read and read and read...

David Gill: Thanks, Cynthia. Keep your eyes open for ETERNAL, coming in March 09 from Candlewick

deb: Cyn, you're amazing! A great writer and advocate for teen lit! Yay!!!

CynLS: and write from the heart.

CynLS: Thanks, Deb!

brenna: Cynthia - thank you for your fabulous blog.

CynLS: Thanks, Brenna!

deb: Oh yes!!!! That blog is AMAZING!!!!

CynLS: Thanks to all!

David Gill: G'night, Gracie

Jamie: I will still wonder what every character's middle name is.

CynLS: Goodnight! Keep in touch! www.cynthialeitichsmith.com

Jamie: Night!

deb: Thanks, ALAN. This was great!

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