

»ALAN BookChat« as of Thu Sep 25 02:03:27 2008 GMT (29 KB)

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**Matt S.** from x.x.x.164 cleared the room 104 minutes ago

**Matt S.:** Hello Everyone! The Book Chat featuring YA author Adrienne Vrettos will begin at 9:00 PM (Eastern).

**holly** from x.x.x.250 joined the chat 78 minutes ago

**Adrienne Maria Vrettos** from x.x.x.161 joined the chat 76 minutes ago

**Adrienne Maria Vrettos:** Hi Matt and Holly, I'm here!

**Matt S.:** Hello Adrienne! Welcome!

**Adrienne Maria Vrettos:** Thanks, I'm realizing it's been FOREVER since I've been in a chat room. I think Clinton was president.

**Matt S.:** Well, that was a long time ago, huh?

**Adrienne Maria Vrettos:** You said it!

**Matt S.:** CJ should be here any minute now to get the ball rolling. I think quite a few people are looking forward to this evening's chat.

**cj** from x.x.x.101 joined the chat 70 minutes ago

**Matt S.:** And here she is!

**cj:** Hi folks

**Adrienne Maria Vrettos:** Hi CJ!

**Matt S.:** Hey CJ!

**cj:** Are you ready?

**cj:** Hey Matt.

**cj:** Adrienne, while we wait around, what are you working on now and have I missed a new book?

**Adrienne Maria Vrettos:** I JUST finished the first draft of my third, due out Spring 2010.

**cj:** Later I will ask for the title, last week's group will want to know if you have continued your one word title

**Adrienne Maria Vrettos:** Hmm...then I'll wait to reveal the mystery :)

**cj:** Is this new book a suspense book or are you trying something totally different again?

**Adrienne Maria Vrettos:** It's totally different! Which means that I didn't have kill any characters.

**cj:** lol

**Adrienne Maria Vrettos:** It was such a relief, I was tired of being the grim reaper. But my fourth book....

**cj:** Earlier today I talked to a friend of mine, Sara Herz who has a daughter librarian, Kate, who lives not too far from you in New York? Ring a bell?

**cj:** sorry I stepped on your line

**Adrienne Maria Vrettos:** Oh! no worries, that wasn't actually an "I have more to say" ellipses. It's been a while since I've chatted!

**Adrienne Maria Vrettos:** Oh, and I do know a few Sara(h) librarians, so I very well could have met her!

**cj:** Well I have made notes to remind myself to ask about thrid and fourth books

**cj:** Hw is your little one?

**Adrienne Maria Vrettos:** She's pretty much too cute for words. She's all about running as fast she can

**Lori G.** from x.x.x.176 joined the chat 62 minutes ago

**Matt S.:** Hey Lori!

**cj:** And mom gets to chase her! Hi Lori

**Adrienne Maria Vrettos:** Hi Lori!

**Lori G.:** Hi, everyone! Now the party can begin!

**cj:** Okay, My phone says it is 9:02

**cj:** SIGHT, tell us about the title and the terrific book cover!

**Adrienne Maria Vrettos:** The title was pretty much with me from the beginning...

**Adrienne Maria Vrettos:** it just said so much to me about the book, not just second sight, but we see and don't see in ourselves and others.

**Adrienne Maria Vrettos:** Blarg! I'm supposed to type "GA" right?

**cj:** Arre you hooked on single word titles?

**cj:** right to the GA

**Adrienne Maria Vrettos:** The first two were just a sort of coincidence, and then when I started writing the third book...

**Adrienne Maria Vrettos:** I was wracking my brain trying to think of another one word, S title. I finally gave up, since it was feeling too forced GA

**cj:** Lori, What was your suggestion?

**Lori G.:** Shin. Clever, huh?

**cj:** I liked it :-)

**Adrienne Maria Vrettos:** Oooh, I like it! Jenny Han has one of the best one word titles, with Shug. And Shin has that great 'sh'...

**Adrienne Maria Vrettos:** It could be about a soccer player! GA

**cj:** Adrienne, the cover art was so good on SIGHT--did you just luck out?

**Adrienne Maria Vrettos:** Totally lucked out. I've been really lucky that S&S do such great work with covers....

**holly:** Hi Adrienne. What drew you to writing for teens?

**Adrienne Maria Vrettos:** I loved both the HC and paperback of Skin, and when I saw the cover for SIGHT I totally lost my mind with excitement GA

**Adrienne Maria Vrettos:** Hi Holly! I think I was always writing for teens, even before I realized it...

**Adrienne Maria Vrettos:** I wrote fiction in high school (and horrible poetry!), then switched to screenwriting in college...

**Adrienne Maria Vrettos:** After a couple years in Hollywood, I realized fiction is where my heart is, and YA fiction was just a natural fit GA

**cj:** On my reread I was amazed at the structure that provided suspense and story. How do you do that?

**Adrienne Maria Vrettos:** It's a secret. And by that I mean I have no idea :) ....

**Adrienne Maria Vrettos:** Dylan came first, and then the story sort of poured out. The structure of it was so heavily built on Dylan and her friends, they held it up GA

**cj:** really! I thought you must have had a wall of diagrams and character histories and

**cj:** I really like the unity those kids felt. I thought your holding of their retelling of the night was so well placed--

**Adrienne Maria Vrettos:** Oh, thank you. It's funny with a story like this one, with so many threads...

**Adrienne Maria Vrettos:** there's a feeling of braiding the characters together, avoid knots, weaving a smooth rope of story that you can climb from beginning to end...

**Adrienne Maria Vrettos:** Once I started braiding, their stories felt so real that it (mostly) easy to keep track

**Adrienne Maria Vrettos:** Woops, GA!

**holly:** Talk a little about the setting in SIGHT. The setting added so much to the story.

**Adrienne Maria Vrettos:** It's actually based on the mountain where I grew up, in Southern California. The town I lived in on the mountain was called Lake Arrowhead,,,

**Adrienne Maria Vrettos:** and I remember there being this real tension between the people that lived on the mountain full time, and the rich people that came up for the weekend...

**Adrienne Maria Vrettos:** Even as a little kid, I remember having this dislike for them - based totally on what I heard grownups say, I never really had experience with the 'flatlanders' myself...

**Adrienne Maria Vrettos:** There was a feeling, though, of being invaded. That these people were

somehow going to take away our trees, and land, and lake. GA

**cj:** I also want to know your inspiration for Dylan and her family?

**Lori G.:** Ah--kind of like students in a college town! :)

**Adrienne Maria Vrettos:** Lori - exactly! As for Dylan...

**Adrienne Maria Vrettos:** I think I started thinking about her decades ago when I read that book *The Third Eye* by Lois Duncan. Have any of you read that?

**cj:** If I have, because I read most of her a long time ago, I have forgotten

**Lori G.:** I'm a Lois Duncan fan--glad to hear of her influence.

**Adrienne Maria Vrettos:** Well, it was this really amazing book about a psychic (and I realize it was only two decades ago, I'm turning 35 and am now acting like I'm at least 124 years old)...

**Adrienne Maria Vrettos:** I LOVED the *Third Eye*, and once I started writing YA, I realized that I could write my very own psychic girl story GA

**cj:** I like the grandmother's visit!

**Adrienne Maria Vrettos:** That scene was so much fun to write - scared myself silly! I wrote a lot of *SIGHT* while visiting my inlaws...

**Adrienne Maria Vrettos:** we were at their little beach house, and even though the days were sunny and I was writing in a very happy little loft...

**Adrienne Maria Vrettos:** I would JUMP at every little sound there was, even in the middle of the day. Their dog would lay at my feet while I wrote...

**Adrienne Maria Vrettos:** and we would take turns jumping and scaring each other GA

**cj:** :someone last week mentioned she didn't think Dylan's mom was very supportive of her, I thought she was just secretive.

**Adrienne Maria Vrettos:** I think Dylan's mom acted out fear, and out of not wanting to see what was right in front of her. Like if she ignored Dylan's gift, it would go away. GA

**cj:** One of the questions that came up last week was about audience, do you find yourself working to a particular gender or age?

**cj:** Do boys send you comments?

**Adrienne Maria Vrettos:** Teens, definitely. As for gender, I'd like to think both of the books I have out appeal to both boys and girls...

**Adrienne Maria Vrettos:** but I think I have more chance with them reading *SKIN*, since it has a male protag. Boys do send me comments...

**Adrienne Maria Vrettos:** and they're funny because they tend to be much more abrupt than the sweet, long letters I get from girls. The boys are..

**Adrienne Maria Vrettos:** more likely to write two lines and not sign their names, then respond with Holy Crap! when I actually write back GA

**Lori G.:** My sophomores have laughed at how publishers are trying to hook female readers with all the pink covers, etc. You used a fascinating gender-neutral cover and even a more neutral name for your protagonist.

**cj:** that's fun

**Lori G.:** Holy crap! You're an author who writes back? :)

**Adrienne Maria Vrettos:** Of course I write back! I wrote to Beverly Cleary once (okay, it was five years ago), and I have the letter she wrote back framed...

**Adrienne Maria Vrettos:** I cried when I got her letter, which I don't expect kids to do when they get an email from me, but I think it's nice thing to do nonetheless...

**Adrienne Maria Vrettos:** And the pink book covers DO try a little too hard, don't they? GA

**Lori G.:** Well, then I'm going to write you so I can have a framed letter when you respond. My students will be impressed. Yeah, they try to force the gender issue.

**cj:** *SIGHT* was such an easy book to imagine visually, does that reflect your screen writing?

**Adrienne Maria Vrettos:** Write away!

**Hubby** from x.x.x.101 joined the chat 33 minutes ago

**Lori G.:** Hi, Hubby.

**Adrienne Maria Vrettos:** CJ, that's a great question, I bet it is a reflection of my screen writing. Wait, my husband's here? Then who's doing the dishes??

**Hubby:** Hi.

**Lori G.:** I thought it was MY husband.

**holly:** Do you want teens to take away a message from your books? And if so, what?

**Lori G.:** Any plans for Sight on the screen? I kept thinking it would be the perfect movie!

**cj:** I agree

**Adrienne Maria Vrettos:** Holly, if anything I would hope that kids come away with a feeling of hope, especially from SKIN. And from SIGHT, maybe a feeling of it being okay to be yourself.

**holly:** Cool.

**Adrienne Maria Vrettos:** And no plans yet for a SIGHT movie, but it would be soooo much fun if it happens! I can't wait to see Nick and Norah's Infinite Playlist! GA

**cj:** I want to tell you my favorite line:

**cj:** At first I thought that Cate would keep my secret. She would tuck it into her heart and hide it, like I do. But she didn't. She is biting my secret in half to see what it is made of.

**cj:** didn't

**holly:** Beautiful writing.

**cj:** I love your language!

**Adrienne Maria Vrettos:** Holly, in thinking more about your question about a 'take away' message, and I think for SIGHT it's really that you have to beat the monsters out of the bushes, face them head on and see what they look like and deal with them.

**holly:** Face things head on.

**Adrienne Maria Vrettos:** Thanks, CJ! I loved writing that line, and I still feel it in my teeth when I read it, if that doesn't sound too weird. I imagine it tastes like dark chocolate covered toffee. GA

**Lori G.:** And your descriptions face some things head on, as well, like the description of her as a baby-- and the scene with her great-grandmother.

**Adrienne Maria Vrettos:** Holly, exactly. Things are terrifying when you face them, but also not as terrifying as when you're hiding from them.

**cj:** I imagined biting through a thread that's dangling from somewhere

**holly:** So true in real life too

**Adrienne Maria Vrettos:** I loved writing her great grandmother (okay, it's obvious I just really loved writing this book), I just really liked her, even if I just wrote her for a short time

**Adrienne Maria Vrettos:** A thread? Cool, I love hearing what other people think of when they read something!

**Hubby:** I came in late--sorry. Have you talked about why you chose to name the main character Dylan?

**Adrienne Maria Vrettos:** Hubby, nope, not yet...

**cj:** Has SIGHT been up for any awards?

**Hubby:** So why?

**Adrienne Maria Vrettos:** Dylan felt like a strong name to me, and it felt like it had a lot to do with her parents, and their love for each other

**Adrienne Maria Vrettos:** sorry to keep you hanging, hubby! GA

**Hubby:** Thanks.

**Adrienne Maria Vrettos:** CJ, I'm not sure if SIGHT's been up for anything. I was so happy it made the NYPL best of the teenage list - in such great company!

**Lori G.:** I do have one student who, in reading your book, found your words almost too powerful and had to put it down. Anything you want me to share with her?

**Adrienne Maria Vrettos:** Lori, wow...

**Adrienne Maria Vrettos:** I do have books that I end up taking a break from, either for just long enough

to stare out the window, or, if they're really upsetting...

**cj:** Lori, that probably says more about the reader than we think

**Adrienne Maria Vrettos:** I close them for a day or so.

**Adrienne Maria Vrettos:** I agree with CJ...maybe it's something your student doesn't want to face about herself? Not to be glib but, is she a secret psychic? GA

**Lori G.:** Yes, she's a really compassionate person==and it drained her, much like it did Dylan. Not a psychic, probably, but definitely feels things intensely.

**Lori G.:** I think it really says something about your powerful writing.

**cj:** There are some books that stir things in the reader's history or life that needs dealing with

**Adrienne Maria Vrettos:** Is she a writer? It's a great outlet for us over-feelers :)

**holly:** It so important and meaningful when the right book reaches a student at at the right time in her life.

**cj:** Haven't you ever broken up with someone and every song on the radio replays that relationship

**Lori G.:** Yes, she is. I have a club I'm starting of high school students writing novels, and she's one of them,

**Adrienne Maria Vrettos:** CJ. that's one of the best things about books!

**Adrienne Maria Vrettos:** Lori, that's wonderful! I've done school visits to some truly wonderful high school novel writing classes, it's always so inspirational. GA

**cj:** Lori,

**cj:** it sounds like she has stories to tell

**Adrienne Maria Vrettos:** holly, I totally agree. there are books that I feel like just saved my life.

**holly:** Do you write every day? How long does it take for you to write a book?

**Adrienne Maria Vrettos:** well, I work full time and I'm a mom...

**Adrienne Maria Vrettos:** so my writing time is a bit limited to lunch breaks and weekends...

**Adrienne Maria Vrettos:** I think right now I'm at about a year per book...but I have fantasies of writing full time and cranking out two a year! GA

**cj:** What are you working on now?

**Hubby:** Are you a member of a writer's critique group? If so, in what ways did they help you with writing SIGHT?

**Adrienne Maria Vrettos:** Right now I'm working on my third book...

**Adrienne Maria Vrettos:** and I've broken from my one word titles to...

**Adrienne Maria Vrettos:** The Exile of Gigi Lane.

**holly:** Love it!

**cj:** yes you have!

**Adrienne Maria Vrettos:** Thanks! It's been a blast to write.

**Adrienne Maria Vrettos:** As for the writing group...

**Adrienne Maria Vrettos:** I used to be in one that I just adored, led by the writer Miriam Cohen. But once I had the baby...

**Adrienne Maria Vrettos:** my free time sort of dwindled. I see my writing group now more for fun once in a while, though I do miss our critiques. GA

**cj:** Can you share a little about The Exile?

**Adrienne Maria Vrettos:** Sure, first I realized I didn't answer Hubby's question.

**Hubby:** Babies will do that to you. Unless you run for Vice President of the US!

**Adrienne Maria Vrettos:** Even though I was in the writer's group when writing SIGHT, I was so behind on the ms that I didn't really have a chance to bring it in to them. It was really sort of stressful!

**Hubby:** That's too bad.

**Adrienne Maria Vrettos:** Exile is about a girl who is quite literally sent into exile by the queen bees (to use a cliché) at her private school. She gets sent to Alaska :)

**holly**: Does she meet Bristol?

**Adrienne Maria Vrettos**: If only! Gigi could have talked some sense into that girl!

**Hubby**: Cute!

**cj**: Questions anyone?

**Lori G.**: When's the new book coming out? Gotta get a review in The ALAN Review!

**Adrienne Maria Vrettos**: GIGI comes out Spring 2010... which feels like forever away but apparently is right around the corner in publishing years :)

**Lori G.**: Also--had some preservice teachers ask about how the publishers determine age range for a book. Sight says for ages 12 and up. Do you agree with that? Just curious.

**cj**: What next?

**Adrienne Maria Vrettos**: Lori, that's a really interesting question...

**Adrienne Maria Vrettos**: it seems like almost all YA is labeled 12 and up, even though there are huge differences in content...

**Adrienne Maria Vrettos**: do think kids are great at figuring out what they are and aren't ready for though, so I don't worry too much about them picking up something that will blow their minds in a bad way.

**Adrienne Maria Vrettos**: As for what's next after Gigi...

**Adrienne Maria Vrettos**: it's either a murderous chef, a pirate, a cursed town, or an amnesiac. Hopefully all four!

**holly**: Ha ha!

**Lori G.**: Give me a cursed town any old day!

**Hubby**: :-)

**holly**: I like the chef idea!

**Adrienne Maria Vrettos**: Aw, thank you guys! Fingers crossed my editors will like them too!

**Lori G.**: So, to be totally selfish, any words for my sophomores as I promote your book tomorrow?

**Adrienne Maria Vrettos**: Oh gosh!

**Adrienne Maria Vrettos**: Wait, those aren't my words...

**Adrienne Maria Vrettos**: Good luck?

**Adrienne Maria Vrettos**: No, just kidding. "Tell the truth" I know Emily said to "Tell it Slant"

**Adrienne Maria Vrettos**: but I think "tell the truth", like their own truth, even if it's ugly.

**Adrienne Maria Vrettos**: And even if it's scary.

**Hubby**: What were you like as a teenager?

**Adrienne Maria Vrettos**: I was super popular and self-assured.

**Adrienne Maria Vrettos**: Not really, or else I probably wouldn't be writing fiction for teens :)

**Lori G.**: That was YOU? I hated you!

**cj**: lol

**Adrienne Maria Vrettos**: Lori, nope not me at all. I had the same name as the most popular girl in my class, who dated the dreamiest boy...

**Adrienne Maria Vrettos**: and every time he'd call her name I'd look up...it was pathetic, but kind of funny in retrospect.

**cj**: What ever happened to all those popular girls?

**Lori G.**: They married professional baseball players.

**Lori G.**: And dyed their hair blond.

**cj**: :-)

**cj**: Adrienne thanks so much for joining us tonight-Anyone have anything else?

**Adrienne Maria Vrettos**: shockingly, if our recent reunion is any indication, they are all still beautiful, successful and alarmingly nice. Such a disappointment!

**Adrienne Maria Vrettos**: Thank you all so much - this was wonderful!

**Matt S.:** Thank you!

**cj:** You were great!

**Lori G.:** You've been a wonderful guest. Thanks for taking the time to do this, and Matt and CJ, thanks so much!

**cj:** Next month we will discuss the Truth About Truman School by Dori Hillestad Butler, which deals with cyberbullying in a middle school.

**Hubby:** Thanks for your lively answers. Good luck with your next book.

**Adrienne Maria Vrettos:** Thanks everyone!

**Lori G.:** Keep your publisher busy, Adrienne. You're appreciated.

**cj:** Yes!

**Adrienne Maria Vrettos:** Aw, thanks. This is all I ever wanted to do, and I feel so lucky to have this chance.

**cj:** Thanks to everyone here tonight for your participation. Talk to you next month!

**Lori G.:** Night, all!

**Adrienne Maria Vrettos:** Take care, everyone!

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