

# SHERRILYN KENYON INTERVIEW

---

## **Q: Is writing the only job you have or do you have another job?**

At present, I'm very lucky to be a full time writer. However, throughout most of my career, I had to work as many as three jobs to make ends meet and to pay back my college student loans. I was even homeless after I'd published six bestselling books (and I lived very frugally before that). Remember that neither success nor failure is ever final.

## **Q: What are the advantages and disadvantages of working at home?**

I get to work in my pajamas :) The disadvantage is that if it's a particularly bad day, I'm in my pajamas at dinner time which can get embarrassing when someone unexpected comes to the door.

Seriously though, the biggest advantage is working at home, but like the PJ's above, it's also a disadvantage since people tend to think those who work at home aren't really working and that you can stop your work day to have lunch or do other things. You can't. You have to stay focused. Working from home with any job isn't something you can do if you're easily distracted or not self motivated.

## **Q: Do your books have a message?**

Yes, they do. As a child with a bad home life, books are what saved my sanity and I want to pay that forward. It was through books that I learned a bad past didn't have to define my future. That if I worked hard enough, believed enough... if I kept trying, no matter what, that things could and would get better. That's what I want to convey in my books. There are no guarantees in life, but you can't let that stop you from trying.

I truly believe that the strongest steel is forged in the hottest flames. That those things that don't destroy us, make us stronger and teach us vital lessons. We will all have enemies out to destroy us. We will all have demons that haunt us and secrets we try to keep. No one comes out of life without soul deep scars. But we don't have to let that destroy us. We don't have to let those scars and those enemies take our hearts and souls. We can triumph through any and all adversity. Don't let anyone, not even the experts, stop you from being the best human being you can be.

Most of all, I hope the books show that you can find humor and hope in even the worst situation.

## **Q: How would you describe your writing style?**

Funny and dark. I grew up watching a lot of MASH reruns. How they could laugh during the tragedy and horror that surrounded them, fascinated me. Life is fun, hilarious and tragic. Sometimes all at once. Ironically, it was that combination that made it so hard for me to get published. Used to be, publishers wanted books that were one dimensional. A comedy couldn't have a dark hero or a sad scene or tragic past. Likewise, a dark story couldn't have humor. They didn't know what to do with me.

That humor, the sarcasm and those dark elements are what fans often tell me they love most

about the books. To them, it's what make the characters and stories seem real.

**Q: Can you describe a typical day in the life of Sherrilyn Kenyon?**

Let's see... I spring out of bed every day at 5 AM to put on my great designer jumpsuit and jog for sixteen miles, then I come home to my fabulous mansion and swim in my indoor pool for three miles while Arturo, my personal trainer, urges me on for at least three extra laps. Then the two of us sit down in my marble sunroom to eat Cajun Hashbrowns at 8 AM while I dictate my novel to my personal secretary and my husband watches on encouragingly....

Oh wait, you mean what do I *really* do? Well... let's go back to Arturo... He's great. He's... oh, you want honesty.

Yeah, but Arturo...

Well yeah he's only alive in my head and my idea of a designer suit is what I got off the sale rack at Target, but still... okay, okay. We'll start over. I'll be honest this time and leave the fantasy people in my head. Drat!

I stagger out of bed (I'm really not a morning person in any sense of the term) anywhere from 6-9 AM and do my mummyesque walk through the kitchen to search out my water and apple juice from the fridge. I usually glare at the clock and wonder why I'm up after only three or four hours of sleep and why Arturo abandoned me for Felicia the hot super model who wouldn't know quality sock monkey pajamas if they bit her. How could he leave me like that for that beautiful, skinny... oh, never mind. I get it.

Then I'm usually greeted by at least one child speaking to me in a language I can't understand (I think it's English but at 6 AM it's all gibberish to me). I mumble something back at him, hoping I didn't just promise him a Ferrari when he's sixteen (if I did, I'll have to sell one of his brothers on eBay to pay for it) and stumble my way to the table where I'm met with the whole crew of perky morning people. I try to smile and hope it's not a grimace that will scar them for life and mumble a good day to them as their father rushes them off to school.

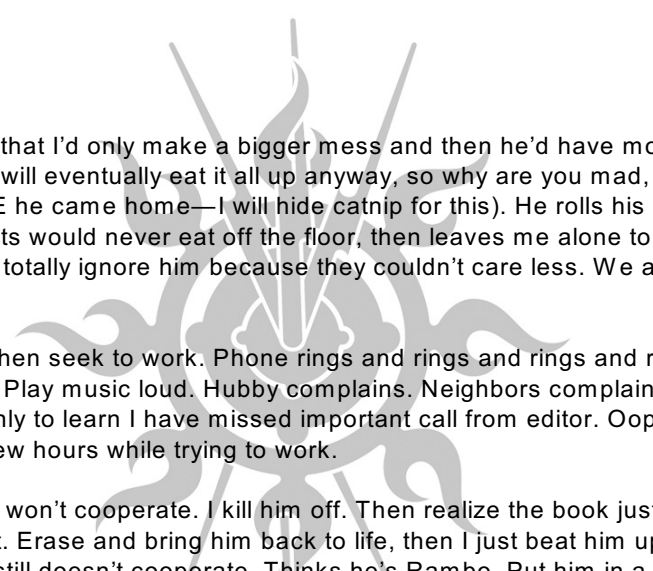
Ahhh! Now it's just me and my cats who don't care if I'm a morning person or not, or the fact that I have a hairdo the Bride of Frankenstein would envy. They really appreciate the sock monkey PJ's I like to wear. Actually, all they want is the bowl filled with food (dang those opposable thumbs) and they will talk to me until I give in. Which doesn't take long since they have the loudest meow on the planet and I can't stand noise before noon. I pour some food, then debate on whether or not I should clean up the mess I just made with the cat food or suffer my poor hubby's indignation over it. Deciding that it's worth listening to my hubby's indignation because I'll only make a bigger mess trying to clean up the little mess, I leave said mess and stumble off to my office with the cats following me. Why don't they ever eat after I pour food for them? I think it's Passive Aggressiveness. They don't eat the spilled food until after hubby sees it.

Then again, it's 6 AM, who cares about cat psychology?

I flop into my chair and wiggle my mouse. Then I stare at my screen for awhile which has a Sephiroth drawing for my background. I don't know what it is about Final Fantasy, but...

Once my eyes begin to open, I try to focus so that I can answer emails and do a little webwork even though I know I should be writing. I don't feel like writing. My brain is still oatmeal. Oops, hubby is home from dropping off kids and has found cat food mess.

Quickly open WordPerfect, pretend to work so that he won't want to interrupt my (clears throat for sarcasm) brilliance with his indignant tirade. Farce doesn't work, he fusses anyway. Try logic.



Explain to hubby that I'd only make a bigger mess and then he'd have more clean up to do. Besides the cats will eventually eat it all up anyway, so why are you mad, honey? (Evil cats for not eating it BEFORE he came home—I will hide catnip for this). He rolls his eyes, reminds me the Grand Queen Cats would never eat off the floor, then leaves me alone to glare at the Grand Queen Cats who totally ignore him because they couldn't care less. We are here to serve their furry hides.

Crisis averted, I then seek to work. Phone rings and rings and rings and rings until I want to flush it down the toilet. Play music loud. Hubby complains. Neighbors complain. Put on headphones and try to write only to learn I have missed important call from editor. Oops. Return call and play phone tag for a few hours while trying to work.

Have a hero who won't cooperate. I kill him off. Then realize the book just ended three hundred pages short. Drat. Erase and bring him back to life, then I just beat him up real bad for not cooperating. He still doesn't cooperate. Thinks he's Rambo. Put him in a dress and threaten to make him a Rambina unless he cooperates. That works. He's back again.

Write until the kids come home and then listen to them lament the fact that they have to go to school. Why can't they be adults and do whatever they want? Remind them that I want to be on a beach in Antigua (watching Arturo, but we omit this since Dad is standing with them), but instead spent the whole day staring at words that turned against me and tried to steal my sanity. Tell them I'd rather be at school, daydreaming and playing with friends while my parents pay all my bills. They stick out their tongues and go upstairs to play while I go back to work. Yeah, grownups have it made.

Angry UPS and Fed Ex drivers appear and drop ninety boxes on my lawn. Please note, I am a writer and we're prone to exaggeration. But not this time. Am thinking I need to move to a new house to make room for giveaway stuff. At the very least move so that the angry drivers can't find me and hurt me.

Call for my wonderful hubby who mumbles he'd rather clean up the spilled cat food. We wrangle the boxes in and find a place to stash them. Then I'm back to work until dinner time. Make superb meal (okay it's Chef Boyardee and crackers with lettuce and Ranch dressing masquerading as salad) that the kids pick at (while they pick on each other). Dream of eating a nine course meal on the beach with hubby and no screaming children or cat making a hairball on rug. Make deal with hubby, I clean the table while he takes care of hairball. Run children away from table by announcing homework time.

Climb stairs while lamenting the fact I no longer have a ranch style house, to get kids back to table to actually do homework. Wonder what kids do at school all day to have so much homework. Egads! It appears all work is saved for home. Finally get that done and wrestle the game controllers out of their little hands so that I can wrestle them into bed (am thinking wrestling greased pigs would be easier). Send hubby off to watch TV and head back to office where I write until I'm too tired to stay awake. Usually until two or three in the morning.

That is basically a typical day that is often interrupted by trips to the emergency room such as the time my youngest thought he could climb walls and I severely burned my hand when he reached for a hot skillet-- and a thousand other unforeseen things that crop up. But basically, that's it.

**Q: You've been writing since the age of seven—literally! How do you keep your stories fresh?**

I air them out every day at three. Oh, sorry. This is a serious question. Hmm... I'm not sure. The stories are just always there and I know I have more ideas than I will ever have a chance to write. I think that's what keeps me going. I want to put down as many on paper as I can before I expire

**Q: What is your greatest challenge as an author beginning work on a new book?**

There's not really a challenge. I always say that I finish a book just so that I can start the next one. Really.

**Q: What is it about the paranormal that you love?**

Blood, guts, goats, ghosts. Everything. I've never been the kind of person who liked to color inside the lines or who wanted to play by other people's rules. With the paranormal, the only limitation I have is my imagination. I can do anything and go any place. I love the freedom of it all.

**Q: You also write Scottish historicals as Kinley MacGregor as well as Science Fiction and Fantasy. Is it difficult to shift from one genre to another?**

Not at all. I just close my eyes and poof, I'm there on the Highland banks, feeling the wind tugging at my hair. Of course, I'm often looking behind me for a demon to pop in, but that's another story.

**Q: Which Dark-Hunter or Chronicles of Nick character is most near and dear to your heart and why?**

Acheron... no wait, Simi. No, Talon. Bubba. Zarek. Nick. Kyrian, um... well, all of them. Choosing between them would be like choosing between my children. They all hold my heart and they all make me crazy.

**Q: Which character from your various worlds was the most fun to create?**

Probably Simi because I think we all have some Simi in us. She is truly the best and worst of humanity which is weird when you consider the fact that she's a demon.

**Q: From where did the idea arise to combine mythological gods with vampire lore?**

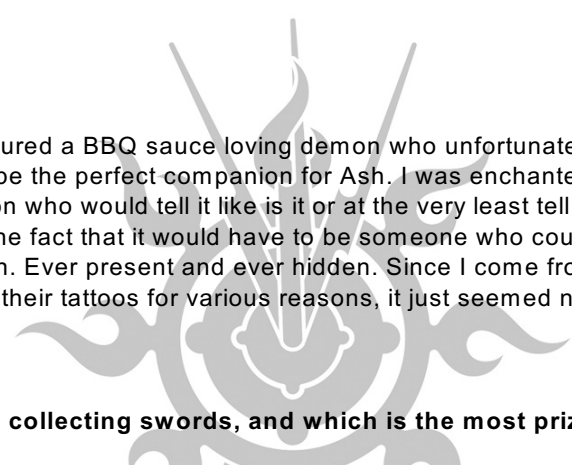
It was just one of those serendipitous moments. I was working for a small science fiction magazine, taking a class in Greek mythology and working on an article for the school paper about the origins of Halloween. That afternoon my boss at the magazine asked me to write an ongoing serial to help boost our subscription rate. I asked if I could do vampires and he said so long as I thought people would read them, sure.

A few hours later, I was talking to my professor for the article I was writing, and told him that all of my research on vampirism and shapeshifters kept going back to Ancient Greece for the oldest tales. Since the god Apollo was god of the sun and plagues, I asked him why he thought no one had ever used that as the backbone of their fictitious world. The moment the words were out of my mouth, I realized \*I\* should write that tale.

I went back to my dorm and the Dark-Hunter legends were born.

**Q: Simi, a Charonte demon, is a living, breathing tattoo whose symbiotic relationship with Ash is wildly imaginative, insanely genius and very curious. How did you think up her character?**

Have you ever been on a long car trip with someone you thought was a good friend? A car trip that was supposed to be only eight hours and after ten you wanted to BBQ them? That was what



led to Simi. I conjured a BBQ sauce loving demon who unfortunately didn't eat the driver. But I knew she would be the perfect companion for Ash. I was enchanted by the thought of a teenaged demon companion who would tell it like is it or at the very least tell it like she sees it. The tattoo part came from the fact that it would have to be someone who could always be near Acheron, seen but not seen. Ever present and ever hidden. Since I come from a family of tattooed men who have to cover up their tattoos for various reasons, it just seemed natural that she would be a living tattoo.

**Q: How did you get into collecting swords, and which is the most prized in your collection?**

It all started with an inlaid ivory hilt Korean sword my father owned that I discovered when I was five. I thought it was the coolest thing and quickly sliced a chunk of my finger off. I've respected and loved them ever since. There is a beauty and artistry to each one and the workmanship that goes into each is incredible. I think that appreciation comes from my grandfather who was a blacksmith. As a little girl I used to watch my grandfather work in a forge. I'm fascinated by metallurgy.

My most prized is probably my cheapest. It's a replica of a twelfth century battle sword that I used to fight with back when I was active in the Society for Creative Anachronism for no other reason that it was my first. I have two that were given to me by fans that I also treasure.

**Q: What can you tell me about yourself that I'd never guess from your books?**

I collect hourglasses. Another strange fascination that started in childhood. And that I love classical music. I play the flute almost everyday and one of the goals I have in my life is to be able to play Grieg's In the Hall of the Mountain King. I'm partially paralyzed in my right hand and lack the dexterity to play that and Mozart's the Magic Flute. If I could just perfectly play one of those tunes just once... But it doesn't stop me from trying and one day... I will play them perfectly. I know it.

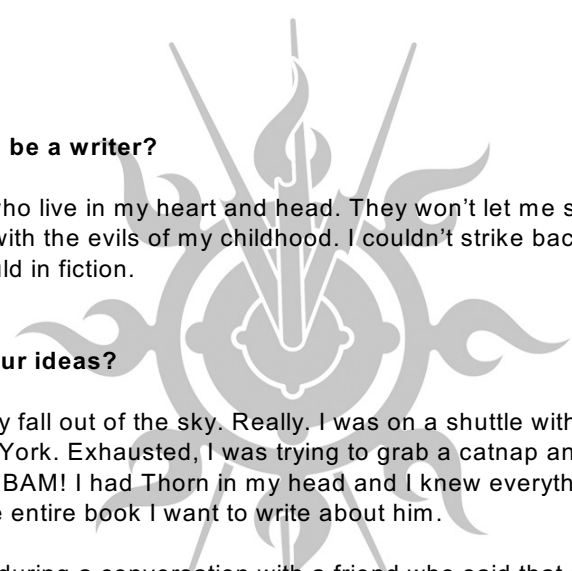
The other thing is that I come from a long line of working people. My mother was sixty years old working the counter of a video store and my father was a retired Sergeant Major. My grandmother worked the assembly line of Nabisco and my other grandfather was a faith-healer and rainmaker who built the church where I was baptized (and I mean literally built the church). When I was little, I used to pretend I could control the weather too.

**Q: Can you tell me about your childhood?**

It was brutal and awful, and it left a lot of scars on me. It was the kind of childhood that a lot of people use to justify criminal behavior. But that being said, it gave me a lot of strength and made me the person I am today. That which doesn't kill you, serves as a motivational speech for others. You can't let the past ruin your present or destroy your future. I couldn't control what happened then, but I can control my attitude now and I won't give them anymore of my life. To anyone else who is in a similar situation, hold on. It will get better. You have to have faith and you have to believe in yourself.

**Q: Did you always want to be a writer?**

From the moment I was born. Literally. In my Brownie manual it has my shaky handwriting that says: When I Grow Up, I Want To Be: A writer and a mother.



**Q: What inspired you to be a writer?**

The characters who live in my heart and head. They won't let me sleep until I tell their tale. It was also how I dealt with the evils of my childhood. I couldn't strike back at the ones who hurt me in real life. But I could in fiction.

**Q: Where do you get your ideas?**

Everywhere. They fall out of the sky. Really. I was on a shuttle with my crew, coming back from Comic Con New York. Exhausted, I was trying to grab a catnap and paying attention to nothing. All of a sudden... BAM! I had Thorn in my head and I knew everything about him. His past, his presence and the entire book I want to write about him.

Bubba was born during a conversation with a friend who said that she wanted a computer tech guy she could understand. Someone who spoke slowly and didn't use tech words she couldn't understand... BAM! Bubba Burdette was there with the Triple B.

**Q: How do you stay motivated and inspired?**

The characters. They are always with me and I want to hear them more clearly. Nothing motivates me more than wanting to know how the story ends, wanting to learn more about the people in my head.

**Q: Is there anyone you look up to for inspiration?**

I wouldn't say inspiration so much as motivation and strength. As hard as my life has been, my mother's was so much harder. To this day, I don't know how she got up in the morning and made it through the days of her life. She had a severely handicapped daughter and she lost her oldest son (my brother). I barely survived my brother's death. I have no idea how she managed to hold it together. She would always say that knowing she had a small child and my sister, she had no choice but to continue on. I figure as long as I have my sons and they're healthy, I have no reason whatsoever to complain about anything.

**Q: What books have you written?**

Bunches. I've placed over fifty on the New York Times, and I add new ones all the time. The best way to get a list is to visit the website and click the printable book list.

**Q: Are you going to write more books in future?**

Absolutely. I've been writing all my life and often joke with my hubby that when I die, I want him to bury me with a laptop that has a long battery life. That way, I can be a real ghostwriter.

**Q: Have you won any awards?**

Quite a few. I've won several Prisms, PEARLS, HOLT Medallion, Maggie Award, MARA Award, Bestselling Book Of The Year, Reader's Choice, and many others.



**Q: What is the most important reason for you to keep writing?**

My love of it. I live to write. It's like breathing to me. Not to mention, I think my fans might eat me for breakfast if I were to quit before I wrote Savitar's or Jaden's story.

**Q: What is the first thing you ever wrote?**

A horror novel about a little girl who murdered her brothers and got away with it. I swear it wasn't based on any fantasy I had at the time. Really. (And Steven, if you see this, I *really* mean it)

**Q: Do you have any siblings?**

Bunches. I have two older sisters and a younger brother. I had an older brother who died when I was twenty-one. We also inherited my uncle's sons and daughter who lived with us off and on throughout most of my childhood and early adulthood.

I tried several times as a child to give them away. I even went so far as to swap my baby brother for a wagon when he was eighteen months old. Unfortunately, my mother made me swap back. Of course, when he turned sixteen, she told me that she'd wished we kept the wagon.

**Q: Do you feel like your work has had a positive influence on readers?**

That's for the reader to judge. I hope I can say yes. That's all I truly want. Books gave me so much all throughout my life. They gave me hope when I needed it. Laughter. Most of all, they provided an escape from that which I couldn't face. I can't thank those writers enough for being there when I needed them. That's what I hope other readers take from my books. I want to touch their emotions and give them a warm feeling when they put one of my books down or think about one of my characters.

**Q: Do you have any charities you support or other humanitarian programs you participate in?**

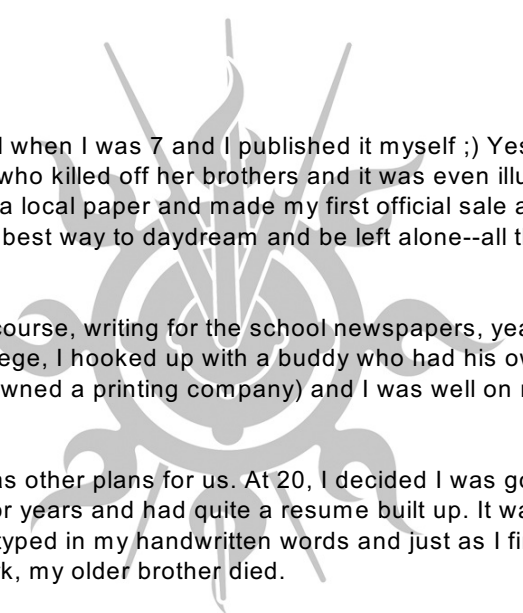
I support numerous charities. My oldest son has autism, so I have done a lot of work with them and for them. Likewise, I support Cerebral Palsy, Diabetes and Cancer by participating in auctions for those causes.

These are the organizations that I personally favor and support: American Cancer Society, Autism Research Institute, Autism Society of America, Cure Autism Now, United Cerebral Palsy, American Red Cross, NOLA Public Library, St. Jude's, Make a Wish, National Center for Learning Disabilities, March of Dimes, and Habitat for Humanity. I'm also a big supporter of the arts in my town and am a member of: Friends of Nashville Ballet, Nashville Opera Guild and the Applause Society. And as a woman of mixed Cherokee heritage, I'm also a member of the Native American Indian Association of Tennessee.

My writing memberships include: Science Fiction Writers of America, Horror Writers Association, Mystery Writers of America, Sisters in Crime, RWA, MCRW, Novelists Inc., and the Author's Guild.

**Q: Did you have to overcome hardships to get your books published?**

I always say there are two things you never want to ask me about: Publishing and pregnancy. I'll scare you off both. Yes, I had an extremely hard time.



I finished my first novel when I was 7 and I published it myself ;) Yes, I still have it. It was a horror novel about a little girl who killed off her brothers and it was even illustrated. I published my first essay in third grade in a local paper and made my first official sale at age 14. I wrote all through school (hey, it was the best way to daydream and be left alone--all the teachers thought I was taking diligent notes).

I stayed steady to my course, writing for the school newspapers, yearbooks and even local papers and magazines. In college, I hooked up with a buddy who had his own SF/F magazine he was publishing (his father owned a printing company) and I was well on my way to being a book author.

But sometimes God has other plans for us. At 20, I decided I was going to go for it. I'd been selling to magazines for years and had quite a resume built up. It was time to go for the book market. For months, I typed in my handwritten words and just as I finished the manuscript and it was ready for New York, my older brother died.

I was devastated. You see, Buddy wasn't just my brother. He was my best friend. My protector. And with him gone, I didn't want to write anymore. I honestly didn't want to do anything. It was the only time in my life that I was truly lost.

Three years later I married my husband. More than anything else, he helped me heal. As I was moving into his apartment, he found some of my old novels and said, "You know I remember how you used to write all the time. Why don't you do that anymore?"

I told him I just didn't and I tucked them away. But destiny wasn't through with me. I had moved to Richmond to be with my hubby and I couldn't find a job. Not even at McDonald's. It was horrible. We were dirt poor with a beat up Escort and Mustang between us. We had no table or chairs and only a bed, a stereo and a small TV in a tiny two room apartment.

I wanted to help support us and felt lower than low. I was talking to another childhood friend who was then editing for a magazine. She told me that they needed a couple of articles written. They didn't pay much and she knew I hadn't written for awhile, but if I wanted those they were mine. I jumped at it.

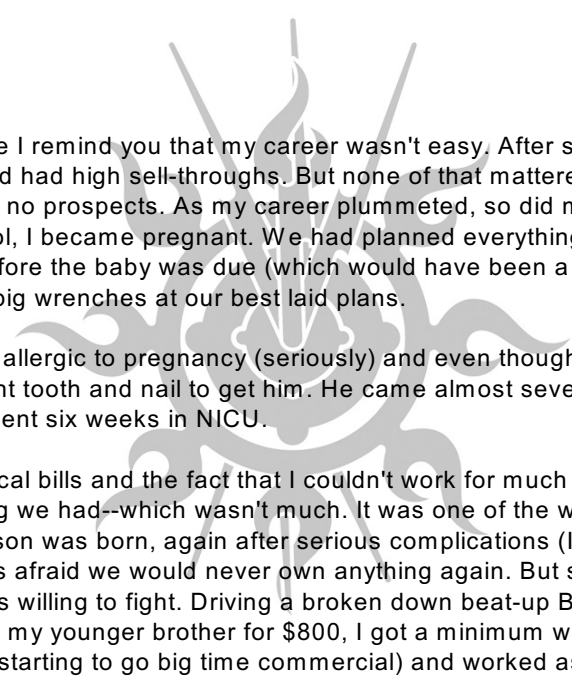
So I pulled my hubby's typewriter out of the closet (I had sold mine) and sat down on the floor with a cheap pack of typing paper and set to work on my article. No sooner had I started than I heard those voices that I had silenced. Once more my people were talking to me. I remember looking up at the ceiling and bursting into tears. For the first time since my brother died, I remembered why God had put me on this earth.

I was supposed to be a writer. By the time my hubby came home, I was surrounded by paper and I was still crying. He looked at the mess and with a confused expression asked, "What happened?"

I told him, "I'm writing!" After I explained everything, my wonderful hubby took me out immediately and bought a Brother Wordprocessor for me. Yes, he who hated to charge anything, broke out that almost unused card and charged me my very own wordprocessor (and a card table and \$10 steno chair). It was there my first eight novels were written and there the first of the Dark-Hunter novels were started.

Almost two years later, I sold my first book. Not for a lot of money, but it was enough so that I could buy a real desk and after the sale of the third book I traded in my Brother for a real computer. you can see my workstation here complete with the hubby's typewriter on the white desk and my Brother on the black one. The boxes underneath are unsold manuscripts. The red chair was the good one I'd bought after the sell of my second book.





Now here's where I remind you that my career wasn't easy. After six sales, it went south. I had won awards, I had had high sell-throughs. But none of that mattered. I found myself without a contract and with no prospects. As my career plummeted, so did my personal life. As my hubby finished up school, I became pregnant. We had planned everything carefully. I was going to work until the week before the baby was due (which would have been a month after his graduation). But life often throws big wrenches at our best laid plans.

I learned that I'm allergic to pregnancy (seriously) and even though all I have ever wanted was a baby, I had to fight tooth and nail to get him. He came almost seven weeks early and I barely survived it. He spent six weeks in NICU.

Because of medical bills and the fact that I couldn't work for much of my complicated pregnancy, we lost everything we had--which wasn't much. It was one of the worst times in my life. By the time my second son was born, again after serious complications (I told you I'm allergic to pregnancy), I was afraid we would never own anything again. But still I am ever an optimist. For my children, I was willing to fight. Driving a broken down beat-up Baretta we bought on installments from my younger brother for \$800, I got a minimum wage job as a web designer (the internet was just starting to go big time commercial) and worked as hard as I could to feed my babies and to get us out of our tiny, rundown apartment.

All the while, I never gave up my dream or forgot the people who lived in my heart. I had \$3.00 a day in my budget that I could spend on lunch for myself. More times than not, I spent that money on postage to mail out my partials to publishers--hey, I was really skinny in those days.

In 1997 as my web work started to pay nicely, I had a brand new story, a pirate novel that I had started. I felt really, really good about this one. I sent it to my agent and my critique partner (a bestselling author). My friend called up and told me it would never sell--it was the wrong time period, wrong setting, etc. "Sherri!" she castigated, "No one will ever buy a pirate set in 1791! Have you lost your mind?" She asked if I ever wanted to publish again. Worse, my agent called and not only parroted that sentiment, she told me that though she had tried to sell me for the last three years, she couldn't and that she thought it best we go our own ways. To this day, I don't blame her. She stood by me when most people wouldn't have. It just wasn't meant to be yet.

Again I was devastated. But I was not defeated. After I scraped myself up off the floor for the umpteenth time. I decided to submit the book on my own. Just one problem. I didn't have enough money. So I wrote a single query letter to an editor. I pitched her the idea for my two favorite stories...Fantasy Lover and A Pirate of Her Own. She wasn't interested in anything paranormal, but said she would like to see the pirate book.

Saying a big prayer, I sent it off and within a week, I had a 3 book contract and Kinley MacGregor was born. Since then, I have been very blessed and to that I owe my readers so much gratitude that I really, truly can't express how thankful I am to you. (And as a side note to those of you who are writing an unpopular time period or subject--that book that my agent and friend said would never sell is still in print eight years later and is in its eleventh printing).

It was two years after I sold APOHO to Harper that St Martins bought Fantasy Lover and my Dark-Hunters. And yes, I am so glad that I didn't give up.

I think one of the greatest moments of my life (aside from holding my sons in my arms for the first time) was hearing the sound of my editor and agent on the phone the first time I hit the extended NYT and the official NYT best seller lists. But even those were marked by sadness. The first call came while I was on my way home after seeing my mother in ICU, and the other came just three days after she died. Every time I look up on my wall and I see that list with my name and title circled, it is bittersweet. But for three days, my mother would have been here to share the achievement I had spent an entire lifetime dreaming of. How many times did I tell her that I wanted to be on that list? She always believed that I could do it and when that call finally came, it

hurt so much that I couldn't tell the one person who had always been there for me. The one person who never doubted me and who said, "I won't buy another book until you make that list." So I would buy the books and authors she loved and send them to her. I had a box of them that I was going to take to her when my brother called with the news that she would never get to read any of them. It's a box that still sits in my office.

My mother was the one I always looked to for courage. She never gave up fighting in a life that was never fair. She was and is my inspiration to carry on no matter what life throws at me. As she would often say, "the more lemons you have, the stronger the lemonade." Of course I would often challenge her with, "Yeah but too many makes it bitter." And my mother would come back with, "Only if you let it. The heart is the sugar. Yours is big enough to sweeten the orchard." She was a great lady whose absence is felt every day of my life.

And I have to say, that she was right. My lemonade is sweet and it is strong. Right now, things are looking good (I'm knocking wood like a maniac) and during those four years while I searched for a publisher, I did learn one lesson. Whether published or unpublished I am and will always be a writer. So for all of you out there who want to write, never listen to anyone who says you can't be what you want. Never give up your dreams. Believe me, I know it's hard. But in the end, those dreams are what see us through the hard times. That and the laughter of friends and family. Hold your friends, family and dreams close to your heart and fight for them all.

**Q: What are your goals with your life and novels?**

To live the best life that I can and to not let my yesterday use up anymore of today and none of tomorrow. As for my writing, to keep doing it so long as there is life inside me. I hope to keep meeting my readers and sharing stories and laughter with them.

**Q: Do you feel you have achieved your goals?**

To achieve a goal, you have to keep working it. I'm still doing that so I guess the answer is yes.

**Q: Why did you write the Chronicles of Nick?**

Since the inception of the Dark-Hunter world, I've wanted to write a spin-off series for the Squires. There's so much material there to work with and I knew it'd be fun to take a Squire and make him evolve into a Dark-Hunter.

When I first suggested to my publisher that we do a series for Nick, they weren't interested. They wanted me to focus on the DH books.

As the DH books grew in popularity and my boys got older, Nick kept nagging at me to do his series. Then one day, my oldest son came home and told me that if he read one more book on his school reading list, he was going to morph into a girl. "Mom, all the books are either about girl stuff and trauma, or they're about how all us guys have wronged all the girls throughout the history of time. What's that about? You know how hard it is to ask a girl out when you've just discussed a book about how sorry all men are? I can't take it anymore. Write me a book I can enjoy. Please!"

I promised him I would and so I returned to my publisher and begged for a Nick series. I wanted to write a series that would appeal to both men and women, boys and girls. Something that had adventure and snappy comebacks. Something that lived and breathed, and dealt with the problems confronting teens and the adults surrounding them.

My publisher agreed and so I started the series as an homage to my boys. So far, I was right and both men and woman, boys and girls have embraced the series.

**Q: Who reads the Sherrilyn Kenyon books?**

Everyone. The audience is almost evenly split between male and female and come from all age groups. One of my favorite gifts came to me from a teacher. As a class project, she had them read Infinity and then write fan letters to me. I treasure each and every one. The teacher bound them into a folio that I keep within arm's reach of me, and I smile every time I look at it.

**Q: What's the hardest thing about being a writer?**

Not listening to those evil voices of doubt that ring in my ears, saying I suck at writing, and that I can't complete the book I'm working on- and that even if I do, no one will like it. Self doubt can be paralyzing, and I have more than my fair share of that.

For others, I think it's the constant criticism that can be overly harsh at times. One of the "gifts" I have from my childhood is that I was always criticized, and as harsh as a reviewer wants to be, they're amateurs compared to what I grew up with. Insults and biting comments roll off me like water over a duck. I have the hide of a rhino. Other writers don't and they take those comments to heart. I've seen it cause many a great writer to quit and cause them to have a nervous breakdown.

You have to come to terms with the fact that some people can never be pleased and they're usually the ones who are most vocal. Others live for no other purpose than to attack others. They believe that the only way they can rise up is to tear someone else down. Still others thrive on negativity and on hurting others. You can't let that get to you. I, and countless other authors, have been attacked very publicly and it's not always over the books. Sometimes they're personal attacks over how you look, dress, or even stand.

Not to mention, even your biggest fan won't always love everything you write. Sometimes it's you, but most of the time, it's from something in their past or their belief system that kept them from enjoying it.

I remember reading years ago, a book from my favorite author. In the plot, the heroine marries the man who killed her most beloved brother. Having lost my brother, I could never accept a man like that being near me, never mind fall in love with him. I hated that book and it had nothing to do with that writer. It was because of my personal experience.

As a writer, you have to remember the old saying: You can't please all the people all the time. Some people you can't please at all. The goal is to please as many as you can and to cherish those who love what you do.

**Q: What is the hardest thing about writing the CON series?**

Dealing with the people I love while knowing some of them are going to die, and neither Nick nor I can save them. I always have a lump in my throat when I write their scenes. It also breaks my heart to remember how close Acheron and Nick were before they became enemies. I hate to see them fighting. But I know why they have to take this journey.

**Q: Do you have favorite books or authors?**

I have many, many faves. I read some of everything. My all time favorite books are: The Wolf and The Dove by Kathleen Woodiwiss. Devil's Bride by Stephanie Laurens. Anything written by Jim or Shannon Butcher. The Canterbury Tales by Chaucer. The Importance of Being Earnest by Oscar Wilde. Johnny Zed by John Betancourt. Burt Cole's The Quick.

**Q: Who has influenced your writing?**

The answer is simple. None.

While I've read fiction all my life and have many, many fave authors, none of them have ever made a difference in my writing in any way. I've never tried to mimic anything about them and even though their characters and books have stayed with me and lived in my heart alongside my own, they've never held any kind of influence over me. Yes, I've admired the beauty of how Oscar Wilde and Chaucer, as well as countless others turn a phrase, but that's their style and while I love and admire it, it's not my style or my characters'. Writing for me wasn't like art where I studied another artist and tried to duplicate their expertise. I give other authors their due while I continue on my own by doing things, right or wrong, my way.

But as I was doing an interview earlier today, I realized something. There are actually writers whose works have influenced my writing. But not the way most people think. Since the day I discovered Descartes's Passions of the Soul in sixth grade (I really was a precocious little monkey who read above a college level by fifth grade), I became enamored of philosophy, and, more importantly, philosophers. No, I didn't understand everything back then, but I kept returning to those books and mulling their words, gaining more insight and understanding with every reread.

Over the years, I didn't absorb and believe all their theories. Some of them just don't work for my own philosophy and ethics (Rand jumps immediately to mind), but others such as Hobbes, Plato, Kant, Kierkegaard, etc. appealed to me at my most fundamental level. More than that, they taught me to think and to evaluate human behavior for myself. I went from philosophy to psychology where I explored Jung, Pavlov, Skinner and countless others. That ability to understand the complexities, duality and most importantly the dichotomy of human behavior has influenced my writing heavily because it has influenced my cognition and forced me to evaluate every aspect of not just me, but every character I create.

Another great influence on my writing was a paper I wrote in college. My dissertation was simple and yet extremely complex. It was that human personality and individuality are defined not by our consistencies, but by our inconsistencies. Those weird quirks we all have- some for a reason and some simply innate. That is the cornerstone of humanity. And that is what I use in my writing.

Each and every book, each and every character, for me, is an exploration of the various, and often opposing, philosophies and theories I was exposed to by those writers. Without their work, mine would not be the same and so I guess in the future, I need a new answer whenever an interviewer wants to know what writers have influenced me.

The only problem now is figuring out the ones who made the most impact. Hmm... maybe I should say Homer and Hesiod, and of course, Plato... definitely Plato :)

**Q: What kind of research did you have to do?**

All books require some form of research. If you set them some place you haven't been or that you haven't visited in awhile, you have to study those towns and areas, even if it's a contemporary setting. The internet helps a lot with that.

For the mythology and history, I've studied those for so many years that I know most of it off the top of my head. What I don't know, I usually have a friend who does and all I have to do is call them.

**Q: Everyone comments on the beauty of your sites. Where did you learn web design and how long have you been at it?**

I think I was blessed because I'm ambidextrous. I'm able to use both the left and right side of my brain equally, which has really come in handy doing web work. What few people realize is that I have a heavy art background and was even accepted into SCAD (Savannah College of Art and Design). Unfortunately, I couldn't afford tuition or the hefty cost of art supplies, and had to turn my sights to a more reasonable goal.

I entered college as an art major and did pursue it for as long as I could afford it, but after completing about half my courses, I ended up switching majors to the much cheaper History department.

The computer artwork came later. After teaching college extension courses for a couple of years, I needed something that would actually pay for daycare and groceries, not to mention paying the rent on time would be nice, too.

So I went looking for computer jobs and lo-and-behold there was an ad in the local paper that said if you can teach, we will teach you computers. I answered it and was hired.

As for the web design, I started piddling with notepad and HTML back at the tail end of 1994, and have been tampering with it ever since trying to see what I can make it do. It wasn't long after that, that I started working for design companies as a programmer. I'm completely self-taught on all things computer.

**Q: When you write, do you use all your senses? Such as when you are setting books in New Orleans do you see it, hear it, etc.?**

When I write, I can feel and see everything clearly in my head. Every smell, every glimmer of light. Things go through my head like a movie. Locations where I have lived, such as New Orleans, tend to come easiest, but I've done a lot of reenacting, role-playing, and such that helps with that as well.

**Q: You are in the SCA (Society for Creative Anachronism). Has that helped your writing?**

It gives me a world of insight in to how clothes feel and how heavy some of them are. It also helps in reminding me of how long undressing can take :)

It also has helped a lot in that I have actually jousting and sword fought while visiting SCA friends, tournaments and events. I've worn a full suit of armor and have handled working weapons of all kinds.

**Q: I've heard that you have a background in martial arts. What did you study?**

I don't know if I would call it a background. I did Aikido for a few years in college, but never very seriously.

I think the most interesting thing along that vein that I've done is to be the sparring partner for two

Golden Glove boxers. For that matter, I TKO'd one of them during practice.

**Q: Where so you see the Dark-Hunters going? How long will you write them?**

Far into the future, I hope. I have over forty books planned for them at present, and get at least a new idea a week. I've laid them out very carefully and hope to be doing these books for a long time.

**Q: How do the Dark-Hunter novels differ from other vampire books on the market?**

These ain't your mama's vampires :) Forget what you know, or think you know, about vampires and be prepared to meet a whole new breed. Every rule you think you know in this world will have an exception. Every time you think you know something, be prepared for the unexpected. These guys are their own masters and they are unlike anything that has come before them.

One of the biggest differences is that my vampires were cursed by the god Apollo. Unlike the traditional vampire, they don't have immortality. They only live twenty-seven years. The only way they can live past their 27<sup>th</sup> birthday is to start stealing human souls.

Their legends and brethren date back to Atlantis, and they have been kicking butt and taking names for the last eleven thousand years. They are ancient warriors, male and female, who have been trained for one thing and one thing only--to save mankind from the evil not only in this dimension and realm, but from others as well.

Each rule, each law has been carefully thought out and crafted to allow given loopholes and adventures that will be unique to each book and each character. The ending of each book will be completely different from it's predecessor.

I went into this series thinking years into it. I wanted to create a world where the reader would never get tired of the same old same old (or me for that matter). I wanted a world like that in which we live. Where every day would start with limitless possibilities.

It is for that reason that I created the three separate branches. The Dark-Hunters who protect the night, The Were-Hunters who protect the past, present and future and the Dream-Hunters who protect our dreams.