

Rachel Caine: The World of Vampires and Demon Turtles



Rachel and Fang – the demon turtle and tour mascot



Rachel in signing mode

It all started with a lamp. Unlike Aladdin and his famous Genie this lamp was more ordinary. It was merely a street lamp, spaced slightly too far from the next, that sparked the creativity locked within the imagination of author Rachel Caine. Now she has more than 30 novels, printed in 24 languages, around the world.

Of her journey so far Rachel said:- “I look back and everything I do is just one step. You look back down the mountain and you think how did I get here?” She feels that each of these steps has been valuable in contributing to her position today and when trying to pinpoint her proudest moment she admitted:- “I couldn’t really say, except probably this last book deal. I suddenly realized wow we’re on book 13, 14, 15 of a series, and that’s very unusual!”

While proud of her own accomplishments, what she truly treasures are her fans. “It’s so rewarding, especially in the young adult market, to meet people and hear how it’s changed their lives.” And for some that change has been truly remarkable.

Rachel shared the unbelievable story of a 21-year old fan who previously hated reading. She had faked her way through school, doing everything within her power to avoid reading. “She used to check books out of the library to fool her parents, and move the bookmark through the books and then

check them back in. This was a very elaborate scheme she had.” She continued to do this throughout college, and one day the power went off in her apartment. Having nothing else to do, she resigned herself to reading the book she currently had checked out from the library. It just happened to be Rachel Caine’s. “Her message to me was, I never knew what I was missing, what else do I read?” Rachel exclaimed enthusiastically.

It is fans like this who constantly confirm that Rachel made the right choice when she decided to leave her permanent position to pursue writing full time. After about four years of working as a crisis communications manager for a large international company, while also writing three books a year, Rachel decided she had to make a choice, and she’s very happy with that decision. “I think it was the right choice, it’s certainly been tremendous for us.”

Roger Zelazny who wrote 9 Princes in Amber, “one of the earliest urban fantasy series,” inspires Rachel. “He wrote in first person, which I tend to do in some of my books.” And Rachel has an impressive number of books, ranging in content from vampires to Shakespeare.

“I have a new book I’m working on right now that’s not related to the Morganville series. It’s called Prince of Shadows and it’s a retelling of Romeo and Juliet, from the point of view of Benvolio and Rosaline.

“It just so happened that one of my friends on Twitter said I need to finish my story about Benvolio, and I immediately thought ‘Oh Romeo and Juliet, how cool she’s doing a re-telling,’ and she said, ‘I mean my cat.’ So, I owe her for the idea completely.” Rachel will submit the completed manuscript for her latest project on June 30, while she’s still on tour.

Of her more famous, Morganville series she says “It’s truly amazing the response we’ve had from all over the world, and

considering it's a very regional kind of story. It's a small town in west Texas in the US."



Some of Rachel's
Edinburgh fans

Fans may be wondering what inspired that much-loved small town. Rachel says, "Inspiration comes from all kinds of strange little details, and in the case of Morganville it was a conversation I had with a friend of mine, on the way home, driving in the dark, because I knew I had to come up with an idea. She said, well tell me the first thing that comes into your head, and I said the streetlights are really far apart. And she said, that's interesting why? And I said well, I guess if vampires made a town they would put street lights really far apart." And the rest was history. The seed of an idea had been planted, and from it grew Morganville.

From her extensive series Rachel does have a favourite book. "Book 11, which was Last Breath. I like it because it came out the closest to how I envisioned it to be. And luckily that seems to have really resonated with the fans as well."

"I'm very lucky that one of the ones that has really been very popular is my favourite as well."

While Rachel has undoubtedly captured her market now, she admits it hasn't always been easy. "I went through a kind of dark period of my career. The first couple of tries I had at doing what I do were not very successful because the market was not really there for it."

"Until urban fantasy became a thing I didn't really have a home. I was fairly early in the game."

Now, she gets to enjoy doing what she loves the most, writing. "I'm very simplistic, I love getting up and working. Working and writing is just a real joy to me."

"I've achieved so many [goals] I never thought I would. I've been on the New York Times list, I've been on the USA Today list, I've been on all the bestseller lists in England and Australia. I can't think of anything that I would dream about now. Everything to me is a joy at this point."



Just some of
Rachel's books

Even getting up at the crack of dawn. "To my great distress I discovered the time I write best is from 5am to noon. That's a terrible thing to discover, I don't wish it on anyone."

And authorship has brought other experiences she wouldn't wish on anyone. Rachel was sitting a mass literary signing when she found herself seated between two people suspected of committing murder. "I was sitting between T. Cullen Davis and O.J. Simpson. I was just sitting there thinking I'm going to sign and not look to the side." Thankfully she and her vampires survived the signing unscathed.

But when the good, bad and the weird come together in the melting pot of authorship, Rachel Caine loves and values her profession. She enjoys "getting out from behind the computer and coming out and hearing these wonderful stories from people about their experience with the books and what it meant to them." Hence her lengthy European book tour beginning from 4 May to 24 June 2012. Then following a two day break an American leg of the tour will commence and will continue until August.

Rachel continues to entertain new ideas and inspiration. She is open to making Morganville a television series and has even written a pilot script, but right now, she's more than content with being a writer. And what's the best thing about being an author? "Being able to quit my day job. I loved my job but the moment I quit I realized this huge weight came off of me, and creatively that's very exciting!"



Rachel and Fang – ready to sign and meet their fans

Listen to the full interview with Rachel Caine and her husband R. Cat Conrad: