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Have you always wanted to be a writer or is it something you discovered along the path of life?

Hi, Roxanne! How nice to be here!

I've made up stories for as long as I can remember, and my mother tells me I used to ask her to write them for me. Along life's way, I also discovered a love for teaching, and as there were few writing courses at my college of choice, I first became a Speech & Language Pathologist. I worked in public schools and in a university clinic, and later also taught traditional subjects in a small, private high school.

But yes, much as I love to teach, I always wanted to write and was always pulled back to writing!

How has your writing path evolved? Where did you start?

As a young child, I have no idea what I wrote, but in grade and high school and in college, my efforts were in poetry and short stories. Later I tried my hand at children's picture books with a good friend, wrote a few scripts after taking a course in writing for television, and worked on comedy sketches a la *Saturday Night Live*. I was still working on scripts and short stories when I decided to give novel writing a shot.

My early novel efforts are best forgotten, but I learned so much in the process! I started with romantic comedy, and branched into romantic suspense with elements of humor and the paranormal (psychic visions), but nothing completely clicked. My move to St. Augustine provided an unexpected but welcome shot of new writing energy!

I still work on screenwriting, but novels are my primary focus at this time.

Are you a long time paranormal fan or new to the "Other" world?

Oh, I'm a huge long time paranormal fan! My own experiences with the paranormal edged their way into my work even before I wrote in the genre, and I'm thrilled to now be published in paranormal.

Your main character has been described as Gidget with fangs, how did that happen?

Grins, Roxanne! It all started with a peanut butter commercial. Really! In the ad, two little girls are spending the night, and the little hostess says something like, "... we can play Crazy Eights, or we can watch this 'Princess Vampire' video." Now, obviously, I misheard the Princess

Vampire line, but it struck me as funny, and then as a funny idea for a book. That's how my heroine Cesca was conceived.

The Gidget part came up when Cesca informed me that she was a part day-walker, and, hey since she'd been a tomboy in her youth and loved the ocean, I should let her learn to surf. Since the Gidget with fangs idea was even funnier than Princess Vampire, I hopped on board. When a character speaks that clearly, I'm listening!

Do your characters come to life on their own or do you plan them?

Cesca came to life on her own, and many of my characters tend to show up in full form. Not that I know every detail of their lives, but it's fun to uncover those special things about characters. Other characters I plan, but they can also pull surprises when they flesh themselves out differently than I imagined.

The first book in the series, [*La Vida Vampire*](#), made you a best selling author, did you do anything to celebrate such an accomplishment?

At first, I alternately pinched myself and did the happy dance, and gave a great deal of thanks. After a few months – you know, when I thought the chance of jinxing myself was over – I bought myself a balloon that read “congratulations!” It's deflated now, but I still have it.

Tell us a little about your newest book, [*Last Vampire Standing*](#).

Last Vampire Standing was a stitch to write! Jo-Jo the Jester was one of those characters I planned, but he burst on the scene a bit differently and in fuller form than I had imagined. When he crashes Cesca and Maggie's housewarming party, Jo-Jo begs Cesca for sanctuary from the master vampire in Atlanta so he can become a stand-up comic. Cesca's soon learns that Jo-Jo has unwittingly brought more than bad jokes to St. Augustine, and must help her ex-slayer lover solve both a murder and the mystery of what is draining master vampires of their energy force.

If you weren't a writer what would your career be?

If writing hadn't kept calling me back, I'd probably have stayed in teaching. I would've needed another creative outlet or three, though. Outlets beyond creative lesson planning. 😊

When you are not writing, what can you usually be found doing?

Most of the time when I'm not writing, I'm reading. I'm also known to garden here and there, to paint a bit (acrylics), to do needlework if I get the yen, or to refinish furniture pieces. I'll also venture out with my surfboard now and then to practice falling off of it.

Who are some of your favorite authors?

How long do you have? Okay, I'll name some, but understand that for every favorite author I name, I'll leave out at least 5. Here goes: Lorraine Heath, Rachel Caine, Kelley Armstrong, Jim Butcher, Victoria Laurie, Robert B. Parker, Robert Crais, Jan Burke, Joan Hess, Charlaine Harris, P.C. and Kristin Cast, Lori Wilde, Janet Evanovich.

I just looked over the list. Hmm. Make that for every favorite author I've mentioned, I've left out closer to ten more favorites. My blown book budget happily attests to how much and how many authors I read. ☺

Have you been inspired by other authors, if yes, who?

I'm inspired by every author I read, Roxanne! Sure, I notice aspects such as rhythm, pacing, characters, descriptions, sentence structures, word choices, etc., but those aren't the major sources of inspiration. What awes me every time is the story. Whether I'm thrust into immediate action or invited in to meet the characters first, the stories sweep me away.

What books are currently on your to-read list?

Again, this could take pages, so I won't name but a few. I eagerly await the new books of every author I faithfully read, and I look forward to debut books and recommendations of friends just to meet authors who are new to me. I'm reading HUNTED by P.C. and Kristin Cast right now, and Charlaine Harris's DEAD AND GONE is up next.

I have to mention a non-paranormal book that's been on my snag list for over two years – mystery writer Joan Hess's newest Maggody book. This isn't a plug for a friend because I don't have the honor of knowing Joan. I just love her books! I also don't trust that I have the title correct, but last I heard, it was something about motherhood in Maggody with a release now of January 2010. Of course, I thought it was June 2009 and about had myself a hissy fit when I learned differently. ☺

Sometimes I think I need to be medicated in order to wait for the next books by favorite authors. Barring meds, writing my own books is great therapy. On so many levels!

Roxanne, thank you so much for inviting me to the Fang-tastic Book Blog! You and your readers are a blast!