

Interview questions for Nancy Haddock

Nancy, thank you so much for agreeing to this interview. I'm excited to put you in the spotlight.

Lori, thank you for inviting me! I'm delighted to be here!

1) It took several years for you to get published. What kept you going?

It took me a *lot* of years to make the first sale, but I love writing. I love story-telling. Even during the years I stopped writing "seriously" in order to take care of family issues, I still wrote. My writer friends were a great source of support, but the bottom line is that I always had the hope. Hope that I'd come up with saleable stories, and hope that a story would land on the right editor's desk at the right time. Not the expectation, but the hope.

2) Would you like to tell us a little bit about how you got "The Call"?

I had pitched *LA VIDA VAMPIRE* to Cindy Hwang at the Dreamin' in Dallas conference in 2006. Due to a series of events, Leis Pederson invited me to resubmit to her in late January 2007.

I was working along on another project when the phone rang on February 21st at about 11:30 a.m. I answered without checking the caller ID and heard, "Hi, Nancy. This is Leis Pederson at Berkley."

Now I'd learned that Leis was from Texas, so I said, "Hi, Leis. I hear you're a Texas girl. Whereabouts are you from?" We did about five minutes on Texas, but my heart wasn't racing because I didn't yet suspect why she was calling. (Duh, but see above, expectation v. hope.)

Leis then said, "We want to make you an offer."

Houston, we have cognition. Well, some cognition. I never quite got the concept of emotions warring with each other, but I got it then. Joy warred with disbelief, until I did a mental head slap and put my business hat on. When Leis finished making the offer, I asked, "Since you've made The Call, does that mean you'll be my editor?" The answer: Yes.

Okay, then I squealed -- though I tried to hold the cordless unit far enough away from my mouth so as not to deafen ... my new editor.

Wow. There were so very many times I thought I'd never hear that phrase come out of my mouth. All the years of work and hope paid off!

3) It's so exciting to see you got a 4 ½ Top Pick from Romantic Times on your very first book. Tell us about that.

I had taken a break to check e-mail, and found a note from that little bird named Lori Wilde congratulating me on being an RT Top Pick. I don't know how many times I read that one line, stunned but with happy tears welling up. Being an RT 4 ½ stars Top Pick was an achievement to shoot for someday. That my debut book was so well-received? Let's just say I have a lot of bruises from pinching myself.

4) Tell us about your book.

LA VIDA VAMPIRE is the story of 227-year-old Cesca Marinelli, a vampire who was turned in 1800 and has been buried for over 200 years. When Maggie O'Halloran rescues Cesca during a house renovation and gets her up to speed with the 21st Century, Cesca is determined to make the most of her new lease on afterlife. Everything is going her way until she finds a body and becomes a murder suspect. She butts heads with hunky preternatural investigator Deke Saber, but they must work together to find the real killer before Cesca's the next victim.

5) This is the first book in a trilogy correct? Do you have titles and release dates for the next two books?

Actually, LA VIDA VAMPIRE is the first book in a – so far – open series. I don't have a specific release date or title for the second book, but have been told it will probably come out in Spring 2009. I'm having a ton of fun with the second book, and look forward to writing more in the series!

6) Describe your writing process.

In the conceptual stage, I make a lot of notes on world-building, do character charts, timelines, and generally play "what if." In the writing stage, I usually write three to four chapters before I write the synopsis, then use that or a longer outline as my blueprint. However, the characters always surprise me with their secrets. I love it when something unexpected comes flying out!

I used to spend a few weeks plotting an entire book scene by scene before I got down to the actual writing. This worked well for me because I'm a linear thinker. LA VIDA VAMPIRE was the first book I wrote by the seat of the pants rather than by following a detailed outline. It's a scary process sometimes, but I ask my characters what comes next, and they're usually right there to tell me.

Of course, in the revision stage, I layer, cut, slice and dice. And that's about the only time you'll hear me use cooking terms. <g>

7) You used to live in Texas, but now you live near the beach in Florida. What's that like?

I love Texas, and I love NE Oklahoma (aka Green Country) where I was born and raised. I miss also Texas and Oklahoma, especially in the spring and fall, and I

miss my friends and family in both states. However, being at the beach is paradise. Heaven. Nirvana.

Okay, so maybe hurricane season puts a tiny damper on things, but truly, I've always been pulled to the ocean, always knew I needed to live near an ocean. And, in addition to our awesome beaches here, I have the beautiful and historic city of St. Augustine. It may sound corny, never mind clichéd, but I'm happy as a clam!

8) What do you find is the most rewarding thing about being a writer? What do you struggle with most?

The most fun thing is knocking on my characters' doors and having them come out to play. I love the world building, and, though I know the general A-B-C of the plot, I love the twists the story takes and the secrets that come out.

I think what I struggle with the most is focus. Because my office is open to two other rooms in the house, it can be too easy for me to get pulled off-task sometimes. I often play a nature sounds CD and wear noise-reducing earphones to block out distractions.

9) What are your writing plans for the future?

I'd love to write at least three more books featuring Cesca, Saber and the St. Augustine gang. I'm also working on another urban fantasy, a cozy mystery series, and several screenplays.

10) Any parting words of wisdom for aspiring authors? Anything else you'd like to tell your fans?

Aspiring authors, believe in yourself, hold on to hope, and keep learning about both the craft and the business of publishing. Submit, learn from critiques, and know when to trust your gut.

Fans? I have fans? Cowabunga!

Seriously, I hope those who read LA VIDA VAMPIRE will enjoy it! I also hope friends, family and fans will come to my website and play "Where's Cesca." I'm having a blast with my Beach Party page! URLs to know?

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