

Kindle Mojo Interview

July 3, 2012

Kindle Mojo was a website which featured Kindle-related content: it plugged and reviewed Kindle titles and interviewed their authors. Recently it vanished—I am not sure if it went offline or if it's just in transition. But here's an interview they published on July 3, 2012, at the original link <http://www.kindlemojo.com/2012/07/03/author-interview-kristi-petersen-schoonover/>.

KM: Tell us about your book(s).

Skeletons in the Swimmin' Hole—Tales from Haunted Disney World is a collection of ghost stories set in Disney Parks intended for older teens and adults—there's plenty of Disney stuff out there for kids; I wanted to do something for grown-ups. What's most surprising about this book is I've gotten a lot of Moms who love it—because it's just and all for them, not for them to share with their kids. I'm also a Disney Parks fan and junkie, and there just didn't seem to be enough park-set stuff for adults to feed my own passion: except for a few books like *Down and Out in the Magic Kingdom*, *Lord Vishnu's Love Handles*, and a few others, I hadn't seen any dark Disney-related fiction intended for adults. And realistically, these stories could be set in any theme park, as the setting is the only Disney thing about it—Disney represents ultimate happiness. What better place to stick the ultimately tortured and see what happens?

KM: What lead you to becoming a writer (Why do you write)?

I was read to every night probably from the time I was in the womb (my Dad taught English Lit) and probably because of that, I've been reading and writing as far back as I can remember. I was aware from the time I was a tot I wanted to write fiction my whole life--the first short story I remember writing was when I was five. It was called "The Lonely Tree." I didn't really figure out why I write until I got much older: reading is an escape, but writing? That's the ultimate escape, because I have total control over the universe I'm in.

KM: What influences your writing (authors, books, events, people, and others)?

I'm a voracious reader, so if I listed all of my influences here it'd go on forever, but I can say Poe is a big one. As far as specific stories, I find it's anything that ignites that spark: an article or short story I read, something someone says, a real-life situation. An idea for a story for me comes from anywhere, to the point at which, when one is complete, I record the exact items which inspired it in a log. I find that stuff really interesting, and I wish more writers would talk specifically about where a particular piece came from.

KM: If your book were to be made into a movie, who would play the lead roles?

This is a tough question, because *Skeletons* is a collection of short stories; however, there

aren't that many stories in the book, so I could cast the lead in each one: Taissa Farmiga (Violet Harmon in Season 1 of *American Horror Story*) would make a great Livvie ("Doing Blue"), even though she's a little young; she'd more than pull off the "hidden inner torture" required of the role. Connie Britton (Vivien Harmon in Season 1 of *American Horror Story*) or January Jones (*Mad Men*) would excel at Charlotte for "Charlotte's Family Tree"—they both do well with portraying women of guilty conscience, wracked with inner conflict and suppressed anger. I could see *Treme*'s Kim Dickens as the crunchy mother in "Romancing the Goat"—she's got that laid-back drive that's perfect—and *Mad Men*'s Kiernan Shipka as the creepy little Angelina the albino goat-child, but for the main character, Imogene? I'd have to audition. For the title story's Cora, I'd choose Melissa Leo, who does well with introverted characters with secrets. For Miss Reyna, I'd have to pick *The Glades*' Kiele Sanchez—as Callie on *The Glades* she has moments of emotional instability and is easily unnerved, and that's what Miss Reyna's all about. And for the only male main character—JJ in "All This Furniture and Nowhere to Sit," I'd have to go with Steve Zahn—he brings a Devil-may-care-but-not-really aura to *Treme*'s Davis, and that's exactly how JJ is.

KM: Describe your writing process from start to finish of a project.

Oh, man, for me, that's a tough question. I have no set process. Sometimes a story pops into my head, completely, and a draft is out in an hour. Sometimes I have a rough idea and it goes in a drawer, and years later it gets resurrected. Sometimes I have a beginning and an end and no middle. Sometimes I take months to write a single story; others, I can my whole life, including paying bills, friends, eating and everything, and I live and breathe the thing until it's written. Sometimes I write carefully through the whole draft; others I just puke it all out and fix it later. The only true process I have is: 1. Write draft. 2. Fix draft. 3. Send draft out for critique. 4. Polish based on critique.

KM: Do you ever suffer from writer's block and how do you deal with it?

I actually don't believe in writer's block—not in the way most writers do. It's not a block, it's my body/mind/spirit resting to build up more ammo for the next go-round. Anais Nin noted her best writing was done while she was out living; what she meant was that the experience of life is what inspires the work. So if I'm not writing for a while – and sometimes it's been for a couple of years at a time—I just enjoy reading, baking, creating film projects, community theatre acting, volunteering at an aquarium, cleaning out everything in my house, swimming, anything that is wholly different from writing, and all of those things I enjoy or have always wanted to try that I don't have time for when I'm chained to the keyboard. It's me, taking a break. That's all. I go with it. It comes back. It always does. When it's ready.

KM: What's next?

My dark emerging YA novel (a horror novel for older teens on up), *Bad Apple*, will be published by Vagabondage Press Books on September 25, 2012—people who like Poe's unreliable narrator, Shirley Jackson, and books like *Winter Girls* and even *The Lovely*

Bones will definitely like *Bad Apple*, so I'm working on a marketing plan for it. In addition, my short story "The Thing Inside," is featured in Western Legends Press' *Unnatural Tales of the Jackalope*. That comes out June 30, so I'll be helping to spread the word about that. There are a few short stories I've drafted that need work, so after the marketing for *Bad Apple*'s done, I'll be working on those. There's also a supernatural mystery series and the second collection in the Haunted Disney series. So I have about three years' worth of writing cut out for me. What's really critical right now, though, is plans for our wedding. Nathan and I are getting married at Howe Caverns in September. That's where ninety-five percent of my creative juice is going right now—especially since I'm writing a ghost story as part of our favors. The chapbooks will only be given to our wedding guests and the story won't ever be available outside of that, so I want to make sure it's some of my best work.

KM: "I always wanted to write a book." What advice would you give them?

Well, since you wouldn't skydive or fight fires without training, I'd say the same about writing a book. If you really want to do it, spend lots of time reading quality work, read some how-to books, take some writing courses, learn about the business and what's required of you. Maybe even invest in a degree. But prepare. Being a writer involves much more than using a pen, just like being a skydiver involves much more than strapping on a parachute and being a firefighter involves much more than aiming a hose.

KM: What is your most favorite thing about being a writer? Least favorite?

For me, my favorite thing is having a ready-made escape at my fingertips: I can go anywhere I want, do anything I want, be anyone I want as long as I have a keyboard in front of me. My least favorite? It's the ups-and-downs of being a writer in terms of anxiety: am I good enough? Should I give this up and go be an accountant? Who's really going to read what I'm going to write? The self-doubt, which happens to every type of artist, is the thing I wish would just go away.

KM: What do you do when you aren't writing?

I read, clean house, party with friends, watch my favorite shows, do other types of projects such as making photo DVDs, blog and research for future stories...nothing too exciting, really. I also have a podcast called *Scary Scribes* on Canada's Paranormal, Eh? Radio, and I do read and record short stories for a radio show called *Tales to Terrify* based in England. I'm also active in the New England Horror Writers Association. And I love to visit friends for the weekend or longer. Some of my favorite places to visit include Newport (RI), Burlington (VT), Voorheesville (NY), and Austin (TX). And, of course...Walt Disney World.

KM: Where can people get your book?

Skeletons is available on Kindle and in Print, and it's also out there for Nook:

<http://amzn.to/SkeletonsPrint>

<http://amzn.to/SkeletonsKindle>

<http://bit.ly/SkeletonsNook>

If you want a print copy signed by me, you can visit www.haunteddisneytales.com.

KM: Where can people find you on the 'net?

Website: www.kristipetersenschoonover.com

Haunted Disney Tales: www.haunteddisneytales.com

Scary Scribes Podcast: www.scaryscribes.com

A Wedding at the Center of the Earth: www.journeytothecenteroftheearthwedding.com

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