

Q&A

1. Why did you write this book?

I've always been fascinated with Arthurian legends. It was, after all, Marion Zimmer Bradley's Mists of Avalon that first opened my eyes to the world of fantasy. But I was always perplexed as to why Morgan was always referred to as an evil enchantress or as someone with a dark, depressing Fate, and I always wondered... what if someone erased a few of the lines in her story and rewrote them differently? And so I did.

2. What got you started writing?

Though every writer before me always says that they've been telling stories all their lives, I'm afraid I must go with the same line. It all started when I had to placate my brother after having made him cry, before my parents caught on and punished me. Then, as a curious child, I did things I wasn't supposed to and had to become adept at making up excuses for myself. That's the practical, every-day of my art.

3. Were you a bookworm as a child?

Yes, I'd imagine myself living similar adventures to those experienced by my favorite characters. At first, those stories were mainly in my head, then I slowly started putting pen to paper. Finally, after I'd finished college (where I majored in math), I just had to find a way to make my imagination come alive, and I started writing.

4. What motivates you to write?

Frankly, writing is a very difficult task that requires many sacrifices (especially if you have another full-time job like I do). That means less time to go out and have fun with friends, traveling, etc. But the feeling of elation I get when making stories up, then playing with the English language during the editing process... well, it makes it completely worth it. I also love seeing how my whimsical tales affect others.

The best compliment I've received thus far is from a friend of mine. She'd already suffered through the first draft and a number of revisions after that, when I asked her if she'd mind reading the (semi) final one I'd made. While she was reading that draft, despite knowing what was going to happen, she told me that Blood of the Fey had made her forget all about her pain. And that is worth writing for.

5. Tell us about your writing process.

After getting an education in math, I'm afraid my process has gotten rather dry and formal. I've found (over the course of 7 years), that the best way for me to write follows the pattern below:

- a) Come up with the central idea, and write down as many ideas as possible in a notebook—doesn't matter in what order or which book of the series it's for. I also really like to read the books on writing by Donald Maass during this phase, because it forces me to think about my story from a number of different angles that I may not have otherwise considered.*
- b) Go through my notes and write each idea down on a separate flashcard. Once that is done, I can rearrange the flashcards in a way that makes the story have a (what I believe to be a) nice arc. I can then fill in the gaps with more flashcards I create.*
- c) Once I have the skeleton of the story down on my flashcards, I type them up in one long word document, adding more details (what I like to call 'the muscles'). I then revise this summary a few times, each time adding or taking something out, sometimes moving things around again (I find it a lot easier to get your story down right from the start rather than redoing it once you've already written the whole darn thing, which is what I did with my first book, 25 times).*
- d) When I'm satisfied with my now extensive summary, I'm ready to add the blood and nervous systems. I write the first draft. I'm lucky enough that I have friends willing to read this draft and tell me what they think (this isn't about sentence structure or grammar, it's about story flow).*
- e) Afterward, I go over and over the drafts, incorporating ideas expressed by my first readers (at least the ones I agree with, though I find they're almost always right), until I feel I have a decent product.*
- f) I get a third party professional editor to look at my work and wait. A long time.*
- g) The time off from the story means that when I get the story back (and after going over the suggested changes by the editor), my mind is fresh and I can go over my story again with critical eyes. At this point, I read my story out loud (I found this was a great tool while practicing for the audio version of my book) and find a lot of passages where the flow/sentence structure can be ameliorated. I suggest doing this at least two times.*

That's about it for my writing process. But I must stress on a few things more that really help me:

- a) Read, read, read. Write, write, write.*
- b) Have someone (or multiple people) off whom you can bounce ideas back and forth—very useful, during the whole process.*
- c) Professional editing is important, they'll catch things you won't catch yourself because you're so used to your story.*