Emily Skinner
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Facts

-Emily Skinner named both her book series after her daughters. Marquel was named after her daughter, Marquel. St. Blair was named after her daughter, Blair.

-Emily was extremely pleased to see the famous actor Eric Roberts starring in the book trailer for Marquel.

-Emily wrote dramatic poetry and short stories as a child.

-Emily was a staff writer for the Clearwater Sun Newspapers.

-Emily is currently a sales rep and hopes to step away from that position to focus on writing full time.

-Emily currently resides in Florida with her husband.

-Emily was mentored by Harry Whittington, whom she met while working for the Clearwater Sun Newspapers.

-Emily has written skits for several cable access television shows.

-Emily was a terribly slow reader as a child. Her favorite book was Charlotte's Web .

Interview

Q: When did you know you wanted to be a writer? When did you start writing?
A: I wrote poetry as a kid and then thought I wanted to write a novel after I saw romantic movies like Gone With The Wind and Cleopatra. I also started reading historical romances about the same time. All of the movies we watched it seems, were historical or period pieces. So my first stab at a novel was about an Irish widower during a potato famine, I think? It was really bad and of course in those days they married teenagers and I had a teen lead with an older man and a child. No clue why? There were also lots of rats invading the Irish town, so it was like who will eat? The people or the rats… and in the middle of this a romance blossoms between a grumpy older man who basically is taking in the teenage girl as a babysitter for his kid. Somehow the girl finds this endearing and falls head over heels, but I think it is shortly after he kills a giant rat that leaps at her. I was a strange kid, obviously.

But then I graduated to reading humor and I wanted to be the next Erma Bombeck and then later I read Stephen King short stories and wanted to write horror. This was from elementary to middle school age. As I got older, I went back to romance stories and tried Harlequin formulas, but nothing stuck with me. I wasn't very good, but I tried. I really did. I wanted to be a writer and I couldn't seem to put the sentences together as well as I should.

Q: Where do you get your inspiration?
A: My mother and father are tremendous readers and they still read regularly. We had hundreds of books in our house when we were growing up and my dad built book cases for their collections. They also took great pride in organizing the books and keeping the home library orderly. It was an amazing time when print books were in vogue. We had Literary Guild and Book of the Month Club books coming in the mail regularly and my mother would say, "some day these will all be yours" to us kids. I truly believe it was my parents' passion for books that grew my passion to write. However, I was a painfully slow reader. I didn't read a lot, but what I did read and complete I loved. Charlotte's Web was and is my favorite children's book.

Q: Why do you write for young adults?
A: I like clean stories. Meaning less violence, adult language and situations, but I do write those stories, too. However, with young adult, there is a challenge to tell a story in a format that seems to warrant discretion and clarity. If that makes sense. Which means writing what is sometimes a controversial topic in a creative way that is suitable for all audiences. I love reading historical books from both the adult and children's section of the library. I marvel at how great non-fiction children's authors relate historical events in a manner that makes it easy for anyone to understand. Plus, I love young people's perspective of the world. I once had a creative writing teacher tell me that I have a certain naiveté in my writing. I think my inner voice is 14.

Q: What advice do you have for young authors?
A: Don't give up. Write, read and write again. Enjoy telling the story and don't get concerned about grammar. You can get help when it comes to grammar and editing. However, you have to write something first. We are always learning, so don't beat yourself up. Just keep writing your unique stories your way. Don't copy anyone. Just write what is inside you.