

## Interview for “The Vampire Within: New Blood” by Drew Silver

*Today, Tyler R. Tichelaar of Reader Views is pleased to speak with Drew Silver. Drew is the author of “The Vampire Within: The Beginning” and now the newly published, “The Vampire Within: New Blood,” the second book in her vampire trilogy. The third volume of the trilogy will be published in 2008.*

*Drew Silver has been a huge fan of the classic vampire story since she saw the original Dracula movie starring Bela Lugosi. Inspired by observing the similarities between human lives and those of vampires, Silver’s Vampire trilogy was born. Silver holds a Criminal Justice Degree and has worked in law enforcement. She has also spent over twenty years studying the martial arts and mastering various weapons that come to play in the second and third novels of her vampire trilogy.*

Tyler: Thank you for joining me today, Drew. To begin, I’m always intrigued when authors write a series of novels. Did you set out intending to write a trilogy, and if so, did you write all three novels before publishing, or did you finish the first, publish it, and then move onto the next?

Drew: From the start, I knew “The Vampire Within” would be a trilogy. To do otherwise, would have betrayed the characters and intricate storyline. I finished and published each novel at pivotal moments in order for the reader to absorb what had just happened to the characters and determine if they would have made the same choices.

Tyler: Would you tell us a little bit about what happened in the first novel, and where “New Blood” picks up from it?

Drew: In “The Vampire Within: The Beginning,” a group of college students are lured into participating in a University-sponsored research project that promises to cure ailments, enhance athletic performance, and make one more physically attractive with a mere series of injections. The students are divided into two groups, one controlled and the other experimental. What none of the students are aware of is that those promises are side effects of becoming a vampire. “New Blood” picks up after the “control” group learns they have also been given the genetically-altered vampire serum and must take the rest of it to keep from dying either by the serum coursing through their veins or the evil hunting them.

Tyler: I understand the setting for “New Blood,” Triton, California, appears to be a model town, especially lacking in homeless people, but that there is a sinister reason why the homeless are not around. Would you explain that reason to us?

Drew: The homeless are a mostly unaccounted part of society. There are many who have no family or friends who keep tabs on them. There are others who suffer from many different mental ailments including hallucinations. If a certain species needed human blood to thrive on, this would be a feasible group initially to prey upon. First, no one would believe them if they stated vampires were attacking them and second, who would notice that they were missing?

Living in San Diego, we have quite a few homeless... I'm sure it's because of our mild winters and infrequent rainfall. If one of the homeless disappeared, another would take his or her place. It would take a substantial decrease to get the public's attention. A comparable group is prostitutes ... I think it's why some serial killers target them. They're easy prey considering they are willing to get into a stranger's car just to make a few dollars.

Tyler: I am intrigued by your decision to have the characters become vampires through scientific testing rather than just a vampire going around turning others into vampires. Why did you choose to have the vampires be the result of scientific efforts?

Drew: There are already so many stories in circulation about the traditional means of being 'turned' into a vampire. I felt it was time to update the story with a new way of transmitting the vampire curse. Like so many diseases that are passed on through unprotected sex, swapping needles, etc. having the vampire serum injected intravenously into the majority of characters by a trusted source seemed more believable and more sinister.

Tyler: The vampire novel has been popular in English literature for two hundred years now, yet several vampire novels are produced each year. In your novel, you focus on genetic engineering. Is it because the vampire genre lends itself to commentary on modern day issues that it has survived?

Drew: The vampire is only a myth because we haven't found anything to prove otherwise. Yet, there are those who have what is called Xeroderma pigmentosum or XP, who can't go outside because pain and blistering occur immediately after contact with sunlight. There are others who believe they are actually vampires—they have what is called Clinical Vampirism. There are many other similarities that link the two worlds, including the quest for eternal youth, which present-day scientists are trying to zero in on. Vampires are a unique reflection of everything we fear and simultaneously, everything we want to be.

Tyler: Drew, what makes your vampire novels stand out from all the others, including the very popular novels of Anne Rice?

Drew: This trilogy just doesn't bring what we know as vampires to modern day, it transforms them. Staying true to the "survival of the fittest" theory, Dr. Cohn, the ultimate nemesis in the story, uses his expertise in genetic engineering to manipulate the DNA recovered from vampire remains and to test the effects on unsuspecting students. The students are forced to decide whether to allow the vampire within them to consume them or use the vampire within to wage war against the evil that has been unleashed in their city.

Tyler: Are you personally interested in genetic engineering itself? Often, horror novels are seen as social criticism? Were you trying to say something similar here about the potential dangers of science?

Drew: I think genetic engineering should always be respected and that no one has the right to play God. In “The Vampire Within” trilogy, the students are lured into participating in a research project that promises them god-like results such as increased stamina, better eye sight, and eliminating the effects of asthma. Our society already has made great advances in increasing stamina, correcting vision with lasers, and having more effective asthma inhalers. The simple truth is that most of us desire more and more. If we acquire better vision or a faster internet connection, we are rarely satisfied for long and search for the next best thing. If you want examples, just turn on the television. “The Vampire Within” shows what happens when these students sign up for a get-fixed quick experiment and find that dealing with their physical limitations was much more appealing than stepping onto the other side of the proverbial fence which had promised greener pastures.

Tyler: Why did you choose the title “The Vampire Within” for your trilogy? Are you suggesting we all have a bit of the vampire within us?

Drew: Yes, I do think we all have a little bit of a vampire within us in the regard we share some of the basic characteristics of vampires. We all want to live forever, in a youthful way—not experience the effects of old age. If we had a chance to live forever, be beautiful forever, and perhaps powerful and wealthy forever, would any of us pass it up? I don’t think any of us could answer it truthfully until put in the situation.

Tyler: Of course, there are negative effects to being a vampire—if not for the vampire, for other people. The characters in your story did not choose to be vampires, but were tricked into it through the scientific study. But do you think people would choose to be vampires in exchange for eternal life and youth?

Drew: I think it comes down to what’s worth selling your soul for. For example, the leader of the good group of vampires turns out to be Justin Monroe. He’s been tricked into taking the first injection and he’s given the choice to live or die. Of course if I were put in his situation, I would have made the same choice to become a vampire. He’s doing it for all the right reasons—to be with the woman he loves, to protect his family, and hopefully to save Triton City and perhaps the world from the diabolical plan that Dr. Cohn has put into motion.

We all make choices everyday that impact our lives. I’ve met some of the greediest people in the world and some of the most giving. I know people who would sell their souls for eternal life and youth and people who would sell their souls to save a loved one from a tragic disease. It’s all about what we value because what we value is a reflection of ourselves.

Tyler: Drew, I understand college students are the main characters in “New Blood.” Why did you choose college-age main characters?

Drew: College is where most of us are free to make our own decisions for the first time. It is also the age where we still believe we are “invincible.” In this trilogy, Triton University is made up of

the best and brightest students from around the world. More importantly, none of the students in attendance are there to fail. They will do almost anything to get ahead and be recognized as future leaders. Dr. Cohn preys upon this theory with deadly results.

Tyler: As I mentioned at the beginning, you have a great interest in martial arts. Would you tell us a little bit about that interest and why and how you used it in “New Blood”?

Drew: I fell in love with the martial arts when I was eight years old after watching a Chuck Norris movie. I’ve studied the martial arts since and have mastered every weapon I’ve laid my hands on. My favorite weapon is the Kama, which is best described as a modified version of a farming sickle with a shortened handle and blade. Two of the characters, who are brother and sister in “The Vampire Within Trilogy,” have extensive martial arts training. It is touched upon in “New Blood” and a modified Kama is also introduced, but the real value of this training will be put to the test in the third novel.

Tyler: Drew, when can your readers expect the third novel in the trilogy, and would you tell us its name and give us a little preview?

Drew: The third installment is called “The Vampire Within: Life Eternal” and will be available summer 2008. In “Life Eternal,” Justin and his group are forced to divide their efforts. One half of the group is headed to Romania to see if they can recover a pure DNA sample and the other half is staying in Triton City in the hope of stopping Dr. Cohn and his henchmen.

Tyler: What do you mean by a pure DNA sample? Are they seeking out an actual vampire—one of their predecessors? Is this where the serum came from, and do they expect this sample will cure them?

Drew: I don’t want to give too much of the third book away, but the band of good vampires has many reasons for seeking out a pure DNA sample. A little sneak peek is that those who already turned know that there is no turning back, but the question remains is there a way to keep those who haven’t been injected from being infected since it’s quite apparent the scheming mind of Dr. Cohn could have world-wide implications.

Tyler: Drew, what do you plan to write next? Will there be more vampire tales or will you concentrate on another genre?

Drew: There is a possibility of a follow-up trilogy called “The Vampire Unleashed,” and expanding the storyline to include werewolves.

Tyler: Thank you so much, Drew, for joining me today. Before we go, would you tell our readers your web site address and how they can purchase a copy of “New Blood”?

Drew: I invite everyone to check out my site at [www.thevampirewithin.com](http://www.thevampirewithin.com) and email me with any questions. Both novels can be purchased at Dark Delicacies Bookstore, Borders, Target.com, Amazon.com and other online outlets.

Tyler: Thank you, Drew, and best of luck with your future books.