

## **Interview with Drew Silver** **Author of *The Vampire Within: The Beginning***

Reader Views is happy to be talking with Drew Silver, author of “The Vampire Within: The Beginning.” This is the first in a trilogy that brings the classic vampire tale into the new millennium.

**Juanita:** Thanks for talking with us today Drew. Please tell your readers the storyline of “The Vampire Within: The Beginning.”

**Drew:** The Vampire Within: The Beginning is about a group of college students who sign up for a research project that promises to help improve a variety of ailments including, but not limited to, asthma and poor eyesight. The head of the research project, Dr. Cohn, also claims it enhances intelligence and beauty. There are a few side effects that seem reasonable such as, nausea, muscle pain, and headache, but it’s a new set of fangs and the need to drink blood that has this last research group concerned....and what about the prior research groups?....What were their side effects?

**Juanita:** What inspired you to write “The Vampire Within”?

**Drew:** I live in San Diego and here as it is all over the country, there are a lot of people who want it “all”. They want power, money, good looks, intelligence and whatever else can be thrown in. We have people researching ways for us to live longer and be healthier through a variety of sciences. And I’m not saying that any of that is bad, but I do wonder at what cost and when will it be enough? So, I started thinking about the correlation between our lives and that of vampires. Vampires seek power, wealth, beauty, and eternal life. Most of us, seek that as well and would do whatever we could to get it. Thus, “The Vampire Within” was born.

**Juanita:** How have you brought the classic vampire story up to date and into this new millennium?

**Drew:** First, I am a huge fan of the classic vampire story, but we are in 2006. I wanted to keep the excitement of the vampire realm alive in old fans and hopefully gain new ones by creating a story that intertwined the past and present in a feasible way. Now, I won’t give away all the twists and turns, but just imagine what scientists would do if they found an actual coffin with vampire remains. Do you think they would try to extract the DNA, manipulate it, and see if they could cure the ailments of the world? Or do you think that there might be a chance that they would think about the power, the money, and all the other things that having the ability to create the ultimate vampire might give them? It would truly be good versus evil and that is exactly what The Vampire Within Trilogy is all about.

**Juanita:** Wow!...very intriguing Drew. It sounds like “The Vampire Within Trilogy” will be relatable to a wide range of readers. The theme of good vs. evil is timeless and understandable to everyone. Tell us about the main characters in your book.

**Drew:** There are twelve main characters in the book – all but one of them are college students at Triton University. There’s CJ and Greg Ashton – recently lost their parents and are in need of money. Brad, Justin & Steven are football players wanting to increase their performance. Jennifer, Justin’s girlfriend, is involved as an intern...at first. Cory & Kellie, another couple participating – Cory is Brenda’s best friend. Brenda is there in hopes that her severe asthma can be relieved. Julie & Emily are interns and Eric, Justin’s brother, is an integral key to helping this group understand and come to terms about what is happening to them.

**Juanita:** Drew, why did you choose college students, as your main characters and the backdrop of college as the setting of “The Vampire Within”?

**Drew:** College is where a lot of young people experience freedom for the first time. They’re away from parental supervision and the rules that restricted them from partaking in certain activities. Also, college is expensive and a lot of students have to work full-time jobs to afford the tuition.

**Juanita:** Reviewers of “The Vampire Within: The Beginning” all give high praises for your character development. Can you tell us a little about your thought process regarding the strong attention to character detail?

**Drew:** In life, I’d like to think that I surround myself with wonderful, genuine people. It’s the relationships that blossomed because of these individuals’ character that makes each such an integral part of my life. I take this perspective into my writing as I really want the reader to embrace each character, to feel like they know them, and to find that they are rooting for them to survive. I believe what moves us through life is the people we have in our lives, so I have my characters move the reader through the story. I think the best compliment in the world is when someone comes up and says “Hey, what happens to Justin? Does he and Jennifer survive?”... because the characters have taken a life all their own. They are no longer mere words on a page.

**Juanita:** It sounds like “The Vampire Within” could make a great movie. Have you thought about seeing your trilogy transformed to the big screen?

**Drew:** I’ve definitely thought about it. It seems that everyone who reads it emails me and tells me that they can’t wait for it to be a movie or television series. They love the characters and find that it’s what the vampire genre has needed for a long time. Of course, I’m just thrilled that they love the book.

**Juanita:** The doctor in your book is playing upon the desire of the students to succeed amidst the strong competition with peers. Can you elaborate on this theme?

**Drew:** Peer pressure and the stiff competition that a college environment provides can be very intimidating. There’s so much going on – academic and social obligations can be difficult to balance and nowadays, so many people are looking for a “quick fix” whether it’s the pill that will magically make you lose weight or the cheat sheet that will get you an A on your next chemistry exam. Dr. Cohn simply played on this facet of human nature to his advantage.

**Juanita:** So, do you think greed would be one of our ultimate downfalls, and the demise of the students that take part in the Dr. Cohn’s experiments?

**Drew:** The demise of the students I can't reveal, but greed is in the heart of some of them – so is power. In life- we are always challenged to do what's right. Only the ones that are strong enough to see past the immediate benefit and see the long term effects will truly understand their importance in the battle of good versus evil.

**Juanita:** Do you think we all have some aspect of a vampire within us?

**Drew:** We all think that what we believe in is the right thing whether it is religion, how we live our lives, who we love, how we raise our kids, whether we exercise or not, etc. We all want the power to control the universe around us so we can have things our way. When things don't go our way, we place the blame on everything else in the universe such as being late to work was due to traffic. We never consider that the day before the traffic was there – that people just didn't miraculously appear. And as I said earlier, most of us want more time, more money, more power, more everything. So yeah, I think there is a vampire within all of us.

**Juanita:** Now, since this is a vampire tale, is “The Vampire Within” a horror, thriller? Can readers expect much blood being spilled in your trilogy?

**Drew:** The Vampire Within Trilogy is both a horror and a thriller. There is blood shed, but not a tremendous amount in the first book. I don't believe in saturating the pages with graphic detail as I trust the imagination of the reader to take them beyond the written word. When I was writing this book and had to walk my dog, it freaked me out and I thought, “Hey, I'm on to something.” I don't think anyone will finish this novel and be disappointed.

**Juanita:** If you scared yourself writing “The Vampire Within,” it will truly scare readers too. Is that what you are ultimately hoping to express with your trilogy?

**Drew:** No, but I do believe in a good story and allowing the characters to tell it. The Vampire Within will leave a lasting impression – one that will stay in your mind and have you looking over your shoulder even though there is nothing there. Of course, there always could be something there.

**Juanita:** Who is your reading audience?

**Drew:** Everyone from 17 on up. The majority of characters are in college and as we all know the age of a student varies tremendously. Plus the characters are diverse in social status, ethnic background, etc. I think each reader will find someone to relate to and follow through in the story.

**Juanita:** Where did your interest in vampires begin?

**Drew:** My interest in vampires started when I watched a very old black and white version of Dracula with Bela Lugosi. It terrified and enthralled me. I loved the mystery of the character and was curious with the legend of vampires needing to drink blood to stay alive. So after that I tried to watch every vampire movie and read every vampire book I could lay my hands on. Back then though, everything that wasn't E.T. or The Fox and the Hound seemed to be rated R, but I persisted. In fact, I was probably the only girl on my block at Halloween one year who died my hair jet black, had my entire face painted white, and fake blood dripping from my mouth.

**Juanita:** Your interest in vampires has gone one since childhood. Why do you think you and other readers of the thriller genre like to be scared?

**Drew:** For me, it isn't the rush of being scared but the rush of the unknown and in turn that can be scary or exciting depending on your view. Vampires are scary to most because they drink blood, have fangs, stalk their prey at night, etc. We would deny their existence unless we had refutable proof and even then we probably wouldn't believe it unless we actually saw one. I think the unknown is what's scary that's why very few people take risks.

**Juanita:** Drew, I understand that you have been practicing karate for many years. What has been your history with the martial arts, and does it play a part in "The Vampire Within"?

**Drew:** I've been in karate for over twenty years. I have a second degree black belt in Tae Kwon Do and a third degree black belt in Isshinryu Karate. I won the Isshinryu World Championship in the Women's black belt sparring competition in 1992. Then, I started to instruct more and I loved it. I wanted my students to be better than I ever could dream of becoming.

What drew me to martial arts was an old Chuck Norris' movie that I saw when I was about 8. I've been addicted ever since so to answer your question – karate definitely plays a part in the "The Vampire Within." One of the characters will use kamas – my favorite weapon – which is a shorter version of the sickle which was used to gather crops at one time. The rest – you all will have to wait and find out.

**Juanita:** Now, you received your college degree in Criminal Justice from Indiana University. Did any of this training prepare you for writing "The Vampire Within Trilogy"?

**Drew:** Of course – a lot of what I experienced during those years I was able to bring to the novel. For example, I had a fantastic psychology professor – she looked you in the eye, made you think on your feet, and respected your opinion. She taught the class as though we were equals and I found that the class respected her more for that. And, in turn, the grades in the class were excellent. On the other hand, I had a communications professor who dragged himself in every day as though it was the last day of his life. He reminded me of a vampire with his pale skin and tall, lanky body. He was quite bitter and rarely smiled. I also remember the variety of ages, social status, ethnicity, etc of the students and the pride of going to I.U. This is what I took on a basic level. The degree in Criminal Justice and the few years I spent as a police officer gave me an edge on police policies and procedures.

**Juanita:** When can readers expect the second and third books in your trilogy?

**Drew:** The next book, *The Vampire Within: New Blood* will be available May 2007 with the 3<sup>rd</sup> book *Life Eternal* coming May 2008. As always – I'll have the first two chapters available for download a month prior to each of the releases.

**Juanita:** I know your readers will be anticipating the continuation of "The Vampire Within Trilogy." Where can readers find out more about your books, and the download prior to the release date?

**Drew:** I invite everyone to check out [www.thevampirewithin.com](http://www.thevampirewithin.com). It is in its' first phase and will have continual updates. You can also download the first two chapters of "The Vampire Within: The Beginning" from that site. For additional reviews – check out either [thevampirewithin.com](http://thevampirewithin.com) or [amazon.com](http://amazon.com).

**Juanita:** Drew, thanks so much for your insightful interview. Your fast-paced vampire trilogy “The Vampire Within” is getting great reviews and sure to entertain, and scare, your readers. Do you have any last thoughts for us today?

**Drew:** I hope that everyone out there listening enjoys The Vampire Within Trilogy. I had a fantastic time writing it. Remember – without all of you – my imagination would feel like a caged bird. Thank you for letting me spread my wings.