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Reading

From Goth to Glitter

Vampire author Rachel Caine on writing for tweens, her sci-fi background and the next lit trend

By Carla Ferreira

The best thing about the *Morganville Vampires* book series is that the female protagonist isn't a shaky, stuttering, emo-girl hung up on a vampire who treats her like shit, à la some popular vampire books. Residing in a literary middle ground of sorts, *Morganville* doesn't have the following of *Twilight* but it has been on *The New York Times* best-seller list, optioned for television/film by a British production company, and Caine recently quit her day job in corporate communications.

The series is set in a Texas college town called Morganville that's secretly run by vampires. Naturally, the early-admitted 16-year-old college student protagonist, Claire, gets caught up with the vamps.

Caine started writing supernatural-fantasy-mystery novels in the '80s, published her first vampire novel in 1992 and is now author of more than 30 books. Her previous series are written under the names Roxanne Conrad and Roxanne Longstreet, which she says in a phone interview were necessary. "In order to keep selling books, I had to erase the past and start over."

Caine grew up in a science non-fiction world; her father was a "missile countdown expert" and her mother worked for rocket scientists. That early exposure to



the unusual nourished Caine's love of the supernatural, which runs so deep that she can't write any story "without having some element in there that was either quirky or weird or different or supernatural or paranormal."

Inspired by the mega-success of young adult books such as *Harry Potter*, Caine's publisher asked her to write for that audience. After some thought, she jumped

onto the bandwagon and her young adult *Morganville Vampire* series began in 2006, one year after the release of *Twilight*.

Although she writes for young readers, her books have some violent and sexual undertones. At Comic-Con, one-third of Conrad's audience were adults.

Caine has prepared for the eventual end of the vampire craze and only has three more books planned for the *Morganville* series. Conrad predicts that the next trend will be set in a post-apocalyptic world. But she doesn't think vampires will be gone for long. "About every five years someone says, 'Oh vampires are dead,' [but] the nice thing about vampires is that they keep coming back from the dead." ■

Rachel Caine is on tour for her ninth Morganville book, Ghost Town. She stops at Borders 2190 N. Rainbow Blvd. at 2 p.m. Nov. 20.

The Librarian Loves ...

Selected by Jeanne Goodrich, executive director for the Las Vegas-Clark County Library District.

In *Food Rules: An Eater's Manual* (Penguin, 2009), Michael Pollan provides 64 pithy rules for healthful eating, a distillation of the many fascinating observations and findings he's already provided in *The Omnivore's Dilemma* (Penguin, 2006) and *In Defense of Food* (Penguin, 2008). Based on scientific data (but without the big words) and folk knowledge from around the world, Pollan describes what it means to eat healthfully and well, in short, easy-to-remember adages. It all boils down to seven words: "Eat food, not too much, mostly plants." A skinny book for a skinnier you!

