



INSIDE *MY SISTER'S STALKER*:

an interview with the author,

NANCY SPRINGER

Q: *What inspired you to write MY SISTER'S STALKER?*

A: Being upset. I had watched a true-crime TV show in which a stalker killed a young woman and it was discovered afterward that he had been planning his crime on the Internet for years, but no one noticed. How horrible. So I had to write a book in which someone does notice the stalker's web page. When something in real life bothers me deeply enough, I am often moved to fix it in fiction.

Q: *What would you like readers to take away with them upon finishing the book?*

A: Hope. A sense that things can turn out okay if good people take action. Not perfect, but okay. There's trauma, but with help, people can get through it.

Q: *Have you always wanted to be a writer? What age were you when you realized you wanted to become an author?*

A: I started writing as a teenager, but I had already finished my first novel before I finally admitted I wanted to be published. Prior to that I acted as if my writing was a hobby; some people crocheted, but I wrote. I was in my midtwenties when I "came out" as a writer.

Q: *What was your greatest challenge when writing MY SISTER'S STALKER?*

A: Getting the personality of the dad right. The mother was no problem; she's a combination of my own flaky mother and one of my New Age friends. But the father at first was just Riggie's enemy. It took both me and Riggie a while to understand him and find his human side.

Q: *Have you always been drawn to writing mysteries and thrillers?*

A: No, because plotting is not my strength as a writer—I tend to be character-driven—and because I don't like it when authors withhold information or use red herrings to trick readers. I wrote my first mystery without even realizing it was a mystery until it won an Edgar Award from the Mystery Writers of America. I thought it was just a novel that happened to have a murder in it; and as part of the ending, naturally the murder had to be solved.



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I still think that's the best way to approach mystery or suspense: by setting forth to write a good novel.

Q: *In what other genres do you enjoy writing?*

A: I began my career writing fantasy grounded in mythology and psychology, sometimes called "high" fantasy, and I still love writing fantasy; except now, rather than writing "long ago and far away," I'm more likely to play with magic in the contemporary world. I have written horror occasionally. I also enjoy writing "straight" contemporary stories, and I've begun to venture into historical fiction. I love reading and writing poetry, and I think my prose would be weaker if I didn't.

Q: *Who was your favorite author growing up?*

A: Maybe T. H. White, for *The Once and Future King*; I know I tried to imitate him when I wrote my first novel. It's hard to say. I simply read whatever I could get my hands on. I've always loved nursery rhymes, legends, folktales, and fairy tales, so maybe my favorite author was Anonymous.

Q: *And your favorite books?*

A: Even as a child I noticed that *Bambi*, by Felix Salton, is tremendously well written, with poetry and thematic depth. But I wasn't particular. I read all the Black Stallion books by Walter Farley, and I remember driving my mother nuts by obsessing over *The Yearling* by Marjorie Kinnan Rawlings during a family vacation. Later, *To Kill a Mockingbird* by Harper Lee had a tremendous impact on me. And *Out of the Silent Planet* by C. S. Lewis.

Q: *Do you have any recommendations for aspiring writers?*

A: Read widely, notice what you enjoy and why, but also notice what bores you and why. You must form your own ideas of good writing versus bad writing. When you start to write, if you join a writers' workshop, you will develop your judgment by critiquing the work of other writers. What you learn this way is far more important than anything anyone says about your writing. Be courteous to anyone trying to help, but become yourself as a writer. Cherish the integrity of your work. And write on!!



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