

Q & A
with Yves Fey

Q: Here's a question that always gets asked, but readers are always curious: how did you get started writing?

YF: I always loved books, especially pretty illustrated books when I was a child. After my father's death when I was ten I burrowed into books so I could live in another world for a time. Writing? I don't remember now if it was inspiration or an assignment, but I wrote a short story in 6th grade where the heroine opened the scene dusting a marble bust of Athena or some such thing. My teacher praised the unusual detail, so I decided I knew how to write. After that, I frequently wrote short stories and poetry until I went to college. There I embarked on the Great American Novel. I even finished it, but no one understood it, including me.

Q: What has been the most important influence on your writing?

YF: The books I love. The movies I love. Mostly, I've learned through osmosis – and good critiques. I almost never read how-to books, though I've gleaned a few glittery bits here and there. All these things combined with the desire to venture into other times and places.

Q: Do you have a favorite author?

YF: Many favorites. The greats—Shakespeare, Dostoyevsky, Tolkien, Hardy, Faulkner. In mystery I love both old and new authors—Megan Abbott, Raymond Chandler, Dorothy Sayers, Michael Connelly, among others.

Q: What spurred your fascination with Paris?

YF: It was love at first sight – seven years old and watching An American in Paris.

Q: Your ancestry isn't French?

YF: Scotch-English and German—but probably French in an earlier incarnation. Paris feels like a second home.

Q: Do you stay historically accurate when you write, or do you like to play with history?

YF: I've researched carefully and tried hard to stay true to particular events, but I've discovered in tracking down odd discrepancies that being perfectly accurate is a pipe dream. When I could not confirm something or it was not particularly significant, I went with what was best dramatically. The cycles of the moon in *Floats the Dark Shadow* are accurate, but the weather suits the mood of the chapter. I hope the reader will not chastise me if they uncover a *faux pas*, but view my world as an alternate reality to our historical Paris.

Q: Why did you switch from romance to mystery?

YF: At first, I didn't think I could successfully plot a mystery, but then my romances evolved with dark, twisted plots. While I love happy endings, I love sad endings too. Classic romance was often tragic, but the modern romance genre wants happily ever after every time. I didn't want to be bound to that. I like to explore darkness. I did like writing the steamy scenes in romance—which are much curtailed in mystery.

Q: You like darkness?

YF: Psychological labyrinths that lead into a fascinating abyss, yes. Urban grunge and squalor sends me fleeing in search of happy endings.

Q: What next for Theo and Michel?

YF: In the next book the Dreyfus case erupts, splitting Paris into warring camps. The murders are committed against that backdrop of anti-Semitic riots, letting me explore the theme of prejudice against not just the Jews, but gays and women as well—and the relative lack of prejudice against Blacks in France. After that—well there's a character locked away in an asylum, the World's Fair in on the horizon, and the French police were known to have sent detectives to America. Michel may end up in California. The main characters continue to fascinate me, but Liliás the courtesan and Blaise the criminal kingpin are both asking for leading roles as well.

Q: And you're now designing perfumes? How did that come about?

YF: It began as a quest for fragrances I couldn't find—the perfect dark spicy rose, the ultimate gardenia. I fear the gardenia is unattainable, but I've done a shadowy rose I loved. But the real spur was the idea of creating perfumes inspired by the book, by the characters or even just the mood of the world. Theo still eludes me, but I have a wonderful Michel fragrance brewing, and a dreamy concoction that is an homage to *The Green Fairy*, absinthe.

Any information in this press kit may be used for print/electronic articles or reviews. If you have additional questions for Yves Fey, please submit them to: [BearCatPress@gmail.com/](mailto: BearCatPress@gmail.com)

We would appreciate a copy of the article or review. Thank you.