

A BSB Interview With David-Matthew Barnes

by Connie Ward, Bold Strokes Books Consulting Publicist

June 1, 2011

What made you decide to become a fiction writer?

I became a writer out of my love for reading. When I was a child, I read everything I could—books, magazines, even the backs of cereal boxes. I fell madly in love with language and story, and the possibilities both provided to utilize my creativity and imagination. I wrote my first short story when I was seven years old, called “The Blue Witch.” It was about a witch who was sad and lonely because she didn’t have any friends and decided she didn’t want to be a witch anymore. My second-grade teacher read the story, loved it, and called my mother. She bought me my first typewriter when I was thirteen. I published my first short story when I was fourteen, and I’ve been writing ever since.

What type of stories do you write? And why?

My work is steeped in realism. I’m fascinated with writing about everyday people with extraordinary lives who find themselves in circumstances that challenge and ultimately change who they are. I think there’s incredible beauty in human emotions. There’s poetry in the fragility of a character’s heart and soul. I love taking my readers on a journey through a literary landscape where they find pieces of themselves where they least expect to.

What do your family/friends think about your writing?

I’m very lucky, as a writer, to not only have a wonderful, supportive partner, but also an incredible circle of friends who provide me with a never-ending supply of encouragement and inspiration. I’m also a member of a writing group. They offer and provide terrific input and helpful critiques of my writing, especially when I’m in the beginning stages of a new novel.

Where do you get your ideas?

I’m a professional eavesdropper. I get many ideas from conversations I overhear. I also tell my friends and family that every story they tell me is fair game, even the embarrassing ones. I’m very fortunate that people (especially strangers) are drawn to share their personal stories with me. I’m a college professor. I spend four days a week with college students teaching English, humanities, speech, and theatre. Many of my ideas come from them, the things they share and talk about in the classroom. I’m also very influenced by music.

-continue page 2-



Order Bold Strokes Books from these Distributors:
Perseus.....800 343-4499 Baker & Taylor.....800 775-1100
Ingram.....800 937-8000
Direct from BellaDistribution 800 533-1973



A BSB Interview With David-Matthew Barnes

www.BoldStrokesBooks.com

Page 2

How much of yourself and the people you know are in your characters?

Very little, actually. I don't write from an autobiographical viewpoint very often. If parts of my life are in my novels, the kernel of truth is dramatically heightened to serve the story. I really enjoy tapping into my imagination when writing, especially when creating characters.

How do you write; do you plan everything out or just write?

I never plan everything out because I live for the element of surprise when I'm writing. So often, the characters really determine the course of the story—and I let them take over whenever they insist on it. I definitely know how I'm starting and finishing a novel when I sit down to write one. Yet, everything between those two points is undiscovered territory for me.

Which lesbian and/or gay authors inspired you the most? Do you have a favorite of this author(s)?

I grew up with two mothers, so I read a lot of lesbian fiction when I was younger. I read *Rubyfruit Jungle* by Rita Mae Brown when I was twelve, and I loved it. *Bastard Out of Carolina* by Dorothy Allison is a literary masterpiece. My favorite novel is *Daisy Fay and the Miracle Man*, written by Fannie Flagg. Her work has had a tremendous influence on me. My writing has never been the same since the first time I read a play by Tennessee Williams.

What makes *Accidents Never Happen* special to you?

Accidents Never Happen is a novel ten years in the making. It began with the phrase "Albert was a boxer and Joey liked his bruises." From that one line, I developed the entire novel. The story went through many changes and revisions. I restructured the novel a couple of times until I found the right way to tell the story. The characters in this novel were challenging to write; they were unpredictable, so they kept me on my toes. For me, this novel is my literary love letter to the city of Chicago, my favorite city in the U.S.

Do you have any suggestions for new writers?

Write every day. And, write fearlessly. Write because it's something you love to do. Then, your writing will come from a stronger, more truthful place.

-continue page 3-

A BSB Interview With David-Matthew Barnes

www.BoldStrokesBooks.com

Page 3

When you're not writing what do you do for fun?

When I'm not traveling, teaching, or writing, I read a lot, play Monopoly, watch classic films, and coach cheerleading. I also have a dog named Lucy. She's a Cairn terrier, and she is very entertaining.

What is your favorite of the books/stories you've written and why?

I consider each novel I write to be a major accomplishment in my life and career. I'm fond of each of them for different reasons. I will always have a special place in my heart for *Mesmerized* because it was my first novel. While writing *Swimming to Chicago* I fell in love with the characters. However, I have to say that in terms of craft, *Accidents Never Happen* is my strongest writing, to date.



Order Bold Strokes Books from these Distributors:
Perseus.....800 343-4499 Baker & Taylor.....800 775-1100
Ingram.....800 937-8000
Direct from BellaDistribution 800 533-1973

