



Interview with

Kevin J. Kennedy



1. Please provide a brief introduction, including your name, the genre(s) you write in, previous work and where you are based.

I write as Kevin J. Kennedy but generally go by Kev. I write mainly short horror fiction. You will find my work in a variety of horror anthologies that have been published in the last two years and I also co-wrote a novella called *You Only Get One Shot*. The feedback on my work has been fantastic, considering I'm relatively new to the field.

I also put together the *Collected Horror Shorts* anthologies which seem to be gaining a growing audience.

2. Which of your books / pieces of writing are you most proud of, and why?

You Only Get One Shot is the only work of any real length I've written.

Working with J.C. was great as we could bounce ideas off of each other and I already loved his writing. We were originally going to do a small collection but wanted to do something a bit different. I've read books full of short stories that were all interlinked but we decided to make the shorts a part of the overall story. It seems to have been well received.

3. How long on average does it take you to write a book?

I'm quite a slow writer as I find it hard to just focus on one thing so I generally do several other shorts and put an antho together while I'm working on something longer.

4. What is the most difficult part of your artistic process?

Editing. I find it really tedious working through edits. It's probably the main reason I stick to shorter works.

5. What was your hardest scene to write?

I really can't think. Once I have the idea it's easy enough to write. It's more finding the right way to go when I get stuck that can be troublesome but I just leave it until inspiration strikes and then I go back to it. It's rare that I'm working to a deadline so there is often no rush.

6. Do you read your book reviews? How do you deal with bad or good ones?

Yeh. It's a habit that I have heard goes through time but I guess I'm still too new to it all. I try to use the feedback to make sure the next book is stronger. When I release *Collected Christmas Horror Shorts*, the only real negative feedback it got was that some of the stories could have been a little longer so the minimum and maximum word count got put up for *Collected Easter Horror Shorts*, it then jumped again for *Collected Halloween Horror Shorts*. I also noticed that some of the negative reviews for the Easter book felt that some of the stories didn't have strong enough ties to Easter so in the Halloween book I rejected stories that I didn't feel had a strong enough Halloween element. I don't really care about bad reviews. Everyone gets them and you can't expect to please everyone but you can take the constructive feedback and use it. My books all sit with pretty high average ratings so listening to the readers definitely works.

7. What kind of research do you do, and how long do you spend researching before beginning a book?

I generally write about things that I already know about. I don't think I would tackle a subject that needed much research as I have a load of story ideas I just haven't had time to write about. I will sometimes read books of a similar sub-genre though to put me in the mood for a story I am going to write.

8. What does literary success look like to you?

I'm not really sure. I had always thought it would be cool to have a story in a book and when I did that I wanted two stories in two books and on it went. I'm just enjoying what I'm doing with no real goal in sight. I've kinda fell into doing the anthos but it's a lot of fun. I get to pick the theme then read submissions from lots of my favourite authors and pick my favourites and put them in a book. It's a lot of work but I enjoy it too. I spend less time writing than I should but I'm working on a book with Christina Bergling and I'm writing a longish short for The Queuing Dead, an antho being put together by Marc Moore of Goodmorning Zompoc. His last antho Treasure Chests, that is raising money for breast cancer has been success so I'm looking forward to taking part in this one too. I will just keep working on the projects that look good and see where it all leads.

9. How many unpublished and half-finished books do you have?

Probably about four or five. I struggle to stay interested in a longer piece if I'm working on it by myself. I'm better at co-writing as I'd never let someone else down so it keeps me motivated to keep going.

10. What's your favorite under-appreciated novel?

Blood Crazy by Simon Clark. It's one of the best post-apoc books written in my opinion but I rarely see it mentioned or on the lists. I love The Stand by King and Swan Song by McCammon like everyone else but Blood Crazy is definitely up there in my opinion. I've read a tonne of post apoc. I love all Brian Keene's post-apoc stuff and there's some newer stuff out there that's fantastic like the Hell Divers series by Nicholas Sansbury Smith but if you are looking for some old-school, fast paced horror then Blood Crazy should be right up your street.

11. What was the best money you ever spent as a writer? (E.g. software, self-help books, marketing books etc.)

I'd have to say that it would be the money I spend on books. I haven't bought any software, I do everything manually through Word. I don't read 'how to write' books. I've tried Amazon and Facebook paid marketing and it didn't make a great deal of difference. I read lots because I love to read. It's the only reason I want to write and put books together and it keeps me interested. When I read now, I look more at story structure and character development than I used to so I can improve my own writing.

12. Do you want each book to stand on its own, or are you trying to build a body of work with connections between each book?

There will be little connections throughout my work as I've always enjoyed when authors do that and there will be an ongoing series of carnival themed tales that will have links to each other.

13. What are common traps for aspiring writers?

When I got a few stories into books I started looking for every open call and subbing stories in the hope of getting my name into more books. Some of them hardly sold a copy. I had subbed to lots of anthos without really looking at the publishers. It's worth doing your research. If a publisher puts out antho after antho and they have little to no reviews and sit way down in the rankings, it's probably not worth bothering with their next one. Look for decent press's and sub to them and if you get a rejection use the feedback. Being in lots of books is pointless if no one is reading them. You are better with one good story in a book that gets read by thousands.

14. What's the most difficult thing about writing characters from the opposite sex?

I'm not sure. If you have a character in mind for a particular story and it fits, it has never seemed like a problem so far.

THANKYOU