Author Interview With Maria DeBlassie by Itsy Bitsy Book Bits

For those new to your work, please tell us a bit about yourself, your books and their genre/s

- I write inspirational non-fiction, cozy Gothic stories, urban fantasy, and romance. I find they all nourish one another. My non-fiction books on everyday magic help me craft the enchanting worlds in my fiction and my genre stories guide me deeper into everyday conjuring in my life beyond the written word.

What's Your Favorite Genre to Write?

- I love to write cozy gothic tales.

What lessons have you learned as a writer?

- Writing is a form of magic-making for me, so everything I write helps me understand my life a little better or conjuring a new way of being.. I've also found that I'm a better writer when I have a well-rounded life. The two feed one another.

If you could spend the day with one of your characters, who would it be and what would you do?

- Honestly? I wouldn't mind talking to the orange tabby cat that keeps appearing in Hungry Business. I feel like that cat and his owner would have a lot of interesting things to say.

What's your writing routine? (Outline or go with the flow of your character)

- I have a general plan where I want the story to go, but inevitably the characters take control and move story in surprising directions. It's my job to step back and let the story go where it needs to go. That's what make storytelling magic! I have the ideas and the outline...then the plot twists and unexpected delights come.

How much of yourself do you put into your books and characters?

- There's a little bit of me in all my characters. If I can't relate to my characters, then neither can my readers. I'm always writing about something I need to work through or an idea I've been marinating on, so parts of me inevitably end up on the page.

If you won the lottery what would you do with the money?

- Yeesh! That's a tough one! I'd probably set up a scholarship for students at the community college I work at. I didn't earn the money, so I'd want it to go back into the community in some way.

In your everyday life how do you give back to the world?

- I teach, I write, and through those things I help people heal, find joy, and conjure their own magic.

If you could give your younger self one piece of writing advice, what would it be?

- Just write. Forget outside voices--you have stories to tell and those who need your magic will find you.

If your life was a song what song would it be and why?

- Another tough question! I think it would be La Luna by Lucy Schwartz. It's gentle and ethereal, and every time I listen to it, I'm reminded that everyday magic is real.

Name two authors you wish more people knew about

- I think more people should be reading Tim Prasil, who edits and publishes occult detective stories, and Jenna Moore Fuller, who writes delightful books on the magic of synchronicity.

Would you say your writing style is more character driven or plot driven?

- More character driven--I'm more interested in the internal lives of people. The rich juicy secrets and the quiet, private hopes we all nourish deep inside of. We too often devalue our internal lives and the intangible, tough I think those are really the most important parts of our lives.

Who are some of your favorite authors to read?

- Too many to list! My current reading list includes Occult Detective Magazine, tarot books by Teresa Reed, and anything by Juliet Blackwell.

What are some of your hobbies?

- I love to read (of course!), cook, knit, garden, consult the tarot, and basically do homey witchy things.

Have you attended any signings? If so, what was your favorite thing about it?

- I'm mostly virtual and I love how the online community is so supportive of one another. It's always so great to meet so many fellow book lovers!

When reading reviews, what is something you love to see written?

- I love it when people resonate with my books on a personal level. Reviewers consistently say that Hungry Business is both creepy and comforting it how relatable it is.

What are you currently working on?

- Readers can expect to enjoy more cozy Gothic stories in the coming year, like Hungry Business, short story about searching for soul in a world that's forgotten the power of everyday magic. Then my second book, Practically Pagan ~ An Alternative Guide to Everyday Magic, will be release this October. The title says it all: it's a practical guide to conjuring a more magical life!

Do you have any superstitions when it comes to writing? If so, what?

- Just not to get too uptight about anything. I have to stay loose, otherwise the words won't come.

What is the best writing advice you've ever received?

- Sit down. Write. And keep writing until you know who you are as a writer.

What books are currently in your to-read list?

- I'm really getting into tarot reading, so the next book I want to read is Brigit Esselmont's Intuitive Tarot. I'm also a sucker for all things paranormal investigators, so I'll be reading Alexis Hall's Kate Kane series as soon as I wrap up Katrina Jackson's Every New Year.

What is your favorite book made into a movie/tv show?

- I would probably say Lucifer, although the TV show has nothing really to do with the graphic novels it was based on. They are two very different things, but both fabulous in their own way!

You are filling out this interview as part of a tour with Itsy Bitsy Book Bits. What made you choose Itsy Bitsy Book Bits?

- I've worked with you in the past and love your community!

What is something people would be surprised to know about you?

- This is kind of an open secret at this point, but I'm a bruja. I believe in everyday magic, the power of the universe, the seen and the unseen, and the daily spells we cast without thinking—the wishes, thoughts, and actions we cast out into the world to bear fruit. When we're more intentional about this energy, we can direct it towards hope and healing. I also hoard way too many mason jars, have my own witchy herb garden, deal the tarot, and know that storytelling is one of the deepest forms of magic.

Do you read & review other authors' books? If yes how often?

- Yes! I review the books I've loved reading each month on Goodreads.

Which one of your characters was the hardest to develop?

- They all are, in their own way. I have to get to know them before I can tell their story. And fictional characters are like cats--you can't force them to do anything. You simply have to show up, be receptive, and let them come to you.

Which character was your favorite to write?

- The orange tabby cat, hands down. But you'll have to read Hungry Business to understand that one!

How do you keep yourself motivated through the whole writing process?

- I'm a total homebody, so I love to saturate myself with the sacred simple pleasure of home while I write: a pot of tea, a stroll in the garden on my break, a stack of books to inspire me. When I fill up on those joys, I feel inspired to write.

Does anyone read your works in progress? (Family, Friends, etc)

- Just my familiar, Smoke, and only when I'm stuck!

Do you ever reread books or series? If so what is a series, book Or author you could reread over and over?

- I'm a major rereader and have reread most of my library over the years. I love returning to stories that have soothed and healed me in some way. Their medicine never fades and every time I return to those stories, I find new things to love about them. There's also something deeply comforting about lingering in a fictional world where you know the story inside and out. It allows you to pick up subtleties you might have missed the first time around or revisit old friends.