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Q. TRAVELLER takes place in York, England. Have you ever been to Yorkshire?

A. I've visited there several times. I love the moors and the little villages. York itself is a walled city and completely magical. I knew I had to set Traveller there.

Q. The Travellers in your book are loosely based on a real, gypsy-like ethnic group. How did you become interested in Irish Travellers?

A. I saw a program about them on the BBC and was fascinated, mostly because I'd never known they existed. There is something so mysterious and intriguing about gypsies. They've painted the pages of folklore for generations. They have interesting customs and face such unique challenges, including a great deal of discrimination. People fear what they don't know.

Q. Did an actual Traveller inspire your character, Michael Nightingale?

A. Uh, no. My Travellers aren't exactly like real life Travellers. They're mercenary warriors who fight monsters to save the world. And they have special powers, like unusual speed and lightning-fast reflexes. They also have exceptionally good weapons.

Q. How did you come up with Emerson Shaw?

A. I wanted to create a character, tiny but fierce, to stand up to Michael. He's such an alpha, and used to protecting everyone and being in charge. Emerson brings out a different side of him. She makes him laugh. She challenges him, and yet allows him to be vulnerable. And she takes care of business, too. She's quite a warrior. It takes Michael a while to accept it, though.

Q. And she's southern?

A. I didn't realize she was southern until I began to write. I heard her voice rattling around in my head and realized she had to be from Kentucky. I used to live in Bowling Green and had an elderly neighbor there named Miss Blanche. She insisted I call her Grandma Sugar and always made me big glasses of sweet tea. I loved living in the south and really enjoyed writing a southern character.

Q. What makes you happiest about writing?

A. I love when people read my books and enjoy the stories I've told. I'm elated when my readers feel a connection to my characters, when something touches them, and they are moved to laugh or to cry. I also adore the process of writing itself. A day without writing feels incomplete to me. I honestly want to do it everyday. I'm happiest when I'm plugging away on a new story, but I also love editing. That was an acquired taste. I had to learn to love editing.

Q. Will we be seeing a sequel to TRAVELLER soon?

A. Definitely. I'm working on it right now.