

30th Anniversary Special Interview

Rosemarie Salvatore Fan

1) When did you become a B&B fan?

I feel very lucky to have been there right from the beginning, watching the premiere of the Pilot episode on Sept 25, 1987.

2) What attracted you to the series

At first it was just curiosity. I had never been interested in Sci-fi/Fantasy before and had no idea if I was even going to like it. But the advertisements for the series that ran all summer were very mysterious. I didn't know much about the fairy tale because this was before Disney made the story so well known. But I did know that it was a one-time story that had a definite end with the Beast transforming into a prince. I couldn't figure out how they were going to turn that into an ongoing series. That was my main reason for tuning in.

3) What changes have occurred in B&B fandom over the years?

The group is a smaller size. Some of the early conventions had hundreds of attendees. In many ways, the smaller size of the group has been a good thing for me. I have felt very comfortable being on stage and doing things that I might not have done if our numbers were still as large as they used to be. Sadly, though, something that I've noticed lately is a bit of a cliquish mentality invading fandom. I never felt that before. It's not everyone, but some people are more closed off to meeting new people and trying new things. I guess it's partly human nature for a group that has been around for as long as we have, but it still upsets me because that kind of behavior is not what B&B is all about. It's also not how I feel at all. I still look forward to meeting new fans at cons and making new connections.

As far as making connections goes, the computer has been a huge change. I used to write lots of letters by hand. At any given time, I had probably half a dozen pen pals that I wrote to regularly. I also loved to write Letters of Comment to newsletters and letterzines. The computer changed that, but it was mostly a good change because I think it's much easier to keep in touch with fans now. It has made fandom a closer

community. I've gotten to know a lot of fans better due to communication on the computer. Even though you see each other at cons, it's hard to have deeper conversations with everyone because of all the activity that is going on. I love having online conversations with fans.

Fan fic has changed as well. That's a little harder for me because, just as I prefer books to an e-reader, I so loved the paper fanzines. I loved holding them in my hands and seeing the art that went along with the story. There was such creativity in how different people lovingly designed them. There was such excitement to receive one in the mail. I don't really get the same feeling from reading fan fic online. I read some fan fic online, but I tend to shy away from the longer stories because you can't pause as easily and just use a bookmark to hold your place.

4) What do you enjoy most about the series?

I love the spiritual and symbolic aspects of the show. The Bond that Vincent and Catherine share is at the heart of that. The spiritual connection that they have is so wonderfully romantic, and it sets them apart from any other fictional couples that I've ever seen. It's very beautiful and the idea of it has always had a hold on me. A very close second to the Bond would be the utopian ideals of the Tunnel community. While this idea of a community where all are treated as equals may be seen on some other shows, it's just much more intriguing to imagine a whole community living under the already amazing city of New York.

5) What do you wish B&B fans would do?

I often wish that there were more spiritual/religious minded fans who wanted to discuss the show from that point of view. Too often, the focus is on the more shallow aspects: the X-rated and/or the silly, comedic stuff. That stuff is fine to a point, but I prefer a deep dive to a splash in the shallow end of the pool any day.

6) How much time do you devote to B&B in an average month (including social media time)?

Most of my FB friends are fans. In fact, the reason I first got online, and then, on social media, was because of B&B Fandom. If I'm involved in a project, like something for WFOL, something for a convention, writing something or doing something creative, I could spend a lot of time devoted to B&B. Other times, maybe there is less physical activity, but I think V&C are always somewhere in the back of my mind. Quite often a reference to the show will pop up in my life when I least expect it and bring those thoughts to the forefront once again. So, it's a good many hours.

7) How many B&B fans have you met?

It is hard to say an exact number. As I mentioned, past cons were much larger and I never kept track. And now we have fans that we might "meet" online – at WFOL, in a chat, on Facebook – all of which I still feel is a form of meeting. I would guess that I've met hundreds of fans over the years - and it's been wonderful! The feeling of being connected to people all over the world – people that I might not have crossed paths with otherwise, is just an amazing and rewarding aspect of fandom that I love very much.

8) What is your favorite memory as a fan?

I've had many, many wonderful memories, but my first fan run convention, South of Oz, in Orlando, in 1991, was so full of firsts for me that it has always stood out. It was the first time I ever flew on an airplane, or even just went on a trip without my family. The dealer's room was huge and I was stunned to see all the fanzines and other goodies. There were so many costumes and they were all amazing. I remember there were at least a dozen Catherines, in all of her various outfits, on stage at the same time, what an incredible sight! Actors playing V&C danced a waltz for us. I especially remember the banquet which was magical! The music videos that they played were perfect, causing me to feel such overwhelming emotions. There was a shadow play that years later I learned my roommate took part in - although I didn't know her at the time. It was a dizzying, whirlwind of a weekend that I will never forget!

9) How has B&B changed your life?

I related to both Vincent and Catherine in so many ways. It was the first time I had ever connected so strongly with any fictional character – and then to have both of them at once – was very intense. I felt that so many aspects of my life were being mirrored back at me on the screen. It caused me to see myself in a whole new light. It basically put me on the very same path Catherine was on – that of striving to overcome obstacles in a way that I never had before, trying to find greater meaning in life, and learning how to be a stronger person. It was what I consider to be a spiritual awakening. I know that many things that have brought me a lot of joy, such as going to college, traveling, and even just learning to stand up for myself and what I believe in, would probably never have happened if not for the influence Beauty & the Beast had on me.

10) If you could have one B&B wish granted, what would it be?

In spite of all the wonderful fan fiction that we have, I have always had a secret desire to have something “official” reunite Vincent and Catherine on the large or small screen. I guess I didn't realize how much I wanted this until the CW came out with their pitiful and insulting “new” version of the show. My wish would be that B&B could have something new – a new quality series, like Star Trek fans had The Next Generation and other series that were worthy of the original; or like Disney just came out with the new live action version of their animated B&B movie. Catherine and Vincent deserve this same kind of respect from The-Powers-That-Be in Hollywood, and they also deserve to be brought into a new era because the ideals of the show should never go out of style.