

Friday, December 7, 2012

Las Cruces Bulletin

Arts & Entertainment | C3

Featured author: *Belinda Vasquez Garcia*

# Garcia fascinates readers with her literary magic

## Author's own experiences feed her fantastical stories

By **Isabel A. Rodriquez**  
For the Las Cruces Bulletin

Long before she was thinking about writing a book, Belinda Vasquez Garcia was infused with the ingredients that lie at the core of her writing.

Growing up in a superstitious Hispanic family in New Mexico (her grandmother used to burn her brother's hair after cutting it so witches couldn't harm him), Garcia, who has had two books published, was instilled with a fascination with magic, witchcraft and Native American culture.

One of those legends, La Llorona, is featured in "The Witch Narratives Reincarnation," the first in a three-part series.

"I always try to put magic into everything I write," Garcia said. "I think it's fun."

Her second book, "Return of the Bones," covers a great deal of New Mexico history through 1838. The story is inspired by the theft of 2,047 skeletons from the ghost Pueblo of Pecos in 1915. In present day, a shaman and his granddaughter, the last of the Pecos, set out on a journey from New Mexico to Boston to claim the family bones.

"I wanted to tell a different story," Garcia said. "I came up with the grandfather as a medicine man, and the daughter being transported to the past. I think it makes it different and exciting. I always try to make (my stories) original."

The grandfather character, she said, was inspired by a medicine man who used to visit her family when she was a little girl.

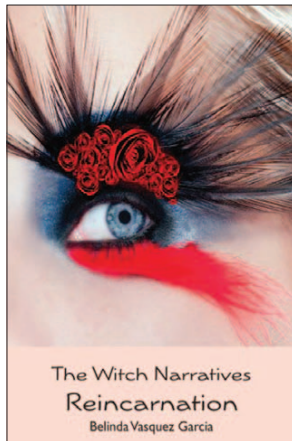
"He used to visit my aunt and sit and drink with my father," she said. "As a kid, I was fascinated with him."

That's not the only time her characters have been inspired by real people.

Felicita, a mother in "Reincarnation," was modeled after Garcia's great-aunt who helped raise her after her parents passed away.

Asked which character she herself relates to most, Garcia said Salia, the daughter of witches in "Reincarnation."

"The fact that I was left alone at the age of 16, I didn't have any parents. I relate to



that, I know how it feels," she said. The last two books of the series have already been written and are in the editing process.

If it seems as if Garcia always knew she'd be writing books professionally, that isn't the case.

The only books her family owned were the A and B encyclopedias and a Webster's dictionary that doubled as a sitting stool.

After earning a bachelor's degree from the University of New Mexico in applied mathematics, Garcia worked as a software engineer and web developer for Sandia National Laboratory.

Her spare time was spent writing fiction, some of which she said she's long since thrown away.

"I've been writing for about the last 20 years," she said. "I was writing about 20 hours a week, and I started attending conferences and workshops to learn the mechanics. I didn't want to get a formal writing education, but it was a nice way to be able to do something different."

"Reincarnation" was actually written in 1998, but she admits she was "extremely shy to publish," even feeling anxiety over it.

"Finally, a few years ago, I started getting all my work together, publishable," she said. "I need to start getting (my books) out there. I'd invested so much in the characters I created, and I needed to share them with the world."

"Hopefully my writing provides an escape for readers while they're reading. I

hope it becomes real to them. Sometimes I think I should have tried publishing sooner. It was hard, because life gets in the way. At least I'm doing it now."

Writing, she said, is something she views as a fun hobby, not work.

"It's a passion from the heart," she said. "It has nothing to do with money or making a name for myself. Characters become like real people, and they're just being channeled by the author, at least through me."

Although she has a few projects in the works — a great deal of research goes into her stories — Garcia said her children are awaiting a memoir of her "stranger-than-fiction" childhood.

While the majority of critics have been positive about her books, Garcia said she's mostly unaffected by reviews.

"I've only had one negative review, and he said he normally doesn't read fiction and was expecting more history," she said. "That bothered me a little, because I do a lot of research. It sparks ideas ... but I try to distance myself from the reviews. I read them as if they're about someone else, so I don't get caught up in them."

Garcia's advice to aspiring novelists? Write. Write a lot. "Really put in the hours," she said. "The more you write, the better you'll get. Be sure to follow your idea. Don't let other people tell you it's not marketable. Follow your instincts, and you'll enjoy it more — you don't want it to be like work."

To learn more about Garcia and her books, visit [www.belindavasquezgarcia.com](http://www.belindavasquezgarcia.com), or contact her at [b@belindavasquez.com](mailto:b@belindavasquez.com).



GARCIA

“ Characters become like real people, and they're just being channeled by the author. ”

### Details

**Belinda Vasquez Garcia**  
Author

#### Books

- "The Witch Narratives: Reincarnation"
- "Return of the Bones"

#### Website

[www.belindavasquezgarcia.com](http://www.belindavasquezgarcia.com)

**MAIN STREET DOWNTOWN**  
**DOWNTOWN**  
It's Really happening

### UPCOMING EVENTS

FRI. DEC 7	Fantastic Fridays	3 P.M.
	Branigan Library	
FRI. DEC 7	Holiday Downtown Art RAMBLE	5 P.M.
	Downtown Main Street	
FRI. DEC 7	Old Fashioned Holiday Open House	5 P.M.
	LC Railroad Museum	
FRI. DEC 7	City Christmas Tree Lighting	5:30 P.M.
	City Hall Parking Lot	
FRI. DEC 7	Downtown Holiday Light Show	6:30 P.M.
	Downtown Main Street	
FRI.-SUN. DEC 7-9	Irving Berlin's White Christmas	8 P.M.
	LC Community Theatre	
SAT. DEC 8	Reading & Book Signing - Marin Sandy	10 A.M.
	COAS Bookstores	
SAT. DEC 8	Pinch Pot Workshop	10 A.M.
	Branigan Cultural Center	
SAT. DEC 8	Christmas on the Camino Real	10 A.M.
	Mesquite St. Historic District	
SAT. DEC 8	Las Cruces Collects - Dr. Charles Towney	1 P.M.
	LC Museum of Art	
SUN. DEC 9	Lighting SNM's Tallest Menorah - All are invited!	4 P.M.
	Albert Johnson Park - In Front of City Hall	
TUE. DEC 11	Read to Me - stories for ages 3-5	10:30 A.M.
	Branigan Library	
TUE. DEC 11	Friends of the Library Book Review	1:30 P.M.
	Branigan Library	
WED. +THU. DEC 12+13	Toddler Time! Stories for kids 1-3	10 A.M.
	Branigan Library	
WED. DEC 12	Mother Goose Time! Birth - 13 mos.	11 A.M.
	Branigan Library	

**EL PASO ELECTRIC HOLIDAY LIGHT SHOW**  
DEC. 7 - JAN. 6  
6 - 11 P.M. Nightly  
**DOWNTOWN MAIN ST.**  
Tune in to 101.5 FM for Music!

**DOWNTOWN LAS CRUCES PARTNERSHIP**  
a new mexico main street community

### ONGOING EVENTS:

- Downtown Arts RAMBLE - 1st Friday of the Month 5-7pm
- Camino del Arte - 2nd Saturday of the Month 11am-3pm
- Las Cruces Farmers & Crafts Market - Wed. and Sat. Morn.

### SPONSORED BY:

Thomas Branigan Memorial **LIBRARY**