

INTERVIEW WITH JOSI KILPACK

Question:

Your books have been described as culinary mysteries. What role does food play in the plot of your books?

Answer:

In traditional culinary mysteries, the mystery is directly linked to food--I have blurred those lines a little bit. While some of the stories do involve food as a 'culprit' or 'mitigating factor' others don't. I think because it's become such a long series, it would be difficult for me to have fresh plots of they stories were too culinarily focused. One role that food serves through the series is an element of characterization for Sadie--she thinks about food, makes food, eats food, bribes with food, etc. It's certainly an integral part of the story.

Question:

What inspired you to involve food in your mysteries?

Answer:

Jeff Savage ran a writing contest several years ago (2005 I think) where he asked for the first chapter of a novel that involved food. The contest was part of a promotion for his new book which involved a detective who ate all the time. I decided to give it a try and

absolutely loved it. I didn't win the contest (I took 2nd though) but continued the story over the next couple of years.

Question:

Do you have a favorite recipe from any of your books?

Answer:

My family's favorite is Evil Chicken, from Devil's Food Cake which involves bacon, bacon fat, brown sugar, chili powder, and chicken. I thought it sounded horrible when it was first given to me by one of my test kitchen bakers, but we absolutely loved it and over the years I have heard the most feedback for this recipe. The recipes I make the most often, however, are Devil's Food Cake (which was my grandmother's recipe) and Alfredo sauce from Lemon Tart.

Question:

What books, authors inspire you?

Answer:

Nearly every author I have met or read inspires me simply because I have so much in common with them and know how hard the process can be, and yet how rewarding it is to turn an idea into a story you can share.

Some of my very favorite authors are Sue Grapton and Dean Hughes--I have yet to read a book by either of them that I didn't like, though they write very, very different things.

Question:

Where do you draw your inspiration for your work?

Answer:

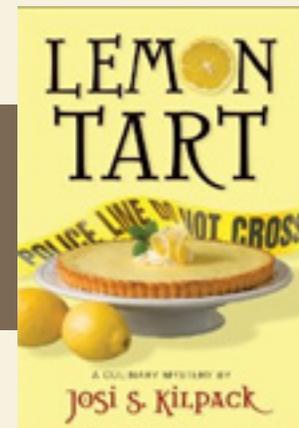
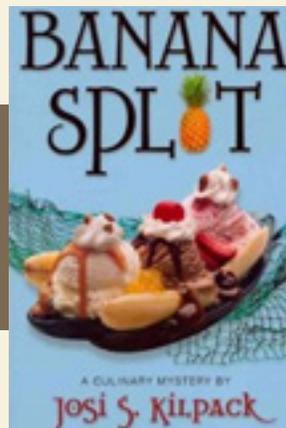
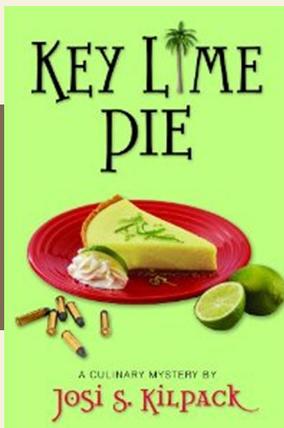
I draw inspiration from everything--TV, movies, mall patrons, blogs, church, my kids, other books, newspapers, writing books. I am currently writing 2-3 books a year so I have tight deadlines and need lots of 'fuel' to keep my stories going. I have become an information-suck and am continually filing things away for later use.

Question:

What's your advice to aspiring writers?

Answer:

Learn your craft! Then, learn your craft. And when you finish with that, learn your craft some more. The only thing more frustrating to me than reading a poorly written book by a new novelist (I do contest judging and freelance editing) is reading a poorly written book by a seasoned writer. Just like a surgeon or a plumber or a police officer,



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there are skill sets that are necessary for a writer to be good at what they do. Learn those skills. Take writing courses at a local college, attend writer's conferences, read books on writing, read really great books and take note of why you love them. Never stop doing these things, never stop improving, never believe you know it all, cause you don't.

Question:

How much time do you spend writing each day?

Answer:

The When I'm not on a deadline, I don't write every day. Instead I wait for inspiration and perfect moments and catch up on everything else I want to be doing in my life. Because I do this, I then go into panic mode in the weeks before my deadline, then I'm writing about 50 hours a week, sometimes more. I hate, hate, hate panic writing, but it seems to be a bad habit I've fallen into and can't get out of it. I expect to hit panic mode on January 1st, since I'll then have a deadline just 10 weeks away. I am dreading it . . . and yet I continue to clean closets and play Bejeweled and write blog posts instead of writing right now. I'm neurotic.



Josi began her first novel in 1998 and hasn't stopped. Her novel, *Sheep's Clothing* won the Whitney Award 2007 for Mystery/Suspense. *Lemon Tart*, the first book in the Sadie Hoffmiller Culinary Mystery Series was a Whitney Finalist for 2009. Book nine in the series, *Baked Alaska*, will be released in February 2013. Josi currently lives in Willard Utah with her family. For more information about Josi, you can visit her website at www.josiskilpack.com or her blog at www.josikilpack.blogspot.com