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>> Hello. I'm Sheryl Cannaday from the Library of Congress. The National Book Festival is in its seventh year and it has attracted tens of thousands of book lovers of all ages to the nation's capital to celebrate reading and lifelong literacy. This free event is sponsored and organized by the Library of Congress and hosted by First Lady Laura Bush. This year the Festival will take place on Saturday, September 29th on the National Mall in Washington, D.C. Festival goers will meet and interact with 70 bestselling authors, illustrators, and poets. There will be activities for the entire family. If you are unable to attend in person, we invite you to experience the Festival online. Our podcast interview series with well known authors, along with webcasts from the Festival will be available through the National Book Festival's website at loc.gov/bookfest. We now have the pleasure of talking with New York Times bestselling author of contemporary fantasy novels for teens and children Holly Black. She will appear in the Teens and Children Pavilion at the Festival on September 29th. Ms. Black's popular teen urban fantasies have all found international success and been translated into numerous languages. Holly Black's latest work, *Ironside*, a modern fairies tale is the followup to her book, *Tithe*, where we follow Kaye's magical quest between the human world and fairy world where nothing is at it seems. Welcome, Holly. Can you discuss how you've drawn from the world in which you grew up, the suburbs of New Jersey, into the magical worlds of *Tithe* and *Ironside*?

>> All right. Well, when I first writing *Tithe*, I was thinking about the fact that when I was a kid, it seemed to me that there were a lot of books where there were people who were very poor and there were people who were very rich and there were people who were middle class. But middle class in those books seemed rich. And so I wanted to write about the people I knew, you know, kids who lived in trailers and who, you know, walked everywhere and who had beater cars and who, you know, were a little bit different than what I had read when I was growing up. And also, the Jersey Shore which is a really strange place in that once it was really beautiful. And presidents would come, and you know, they'd go to the beach for the holidays and, you know, they still had Jersey artifacts of that. The beaches are like called The Seven Presidents Beach and there's in Asbury Park, all these magnificent old buildings but now they're completely abandoned. And I felt that that setting would be, it's almost a sort of haunted setting in itself and it would be really interesting sort of juxtaposed against this magical world.

>> A strong theme in *Ironside* is the feeling of not belonging. Kaye feels trapped between a human world and a fairy world. Did you have similar feelings growing up in New Jersey?

>> Well, I think -- I think one of the things that fantasy can do is have a metaphorical read and I think that everybody at one time or another feels like they don't belong. I mean I think that Kaye -- [inaudible] like Kaye is that I've -- like she really doesn't belong. You know we as humans may sometimes feel like our friends don't understand us or like we're not like our family. But Kaye literally is not human. And I think that I was sort of thinking along those lines. I thought you know this

would -- that it's an interesting stand-in for that feeling. But I don't know that I felt that anymore than any one else does.

>> Let me ask you about I guess the popularity of fantasy books. Do you think -- what do you think the fantasy books and characters such as Harry Potter are so appealing to young readers today?

>> Well, [inaudible] fantasy. I don't know that -- in some ways you know I have -- I felt their painfulness and another way I think I'm like, of course, people love fantasy. Fantasy is great. But I think that like as I was saying I think that fantasy often is thought of as an escape but in fact the great thing about fantasy it gets as a lot of thing from different and interesting and new directions. You know Harry Potter is able to talk about issues of discrimination and issues of good and evil in ways that are different than realistic fiction is going to be able to. And I think that people have really, you know, enjoyed that. I think -- but I also think that people enjoy the idea that the world could be bigger and stranger and more interesting. I think people love the idea that somewhere in the world there could be a school of witchcraft and wizardry and some kids are getting letters. I think like -- I think that people think that it's exciting to believe that maybe if we look sort of sideways into a forest maybe we'll see something out of the corner of our eye. I think that feeling of largeness and possibility is very enticing.

>> Well, obviously you have a vivid imagination. I would think that writing fantasy requires having that kind of imagination. What do you draw from?

>> I think the books that I read when I was a kid -- I grew up reading Brian Froud and Alan Lee's Faeries which is this beautiful illustrated book that my mom brought home. And it's quite frightening. I mean it was my first experience realizing that fairies weren't, you know, little girls with wings. But there was this whole -- they were this whole range of creatures and this whole raving of folklore. And that was sort of my access point into reading just a ton of fairy folklore. And I find it all so interesting. They're almost like ghost stories. People would go out into, you know, the field of different countries and ask people for oh, have you had any fairy experiences and people often would often be like, well, I haven't but that guy has and then refer them. Then they would tell these really, really fascinating stories like this guy who he cut off the corner of his house because he had built it on a fairy path and it would -- the rattling and the banging every night of the fairies trooping by was so loud he couldn't sleep because they hated that he built a corner. And so there's this really great picture of a house with a corner cut off. And the story ends where he says that afterward although the rattling and the banging stopped, some nights he would still hear this whish of wind go around that corner. And I loved those stories and I think that they had just a huge influence on not just what I put in the stories but the trying to evoke that mood, that sort of haunting, luminous magical stuff mood.

>> I've read that you grew up in an old Victorian mansion filled with books and oddities.

>> It was not quite a mansion.

>> How did your surroundings influence your writing?

>> I thought -- the house, it was a big house. It was not a mansion. It was this sort of dilapidated old Victorian house. It was over a hundred years old. My parents had inherited it from my great grandmother. And it was filled with things when we got there and it was filled with even more things by the time I was a teen-ager. It was just completely filled with things, and books. And I think that that house and that sort of landscape of this cluttered old weird house has shown up in a couple places. Probably most of all in the Spiderwick Chronicles that I wrote with -- that I worked on with Tony DiTerlizzi. But I think that particular landscape has sort of shown up again. The idea of the old house filled with weird secret things because my house may not have been filled with secret things but there was certainly a lot of weird things.

>> Well, do you like that kind of thing? I mean does your house look like that now?

>> It's less dilapidated. I moved to Massachusetts and I have an old cheater house here and I try not to fill it with quite as many things. I'm not that good at it. Fewer things. I do have a secret door though.

>> Really?

>> [Inaudible.]

>> Oh, wow. That sounds interesting.

>> I can, you know, freak out new people as I was once freaked out.

>> Well, we certainly are looking forward and I'm sure your fans are looking forward to hearing you speak on September 29th and hearing more about your new book, Ironside. Can you read an excerpt from that book for us?

>> Yes. This is from Chapter 1 of Ironside. "Human girls cry with they're sad and laugh when they're happy. They have a single fixed shape rather than shifting with their whims like wind blown smoke. They have their very own parents whom they love. They don't go around stealing other girl's mothers. At least that's what Kaye thought human girls were like. She wouldn't really know. After all she wasn't human. Fingering the hole on the left side of her fishnets Kaye poked at the green skin underneath as she considered herself in the mirror. "Your rat wants to come," Lutie-loo said. Kaye turned toward the lidded fish tank where the doll-sized faery had her thin pale fingers pressed against the outside of the glass. Inside Kaye's brown rat, Armageddon, sniffed the air. Isaac was curled in a white ball in the far corner. "He likes coronations." "Can you really understand what he's saying," Kaye asked pulling an olive skirt over her head and wriggling it onto her hips. "He's just a rat," Lutie said turning toward Kaye. One of her moth wings dusted the side of the cage with pale powder. "Anyone can talk rat." All right.

>> Can you offer any advice to young writers?

>> I think the best advice that I have about writing is to read everything. It sounds obvious but it's true. And read outside the genre that you love and also inside the genre you love. Read mysteries, read science fiction, read fantasy, read realistic fiction, read biographies, read memoirs, read everything. Because each different thing has tricks and because you're storing up all of that knowledge and all of that sort of -- just the seeing of phrases and the knowing how people are doing different things in books. And the other thing is it was really helpful for me to have a writing friend. Somebody that I knew who also was very serious about writing who could poke me and prod me and make sure I got my chapters done, and read what I wrote and give me good feedback. And the best writing friends are people who really like the same kind of writing that you like. Maybe not the same -- maybe not even the same genre but they have the same appreciation for what you're doing as a writer and they're going to understand it and they're going to give you feedback that helps you be a better writer and you're going to hopefully give them feedback, makes them be a better writer. And just giving feedback is also helpful. It trains your mind to think critically about writing. So those are two things that I -- they were really helpful for me.

>> Now, you have another book coming out this fall. On September 18th The Nixie's Song.

>> That's right.

>> Which is a part of the popular Spiderwick Chronicles series. What is a nixie?

>> A nixie is a water fairy, freshwater fairy. They live in ponds.

>> Now the setting for Nixie's Song is different than the other Spiderwick novels. As a maybe a Floridian, why did you decide to move from New England to sunny Florida?

>> Well, Florida is actually where Tony grew up and so that was one of the reasons. But most of all, what we wanted to do with the second cycle of the Spiderwick Chronicles was do some unexpected things to make some unexpected choices. You know, in the first cycle we sort of -- our intention was that fairies could be anywhere, that they could be in your backyard and that, you know, anyone could go out and sort of look for fairy evidence and possibly find it. But saying that about New England it feels still in that -- it still feels like, well yes, of course there might be fairies in New England. But Florida is different. It has a totally different -- the landscape and the idea of okay, no, we really mean anywhere. Florida, you know, in a development where Nick lives is just as ripe with fairies as, you know, a old weird house in New England.

>> What do you find so appealing about fairies? I mean

>> I mean they're unlike other kinds of supernatural creatures. The variation of fairies is really interesting. And also unlike say

werewolves or vampires, fairies have never been human. They are this alien sort of group of creatures that live in our world but we don't see them. And I like that they -- they're deeply associated with nature. I like that they have a sort of different sense of what's right and wrong than we do. They have very strict rules about borrowing; they have really strict rules about lying. They are and there are so many different kinds. I mean there's ogres, goblins, nixies, pixies, sprites, [inaudible], you know, I can go on and on and on. And all of them have different things that they do and things that they can do and different habits and habitats.

>> How do you prepare for the creation of this new world that grows in your mind?

>> That's a good question although I'm not entirely sure how to answer it. I think, you know, it depends on the book. You start with something. You start with some bit of something like sometimes a line. Like *Tithe* I started with a line that I had, or you start with an idea of some tiny piece of it and you just start developing it and pushing it and messing with it and thinking about it until it starts to come together. And then for me while I'm writing it, I'm still changing it and editing it. And with *Spiderwick* Tony and I kind of sit down and try to talk about what we're doing, what we're planning on doing, and then I'll go off and write and he'll go off and draw and we'll get together and give things back and forth which is really different than both of my other books and most people's process because most times authors and illustrators never really meet.

>> What is it like to work with another author on a book? Tell us about your collaboration.

>> Well, like I said it's because we have sort of an unusual thing. It's probably different than other people's collaboration because what I'm doing is -- we're really just kind of hashing things through and trying to figure out what would make a good story and then I'll go off and write and then he'll give me a lot of feedback. I then I'll take this feedback and try and figure out how to make it work, and how to make it a better story. You know, our idea being trying to make the best story it can be and also to just really tightly match the illustrations and the writing. So that, for instance, if he wants to draw something, often I will -- I'll let that scene be underwritten so that the drawing speaks for the scene and he will usually choose things to draw that I haven't -- I haven't described a lot which was not how I thought illustrations worked. But, in fact, it's really interesting because then the illustration and the writing are really in dialogue a lot more. And also sometimes he'll send me a picture and I'll write a scene from the picture and then he'll -- as in the case of [inaudible] and then he'll redraw the picture. So I think in that way it's -- there's -- I don't know how normal it is but it's been a lot of fun.

>> And we're talking about your collaboration with illustrator artist Tony --

>> Tony DiTerlizzi.

>> DiTerlizzi, okay. Great. The Spiderwick Chronicles are now being adapted into a film to be released in February 2008. What can your fans expect from the movie version?

>> Well, the movie version, a lot of people ask me how many books is it - are in the movie version and it's all five books. Obviously not everything made it in. But the they tried to pick a lot of fun stuff and I think people would really like it. If I were to say which book it was most like, I would say it's most like Book 2 and I think it's a lot of fun. And really pretty great. I'm really excited.

>> Can you discuss your upcoming projects such as the graphic novel series, The Good Neighbors and The White Cat?

>> Well, The White Cat is filled with just about three chapters that I'm constantly rewriting so I don't know what to see about it. But The Good Neighbors is Graphic Novel series illustrated by Ted Naifeh. And it's coming out -- the first book is coming out from Scholastic next year. It's also about fairies but it's on the West Coast. There's no [inaudible] of fairies that are battling. It is a little different. It's a little bit more of a mystery and there's going to be three graphic novels in total.

>> Well, thank you very much for your time, Holly.

>> Thank you.

>> The National Book Festival is free and open to the public and will take place on the National Mall between 7th and 14th Streets Northwest from 10:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. on September 29th. For details and a complete list of participating authors, visit loc.gov/bookfest. Thank you for listening.

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