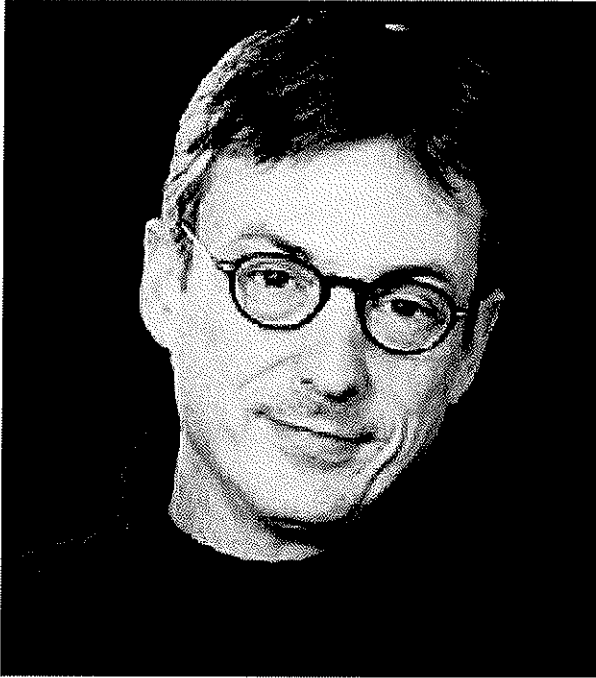


Pullman author: A different kind of vampire

Local author dismantles a genre with his first novel



By Caitlin Cole For the Daily News Moscow-Pullman Daily News

The protagonist in Pullman author Richard H. Miller's first novel enjoys living a seemingly normal life in his luxurious downtown Spokane condominium. He likes to read, watch the Nature channel and drink red wine. He meets the women he dates through the Internet. He contemplates Nietzsche's personal life and whether Velcro is better than buttons.

He also is a 150-year-old vampire.

Miller will be signing his novel, "All You Can Eat" from 5-7 Friday at Hastings in Moscow. The author's first novel was released in October by Gray Dog Press of Spokane.

Miller began with writing short stories. "Then I found out there wasn't much money in that, so I decided to write a novel. I gave myself permission to write something bad," said Miller. He is currently the senior marketing and communications manager for the Center for Distance and Professional Learning at Washington State University. Before that he was a newspaper editor for 20 years. "My experience as an editor drove me to continue to improve the story throughout several drafts," he said.

While the central characters all happen to be vampires, Miller does not consider "All You Can Eat" to be typical of the vampire genre. There are no fangs, capes or menaced teenagers. In fact, the word "vampire" never appears in the book.

"This book would suit a reader who's somewhat maladjusted and likes books that don't conform to any genres," he said. "There's a lot of twisted humor here."

The story revolves around Darius, who Miller describes as "a step outside mainstream culture in a 'Stranger in a Strange Land' type of way. I enjoyed writing a character who viewed culture with objectivity and befuddlement. He notices the trivial absurdities, such as cargo pants and cell phones. He also wonders about the deeper absurdities, like happiness, materialism and the role of television in people's lives." The novel is set in mainly in Montana and Spokane.

Miller crafted his novel by dedicating two hours each morning to writing. He got many of his ideas for the story while living in a condominium in downtown Spokane, just like his character. "As I walked to and from my condo I would catch snatches of conversation on the street which became central to the plot," Miller said. He writes approximately 1,000 words every day.

Miller credits his years as a journalist and editor as the inspiration for the story's details.

"It takes a suspension of disbelief to believe in a vampire character. I used a journalistic style and details to make Darius believable. I wanted him to be realistic instead of mythical like other vampire characters."

Miller didn't write in his youth, but he was a voracious reader. "I used to skip gym and go to the library to read," he said.

Although he has been inspired by many authors, Miller said, "In the end, you've got to write the way you write. I wrote "All You Can Eat" with the hope that it would appeal to vampire fans who want something incredibly fresh, and also to people who hate vampires."

Miller, who is promoting "All You Can Eat" at bookstores across the Inland Northwest, is working on his second novel.

On the Web:

- www.graydogpress.com