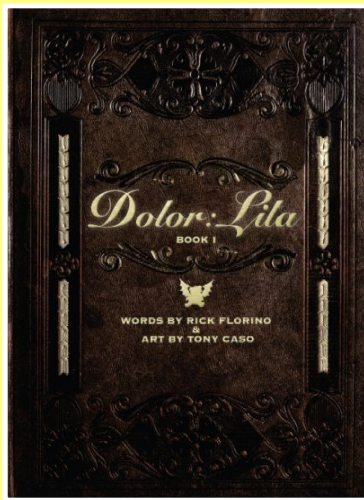


I had the pleasure of receiving a copy of Rick's first installment of Dolor titled Lila in November to review before our upcoming interview, and I loved it! I literally sat and read through it twice. Dolor is a ten-part series of books that unfolds little by little. From the onset readers are tuned into that there is something amiss in the town of Dolor. As the book unfolds readers are brought into a story of suspense, drama, and whodunits, with a chilling turn of events that leaves you wanting for more, as seen through the eyes of FBI agent Jeffries who happens upon the set of diaries while investigating the dark and ominous town.

Being a native New Englander myself, it was pretty easy to break the ice with Rick. He grew up in Massachusetts, not too far from where I grew up in Rhode Island. We spoke a bit about the local sites and how things have changed over the years, and although Rick now resides in California (I'm jealous might I add), once a New Englander always a New Englander.



Yvette: When I sat down and started reading Lila I was interested from the get go. I liked that it wasn't like your normal book. It made me wonder where it was going. I liked that it was raw.

Rick: Thank you. No, it's not polished, and it's not meant to be. If you are reading someone's diary on the last day they are alive it is not going to be written in the King's English. That was always very important to me, to show this decaying psyche, this decaying marriage, within a decaying town. Everything is falling apart. It's a godless, strange place, but at the same time once you enter into this world you can't really leave, and people have a lot of questions. One of

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Dolor: Lila BOOK I

A Book By Rick Florino

Interviewed by: Yvette M. Kelley

the best things about Lila is everyone who has read it wants to read the next one in the series which is titled Chrissy.

Yvette: Where did you come up with the concept of Lila?

Rick: I wrote Lila in three days. I always wanted to create my own town, my own world, where anything is possible. I wanted it to be a place that hid a lot of secrets. I feel that what goes on in the book is a reflection of reality, but it is so amplified and strange and dark that it feels like a dream.

COME TO



Unfortunately, though, these tragedies do happen in life. One of the things I wanted to convey is that this is a real story, and I wanted to create a story with a narrator that the readers could trust. Those are my favorite stories.

Yvette: I am not sure if everyone does this, but when I read a book that grabs me, my imagination goes to work, and your book took on a Stephen King type vibe with a town that evolved, in some sense, into a living being.

Rick: That's a great compliment. Thank you. You are totally right. The town is alive in a lot of ways. There's Stephen King, Clive Barker, H.P. Lovecraft, and I want it to be on that level. I want to take the series that far.

Yvette: You're welcome. I will also say when my imagination goes to work I

envision the characters as people, and for the character Caleb all I kept thinking of, and you will probably laugh, is the actor Tim Daly.

Rick: (laughs) I am not sure who that is, but I am going to have to look him up.

Yvette: You will know him when you see him. For some reason, though, when I read about Caleb, that's who pops in my head. It's what I do when I read. I will also say the placing of the teddy bear is quite poignant. Especially when it comes to children and how much they look for comfort and protection in a stuffed animal.

Rick: Yes, but in the end it is a perversion of that. It torments Caleb in the end as he has almost no human contact, and his only conversations take place with the bear. It's not a happy story, but I feel that in a lot of ways it is cathartic for people because everyone

has been in that position he has been in, in his life. We all have lost someone. So everyone can relate.

Yvette: I found the artwork for Lila raw as well. Is that what you were going for?

Rick: Yes, it definitely had more of a raw vibe. Lila is kind of like a band's first record. It's meant to be a little dirty, a little off, and weird. It's not meant to be polished and refined. I always felt it was important to come out of the gate very raw and very real, and I think that is why it has resonated so much with the kids because nobody is speaking to them this honestly in a book. Nobody speaks in a colloquial fashion that I've written the book in.

Yvette: I liked the twist in the end and how it brought the diary to a close. Is Agent Jeffries going to feel the need to read these, or will he be stuck there?

Rick: Ah, that is where you will have to read the rest of them.

[Editor's Note: Damn he got me!]

Yvette: Are all the books going to be short stories like Lila?

Rick: Yes, they will all be short stories. Plus as each story is revealed you will learn more and more about Dolor itself. It's an interesting place where one never feels safe. I want the readers to feel that and have a sense of not knowing what's happening next. Also, Lila is actually the last book in the series.

Yvette: So, you are working backwards to book number one? Will we be seeing any of the characters from Lila in any of the other books in this series?

Rick: Yes, you can expect to see Caleb in every story. As things progress and we count down to the last book in the series, things will be revealed and will finally make sense. In the meantime, the readers can expect to see a lot happening.

Yvette: So, what are you up to now?

Rick: I am at my buddy Craven's house right now. He just shot these pictures for the next book of my new artist and me. They are pretty sick. They have this vibe of the first Korn video "Shoots & Ladders," like their song "Blind" but mixed with Alfred Hitchcock, and it is exactly what I was going for, all demented and weird. It's



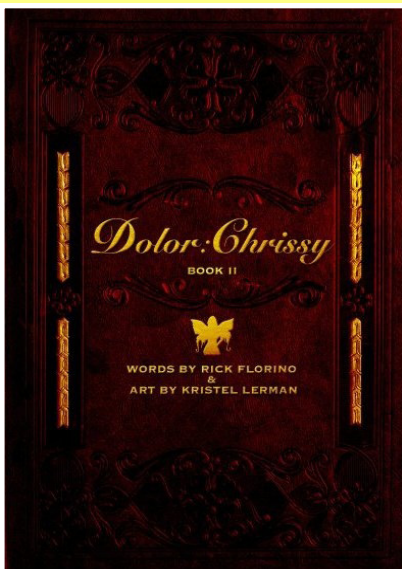
Artwork by Tony Caso

everything I hoped they would look like. He has been cool to edit them as well.

Yvette: This is for Dolor: Chrissy: Book II, correct?

Rick: Yes. It's due out February 11th, 2010. I have a new artist, Kristel Lerman, and her stuff is really mind blowing. Tony's stuff was awesome, but her work has more of a psychedelic feel to it. It matches up to the text more seamlessly. I am really blessed to have her as part of the team.

Yvette: I am definitely looking forward to reading Chrissy, but I hate to have to wait so long for it to come out. Do you have any other project you are currently working on?



Rick: (laughs) I know; it's a few months away. I also have a poetry book I am going to get out later next year after the third diary, Dolor: Arielle, comes out [called] Lullabies for the Insane and Crooked Fairy Tales for the Depraved. In Chrissy we have the first poem from that book is at the end of Chrissy. It's pretty cool. They are poems I have been writing for awhile, and they all connect.

Yvette: Is there anyone's work that influenced you in becoming a writer?

Rick: I would say my two biggest influences were Edgar Allan Poe and Vladimir Nabokov.

Yvette: Personally, I love Edgar Allan Poe's work.

Rick: Me too, ever since fourth grade. I would read his collections over and over again. I loved how clever he was; [it] really resonated with me. Primarily I was more influenced by music and movies more than anything else like Stone Temple Pilots, Tool, Metallica, Alice in Chains, Pantera, and Slipknot to name a few. Movies I loved are *Casino*, *The Crow*, *Taxi Driver*, things like that. I am a HUGE music fan. I listen to music while I write. I listen to Slayer while I write. It energizes me. That's why I feel like Lila is more of a record than a book.

Yvette: It definitely has a nice flow to it. Where can someone get a copy of Dolor: Lila as well as any of the other books in the series as they are released?

Rick: Lila is available on my website **bookofdolor.com**. Limited edition signed copies can be purchased there as well. Chrissy will be available on February 11th, 2010, and Arielle, which is the third book in the series, is due out in the summer of 2010. I plan on releasing a book every four to six months.

Artwork by Tony Caso



Rick taking a little time to ponder. About what? We're almost afraid to ask...

With that I thanked Rick and promised him we would keep in touch as each book was released. Hey, what can I say? I am looking forward to seeing how things turn out in the town of Dolor. We spoke for a bit longer and with a huge thanks especially considering we went we over our scheduled interview time. I wished Rick Happy Holidays and promised to be in touch soon. Now, I wait in anticipation for Chrissy to

