



Q&A interview with Catherine Doyle, author of *Vendetta*

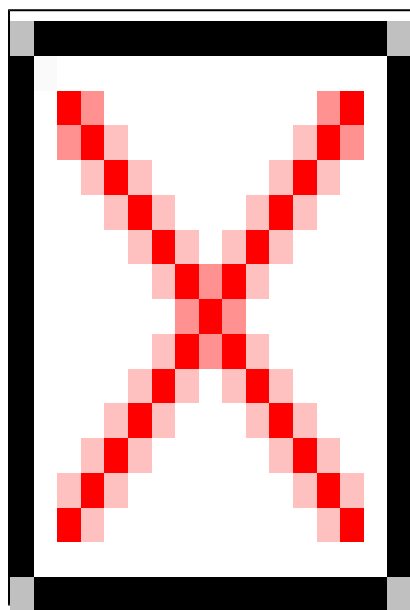
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[Catherine Doyle](#) [1]

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Debut author **Catherine Doyle** answers our questions.



***Vendetta* is a romantic-thriller ? which of those elements did you find easier to write, the romance or the thriller?**

Sophie gets swept up in romance and danger, and it was fun to escalate both elements, though I have to say I found the thrilling parts slightly easier to write because they were all about high stakes, fast action and big consequences, which swept me up too!

There's a very spooky scene early on ? where you ever tempted to add supernatural elements to this?

With [Vendetta](#) [3], I wanted to write a book that had some of the elements I love about paranormal YA ? an eerie setting, dangerous characters, and an unfolding mystery ? but not necessarily be dependent on a certain trend, like Vampires or Ghosts or Werewolves. So, while **Vendetta** consciously echoes some paranormal-seeming things, especially early on, I knew it was always going to stay grounded in the real world.

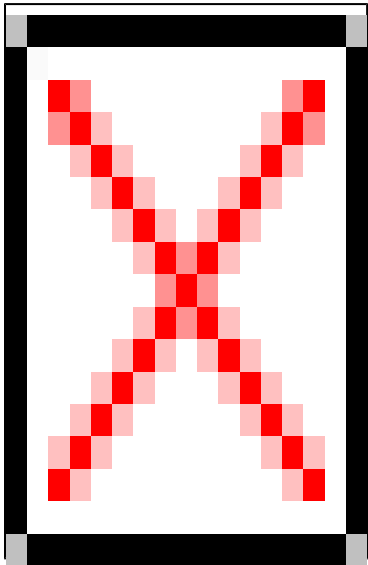
The central character, Sophie, is pretty tough. Was that important to you?

I wanted Sophie to have a mind of her own and to be able to stand up for herself but I also didn't want her to be super kick-ass and unrealistic. I didn't set out to write a special snowflake, someone who was incredibly self-assured or immensely talented at something. I wanted to write a normal girl with flaws, whose life was a bit boring, but who had a great friend that she could laugh and be herself with. Sophie is very much a product of her upbringing and her environment. She's a bit naïve and always wants to see the good in people but when the chips are down, she can stand up for herself, and more importantly, she can stand up for the people she

loves.

Nic, the boy she falls for, has done some terrible things in his life, but describes himself as 'a good person, with good morals'. How careful were you not to glamourise violence, or do you think the conventions of this kind of story means this isn't an issue?

I didn't want to glamourise the violence in **Vendetta**, which is why some of the scenes towards the end of the book



are particularly tough. However, it was important to show that Nic ultimately believed in the good in what he was doing, regardless of whether this was really the case or not (which, of course, it isn't). Nic doesn't necessarily have the answers, he just has his own answers (the ones that help him sleep at night!), and that's one of the things Sophie has to reconcile as she realizes just how twisted his world really is. Nic's belief in his family's work does not necessarily make it as true or admirable as he explains it to be. There are facts, beliefs and emotions, and the interplay between all three is what drives **Vendetta**. Often, it is the belief and the emotion that we encounter, but I would like to think that the reader becomes aware of the cold hard truth beyond this, just as Sophie does.

You were born in Ireland but the book is set in the US ? it feels very real ? have you spent time there? What made you choose the setting?

My mother was born in Chicago, and goes back there every so often, so my brothers and I visited it several times when we were growing up. Two of my best friends are North American, and I tend to spend a lot of my summers over there with them, so the US setting came quite naturally to me (though I do have an incredible American copy-editor too, thank God!)

What would you say have been the main influences on your book?

I would definitely say that movies have been an important influence on **Vendetta**, particularly old-school classics like **The Godfather**, **Goodfellas** and **The Departed**. I write in quite a filmic way because I have always been obsessed with films (from Disney to horror, to Rom-Com and documentaries) and naturally write quite visually as a result. Of course, music has played a huge part as well. As I was writing **Vendetta**, I listened to an abnormal amount of Hozier because I just felt his melodies and lyrics resonated so closely with the story I was trying to write.

Your publisher Barry Cunningham describes Vendetta as 'one of the best movies I've ever read'. Do you see it like that? Might it become a film?

Every chapter in **Vendetta** began as a snap-shot image in my head, and then I built the scene around that, so I do think it makes sense that he would view it like that. It would be a dream come true to see it on the big screen!

This is your first novel, what's your favourite scene and what are you most proud of about the book?

My favourite scene ? ooh! I like the basketball scene (because there's a Millie rant that I loved writing) and I like the

warehouse scene, particularly the very end of it when there's a quiet (and unconventional) intimate moment between Sophie and one of the brothers, amidst all the chaos. That's a special scene for me.

Since [Vendetta](#) [3] came out, I've gotten emails from girls who have said that they particularly loved Sophie's friendship with Millie, because it was so real and relatable. The portrayal of a genuine, supportive and important female friendship is something I feel quite proud of.

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