

Interview at TextyLadies: May 2008

1. When did you start writing? Do you remember the first sex scene you wrote? **I started writing as a kid. Even as young as eight, I was scribbling stories. I first wrote sex in my early twenties, and I still have some of those short stories in spiral-bound notebooks in my office. I don't remember which scene was the first-I've been doing this for 25 years-but I started writing kink fairly early.**

2. How did you feel when you got your first contract? **I got my first contract in early 2005 for a category-length contemporary romance from a now-defunct e-publisher. Looking back, that book needed a lot of work, but it wasn't bad. And while it wasn't erotica, it was pretty steamy. My first New York contract, with Bantam, came in 2006. Both experiences were incredibly exciting-even with the e-book. I got a phone message from the editor, Mimi Riser, saying she wanted to talk to me about my manuscript. I was hyperventilating so hard it took me a full 20 minutes to calm down enough to call her back. I'm sure I sounded like a total nimrod on the phone, but she was so incredibly nice to me and so flattering about my work. I adore her to this day for making my first experience so wonderful.**

**The Bantam contract felt huge! I went through a bidding war, which was one of the most exciting and terrifying experiences of my life. I was exhausted and exhilarated when it was all settled-it took me weeks to come down off the high, and to recover from the stress. Then I had a book to write, my first novel, so the panic set in. But I wouldn't trade the experience for anything in the world!**

3. What are some of your hobbies? **Are shoes a hobby? I love shoes and have far too many pairs of stiletto heels for someone who spends most of her life in her pj's behind a desk, alone.**

**Last year I got into making ATC's (Artist Trading Cards). These are small pieces of mixed-media art, the size of a playing card. It's refreshing to have a different creative outlet. It seems to use a different part of the brain than my writing, so it's a good break for me-relaxing and invigorating.**

**One hobby I haven't indulged enough lately is going to museums and galleries. I'm an art geek, can't get enough of it! I'm very into the Surrealists right now, but I've always loved neo-classical art, and black and white photography and sculpture are probably my favorite mediums.**

4. Can you tell us about your routine and perspective as a working writer? (I know you have to do edits on paper, talks with your editor, deadlines...and how do those edits work? I've only ever had Track Changes, which I love:)) Plus, you've got to be so busy, how do

you find time to write? I don't really know this, but what is your day job? I wasn't sure if I should ask? **I don't have another day job, so my day is all about writing and all of the things that come with being a published author: editing, proofing galleys, promotions, interviews, brainstorming with my writer friends, critiquing for my critique partners, occasionally talking with my editor and my agent, updating my blog and website, presenting workshops several times a year, preparing for conferences...there's so much more to it than just writing a book. Even without a day job it can often be hard to find enough hours in the day to do it all and still have a life-especially when I'm close to a deadline. I am in awe of those authors who have day jobs, kids, and still manage to write a book or two a year!**

**My day usually goes something like this: I get up any time between 8:00 and 9:30- I'm a terrible insomniac, so earlier is not an option. I'm pretty much comatose until around ten, so I have some tea while I check email and try not to answer any important ones since I'm really still half-asleep and will inevitably say something completely idiotic. I have three email accounts-one personal, one writing/business-related, and one for Romance Divas, a writer's resource website and discussion forum, where I'm an administrator, so this can keep me busy for a couple of hours. I shower and change from my early morning pajamas into my working gear: yoga pants and a cotton top, and my fuzzy slippers, even in summer.**

**If I don't have to run errands, I'll do edits and critique for my CP's, make any necessary phone calls. I usually write later in the day-rarely before 4PM. I do most of my writing at night, and lately have been most productive between 9PM and midnight.**

**Regarding edits, well, there are several stages. Revisions come first (and at Bantam I always have revisions! I dream of the day I turn in the perfect manuscript!). Those happen within a week or two of turning the manuscript in. Once the revisions are accepted, my editor and a copy editor edit the manuscript. The whole thing in printed form gets sent to me with their little coded squiggles all over it. This can happen weeks or as long as a couple of months after revisions are complete.**

**Once I return edits, the book goes into production and next step are the galleys. I sometimes have only a few days to proof the galleys, and this can be an arduous task, as I have to read the entire book, keeping a close eye out for any last minute typos. You'd think it would be impossible at this point, but sometimes there are small errors. The hard part is that by the time the galleys come to me, I may not have seen this book for a number of months, and there are always those moments when I come upon a scene that I feel I could have done a better job on...but it's too late by that point, which can really make me crazy if I let it. After that, it's just waiting to see what my cover will look like. The art department at Bantam is fantastic, so seeing a new cover is always exciting!**

5. You have a new book due to be released May 20. Will you tell us about it?(I'll also be posting titles and blurbs of your other books)

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My May 20<sup>th</sup> release, **HOT NIGHTS DARK DESIRES**, is an erotic anthology from Bantam. There are three stories, all centered in New Orleans, one each by me, Stephanie Tyler and Sydney Croft.

My story in this anthology is **THE ART OF DESIRE**, and it's about tattoo fetish-one I share with my characters. For me, the experience of getting tattooed and being tattooed can be highly sensual. I'm fascinated with body art-I always have been-so I'm not surprised it ended up in one of my books. This story really explores what goes on in people's heads about tattoos, why some of us find them so irresistible. It helps to toss in an irresistible hero. Tristan is to me, anyway, and to my heroine, Sophie. He's the dark, brooding type, which I always love! She's a bit dark and brooding, too, actually. The whole feel of this story is very moody, and New Orleans was the perfect setting for it.

Here's the blurb:

**New Orleans, a multifaceted city famous for its diverse art and people, reveals its offbeat charm and marvelous eccentricities through three stories celebrating the Big Easy and its funky culture and exotic atmosphere in an anthology from authors Eden Bradley, Sydney Croft and Stephanie Tyler.**

Seduce your senses...

**THE ART OF DESIRE, by Eden Bradley...silky skin, decadent sin, and decorative ink come together in a tapestry of eroticism set in the heart of steamy New Orleans' French Quarter. Sophie Fiore has always wanted to be a bad girl, but has never quite dared to take it all the way.**

**Tristan Batiste is a tattoo artist, classic bad boy, and the image of Sophie's wildest fantasies come to life. Will she let Tristan charm her into getting the tattoo she's always yearned for—and if she does, will she become addicted to body art? Or to Tristan?**

6. Do you have rituals to get you in the mood to write? I usually pick a playlist. Each book has its own music. While writing **EXOTICA: SEVEN DAYS OF KAMA SUTRA, NINE DAYS OF ARABIAN NIGHTS**, I listened to a lot of sitar music...I really wanted to get a sense of the exotic. For **THE ART OF DESIRE**, I listened to a lot of pretty hard-core rock music-angry, moody stuff. It fit those characters and the mood of the book perfectly. And for my upcoming October release, **FORBIDDEN FRUIT**, my food fetish book, I had two playlists. One was sad, wistful songs, and one was sultry, sexy music.

Other than music, it's about sitting down and making myself do it. When my energy is flagging, I use chocolate (I ate a *lot* of chocolate writing **FORBIDDEN FRUIT!**).

A favorite this year is chocolate covered peanut butter pretzels. I'm addicted! I have to be careful-I can eat an entire bag in a day when I'm on a roll.

7. Do you plot your books? I sell on proposal, so I have to plot enough to have a fairly clear outline. Of course, I always deviate from the outline a bit as I write. For me, each story is an organic entity, so I never know exactly where I'm going until it's happening. I used to be a hard-core pantsner, but I've learned the value in outlining.

8. Do you ever get the dreaded writer's block, and what do you do to overcome it? **Yes! Last year I was quite sick for months and writing sex was really hard! But I don't believe in the muse theory. Sometimes you just have to sit your butt down in the chair and do it. I have incredibly supportive writer friends, and they'll push me as needed. When I'm really blocked, I make myself report in to someone every day with my writing progress. That usually does the trick. I may have to sweat blood sometimes, but when you have a deadline, you learn to write despite the blocks.**

9. What are your future goals for your career? **To hit the New York Times Best Seller list-not an easy task for an erotica author! To keep writing until I'm 80.**

10. Do you have any book signings scheduled? **I'll be at the Romance Writers of America conference in San Francisco at the downtown Marriott Hotel at the Literacy signing on Wednesday, July 30<sup>th</sup>, and will also be at the conference's Bantam signing on Saturday, August 2<sup>nd</sup>. I also plan to be at the West Hollywood Book Faire on September 28<sup>th</sup> with a group of erotica authors. On October 19<sup>th</sup> I'll be signing at the Barnes & Noble in Encino, Ca, with a group of Southern California romance authors. Check my blog and my website for details!**

[www.EdenBradley.com](http://www.EdenBradley.com)

[www.edenbradley.blogspot.com/](http://www.edenbradley.blogspot.com/)

11. You conduct a workshop titled An Exercise in Sensuality. Can you tell us a little about that? **I love doing this workshop! It's an audience participation, hands-on workshop in which I talk about using the five senses to bring depth to your stories. I hand out sensory-stimulating objects as a means to helping the participants get in touch with that part of themselves which is often shut down-and no, I don't mean sex toys! Textural objects like fur and sandpaper, chocolate to stimulate the taste buds, I play music, we look at pictures, and do a few writing exercises. I talk about the senses being related to memory, and how all of these things affect each person-or character-differently, depending on our own personal history. I believe sensory detail grounds the reader in the story and brings your characters and your settings to life, making for a richer story.**

**I love sensual detail in a story, and not just in the love scenes, although these kinds of details are particularly effective when writing sex. It's really all about stopping and smelling the roses-something too many of us forget as we go about our day-to-day lives.**

12. You also do a workshop, 'Everything You Ever Wanted to Know About (writing) Sex, But Were Afraid to Ask', with authors Lillian Feisty and Alessia Brio. What can you tell us about that? **This one is fun! The three of us talk about anything and everything! It's a completely no holds barred discussion about every possible aspect of sex, writing erotic fiction, the erotica and erotic romance industry. We're all very**

**uninhibited, so things can get pretty wild. But it's the one place you can come and ask about almost anything and get an honest answer from three women who've been there, done that and have written about it! We gave the workshop at Passionate Ink, the online RWA chapter for erotic romance writers. We're hoping to do this one again next year elsewhere.**

13. What are the most common mistakes you've seen writers make when writing sex? **For me, the biggest issues are writing the same sex scene every time-the same positions, the same description of sensation (or worse yet, none at all!). Writers need to use their imaginations, to use different positions, settings, and most important, to understand that if their characters are truly individuals, their sex scenes will be, too. There should be a mental and emotional component that is entirely unique to that character. And it's the characters that keep any aspect of a story fresh.**

14. What are a couple of things about writing sex that writers should know but ARE afraid to ask? **Don't be afraid to ask, period. Find a group of fellow writers you trust, and simply ask! You'd be surprised at how honest people are willing to be. As with any other aspect of writing craft, don't ever think you know it all, don't stop learning.**

15. Your tattoos are gorgeous! What are they, and most importantly, did they hurt? Will you get more? ;)  
**Thank you! My first tattoo was done when I turned 18. It was a Pegasus on my back left hip-very poor artwork, unfortunately. It hurt a bit, but not too badly-although it's been a lot of years, so I don't know how accurate my memory is. When I was 21 I had the color touched up and that wasn't bad at all. My skin was more irritated than anything.**

**I had my second tattoo, some Kanji script down the back of my neck, done for my 45<sup>th</sup> birthday. I love the written word, and it was important to me that it be Chinese because my mother spent the last 12 years of her life in Singapore and China and always felt very strongly connected to Asian culture, so part of that piece is about honoring her memory. There was no pain at all having this one done-I was full of endorphins right away and giggling!**

**My third tattoo was done in San Francisco last October-a cherry blossom on my ankle. I was with two of my close friends, erotic romance authors Lillian Feisty and Lacy Danes. We'd gone there to do a book signing and reading. We all decided to get tattoos-a bonding experience for us. I have to say, that one hurt like hell! I'd always thought I had a good tolerance for tattoo work, but the feet and ankles are particularly sensitive, and because of the way the skin processes in these areas, they really have to dig deep. It was an ordeal!**

**I recently had a large cover piece done to go over that poor old Pegasus. It's a large image of the White Tara, the Asian Hindu goddess of health and healing. She's beautiful! I spent about 4 ½ hours on the table, and while my skin was a little sore**

**initially, I really went into a trance state after a while and nearly fell asleep a few times. I've heard that having your ribs tattooed is usually incredibly painful, but I was fine. I go back in July to have the piece colored in, and I can't wait to see it finished!**

16. Is there anything you'd like to add? **Thank you so much for having me here today!**

17. Do you have any links you'd like to share? (I'll already have up your links to your website and blog, but thought you might know of some really good, informative sites for writers of romance and erotica and things like that. :) Whatever you'd like to put up)

**Useful links for romance and erotica writers:**

**I'm an administrator for Romance Divas-it's an award-winning website and discussion forum for those writing all romance-related genres. We have special age-restricted areas for the steamier side of writing. It's free, and a great place to learn about writing craft and industry, and to network with other writers:**

**[www.RomanceDivas.com](http://www.RomanceDivas.com)**

**For erotic romance authors, you might consider Passionate Ink, the erotic romance writer's chapter of Romance Writers of America. This is another excellent information resource, and it's also the one organization who is actively working toward authors in our genre gaining respect in the writing industry: <http://www.passionateink.org/>**