

A BSB Interview With Lesley Davis

by Connie Ward, Bold Strokes Books Publicist/Author Liaison

August 1, 2008

What made you decide to become a fiction writer?

I've always written, so it seemed perfectly natural for me to write seriously as I got older. I wanted to write the stories I myself wanted to read. I got the incentive to do it properly when Cindy asked me to write a story for her when we were courting! That was "Keeper of the Piece" and the first thing of mine to be published.

What type of stories do you write? And why?

I'm a fantasy/science fiction writer...so far! I love the genres and am very fantasy-minded. (I can quote *Star Wars* better than any guy at work!) I like creating something that isn't grounded in the real world—taking the reader away from what they can see every day and showing them something beyond the norm.

What do your family/friends think about your writing?

My partner Cindy is my biggest supporter. She encourages me, urges me on, and is so proud of what I do. My dad saw my first book published but died as the second was being done. He was so excited and pleased for me and would have been so proud I was accepted by Bold Strokes. My mom....she is embarrassed and won't mention it at all. If I was writing straight fiction she would find it easier. I try not to let her negativity toward my sexuality get me down. My friends have been either very supportive or have been oddly jealous and have fallen away. My work colleagues think it's all very funny and expect me to leave my job and become JK Rowling. I hate to disillusion them!

Where do you get your ideas?

The ideas usually spring from the need to write my version of a tale. In *Truth Behind the Mask* I wanted to write a superhero story with a lesbian leaning. I usually see something or read something and the little cogs in my head start turning, and I wonder how I could change it so it could be something I'd really rather see.

How do you write; do you plan everything out or just write?

Usually set scenes suddenly pop into my head that I have to write down as soon as they appear. I see the ideas like movies in my mind. At first I get main scenes or just little pieces, then as I start to plot and plan, the bigger picture comes into view. The characters have no compunction against talking through whole scenes while I'm doing something else, making me have to dash for a piece of paper! I have lots of scrap pieces around me when I sit before the computer. These form the basic bones that I then flesh out further. I have to carry paper with me everywhere. I wrote out the plot for a previous story on a Toys R Us receipt. It's a good job I'd spent plenty!

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What makes *Truth Behind the Mask* special to you?

I honestly love the story for this book. It went through some changes in the editing, and I have Cindy Cresap to thank for stretching me and making the premise really grow and become so much better. I love superheroes, and to be able to create a version where the women are powerful but not over-exaggerated was such fun. I wanted them to be as real as crime fighters could be. I love the characters so much and spent quite a long time with them as the story unfolded. And it's my first book with Bold Strokes, so Pagan and Co are always going to be extra-special to me.

How much of yourself and the people you know are in your characters?

When I first started writing, the main character of "Keeper of the Piece" was very much as I was back then and I could portray that feeling in writing (the character hibernates, which alluded to the fact that I have CFS and at that time was still sleeping more than being awake). Now, my characters have their own voices and appearances. They're not me or parts of me. I do find it hard to write meat eaters, though, as I am a strict vegetarian! I try not to use real people as characters. I learned the hard way from a previous story that it's not always wise, not everyone appreciates your sentiment. I just wish I could be more like some of the characters I have written, especially in this new story. I would love to be Rogue.

Which lesbian authors inspired you the most? Do you have a favorite of this author(s)?

Chris Anne Wolfe was the first lesbian writer that really caught my attention. I loved *Shadows of Aggar* and the whole fantasy world she wove. Karin Kallmaker's books were the first books I read that referenced things and times I could associate with, so I have long admired her works too. At the risk of sounding biased, I've read everything Radclyffe has written and love her work. Her stories are the ones I re-read the most for their strong character base and the sheer excitement of the story, be it the intrigue and fast pace of the Honor series or her romance novels. So my favorite is going to be Radclyffe because she's opened my eyes to how romance can be written. She's undoubtedly an inspiration.

Do you have any suggestions for new writers?

Have patience and perseverance. Also, take any criticism positively given and learn from it to better hone your craft.

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When you're not writing what do you do for fun?

I am the ultimate gaming geek! I have to be surgically removed from my Nintendo DS to go to work every day. I'm a Nintendo fangirl so every weekend I have my Wii Remote and Nunchuck in my hands, playing every game I can cram into forty-eight hours. Thankfully, my partner is a game fan too (just not as fanatical as me!) so my being stuck before the TV for hours (and hours) on end is something she's okay with. We watch a lot of TV too—Fox News, because Cindy is an American living here in the UK with me, the CSI's, most other crime shows, and anything sci fi. I'm a huge fan of *Heroes*. I'm not a great fan of the outdoors so I spend my free time indoors—reading, writing or racing Mario in his kart!



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