

A BSB Interview With I. Beacham

by Connie Ward, Bold Strokes Books Consulting Publicist

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What made you decide to become a fiction writer?

Insanity. Well, what else glues someone to their laptop, totally absorbed and unaware of what is going on around them whilst the sun shines and the rest of the human race is outside having fun? Seriously, I became a fiction writer for many reasons, but mainly because I have stories to tell. As a child I loved books. My favorite subject at school was English literature, which introduced me to outstanding authors and showed me the power of the written word.

So for me, it was almost the law of natural progression, the inevitability that my love for reading would join forces with my overly abundant imagination. Add to this that my parents didn't have a TV in the house until I was about ten, so on rainy days (too many in England) or when I was grounded (a frequent occurrence), I needed something to occupy myself. I started to dream up and write my own short stories, which I would share with like-minded school friends. Everything has just moved forward from there.

What type of stories do you write? And why?

I write the type of stories I like to read. I enjoy good romance set around a durable tale. The backdrop to the story could be anywhere: in space, in a multinational corporation, in a submarine. What's really important to me is to delve into the inner machinations of the characters and how they react to each other. I love exploring the intricacies of human relationships. I'm not sure why I write these sorts of stories; it's probably because people fascinate me.

What do your family/friends think about your writing?

Frankly, like me, they are all a little excited about my being published. I am very lucky that they are very supportive, and I feel immensely humbled by the encouragement they have given me over the years. Of course, it's all going to cost me. They want autographed copies of the book.

Where do you get your ideas?

Ideas just seem to drop into my head like locusts hitting vegetation. The problem for me is then sifting through everything and emerging with something that will work. Music is also another inspirational pool of writing goodies for me. I hear music, I see characters.

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

Let me put my psychoanalytical hat on. The surface answer to this question is none. I did not intentionally put anyone I know (or me) into *Sanctuary*. I drew my characters on paper and they developed as I wrote. But how can a writer avoid putting herself into her characters in some part? The characters have to be channelled through me via my thought processes, so some tainted goods do get delivered. I'm not saying more in case I get sued.

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

Both. Generally, I'm a messy writer. I always have the basic story outline figured and then key scenes will come to me, which I'll just write. The trouble is these can be from the beginning, middle, or end, out of sequence, and often without the stuff in between. This method makes for a lot of hard work when I'm trying to piece the whole thing together and make it flow. *Sanctuary* has taught me to try to be more disciplined, to flesh out the story in greater depth before plunging in. I can still change things if needs be, but the work upfront definitely pays off. That said, old habits die hard and the mess continues.

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What makes *Sanctuary* special to you?

It's my first published book! It shows I can do it, actually sit down and write a story from beginning to end and get a publisher to like it enough to put it in print. It's also special because that process has led me to Bold Strokes Books and the opportunity to get to know folk there: Radclyffe, the support staff behind the scenes, other authors, the editorial staff, etc. Joining BSB is like being adopted by a large family who support you. All the authors I've met say this, not just me.

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

At last, a question I can answer with no difficulty. The key word here, *inspired*. There are two authors who stand out. First, thank you, Gina Dartt, for writing *Star Trek Voyager* fan fiction and introducing me to the brilliant romantic intertwining between Janeway and Seven. Her beautifully crafted stories in this genre opened my mind to writing *lesbian* fiction. Those beginnings led me to discover my second inspirational author, Radclyffe. (I can hear the readers whispering "creep.") Not so! I've read many of Rad's books, but without hesitation, my favourite novel is *Tomorrow's Promise*. I've read it so many times, I recently had to purchase another copy because the first one fell to bits.

Do you have any suggestions for new writers?

I doubt I can come up with anything that hasn't already been said, but here's my penny-worth. Keep writing and believe in yourself. For every writer, there's a reader. The more you write, the better you become. Do not compare yourself to other writers—that's the kiss of death and terribly depressing. You are unique and have your own style. And when you've written your book and want to send it to a publisher? Be ruthless with your own editing. Go through each page, line by line, read it out aloud, and make sure you catch every spelling error, badly phrased word, and so on. Don't put the publisher off your story because they couldn't get past the errors. Here endeth my suggestions.

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

Okay, now I reveal what an unimpressive, dull little writer I am. I love D.I.Y. and given the house I have, it's a true blessing. If anything else "drops" off it, I'll scream. But I'm never so happy as when I have a saw or a combination shave hook in my hand, music blasting in the background ("Barcelona" by Freddy Mercury...outstanding!). Fun to me is also being with friends and *some* family. I can't sit still for ten minutes and love to travel. Movies, antique hunting, going for walks with the cat—all high up there on the fun side. Told you I was dull.



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