

A BSB Interview With Erin Dutton

by Connie Ward, Bold Strokes Books Publicist/Author Liaison

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What made you decide to become a fiction writer?

I've enjoyed writing since I was a kid. It's just that for a long time, my stories were just for me and those few people I shared them with. It wasn't until about a year and a half ago that I decided to submit something. I issued myself a challenge to complete a submission-worthy manuscript and if I did that, I had to send it in. Then I picked two people I trusted and told them my plan so I couldn't chicken out. I am just glad that Bold Strokes decided to take me on.

What type of stories do you write? And why?

So far, I've tended toward romance. Because...well, don't tell anyone, but I'm secretly a hopeless romantic. But in reading, I have pretty diverse interests. I enjoy romance, adventure, medical thrillers, cop stories, and a bit of fantasy as well. So in writing, I don't really rule out any genre. I just write the story that's in my head and see where it leads.

What do your family/friends think about your writing?

Everyone is really supportive. My mom wants to read everything I write (imagine me trying to explain to Mom why she doesn't *really* need to read my selection in *Road Games*. We have a very open relationship but I just don't think I'm ready for that). She and my sister insisted on signed copies of *Sequestered Hearts*, though.

Where do you get your ideas?

Ideas can come from anywhere really. Sometimes they just seem to come to me. I've gotten ideas while listening to a certain song; it just inspires a mood. I'll be in the shower, in the car driving to work, or doing just about anything but writing, and a scene will come into my head. In the beginning stages of a book, I like to keep a notebook with me so I can jot notes as they come.

-continue page 2-



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Page 2

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

I don't plan more than the basic premise. I have a general idea of the story, but I don't do any extensive outlining. I'm a visual person. I see the scenes happen in my head. It's like watching a movie, only I can see inside the heads and hearts of the characters.

What makes *Sequestered Hearts* special to you?

You know how people say you never forget your first kiss. Well, *Sequestered Hearts* is my first everything in publishing. It's my first published novel, the first time I held a book with my name on the cover. It's also my first experience with being edited, the first time I got to watch my work grow. And, looking at where it started and the finished product, I'm so proud and humbled by all that I've learned from my editors. So this book will always be special to me.

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

Consciously? Not much. Naturally, I see qualities in people that I admire or weaknesses that are human and true-to-life, and they make their way into my characters. And I'm sure there's a bit of myself in there as well. But none of the characters were patterned after anyone in particular.

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

I would say I'm most inspired by Radclyffe, and if I have to choose a favorite, it's *Love's Masquerade*. But I have about sixteen second favorites. I continue to be impressed with how much her books can make me feel, for example *When Dreams Tremble*. Or make me think, like *Shadowland*. Or just downright entertain me, like any book from the Honor Series.

-continue page 3-

A BSB Interview With Erin Dutton

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Page 3

Do you have any suggestions for new writers?

Discipline is so important. At least, it has been for me. I try to work on something every day—writing, edits, or even a short story just for fun. The point is to do something. Then when I do need a break or a vacation, I reward myself with that time off.

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

I took up golf a couple of years ago. I'm not very good, but I can't help but keep trying. It's true what they say—when you hit that one perfect drive you just want to do it again. And that's what gets you through the one that you lost in the trees, the one that never clears the water hazard, and the two attempts it takes to get out of the sand trap.



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