

# A BSB Interview with Jove Belle

by Connie Ward, Bold Strokes Books Publicist/Author Liaison Consultant

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## What made you decide to become a fiction writer?

I don't know that I decided. I just did. Now it's intrinsic to who I am, how I define myself.

## What type of stories do you write? And why?

*Edge of Darkness* is a romantic thriller. *Split the Aces* is for the Matinee line. I'm not sure what category it will be marketed in, romance or erotica. My next project will likely be another romantic thriller. Or possibly just a straight-up romance. Why? Well, sex is not only fun to have, it's fun to write. Seriously, I just write what the characters tell me to. It's that simple.

## What do your family/friends think about your writing?

Hmm. The majority of my friends are straight and not writers. They look at my writing like it's this mythical creature—something they are impressed with, but don't really understand. As for my family, my oldest daughter is nineteen. She thinks it's a riot. My wife thinks I've divorced her and married my laptop, but she's in love with the cover of *Edge of Darkness*, so she's forgiven me. My other two children are far too young (four and one) to be reading the kind of stuff I write. <grin>

## Where do you get your ideas?

I generally start with the characters. Once I know who they are, I try to figure out what they'd do in certain situations and it goes from there. *Split the Aces*, due out in October, was born from the combination of desert sun, casino smoke, and one too many mind-numbing meetings in the city of sin last summer.

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

I plan and I plan and I plan. Then I start writing and, well, best-laid plans and all that.

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

There are definitely similarities. In *Edge of Darkness*, the main character, Diana, has an ongoing battle with traffic, and her responses to the drivers around her are very similar to mine during rush hour. Ali and Diana both have a fierce protective streak, but express them in different ways. That need to care for people is a reflection of my mom. And the list goes on. It would be impossible, for me at least, to not draw on personal experiences, especially when trying to create a character that I like and can identify with.

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### What makes *Edge of Darkness* special to you?

I suppose it's the fact that I wrote it at all. It's a thriller, with a serial killer running amok through the pages. And, as if that wasn't enough, I wanted readers to identify with the killer, to not immediately paint her as the villain, in spite of the blood on her hands. That's not the type of book I would seek out to read. But I couldn't stop picturing scenes in my head. They demanded that I write them. It all started as a three-paragraph blurb I wrote when a friend, Tara Wentz, posted a challenge in her Yahoo group. The topic was the weather. All I could picture was this woman standing in the street, rain pouring down, midnight sky, sword in her hand, dead guy at her feet. That image grew into *Edge of Darkness*.

Also, it's my first published book. Nothing will ever alter or change that piece of my life. I may write other books that I like more, but this one is the first. Bold Strokes said yes, invested in the development and publication, and shortly I'll find it sitting on the shelf at Borders with my name on the cover. That's pretty damned amazing.

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

This is a great question. Frankly, everything I read inspires me on some level. There are some really talented people out there. But, if we're talking in terms of light-bulb moments, you know, full chorus of angels, perfect clarity kind of inspiration, then that narrows the field a bit. I didn't discover lesbian fiction until very recently, within the last three or four years. The local Borders had one shelf partially full of gay/lesbian fiction—three-fourths of a shelf—and we shared it with the boys. That same Borders now has a full three-foot section, six shelves, filled with nothing but lesbian fiction. But at the time, the selection was pretty limited. Two authors stood out. Later I discovered that they had both been writing for quite a while, with no end in sight. They were, of course, Karin Kallmaker and Radclyffe.

As for favorites, it's impossible to choose just one apiece with such prolific writers, so I hope a list of three will work. For Rad, in no particular order, it's *Innocent Hearts*, *shadowland*, and *Lonely Hearts Club*. For Karin, *Painted Moon*, *Unforgettable*, and *Embrace in Motion*.

Since then I've discovered an entire lineup of women who inspire me, but with those two I discovered possibilities. Karin Kallmaker, though she doesn't know this, inspired me to write. Radclyffe inspired me to keep writing and, ultimately, publish.

### Do you have any suggestions for new writers?

Get a good beta reader. It's scary as hell to have someone dissect your work, but a good beta reader will tell you the truth. Friends tend to be a little less forthcoming. And, above all else, write. Don't stop. It won't all be good, God knows, but that's why it's called a first draft

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

Today I got to play with my chainsaw. Power tools are always good. I spend most of my time, however, with my wife and kids. At this stage in my life, it's all about the family.



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