

A BSB Interview With Bobbi Marolt

by Connie Ward, Bold Strokes Books Consulting Publicist

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What made you decide to become a fiction writer?

When I was thirteen, I read Jacqueline Susann's *Valley of the Dolls*. The book blew me away! I loved the idea behind roman à clef. In translation, that means "novel with a key" and disguises real people and places in fiction. It was simply a matter of time before I wrote "the world's greatest" roman à clef. I did write it, about nine years later, but I'll never let anyone read it. *s*

What type of stories do you write? And why?

I write romance. I love sappy books or movies, so I write about people falling in love under different circumstances. I try to have at least one scene that anyone with a tear duct might cry over, even the slightest bit. What I truly want is someone to cry like a baby because that's what I do when I write a scene that I consider emotional. If the scene is eating my heart alive, I try to get that on paper. Then all the pain goes buh-bye with a happy conclusion. YAY!

What do your family/friends think about your writing?

Hmm. Family: I never told them about my lesbian factor until my first book, *Coming Attractions*. I was forty-one. Without going into the gory details, I cannot say anyone in my family has read my writing, except for my youngest niece—she's thirty. She likes my work, she's proud and happy for me. She's the only family member who knows about *Between the Lines*.

My friends think it's pretty cool that I'm published and they say they like the stories.

Where do you get your ideas?

Obsession! *Between the Lines* came from my obsession with a particular British female actor. I was obsessed with a need to write about her, but she's not the lead character. I "mated" her with another female actor I was ga-ga over at some point in my life—she's the lead.

I wrote *Coming Attractions* because of my obsession with yet another female actor. At the same time, certain celebrities ticked me off because they wouldn't come out of the closet when we all "knew." Not that they owed me anything, of course, but I felt they did. Anyway, I threw the two together and wrote the results into a short novel.

With two people on paper, I have to make them fall in love. Along with their emotional pros and cons, I throw in props. I look around for things to make the story more interesting. In *Between the Lines*, I tossed in a ketchup bottle for a little drama. The bottle that readers come to know is a bottle I possess, received it in the same matter as described in the story. I also browsed Tiffany and Co. jewelry, saw a bracelet I liked, and tossed it in for more drama. That bottle and that bracelet became indispensable to the story. The toughest part was deciding what the bottle meant to Gail. The most fun was finding out what the bracelet did for Gail. I bought the bracelet but mine is just silver.

In both books, all of the characters are fiction and I used only their faces for inspiration.

-continue page 2-



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A BSB Interview With Bobbi Marolt

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Page 2

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

I write, knowing only bits of what will actually happen. I always know the beginning and ending. I tried planning/outlining once, but found things can change very quickly and those changes can change other things you've planned, so why waste my time with planning? Writing works best for me.

What makes *Between the Lines* special to you?

It's special because it was the first time I'd ever sat back and said, "Wow. I did good." I'm still sucked into Gail and Tannen's story when I read it. I compare it to watching a favorite movie over again. I'm crossing my fingers that I won't let the readers down.

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

In all of the main characters of both books, you'll see bits of me. Their traits could be mine and/or their attitude could be mine; their professional sides are always something I have wanted to be; their handicaps are often mine. The characters are never anyone I know in real life. Other than my "stuff" in them, they are absolute fiction.

Is that vanity? I'm certainly not as interesting as the characters. Whatever it is, it's worked for me so far.

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

My inspiration came from a straight writer. Do you have a favorite of this author(s)? *Valley of the Dolls* and *Once is Not Enough*.

Do you have any suggestions for new writers?

Absolutely. If you love your story, write it. If you need help—ask someone, take some classes, or read some books on writing.

After you complete your manuscript, listen to whatever an experienced beta reader has to say, if you use one.

If that story finds a publisher, get over any anger you might feel when you experience the editing process. If she or he knows their stuff, they know what needs strengthened and what needs cut. They will also know your strengths and will work with them. You may have to rewrite a lot, or only a little. Don't be afraid to delete or rewrite. These can be painful acts (especially deleting), but you'll get over them and you'll have a more interesting and precise story. An editor will listen and give it a nod if you plead a good case as to why something needs to be your way.

Remember and utilize what you've learned along the way and from your editor.

Your brain, your instincts, your imagination—they make the story. The "muse" isn't involved.

Finally: Less is more.

-continue page 3-

A BSB Interview With Bobbi Marolt

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Page 3

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

I'm rather adept at annoying people in harmless ways. I crack my gum, I'll start singing in the middle of a conversation because a word reminds me of a song. Those are just starters. I'm a pest, I'm good at it, and it's fun. *s*

Aside from that, I could listen to classical music for hours on end. I also like movies and I reference many in *Between the Lines*. On a more serious fun side, I miss playing the piano, but will have another someday.



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