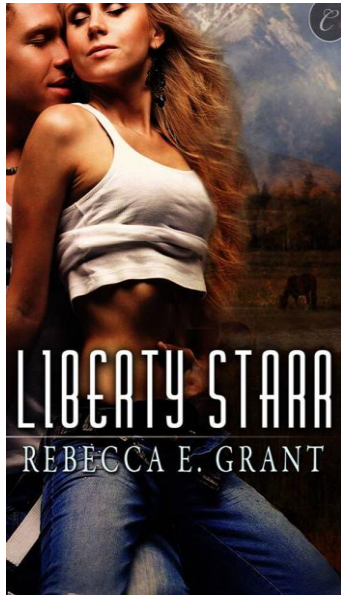


Carina Press Blog

I was a closet romance writer... (first posting)

Rebecca Grant | May 17th, 2010



What is the one word that will get the attention of most people faster than anything else?

SEX. Am I right?

Just the word elicits a deluge of feelings, images, memories, and the anticipatory thrill of future pleasures...

LOVE is a close second.

Yet, even though these things are uppermost in our minds—or at least up there with the uppermost—we don't go around telling business associates and casual acquaintances about our love lives or our sexual fantasies... even though we all have them, right?

We don't rent out billboard space to announce our latest lover, or go on Lenno to talk about the Kama Sutra position we discovered that drives us wild.

For all that sex and love demand so much of our attention and hold our curiosity, it's still very private.

That's why I was a closet romance writer.

LIBERTY STARR is my debut romance novel and I'm thrilled that Carina Press has selected it to be a part of their launch. Since you and I have not met one another before, I thought this blog would be a great place to open my heart—to invite you in—and share my journey from closet romance writer to romance author. I'll do my best to make it fun.

I'm a romantic...

The first time I saw the snow-covered Rockies I was nearly knocked out by what a romantic backdrop they made. (I may have been slightly influenced by the fact that I was utterly in love at the time.) Then there's the White House. The first time I saw it I was struck by the romanticism of the many lives—leaders—drama—and life-changing decisions that structure has given shelter to (again, quite possibly I was influenced by the tall drink of water whose arm was around me at the time).

Even as far back as when I was six or seven and tried on my first pair of roller skates—the kind that clipped to the bottom of my shoes—I was instantly enamored with them because I realized just how fast those skates would take me down the street to see Kenny, the love of my life.

Romance is everywhere and in nearly everything.

I devoured romance novels as a teenager and never stopped loving them. One day about twenty years ago, I decided I would write a romance novel. The story just poured out of me, and when I was done I called it *When the Time is Right*. I sent it off to a number of publishers and received a fistful of rejections. Not long ago, I ran across a musty-smelling copy of that old manuscript and laughed all the way through it because it was so genuinely awful. Really, the only thing to do was enjoy how sweetly terrible it was, and be grateful that no publisher had ever thought ‘the time was right’.



A few months later, I wrote a second novel, *Maestro’s Melody*. This one was only slightly better than the first. I loved that story so much, I tried to get it right for about five years, but the end result was still rejection. So, not only was the time not right, but the melody was flat as well.

I did all of this in secret ...

... because my personal experience is that it takes a certain amount of maturity to be able say to people, *“I write romances. They’re intimate, hot, tender, and where appropriate, not so tender. They’re filled with intrigue, laughter, hope and provide an opportunity to disappear into the sheer fantasy of the moment. To marvel at the miracle of love, and the way one human body folds into another.”*

Twenty years ago I wasn’t mature or confident enough to do this—and so I wrote in secret.

Life happened and one day the calendar told me that twenty years of family, friends, education and career had come and gone. I had long since abandoned the idea of ever becoming a romance author, until a year ago, when the urge snuck up behind me and caught me in its net once again. Intrigued with this long lost idea, the first thing I did was rewrite *Maestro’s Melody* (still in secret) and give it a new title. But now I was writing in secret because being twenty years older and at least a tad wiser, not only was I unsure that I could look anyone in the eye and be mature enough to say, “I write romances,” I also didn’t know if I could produce a book that was worthy of the romance genre.

Pleased with my effort to rewrite *Maestro’s Melody*, I (secretly) took a romance writing course...

Whooooooie but that was hard! During a number of painful and very public classroom critiques, the two author instructors patiently explained to me that I was not ‘there’ yet.

The verdict: great plot but my writing style was too stiff. I was going to have to loosen it up if I wanted to appeal to today’s readers. This chased me even deeper into the closet while (in secret) I tried everything I could think of to loosen up... but I just seemed to get stiffer.

Finally, on the last day of class, I was sitting in the back of the room when I heard a voice whisper into my ear, “You could write erotica. It will act as a lubricant, and your voice will stop sticking.”

My eyes popped wide and I nearly choked because (as you’ve probably guessed by now) if I was a stiff writer (and still writing in secret), the probability that I’d be comfortable writing erotica was a long shot. But that voice was indubitably my muse—and who was I to argue with her?

Two days later, I found a private corner. There, hunched over my computer I wrote a short piece of erotica...

... and then a longer one, and an even longer one. Every sentence shocked me. Not because I think there's anything wrong with erotica, but because I had no idea it was in me... and there was nothing stiff about my writing ... at least not about the dialogue anyway!

The irony was not lost on me that here I was, still a closet romance writer and now I'd gone even deeper into the closet to (secretly) write erotica as a way to loosen up my writing style.

One day, my muse whispered, "Okay, now it's time to write a contemporary cowboy romance."

"No way! What do I know about cowboys?"

Not bothering to answer, she said, "And it will be set in the fictional town of Stone Hill, Colorado at the foot of the Rockies."

"But I've only seen the Rockies once... and didn't you hear me when I said I don't know anything about cowboys?!"

"Trust me. This will be a great way to combine heat with humor and intrigue. You'll love doing it."

So, every spare moment I could find, I was in my darkened corner hunching over the keyboard writing (in secret) a contemporary cowboy romance with erotic elements. When the story was done, I asked a select group of people to (secretly) critique the book. They gave me a boatload of helpful feedback, and joked that their partners were grateful to me for having written the book.

That was the day I stopped writing romances in secret...

... because I began to understand what it was that spoke so to me about romance novels, and what I wanted to create for readers. To me, the romance novel is a reminder of who we are as human beings—human souls who live and love on this earth—who experience through love and sex, just how divine it is to be alive.

I hope you'll check back later today. I plan to share a bit about the characters of LIBERTY STARR, some excerpts, and what it was like the day Angela James from Carina Press, called!

In the event it's not obvious... I am **thrilled beyond words** to be part of Carina's launch!

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***reminder: Commenting on an author's blog entry/entries for the day will enter you to win a digital copy of their Carina Press title. One winner daily. Commenting on any of the Countdown*

*entries will enter you into the big giveaway for a Carina Press promo prize pack. One winner at end of Countdown.***

Tags: [author](#), [book](#), [Carina Press](#), [contemporary cowboy romance](#), [contemporary erotic romance](#), [contemporary romances](#), [Countdown to Carina](#), [giveaway](#), [Liberty Starr](#)

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27 Responses to “I was a closet romance writer...”

1. [Tracy Griffin](#)

[May 17, 2010 at 10:18 am](#)

Well... well... WELL!

Congratulations my dear friend! I can't wait to read the entire book! Chapter one only makes me want MORE!! Love love love, Tracy!

2. [Kathleen Dienne](#)

[May 17, 2010 at 10:20 am](#)

I am not laughing at you – I am totally laughing with you. I have several TERRIBLE manuscripts that are stiff and self-conscious. And yet here we are comfortably writing erotica. Congratulations, a thousand times, on finding your voice. Can't wait to hear more about the book!

3. [Rebecca E. Grant](#)

[May 17, 2010 at 10:24 am](#)

Thank you soooooo much, Tracy! I hope your comment drawws people to your website because your artwork is amazing!

4. [Rebecca E. Grant](#)

[May 17, 2010 at 10:28 am](#)

Oh, thank you Kathleen! Yes, yes, yes (to the irony)! Carina has done a wonderful job of bringing the authors together in a supportive community, and your comment is just one example of that! We have great reads ahead of us!

5. [Joyce](#)

[May 17, 2010 at 10:33 am](#)

Very interesting that with time and experience you gained the wisdom necessary to understand – no reason to do this brilliant work in secret! The joy this story will bring to readers is limitless – nothing to hide. Congratulations and thank you for sharing. I too will try to open up to any “secret” talents. This is truly a milestone day! Joyce

6. *Ann*

[May 17, 2010 at 10:35 am](#)

Sounds like Liberty liberated her author! Can't wait to read and see what liberating advice she has for me. Best wishes on your release! Ann

7. *Liz Fichera*

[May 17, 2010 at 11:09 am](#)

Good for you, Rebecca! Way to not give up. And the world can always use another romantic story involving cowboys! Look forward to reading your book this summer!

8. *Phyllis Smith*

[May 17, 2010 at 11:15 am](#)

Oh what fun to read about secrets! And how the best ones are meant to slip out! Taking form in a romance novel! Rocky Mountains – I can't wait to read and see what you've gone and done now!

9. *Rebecca E. Grant*

[May 17, 2010 at 11:28 am](#)

Thanks Liz! I can't wait to read your book, Captive Spirit!

10. *Rebecca E. Grant*

[May 17, 2010 at 11:29 am](#)

Joyce and Ann–so glad you're planning to add Liberty Starr to your summer reading list! Thanks!

11. *Rebecca E. Grant*

[May 17, 2010 at 11:30 am](#)

Oh, thank you Phyllis. Liberty Starr is all about secrets. I just gave mine to her 😊

12. *Bernita*

[May 17, 2010 at 11:55 am](#)

What a wonderful secret-to-pup story!
The bestest thing is that you did not give up.

13. *Bernita*

[May 17, 2010 at 11:56 am](#)

~shame-faced~
Oh, my fickle fingers!
“secret-to-pub”

14. [Rebecca E. Grant](#)

[May 17, 2010 at 12:10 pm](#)

Hi Bernita—blessings to your fickle fingers 😊

15. [Pearl](#)

[May 17, 2010 at 12:16 pm](#)

I am happy you came out of the closet because your debut sounds amazing!

16. [EC_Sheedy](#)

[May 17, 2010 at 1:03 pm](#)

I love hearing where stories come from, so thanks, Rebecca.

And I’m so glad you “loosened up” enough to tell us your story. 😊 It sounds like one not to be missed.

17. [Kathy B](#)

[May 17, 2010 at 1:32 pm](#)

Until recently, I was a closeted erotica reader. Now, I’m out and proud of it! Looks like a great book, and I’m looking forward to it. BTW, the cover is FABULOUS!

18. [Jacqueline](#)

[May 17, 2010 at 1:54 pm](#)

Congratulations on your upcoming release, Rebecca. The cover completely caught my attention. It’s sensual, but so joyous and tender. I can’t wait to read more.

19. [Fedora](#)

[May 17, 2010 at 2:20 pm](#)

Rebecca, huge congrats on your debut with Carina! I loved reading about how you listened to your muse! 😊 Hooray for you, and double-hooray for us readers who will get to read your stories! Definitely looking forward to your contemporary cowboy story!!

20. [Estella](#)

[May 17, 2010 at 4:52 pm](#)

Congratulations! I can’t wait to read Liberty Starr!

21. [Anna Shah Hoque](#)

[May 17, 2010 at 5:10 pm](#)

Can't wait to read your book...looks awesome.

22. [Rebecca E. Grant](#)

[May 17, 2010 at 5:48 pm](#)

E.C. It has been interesting. A few of my friends have been s-h-o-c-k-e-d. Again, not because there's anything wrong with writing romances... I just have a hard-earned reputation for being very *private* and then suddenly, I threw wide the door... and the windows... Some even thought maybe I'd ripped the door right off its hinges... 😊

But the secret is out now!

23. [Rebecca E. Grant](#)

[May 17, 2010 at 5:56 pm](#)

Hi Kathy B. Yes, I love the cover, too! Thank you!

When I first saw it my jaw dropped. The day I knew Carina was going to publish me, I browsed Google Images to see what I might like my cover to look like... just to enjoy the 'dream-come-true' feeling a little. I found a photo of a woman wearing a white t-shirt and blue jeans... with her midriff bare. The only thing missing was the hot guy...

I fell in love with it and thought to myself... wouldn't it be grand if my cover was something like this...

And then several weeks later Carina showed me the preliminary cover and I couldn't believe how similar it was to the photo I'd been dreaming about.

So glad you like it!

24. [Rebecca E. Grant](#)

[May 17, 2010 at 6:04 pm](#)

Hi Jacqueline! Sensual, joyous, tender. I'm so glad you see it!

25. [Rebecca E. Grant](#)

[May 17, 2010 at 6:06 pm](#)

Hi Fedora! Yes, my muse, who is often coy (which I think she mistakes for playful) finally got her way. YAY!

Thanks for your celebrating with me, Fedora!

26. *Diane M.*

[May 19, 2010 at 9:05 pm](#)

Congrats on the sale!

27. *MaryK*

[May 19, 2010 at 10:27 pm](#)

“I write romances. They’re intimate, hot, tender, and where appropriate, not so tender. They’re filled with intrigue, laughter, hope and provide an opportunity to disappear into the sheer fantasy of the moment. To marvel at the miracle of love, and the way one human body folds into another.”

Very nice description of romance. 😊