

**WRITE
TILL
YOU'RE
HARD**

GUY NEW YORK



Write 'till You're Hard: The Best Guide To Writing Erotica Ever

by Guy New York

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This is work of fiction intended for an adult audience. All characters portrayed are at least eighteen years of age.

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Introduction: Get out the lube and start writing

People will tell you that writing is a grueling, miserable occupation, that should only be undertaken by the strong of heart and the bulletproof. They'll tell you that you have to be born a writer, and if you lack that certain something (they never know what it is) you'll be mediocre at best. They'll also tell you that the earth is 4,000 years old and racism is a myth, so don't believe a fucking word they say.

Every single one of you can make people come using just your words. Okay, you can't force them, but you can inspire, excite, and entice them. You can seduce them, arouse them, and make them fall off their chairs laughing. And if you really want, you can probably make them come and laugh at the same time. Writing is a skill like any other, and you can learn it. You can learn to tell stories, you can learn to form great sentences, and you can learn to turn people on. It may take courage, and it will definitely take work, but if you want to write dirty things you're in good company. Some of the greatest people in the world have sex, and many of them write about it as well.

So, without further ado, here are my ten easy steps to becoming a moderately successful author of erotica:

- Step one: have lots and lots of great sex.
- Step two: write about it.
- Step three: have sex with someone other than yourself
- Step four: move out of your mother's basement
- Step five: go to Paris with a girl who says she loves you but then hooks up with an Italian instead and breaks your heart
- Step six: write a bunch of dirty letters, finish college, have a few threesomes, explore your bisexual side, and make a shitload of mistakes
- Step seven: find a super kinky girlfriend who will encourage you to do stuff that makes you uncomfortable
- Step eight: go to therapy
- Step nine: read what you wrote about sex in step two
- Step ten: write the truth

These steps won't work for everyone, and you might even argue that they didn't work for me. My forty-seven fans might disagree though. You might also think that step ten is the most important and that I could have cut out all the other steps, but truth is relative and often it's not very sexy. What I should have said was write enough of the truth and fake the rest.

When I first started writing erotica my motto was write till you're hard. If it turned me on then I would write it down. And it's still often a good judge of how something will be received, but it's not the end all and be all of writing hot sex, because there's no accounting for taste, mine included. Some people like things I don't, and some people find words sublime that I find trite and vice versa.

But it's a place to start. When you sit down to write some hot sex "what turns me on right now," is as good as any a place to find inspiration. The next step is honesty. And I don't mean you have to be honest with your readers. In fact, I think that's probably never true. You can lie to your readers all day long if you want. It's called fiction. I mean you have to be honest with yourself. You have to look at

your current fantasy and figure out what's really turning you on about it. What part of the fantasy can you not get out of your head? What's the one thing in the story that makes you want to tear someone's clothes off and do squelchy things with them?

For many of you this may be a creepy thing. Let's face it, our turn-ons are rarely politically correct. Just think of the names that we call each other in bed: baby, slut, (baby-slut?), piglet, whore, daddy, little girl, bitch, lying-cheating-bastard, chubby, mandingo, Chloe Moretz, uncle, honey, cum-dumpster, and everyone's favorite Game of Thrones inspired name, Sister.

Now, if you want to write a story using all of those words at once I salute you and pass the fucking torch. You don't need me anymore. But in all seriousness our kinks and our turn-ons are not always what we like to think they are. We don't all get turned on by love (although that can work too) and sweetness. We push boundaries, find places that make us and our lovers uncomfortable, and sometimes we even fuck up and go over the line. And that's the entire point of fantasy. That's what we're supposed to do. Because we're not crazy, we can distinguish between the idea of being kidnapped by five sexy men and the reality of it.

If you want to make a lot of money it helps if you love money. I don't mean love having money, or even spending it. I mean it helps if you love everything about money. If you're interested in how it's made, where it comes from, how it's valued, and everything in between, you're far more likely to have a lot of it. You have to pay so much attention to money that it's almost all you think about. Once you understand it, focus on it, and adore it. Then you can set your mind to making as much of it as possible.

And the same is true for writing about sex. So before you decide that you're going to dig out those crusty copies of Penthouse Forum, the old typewriter, a bottle of scotch, and then sit down to write the great American erotic novel, you have to be sure that you really like sex. Sure you got laid last week and it was like totally awesome, but that's not the same thing. What kind of sex was it? What did it feel like to your partner? What was so good about it and what was just mediocre? Why did you like it? What was your favorite part? How did you decide to have sex, and how much did you talk about it?

I'm not saying you have to be a sex god to write great sex. In fact, I don't think it's all that important. What is important is that sex interests you. Have you ever read an article or even a book where it was clear that the author didn't like their subject? If they hate it that's one thing, but nothing is less enjoyable to read than disinterest. If you can tell the author just doesn't care about stamps then there's no reason you should either.

So think about it. Many of us think about sex all the time, but it takes more effort to think about thinking about sex. When do I most often think about sex? What's going on in my life when sex is on my mind? Is it in the morning? Is it while I'm in the shower? As soon as the girl in the next office walks in with a skirt so short I have to resist bending her over my desk? And then of course there are my hangups, my fears, my turn-ons, my shame, guilt, and joys. When was the last time sex made me laugh? When was the last time I cried? Why is it that sometimes I come within seconds and others it's all I can do to fake it?

The book starts by examining own personal experiences, because no matter how true or made up a

story may be, our lives are some of the best fodder we have. I then move into short stories--which is mostly about narrative arch--and how to build tension in small ways. We'll talk about full length novels, character development, fetishes, dialog, blogging, and we'll even touch on publishing.

There are a million books on formatting, self-publishing, marketing and promotion, but this isn't one of them. At the end of the day, the most important thing for any writer to do is keep writing. So, with that in mind I hope to give you tools to do just that. Every chapter has a short exercise at the end, with a hashtag in case you want to share your work on Twitter. And some of the chapters also have thought experiments in the middle. Feel free to share those as well.

So after you've had your heart-broken in Paris, after you've gone to therapy, and after you've listened to your own truth with as little self-judgment as possible, you're ready to pick up the pen (fine, your laptop) and get started. The rest of this book will tell you - and show you - how to get the words down. It will show you how to keep at it, how to get better, how to make your readers come so hard they go blind, and then, if you're interested, how to make money with your filthy little monkey mind. So, sit down, get comfortable, and don't forget that lube. It's going to be a slippery ride.

Part One

Experience: And one time at band camp...

My first foray into dirty writing was in the form of a letter to a young woman named Stephanie. I was madly in love with her (and still probably am) from about seventh grade on. She was gorgeous, smart, and fiercely independent. We kissed for the first time in tenth grade, and kept at it on the rare occasions we saw each other as we got older. There was only one time we got close to naked, and even then all I did was slide one finger inside her. Neither of us ever came, and we never so much as kissed each other below the waist. It was year after year of frustration, adoration, and so much kissing that I can still taste her mouth if I close my eyes.

When I went off to college I had a job sitting at a desk for four hours Saturday morning answering a phone that hardly rang, so I started to write letters. My first few to her hinted at missing her. I missed her touch and her laugh. They were sweet and gentle, and if I mentioned kissing, it was romantic. And then one day I wrote something just to see what it felt like. I told her I wanted her for the first time. I told her I wanted to undress her completely and open my mouth between her legs. I wanted to kiss her lips as I slid inside her, and I wanted to make love to her for hours.

I sealed it and mailed it before I could think better of it, and two weeks later I got a reply. She was blushing, gushing, and embarrassed. She loved it and told me she read it a few times over in private. We talked about it when next I saw her, and we laughed awkwardly without any understanding. It became a novelty, and gradually we dropped everything but our kisses. Even today we'll steal a kiss when we can, but there's never a word about wanting more. Everything I had to say was in that letter.

While it wasn't the start of a torrid love affair with Stephanie, it was the start of my life as a dirty writer. I kept a journal after that where I wrote down the most ridiculous fantasies I allowed myself to have. I made a rule to never censor myself, and I still have a small blue book full of filthy little snippets that are nearly impossible to read. It took me years to share something again, but by then I was hooked. When I first published a story on my newly created Tumblr, Quickies in New York, it was all over. I was going to write about sex and I was going to write about sex a lot.

Your journey is most likely not the same. And if you were writing dirty letters to Stephanie I probably don't want to know about it. But whatever your journey to picking up this book was, whether you've been writing smut for twenty years or twenty minutes, you have the biggest tool you need right there in your pocket. I mean in your mind. You have a tool in your mind, and it's going to be invaluable as we get into the weeds of writing sexy things. So think about your journey. Think about what led you to be so damn interested in sex that you want to write about it. If you're like me, it's a story that will come back to you over and over again as your writing improves. The more you open up to the truth of your life experiences, the better you'll be.

I often joke that my writing is fan-fiction of my life, but the more I say it the more I think it's as good a description as any. As writers everything we put down comes from somewhere, and everything we experience can be a jumping off point. And if we have sex on the mind then everything is a jumping off point for more sex. It's like a big swimming pool of sex just waiting for us to dive in headfirst. My life is what it is, sometimes it's me being anxious, sometimes excited, and often it's just me being a

little out of focus as I struggle to get through my day. I don't need to live the stories I write, but I do need to find the seeds of them there.

At least for me, this is a place where it's easy to get lazy. Wow that girl in the plaid skirt is adorable, think I'll write a story about a girl in a plaid skirt. Wow, I had really nice sex with my wife last night why don't I write it all down and post it to my blog? There's nothing wrong with either of those scenarios, but they're both a bit underwhelming when it comes to storytelling. If I notice that plaid skirt and instead ask myself why I like plaid skirts I have a better chance at writing something interesting. If I ask myself what it was about last night's sex that is sticking in my mind's eye, I might stumble upon a truth worth telling.

The first girl I slept with used to come over after school, and we'd fuck on my bed with her uniform still on. Sometimes for as long as ten or fifteen minutes. It's not a whole story, but it's a start. Is that why I love plaid? Hell, I can't even remember if her uniform was tartan or solid blue, but maybe it doesn't matter. But what do I do with a thirty-eight year old man who is remembering his high school girlfriend because a woman walked by in a plaid skirt on a warm spring day? I haven't thought about her in a long time, and now that I'm reminded, I find myself feeling like an asshole for how we broke up. I'm remembering her hair was so black it was nearly blue, and I can hear her laugh and see her smile. I remember our first time, and I remember later in the summer, after we broke up, when she made out with my best friend at a party.

Suddenly, from one short experience, I have a wealth of imagery to work with. The same might go for the second story. What if the sex last night was only mediocre? What if we were so tired we could barely get each other off, and what if I didn't even come? None of those things are especially sexy, but they all give me insight into how I might write the scene. Maybe I start with what it feels like to be completely exhausted. Maybe I begin with us climbing into bed, both of us thinking the other is expecting sex, while we just want to go to sleep.

Using our day to day life as inspiration is one of the best tools we have as writers. But it only works if we take the time to pay attention, let go of our judgements and preconceived ideas, and let our minds go where they might. And of course, we have to follow our interests.

So, what if you haven't had sex in forever, and then it was with one partner for six years and it was always the same thing? What if you've only been with women but want to write about men, and what if you have insatiable desire to write from a gender other than your own? In other words, what if you want to write things you have no experience with?

I'll admit that there are some things I just don't write about. It's hard for me to write lesbian sex scenes because I've never had lesbian sex. I haven't had much sex with folks with disabilities, and it's rare for me to attend an orgy in full Native American garb. But if people let reality get in the way of fiction we'd (thankfully) have fewer murder mysteries, thrillers, and alien abduction stories. Not many of us write fantasy novels based on our extensive inter-dimensional travel experience, and only a couple of us have travelled faster than light speed. But our imaginations can take us pretty far in all these genres, and the same is true for sex. What I would suggest you avoid, is writing from the point of view of people whose reality you have no experience with. If you're a middle aged white guy, you might want to stay away from telling us what it's like to be a young sexually voracious black woman.

That aside, how do you write about things you've never done? How do you tell a compelling story about something you've only fantasized about while struggling to get through your normal day? All of us have the ability to get lost in our imaginations and daydreams. We can all let our minds wander through a whole minefield of whatifs, and it's a good place to start. If you've never been choked by four cocks at once but it's something that turns you on to no end, then you're going to have to spend some time in your fantasy world. It's terrible I know. You have to fantasize more, jerk-off more, and then you have to do it again. And you have to go into as much detail in your fantasy as possible. Who do the four cocks belong to? Why are they choking you? Do you know them? Does one of them belong to your husband or boyfriend? And how did you get that rip in your dress?

Once you have the fantasy in mind, and you've rubbed one out a few times, it's time to bring it back to your own life. You may not have had that experience, but I bet you know what it's like to let go. I bet you know what it feels like to indulge, and I bet you know what it feels like to choke on something. Even if it's not a cock. How does it feel to kneel on the floor for a long time? What does it feel like to do something that makes you nervous, even if it's exciting at the same time?

Again, this is fan-fiction of your life, and you're the one telling the story. You are the only one who knows how you react when you're scared, excited, or anxious. You're the only one who can describe your own longing, shame, or desire. Your life is where you begin. Your memories, experiences, and most of all your imagination. Once you can relate your fantasies to your own history, even if they're outwardly unrelated, the stronger your writing will be.

So pay attention to the world around you, fantasize about it all, and keep touching yourself. Remember, it's for your art.

Writing Practice one:

For this first one I'd like you to write down a real life sexual experience in as much clinical detail as you can imagine. Maybe it's the last time you had sex, or maybe it was just jerking off in the shower. Try to keep it recent enough that you can remember little things.

As you're writing it down, include everything. What time of day was it? What were you wearing and what were you thinking about? Why did you have sex and at what point did you realize it was going to happen? Did everyone get hard and wet at exactly the right time? Did you both come? Neither of you? One of you faked it and the other pretended not to notice?

The key is not to censor yourself, but also not to get caught up in style. Don't worry about word use. All we're looking for is description in as objective a way as possible. So sit back, and push yourself to be as honest as you can. Those strange stomach noises that made you laugh? Yeah, put that in too. When your mind wandered to your work meeting the next day and then you thought about that cute person down the hall? Put it down as well.

If you find this helpful, I'd encourage you to repeat the exercise with a few different memories. It can be liberating to write about sex without worrying about anything but the truth. There's freedom in being a sex journalist, so good luck and enjoy.

Each exercise also has a hashtag in case you'd like to share yours on twitter. The hashtag for this one is #WTYHlife (wtyh stands for Write Till You're Hard in case you didn't guess that already)

Part Two

The Short Story: Flowers for Algernon's Mom

How many of you have taken a class on short stories? Okay, just a few, but I bet you had to study them at some point. You may have had a book in high school called Great American Short Stories or some other non-descript book by mostly dead white men writing about suicide. But I bet you also learned about structure. After all, a short story is a style and it has a form that's good to know even if you play on breaking it.

Here's the short version of the short story. Start with something exciting and specific. It's often a character in crisis. Something is about to happen. The story then moves into the plot, pushing ahead from where it began until it suddenly twists to the side! Oh no! It's an unexpected event! How unexpected! And then just when you think it's over it comes back to the beginning and it all makes sense. Or sometimes you're left wondering what the fuck just happened. Was that all in his head as he was being hung on that damn bridge? Fuck, I should have seen that coming.

If you're writing about sex in the short form, it's good to remember the basics. It's easy for all of us to get distracted by the squishy naughty bits: the moaning and screaming and the tearing of clothes. After all, that's why people are reading us right? They just want to get off. That may all be true, but I would insist that your story needs to be interesting even without the sex. How many times can you read about a penis entering a vagina? Sure there may be a few thousand positions, but at the end of the day we're talking about friction. And this goes for mouths, hands, feet, eggplants, toys, and sheep. If you want to write for a science magazine then the mechanics may be all you need, but if you're writing a story, there has to be something else.

So let's try it. Think about a sex story you read recently and take out the mechanics of sex. Think about the last story you wrote and go from there. Do you care about the people involved? Is there a reason you want to know about their sex life? Did they experience personal growth? Did they attain complete and perfect enlightenment? Okay, that may be going too far, but you get the point. If the whole story vanishes once you take out the "insert object a into tab b" then go back and think about it some more.

The "non sex stuff" doesn't have to be big. It doesn't have to take up a lot of space on the page, and it doesn't even have to be very important. Even the most casual observations can add tremendous depth to an otherwise simple story. If your characters are getting drunk on wine before they fuck, what kind of wine is it? If they're staring up at the ceiling what are they looking at? If one of them is moaning, what is he moaning? Does her body feel good, or is it the way her head fits perfectly into the crook of his neck? The details add flavour, but more importantly they tell us something about your characters, and if we aren't interested in your characters we probably aren't interested in the sex they're having either.

In a short story (we'll talk about novels later) you don't have a lot of time for character development. There are no chapter-long backstories, no childhood memories that return at each major plot point, and it's hard to keep track of more than two or three people at once. Which means your characters need small, but strong clues as to their personalities. Sometimes all it takes are a few simple words, a

couple lines of dialog to make us feel like we're reading about a real person.

"I want to fuck you," tells us almost nothing about the person speaking.

"I want to fuck you until your husband comes home," gives us a bit more.

"I want to fuck you until I've worked through all my childhood issues of abandonment and rejection," probably tells us too much.

I love dialog for just this reason. If you follow the old writing rule of "show don't tell," dialog is your best friend. Or maybe it's the best method of cheating. Either way, you can have a character say something that would otherwise take a whole lot of explanation to make your point. This is a good time to think about the people you know and steal stuff. Find personality quirks that you find endearing or even irritating. The point is to let your characters explain themselves so you don't have to, in order to create as much tension as humanly possible.

If sex is all about tension and release, storytelling is just the same. A great short story pulls the reader in more than one direction (just like a good handjob) and keeps them guessing (also like a good handjob). Luckily we have a lot to play with when it comes to sex, and if you use your dialog and your short descriptions to build that tension, you can go far with just a little.

We all have inner conflicts when it comes to sex, and often outer ones as well. You may want to write about characters with no guilt, shame, or confusion about their sexual choices, but I can almost guarantee you it won't feel all that real. I'm not saying your characters have to be neurotic messes (unless you're writing Woody Allen slash porn) but a little bit of inner conflict goes a long way. And again, be specific.

"I can't do this, I'm married," is a perfectly normal excuse.

"I can't do this my husband is in the other room," is a bit more intense.

"I can't do this, you're my husband," is downright compelling.

Why can't she sleep with her own husband? Now I want to know about this couple. I want to know what makes them tick, and I'm already excited for them to break their rule, whatever it may be.

I do this exercise often when I'm writing. I start with a line like the first one above and then force myself to add tension. And then I keep going. Why don't you try it right now. You can write it down or just do it in your head. We'll start with a fairly common sexual situation and go from there through five rounds of upping the tension. Here's the line.

"The couple had to be quiet because someone was in the other room."

Now take a few minutes and add some tension. This is not a time to hold back. It's not a time to say, "that's not realistic," or even "that's not moral or legal." It's a time to let your imagination go without restraint. It's about pushing yourself. Five times.

I can wait.

I'm really not in a hurry. Seriously.

Is that as far as you can push it?

Okay, I'll do it too, just to show you that you're allowed to be ridiculous even when writing about sex. Let's see, who might be in the other room? Why do they care? What if they didn't care?

One: The couple had to be quiet because someone was in the other room.

Two: They fucked quietly because their parents were in the other room watching a movie.

Three: They fucked loudly so their spouses could hear them in the other room where they were untying the maid.

Four: They fucked so loudly they disrupted the church service and orgy going on upstairs.

Five: The bride came so loudly everyone heard it in the chapel. Including the groom.

I bet yours were better than mine. I'm sure they were different, and if you let yourself go you might have found something really interesting. Now you just have to do it on a regular basis with almost every line you write, and you'll have some fucking hot stories that people can't put down unless it's to pick up a box of tissues.

You have a great beginning, and you've developed characters who are compelling, real, and of interest to the reader. Now you need the twist, and then the conclusion. Once again, this doesn't have to be earth shattering. Aliens don't need to land and anally probe your characters, and it doesn't have to turn out that the whole thing was a dream. In fact, never do that. There's nothing worse than wasting your readers time and that kind of a twist feel like you did just that.

But something unexpected can help move the story along to its finish. Maybe it's the phrase that triggers someone's orgasm, or maybe it's a revelation at just the right time. It could be a real life interruption or a even a pleasant surprise. But once you get them turned on and ready to go you have push them over the edge.

And then end it. It's easy in writing about sex to leave out everything that happens after orgasm. Especially for us guy identified people. But even a moment of reflection can go a long way, and if you can bring it back to the beginning all the better. Maybe you re-use a phrase that started out the story, or maybe your characters return to where they began. If it starts with a sip of wine it may end the same way. What's important is that your readers feel some closure. Especially in a short story. So break out that collection of short stories from high school and remember what you like about the form.

Writing Practice Two: This is a simple one, but it's not easy. We're going to fit as much tension into a short a story as humanly possible. Let's start with a haiku. You remember the whole 5-7-5 syllable poems. Technically they need to have something to do with the seasons, but we can avoid that now.

If a haiku feels too difficult or too out of your frame of reference, try writing a tweet. 140 characters isn't a lot of room to build tension, but you can do it. Think about every word and cut the ones that don't add anything. Think about characters and relationships. You can leave people guessing, and nothing has to end, but make us care. Make us hard, or make us cry. Like I said it's difficult, but it's important. If you can build tension in one little poem, then think what you can do in a whole story?

The hashtag is #WTYHshort.

Part Three

Characters: Daddies, Littles, and Pig Sluts.

I'm not actually sure what a Pig Slut is. I know I could Google it, but I'm enjoying guessing instead. You may know what it is, and maybe you even wrote a best selling book called "Pig Sluts in Space" or something. If that's so, then let me know so I can read it.

But on to characters. Back in the olden days of porn, when we used to have to steal VHS tapes or find magazines in the woods buried under trees (I still don't know why), people made fun of porn with a plot. It was called chick porn or something like that. And I secretly liked chick porn and was afraid to admit it. What's wrong with a little plot, I thought. So what if I like a little build up and a little character development. It may be interesting to note that some of the biggest selling porn movies did in fact have plots, even if they were odd or messy. In *Behind the Green Door* a young woman is kidnapped, drugged, and then fucked on stage while a weird cast of characters watch from the audience before getting naked and joining in on the fun. And don't forget that *Taboo* was one of the best selling series ever with all sorts of complicated plots involving a mom and her son, a girl and her brother, and the always classic daddy and daughter story.

You may be saying to yourself, Self, what does plot have to do with character, and I'm going to tell you. Everything. That's the short answer. The long answer is that in erotica your plot is often driven solely by character. Sex is about relationships (even if the people are strangers) and those relationships are what make it interesting and engaging. If you want people to care about the sex, then they have to care about the people, at least enough to keep their curiosity.

Consider a few lines of a story without any real character development:

He opened his mouth on her, pushing two fingers inside her at the same time. She arched her back and moaned loudly as he slowly kissed his way up her body. By the time he reached her lips, his cock had replaced his fingers.

"Fuck me," she whispered. And he did.

It's a pretty simple little scene and it's easy to tell what's happening. What we don't know is why it's happening or why we should care. We also don't know anything about who these people are, and for many of us, the story would be far more interesting if we did. In fact, some fetishes are so strong and powerful that even a hint of it would change everything. Can you think of one word changes to the story above that would define characters and up the tension?

This classic *Taboo* change is pretty easy. What if the last line instead reads:

"Fuck me, Daddy," she whispered. And he did.

Simple, clear, and for some readers it makes all the difference in the world. For others it may make them uncomfortable, sick, or angry. Which is why titles are so important (and sub-genres). It's nice when people know what they're getting themselves into. But that little bit of dialog could indicate a number of relationships that would change the balance of power in the story. She could be his student

his boss, or his drug dealer. They could be strangers, colleagues, cheaters, or politicians. I mean what if she's a republican and he's a libertarian? Kinky right?

Let's try another one word change.

He opened his mouth on her, pushing two fingers inside her ass at the same time.

Hey, that's a little bit different. It doesn't tell us much about the characters, but we do know they're a little more adventurous than the passage might otherwise have us believe.

What about changing a few more words:

He opened his mouth on her, pushing two fingers inside her ass at the same time. She arched her back and struggled loudly as he bit his way up her body. By the time he reached her lips, his cock had replaced his fingers.

"I hate you," she whispered.

Again, not too many changes, but suddenly it's a very different scene. The point here isn't to use my quirks, turn-ons, fantasies, or neurosis. The point is to use characters as a way to up the tension and pull in your readers. You get to decide why it's hot. If priests and nuns work for you then go for it. If you prefer a tennis coach and an Olympic athlete that make that shit happen. I'm not trying to tell you who it should be. But I am telling you it has to be someone.

Even if you are using standard relationship tropes you still need personality. Again, this is a great place to steal from your real life. You don't have to steal much for it to work. Personalities don't have to be giant, overwhelming, or outlandish. All they really require are opinions. Preferences and taste help too.

Let's try another typical example.

Sarah was five-foot ten with big blue eyes and long red hair.

Okay, we know what she looks like. It may give the reader a visual of her physical appearance, but it doesn't do much else. Even if you want to describe appearance (I rarely do) you can give hints as to personality.

Sarah was wearing ripped blue jeans and a green shirt that reads "who's your edamame?"

I still get a picture of the character in my mind (although I get to fill in the physical details I find most attractive) but I also get a sense of who she is. She's casual and a little strange. She wears goofy shirts and doesn't care that her jeans are ripped. Again, the specifics aren't that important except for the fact that they're there. If you haven't thought about how your characters dress, what music they listen to, and where they eat, you probably don't know them well enough to write about why kind of sex they enjoy having. Sarah clearly likes to fuck outside and isn't afraid of some nice dumplings.

You have as many choices for characters as there are people in the world (and then some). They can be

young or old, big or small, and serious or ridiculous. But at the end of the day we have to care. Even a little. I know you just want to jump into the juicy blow job scene and there's no reason you shouldn't. But make sure you know if the person doing the blowing likes to spit or swallow. And why.

Writing Practice Three: This one is either going to be super fun for you or terrifying. Write a scene (no more than a page or two) with just dialog. Don't describe a thing, unless the characters are saying it. "I love your blue dress and your bright green eyes. What are you a size six with a 34b and blonde hair," is cheating. And terrible.

See how much you we can learn about your characters using only their words, and see how much sex you can describe without any description at all. Let them tell us everything, and if we end up guessing some then that's okay too. Have fun with it.

The hashtag is #WTYHcharacter.

Part Four

Power: I did not have sex with that woman

Another person who inspires my writing is Megan. Megan was one of the sweetest, kindest, and dirtiest girls I ever met. She approached sex with an innocent glee that bewildered me and turned me on to no end. It wasn't a side she showed to most people, and I didn't really see it until we had already begun to date. She had grown up on a farm in the midwest, and her family was quietly religious. She studied hard, worked hard, and she smiled when she sucked my cock as if she was the happiest girl in the world. She whispered fantasies into my ear about other women, and she was happy to hear about my random crushes. We fucked in her shower, her legs around me as she came so loudly her roommate was blushing when we got out.

In many ways she was wiser than me, and I learned more from Megan than I did from my professors that year. She taught me how to tie her up and still fuck her slowly and gently, pulling her orgasms from her body with a tenderness I had never associated with bondage.

"There are two reasons to tie someone up," she told me. "The first is to get yourself off. You can use them as you want, and they can't do anything about it. The second reason is to make them come so hard they can't breathe. When you take away their power to return the favor, they have no choice but to give in to their own pleasure. Now tie me up and fuck me. For me."

She was unlike anyone I have had met, and she still is. She's complicated and beautiful, and her joy and excitement around sexuality is amazing to see. She made me understand many things differently especially when it comes to how we exchange power.

Power is a near constant when it comes to erotic tropes, and as humans we're obsessed with it. There's a reason so many of our fantasies and role-plays involve people who are not on equal footing, and it has a lot to do with tension. I don't know exactly why we're wired this way, but it seems to be a near universal truth. A simple search on Amazon will give you a ready list of relationships in erotica with strong power dynamic. Here are just a few:

- Dominatrix/slave
- Teacher/student
- Daddy/little girl
- Boss/secretary
- Interviewer/job applicant
- Wife/cuckold
- Top/Bottom
- Dom/Sub
- Groomer/puppy
- Bill/Monica
- Cop/sex worker

I may have gotten a little carried away there, but you get the point. The list goes on and on, and I'm sure you can think of a bunch I missed. In fact, any time there is a power differential between two

people I bet you someone has turned it into a fantasy.

What is it we love about power? And how do we use that to write compelling erotica? After all, one person telling another person what to do all day won't necessarily turn out to be the hottest thing in the world. Most of the time it's the balance of power that we find so fascinating. Is the secretary going to push back? How much control does the cheerleader have over her coach? Is the slave going to end up getting what he wants in the end? When the balance is in doubt, or the top's ability to control is less than absolute, we have sexual tension that we can hang a towel on. It requires a bit of the unknown to keep our minds guessing. It's the space we create for our readers to use their own imaginations.

I've heard that the basic formula is $\text{Attraction} + \text{Obstacle} = \text{Passion}$. When it comes to power based relationships the obstacle is often self defined. A teacher isn't supposed to sleep with her student. The obstacle is already there. Bosses have to resist their assistants, and daddies are not supposed to educate their little girls about the joys of cock sucking. If you think about your own life, and the times you've felt that overwhelming desire for someone, I bet there was often an obstacle involved. All the way back to Romeo and Juliet we've been fetishizing obstacles so much that it's often enough to simply let readers know your characters are attracted to each other.

Even when we moved away from typical power dynamics this formula works fairly well. The obstacle could be someone sleeping in the other room. It could be distance or social taboos around gender or race. If most, or all, of the examples above feel cliché and uninteresting there are plenty of other ways to build tension that demands release. I often find that it's enough to have one character say "we shouldn't" and let the reader work out why. You don't need to fill pages with details here, but you need to establish the obstacle clearly and then break it with panache. That's right. I said panache.

Writing practice part four: Come up with an unlikely power situation that you haven't written about in the past. There can be any number of reasons for a power imbalance, and don't feel constrained by typical things. Illness, age, super powers, and any number of other things can work.

The hashtag is #WTYHpower

Part Five

Novels: The Heart is a Lonely Fucker

I think you're crazy if you want to write a full length erotic novel. Seriously, that's so much fucking sex I don't even know where to start. Do you need sex in each chapter? How much is too much sex and how much is not enough? Is it just a dirty novel or is it erotica? What if it's a thriller with some naughty bits or a fantasy novel with lots of fucking? It's all too much to think about.

Okay, now that we've gotten that out of the way let's be realistic. An erotic novel is just like any other novel except that instead of leaving out the parts where people get naked you include them and possibly give them more attention. It still has to be a full story with real characters, a good narrative arch, and a compelling plot. We have to fall in love or hate people, and pacing is more important than almost anything. And then you need sex which doesn't sound the same in every chapter, and it needs to end in some type of a climax. If everyone fucks at the beginning, chances are slim anyone will want to read to the end. And if no one fucks until the last chapter, then chances are slim no one will want to read to the end.

Some of you probably have a great idea, maybe even a few chapters, and you should run with it. It's easy at the start of a novel to get caught up in the weeds, but if you do that you'll never make it out of the harbor. Long works of fiction require momentum. They have their own weight, but you have to go far enough into it before it will drag you along. So in the early stages the most important thing to do is to write. If you want to start with an outline, do that (personally I love outlines), and if they're not your thing, then just start typing. Don't worry about the details, and don't worry about skipping parts that are difficult to get through. In fact, with long works of fiction it's often easiest to write the parts you are most attracted to. Do you really want to get into that sex scene that happens in the middle of the book? Go for it! Would you prefer to write the last chapter so you know how it ends? Why not.

You'll find at some point that the book has a mind of its own. Your characters will begin doing things that are unexpected and your plot may shift without you knowing why. This is all pretty normal. Just keep writing. Once you're about halfway through, you can look at the big picture again. By then you've got enough down that it's starting to feel like a book, but not so much that it's all set in stone. Look at your pacing (you should be right at the point where shit is getting crazy) and look at your characters. If there are parts that bore you cut them out and keep going. If there are whole chapters of explanation put them to the side and keep the story moving.

One of the great things about writing longer works of fiction is that you can get into the details that you don't have time for in a short. Your characters can evolve, their relationships can change, and if you're writing about sex you have a great opportunity to unpack everything. What is the sex like at the beginning of a relationship? How does it change along the way, and how is it tied into our emotional lives? Do your characters fuck more when they're stressed? Do they take out their anger on one another? What is the sex like after years of being together? Even if most of the book is a lead up to your characters getting into bed, you have a chance to get inside their heads and make us care. It requires real depth, but that's part of the fun.

Most contemporary fiction is about characters discovering who they are. It's a classic trope that we

come back to over and over again. Look at any of your favorite books, and I bet you'll find at the heart of it, that someone is learning things about themselves that they didn't know when the book started. Sex is a natural way to look at self-discovery, and it's one that is often overlooked or ignored. Mostly because we're afraid of sex, and there's a giant stigma against erotica as being a non-serious genre. Which is a load of shit. Sex and relationships are at the center of all of our lives, and any serious author who avoids writing about them needs to look in their little bag of shame to see what the hell is going on in there.

Think about the ways that sex changes people's lives, and you have a start to an erotic novel. There are any number of easy beginnings that may lead you in vastly different directions, but they're good places to start. How has sex changed you? What decisions have you made, and who has come into your life because of it? We all have longer narrative arches we can pull from.

Let's look at a few classic plot lines and see how they might work in erotica.

Boy meets girl, boy loses girl, boy gets girl.

That's a classic. And it gives us a lot to play with. Let's see, now how can we make this dirty? And maybe add some more tension.

Boy meets girl, boy has sex with girl, girl can't come unless boy blindfolds her, boy gets anxious and leaves girl, girl fucks his best friend, boy murders best friend, girl feels terrible about it but still likes being blindfolded, best friend's death turns out to be faked, and finally all three of them have crazy monkey sex with boy blindfolded. Girl comes.

That wasn't too hard. I mean, it might need some work, but it's a start. Let's try one from the thirty-six Dramatic Situations by Politi. We'll go with another classic.

#15 Murderous Adultery

That's a classic point, but as erotica authors we may have some insight into this. We might also be able to make it hotter, because it's not typically a super sexy story line. Typically in this plot line the two cheating bastards conspire to kill the innocent and betrayed spouse. How terribly sad and depressing. And really, who are these people? Haven't they read *The Ethical Slut*? They should get their shit together.

How about we start with an affair and all the excitement that comes with the forbidden. Then the spouse finds out about it and seduces the third party. The cheater doesn't know what's going on, but suddenly all of them are fucking each other and only two of them know it. The third party falls madly in love with a fourth person, who conspires to bring all four of them together on a fateful night of misplaced identities. We could even pull in some Shakespearean antics where Bob is fucking Sue but thinks he's fucking Sally who thinks she's fucking Mark.

Ah, it practically writes itself.

Again, this is brainstorming, not suggestions. The goal is take something that feels normal and look at it from a sex inclusive perspective. You can do it with almost any plot, and personally I think it makes

them more interesting. I mean how much better would *Pride and Prejudice* have been with a few spanking scenes?

At the end of the day we have to like your characters enough to spend a few hours with them. And the sex has to be compelling enough, varied enough, and exciting enough to keep us coming back for more. The more tension you can build the better, but don't forget to release it as well. Let people laugh, smile, and occasionally take a break. Even at the hardest points in our real lives we have moments of peace.

Writing Practice Five: Write an outline for an erotic novel. Only list the big plot points, but go through the whole thing. It doesn't have to be good, but think back to the section on tension, power, and short story structure. A novel should have all of the same things along with deeper character development and a different pacing structure. Try to make each point stronger than the one before it, with a climax that's super intense. If there are sections that feel like filler then cut them. If parts look slow then make them more interesting.

Outlines are a great way to understand tension, because you don't have to write the whole thing to get a sense of flow. And remember, your plot doesn't have to be (and probably shouldn't be) just driven by sex. Maybe it's a contemporary romance with lots of four letter words. Maybe it's a fantasy world with bizarre sexual initiation rites. Don't limit yourself and push hard. Remember it's just an outline. You don't ever have to write that scene in the middle where you put down "Jessica sleeps with her boyfriend's dad the same night he dies in a car crash."

The hashtag is #WTYHnovel

Part Six

Fetish: Light of my life. Fire of my dick.

I mentioned earlier that some fetishes are so strong that even a hint of them in an otherwise mundane story can push your readers over the edge. I've heard that highly specific fetishes are mostly a male thing because boys imprint sexually at a young age and it stays with them. Women tend to be more fluid in their turn-ons, which is why you don't often find women with highly specific fetishes like shoes, piss, or even body type. However true that may or may not be, writing erotica for a specific fetish is its own thing. You don't need to be an expert on the fetish you're writing about, but you do need to understand it. You have to get close enough that you understand why it turns someone on. I don't write about certain things because not only do they not turn me on, but I don't get them either. Which isn't to say I shouldn't expand my mind. It's just that I should expand it before I write.

I'm going to assume that if you're writing fetish erotica you have at least some interest in the subject. Again, this is a great place to go back and look at your life experience to gain some insight into why a particular thing turns you on. I unpacked my affection for plaid skirts for you earlier, but let's look at another item on my list.

Years ago I had a best friend whom my girlfriend had a crush on. It was a quiet crush, and it was clear that her affections were returned. I struggled for a while until I finally decided that if I had some control over it, maybe it could be fun rather than anxiety inducing. I finally asked him if he was interested in coming over and fucking her, and he smiled and said sure. She was on board as well, and so that evening he came over; we drank a few beers on the couch as we all struggled to figure out what to do next. She finally excused herself to go to the bathroom, from which she called out, "why don't you go into the bedroom and get ready to fuck me when I'm done."

I sat him down on the bed, and when she returned I stood her in front of him and watched them gaze awkwardly at each other. I asked him if he wanted to fuck her and he nodded. I asked her the same and she moaned. I slowly began to undress her as he watched, and I showed him each part of her body as I removed her clothing. When she was naked I pushed her down onto her knees and told her to suck his cock to get him ready. The three of us ended up naked on the bed pretty quickly, and for a long while she sucked his cock as I fucked her. I watched her carefully, engrossed by her mouth around him, and what I remember most is her moans of desire. She wanted him in her mouth more than she could say, and she finally had him. By the time he slid inside her cunt I mostly watched, and it was the beginning of a turn-on I didn't really know I had.

I thought about that moment a lot (mostly on cold lonely winter nights) and tried to work out what it was that turned me on so much. Some of it was the power I had over them, and some of it was my own jealousy. I liked seeing her as a sexual person with desires so strong they couldn't be contained, and I liked the look of want on his face as well. From that night on, I found myself fantasizing about many of my lovers getting fucked by other men, and the times it came to fruition were most often incredibly hot.

Sharing partners has become a constant theme in my writing over the years, and some of that is because it's such a strong turn on for me. So, when you're thinking about writing foot porn, spanking

erotica, or sexy school girl fantasizes, put some thought into when they first caught your attention. What was happening in your life when you realized that more than anything you wanted to blow a stranger? Where do you think that urge to slip on your wife's panties came from, and how can you recreate that desire in your reader's imagination?

It can be easy to get lazy when you're writing fetish erotica, and I'd urge you to resist the temptation. Don't stop working after you've established that your character likes to be pegged by his wife. Work through it enough to offer the little insights that will really bring it to life.

Fetish is also a place where it's really okay to move away from your experience and into the world of fantasy. I can't overstate the idea that we're all allowed to have fantasizes we don't want to ever do in real life. It's the nature of fantasies and if you repress them they tend to rear up in other parts of your life. If your fantasy is illegal or otherwise immoral, then writing about it may be the healthiest way for you to experience it. Again, you don't have to justify your turn-ons here. You just have to describe them.

Writing Practice Six: Write about a fetish you don't have. I know, I just told you to think through all sort of things that turn you on from your past (again) but trust me on this one. Find something that you don't really get and try to work on it until you feel at least the tiniest twitch. Maybe it's something you actively don't like, or maybe it's just not something you think you understand. Dive into it anyway, and think hard about why it might turn someone else on. I think you'll be surprised.

It doesn't have to be a long story, but try to get to the heart of it. It doesn't have to be a mind game. In fact, you can just write a hot scene without too much introspection as long as you find something in there that excites you. Push yourself and chose something that is a real challenge. Spend enough time with it that you feel like you've gained some insight into something you haven't otherwise given much thought to.

The hashtag for this one is #WTYHgoats.

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