

# A BSB Interview With Lindsey Stone

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March 1, 2010

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

It wasn't a decision. It's something that grew on me. My first novel, *Awakening to Sunlight*, came at me from out of nowhere. It started with a scene popping into my head. I saw it so clearly I felt compelled to write it down. As I did, more scenes appeared and I soon had an outline for a story. In the years that followed I kept coming back to it until I had a complete story. During this time I started writing other stuff and pretty soon writing became a compulsion. It was like the floodgates had opened and all these characters and plots were flooding my mind.

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

Hopefully the type readers find engaging. I have quite a few stories half finished, each very different from the other. For example, I'm currently working on a science fiction series in which Earth is in great peril, as well as a few plays that deal with family issues. I also have a cabinet full of outlines for stories ranging from historical adventure novels to comedy sketches. I think there is one thing I strive to achieve in anything I write and that is to capture the emotion of a moment and reveal it for what it is.

*Awakening to Sunlight* is a romance novel with a dose of realism. One of the protagonists is dealing with the loss of a lover; the other is struggling to redefine herself after escaping an emotionally abusive relationship. I love romance novels, but I often feel that the characters and their emotional journeys are a little flat. I know you can't make romances too heavy because the reader wants to escape the harsh realities of the world and feel good. Nonetheless I think it's only right that at least in a fantasy world, romance can be found for all types of women. Not everyone is successful, not everyone is strong and brave, good people make bad choices, etc. I think as a reader we identify with flawed characters more easily and are able to gain more courage and optimism by joining them in their personal journey to happiness and enlightenment than we would following strong, successful, all-rounded characters. With this novel one of the things I wanted to do was to depict the ongoing struggle of a type of person that is often overlooked in literature, but who represents a great deal of women. A single-parent mother riddled with self-doubt who struggles to do right by her child whilst trying to find her own way in life.

I feel I must add here that I do love reading about strong, successful women who are capable and have it together. From top doctors to female combat soldiers, as long as the story is true to who they are I'll follow them through any tale.

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

They're really impressed. It's their enthusiasm that reminds me that what I've done is something to be proud of.

## What makes *Awakening to Sunlight* special to you?

I've spent years trying to find my niche in life and struggled to find something I could put my heart and soul into, but nothing ever seemed worthwhile. I spent a lot of time being there for others to the extent that I had very little time for myself. My creative energy seemed to burn for no reason. It took me a long time to complete this novel but in doing so I achieved a personal milestone. In writing it I discovered that my inner voice found a way to use my creativity and put something positive out there in the world. I want whatever I write not only to be entertaining but I also want it to reach the hearts of others and offer them encouragement. *Awakening to Sunlight* is my first attempt at doing that.

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

I'm not one to put pen to paper and just see where it leads me, although on occasion I will do that. I normally have a rough idea what it is I'm going to write and where I want the story to go. Sometimes, during the process of writing the story, the story dictates a different direction to what I had planned. In those moments the story is queen and if we can't find a compromise, she always has the last word.

I think I should mention here that I can't spell to save my life. My spell-check and I are always in disagreement and I'm forced to prove my point by spending an awful amount of time burrowing through the dictionary trying to find the correct spelling for a word only to find out that the word I'm trying to spell is the wrong one anyway.

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

I do not base my characters on people I know. The characters in my work pop into my head and introduce themselves to me. The more I listen to them the more they reveal their personality to me.

Nothing I write about is based on me or my life. That said, I can only write the things I do, the way I do because of what I have learned and observed throughout my life. So I guess if you want to find me in my work then you have to look for the essence of the story, my intent.

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## Where do you get your ideas?

A scene or a person will appear in my head, paused in motion, and the more I look at it then the more I understand what is going on and a story unfolds.

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

There are a lot of books I've enjoyed and I have a lot of respect for so many authors, but my favorite lesbian authors who have inspired the most have to be Isabel Miller, Radclyffe, and Karin Kallmaker.

Isabel Miller, simply because her novel, *Patience and Sarah* was the first book I read about lesbian love. Until then I wasn't aware that lesbian romance novels existed.

Karin Kallmaker, because her novel *Substitute for Love* was one of the first contemporary lesbian books I read and she completely blew me away. Every book she writes is a treat.

Radclyffe, because her books are not only fantastically written, with interesting plots, but she also portrays strong woman without sacrificing their sensuality and emotional vulnerability.

## Do you have any suggestions for new writers?

Writing can be pleasurable and very rewarding, and although it is most definitely worthwhile, it can be hard work. So my advice is this: write the things you want to do even when you don't want to and no matter how busy your day is, make sure you sit to write even if it's just for five minutes. If you have the energy to turn on the TV then you have the energy to pick up a notepad. Try it, you'll surprise yourself. And remember: inspiration is only a small percentage of what writing entails. The rest is simply applying your ass to your chair and putting pen to paper. The book won't write itself and you have to choose for it, every time.

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

You mean apart from avoiding the daily chores that no matter how much I ignore them won't go away? Well, I seem to do a lot of renovating for other people, I watch TV, read, play the guitar, I go out geo-caching in the dead of night, I play pool (badly), and I make resolutions to do more exercise, which never works out!



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