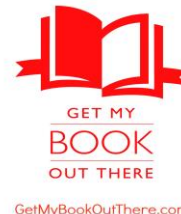


Get My Book Out There Podcast #20 Naughty Words for Nice Writers with Cara Bristol



Narelle Todd:

I'm Narelle Todd.

S.E. Smith:

And I'm S.E. Susan Smith.

Narelle Todd:

We are the self-publishing author and marketing duo that has sold over 2 million books, but we didn't start out knowing how to sell books. Fast-forward past many failed promotions and a lot of lessons learned, you will see how we went from self-publishing newbies to hitting The New York Times bestsellers list and making the USA Today bestsellers list 19 times and counting. We created the Get My Book Out There Podcast to give you simple yet effective marketing strategies to increase readership and book sales so you know what to do, when to do it and how to do it as well as some tips for staying mentally and physically well.

S.E. Smith:

Let's get started.

Narelle Todd:

And we've got a treat for you today. Cara Bristol, welcome.

Cara Bristol:

Thank you. I'm glad to be here.

S.E. Smith:

Yeah.

Narelle Todd:

We've been wanting to do this one for a little while 'cause she keeps talking about Cara has this fabulous book out. I'll just give you a quick bite. So Naughty Words for Nice Authors. So it's a romance novel thesaurus. So that's the book that we're going to be talking about today, but Cara, can you just, firstly, tell us what it is that you write, where would we go to find your work?

Cara Bristol:

Well, I write science fiction romance. I just recently published my 50th book and I got my start writing erotic romance and spanking romance, and then shifted into science fiction romance. And I wrote Naughty Words for

Make this year a book selling year with my clear step-by-step plan to market your books and build a strong business foundation... without stressing over time, money, or sales! Download my guide [HERE](#).

© Copyright 2021 Successful Living Pty Ltd - Reproduction of this document in any way shape or form both online and offline is strictly prohibited. You are NOT entitled to resell, reproduce or share this document or any version you make of it, and any breach of this will be enforced by the law. This document is for your personal use only.

Nice Writers as kind of my own personal survival guide in writing the sex scenes. But I have five or six science fiction romance series out. I write about cyborgs and aliens, and with a lot of humor in it. I think that's what distinguishes me from a lot of other books is the humor in my books.

Narelle Todd:

Yes. Yeah. I would agree. They're great. Yeah, definitely. I will always-

S.E. Smith:

We definitely need that laughter going right now with everything going on. The only thing that we're missing is it's the visit from the aliens.

Narelle Todd:

So have you found that describing sex scenes is different in different genres or is it, are the words the same? Does it depend?

Cara Bristol:

It really depends. It depends on the genre. It depends on the trope. It depends on your own personal style because the words you would use in historical romance are going to be different than what you would use in a contemporary romance. And if you're writing about aliens, they don't use the same technology. So yeah, it does need to vary and with the heat level and what your readers expect from you is a big thing. I mean if you're used to really graphic scenes and then suddenly, they pick up your book and it's sweet, they're going to be disappointed. And if they're used to sweet and they pick up a really graphic book, they're going to be shocked. So yeah, it varies by a lot of things.

Narelle Todd:

Yeah. Oh, that's fair enough.

Narelle Todd:

Would you set up the foreplay say of a closed sex scene? So closed door is what we would call it. Would you set up the foreplay for that scene different to an open door scene? Does that change?

Cara Bristol:

No, I don't think so. I don't think I would change that. I think the foreplay or the seduction aspect is always the biggest part of a sex scene anyway because it's the feelings and it's the lead in and those are the things that matter. Again, the only things that might differ are the words that you might use. And if it's going to be an open door scene, there might be a whole lot of groping and some nudity in the foreplay, but otherwise, no, I mean you would have the seduction and the romance and the flirting and the teasing and all of that would still be the same.

Narelle Todd:

Make this year a book selling year with my clear step-by-step plan to market your books and build a strong business foundation... without stressing over time, money, or sales! Download my guide [HERE](#).

And does it matter about gender? So if you're writing romance, I guess the presumption is most romance readers are women. As we know, plenty of men read romance as well. They may not admit to it, but would you write the scenes differently if you were going for a mostly male audience?

Cara Bristol:

Oh, I think I would, yeah. I think the female audience, they want more of the romance. They want the emotion and there has to be a connection between the characters beforehand that they have to care about each other. Whereas I think for a male audience, they probably just want the sex. So you would leave out a lot of the emotional, I love you, and oh, what does he think about me, and all of that kind of stuff.

Narelle Todd:

Yeah, it's pretty much the females probably thinking, oh, how do I look and all of that sort of stuff. And he's fine, he doesn't care. He's just out for the action sort of thing.

S.E. Smith:

So it's more of a woman equal emotion and men equal physical.

Narelle Todd:

Physical.

Cara Bristol:

The dividing line, although romances are getting very physical, they're getting ... even they're graphic these days. I mean the trend is less to fade to black and more to just open the door, but women, they still want the emotional aspect. They still want the connection to the partner. It needs to be part of a relationship and an ongoing thing between the male, the heroine and the hero.

S.E. Smith:

So what do you find to be the most challenging scenes to write? Do you think writing the ones that have the buildup and the closed door are more challenging or ones that actually have the graphic sex in it? And if so, if you are writing a book, is there really a limit to how many scenes you should put in a book?

Cara Bristol:

A lot depends on how you write it. I think the buildup can be challenging because you really are focusing on the emotions and the romance, and it's just like writing any scene. I mean there's so much going on. There's what they're doing. There's what they're thinking, what they're saying. And when you get into the sex aspect, you still have some of that going on, but you're doing ... It's just the more physical things, the mechanics and so that can be easier. I've heard a lot of authors say that they find writing sex scenes easy for that reason because a simple function really to describe, but it's all the romance and the ebb and flow of it all that can add challenge to it. It depends again on what you're writing and what your readers expect.

When I started and I was writing erotic romance and spanking romance, I had a lot of sex scenes. I would write 50,000 words and have a sex scene about every 10,000 words and that was a lot. And that's partly why I wrote

Make this year a book selling year with my clear step-by-step plan to market your books and build a strong business foundation... without stressing over time, money, or sales! Download my guide [HERE](#).

the book. How do you write five sex scenes in 50,000 words and make them all sound different? I mean it's a challenge. And I backed off from that. Now I don't consider myself an erotic romance writer anymore. I'm just writing romance, science fiction romance. I may have two sex scenes in 50,000 words, possibly three. So it just depends on what you're writing. And if you're writing erotic romance, and if you're writing something like BDSM romance, there are going to be more sex scenes in there than a regular romance.

S.E. Smith:

But one of the big differences is getting people to understand the difference between romance, you have the overall romance, but then you have the romance and then you have erotica. And I think that there's a lot of confusion between, the difference between the two.

Cara Bristol:

Oh, that's a good question. I like that question. I actually, I want to use an analogy of a cupcake. In romance, in a regular romance, the romance, the relationship aspect is the cupcake and the icing, and the sex is the sprinkles on top. You can take away the sprinkles and you still have a good story. The entirety is there. In erotic romance, the romance is the cupcake. The sex is the frosting. It makes it better. But if you took away the frosting, you'd still have a fairly decent dessert there. I mean it's still whole. And in erotica, the sex is the cupcake. And if there's a relationship aspect, it's the frosting, it's the relationship. The sex is the story and then there may be a romance in there, but not necessarily. And then in porn, all you get are sprinkles.

Narelle Todd:

That is the best description.

S.E. Smith:

It is. It is. Nobody will ever eat another cupcake without thinking about this. They're going to be going, oh, am I having erotica today or romance? And if they walk out with a paper just filled with sprinkles, you know.

Cara Bristol:

You know.

S.E. Smith:

Or just a container of sprinkles. It's like forget the cupcake. I'm just taking the sprinkles.

Cara Bristol:

And there is a lot of cross over between romance and erotic romance and the line can be very fine. But in general, if you can take the sex out of the story and you don't know there's anything missing, that's basically just a romance.

S.E. Smith:

Excellent. I know that has been a question that has been brought up time and time again, and I've never had anyone be able to so eloquently give a demonstration of how to know the difference between the two.

Make this year a book selling year with my clear step-by-step plan to market your books and build a strong business foundation... without stressing over time, money, or sales! Download my guide [HERE](#).

Narelle Todd:

Yeah.

S.E. Smith:

And I think it's important for authors who don't know and readers 'cause you've had some that, well, if it's got any graphic sex, they automatically say it's erotica. And I've even seen that in the industry where the industry marks it down, a story as an erotica, and it's got maybe two sex scenes and they're descriptive, but now you've got an 80,000-word story and two sex scenes does not make an erotica, but they try to put it into that genre.

Cara Bristol:

Yeah. I would disagree with that. It's still a romance. It's just that romances have gotten more descriptive. They don't close the door anymore.

S.E. Smith:

Yes.

Cara Bristol:

And I've been rereading some of the old Harlequins that I read when I was a teenager and I am surprised at how much sex there was in them. I didn't remember that. But yeah, and they were rather descriptive, not quite as descriptive now, but yeah, there was a lot of sex there.

S.E. Smith:

I agree. And I think even somehow for a while there, the older Harlequins had a lot more and then they kind of phased it out where it was all closed door and they barely have the hand holding or the kiss. And then now, they're realizing that they better get with the times.

Narelle Todd:

I grew up on Mills & Boons 'cause that was all that we had where I was. Yeah, and it was all paper back then. Certainly, nothing electronic so ... But two of my favorite descriptors and I just, every time I ... I see them now and again in books, but two of my favorite descriptors from those days were love canal and the throbbing love stick.

Cara Bristol:

Oh, gee.

Narelle Todd:

It just ... Whenever I see them or something that's very, very similar to that, it always just takes me back to when I was a teen or early 20s reading Mills & Boon... And at that time, it was like oh ... Because, of course, we didn't use or back then, they didn't use the real words. Certainly, you would never use any of the real descriptors for any of the sexy bits. Let's looking at now is using the real names for body parts, for the sexy parts, is that still a no-no? Are readers expecting kind of you to come up with descriptors like love canal or throbbing love stick or ...

Make this year a book selling year with my clear step-by-step plan to market your books and build a strong business foundation... without stressing over time, money, or sales! Download my guide [HERE](#).

Cara Bristol:

No. I think they prefer the real names and ... But a lot of authors maybe don't feel comfortable doing that. And readers, they want different things. Some prefer it really descriptive and others, they skip over the sex scenes. I've heard them say that. So it is possible to write a scene euphemistically and avoid those descriptive words, but the trend now is to just call a spade a spade.

S.E. Smith:

I think people are feeling a little more empowered, not that taboo, oh, my goodness. You shouldn't say this. It's like, no, you should be educated about it. You should understand your body and you should be comfortable in your body.

Narelle Todd:

Certainly in your book, you talk about to make your sex scenes as something other than sex. Is that a little bit counterintuitive? Isn't it about sex?

Cara Bristol:

Again, that feeds into the whole relationship aspect and the romance aspect, and what is happening during sex can be a metaphor for what's going on in the relationship and it should move the plot along in some way. Again, it's that romance versus getting into erotica thing. Is it just for sex or is it cementing the relationship? And so as they're having sex, there should be something else going on. Are they worried they're going to lose each other? Are they thinking that it's going to bring them closer together? Is she thinking marriage, that type of thing, that is he worried that he's been the assassin and he afraid she's going to kill him if he falls asleep afterwards? I mean it should feed into the plot of the story. I think that's what makes it more meaningful to readers and that's how you get away with using some graphic language because it still means something to the characters.

Narelle Todd:

Yes, for sure. I love there's a part in your book and when I read it, you just get such a strong physical thing of it. So I love the way you use the words. And I'll just read this bit to you. So you say avoid disembodied, independently moving body parts. So an example, "his hand drew loving circles over a certain part of her body, his hand caressed her face." And then you say, "Well, the only hand you know if he can do that is the thing from the Addams family." So it should be he caressed her face. A little bit more about that, how about the words that we use and how we describe things like that.

Cara Bristol:

Yeah. I think a lot of authors when they write it that way, they're trying to avoid "he did this, she did that, he did this, he did that," and so hands and body parts just tend to fly around. But my publisher, Lucid that I had years ago, they were really strict on that and that's where I learned that no disembodied body parts. Minds and eyes don't wander off on their own. I think when you're writing, you need to find a way. And it also helps to make it more active because if he is doing the caressing and she is doing the fondling, it puts it back on the subject, on the person performing the action and it makes it more active. And there are ways around, to avoid the "he, she, he, she," but as authors, we have to find those ways.

Make this year a book selling year with my clear step-by-step plan to market your books and build a strong business foundation... without stressing over time, money, or sales! Download my guide [HERE](#).

Narelle Todd:

Yeah. And you certainly can in your book. It was such a great read. The words that you've got in there, the synonyms are just phenomenal. So I think authors really need to, anyone writing romance even really needs to go and get that book. That's for sure. Even just, you've got a thing in there about scent and I found that so interesting because I thought that's it actually and some things for me, I don't smoke, but cigarette smell and coffee smell, they are things that are like turn-ons for me. And I'm just going yeah, just you don't often see or read scent being used as a way to bring out I guess the love making as opposed to sex making. Yeah, so I loved you added that.

Cara Bristol:

Yeah, to use senses in writing I think is the sense of scent, but especially in romance, it's a big one. I mean you think back, a boyfriend you had years ago, maybe he wore a certain kind of aftershave and boy, you can be outside and you smell that and it just instantly takes you back. So it can really add something I think to the romance. She likes the way he smells, he likes the way she smells, and it adds another element to the writing.

S.E. Smith:

Yeah. Reminds me of that Love Potion No. 9. They're trying to bottle this pheromone that's going to really attract. And that's kind of when you think about real life, and that's what I guess, as a writer, you try to do is capture those real emotions, those real feelings and all the senses that attract you to somebody. And there's been some people that very attracted to and others that are like, "Oh, no, get away. It's like Pepe Le Pew. "

Cara Bristol:

And especially in science fiction romance, there's a lot of opportunity to use the sense of smell because aliens can smell like anything and there's always that pheromone thing going on where he's immediately attracted to her and, yeah.

S.E. Smith:

Yes. Yeah.

Narelle Todd:

The instant mate sort of thing or that can be from touch or smell or really plays into that one. What role do you think romance authors play in the safe sex message? Is that something that romance writers should even be concerned about? Should everybody have to wear a condom or be on birth control...

Cara Bristol:

And again, it depends on genre. And I actually just asked that question in a Facebook group, whether readers expected that or not. And some said definitely yes and some said oh, they don't even think about it or they just automatically put a condom on the guy themselves in their heads, but ... And I think in erotic romance where there's a lot of sex going on and maybe with people they don't know very well, I think it's probably a good thing to do, but again, it depends because like in historical romance, it didn't exist. And in science fiction romance, when he's an alien, it may not be so important then either. But yeah, it's something to definitely keep in mind and you can work that into the scene, too.

Make this year a book selling year with my clear step-by-step plan to market your books and build a strong business foundation... without stressing over time, money, or sales! Download my guide [HERE](#).

Narelle Todd:

Yes. And you've given some nice options in your thesaurus as well to use, writers who want to include that in. So just to finish up, what are some of the essential things you think that writers of sexy scenes should do when they're writing a scene to make it intimate and loving?

Cara Bristol:

I think number one is the buildup to the scene. As I've said, the whole seduction, the foreplay aspect is much more important than the actual sex part. And in terms of the length of the scene, the buildup should be the longest part. And then, the middle part is the actual sex part, the in and outs. And then don't forget the aftermath.

Narelle Todd:

Yes.

Cara Bristol:

When they're lying in bed and the cool down and they're going to talk, and then that's the point to really bring in all of the relationship stuff. And I've noticed it in historical romance, that often occurs at the end, where she wakes up and he's gone. She thought he was going to be in bed with her and she finds him downstairs. And now, he's suddenly turned cold. And now, she's rethinking the relationship. That aftermath is very important to the scene.

Narelle Todd:

Yes, I would agree.

Cara Bristol:

Another thing I would say is that when you're writing a scene, you should use the physical, the emotional, and the thoughts in the scene, what they're thinking, what they're feeling, what they're doing.

Narelle Todd:

Great wisdom there.

S.E. Smith:

We have one quick question before we go.

Narelle Todd:

Oh, yes. Go for it.

S.E. Smith:

Make this year a book selling year with my clear step-by-step plan to market your books and build a strong business foundation... without stressing over time, money, or sales! Download my guide [HERE](#).

All right. So Cara, how much talking should be done? How much dialogue should you have during the actual physical, the bedroom scene? It seems like if you've got too much, it might detract from it, but if you don't have anything, it can make for a really long descriptive.

Cara Bristol:

Yeah. It makes the scene really dense. Dialogue really helps to lighten it and break it up. You don't want so much that the readers are rolling their eyes, people don't really talk like this, but definitely there should be some. More, again, in the beginning when they're flirting and they're engaging, less during the sex act itself. And then again, in the aftermath, there should be some, but the place to really condense that would be during the actual intercourse part. But, again, you'll still have your oh, gods and oh, that feels good and here, do this, do that, that type of thing.

S.E. Smith:

All right, thank you. Because I know that's one of the things where you get into it and you're like, okay, are they just going to have a conversation during this whole thing? It's not even happening. So it's good to know how to do that balance.

Cara Bristol:

Yeah. I think it needs to be less than in a regular scene, but a little more than what happens in real life.

S.E. Smith:

Okay.

Narelle Todd:

And maybe a bit more varied sometimes then, oh, baby. I read a book the other day and that was literally all they said during everything and I was just going, "Really?" I want to a bit more than that, but I guess it depends on your genre and the reader, doesn't it?

Cara Bristol:

I mean you have to remember it is a romance. It is a romance and the emphasis is on the relationship.

Narelle Todd:

Yeah. So Cara's book, I'll just pop it up again for those looking on their YouTube channel is Naughty Words for Nice Authors. Cara, where can people find you?

Cara Bristol:

They can find me on carabristol.com and on Facebook on Cara Bristol. And the other thing I'd like to say about Naughty Words for Nice Writers is it's available in a paperback as well as ebook. And I highly recommend the paperback because it's so nice to be able to flip through it.

Narelle Todd:

Yes.

Make this year a book selling year with my clear step-by-step plan to market your books and build a strong business foundation... without stressing over time, money, or sales! Download my guide [HERE](#).

S.E. Smith:

And highlight your favorite scenes. The oh, yes, yes, yes.

Cara Bristol:

Write in your own words in the margins if you think of some that I didn't.

Narelle Todd:

Awesome. Well, thank you so much for talking to us about the subject of writing romance. It's not necessarily the easiest. We appreciate the words that you've put together. The book is such a phenomenal resource. I was, when I was going through, I've had it for a while now and just going through it and you just think, wow, I never thought of calling it that or the descriptions; I think it's wonderful resource for romance writers. Go and get a copy.

Cara Bristol:

Thank you so much for inviting me.

S.E. Smith:

Oh, I need to go get some cupcakes now.

Narelle Todd:

And if you want to read some really great science fiction romance, you must go read Cara's stories. They're brilliant.

Cara Bristol:

Thank you very much.

Narelle Todd:

That's my shameless plug for the day.

S.E. Smith:

Thank you for joining us.

Cara Bristol:

Thank you.

Narelle Todd:

Thanks. Go get my book out there.

Make this year a book selling year with my clear step-by-step plan to market your books and build a strong business foundation... without stressing over time, money, or sales! Download my guide [HERE](#).

© Copyright 2021 Successful Living Pty Ltd - Reproduction of this document in any way shape or form both online and offline is strictly prohibited. You are NOT entitled to resell, reproduce or share this document or any version you make of it, and any breach of this will be enforced by the law. This document is for your personal use only.

Make this year a book selling year with my clear step-by-step plan to market your books and build a strong business foundation... without stressing over time, money, or sales! Download my guide [HERE](#).