

Kelly 'Kasey' Carver Slips into Something Romantic



Kasey at a recent Christmas party in the USA.

Kasey Carver ('92) wrote to us with the following note for the Alumni News section and we went a little further to find out about her career as a romance writer. She writes so prolifically that Kasey, using Kelly Kirch as a nome de plume, has seven books coming out in 2008. She thanks her JIS English teachers for her success.

Hello out there. I decided it had been too long since I'd sent an update and, well, Purnima (Ralhan, '92) Kine told me I should.

After almost 12 years of marriage to a wonderful man and two lovely daughters, we have ended up in the middle of Indiana for the next year or so while my husband completes his four-year M.Div degree. I, on the other hand, have been officiated as a Professional Writer.

Those of you who knew me might remember the humorous stories and poems I used to put out for fun, which always involved my friends as the stars. Well, a week after recognition by a national organization of writers, I received three contracted sales on my first three fiction works with the interest in my current project. I also have two agents to decide between and feel like the world is at my doorstep. Lovely feeling.

You know what I really miss about Jakarta? I truly miss the spectacular storms during the rainy season. I used to look out the windows of our house and watch the trees bend, the lightning light the sky and fall asleep to the howling. We vacationed once on Pulau Seribu and it did that. Fantastic experience.

Mrs. Piccolo and Mrs. Weaver, if you are out there, thank you for believing in me. I have never forgotten you nor appreciated an English teacher more than the two of you.

Kasey Carver (now Kelly Strohkirch)
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Tell us a bit about yourself as a romance author.

Kelly Kirch is my pen name. I had been writing inconsequential stuff since eighth grade and didn't take my writing seriously until about four years ago. Once I realized the characters running through my head weren't going to go away, I picked up a pen and began to put their stories down on paper. Searching the Internet one day for people like me, I stumbled across the site for the Midwest Fiction Writers, a Minnesota-based chapter of the Romance Writer's of America. I wanted to be a member of this group so badly, I joined the national RWA organization and soaked up everything! Since then, I have remained a member of RWA, which has recognized me as a member of the PAN (Professional Author's Network), and the Midwest Fiction Writers along with the recent additions of the Wisconsin RWA, Indiana RWA chapters, and the Indiana Writer's Connection online group. I currently write for both Resplendence and Cerridwen publishers.

What type of books do you write?

Regency Set Historical Romance is a romance that is loosely set in the Regency of England, but is only a backdrop to the book's plot.

Where do you get your story ideas?

I think every writer is asked that question a lot. Mostly, I see something that sparks an idea. In two of my works, it started with the picture of the first scene lurking in my mind. Plots are where you find them, I guess.

What are the most frequent themes in your writing?

I have discovered I have a particular fondness for secret identities in one way or another. It has always fascinated me and I only just realized all my stories have this in common... so far.

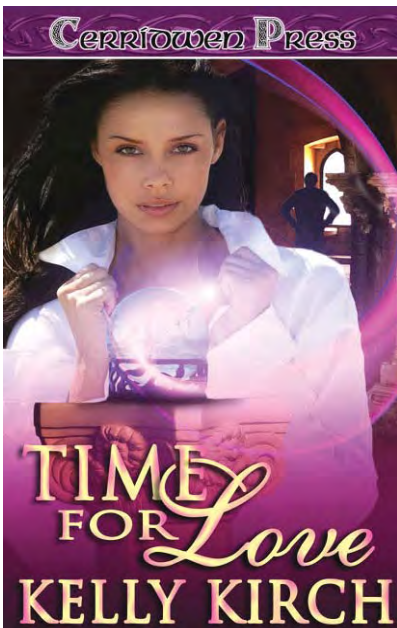
Who are your favorite authors?

That's a cinch... just about all of them. In fact, some of my favorite authors aren't published yet. When it happens, I'll be the first in line.

But just to name a few: Jude Deveraux, Julia Quinn, Linda Howard, Elizabeth Lowell, and Sabrina Jeffries are some of the people I look for in the bookstore.

Who is your favorite hero?

My husband, (sigh). He always supports me and my writing. He never sees me typing and asks me to get a "real" job. He thinks that I'm cute even when I should have hit the shower hours ago, but got caught up in my latest project.



Kasey's first novel came out on Valentine's Day, 2008

How long does it take you to write a book?

It varies a lot. Generally, I write about a chapter a day five days a week. I send my chapters off to my critique partners and use free time on Saturdays to look over their suggested changes or catches on things I overlooked.

Since I'm someone who writes from the seat-of-her-pants, I don't outline at all. I have a general idea of where I'm going, but if I create wonderful characters, they tend to take over the story direction, and I let them. So let's see, approximately five chapters a week and 20 to 26 chapters a book, somewhere around a month. Then I revise, revise, revise until I am screaming for the book to be over. That's another month.

Is it important to have a critique group?

Only if you trust them. My current critique group never messes with my voice, they laugh at my jokes and they tell me when I have truly confused them. I was recently told my secondary male was a clod. I had to go back and find out what made him such a loser and now he's much stronger. Sometimes I'm told to take risks, even when I don't want to. Together the group catches things I don't and that's important. I trust them completely and never take their comments personally be-

cause they don't have a mean bone between them, even if the comments might occasionally pinch.

Where is a good place to get started writing novels?

Go to www.RWANational.org and look around. Find a local chapter. The support and information you receive is invaluable. Then pick up your pen, your laptop, whatever, and write.

And where do you start?

Someone once told me she had ideas that were better than any TV show she'd seen. I told her to write it down. She asked me how and I asked her to tell me about her characters. She asked me if she actually needed people in her story. Hmmm. I'd start there.

The following is an excerpt from Kasey's book, Time for Love, which was published on February 14, 2008:

"Is she all right?"

Sarah turned to the sound of Drake's velvety voice.

"She seems to have forgotten she's at the ball," the fair-haired man said. Sarah didn't know what was happening but she wasn't about to show her hand either. "I'm okay. I just need to rest a minute. I must have hit my head harder than I thought. You know, temporary amnesia."

"You hit your head?" Drake asked. "When I fainted?" she offered. "Was there some other time I should have caught you?"

"Uh. No. Just this last time. How come I sound English?"

Drake shook his head. "I think you're right Lord Milstoke. She's not well." She sipped the lemonade Drake handed her. Her eyes darted, trying to settle on something that made sense. None of it did. Her head throbbed. Lord Milstoke, the fair and Drake, the sexy, were looking at her with marked concern.

"Perhaps you should go to your quarters," Drake suggested. "And where would they be?" she asked.

Drake and Lord Milstoke exchanged looks.

"I'll have Elizabeth take you. I may be a common sight in the Grantham house but my escorting you to your rooms would cause



raised eyebrows for which even my title won't compensate."

"Of course you have a reputation. How cliché."

"Pardon?"

"Nothing. Don't mind me. I'm just hallucinating. I got fired today."

"You've been burned?" Milstoke asked in alarm.

"No. I was let go."

"That's impossible. I caught you myself. You never touched the ground." Drake looked offended. Sarah grinned. "Never mind. Take me to your leader. I need a nap." Drake tucked her hand into the crook of his elbow. She turned back to Milstoke before entering the ballroom again. "Hey, if you see my cab driver, don't tip him. I don't appreciate the joke. It's been a hard enough day as it is."



Kasey with Purnima in the USA, shortly after graduating from JIS.