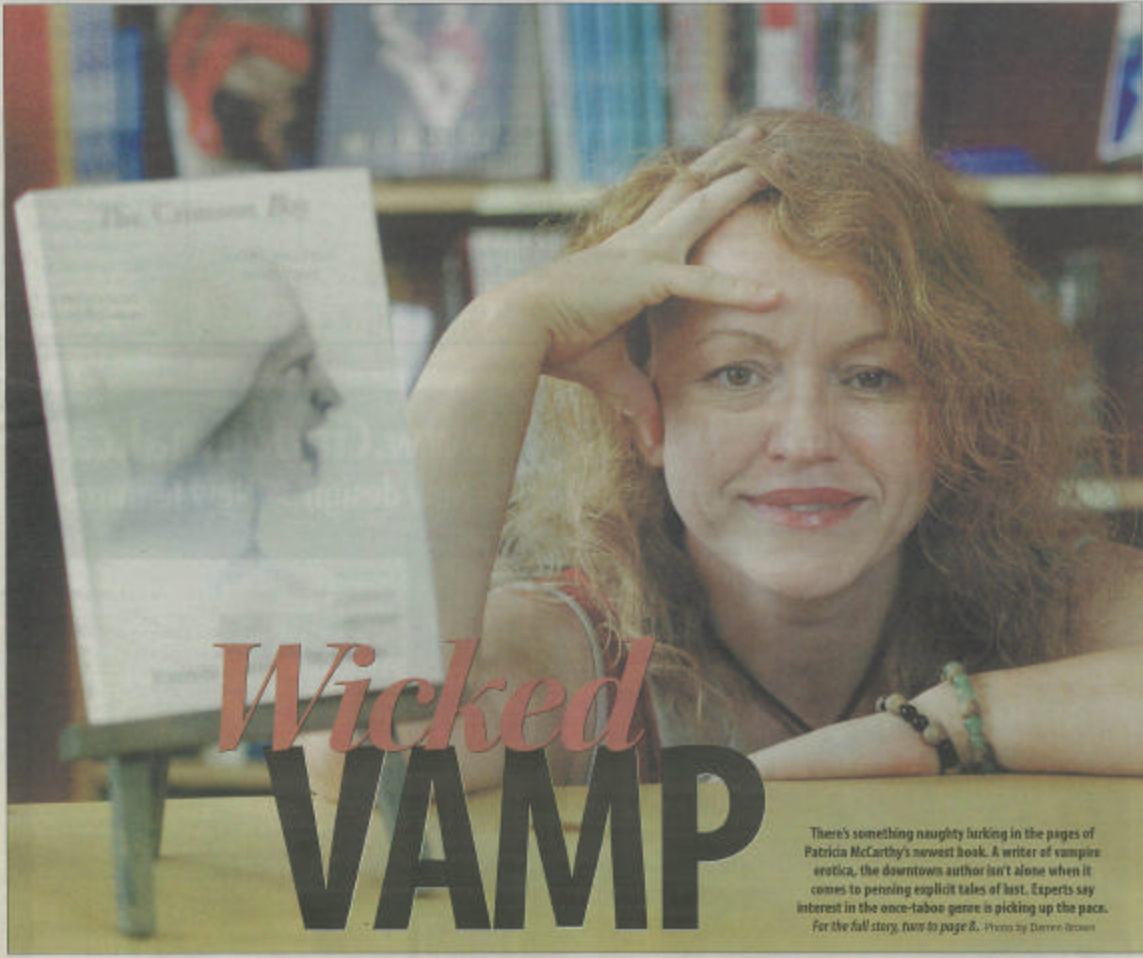


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OTTAWA'S URBAN NEWSPAPER



## Wicked VAMP

There's something naughty lurking in the pages of Patricia McCarthy's newest book. A writer of vampire erotica, the downtown author isn't alone when it comes to penning explicit tales of lust. Experts say interest in the once-taboo genre is picking up the pace. For the full story, turn to page 8. Photos by Darren Brown

'Fiction is about fun, even if it is a bit twisted,

- Patricia McCarthy

# Raw, rude & roman

*Erotica author spins tales*

By PATRICIA LONERGAN

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Local author Patricia McCarthy refuses to shy away from any taboo when it comes to exploring human sexuality, whether its sado-masochism, bondage and domination, adultery, lust or obsession. And she refuses to apologize for it, too.

"Maybe I don't have any shame," she says with a grin as trucks roar past on Laurier Avenue.

While sitting on the patio of a coffee shop on Elgin Street, the wind tugging at her blonde hair, McCarthy explains how she came to write a series of what she describes as vampire erotica novels, the newest now available at select stores.

An office worker by day and a writer of explicit fiction by night, McCarthy says she got her start writing naughty poetry.

"Erotic poems just started to come out of me," she says, explaining



## BANNED AND CHALLENGED BOOKS Literature has had a rocky past, whether erotic or not

1914

Droll Stories by Honoré de Balzac  
banned by Canada Customs

1949

Ulysses by James Joyce  
Allowed into Canada for the first time  
after a 26-year prohibition

1953

Lolita by Nabokov  
Nabokov couldn't find a U.S. publisher for his book on pedophilia and  
murder, so instead printed in France. The book didn't break into the  
American sphere until 1958.

1959

The Woman of Rome by Albe  
on the list of books banned fro

Every morning is glorious. Every morning I wake with love in my heart for Samuel. He went on his way. His departure reminds me that throughout the day I will pine for his return, when he takes me to our special room.

I finished three loads of laundry and vacuumed. Very quickly, the sun warmed the April morning. Ottawa weather is schizophrenic, particularly winter and spring months. Winter brings out my randy behaviour as temperatures drop as low as minus forty Celsius, only to crawl up to plus twelve the next morning, making me want to tear off my clothes and run naked in the streets.

- Chapter 4, *The Crimson Boy*



she never made a conscious decision to sit down and start composing prose wrought with desire.

After writing over 400 pieces, she started to publish a collection of her works. The first, called *Vulgar Verse*, was soon followed by *Friction* and *Mounting the Bedpost*.

Meanwhile she was asked to write dramatic vampire stories by an American magazine that had received some of her poetic submissions. McCarthy says she liked the genre so much, she decided to give it a try, especially since erotic poetry and the mysterious dark nature of vampires seem to gravitate toward one another. Soon, though, she found herself penning a series of novels.

McCarthy's first book, *Crimson Man*, is about lust and obsession while the second, *Crimson Boy* doesn't offer the reader as much sex, although it still tantalizes the senses. The third, now in the editing phase, will be more polished and romantic, McCarthy says.

Response to her novels has been all over the map, she says. While some have indicated they couldn't read it on the bus because they were getting aroused, at least one woman suggested McCarthy has "psychological problems," she recalls.

"If you don't like it, close the cover," she says to those who would condemn her explicit tales, explaining it's a private world. "Don't judge others who like it."

"Fiction is about fun, even if it is a bit twisted."

Tales of wild, abandoned sex may not be for everyone, but McCarthy says she thinks the genre is catching on. Retailers seem to agree.

### Growing acceptance

While erotica fiction has always been around, Venus Envy owner Shelley Taylor says it has grown in popularity.

"Our sales have skyrocketed," she says, adding her store has stocked erotic novels for over nine years.

# Antic

tales of passion and lust

She credits a greater variety of novels and better writing for the increased interest.

"There just wasn't a lot available when we first opened in 1998," she says. "There was some erotica on the market but it was pretty minimal and it wasn't all that great. I think more people are getting turned on to it because they recognize that a lot of it is pretty good."

According to Taylor, there used to only be specific types of erotica available. Readers either had their Hustler or Penthouse which was mostly intended for men, she explains, while there were also the Victorian-era novels that were almost all about spanking. Now more women write and mainstream authors have also taken up the genre, increasing expectations and creating a higher standard, Taylor indicates.



**1959**  
The Call of Rome by Alberto Moravia  
of books banned from Canada

**1930**  
Lady Chatterley's Lover by D.H. Lawrence  
Canada Customs prohibits imports, it isn't until 1962 the Supreme  
Court rules the book isn't obscene

**1989**  
Satanic Verses by Salman Rushdie  
Canada customs seizes the book,  
then rescinds the ban 48 hours later

**1997**  
Women on Top: How Real Life  
has Change Women's Sexual Fantasies  
by Nancy Friday  
Removed from libraries in Winnipeg  
and parts of British Columbia

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and parts of British Columbia

She adds another reason for the increased popularity is a shift in cultural attitudes.

"I think our culture has become somewhat more sex positive, so people are more comfortable now [buying] erotica and sex toys," she says.

The growing tolerance for erotic literature is also evident in nationwide book chains, like Chapters, which now offers readers a section dedicated to the explicit material.

"It's not as hush-hush as it used to be," says Mike Nelson, who works in the erotica section at Chapters on Rideau Street. "It doesn't seem to be as taboo anymore."

He says while roughly 80 per cent of the section is dedicated to one publisher, others are starting to get on board.

While some "big name" authors, perhaps the most prominent being Anne Rice and her *Sleeping Beauty* trilogy, can be found in this section of the bookstore, many novels are either anonymously written or are yearly anthologies, Nelson indicates.

An avid reader of French philosophers, Nelson adds that he's noticed they all seem to have written one or two erotic novels on the side.

"It's not just like a low brow, smutty category," he says. "Certain authors have a more intellectual bent to what they're writing and it's not just pure eroticism and pornography, there's some sort of meta-physical quality to it," he says.

McCarthy says she believes erotica is also a way people can give themselves permission to express their sexuality or vicariously live out a fantasy.

The characters in her novels, especially the women, are emancipated and can behave anyway they want without real-world consequences, she explains. But in reality women are still judged differently and men don't carry the same sense of shame with being sexually aggressive, she argues.

With two books on the shelf and another on the way, McCarthy says she plans to keep writing in the erotic style. She already has three more books planned for her *Crimson* series.

*Patricia McCarthy will be reading from her newest novel, Crimson Boy, at Venus Envy, 320 Lisgar at Bank, on Sept. 29 from 7:30 p.m. to 9:30 p.m.*



Photos by Darren Brown