Tish Beaty – Writing Sample

Excerpt from “Fifty Writers on Fifty Shades of Grey” – Smart Pop Books. Release Date: Nov. 20, 2012

In early 2010, I was asked to help in the development of an e-publishing house for the Australian-based company The Writ­er’s Coffee Shop. The Writer’s Coffee Shop began online as a site for worldwide discussions centered around books, authorsblogs, and more, and eventually evolved into TWCS Library, where people could post original works as well as fanfiction. I worked alongside the original founders of TWCS’ site to build a publishing house that catered to the needs of aspiring authors. I became a Managing and Acquisition Editor and worked with erotic romance manuscripts more often than not.

As an editor of erotic romance, I feel that the genre opens the doors of the imagination into worlds most readers have never traveled. An erotic romance manuscript should capture the ex­citement and naughtiness of a first love—the one you lost your “V card” to. It needs to combine sensuality and kink in ways that make the loneliest person *feel*. It should be romance, ad­venture, love, loss, suspense, and unbridled desire all rolled up into one story. James’ *Fifty Shades* did just that and in a man­ner that didn’t scare off first time readers of the erotic romance genre.

From the launch of TWCS Publishing House, we knew we wanted to acquire and publish the story that had set the Twi­light fanfiction community afire, and we were thrilled when E. L. James chose to publish the series with us. Due to my back­ground in editing and writing erotic romance with the pub­lishing house, as well as my experience in the lifestyle, I was the only choice for editor of *Fifty Shades of Grey*. Many would have been nervous taking on such a task, but I was excited. I knew from the moment we signed James that this would be the chance of a lifetime.

I was given a little over a month to edit and finalize the man­uscript with James. Reading through it for the first time after the rewrites was a surreal experience. The structure and characters were the same as the original story that first caught my attention in 2009, but the changes in details made it feel like a first read. James had managed to take her Twilight-inspired story and turn it into a manuscript that was truly *hers*.

It didn’t take long for word of the rewrite and potential release to spread worldwide. James had a huge following of readers pri­or to publishing *Fifty Shades of Grey*, and this helped in initial sales. It also made the task of editing the book and keeping it true to James’ intent very important. We knew James and her readers would not take kindly to an editor coming in and red-penning *her* story, and I was advised by TWCS to handle James and *Fifty Shades* with kid gloves. At times it was difficult for me to hold back my natural desire to make changes I thought were necessary; after all, I have been lovingly dubbed “Comma Bitch*”* by those I’ve edited. Looking back, I’m glad that I refrained from making drastic changes to the story and allowed the characters to speak for themselves, but agreeing to handle the manuscript and James delicately went against everything I stood for as an editor—and if I could do it over, I’d go with my gut instinct rather than sugarcoat the process for those involved.