

## How Sensual?



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### How sensual should your book be?

Only you know. The line you write for may require two consummated love scenes or one, or none, but only you can determine your comfort level, writing sensuality. That's the first question you need to answer. Not to say that today's answer will be the same as next year's, or that it's the same you'd have given last year. I had to read a large variety of sensuality before I discovered where I was comfortable writing, but I knew nothing would be more taxing for a reader than a love scene that came straight out of the images I had of my aunts shaking shocked heads.

So, step one: Determine your comfort level for writing a love scene.

Step two: Establish which line you want to write for--even if it's single title, and read enough of those books to discover the range of sensuality other writers employ. Request publisher's guidelines to find out what the publisher likes to see.

Step three: (This is the fun part.) Remember that sensuality neither begins nor ends at the bedroom door. Life is a sensual experience. Even if your line requires no consummated love scenes, or no love scenes without marriage, a romance should resonate with two characters discovering a whole new view of the world through each others' eyes.

Remember when you fell in love.

The sky looked more intensely blue. A cool breeze or the hot sun might have been more disturbing against your skin because you shared the experience with your lover.

Cooking breakfast together became not a task, but a rediscovery of the tastes and aromas of the food you prepared. Doing laundry, you noticed the soft texture of the jeans your new husband had worn for years to change the oil in his car or mow the back yard whose grass emitted a delicious, fresh-cut scent as he tidied it for your first stay.

Even if your characters won't be making love, let them sense how different they're going to feel from now on because they're together. Maybe the sensuality between them, their hunger for each other, will be more powerful because they also

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know they can't consummate their relationship.

If you're writing consummated love scenes, remember what makes these scenes readable for you. It's not so much the clinical aspects of what's happening, but the emotional ties strengthened through a physical expression of love. Ply the scene with emotion.

And, finally, what function does the love scene play in your book? Is it there because the guidelines require it? Is it there because you enjoy writing love scenes? "Yes" is the wrong answer to either question.

Love scenes should play a fundamental role. They should answer a story question. Your book should feel incomplete without them, as it would if you left out any turning point.

How sensual should your book be? Determine your comfort level. Target your book, and decide which story question cannot be answered without a love scene. And then, have fun writing!

Anna Adams most recent release was *Maggie's Guardian*, a September 2002 Harlequin Superromance. She's currently working on a trilogy for Superromance, *The Calvert Cousins*. Look for the first cousin in *The Secret Father*, out in September 2003.