

# Author Interview: C. L. Cattano

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C. L. Cattano is the author of the epic ten-book lesbian romance series, Salvaggio's Light. Now that the final book in the series hits the shelves she has taken some time out of her busy schedule to answer some burning questions.

I was lucky enough to have the pleasure of C. L. Cattano's company previously!

You can also take a look at the [first interview here](#), where she chats to me about writing her first book, Cursed Hearts, and talks me through her writing process.

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**Welcome back! Let's get right into it: Tell us all about your latest book, what inspired you?**

My latest book is actually the final book in the Salvaggio's Light serial titled Frenzied Love.

Originally, I wrote Salvaggio's Light as a screenplay. After not finding many movies that were what I would call 'epically themed,' I was inspired to write a lesbian-themed mini-series with a lot of drama, suspense, intrigue and, of course, love. After speaking to people about how hard it was to get something produced (I'm happy to see a few popping up now and who knows maybe someone will pick mine up! Oh, to dream!), I was convinced to do a lot of re-writes and turn it into a book serial. It was a surprise to me, and my editor, that it turned out to be ten books!

Salvaggio's Light is the life story of the main character, Rafaella Salvaggio, and delves into the lives of many of her friends and lovers. Rafaella goes by the nickname Rafe (Rah-fay). She is the daughter of an Italian father and American mother. She was raised until the age of twelve in Italy then, after her mother's death, her father moved them to America. The first book, Shattered Paradise, picks up her story at a significant turning point in her life. She has been separated from her partner Eden Kingsley for about eight months and they have agreed to go on a trip with family and friends to what is to be part vacation/ part celebration of their daughter Bronte's first birthday. This is the first significant time they have been together and things do not go well. As the books progress the past unfolds and the secrets she is keeping have a direct link to Rafe's current troubles.

There are a lot of characters in the series. I've had mixed reviews about writing in so many, but they each have a specific role to play and were necessary to pull the story together so the characters could learn about Rafe, and each other, in order to grow and, hopefully, change. I admit a few of the characters are hard to like – they may drive readers a bit mad! I know it was maddening to me at times when writing them! But I felt they are true to who they are and their ways of handling problems and conflict are consistent with how a real person might act. That is probably what makes them so maddening!

The main supporting characters are Eden Kingsley, Julia Hawthorn, and Abby Van Falkov. Eden is Rafe's ex-partner. Julia is a childhood friend. Abby is one of the first friends she made after moving to California from New York. They all have interesting experiences with Rafe but none are privy to her secrets.

I like to write stories that make the reader get so involved they experience an array of emotions. I've been told this was a success! I've got a lot of emails from people upset and talking to me like the characters are real people... it's kind of weird – but I'm weird, so I enjoy talking with them and helping them resolve the issues they have. I usually tell people to pace themselves while reading the series so they don't become emotionally overwhelmed. It was not meant to be read back to back, though some can do it without problems. Like a mini-series, you need at least a weekly break between episodes.

**Wow! That sounds like quite a series!**

**So what do you think it is that makes a good story?**

Personally, I want a book to make me feel something. It can be happiness, longing, fear, anger, horror...the gambit. I want to experience the story along with the characters.

**I can agree with that, wholeheartedly.**

**So, when did you first realise you wanted to be a writer?**

I first realized I wanted to be a writer at a fairly young age. I was an avid reader as a kid and wrote everything from short stories to poems. I often fantasized about writing song lyrics that were turned in to radio hits. I look back at the songs I wrote when I was young and have to laugh at how naive and weird I was! They make me wonder sometimes how I didn't know at a younger age I was gay. Not being exposed to any type of diversity (I mean none... no gay people, black people, Hispanic people...not even theater people – Gasp! -until I was well into my teens I didn't understand my weirdness, otherness, and outright odd thought processes really were not anything special. I was, when put in the right environment, pretty much just normal. It was comforting and disappointing at the same time. The one thing I was good at was putting my thoughts in writing. It's not always easy but I've been told I have so many strange thoughts I should make sure to write them down. That, of course, may just be how they get me to shut up!

## **HAHA! Yes, writers can be full of strange thoughts! But speaking of diversity, why do you think we need more LGBTQIA+ representation?**

For a long time, I would only read stories with boys because I wanted to feel like I was him on the adventure. Many times I wished I was a boy so I could have those experiences in real life. I did not understand, and I was not told, that I could do all those things as a girl. It was a huge moment for me when I realized I could have everything – the adventure, the girl, the success...and I didn't have to be a boy! Now I look for stories with strong female characters, for the most part in lesfic, and I haven't been disappointed. I can now have it all. I can read the stories with the male characters and enjoy them without jealousy and I can read the books with female characters and see myself. That is an awesome feeling for me.

Now there are so many books with characters representing the LGBTQIA+ community that it has turned into a huge industry. But... yes, I do think we need more. We need books for younger readers especially.

Most LGBT books are more adult-focused with stories about relationships and sex. Those will never make it into a grade school library. The gender revolution is a continuous process. People are thinking, talking about, and understanding their gender at an earlier age –and that is a good thing. The health and welfare of today's LGBTQIA+ youth will only be better when they can read about kids and characters in books that feel like they do, think like they do, and have positive life experiences like the characters in the books their straight counterparts are exposed to while young. The books need to be there so those straight counterparts will also be able to learn that just because someone is different it does not make them 'other' no matter the difference – gay, skin color, religion, etc.

I encourage readers to find out the policy in their school districts about putting LGBTQIA+ books in school libraries. I encourage readers to buy and donate age-appropriate books to the school and make sure they are available to students – not shoved in a back room somewhere. Also, be prepared for straight parent outrage when their kid comes home with an LGBT book. Pay attention to the welfare of the child and don't let the books get taken away from the library. It is sad, but the gender revolution also means fighting the social battle to keep these fledgling LGBTQIA+ kids safe and informed.

**Yes. All of that: Yes. Seeing myself represented in books would have made a world of difference to me growing up. So, what is your favorite childhood book?**

I don't really have one particular favorite childhood book. I was exposed to a lot of science fiction and fantasy as a young reader so I read everything from Edgar Rice Burroughs, Piers Anthony, Orson Scott Card and others. I've always read above my grade level so I was the nerd walking around with a huge paperback with a dragon or spaceship on the cover. I was rarely without a book in my possession. They usually were not literary masterpieces either... though I eventually had to read those for school. It's funny that I've written a romance type book because I hated romance books with all my heart and soul. My neighbor tried to get me to read her Harlequin books as a teenager. I ended up throwing one of the books across the room and vowed never to read another romance. I guess it makes a difference if the romance is more to your preference...

**I think you may have a very good point there! So, if you had the chance to go back and tell your younger (writing) self anything, what would it be?**

Write it even if no one else understands your vision. Write it even if it makes you seem weird or strange. Never throw away anything you write or create. Later in life, you will go back and see how much you've grown and can recognize your own youthful genius that could not be appreciated at a younger age.

**I can understand that: I have dozens of projects I've binned over the years, and I'd love to go back and have a peek at them, maybe even write them with all the years of experience I've had since then,**

**So, how many unpublished and half-finished books do you currently have?**

I have about 20 projects in my queue at the moment. Some are standalone books and others are series projects. They cross lines of genres from romance to thriller to young adult.

**That's a lot of projects! Any idea what can we expect from you next?**

Well, that depends on which WIP I finish first! I've got a couple of romances in the pipeline. The working title of one is 'Stealing a Thief's Heart' and I hope to have it out in 2019 or early 2020 depending on how the editing goes. The other is a feel-good story of an elderly couple on a mission to be together. I'm also working on a couple of thrillers. One is kind of a murder mystery and the other is a flat out psycho story. So stay on the lookout for things from me and Vagary Publishing.

**I certainly will! And I'd love to have you back to talk about your next project.**

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## C. L. Cattano



C.L. CATTANO LIVES in the Midwestern U.S. with her partner and their dog somewhere between the city and the forest. With a joy for traveling, she and her partner have visited many countries and have a love for meeting people and learning about the places they visit. When possible, she likes to include references in her work about the things she has learned, the places she has been and people she has met while on her travels and in her everyday

life.

Cattano has a variety of creative interests including, but not limited to, creating fine art, writing, photography, and supporting women in the arts. She considers herself a 'Jack of All Trades' dabbling in what she terms the 'whimsies of her soul' pulling her toward happiness and fulfillment.

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