

Author Interview: Emilie Nantel

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Open relationships and polyamory are not topics that are usually represented in mainstream fiction. But Emilie Nantel is doing her best to break the mould, and lend her [bilingual] voice to the underrepresented.

I'm lucky enough that she found the time to stop by and chat about her inspirations and childhood heroines!

So, tell us about your latest book? What inspired you?

OPEN: A Tale of Love is a queer, polyamorous romcom about dating as a millennial. At first, I borrowed inspiration from my own experiences with open relationships and polyamory — the first draft of the novel was much more autobiographical, but soon, my characters took a life of their own and went on to live their own adventures, quite different from mine.

Wow! So, When did you first realise you wanted to be a writer?

When I was a kid, all my favourite literary heroines were writers, authors or poets. I wanted to be like Anne of Green Gables, Emily of the New Moon, Jo March from Little Women. I started emulating them, making up my own little stories. Some of them were straight-up pastiches, imitating what I saw, but they were my first forays into becoming a writer.

As I got older, society told me this wasn't a valid dream, this is something that only happens to others, and that I had to find a "real career," so I let this dream die and spent like a decade trying to figure out my path. Throughout all of this, I discovered fanfiction, so I honed my craft, though I thought it was just a hobby.

At some point, Bobby, my husband, read one of my fics and told me it was just as good as some published stuff out there, and that I should write a book.

I dusted off my old dreams, and here I am, six years later, a published author.

So, out of all of those, what would you say is your favourite childhood book?

Anne of Green Gables. I've read the whole series pretty much every summer for all of my teenage years. These books have been so formative, I have no idea if I love them because I can relate to Anne, or simply because she shaped my whole personality.

What do you think makes a good story?

Passion. Be it a plot that you're passionate about, a theme, characters who are fully fleshed-out, or just the story that you feel like you need to tell? That's gonna be a page-turner for sure.

And as a queer fiction writer, why do you think we need more LGBTQIA+ representation?

For that 'oh' moment when you see a character going through the same thing as you do, and you realize that you are not alone. You are not weird, a freak, or broken. There's a word for what you're feeling. There's a community.

But also, for everyone else, so they can meet characters outside of their immediate experiences, and realize that these people, these identities, exist and are humans, and deserve the same rights and consideration as everyone else.

Do you know how many unpublished and half-finished books do you have?

I have recently started working on my second novel, Load Game (working title, we'll see if it changes with rewrites!), a YA SF/F about a bi teen girl who realizes she has the power to time travel via her selfies.

Other than that I have half-formed ideas scribbled in a notebook but that's it. I tend to work on one project at a time.

If you could tell your younger (writing) self anything, what would it be?

Just keep writing. Someone out there needs to read your story, and you have no idea what wonderful projects are coming your way. Also, you're stronger than you think.

What can we expect from you next?

What can't you expect from me? Haha but no kidding, projects and opportunities are knocking down my door right now, it's a very exciting time. I can't confirm anything so early in the process, but there's talks of a French translation of OPEN (French is my first language), an audiobook, and even a play!

I can't even sit still!

That sounds so exciting! I'd love you to come back when you know a bit more and can talk about it!

It's been an absolute delight having you! Thank you.

Author Bio



Emilie Nantel is a queer fiction writer driven by the need to break the allocishet, monogamous mold and lend her voice to underrepresented communities.

Emilie developed her casual, witty voice writing fanfiction, always seeking the different, the underground, and she still carries that in her original fiction.

As a bilingual Montrealer, it's important to her to showcase the heart and soul of this vibrant and diverse city and its people in her writing.

You can usually find her curled up with a good queer book, or dreaming of the day she owns a cabin in the woods with her husband.

OPEN: A Tale of Love, Mermaids, Bassists, & Creepy Dudes is her first novel.

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