

The Rules: Over all, love scenes must develop out of the sexual awareness, attraction, and sexual tension that begin to develop between the hero and heroine from the first time they meet.

1. Love scenes have to grow out of character and reveal character. They should be part of your character arc.
2. *More* than just sex has to happen in a love scene. In addition to revealing character, good love scenes move the story forward because the hero and the heroine should discover something about the other person and/or about themselves. They should *change*.

Tips from Cara: (*How to keep from slipping into the same-old same-old.*)

1. The devil (and the sexiness) is in the details—so focus on them. Why are these two people attracted to one another? What are the small, intimate details that they first notice about each other? Eventually, these specifics should include interior qualities as well as physical characteristics.
2. Spend time in your characters' heads. Your reader knows how the body parts work. What she wants to know is how the physical is affecting the emotions of the hero or heroine. Think of how you can use action, reaction, interior monologue and appealing to the senses to spin this out on the page. Focusing on emotions is the key to making love scenes new again and again and again.
3. Remember that love scenes should have a progression and the emotional trouble should deepen for the two characters. Your hero and heroine are learning more about each other each time they make love, and they should build on that knowledge. Plus, each love scene should leave them more vulnerable to the other person – and further down on that slippery slope they're sliding into love.
4. In addition to interior monologue, use dialogue. People do talk to each other when they're making love. And this is a great technique for keeping the reader hooked and making sure that the scene doesn't become generic.
5. Consider switching POV. I think the reader wants both POVs. (If a scene break seems too disruptive – cheat. One way to do this is to begin a paragraph with an action by the other character and then slip into his/her POV.)
6. Give your readers (and the characters) variety. Brainstorm ways in which you can vary the following:
 - a. The circumstances; will it be a planned seduction or impromptu?
 - b. Who is the one doing the seducing?
 - c. The setting: will the love scene occur in a private space or public; on the baby grand piano or beneath it; outdoors or indoors; in the shower or the bathtub? The list could go on and on (and it has.)

- d. The mood/tone. (Desperation is good. And humor is my favorite. Sharing laughter always deepens intimacy.)
 - e. The pacing of the love making – fast or slow? Or a combination?
 - f. The techniques the characters might use—(use of toys, games?)
 - g. The timing – When will they make love for the first time? In the first chapter or the fifth? Or later?
7. Find a way to give your readers a little surprise. (I read *Cosmo* every month and for the latest in toys, techniques and *secrets*. I clip ideas—especially if they make me laugh—and file them. Now you know the deep dark secret of one Blaze writer.)
 8. Study how your favorite authors face the challenge of making love scenes fresh and exciting. Notice how they balance interior monologue and dialogue with physical activity.
 9. When the scene is finished, reread it and ask yourself if the reader could skip it. Many say they do. Revise. Do everything you can think of to keep the reader engaged in the scene.
 10. Discover your own *modus operandi* for writing love scenes. (I need a stretch of three to five hours even though I may not use up all the time. And I need silence. You may only need forty-five minutes with some really good chocolate and Mozart on your iPod. But *do* find out what works best for you.
 11. Finally, never hold anything back. Don't save something for the next scene. Give it to the reader in this scene. Something even better will come to you for the next scene.

Cara Summers has written over thirty books for Harlequin Temptation, Duets and Blaze. She has won several awards for her stories, including two Golden Leaf Awards, the Award of Excellence, two Golden Quills for Sexy, Hot and Sensuous romance, and an RT Reviewer's Choice Award for Best Temptation of the Year. This year RT honored her with a Lifetime Achievement Award for Series Storyteller of the Year.

Her 2008 releases include stories in Snowbound (1/08) and Tex Appeal (2/08) a Blaze Extreme—A Sexy Time of It (5/08), Lie With Me 8/08—part of the Lust in Translation Blaze mini-series) and a Come Toy With Me (12/08), the final book in the Angelis family series.

When she isn't busy writing books, she teaches in the Writing Program at Syracuse University and flies frequently to Florida to play with her two grandchildren.