

Interview with Ann Raina
By Holly Hewson for *The Romance Studio*
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HH: Ann, thank you for talking with us TRS. Please tell us about your featured book, *To Freedom*.

AR: It's the third book of the series and tells about the way Ferris, Borayn and the other featured characters go to change their lives and - as a conclusion to all people on Raskayen - the way the clans think about men and their position in society.

HH: This is the third story in your sensational *Living For the Act* series. Where did the idea for this series come from?

AR: The basic idea for a story just jumps at me. I can hardly ever recall when the first scenes come to my mind. However, with that one idea I go to my muse (yes, the one who is always the logic part to my wild ideas...) and we start the fun part of writing - brainstorming. We sit with hot coffee and cookies and develop characters, situations, and the 'red threat' that helps us to get the story going and bring it to a satisfying end. Sometimes this is just the work of a few hours - the outlines, not the fleshing out of every scene - but with some parts we needed more attempts and some re-thinking of how to approach to a situation or get the result needed for the whole plot.

HH: How do *Captured and Kidnapped* kick off the series?

AR: In the first part of the series, Ferris gets captured on a rural moon because his fertility outranges that of many other men living on Raskayen. The planet suffered the loss of many men in a long, fruitless war, and needs fertile men from all over the solar system to start repopulating the planet. In the second part, Ferris is taken to another clan which treats him much better, but still neither he nor the other men are free to decide what they want to do. Women rule and consider men not trustworthy. After all, the male politicians of the planet led it to ruin...

HH: How does *To Freedom* continue it?

AR: In the last part, the situation changes again when the rebels - men and women who work against the clan system - gain more machines and more people. It's the time when the ruling clan women have to think about their doings.

HH: How did you approach world building for this series?

AR: I imagined a world bereft of the elements we consider beautiful - rain forests, lots of meadows, green hills - and put people in there who want to make it better and undo the wrong conclusions the ruling men had done years ago. Yet, their ways of achieving this goal are very different.

HH: What else do you have in store for lucky readers?

AR: I wrote a spy novel in which an agent is forced to work undercover in order to gain access to an illegal training camp. To his misfortune, the undercover job requires of him to become a kind of callboy... The novel was sent to eXtasy Books and I hope that the publisher will vote for it to be released next year.

HH: What do you think your readers would be surprised to know about you?

AR: Hum, let me think about that for a moment... Well, in spite of my favorite hobby - riding - with which I spent a lot of time, I never used this in one of my stories. True, there had been horses in my older stories (long before I dared to have them published), but I never put horse and rider in the center of a story. Maybe, if some ideas hit me I'll reconsider.

HH: What do you enjoy most about being a writer?

AR: Like I said, the time of brainstorming, of weighing ideas, of hoping to find a proper solution for a problem you created during the process - that's the essence. I told my muse that writing down the story is still fascinating and sometimes surprising since characters don't always develop like they should, but the greatest fun is the juggling with first images, a mere scene that could turn out to be great as an opening - or not. There was one story in which my muse ripped apart my wonderful idea of the opening sequence to come up with several new characters I would never have thought of. That's fun and will always be.

HH: What would we find in your to-be-read pile?

AR: I love the work of Tad Williams. By now, I read his series around the "Green Angel Tower", the "Otherland" series, and "The War of the Flowers". The author does not only have great imagination but he also manages to create wonderful characters - see 'Applecore' in the last book mentioned.

HH: Any new year's resolutions this year?

AR: Hopefully, I'll get my new book finished, a fantasy story with shape shifting beasts and a daring king who doesn't know much about the forces taking him on a wild ride through the mountains. In the end, he learns much more about the land, the peoples, and, yes, his wife. This book is in German so I hope to find a publishing house that doesn't only take works from already known authors.

HH: Thank you!