



## Hello from Barbara Kyle

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### A TALE OF A TODDLER

As I was setting my groceries onto the checkout counter the other day a bright-eyed toddler was perched in the cart ahead of me. Her young father looked *awfully* young: reversed baseball cap, neck tattoo, silver stud earring, a sprout of goatee.

"What's her name?" the checkout clerk asked him, smiling at the little one.

"Harper," he answered.

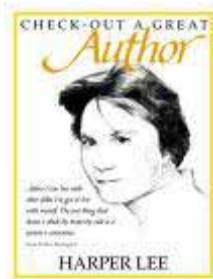
I couldn't resist. "Did you name her after Harper Lee?" I asked, expecting a mystified scowl at worst, an answer about some soap opera character at best.

"As a matter of fact, I did," he said, grinning.

I was gobsmacked. "Are you a writer?"

"No. But I loved English in high school. It's a passion of mine."

Now, if that doesn't flutter the pages of a writer's heart, nothing can. A half century after the publication of Harper Lee's luminous novel *To Kill a Mockingbird* her spirit lives on in ever new generations of hearts and minds, and in the shining face of that little child.



## AND SPEAKING OF SEX ...

I've been invited to speak on a panel at the Historical Novel Society Conference in Chicago in June 2009. (For info on the HNS see <http://www.historicalnovelsociety.org/main.htm>) The keynote speakers will be Edward Rutherfurd (odd spelling, yes, but it's correct), famous for his historical sagas including *Sarum*, *London*, and *Russka*; and Margaret George, bestselling author of *The Autobiography of Henry VIII*, *Mary Queen of Scotland and the Isles*, and *The Memoirs of Cleopatra*. I'm honored to be included in such company.



The topic assigned my panel should be fun: “Is Sex Necessary? Spicing Up Your Historical Novel (Or Not).”

Hmmm. I emailed the question to a fellow writer of historical novels, Christine Trent, and she replied: “I struggle with putting explicit ‘naughtiness’ in my work, and tend to err on the side of not doing it. Plus I tend to laugh hysterically when I read my own sex scenes. It's probably better for all concerned that I don't do it!” (To read about Christine see [www.christinetrent.com/](http://www.christinetrent.com/))

I also posed the question to my daughter, a fine emerging writer of contemporary fiction, and her email reply was concise and bang-on: “There's a song climbing the country charts by the mega-selling duo of Brooks and Dunn. It's called ‘Put A Girl In It’ and I think it sums up the answer to that question pretty well. These guys know what they're talking about. Especially fitting is the line, ‘You can write you a country song, the DJ won't put it on, they won't dance or sing along, till you put a girl in it.’ Check out the video: [http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xuLj5\\_lPt4c](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xuLj5_lPt4c)”

Yes, do check it out. Guaranteed to brighten your day.

Still, I tend to think seriously of this subject regarding my heroes/heroines, as in (call me crazy) sex = love. Though I have written scenes of slightly bent sex when unsavory characters are concerned. Anyway, as I mull my own thoughts and feelings about the subject, I'm thinking: Why not ask the experts – my readers? Do *you* have any tips, quips, peeves or rants about sex scenes in novels? If so, I'd love to hear from you. Email me at [bkyle@barbarakyle.com](mailto:bkyle@barbarakyle.com).

## FOR YOUR BOOK CLUB

Many of you have told me that your book club has read *The Queen's Lady*, my novel set in Tudor England, or that they plan to do so. I'm delighted to hear of this interest in examining the compelling social issues in *The Queen's Lady*, and I'd like to point out that there's a Reading Group Guide for just this purpose. It contains 13 questions that are sure to spark discussion among your members. See: [http://www.readinggroupguides.com/guides\\_Q/the\\_queens\\_lady1.asp](http://www.readinggroupguides.com/guides_Q/the_queens_lady1.asp)



## COMING IN FEBRUARY

*The King's Daughter*, my sequel to *The Queen's Lady*, will be in bookstores on February 24, 2009. *The King's Daughter* follows the adventures of the Thornleigh family into the dangerous reign of Henry VIII's daughter, Queen Mary. If you like, you can pre-order it and save money. To pre-order go to:

[http://www.amazon.com/Kings-Daughter-Barbara-Kyle/dp/0758225458/ref=sr\\_1\\_3?ie=UTF8&s=books&qid=1226432321&sr=1-3](http://www.amazon.com/Kings-Daughter-Barbara-Kyle/dp/0758225458/ref=sr_1_3?ie=UTF8&s=books&qid=1226432321&sr=1-3)

## AND THEN...

In my next newsletter I'll share with you the fascinating things I've discovered in researching my next novel. It's about the young Elizabeth Tudor – just 21 years old – and the crises she faced before she became queen.

Best regards,  
Barbara

P. S. Do visit my website: <http://www.barbarakyle.com/Home.page>