

From Petting to Penetration and Beyond

So You Want to Write a Lemon

By jmolly



Who am I? I'm a writer with 28 stories on Fanfiction.net, I beta 8 people and I've probably written 400 lemons within those 1.5 million words I've posted since 2009. I strive never to repeat myself. I don't focus on lemons, but storyline. Oh, and you should thank Room340C (my regular Beta) for pre-reading this for me, because she is hilarious, and makes all kinds of comments that get me snarky. Now let's get down to business.

So, you've been writing a romance story, or planning one out, and something has you biting your nails: how exactly are you going to go about writing that love scene? There are writers who get downright sick to their stomachs about it, I kid you not. That's logical, because along with trauma and fight scenes, a love scene is very hard to write in a way that will please your readers. However, a well-crafted one can get you lots of respect.

In the fanfiction world, we call this 'citrus': zest, lemons, limes, lemonade, you get the picture. So. First things first: ought you to be writing it?

Number one rule: if you're not an adult, you should not be writing about sex. Please stop reading now.

This is going to be a bit of an amusing article *sticks out tongue at Raum* because I'm writing about lemons on a T-rated blog. That means you aren't going to be reading a lot of sexy words, even if you are as old as me. Is it weird that I find that adorable? Hah. Stick with me. I have a handful of excellent authors who have let me quote their lemons (and

racy words shall be replaced with bleeps, just to tease my hostess). I heartily invite you to click on their links, and give the stories some love.

Part One: Should You Write a Lemon?

I write NC-17 rated lemons. The first time I posted something lemony, I was terrified, and my characters were not even having intercourse. People might have thought I was a –you know- (*looks both ways*) pornographer. Shh! Don't tell my Mom, she's old and you will kill her. By the time my monogamous couple progressed from petting to penetration, I had received positive feedback and was much more comfortable. Now I write lemons that are very graphic. Sometimes the content is controversial, and posting it still makes me nervous. There are certain topics, which, while pretty mainstream in some circles, are still taboo in others. So seriously consider your comfort zone before you post a lemon, because you are definitely going to hear what people think of it.

You will often hear people quote the old adage, 'write what you know'. In some situations, this is Bullbleep. You don't need to be a mother to write about being one. You don't need to be a man to write from a man's point of view. But be very careful about writing a love scene if you have never made love. Most of your readers will be able to tell. I have certainly written about things I haven't tried, and I have written many love scenes from a man's pov. But if you have no personal experience, you need to do extensive research (and I don't mean 'go out and have sex', naughty!). As professional writer Jim C Hines says, "Know what you write."

Part Two: What Kind of Love Scene Should You Write?

Just because you are writing a romance does not mean you have to include graphic citrus. *cough* Stephenie Meyer fades to black *cough*

As the next step up, here's a nice **soft** lemon from our friend Raum:

Both lying on my bed, I admired the shy goddess in my arms. Leaning on my side, I cradled her body close to my chest. I lay her back, losing myself in her eyes as I hovered over her. Her dark hair was a halo around the purity of her face, a silk cushion upon which the most precious pearl was shining. My fingers circled the peaks of her breasts, making them harden. I teased her mouth with my lips, until she tilted her chin up, trying to catch my kisses. My lips brushed her chest, as if I could tell her heart directly how much I loved her. My hand glided across her skin, moving down.

I continued to touch her, letting my fingers find the way to those tender places in which Love proclaims its presence. They learned the fullness of her breasts and the mystery of her most secret spots.

I looked at her, searching for any sign of anxiety, but all that I could see was the love-light trembling in her eyes, like rays of sun sparkling on dancing waves. She moaned softly and our caresses were mingled with murmurings of love and whispered words. Although I was the

experienced one, I felt that I wasn't leading her; we were going together, at the same pace, toward a promised haven.

Wave by wave, we felt our arousal increase, until we couldn't withstand our separation anymore.

And so we became one.

Bella was magnificent. I cherished the perfect shape of her body, her scent, her taste, and the way she welcomed me in our lovemaking, almost with no sign of distress. It was inebriating, knowing I was the first to enter her sanctuary. She was for me a garden enclosed; a shut up spring, a sealed fountain. I wanted to discover every flower of her garden, get lost in every scent. Could she feel how precious she was to me?

Our mutual pleasure came naturally, sweeter than anything I had experienced before. She had chosen me, and I desired with all my heart to be worthy of her decision. I loved her with my whole body, with all my strength, glorying in her responsiveness, and felt both powerful and humbled by her delight. Her voice quavered, and I could sense the joy she was feeling in unison with my own. My speed slackened so as to prolong her bliss.

When we were spent, I pulled her against me and kissed her sweetly. The smooth silk of her skin became warmer as my caresses cherished it. She nestled in my arms as I held her; the time flew by. I wished she knew that I would be forever grateful for her trust. We whispered to each other words to be saved in a secret place of our hearts.

http://www.fanfiction.net/s/7116125/15/De_Immortalitate

But if you are game, you can write **erotica (graphic, hard core, fetishist, or smut)**. Before I go on, let's define lemon versus lime, because a lot of people mix them up. A **lemon** is a sex scene, spelled out for you to read. A **lime** implies sex that is not shown. **Slash** is the same-sex pairing of two characters that don't pair off in the original story. Oh, and a **Mary Sue** is a story where a writer injects herself (and her friends) into the story as the female love interest(s). Note that those generally get a very small readership.

My preference is to write graphic to hard core lovemaking. I don't write love scenes for characters that are not *at least* planning their wedding or forever after. I don't write casual sex. I don't write cheaters, S&M, or group. Those activities conflict with my values. Write what you know, or what you can draw from a reliable source. Don't write anything that revolts you if you're trying to make the scene appealing to your readers. What do I call a **reliable source** for a person who hasn't got experience? A good source might be a book or internet site. It might be a person. I'll give you an example (count yourself privileged, I don't share personal details): I spent a significant amount of time interviewing a Dominatrix before writing "Dartmouth Halloween". I also studied Shibari bondage online for that story.

While we're making up the bones of the story, if you choose to write a story about rape, read <http://jimhines.livejournal.com/437292.html> before you do: there is nothing sexy about assault.

It's wrong to glamorize it, sexualize it, or trivialize it. It's also wrong to make your heroine or hero's whole life revolve around the rape. Yes, men can be raped, especially since the advent of a little blue pill and similar drugs. And please remember that any underage sex is statutory rape, and by writing it you may be encouraging people to think it's okay.

In fact, you may be encouraging that sneaky thirteen year old who reads your fiction, to think it's okay. There is no way to block kids from reading. All they have to do is lie about their age. So there's a warning on my Profile that if kids read, I hope they discuss any questions with a trusted adult. I was recently chatting with an author who was very upset to find out that a child reviewed her tender scene of lovemaking, and called it 'a good bleep'. Kids don't differentiate between bleeping and lovemaking, although most Western schools cover all topics sexual by the end of primary school.

It would sure be nice to read more stories where the sexuality isn't gratuitous, meaningless, abusive, or exploitative.

Okay, enough of that. So you've done your homework and you're going to go ahead and write a lemon, containing the level of detail you (and your chosen audience) can tolerate. Super. Now, let's construct a good lemon.

Part Three: Don't Write a Lemon that Will Truly Embarrass You & Bite You on the {Beep}

Nothing is as painful to read as a poorly-written lemon, that is contrived, lacks continuity, or uses way too many worn out euphemisms or adjectives. Worst of all is a lemon written by someone who hasn't done research. Particularly grueling to read are lemons about anal play written by people who know nothing about it. At the opposite end of the 'poor credibility' spectrum are lemons about a pair of virgins who behave like sexperts. A third pet peeve of mine happens to be slash that is based on characters who don't love each other. How prejudiced is that!

Smart readers won't buy it, and the thing you want above all is to suspend disbelief. If you fail to do this, you're apt to get negative feedback, because people who like to criticize are always happy to review.

I'm not going to pick on anybody and say their work is badly written. Therefore, I point you to my own Twilight parody, "Foreseen Events", starring Bella and Edward. It's short. Read Chapter 2, and if your story's lemon sounds anything like it, you have some major work ahead of you.

http://www.fanfiction.net/s/5577997/2/Foreseen_Events

Part Four: Constructing a Good Lemon: The Bones of It

Stage I: Set It Up

Lay the groundwork. This sounds simple but it's not. You must be methodical. You have to set the stage in a way that is believable, and preferably not a cliché. How do your characters meet? What kind of people are they? How does their relationship (and attraction) progress? Is it gradual or very sudden? Is there a conflict? *Yum!* How do they overcome it? And where and how do they choose to achieve this intimate connection they're about to share? You might want to groom them or bathe them. Brush their teeth. Just sayin'. Although if they're using the commode, I really don't want to know.

Stage II: Light Touches Increasing in Intensity

Your couple is ready to go. Want a really hawt lemon? Seduction. Refer to Part 3: your character cannot go from zero to 100 mph in two seconds. He or she is apt to damage something, possibly an irreplaceable body part. And heaven help your real life reader who tries this at home! Did you know men can break their little friend if it's bent the wrong way by a rough partner? Preparation, people. It's the difference between pain and gain. While we're on that subject, don't forget the lube! My Beta claims it is one of modern man's greatest inventions, along with Velcro, duct tape, and post-it notes (if she's mentioning those in relation to sex, I don't want to know. TMI. Really, Dearest.)

Stage III: More Intense Foreplay

Your lemon should have a gradual build to climax. Hah! Climax, get it? You move from light caresses to heavy petting and non-penetrative sexual activity. A good lover lavishes attention on his or her partner. Penetration alone is not going to satisfy a partner, or a reader. Remember your continuity. It's not logical to jump from kissing to penetration, and then go back later to talk about how apprehensive the partner is about oral. Your pure young couple does not normally shift from the first, sweet experience of touching to some kinky bleepery either (*respectfully bows down to Icy*). If you're going to write it, each character has to have a credible mindset and a motive.

Stage IV: Pre-penetration Essentials

The experienced person doing the penetration checks his/her receiving partner for readiness. Every. Single. Time. The virgin might bleep up.

This is the time to bring out that lube. Oh, and the condoms.

Stage V: Penetration

The wonder of joining: don't gloss over this, even if you're writing a soft lemon. No matter whether you are writing lovemaking or simply bleeping, this is the moment everybody's been waiting for. Acknowledge it.

Stage VI: Intercourse



You can gloss this over or go into detail, but you must write down at least two or three sentences or your characters are going to look like they can't perform. The average lasting time from penetration to climax for an inexperienced 17 year old human boy is, however, only five to ten seconds. You still have to tell the reader why it's over if it's over. We'll assume supernatural males last longer, although the consummation scene in the "*Breaking Dawn*" movie was super cute; *Bella to Edward: "It's okay."* Roflmao. What a sweet couple... I digress. Don't rush the action. Huh? Oh, my Beta disagrees with my interpretation of Bella's words. I give you her take on it, as it vastly amuses me: *Aw, c'mon, Jess. You gotta know he climaxed at least three times before getting to that moment; he's a vampire, for bleep's sake. I read that scene thusly – "I'm not too distracted by the destruction around me . . . keep going, bleep it!!" Dearest? You are wrong. Roflmao.*

Stage VII: Climax(es)

Again, you can gloss over it or go into detail, but assuming it happens, you have to acknowledge it. If it doesn't happen, you have to acknowledge that, too. If your guy is a vampire, he can climax as many times as you want in as short a time period as you want. Assuming he's human, give the poor guy twenty minutes, will ya? He's not a bleepin' machine! Although if he is seventeen, you can shave down his recovery time a bit. Just don't make him last too long.

aside It always kind of slays me that in SM canon, Edward is 'stuck' at seventeen forever. If he's genetically programmed not to evolve mentally, physically, or emotionally, poor Bella is in for one eternal bleepload of disappointment.

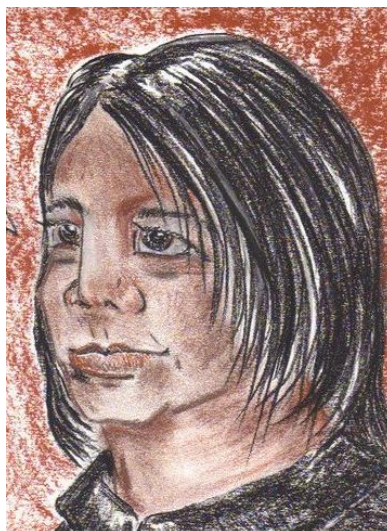
Stage VIII: Afterglow

Your characters reflect upon their experience, whether good or bad. They may discuss it, or they might cuddle. Alternately, they may separate themselves or be parted by circumstance (sigh). Regardless, it's important not to leave this stage out.



Part Five: Constructing a Good Lemon: The Flavour

Your Characters' Characters



Think carefully about your character's personality and how he would talk and behave. Canon virgin Edward is very unlikely to say bleep or anything else coarse during his first time. Canon Bella is unlikely to moan and groan. Neither one of them is likely, even, to verbalize what they fantasize about. In my story "Heaven Help My Heart", a rather hot to trot Leah is anxious to seduce her Imprint, Ivo. He's a 270-odd year old Inuit Vampire who can't remember his human family. Not only is he old, he is an English Second Language speaker, and a recluse. There are certain words he would be unlikely to use:

"Um, are we ... still getting married?" {Ivo} asks shakily.

"Yes." But if he's got any seed in there he's planting it right now. I stomp right over and push

him down, and yank at his clingy black underwear until I've pushed it down enough to free his semi. "Oh, what a pretty turtleneck," I coo. I'd like to kiss it but he'd last all of three seconds, know what I'm sayin'?

"T-turtle?" Ivo asks weakly.

"You have a foreskin," I purr, yanking on it. Ivo strangles another cry and surrenders, falling down on his back on the floor with a thud.

"How does your Umialik know so much?" my mate asks, overcome.

"It's annoying, isn't it?" I say sympathetically while I stroke his gorgeous {beep} to life. "But he's trained as a doctor; and Carlisle's a doctor; too. And Edward's spent more time clasping hands with Aro than anybody I know, and Aro knows more about Vampires than anyone else alive. All I can say is, it's a good thing Leech is on our side. Now come rub my {beep}."

http://www.fanfiction.net/s/7853335/1/Heaven_Help_My_Heart_Fade_to_Blacks

Your Characters Occupy a Space

It is so easy to forget this, and concentrate only on the lemony actions and the dialogue. It's also easy to neglect to tell the reader if they have changed positions. There's a standing joke in the fandom that shoes and socks always come off, even if it's not mentioned. It's one of those unspoken fanfic rules that you don't want to bleep up. So remember their space. Here's a wonderful example of characters occupying a space, from "The Biology Project" by solosintwilight:

I felt his hands move over my back until he gripped my hips, tugging me over him until we both broke away from the kiss, enjoying the feeling of our bodies as they connected. Edward's eyes searched for mine, so many emotions warring inside. His hands pulled at me, moving me against him again until his eyes closed and he let out a long groan.

"I want you," he growled and held me still against him as he breathed. I moaned against his ear at his words.

He had no idea what those words did to my will to behave.

My hands found their way to his head, finding his lips and moving with him there on the bench. My {beep} hit the keys, creating a loud racket as he pushed me against it. He laughed into my cheek and pressed me into the piano again, the noise a little louder when I practically sat on the keys. I let one hand press against the lower keys to steady myself, making a sort of harmony with the middle notes my rear played.

http://www.fanfiction.net/s/7693130/46/The_Biology_Project

Your Characters Have Feelings



How does your character feel in this situation? And what do they sense? Here's a lemon from Rochelle Allison that I just love:

It makes her tense, and clench, and come, the connection, the pursuit of their pleasure, the realization of their mutual infatuation, the fixation, the obsession. Grasping his hair, she cries out.

He moans and flattens himself against her body, driving himself in to her with one sharp thrust.

Hands clasped, they find themselves in each other, pushing, pulling, grasping, groaning. Her legs tighten around his body; she pulls him close, pushing her hips against his, meeting his movements.

"Let me hold you," she gasps, pulling her hands from his grip so that she can wrap them around his neck.

He holds her close and rolls on to his back, bringing her with him, wrapping her body around his completely.

She laughs, loving it, maybe loving him. They kiss, slow, wet, before he sucks her earlobe into his mouth. "You're perfect, Ms. Swan," he sighs, relaxing their rhythm to a slow grind. "I could do this all night."

She bites her lip. "Oh yeah?"

"Yeah," he says, nibbling on her ear. "Watch me."

<http://www.fanfiction.net/s/7876788/1/>

Your Characters Verbalize

Sydney Alice tells me that she hates writing lemons. Isn't it a shame that she writes them so well? Hah! Her readers will want more. You might not like this Edward and Bella at first, but they're certainly credible and they'll earn your sympathy. There's something I really like about Sydney's lemon: the way her characters verbalize:

"You'll never wear these heels again," I whispered softly.

"No," Bella promised me.

Satisfied with that vow, I pushed her legs open as I crawled up the length of her body. Unable to resist the touch of her skin, my fingers trailed along her knee and along the creamy skin of her thigh. She gasped loudly as my fingers found the apex of her thighs, and I lowered my head, letting my lips linger softly on her stomach as my finger trailed along her opening. I knew her so well. I knew that I could press right here and....

"{ Beep}, " Bella moaned loudly.

My finger continued playing with her {ahem} as my kisses traveled north. My lips encircled the {cough} of one {beep}, and then the other, and it was no time at all before she was writhing beneath me, whimpering my name.

She was so ready for me, and I hadn't even kissed her yet.

<http://www.fanfiction.net/s/6436199/1/Thankful>

Your Characters Have Five Senses: Vision, Hearing, Touch, Taste, Smell



To quote a non-Twilight character I love (*cough* Snape), you've got to ensnare the senses. Let me subject you to another one of mine. This one is for my talented Hybridella and Vampward:

He addressed me roughly, pushing deeply in and out of my core. "I took your first kiss. Your tears. Your fantasies. Your first orgasm. I took the first taste of your skin. Your blood. Your arousal. I took your mouth. Your tongue. Your innocence. Your anal virginity. I made you a

woman. A mother. And I will have your humanity. I will have every reaction of your body to mine, and I will have your heart, and your companionship, and your opinions. And I won't ever be finished with you. You will be mine in every conceivable way, just as I am yours in every conceivable way. I will give you everything I've got. And when God claims us back someday, because we are His, we will still belong to each other. Because love does not die. It spins into infinity."

"Yes! Yes! Yes!" I sobbed, clinging to him, my palms slick with perspiration.

"**{Beep}** with me," he pleaded, and then he shuddered and gasped, his mouth falling open, and I thought how pretty his teeth were, even though they were crooked. Love coiled in me. Then, he came with a strangled cry that he freed and loosed to the stars. I soared, and shouted his name while he clutched me, and poured out my love, my muscles firing spasmodically like a roman candle.

Time seemed to stop as our eyes locked, and we were suspended weightless, bodiless, in the light of the stars. Our heat flared out of us, and ignited, and we were encased in an aura of bright flame, but were not burned. It flared brightly, permitting no shadow, and then suddenly, we rejoined corporeal reality, and the flames dimmed, but did not go out. They fluttered around our edges. He held out his hand, the ocean as his backdrop, and golden light gathered in it. He brought it between our joined bodies, and I helped him to cup it tenderly. We watched it for some time, while I straddled his lap, cradled in our four hands like it was a living thing to be protected.

http://www.fanfiction.net/s/5639403/50/I_Hunger_For_Your_Touch

Your Characters are Only Human

Your characters have flaws, and life tends to go awry. It's fun to add fumbles to your story. Those of us who have been in a committed relationship -for a long time- know something that some writers forget: sex is funny. It doesn't hurt to notice that once in a while. Let me point you toward prettyflour, who writes terrific comedy. In this scene, Bella – who receives a hickey of tremendous consequence during some casual sex (whoops) - confronts her partner as a newborn vampire. They haven't exactly known each other long:

"Bella, stop teasing me."

"**{Bleep}** you. I think you deserve a little teasing." I started licking him all over. I was making him squirm big time. My tongue licked almost every part of his body, almost... I purposely avoided his most sensitive areas and waited for him to beg me some more.

He pushed and pushed against me, but I overpowered him. I pushed his head toward the floor and watched as the floorboards were cracking and breaking against his weight.

"{Bleeping bleep}. Please Bella, please!"

Oh how I loved this. Never in my wildest dreams could I have imagined myself in this situation, the most beautiful man in the world begging me and pleading with me. He wants me... Somehow, he wants me...

{Bleep} it. I don't want to wait any longer. Teasing Edward is fun, but I am not teasing myself. Off go my pants and I slowly, painfully slowly lowered myself onto him. This time, when he tried to flip me, I let him. With each of his thrusts, I could feel the floor boards breaking under me. Within seconds, he had picked me up and we were going at it against the wall. I wrapped my legs around him. I grabbed him by the hair.

"Harder Edward."

He obliged and minutes later there was a Bella shaped dent in the wall. With one last thrust, he moaned my name then dropped to his knees.

He fell backwards and I followed landing on top of him once again. He put his hands on my face and pulled me down to him, kissing me with a passion that I had never experienced. When he finally broke the kiss, he looked into my eyes and said,

"I {bleeping} love you."

http://www.fanfiction.net/s/5036455/7/My_Shiny_Freak

Be True to Your Story and to Yourself

The one drawback of writing fan fiction is that you may be tempted to alter your story in response to audience demand. Usually, this does nothing but water your story down (or clog it up) until it's not worth reading. So, while writing your story with sensitivity, don't pander to your audience. Write what you feel passionate about, and you're sure to be satisfied.

I don't think I have much more to tell you on this topic, but I'm always happy to answer questions (as long as they aren't questions about my personal sex life. Yeah, I've had those. Don't ask.). A great way to interact with me is to visit my site <http://jessmollybrownauthor.com>, friend me on Facebook (Jess Molly Brown) <http://www.facebook.com/profile.php?id=100001158080623> , or visit my fanpage <http://www.facebook.com/pages/The-Unforeseen-Events-series-By-JMolly/120789297957442>

Best of luck with your writing!

