

# 30th Anniversary Special Interview

## Janet Rivenbark Fanfic writer

### 1) When did you first become aware that B&B had a fandom?

*It was sometime in January of 2008.*

*I never forgot the show, although I never saw the last two episodes of season 2 or any of season 3 initially. I was in the US Air Force and had a temporary duty assignment to England in the spring of 1989. My husband was supposed to tape them for me, but he forgot. I didn't sweat it too much because I figured I'd just catch it in reruns later that summer. That never happened because the town near us that had the TV stations two and that was the summer our CBS affiliate became an NBC affiliate. I read a little about what happened but never experienced it first hand.*

*Over the years I would search for VHS tapes of the show. I found a whole set once, but the person selling them (on eBay) wanted \$10 each for 55 tapes. That was definitely not in my budget.*

*It was January and I was bored so I was doing one of my searches when I found the DVDs on Amazon. The price was within my budget this time, so I ordered them. I was so excited about it that I had to tell my daughter, and she's the one who told me about fanfiction. She'd been reading Buffy the Vampire Slayer fanfiction on fanfiction.net. Back then, before I had Amazon Prime and two-day delivery, it took almost a week for the DVD's to be delivered, and during that time I read fanfiction.*

*The first one was Dancing In the Shadows by Ayiana. When I sent Ayiana a note telling her how much I enjoyed it, she sent me a note back suggesting that I read the Kaleidoscope series by Cynthia Hatch; she even warned me about The Bridge. She also mentioned that there was an active fandom, which surprised me.*

*Then the DVDs arrived, and I immersed myself in the tunnels for over a week. I watched 6-8 episodes a day. My husband kept asking me if I was ever coming out.*

*That satisfied me for a while. After I watched the DVDs the first time, I started back on the fanfiction at fanfiction.net and read just about everything there.*

*Then for some reason, I did another search and found the WFOL site... the week after it shut*

*down that year. Links there led me to everything else.  
I lurked on BBTV for a while before I started joining in.*

## **2) Why did you decide to write fanfic?**

*I kind of fell into it.*

*Finding BATB fanfiction naturally led me to other fanfiction. And that led me to another discovery... BATB had very little badly written fanfiction compared to some of the other fandoms. A lot of other fanfiction genres had a lot of PWP (Porn Without Plot or Plot? What Plot?), but the BATB stories were almost all well-plotted, well-written stories that could have been turned into scripts for the show, at least in my opinion.*

*All my life I'd rewritten movie, TV show and book endings or filled in missing scenes, in my head. Never on paper (or as the case is now, on the computer). I'd tried my hand at writing fiction, but there never seemed to be enough time. I had two jobs, a husband, a daughter and had conceded the fact that I was not Wondermom years before, so nothing had ever been finished.*

*But at the time that I rediscovered BATB, I was retired, and I had the time (I needed a hobby,) so I just jumped in to see if I could do it. I did it for myself to prove I could and to prove that I could finish it. What started out as just a little thing turned into over 50 pages.*

*My daughter suggested that I post it on fanfiction.net, but I wasn't so sure about fanfiction.net, so I sent it to Lynn Wright at Tunnel Tales. She wrote back and said she liked it and that it was nice to find a beginning writer who knew the difference between its and it's. She posted it the next week. That was in July of 2008.*

*My 2<sup>nd</sup>, 3<sup>rd</sup>, and a lot of the 4<sup>th</sup> fanfictions were written on a little Acer Netbook I had, while I was sitting in the hospital with my husband. He had back surgery in August of 2008. He had a heart attack while he was in the hospital after the back surgery. It was decided he needed cardiac bypass surgery, but they wanted him to heal from the back surgery first. He was in and out of the hospital (finally had the cardiac bypass at the end of October) so many times over the next 9-10 months that I just kept the Netbook in my bag. The hospital had WiFi for the patients, and I used it. Writing fanfiction was the perfect escape from real life at that point.*

## **3) What character(s) do you enjoy writing about the most?**

*I can't say that I like to write any one character more than others. I love them all for different reasons.*

*Father is fun because he's easily manipulated. You can make him the bad guy (and I have), or you can turn him into an old softy.*

*Mary is also fun, and also malleable. We know so little about her background that you can take her just about anywhere.*

*Vincent is a challenge, mostly because it is imperative to get his voice right. Same goes for Catherine, and she might be even more of a challenge because her voice changes. She speaks one way when she's Above doing her job and interacting there, but she speaks differently when she's with Vincent.*

*Diana was a challenge, and I didn't write any Season 3 fanfiction for quite a while because I just couldn't get her right. She either came across too hard or as a carbon copy of Catherine. Then it dawned on me. Diana is a New Yorker; she's from the city; she's a bit more streetwise than Catherine. She talks a lot like me, only with a New York accent. That and watching more*

*of Season 3 helped.*

**4) Do you prefer long stories or short ones?**

*That was a joke, right? I've only written 11 stories under 20 pages. 22 stories were 50 or over; several over 100 pages. Even if I start out thinking "this is going to be a short one," it seldom works out that way.*

*Now, I'll read any length, but I love the long ones where we get a chance to see the characters do something.*

**5) Do you feel you have more stories in you yet to write?**

*You should see the file on my computer labeled IDEAS. They won't all get written, at least not by me, but I do still have a lot in me to write.*

**6) What aspect of the B&B fantasy world intrigues you most?**

*All of it... but it's mostly the idea that there is (or could be) another world just below the feet of the people walking the sidewalks of New York City. That is probably why most of the fiction I read is science fiction or fantasy. I'm looking for the escape from real life.*

**7) Have you written other fiction or any non-fiction?**

*I've started a few things recently, but as of yet no other fiction. But I've written all my life. I started in high school on the newspaper staff. I did mostly sports, but they wouldn't give me a byline because I was a girl and girls didn't write sports. BAH!*

*In the Air Force Reserve, I was my unit's Historian and Public Affairs Representative. I was always writing stories for the Wing Newspaper about what my unit was doing. I wrote Enlisted Performance Reports (some of those got kind of creative), Medal Packages, after action reports, briefings.*

*I edited and wrote a newsletter for a credit counseling service where I worked.*

*But my first real foray into fiction was BATB fanfiction.*

**8) What person do you prefer to write in (i.e. first, second, third)?**

*I dislike first person. I've tried to write it a few times, but it didn't work. I kept forgetting that the person I was writing for couldn't tell what was going on when they weren't around. I will read it but think it works best if written like a diary. Other than that, I think I've tried all three.*

**9) What do you wish they had explored (or explored more) in the series?**

*The show was probably the most romantic show on the air at the time, but I would have liked to know more about the Bond. I've always looked at it as if it was almost another character. What was it capable of? How much of it could Catherine sense? Was it evolving, growing, changing at all? And what would have happened to it if they did become lovers? I didn't like that it disappeared at the beginning of Season 3. I realize that it more or less had to for the writers to write what they wrote, but I didn't like it.*

**10) What aspect of the series do you like least?**

*Inconsistencies, I doubt that they had anyone who kept an eye on those things, and there was the attitude that the viewers would never notice them.*

*Bringing in the same actor to play multiple parts, or having two different actors playing the same character. Having different characters with the same names, who weren't meant to be the same character.*

*Ellie from No Way Down and another Ellie in A Children's Story, Sam Denton and Old Sam, one Kipper in the pilot and another in the rest of the show, two different Isaacs, Robert Pastorelli playing two different characters. One Jenny in A Happy Life and then a different one in Season 2 and 3.*

*To me, that is distracting.*