

THE REAL Scott Pomfret & Scott Whittier

The two Scotts—lawyer Pomfret and advertising whiz Whittier—have broken into the book industry big time with the romance novel *Hot Sauce* (Warner Books, \$12.95). After self-publishing four books and setting up a Web site to promote them, the Boston-based couple saw their mix of traditional romance and gay elements catch the eye of major imprints. Now they're garnering more press and more readers than ever.

What's the difference between gay erotica (which you both write on your own) and a gay romance novel?

Whittier: It's the focus on the relationship.

Pomfret: In erotica you have a lot of the allure of the stranger. You get a lot of the dark alley, and the romance lasts all of 15 seconds before the action starts.

The college freshman moving into the dorm...

Pomfret: You've got it. One step into the dorm room, and he's already getting laid. In one of our books the first sex scene is on page 3. But it's always in the context of relationships. I'd like to think it's at least as hot, but it's much more focused on tenderness and "I know what this guy likes" and loving gestures.

Which is harder to write?

Whittier: I love writing the romances because sex isn't the only part of it. Erotica is like a quickie; you just knock out a quick, hot little story.

Pomfret: If we've just had sex, both erotica and romance are impossible to write because there's no motivation to get worked up again. But I think tenderness is a little harder to write. You've got to stay focused on your characters, so one sex scene can't be so different from another that it seems like different people.

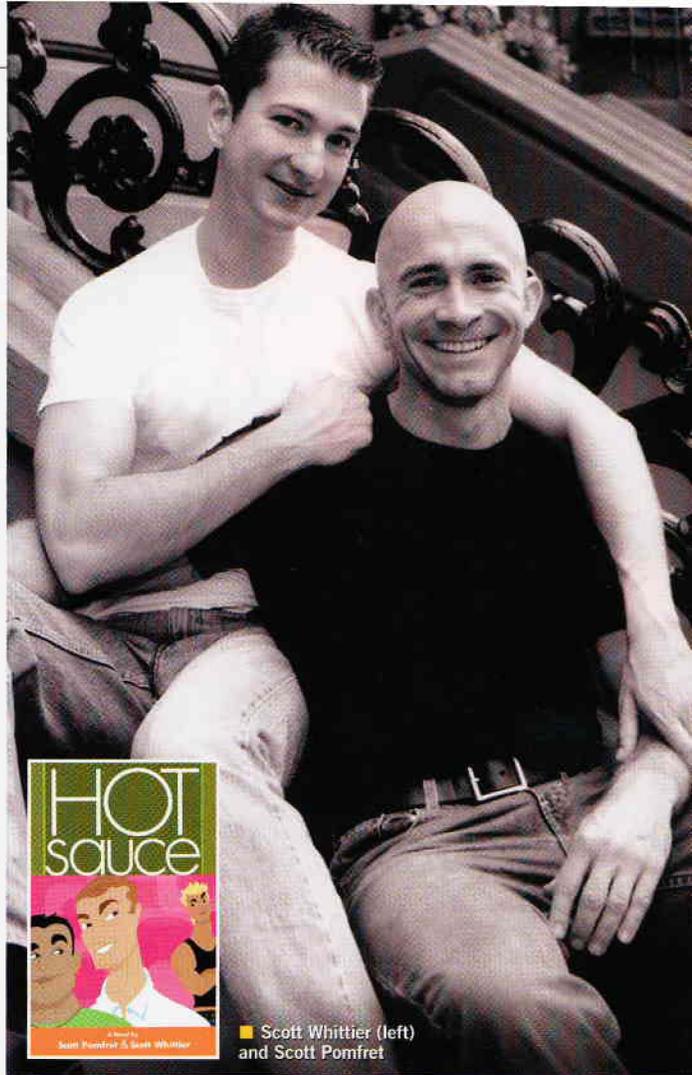
Who writes better sex scenes?

Whittier: My scenes for the romance novel are sweet. The ones I write for erotic anthologies are...filthy. *[Laughs]*

Pomfret: I've got to say, on the erotic writing, Scott has a dirtier imagination than I do. I find it totally attractive, personally.

Is monogamy part and parcel of the romance genre?

Pomfret: Monogamy is what we're shooting for right now. It doesn't mean there won't be a different type of romance novel in the future. We're not trying to write for everyone. We're writing for people who have that dream of a husband, Mr. Right. And that is a dream of monogamy.



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And of course all your characters are absurdly handsome and successful and sexy.

Whittier: I will admit, the only negative feedback we've gotten from people is that the heroes are too handsome, too hot. It is fantasy. The sex is always wonderful, and it goes on for five pages, and it's perfect. And you don't break your parents' hot tub, which I've done.

What's the most romantic thing about the other Scott?

Whittier: He makes me coffee every morning. I don't get out of bed until I hear the grinder going.

Perhaps the most romantic fact about *Hot Sauce* is that it had to be rewritten. Your original, self-published version climaxed with a gay civil union in Vermont—but when Warner Books was relaunching it, you had to update it to a same-sex marriage in Massachusetts, where the story is set.

Pomfret: Honestly, that almost made me weep, to be able to rewrite that scene and to set it in our own state, with history getting ahead of what we are doing. It was fantastic. An honor, really.

—Interview by Michael Giltz