

## ***Conversing With the Unconverted*** ***(How to Deal With Uninformed People Who Put Down Romance)***

**by Stephanie Bond**

We all know a few—snobs who thumb their nose at the romance genre. Co-workers. Neighbors. Relatives. Readers. Booksellers. Reporters. For some reason, value-priced entertainment about monogamous relationships written by women *for* women has been labeled with words as denigrating as *fluff* and *smut* and *filth*. Ironic, considering all the books about dysfunctional relationships that pass as ‘acceptable’ literary fiction, eh? (Oprah, care to read an *uplifting* book?)

If you’re anything like me, rude comments from those ignorant of the panacea of romance novels come out of the blue—call me old-fashioned, but I assume that people won’t go out of their way to be rude and offensive. So in the beginning of my writing career, more often than not, I would respond to the ill-mannered persons with a speechless gape.

Those days are long gone.

Any businesswoman worth her navy pumps is an advocate for her product, especially when she knows her product has a positive affect on consumers. So I came up with a few responses that you might find helpful (and satisfying) when the ignorant and unconverted besmirch you and/or your creation:

**Them:** "You read (write) that trashy stuff?"

**You:** "You obviously haven’t read a romance novel. The stories can be sensual, but many of them contain lots of history or have great mysteries mixed in. Take this one for instance..."

**Them:** "All you ever do is read those silly romance novels."

**You:** "Reading romance is my entertainment, much more rewarding than watching TV or surfing the 'Net. You should try this one and see what you’re missing."

**Them:** "Oh, I read those things when I was a teenager and my mother bought them."

**You:** "These aren’t the romance novels your mother used to read. They’re like great romantic movies, but you get the best seat in the house. Here’s one I couldn’t put down."

**Them:** "I only read literature."

**You:** "Jane Austen proved that literature can also be romantic—*Sense & Sensibility* is one of my favorite classics. You might like this historical romance set during the Revolutionary War."

**(continued)**

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**Them:** "Aren't those books all written on a formula?"

**You:** "If you mean do they all have a happy ending, then yes. But romance novels are no more formulaic than mysteries where the crime is always solved. This romance novel, for instance, made me laugh *and* cry before I got to the happy ending."

**Them:** "Don't those books have a lot of sex in them?"

**You:** "The sexual content varies from book to book, but is usually in the context of a monogamous relationship. The great thing about romance is that there's a book to suit every individual taste."

**Them:** "When are you going to write a *real* book?"

**You:** "My romance novel(s) is/are listed in *Books in Print*, which is good enough for me."

So, the next time someone tries to belittle you or your chosen vocation, smile and graciously put them back in their place by delivering one of your new lines. They won't know what hit them, and who knows—you might even convert a new reader! ~SBond