



**WELCOME TO THE CHATEAU:
AN INTERVIEW WITH TIFFANY REISZ**

The cult at the center of *The Chateau* regards *Story of O*—the infamous French erotic novel—as their “holy book.” When did you first read *Story of O*?

I was in my 20s. I’d heard about it but never read it. Then I read it while I was in seminary considering joining a religious order. I never joined the religious order, but I’m not sure if that was because of *Story of O* or not. We’ll leave that to my future biographers to decide.

Inside the cult’s château, women reign and men are their willing slaves. How did the idea for such a community come about?

Wishful thinking?

The French spy Kingsley Boissonneault—who *Original Sinners* fans may know better as Kingsley Edge—is 24 in this novel. What most surprised you about him at that age?

That Kingsley still has the teeniest, tiniest shard of innocence left in him even after all he’s been through at that age. He’s still a bit of a romantic before life turned him into the incredibly jaded (i.e. French) character we meet in later books. It’s fun that now, in the present day, when Kingsley finally has the love and family he craves, he’s turning back into that more playful, less-jaded person he is in *The Chateau* at age 24.

Madame is an interesting character. She’s described as “a woman of wisdom, power, and beauty.” Tell me more about her.

There is a very famous French dominatrix (Catherine Robbe-Grillet) who is in her 80s or 90s now and is still actively kinky. She’s an incredibly classy, elegant older woman with white hair and I find her fascinating. I think my Madame is how I imagine Robbe-Grillet at a younger age. The *Vanity Fair* profile of Catherine Robbe-Grillet begins with this line: “[She] makes *Fifty Shades of Grey* look like a Disney movie.” Madame makes Mistress Nora look like a Disney Princess.

“Through the looking glass” is a theme that comes up several times in *The Chateau*. What’s the significance of the looking glass?

The Chateau isn’t simply a story about a previously unexplored time in Kingsley’s life (when he was a spy in his 20s). It’s also an origin story of sorts about the kingdom Kingsley will later build

in New York for all his kinky friends. Kingsley and Nora both employ *Alice in Wonderland* and *Through-the-Looking-Glass* imagery in their kinky lives. This book shows where Kingsley first encountered the concept of living a kinky life as going “through the looking glass.”

You’ve written suspense before (your gothic suspense *The Lucky Ones* was recently published by Mira Books), but this is your first real thriller. How did your writing process differ on this book?

This book was much easier to write than *The Lucky Ones*. With Kingsley, all you have to do is conjure him up and drop him into a weird situation and you’ll have fun as a reader and a writer. The pitch was, “Kingsley goes on an erotic adventure inside a femme-domme cult.” The story pretty much wrote itself. It’s James Bond with blow jobs, BDSM, and an angst-ridden bisexual hero still in love with his ex-boyfriend.

Other Original Sinners characters show up or are eluded to, including a certain blond priest...

There’s so much Søren in this book, it’s silly. He’s all over the book from the first page to the last. That’s because you can’t have a Kingsley book without Søren. It would be like bread without butter, day without night, sadism without masochism. Kingsley cannot be understood as a person or a character without Søren. Søren is his creator. There would be no Kingsley as we know him if he’d never met Søren.

After eight books in the Original Sinners series, *The Chateau* is the first full-length standalone set in the Original Sinners universe. Why did you decide to step outside of the series format for this book?

I had conceived of the idea for *The Chateau* a long time ago as a spiritual sequel to *Story of O*, but Kingsley wasn’t a character in it. But the idea kept falling flat for me. When I threw Kingsley into the mix and made him my O who gets thrown into this weird kinky world, the book came to life.

What’s next for the Original Sinners?

In October, 8th Circle Press is releasing *Picture Perfect Cowboy*, which is an Original Sinners standalone novel (category-romance length). It stars Simone, Søren’s backup whipping girl who works at The 8th Circle, and a new character, Jason Waters, a retired rodeo champion who’s deeply conflicted between his kinky impulses and his incredibly conservative family and upbringing. Simone is the cure for what ails him! Søren and Mistress Nora both make big cameos in *Picture Perfect Cowboy*.

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