

ENJOY ENLARGE ENLIGHTEN ENLIVEN *your Self*

## THE QUEEN OF RUBENESQUE ROMANCES

**NASHVILLE, TN**—Romance novelist Pat Ballard was an active, plump and healthy child. The oldest of six children growing up on a farm between Quitman and Meridian, MS in the 1950s and '60s, she and her siblings perfectly exemplified the roll of genetic dice in terms of body size. Pat and one brother were short and fat, another brother and sister were tall and thin, and a third brother-sister set were average-sized.

All ate the same foods, worked hard and played hard in the days before computer games and 24-hour television programming, and accepted their bodies as their natural birthrights.

That is, until Pat discovered height/weight charts when she was 11, followed by fashion and beauty magazines that promoted slimness as the feminine ideal. Both discoveries contributed to a belief that her chubby body was not acceptable as it was. She embarked on a long road of dieting and eating disorders.

By her late teens Pat had so damaged her health by starving herself, purging, and other bulimic behavior that she was suicidal and on the verge of anorexia. With the help of her loving parents she regained her health to some degree, but kept on dieting and trying to shape her body to fit others' ideals.

When Pat was 25 the family moved to East Texas, where she met and married Joe Ballard. When their son, Eric, was three years old, Pat went on her last diet.

“Life was too short to spend it hungry,” she says now. “I needed to have the energy to keep up with an active three-year-old.”

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She decided to stop trying to lose weight or to keep her body at a specific size. Instead, she would eat as “normally” as she could, exercise when she had time, and what she wound up weighing would just be who she was.

Fashion and beauty magazines with unrealistic images of women and girls, rife with dieting advice, had contributed to the development of her poor body image and eating disorders. As she quit trying to change her weight in the late 1970s, a new fashion and beauty magazine helped reinforce attempts to love and accept herself at her natural size: *BBW (Big Beautiful Woman)* magazine. In appreciation for the positive messages *BBW* provided her during an era when size acceptance was practically unheard of, she has subscribed to the magazine ever since.

Finally, “I came to the conclusion that who I was had nothing to do with my body size,” Pat says. “My body was just the package that I was wrapped in. But I made up my mind to learn to love that body, take care of it, and be proud of it.”

A new revelation followed. She realized that when she loved and respected herself, others responded to her in the same manner.

“The more I accepted myself, held my head up and lived with confidence, the more compliments I received,” she says.

It would be several more years, though, before Pat Ballard found her calling: writing motivational fiction as the Queen of Rubenesque Romances.

After spending 15 years in East Texas, Pat and her husband and child moved to Nashville, TN so Joe could better pursue his singing/songwriting career. Pat and Joe celebrated their 30<sup>th</sup> wedding anniversary in early 2004. Eric is now married with two children.

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Pat had recognized at an early age that she loved to “make up” and write or tell her own stories. She spent many hours entertaining her younger siblings and cousins with stories she created on the spot, on demand, while her audience gathered around her. In school, she delighted in English and literature classes, where having to write a short story or poem made her the happiest. The teacher always read her stories aloud to the class.

Her love of books had begun when she started to school and saw her first “reader.” She was fascinated with the pictures and words, and learned to read so quickly she completed two grades in her first year. “From then on, I read anything I could get my hands on, from the Hardy Boys and Nancy Drew mysteries to Zane Gray and Louis L’Amour westerns,” she says. When she was in her mid-teens, she found her literary love—romance novels by Emilie Loring.

After discovering romance novels, Pat knew she wanted to write in that genre. But she wanted her books to have a positive effect on as well as entertain her readers, and couldn’t quite decide where to start with them.

Eventually, her own personal struggles pointed the way. After living life in her Big Beautiful Body for several years, the proverbial light bulb went off over her head. Of course! Motivational romance novels with Big Beautiful Heroines!

She’d write romance novels where the heroine was large, sexy, and real. Romance novels where the plus-size heroine got her hero just like women do in real life. Romance novels where the heroine would *never* go on a diet to lose weight, but would either love herself from the beginning of the book, or learn to love herself before the book was over.

Pat immediately started writing her novels, and began publishing them with iUniverse.com in 2000. When psychologist and journalist Peggy Elam, Ph.D. founded



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Pearlson Press to publish self-affirming and empowering fiction and nonfiction, she acquired rights to those novels and to Pat's previously unpublished short story collection, *Dangerous Curves Ahead*.

*Dangerous Curves Ahead: Short Stories* became the inaugural book of Pearlson Press. Its publication was followed by four of Pat Ballard's romance novels: *Wanted: One Groom* (June 2004), *Nobody's Perfect* (July 2004), *His Brother's Child* (August 2004), and *A Worthy Heir* (September 2004). All are available in trade paperback (\$13.95) and eBook (\$4.95) format. Pat Ballard's romantic suspense novel *Abigail's Revenge* (\$14.95) was released by Pearlson Press in October 2005.

The paperbacks are available retail through bookstores and [www.pearlson.com](http://www.pearlson.com) and wholesale through Ingram Book Group and the publisher. The eBooks are available through online booksellers and at [www.pearlson.com](http://www.pearlson.com).

Pat also maintains her own website at [www.patballard.com](http://www.patballard.com).

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