

ENJOY ENLARGE ENLIGHTEN ENLIVEN *your Self*

THE QUEEN OF RUBENESQUE ROMANCES

Decades of dieting and eating disorders whittled away at Pat Ballard's health and self esteem, but she recovered to champion self-acceptance and positive body image through romance novels with plus-sized heroines.

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, and set her on a long and painful 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 for more than a decade, still 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. Pat went on her last diet when their son, Eric, was three years old.

“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.

Finally, “I came to the conclusion that who I was had nothing to do with my body size,” she 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 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, during which Pat and her husband and child moved to Nashville, TN, before Pat found her calling: writing motivational fiction as the Queen of Rubenesque Romances.

Ballard’s heroines are large, sexy, and real—and they get the guy just like they do in real life. They either love themselves (and their bodies) from the beginning of the book, or learn to love themselves before the book is over.

Pat began publishing her Rubenesque romances with iUniverse.com in 2000. When psychologist and journalist Peggy Elam, Ph.D. founded Pearlsong 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 (May 2004, ISBN 0-9713247-2-7, LCCN 20044102276) became the inaugural book of Pearlsong Press. Its publication was followed



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by four of Pat Ballard's romance novels: *Wanted: One Groom* (June 2004, ISBN 0-9713247-0-0), *Nobody's Perfect* (July 2004, ISBN 0-9713247-9-4), *His Brother's Child* (August 2004, ISBN 0-9713247-7-8), and *A Worthy Heir* (September 2004, ISBN 0-9713247-8-6). All are available in trade paperback (\$13.95) and eBook (\$4.95) format. Pat's romantic suspense novel *Abigail's Revenge* (ISBN 1-59719-003-9, \$14.95) was released by Pearlsong Press in October 2005.

The books are available retail through bookstores and www.pearlsong.com, and wholesale from Ingram Book Group and the publisher.

Pat also maintains her own website at www.patballard.com.

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