

Smut 101: The Geekfiction Guide to Getting It On... On The Page

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Introduction

This guide came about after a few panicked emails from some fellow writers who had just signed up for the [Smutathon](#), and found themselves wondering where to go next. There is no one answer to that question, but hopefully the information that I have collected on these pages will at least point you in the right direction. I have provided as many references as I could find, so I encourage you to explore the recommended websites and books, many of which were provided by your fellow writers.

This guide is presented in two parts. The first is a quick overview of common errors in fan fiction, and the second concentrates on how to write a sex scene. Several of our more seasoned smut writers were kind enough to contribute their thoughts on writing sex, and I encourage you to pay particular attention to their advice.

I hope you find this information helpful, and I look forward to seeing your fics posted on Valentine's Day!

Part I: Basic Tips

Before we get to the good stuff, let's take a minute to cover some common fan fiction mistakes and how to avoid them.

Use Spellcheck

This is possibly the easiest thing that you can do to ensure that your story starts out on the right track. All word processing programs come with a spellchecker, so use it. If, for some reason, you are using a program without a spellchecker, try one of these:

[Google Docs](#) – It's free and it's online, so you can access your documents from any computer once you have logged into your Google account. It's fast and easy to sign up.

[Open Office](#) – This one you download, and it's also free. Have a Mac? [Go here to download Neo Office.](#)

Don't forget to double check how your characters' names are spelled as well. Nothing is more distracting than an incorrectly or inconsistently spelled character name.

Dialogue Punctuation

- Start a new paragraph when a new person starts speaking.
- Examples of correct punctuation. Note the placement of commas in relation to the quotation marks.

Grissom said, "I love bugs."

"Bugs are great," said Sara.

Brass said, "Don't even think about it," then pulled out his gun.

*"Ladies and gentlemen," said Hodges, "welcome to hell."
"Where did they go?" she asked.*

"Put your hands up!" shouted the blonde detective.

Dialogue Mechanics

Your characters come alive through the words you put in their mouths, and traditionally writers have a harder time writing dialogue than narrative. Here are a few guidelines you can follow to help you write more effective dialogue.

- Don't explain your dialogue to the reader
Take a look at the following examples
"You have to be kidding me," Sara said in astonishment.
"But he would never do that," Nick said in surprise.
The writer has simply told you how the characters are feeling missing out on an opportunity to show you a little bit more about the character. How our characters react to things tells the reader a lot about them. When you write strong and effective dialogue, the reader will know how the character feels without you saying "hey, Sara is astonished!" When you choose to tell instead of show you cheat the reader out of the chance to feel along with the character.
Resist the urge to explain your dialogue. Instead, use a bit of physical action to accompany your dialogue and show how your character feels.
You have to be kidding me," Sara said as the knife slipped from her grasp.
- Avoid 'ly' when writing dialogue
 - 'ly' almost always catches the author in the act of explaining dialogue. Examples are: grimly, harshly, listlessly, glowingly, grudgingly, or lovingly. Perhaps you feel the need to dress up the verb said by throwing in a few adverbs. Resist. This actually draws the reader away from the story, and into the mechanics of your delivery. Your dialogue will actually be stronger without these words to prop it up, and flaws will be easier to spot for revision.
 - Exceptions: As with all good rules, there is an exception to this one. If the adverb modifies the verb said (instead of telling the reader how the dialogue is being delivered), it is permissible. Examples of this would be softly, clearly, or quietly.
- Speaker Attributions
 - Don't use them as a means to explain your dialogue. How the dialogue is delivered should be inherent in the words your character says. Examples of this would be: 'she snapped, he growled, she questioned, he intoned, she marveled.' Even worse is 'she grimaced, he smiled, she beamed.' While all of these are examples of explaining dialogue, the second set are the worst offenders because they are physically impossible. You cannot beam a line of dialogue. The primary reason to avoid these verbs is because they draw attention away from the dialogue, once again pointing the reader to the mechanics of delivery.
 - Said is a transparent verb. Think of it like a period or question mark. Which is another good reason not to use adverbs or explanations with your dialogue; they will just draw attention to said.
 - Don't open your paragraph with a speaker attribution.
 - Place the character's name first in a speaker attribution. Greg said, versus said Greg.
 - Decide how you are going to refer to a character and stick with it for the entire scene. Don't call Doc Robbins Al the first time, the doctor the second, and Robbins the third. People don't change the way they think of a person during a conversation. Please note, I am not talking about the duration of your story, just

- the current scene you are working on.
- By this time, I am sure you are worrying about the number of 'saiDs' you are going to have in a scene. Here are some ways to help with that quandary.
 - If it is clear who is speaking, you don't need a speaker attribution. One warning, avoid ping ponging your dialogue just to avoid using said.
 - Use beats of action to replace 'said.' "You're beautiful." Nick brushed his fingers over her cheek. "Let me make love to you." Just vary action with actual speaker attributions and you will be fine. Too much of one or the other is distracting, you just want to create a comfortable balance between the two.

Lie vs. Lay

- Lie means to recline, whereas lay means to put something down. Additionally, Lie means that the actor (subject) is doing something to himself or herself. Lay, on the other hand, means that the subject is acting on something or someone else; therefore, it requires a complement to make sense. Thus lay always takes a direct object. Lie never does.

Style

Here's a list of common errors to watch for:

- **Switching Tenses** – If you start writing in the past tense, don't suddenly switch to present tense in the middle of a paragraph. Wrong: - *Sara picked up her kit and enters the room. She opens it and takes out a roll of duct tape.*
 - Right – *Sara picked up her kit and entered the room. She opened it and took out a roll of duct tape.*
- **Narrative Point of View** – Chose one and stick with it.
 - **The most popular options:**
 - **First person narrative** - This viewpoint uses the pronouns 'I' or 'we' to tell the story.
 - **Third person narrative** - This viewpoint uses the pronouns 'he', 'she' or 'they' to tell the story. The narrator can be created so as to be what is called 'omniscient' or 'all-knowing'; here, he or she seems to know about every character and every place.
 - [Here's a quick online power point of Narrative Points of View and when to use them.](#)
- **Mary Sue** – We all know her. She's the striking blonde/brunette/redhead that Grissom/Greg/Nick can't keep his eyes off of. She sweeps into the lab solving cases and stealing hearts. She's damaged, yet resilient, brilliant, yet humble...and worst of all she's you! Resist the temptation.

Show and Tell

I'm sure you've heard it before, "show, don't tell!" But what exactly does that mean?

Showing is how you transport the reader into your world. You do this through writing scenes.

Scenes can be challenging to write,

A scene has a few distinct qualities

- **Setting** – A specific location where your scene takes place. It could be the bedroom of Grissom's townhouse or the backseat of Greg's car. You can reveal location throughout the scene, so don't feel pressure to paint a complete picture in the opening sentences. A great way to reveal the scene is by having your characters interact with it. If Nick trips over a loose floorboard entering a crime scene, it paints quite a different picture than Catherine's heels clicking on a polished marble floor.
- **Action** – Scenes contain action. Nick seduces Greg or Hodges breaks the case wide open. Dialogue will often play a big part in how your scene is revealed to the reader, and by blending it with action you will immerse your reader in the scene.

As with all things, striking a balance between immediate scenes and narrative summary is

critical to the flow of your story. Scenes are full of action and engage your reader, but every once in awhile, you want to give your reader a break and slow things down. Here are a few examples of when to use narrative summary:

- Adding time into your scenes. Let's say Hodges finally gets up the nerve to take Wendy to dinner. You might show them arriving at the restaurant as an immediate scene, then use narrative summary to pass the time over dinner, and return to scene when they reach the crucial good night kiss.
- Repetitive Action - If Greg needs to run thirty different DNA samples, we don't need to see him doing each individual one. Concentrate on making a scene out of a critical discovery.

Beta Readers

Using a beta reader is one of the best things you can do for your story. Find someone who will be honest with you and be ready to write more than one draft of a story. Betaing starts at punctuation and grammar, but it goes beyond that, encompassing characterization and story structure. Your beta should be familiar with the variant of CSI you are writing as well as with the characters. Be open to what your beta says and think about their advice, whether or not you take it, because it may help you to see your story in a different light. An effective beta relationship really is an honest conversation between two people. Try to remember it's the story that is on the line, not you, and your beta's job is to push you to do your absolute best. And remember to be kind to your beta. Plan ahead. Ask your beta to read your story in advance (not 15 minutes before you need to post), give her enough time to comment on your story, and yourself enough time to make corrections.

Where to find a beta reader

Finding a beta is a process, so you may need to work with a few people before you find that symbiotic relationship you are looking for. I am providing you with two resources to find a beta. Be clear about what you are looking for from your beta when you contact them. If they write, take a look at their stories, make sure you enjoy and respect their work.

[Geekfiction Resident Beta Listing](#) – Read this list carefully and pay attention to what kinds of fics these kind people will read.

[CSI Fan Fiction Writer's Forum](#) - This LiveJournal community is for CSI fanfiction writers to talk about anything from writer's block to characterization. Come in and ask advice, share your tips, and get support as you join the crazy world of fanfiction writing!

A Few Last Tips

These are the things that sort of defy a category, but are worth some consideration.

- Use **bolding** and *****asterisks***** in your fic as sparingly as possible, if at all. Exclamation points are used one at a time! It is distracting at best to use these tricks, and if you have done your job as a writer, you don't need that type of propping up for your writing.
- Use a beta reader. If you choose not to at least have someone do a quick read through, don't write in your author's notes it was because you were lazy or impatient. That is the equivalent of saying I don't care and is hardly an endorsement of your story. Not beta'd will suffice.
- Resist the urge to pepper your sex scenes with the following dialogue:
 - “uuhhhhhhgggg” or “Ccccoooooommmminngg” She moaned or he moaned will do just as nicely. You could also throw in a “More” or “faster” to show that he or she is about to come versus the announcement
- And one final thing that I want to address here is the use of epithets. I am not talking about swear words. For the love of all that is good and right in the world, do not use these in a smut scene. An example of what not to do:

- *The brown eyed Crime Scene Investigator slid his hand over the curve of the Detective's hip.*

This is a particular challenge in slash or femslash fics when it is difficult to use pronouns clearly. It's okay to use the character's name. Referring to your characters by their job title is just not the kind of mood you are trying to set up when writing smut.

Part II: Writing Smut

Words of Wisdom

There is no substitute for experience, so I have asked a few writers whose names you will surely recognize to share their thoughts on what it takes to write smut.

What is one thing you know now that you wish you had known when you first started writing?

- That it's not all about the actions all the time, and no, you don't have to spell it all out for the readers. You really **do** have to trust them to understand what you're trying to say. If you don't, your entire piece comes off as though it's a step-by-step instructional manual, and that's clearly no fun to read. (scullyseviltwin)
- I wish I had known how valuable a beta is. It amazes me now when I read the first story I ever posted just how bad it is. I wouldn't take any amount of money for a good beta. Also, don't pick a beta that tells you how great you are. Pick one that tells you how to be better. You need someone who isn't afraid to argue/discuss with you. It will make your writing a million times better. (Smacky30)
- I'm my own worst enemy when it comes to my writing. I had always believed that it was important to write in linear order and to never delete something once it was written. I've learned that it's ok to start at the end and write 'backwards'. It took me months to get myself out of that mindset.

I've also learned to take advice from beta's. I never realized how important they really are and I wouldn't write a story without one now. (gabesaunt)

- While reviews can be the ultimate high for any writer, writing to get reviews is never as fulfilling as working on something that you as a writer enjoy. People might be clamoring for a sequel, but if you're not feeling it, don't feel like you have to write it just to keep getting reviews. Write because it's fun! (viggylgirl)
- Two things, actually. First, few people have true perspective on their own writing...it's one of the reasons having a beta is so important. It needs to be someone you can trust that you're willing to learn from.

And two, you can't please everyone; this is especially true when writing smut. Some people like softly written prose with emotion and euphemisms for body parts and some people like raw and gritty. Some people find some acts extremely erotic, while others judge the same acts as disgusting perversions...you can't please everyone, but everyone's beliefs and sexuality should be respected. The most important thing is to write to be true to yourself as a writer...don't write to please, write what is real and true and comes from within. (mingsmommy)

What would be your advice to someone writing their first sex scene?

- You really **have** to take your time and don't rush to get it done; I know a lot of writers who insert a sex scene because they feel the story needs it, not because they feel compelled to write it, and that's not good. You have to be comfortable writing what you're writing. If you're not, it comes off as sloppy and boring. You really have to be inspired when you're writing a sex scene, you have to feel the emotions you're trying to pen.

- 1. I would say to start out writing what you know. If you've never had sex in a shower, for example, don't make that your first project.
- 2. Don't be afraid to ask other people about their experiences. Your husband/boyfriend is an excellent source of how a male orgasm feels.
- 3. Use your imagination. Don't be afraid to use your inner perv.
- 4. Don't make it one dimensional. It isn't just about how it feels. Tell the reader how it sounds, tastes, smells, looks. It engages all their senses and makes it 'hotter'.
- 5. Remember to keep it in character. I will read any smut but if the scene is OOC I stop. Just that simple.
- 6. Don't be afraid to take chances. It's very hard to put that kind of material out there. But you have to just close your eyes and jump. (Smacky30)
- In writing a sex scene, it is so easy to fall into a cliché or even (horror) the 'cheesy' scene where your reader is laughing at your characters and their antics. Such a mood kill.

I would suggest reading the scene aloud, and then taking a step back and ask yourself, 'Does this sound real? Does it feel romantic?hot?arousing?' or what ever emotion you are trying to invoke with your words. I was terrified of writing my first sex scene but it gets easier with time (and a beta who is willing to call you out when it does get 'cheesy').

Also, read up on what you are going to write – if you want to write something hardcore, make sure you know the ins and outs of how it's done in real life. Authors have a responsibility to write realistic smut and when an author has researched something, their fic is just more confident, more detailed, and that makes for a better read. (gabesaunt)

- Take your time, both in writing it and even in the scene. Sometimes anticipation can be as much of a factor as the actual moment. Take the time to get into your character's heads, explore what they're thinking and feeling, and you can improve the experience for them and your reader. (viggysgirl)
- Take a deep breath.
Ok, you can let the breath go, now. The advice for writing a sex scene is the same as it is for any other writing. Write what is real and true. Don't rely on cliché. Write with feeling, occupy your characters, don't rush it. Write what you know...ok, so none of us have had sex with Grissom or Sara or Nick or Sofia (and if you have, you need to e-mail me immediately and tell me all about it) but write things you know...you don't have to have experienced them (as a matter of fact, writing something you haven't experienced is a great way to stretch yourself as a writer), but make sure what you're writing is anatomically correct and physically possible. (mingsmommy)

Why write sex? What do you feel smut can add to a story? Is there a reason you choose to include it in your stories?

- 1. I write it because, to me, it is the easiest thing to write. There doesn't really have to be a plot. There is no character development. It's sex - pure and simple.
- 2. I think good smut can add a lot to a story. By good I don't just mean tasteful. I mean smut that is realistic. Pay attention to what you are writing and ask yourself if it is physically possible, can you imagine anybody in their right minds doing it, etc. Think of how you would expect the characters to act in that situation. Don't start the scene with her crying and him comforting her and then have him spank her or something. Again, keep it in character - I don't think I can stress that enough.
- 3. I feel that sex is a natural part of our lives. I can write a story without smut (especially a one shot) but I think that any chapter story needs at least the intimation

of people being intimate. I can't imagine the characters in the situations we fanfic writers put them in without them just caving in and going for it. They are human after all. (Smacky30)

- I got caught in a trap (for a while) of only writing smut because, for me, it is easier. It comes easier to me and I find I could 'churn out' the stories. Not a great trap for an author trying to expand. I am trying to be more selective in the smut I write now, going for more depth, more *vanilla* smut. Of course, you will still see the occasional 'porn without plot' from me since I still love to write it. Smut can add texture to a story that might be missing it. I love to read stories, that touch on the psyche of a character and sometimes that kiss, that touch is the perfect extension of a caught moment. Without the added texture, stories *can* lose that added element of touch which I crave as a reader. (gabesaunt)
- I write sex for a lot of reasons. With the CSI fandom it's something we rarely ever see on screen, especially with the pairings I've chosen (Grissom/Sara, and Sara/Sofia). With Grissom and Sara it's also a look at their personal relationship and how they connect with each other. When it comes to Sara and Sofia I pretty much just think that the pairing is hot, and I think it's been an interesting challenge to attempt this sort of alternate reality outside of canon.

Smut adds such an intimate feeling to the story too, because you're really going into something that is personal to those two characters. I feel like getting that close to your characters can be a real challenge, in both writing it and making it appealing to the readers. (viggylgirl)

- Sometimes I write stories and sex is part of the story as an expression of love and commitment between the characters (e.g. Chapter 9 of And Then Some... or The Lipstick Trick and Treat) and sometimes I write a story just to write smut (Sexicon, Delicious). Part of the fun of writing fanfic (especially for CSI) is creating behind the scenes story...we see what happens when they're at work...what happens when they're at home? The majority of what is written is about romantic relationship between the characters (no matter what your 'ship) and a part of any love relationship is sex...it can be an expression of attraction, lust or love...an act of wish fulfillment, physical release or emotional intimacy. When they are in our hands, we are stewards of these characters emotions, morals, thoughts and feelings...we can gift them with a fantastic sex life that is a physical manifestation of their deep and abiding feelings for each other or we can saddle them with erectile dysfunction and post traumatic stress disorder. The fantastic sex life just seems more fun to me. (mingsmommy)

Do Your Homework

In order to write sex well, you need to read it. And the more you read, the better you will write it. Reading helps you figure out what you like, and what you don't like; what words make you cringe and what turns you on. Admit it; this is probably the best homework assignment you'll ever get. I'll even give you some places to start:

[Geekfiction Smutathon '06](#)

[Geekfiction Smutathon '07](#)

If you'd rather, you could read mainstream erotica as well to broaden your perspective.

Mind Over Mechanics

You are not writing a sex manual. Don't get so hung up on what your characters are doing, that you forget what they are feeling and thinking. A good rule to remember is *Action->Reaction*. If Grissom slides his hand down the smooth skin of Sara's back, you can

bet she's going to react to that. Following the principles of *Action->Reaction* also helps you maintain the tension in your scene.

Another thing to avoid when writing your scene is the Twister effect:

Grissom brushed his left hand across Sara's right cheek. Bringing his fingers down, he caressed the back of her right shoulder as her right hand squeezed his left buttock.

With all the rights and lefts going on in there, you reader will be tangled up in no time flat. Trust your reader to figure it out, even if you don't tell them which hand is doing the action. Another big issue that falls under this category is word choice. The amount of heat between your characters is not dependant on how many different euphemisms for penis you can pack into a story. Eroticism in your story is not borne on "dirty" words alone. It comes from the way your characters respond to one another. Let your characters dictate words you use in your scene and you will find the flow of your work to be much smoother. There are no right or wrong words to use, and you can convey sex in an intimate manner without using a single "dirty" word.

For example:

She closed her eyes as she felt him part her legs, and slide into her. Her arms tightened around him as her hips came up to meet him, pulling him more deeply inside of her. She cried out as he moved inside of her, letting him fill her again and again, until all the empty places were gone.

He could feel the way his touch transformed her, the way that she was finding her way back to him; he heard it in her voice, the way she spoke his name like a prayer. It was all he ever wanted to be for her; the light that brought her home.

Her whole body tightened around him as she finally let go of everything, letting him wash the pain away on the strength of his love. He was flooding her, filling her, making her complete in all the ways she wasn't without him.

That being said, sometimes a dirty word is the right choice. In the above example, I wanted the scene to have a very healing quality; however in the following example, I was looking for a raw tone so the language is more explicit.

She looked up at him, caught off guard by the depth of the desire she found staring back at her. The feel of his eyes on her was driving her to distraction, and she groaned as she slid a finger over her center, pressing down gently, "I'm so wet."

"What do you want?" He tore at the closure on his pants, thrusting the hard length of his cock into his damp palm.

"You." She stroked the swollen lips of her sex, drawing the wetness up and around her clit.

"How?"

"Fucking me." She kept her eyes on him, teasing the opening to her pussy with a finger before sinking it deep inside.

He tried to remember to breathe, unable to tear his eyes away from the sight of her finger doing the work of his cock.

This brings me to research. If you are going to tackle subject matter that you are not familiar with, be sure to do your research (and even if you are familiar with it, it doesn't hurt to do a little reading.) If you are under informed about the type of sex you are writing, your

reader will sense it. Even if you feel that Catherine is a born dominatrix, in order to portray her in a realistic manner you need to know as much about domination as Lady Heather. There is a wealth of information available to you through the internet and books, take advantage of it. I have provided a few links to get you started in the Resources section at the end of the guide.

And as a final word, if you choose to address a sensitive subject such as any form of rape, incest or sexual abuse, it is your job to handle your subject matter with as much sensitivity as possible. Give your story the time and attention that it deserves,

Characterization

Don't forget who you are writing about...your characters' histories and relationships to each other drive your sex scene. Understanding what has brought your two characters together is what is going to bring chemistry to your scene and allow your reader to identify with it. It will also help you keep your characters in-character during the scene. This is always a challenge in CSI fan fiction given the fact that we rarely see the characters having sex on the show, so there is little to draw from canon. It's up to you to draw conclusions from the way your characters behave around each other in the lab, and then extrapolate that into a sex scene.

Since we are writing fanfiction based on CSI, and not original characters, it is important that you know the characters that you are writing. You need to actually watch CSI to make this happen. Find episodes that feature interactions between your characters and watch them over and over. Listen to how they speak to each other, watch the way they interact.

Anyone can write a story with characters named Wendy and Hodges, but your job is to capture the essence of their awkward relationship on the page and take it to the next level.

Making Sex Count

My dad always said that the road to disaster was paved with assumptions, but I am going to go out on limb and assume because you are reading this you want to write more than a Tab A into Slot B kind of story. That being said, just because your story is about sex doesn't mean it's going to be about love. People have sex for a lot of different reasons, and you'll need to decide why your characters are doing it.

Sex is the ultimate vulnerability and the reasons that your characters are having sex fuels the fire in your scenes. And while it may not come directly into play in your story, considering your character's history will help you add intensity to your scenes. Showing the evolution of your character throughout your scene also allows the reader to connect with what you are writing.

While it may seem that smut is inherently PWP (Plot What Plot) that is not necessarily true. Really successful smut, smut that arouses the reader as much as the characters, has some kind of underlying theme to give it meaning. An example of this is "Grissom wants Sara to see herself as he sees her." When you are writing a scene, ask yourself why your characters are having sex. Is it love? Loneliness? Whatever the reasons, make sure you tie them into your scene.

Plotters vs. Pantsers

I am a plotter by nature, so I am a natural advocate for the outline. That's not to say that I've never had a story completely depart from my carefully constructed plan; however, outlines come in many colors and I encourage you to at least try to map out the general direction of your story. Your outline could be a short paragraph, a list of the major events you have planned, or a traditional outline complete with roman numerals.

Outline or not, there are a few things to consider when planning your story.

- Location
 - Where is your encounter taking place? Sofia taking Sara home after a difficult shift has a much different connotation than a quickie in the locker room.

- Content
 - What are they going to do? Who's on top? Oral sex? Masturbation? All of the above?
- Evolution
 - How is this encounter going to affect your character(s)? Has your character used sex to get what she wants in the past but now finds herself falling in love? Was she just looking for a quick release and found more, or less, than she wanted? This just adds one more layer to your story.

Answering these questions will help you create the framework for your story, then all you have to do is fill in the details, which I will cover in a little more detail later on.

Rating Your Story

When it doubt, err on the side of caution. And if you think there is an element that might offend someone reading your story, put a clear warning in your Author's Notes. Examples of touchy subject matter would be rape/non-consensual sex, BDSM or extreme violence.

[Here is a link to Geekfiction's rating system.](#)

What Will People Think?

This is probably the greatest barrier to smut writing; the idea that people will see through your writing and somehow see your secret fantasies. While this might be possible to a degree, if you put a reasonable effort into your story, paying attention to characterization and setting, you, and your fantasies, are the last thing that will be on your reader's mind. Practice does make perfect. Try writing a few scenes for your eyes only as a means to get comfortable with the language and characters that you will be writing. Then if you are feeling brave, ask your beta to look at it and get some feedback. The more familiar you are with your subject, the better your writing is going to be. If there are words that make you uncomfortable, try writing them twenty times on the page and watch their power over you disappear.

Remember, if you are not comfortable with your subject matter, your reader won't be either. There is nothing wrong with "fade to black" at the end of scene. You don't have to write explicit sex to write sex erotically.

Popping Your Cherry: Your First Smut Fic

Let's assume you've done your homework. You've read lots of smut, you know what you like, and you've given some thought to the kind of story you want to write. So where do you start?

Fortunately, a sex scene has a natural progression (foreplay, the act, climax, closure) that you can build on and if you just take it one step at a time you'll be done in no time. The easiest way I have found to do this is to build the scene gradually through layers.

Your first step is to decide what is going to happen in your scene. An example of this would be *Grissom and Sara have sex in front of a mirror*. Then you need to give your scene a context in their relationship (or lack of relationship depending on what you are writing). For my example scene, the context is Sara letting Grissom know that she found his letter. His reaction to that is a desire to show her how he sees her when they are together.

Action->Reaction comes into play on every level of your story.

Your second step would then be to map out what is going to happen in the scene. This means you have to decide the kind of sex your characters are going to have and who is going to do what to whom. (Remember the outline we talked about above. This is where it

would come into play.) In my example, I intend for Grissom to take Sara from behind. You need to know this to write it so it's important to make a decision, and you can always change it if your characters surprise you along the way. After you know what is going to happen in the scene, you write out a rough sketch of the scene. At this point, try to just write and not edit. It doesn't matter if you use the same word fourteen times. You'll have time to fix that in the revision process.

Your third step is to go through your rough draft and start to layer in the detail. You don't have to do this all at once. Maybe one time through you concentrate on Sara, then Grissom on the second time and the third time you look at how they are acting and reacting to each other. Revision doesn't have to be this huge thing if you break it up in to small chunks. Set a timer for 15 minutes and work at it that way. At this point, I also start to refine and tighten the dialogue. At any point in this process, you may want to send a draft to your beta and have her give it a few read throughs. The genius of a beta is that they have distance from your story, and can sometimes give you some much needed perspective.

Below, I have included two versions of a piece of the mirror sex scene that I have used as an example--one from the first draft, and one from a progressive draft.

Sara followed him, unsurprised that they were heading for the bedroom; she'd seen the look in his eyes.

He led her over to the dresser, turning her so that she was facing the mirror. "I want you to see what I see." He trailed two fingers along the side of her face, bringing them under her chin.

She found his gaze in the mirror, and felt a sudden flush throughout her body as the heat she found there.

Several drafts later, and after some beta input, here's the same scene snippet:

She looked up at him before sucking lightly on the sensitive skin just below his ear, murmuring her assent as she allowed him to guide her into the bedroom, her limbs still tangled with his. She could see his desire for her so clearly etched on his face that it made her wonder where he'd hid it for so long.

She stopped beside the bed, but he swung her around in his arms, leading her over to the dresser. He answered her questioning look with a kiss, turning her around in his arms so that she was facing the mirror, and he was standing behind her.

He trailed two fingers along the side of her face, bringing them under her chin as he met her gaze in the mirror. "I want you to see what I see when I make love to you."

She felt a rush of heat travel through her as his meaning became clear. Looking into the glass, she was embarrassed at the nakedness of the emotion she saw on her own face, she tried to turn away, but he held her close to him.

The same basic structure exists in the second version; it's just been fleshed out with more detail.

A few final words here, on endings and how to write a good one. As I have mentioned previously in this guide, the best way to connect your reader to your characters is to show them evolving throughout your story. The evolution does not have to be epic, you don't have to save anyone's soul or turn Ecklie's black heart to gold. The only thing you need to do is bring your story full circle.

Using the mirror fic as an example, the basis for that fic was Sara letting Grissom know she found the letter, in which he admits he has a hard time expressing his feelings for her and no matter where she is, part of her is always with him. The focus of the story then is Grissom wanting Sara to see how he loves her. He does this by making love to her in front of a mirror.

However, in order to show his character's evolution, he needs to say the words that often seem to elude him.

When she shifted under him, he turned her in his embrace, holding her face between his hands as he kissed her. Her arms circled his neck, pulling him even closer to her. He trailed kisses across her cheek, and along the curve of her ear. He smoothed her hair back, as he pulled back to catch her eyes with his own. "Words have often failed me, but my heart has always been yours."

"I always knew." She drew her thumb across his bottom lip. "Even when you didn't." She felt his hand curl around hers and she twined her fingers with his. When his mouth found hers, his kiss held a new promise, and she knew that the letter was only the beginning.

When you are thinking about how to end your story, just remember to look at your beginning and bring your story's focus right back to the issue that brought your characters together.

You can find the full text of the story [Words Fail at Geekfiction](#).

Your Turn

Sex, when it's good, is intense. It's intense to have it, to read it, and to write it. By mapping out your framework first, you can help alleviate some of the stress of getting it right the first time. Once you have your sequence of action, you can go back through and fancy it up a bit. If you get stuck, sit back, close your eyes and imagine the scene unfolding before you. Do this whenever you get stuck throughout the writing process. Put yourself in the middle of the scene, imagine how it might feel to be your character. If you give it time and attention, a scene will grow in your mind and all the tiny little details will begin to fill in as you spend more time with your story.

So what are you waiting for? Go write!

Resources

Sex Info

[Sextutor.com](#) - Sex Tutor offers accurate, clearly written, helpful sex advice.

[Wiki After Dark](#) - Sex wiki, positions, technique and more.

[The-clitoris.com](#) - Everything you ever wanted to know about the Clitoris and Female Sexuality.

Writing Resources

[Minotaur's Sex Tips for Slash Writers](#) - I think that says it all

[Usingenglish.com](#) - Particularly helpful for non-native speakers writing in English

[Alan Cooper's Homonym List](#) - Homonyms are words that are pronounced the same but are spelled differently and have different meanings. Example: carrot and carat. Go here to check if you are unsure you've used the correct word.

[Common Errors in English](#) - Massive list of misused words and how to use them correctly. Covers grammar as well.

Fic Archives & Communités

[Geekfiction](#)

[Passion & Perfection: A Femslash Archive: CSI: -or- CSI: Miami](#)

[What Makes the Desert Beautiful: A Nick/Greg Archive](#)

[CSI Forensics : From Out of the Lab](#) - CSI Fic Archive

[GSR Fic Find: Smut](#) - Grissom & Sara smut

[The Frisked and Conquered...CSI Stories](#) - Femslash Archive. Has some exclusive stories.

[CSI Transcripts](#) – If you look at the menu on the left of the screen, you will see links to all three CSIs.

Recommended Reading

[Self-Editing for Fiction Writers](#) by Renni Browne & Dave King

This book is worth its weight in gold. You can get it at the library too. Read it, it will make you a better writer and a formidable beta!

[Elements of Style](#) by Strunk & White

A classic you should own if you don't. Very easy to find at the library. [Online Version](#).

[The Artist's Way](#) by Julia Cameron

I would never miss a chance to recommend this book (or anything else she's written.) If you have ever had writer's block, this is the cure.