

KEYNOTES



The newsletter of the Romance Writers of America / New York City Chapter #6

JUNE 2016

**NEXT CHAPTER MEETING: SATURDAY, JUNE 4
TRS, 40 EXCHANGE PLACE, 3RD FLOOR, 12-4PM**

TOPIC: PUBLISHING 201

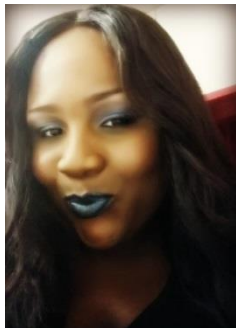
You've got the basics down. You feel confident in your craft. You've mastered the query letter. Maybe you've even sold a book or two or ten. So now what?

This month, we're trying something a little different and having an interactive round table discussion on more advanced publishing topics. Published members will be on-hand to share their experience, so come with questions!

The discussion will be guided a little by what the group wants to talk about, but some topics will likely include: Next Level Conventions (how to get the most out of a con, how to submit a killer workshop proposal, how to get on a panel); Marketing and Social Media that Really Works (how not to annoy readers, strategies with proven success rates, using analytics to track what works online); Time Management for Writers (how to write faster, especially when you have a day job/kids/both); and so on. This will be a discussion new and seasoned writers alike should be able to get something out of, so please join us!♥



CLOSING WORKSHOP: TOOLS OF THE TRADE WITH LAQUETTE



You've written a book! You've even managed to figure out how to publish it. You've done your job as an author now, right? You've done all you're supposed to do to keep your career on the right track, right?

Wrong. As with most things in life, there is so much more than what we see on the surface. Yes, getting that manuscript in top shape, and selling it, or publishing it yourself is very important. However, there are some tools that can help you navigate your author life more effectively. This presentation will cover topics and tips for expanding beyond the traditional role of author to vendor. Topics such as e-commerce devices and platforms (PayPal, credit card readers, website building, newsletters, swag, as well as taxes) will be discussed.♥

“ If you wish
to be a
writer,
write. ”

Epictetus



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THANK YOU!

To Our Contributing Writers
 Maria Cox, Maria Ferrer, Isabo Kelly,
 LaQuette, Kate McMurray, Alice Orr, Mimi
 Pizarro Logsdon, Ursula Renée, A.C. Rose
 & Contributing Photographer: Alexis Daria

2016 CHAPTER CALENDAR

Jan 9	Feb 6	Mar 5	Apr 2	May 7	Jun 4
Jul 9	Aug 6	Sep 10	Oct 1	Nov 5	Dec 3

KEYNOTES DEADLINE

Send articles to keynoteseditor@gmail.com
 by the 15th of the month. All articles
 must be typed and up to 500 words.

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ATTENTION: The Board welcomes all
 comments/suggestions/etc. Please send emails
 to info@rwanyc.com.

MEETING INFO: RWA/NYC meets the first
 Saturday of each month. Meetings are held at
 TRS, 40 Exchange Place, NYC. 12 noon.
 Membership is at the discretion of the Board.
 Annual dues are \$40. Make all checks payable
 to RWA/NYC. There will be a \$20 fee on
 returned checks.

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JULY THEME'S

HONORING OUR CIVIL SERVANTS
 (Police, Fire fighters, EMTs, etc.)



WELCOME, NEW MEMBERS!

ERICA BEY
NICKI NIGHT
MELISSA ROSATI

**PHOTO ALBUM FROM MAY BRUNCH
BY ALEXIS DARIA**



May Brunch Keynote Speaker
Jennifer Baker
from We Need Diverse Books



Alexis, LaQuette, Kate, Stacey, Jennifer



LaQuette and Alexis



Kwana, Stacey & Alexis



Kate Dunn, Shirley & Alexis

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE: WE ALL RISE TOGETHER
BY PRESIDENT KATE MCMURRAY

You may recall the tiny Internet controversy of a few years ago in which an author wrote an article arguing that J.K. Rowling should stop writing so that the rest of us got a crack at the bestseller list.

I found this argument so absurd that I took to my laptop and wrote an article that was eventually published in *Romance Writers Report* about scarcity mindset. This idea that readership is a limited resource is, I argued at the time, the source of a lot of bad author behavior. But readers are, in fact, abundant, *especially* in romance. I've met romance readers who read hundreds of books a year. They bring shopping carts and wagons—literal wagons, guys—to big signings and fill them with autographed copies. They've probably got carpal-tunnel from one-click buying so many ebooks.

While it is true that the book market is crowded and authors compete for reader attention sometimes, it is not true that another author's success takes away from your potential. It's easy to sit around saying, "That author's book is terrible. How come *she* is selling thousands of books, but I'm not?" The harder thing is to examine what it is we as authors can do to change our strategies, to gain more readers, to write better books.

I was going to write about networking this month, because networking is a vital and undervalued part of the industry, but I think there's actually a larger issue that I've seen at play among authors I know recently.

Bitterness. Jealousy. Frustration. Publishing is hard. It's a ton of work, sometimes for little reward. It's not a get-rich-quick scheme, despite the news we hear about wild success. And I'm sure we all have days in which we think, "What is the point of all this?"

But we are romance authors. And support is out there if you need it. That's one of the great benefits about networking. We in this community have such a variety of experiences, and talking to each other can help us rethink our approaches. People you meet at events can be critique partners or offer advice. Maybe they've tried approaches to marketing that would work well for you. Maybe they can recommend editors or cover artists. Maybe they have some insider knowledge about the industry regarding agents, editors, or publishers.

My point is that, by working together, we can all be successful. We can trade resources, give advice, help each other become better writers. We can offer each other opportunities, feedback, support. We can help each other achieve our goals.

And one of the best ways to build that support network is to attend romance-related events, to get out there and meet people. Coming to chapter meetings is a wonderful way to do this; I'm grateful for the contacts (and friends) I've made in the chapter. But that's just the beginning.





Conventions are, I think, a key part of a romance career, but they aren't mandatory, and if they aren't in your budget yet, there are a lot of things you can do locally to network with authors and industry professionals. Here are a few suggestions:

Lady Jane's Salon is always the first Monday of every month at 7pm at Madame X on Houston Street. Admission is only \$5. Each month 3–5 romance authors read from their work. Our published chapter members are often among those reading. (Not to mention, chapter member Hope Tarr is one of the cofounders.) So come to support your chapter mates! Authors also frequently bring along their book teams—editors, publicists, agents, etc.—and the audience is full of romance fans, other writers, and industry people who enjoy chatting over cocktails.

Come to book signings, readings, and panels around the city. If your chapter mates are doing an event, come to support them! Going to events can be a way to meet fellow romance readers and writers, or to learn something new. Keep an eye on the calendar at WORD in Greenpoint, where Sarah MacLean hosts panels of romance writers every six months or so. Eloisa James has been hosting periodic events at Book Culture in Morningside Heights.

There are also small conventions locally that aren't a big financial commitment. The Long Island Romance Writers annual luncheon (which just happened at the beginning of May) is an opportunity to pitch to agents and editors in a relaxed setting, so put that on your calendar for 2017. New Jersey Romance Writers host an annual conference in October that's an easy ride on NJ Transit. Liberty States Fiction Writers hold a conference every March that is fantastic and affordable. If you live north of the city, maybe it's easier for you to get to the New England events: Connecticut RWA has their own annual conference, as do the New England Romance Writers. The CoLoNY (Connecticut and Lower New York) chapter and the Charter Oak chapter meet and host events in Connecticut, as well. The websites of those chapters will have more information on those events if they are local to you.

And, of course, here in the New York chapter, we have our annual Romance Festival coming up this month. If you've never been, I highly recommend at least stopping by to see what it's about—admission is free! Talk to some of the authors exhibiting if you don't want to sell books yourself. Come see some of the panel discussions. We also host the Golden Apple Awards in the fall. We're planning to institute a few changes this year to help facilitate discussion between industry professionals and the chapter members attending, to make this an even better way for our members to network.

Take advantage of these opportunities! We in New York are in the unique position of living right in the middle of the publishing industry, and getting to know fellow writers and industry professionals can be a key way to earn an advantage when it comes to your career. And I genuinely feel that a positive attitude and a willingness to support fellow authors in return goes a long way. We can work together to help each other succeed, so that we all rise together.♥



Kate McMurray is an award-winning author of gay romance and an unabashed romance fan. When she's not writing, she works as a nonfiction editor, dabbles in various crafts, and is maybe a tiny bit obsessed with baseball. She has served as President of Rainbow Romance Writers, the LGBT romance chapter of Romance Writers of America; and as Vice President of RWA/NYC. She lives in Brooklyn, NY. Visit her at www.katemcmurray.com.

**GOLDEN APPLE AWARD WINNERS
BY MIMI PIZARRO LOGSDON**

Vice President Mimi Pizarro Logsdon announced the winners of the 2016 Golden Apple Awards; including two of RWA/NYC's very own; see winners list below. Winners were chosen by Chapter Members. Awards will be presented in September at the GAA reception.

Follow our hashtag: **#GAA2016**

Editor of the Year: Kerri Buckley, Carina Press

Agent of the Year: Linda Camacho, Prospect Agency

Publisher of the Year: Kensington Books

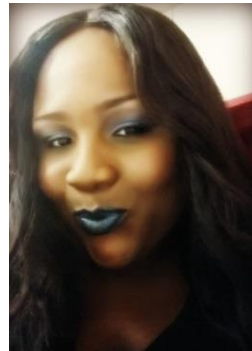
Media Source of the Year: Phoebe Jordan, *New York Times* Romance Review

AND

**Lifetime Achievement Award
Isabo Kelly**



**Author of the Year
LaQuette**



CONGRATULATIONS TO ALL THE GAA WINNERS!♥
Happy Summer!



ROMANCE FESTIVAL: JUNE 25



March your calendars for Saturday, June 25, at 2:30pm at the Morris-Jumel Mansion.

There will be readings, romance discussions, book sales and house tours for a nominal fee. Join us! We also need some volunteers for the day. Let us know if you are available.♥

Our hashtag: **#RomFestNYC**

INDUSTRY NEWS

RWA & Ellora's Cave: After continued reports about failure to pay royalties, RWA released a new statement regarding Ellora's Cave, outlining the efforts RWA has taken on behalf of authors. At this point, the next course of action may be an audit. For more information, see the RWA website.

LaToya Smith, formerly of Samhain Publishing, is now an agent at the Lori Perkins Agency.

As of July 2016, **RT Book Reviews** is ending its print edition and going digital only.♥

BDSM WRITERS CON: AUGUST

Anyone interested in BDSM? From a writers view point, of course.

The BDSM Writers Con is Aug 18-21, 2016. Keynote speaker is Sierra Cartwright. Hosted by sexologist Dr. Charley Ferrer.

Here's our chance to get the "Real" facts up close and personal. There will be workshops, live demos, author- editor mingles, informal editor-agent appointments, book sales, fetish wear sales and even a club night.

If RWA/NYC can get a group of 10 or more to attend, Members will receive 15% off the registration fee. So instead of \$250, we'd save \$37 and pay \$213.

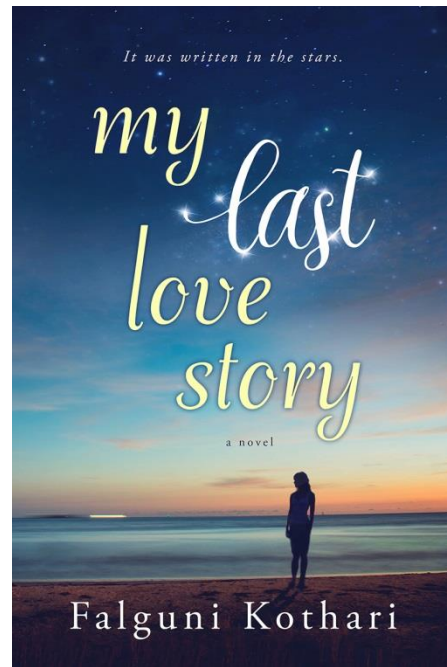
Payment is required by July 1. Discount will be applied AFTER all 10 members have registered.

Anyone interested, email Maria Ferrer at ferrerm@aol.com. It will be fun to go in a group.♥

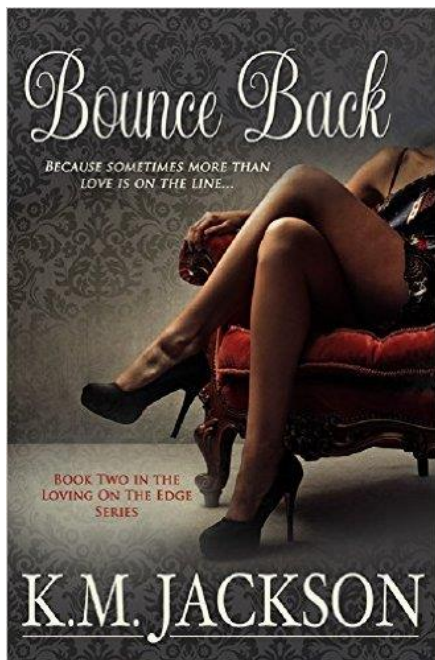
MEMBERS ON THE SHELF



SOMEONE ELSE'S LOVE LETTER
by Deborah Blumenthal



MY LAST LOVE STORY
by Falguni Kothari

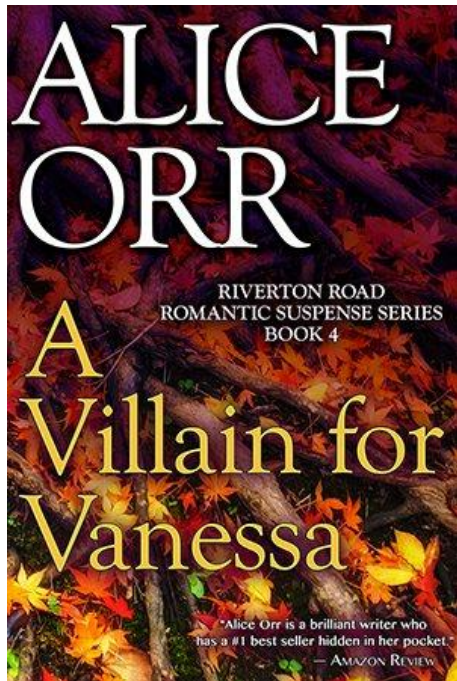


BOUNCE BACK
Loving on the Edge series, book 2
by K.M. Jackson



LOVE'S CHANGES
by LaQuette

MEMBERS ON THE SHELF...CONTINUED

**A VILLAIN FOR VANESSA**

Riverton Road Suspense series, book 4
by Alice Orr

**LET'S RIDE**

Legion of Guardians, book 2
by Xyla Turner

MEMBER NEWS

Cathy Greenfeder has written a short Victorian erotica story that will be published in an upcoming anthology.

Catherine Stine's historical fantasy, **WITCH OF THE CARDS**, will be a part of the "21 Shades of Night" boxed set.

Ursula Renée, Lena Hart and LaQuette all attended the Romance SlamJam and had a ball, which Ursula writes about in this issue.



FREE PROMOTION!



Keynotes is a FREE Promotion Opportunity. We welcome all subjects.

Have a new book out? Entered/won a contest? Interesting topic, research, tips to share? An event, book, conference you'd like to review? Send in your articles, news, book covers, reviews, etc., to keynoteseditor@gmail.com. Articles will also be published on the Chapter Blog for **DOUBLE** the promotion!

Deadline: the 15th of every month. Take advantage of us!♥

ABOUT PRO



The purpose of the PRO Community of Practice is to establish within RWA a network of communication and support to effectively promote and protect the interests of romance writers in the areas between manuscript completion and PAN eligibility.

To help members reach the next level, PRO focuses on the business side of writing rather than craft.

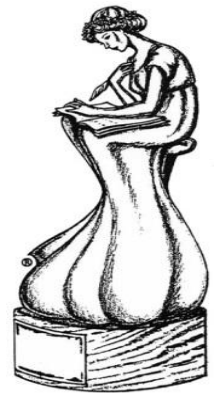
This program is available to any active General or Honorary member who: (1) is not PAN-eligible and (2) has one complete original work of romance fiction of at least 20,000 words, or multiple complete original works of romance fiction which combine for a total of at least 20,000 words.♥

ABOUT PAN (PUBLISHED AUTHOR NETWORK)

The purpose of the Published Authors Network (PAN) is to establish within the RWA framework a network of communication and support to effectively promote and protect the interests of published romance authors; to open channels of communication between those romance authors and other publishing industry professionals; and to encourage professionalism on all levels and in all relationships within the publishing industry.

To be eligible for General PAN Membership: RWA General or Honorary members in good standing should have earned at least \$1,000 on a single novel or novella that meets the definition of Romance Fiction.

To be eligible for Provisional PAN Membership: RWA General or Honorary members in good standing should have: (1) contracted for the publication of a novel or novella for an advance of at least \$1,000, but said work is not yet commercially available ("Option One"); or (2) published an novel or novella, but not yet earned \$1,000 ("Option Two").



Works offered through Predatory Publishing companies shall not qualify.♥

**SUMMER
ACTIVITIES:**

Writing
Reading
...Repeat!



Our theme this month is

**BOY GETS GIRL:
WHO ARE TODAY'S HEROES?**

Here's what our members have to say.



**PAPER DOLLS: TODAY'S HERO
BY MARIA FERRER**

Heroes are important, whether they are bald, have a mustache, are a werewolf, suck blood or wield a whip. Let's face it without them there is no romance. It is the give and take between our hero and his girl which keeps the story moving, which keeps the conflict alive, which keeps readers on the edge of their seats! And if a picture is worth a 1000 words, what does this photo say about our hero?

What's his name? age? occupation?

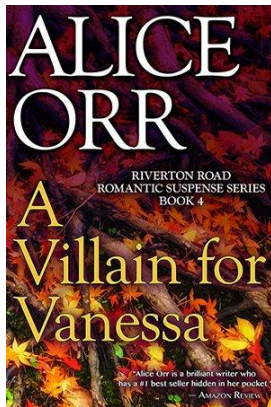
More importantly...can you Trust Him? With your heart? With your top-heavy BFF?

What kind of romance would you write for him? Sweet and innocent? Sexy and steamy? Maybe a little BDSM?

Look at Him—face, body language. Let's play Dolls and bring our Hero to life.♥



Maria Ferrer loved playing with paper dolls as a child and still does. She rips photographs of people and places regularly from magazines, and now with the internet she also copies photos she finds on Facebook and Twitter. As her collection grows so do the ideas in her notebook; sometimes it's a scene; sometimes a character profile. Paper Dolls are great inspiration. Visit her at www.marializaferrer.blogspot.com, and visit her alter ego, Del Carmen, at www.mydelcarmen.com.



ASK ALICE: CHOOSING THE RIGHT HERO BY ALICE ORR

Question: Who is the ideal hero for a romance novel in today's market?

Answer: The attractive hero is intelligent, active, determined, decent, courageous – and of course sexy – whether that hero happens to be male or female.

Intelligent – The hero with appeal makes smart choices the reader can respect. Except maybe one time in the story when danger or heartbreak or some other extremity slips him up and he does something foolish. He plunges himself into trouble from which he will then have to extricate himself using – you guessed it – his intelligence. Added Tip: The male hero in a truly up-to-date story will often be helped in this extrication process by the female hero. Much less often the other way around. Genre fiction has caught up with the gender revolution at last.

Active – This marketable hero – again male or female – makes things happen in the story rather than just having things happen *to* him. He doesn't sit around waiting for the boom to fall. He has a plan and acts on it. When caught by surprise he again must extricate himself using – you guessed it – his intelligence. His active nature also makes him the most interesting person in the story as well. Which means that when you have both a male and female hero in a story – as in a heterosexual romance – you have two most interesting people driving the action.

Determined – His or her motivation is strong – with a will that is even stronger. He decides what he must do and then lets nothing keep him from doing it. Whatever obstacles may arise in her path – remember heroes are bi-gender these days – she forges on to triumph in the end.

Decent – Everybody's favorite hero is best loved for his goals and values. What he holds to be important and worthwhile – in some stories even worthwhile enough to die for – are the same values that most readers or nearly all of us embrace at the heart of the best that is in us.

Courageous – She will face challenges that frighten her and threaten her safety – emotionally or physically or both. She may wish to escape that danger but she stays the course because she knows she must do the right thing whatever the cost. Without such challenges and the hero's heroic response to them – there is no story. Not in this genre anyway or any genre as I see it.

Sexy – Well of course. We've got that from the jump. These are love stories meant to appeal to the libido after all. Sexy does that for me. My guess is the same thing works for you too. Am I right or am I right?♥

Alice Orr's "Ask Alice" column was born from many years of being asked questions about writing and publishing. A WRONG WAY HOME is Book 1 of Alice's Riverton Road Romantic Suspense series, and a free ebook on Amazon. A VILLAIN FOR VANESSA is the fourth book of her Riverton Road Romantic Suspense Series featuring the Kalli family and the Miller family in stories of Romance and Danger. Visit Alice at aliceorrbooks@gmail.com or at <http://www.amazon.com/Alice-Orr/e/B000APC22E/> Here are her links: <http://www.aliceorrbooks.com>; <http://www.facebook.com/aliceorrwriter>; <http://www.twitter.com/AliceOrrBooks>

HERO: TALKING ABOUT BDSM WITH A REAL LIFE CHRISTIAN GREY
BY A.C. ROSE



As “Fifty Shades Darker” films in Vancouver, women are once again thinking of Christian Grey, BDSM and sexually dominant males. I felt it my journalistic duty to bring you an interview with a man who knows about it all, first hand.

Al Daltrey is a real life Dom who lives the lifestyle and also writes strong BDSM erotica. His books are not traditional erotic romances and they come with a warning label, yet he has gained a faithful following of female fans that appreciate his unapologetic peek into the world of BDSM. You might even say it brings some of them to their knees.

By day, Daltrey dons a suit and tie, and works in marketing. In 2014, he opened his laptop and somewhat accidentally launched a second career as an erotica author, penning his first book,

TESTING THE SUBMISSIVE. He admits it is “more extreme” than anything he would ever consider doing with a submissive, yet readers say the story makes them tingle in all the right places.

There is a line in that book that, to my mind, sums up why women love to read about powerful Alphas. “Experienced and mature dominants always have an understated confidence,” he writes. “There is no need to flaunt their power.” There is something very sexy about men, real and fictional, who own their power.

His second novel, **A CONDO WITH TWO VIEWS**, is written from the point-of-view of both the Dom and the Sub. His most recent book, **PAIN, PLEASURE AND PURPOSE (Book One)** is the story of three best friends who help each other navigate life, loss and love...and lots of kinky sex. “I poured everything I had into this story,” says the author.

It’s not often you get to talk to a real life, happily married, sexually dominant male, so we appreciate Al taking the time to answer some of our burning questions.

AC ROSE: Let’s start with basics. What exactly is a male dominant?

AL DALTREY: First, let me say: definitions are not always universal. Ask 25 people the difference between a liberal and a conservative and you will get 25 different answers. All my answers in this interview are my personal opinion based on my personal experiences. Others in the BDSM lifestyle may disagree, and that is fair. For this question, I assume you mean a *sexual* dominant. The simple definition is: a person, male or female, who takes **control** during consensual sex. The submissive of course, relinquishes that control.

And what is exactly vanilla sex?

AD: Vanilla sex is simply regular, normal, healthy non-BDSM sex. Or, even more simply...non-kinky sex. It is a term that became popular within the BDSM lifestyle to describe sex between those who are not in the lifestyle.

So from your perspective, can a sexually dominant male enjoy both?

AD: Absolutely. Personally, I have always loved great vanilla sex. I may practice BDSM, but that doesn't mean I don't enjoy vanilla sex too. BDSM became the icing on the cake. In a good healthy sexual relationship, there are nights where a couple wants the lovemaking to be soft, tender and romantic. Another night, for kinky fun, they might employ bondage and spanking. The point is, it's not all or none. There is room for both.

How did you find yourself on this path, personally? And are you currently in a power exchange relationship?

AD: I was born with it. I know that for a fact. Growing up, the fantasies and inclinations were there. That said, for me, consent is key. I do not believe in force, and do not find force arousing in any way. Today I am very happily married to my beautiful wife.



Female sexual submission is a controversial topic. Some see female submission as a weakness yet many women find role play satisfying and they obviously like reading about it too.

AD: During my lifetime I've been lucky enough to meet my fair share of submissive women. And don't for a minute think these women were weak. Outside the bedroom they were confident, opinionated, gregarious and self-assured. In fact, many of them were successful executives or professionals. At the workplace, they kicked butt. However, inside the bedroom (so to speak) they wanted to feel the strong firm hand of a dominant man taking complete control.

What got you started writing erotic books?

AD: I started writing because of an interest in BDSM, not because of an interest in writing. One day, I flipped open my laptop and starting writing a kinky BDSM story, not really thinking about where it would lead. Soon I had 20 pages, then 40, then 60 and I knew I was on my way to my first novel. I heard about self-publishing, so I cleaned it up and uploaded it onto Amazon. The reaction seemed positive, and soon I had a Street Team on Facebook helping me promote the book.

Is the sex in your novels rough because that is what your readers want?

AD: It's not that I'm trying to cater to what the reader wants but in storytelling almost everything is exaggerated for dramatic effect. In a cop story we see these wildly spectacular car chases where 10 Police cars chase a car through crowded streets at speeds of 200 mph. In a medical drama the Doctor heroically saves countless lives. In a sports movie the athlete scores the winning goal with two seconds left. Think of every single Hollywood movie you know. So, with a BDSM novel, the same applies. The tasks that the submissive must perform are exaggerated for dramatic effect. It's fantasy. So, in my books, the sex scenes are intensified as is the case in every other genre.♥

Learn more about Al Daltrey at his website: <http://eroticabdsm.blogspot.com/>

Read the full interview/story at the Three Tomatoes:

<http://threetomatoes.com/shades-of-al-daltrey-interview-with-a-real-life-christian-grey>

A.C. Rose is a love, romance, and entertainment columnist and author of steamy romance books. Visit her at <http://acroseauthor.net/>.



GOING THE INDIE ROUTE: LET'S TALK MONEY BY ISABO KELLY

The topic of money comes up a lot in the context of Indie publishing—all those stories of Indie authors making huge money right out of the gate, earning a living within a year, striking it rich. You know, the same kinds of stories that came out of the gold rush. But the gold rush of Indie publishing (if there ever really was one) is over. The industry has stabilized a bit, and most authors should view it as they might any other start up business—with a healthy dose of realism and the idea that it might take many years of hard work to start making money.

As a side note, I highly recommend all writers, whether they go the Indie route or not, read books and take classes to familiarize themselves with bookkeeping skills and basic tax regulations. As a freelancer, you need to keep track of your money. Always. Don't assume someone else will just handle it for you so you can sit back and be an *artiste*. That's a guaranteed way to get scammed and end up broke or worse.

Now, on to the meat of this: What kind of money can you expect from Indie publishing?

Honestly, this depends greatly and varies widely—just like in Traditional publishing.

As an Indie, you *will* make more per book sold, which means you can sell less books to make more money. You can focus on the long tail, meaning your book doesn't have to be a success right out of the gate. You can leave it in print as long as you like and let readers find it as they will.

You can also decide what formats to offer your book. As someone who came from small e-first publishers, I had many books that never made it to print for various reasons. As an Indie, I can offer all of my stories in whatever formats I choose—print, ebook, audio. The only limiting factor now is time and budget, but eventually, my entire catalog will be offered in as many formats as I can

manage. The great thing about this in terms of money is you have all these potential income streams from the various formats. Which again means you don't necessarily have to have a huge hit to still make money. All those different trickles of income can build into a respectable income river.





As the person in charge, you also get to pick the prices of your books—another factor that will affect your income. Choose wisely. Know your genres and study the market. For example, voracious Romance readers look for bargains and sales because they read so many books. This isn't to say they won't pay a reasonable price for a book (\$4.99 or \$3.99 for a full length novel in ebook tends to be the going rate), but they aren't likely to pay \$9.99 or more for an ebook unless it's an author they already adore.

And even then, a lot of us will wait for those expensive ebooks to go on sale before we pick them up. On the other hand, there are genres in which the readers tend not to trust really cheap books (assuming the quality can't be good) and are more willing to pay a higher price for a full length novel in ebook. Take both your readers, the format, and the market into consideration when setting your prices to maximize your income.

Now a little caveat here: I completely believe a writer should be paid for her work. Do not underprice your books because you don't believe anyone will pay for them—even if you're new. Set your regular prices at reasonable levels. Then, when you have sales, the discounted price will look really attractive compared to the regular price.

So far we've only talked about income. On the monetary flip side, as an Indie you do shoulder all the expenses of publishing and this can affect how fast your income grows. I highly recommend sticking to a budget, bartering and trading services if you don't have enough actual cash to get the editing and professional covers you need. Roll whatever money you do make back into the business for a few years to add more books to your catalog, in as many formats as are available. Focus on quality products that will keep readers returning for more. In the long run, this will help your income.

Sales can be helped by marketing, and by publishing frequently. But again, you need to focus mostly on writing good books, and publishing them at a rate that's comfortable for you, something you can sustain for the long haul. This might take some trial and error. That's okay. What's most important is to release the best possible book you can write at the time, in the most reasonable timetable you can manage. This is what will keep bringing readers back to your books, and what will help grow your income over time.

The genre, and or subgenre, you write in will have a short term effect on your income, too. Some genres are hot and sell amazingly well—at the moment. Others are smaller niche markets that have fewer, but very loyal, readers. If you're writing in one of those smaller markets, it will take longer to build up a reasonable income. But don't jump onto a "popular" genre bandwagon just because. If you don't love it, don't write it. That's the point of being an Indie author—you can write what you love, when you want to, and release it as you like. Don't miss out on this aspect of going Indie just because you're in





a panic to make money, because in the long run, you'll get burned out and quit. Also remember, genre popularity changes. What was hot two years ago isn't what's hot now necessarily. Write to your passion and the money will (eventually) come.

Bear in mind, in the beginning you may only make a couple of dollars in a month. Don't get discouraged. Keep at it. This can be a slow building business and that's okay. Also bear in mind, you could hit it right out of the park with your first book. And you want to be prepared for that, too. I wasn't and it bit me in the butt (but that's a different article topic).

The money aspects of Indie publishing can be exciting, daunting, and depressing if you don't take a realistic view of the business. Just like in Traditional publishing, sometimes you get really lucky and a book skyrockets unexpectedly. More often than not, though, your income from your writing will build only slowly. Initially, you might be operating in the red—and you might be doing that for years before the income starts to exceed the costs. And that's OKAY! It's not a failure if it takes you time to earn money, because this isn't a get rich quick scheme, and it never has been.

Those writers making a good living as Indies work very very hard to do that. Some of them reached that level quickly. Some of us will take a lot longer. Some years will be better than others, depending on life, the industry, a lot of things outside your control. But if you love telling stories, you *can* make a living at it going the Indie route. Focus on the long term, concentrate on writing the best books you can, and keep track of your money closely so you don't throw yourself unnecessarily into debt. Enjoy the journey and the knowledge that with all that control, comes great opportunity. Happy Writing!♥

Isabo Kelly is the award winning author of numerous science fiction and fantasy romances. Under the name Kat Simons, she's also the bestselling author of shapeshifter paranormal romances. For more about Isabo or Kat, visit www.isabokelly.com and www.katsimons.com.



**ROMANCE SLAMJAM
BY URSULA RENÉE**

Conferences can be a bit overwhelming. There are times when I don't know what to say or which way to turn. And, after spending a day forcing myself to step out of the safe corners and mingle, I feel as if someone had stuck a needle in me and drained all my energy. Therefore, in the days leading up to my first readers' conference, I was afraid I would antagonize everyone around me and, instead of attracting readers, I would turn them off.

Thankfully, my fears were never realized at Romance SlamJam, which was held from April 28th through April 30th in Dearborn, Michigan. Romance SlamJam is promoted as a conference for readers and writers of African-American Romance, however, before I even arrived at the Royal Dearborn Hotel I felt as if I was attending a family reunion. Veteran attendees welcomed newcomers with open arms, making sure we were not left out.

Authors were given opportunities to speak to readers at the Reader Sessions, sit on panels and talk to readers during the Speed Dating with the Author events. There were also plenty of opportunities to mingle during the Karaoke Meet and Greet, the Dinner Cruise and the Emma Award Banquet. The authors and readers I met were friendly and supportive and, by the end of the weekend, I made new friends, who I look forward to meeting at future events.♥

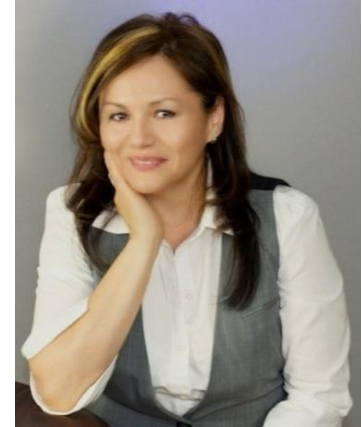
Ursula Renée writes historical, multicultural romances set between World War I and the 1960s. When she is not writing, Ursula enjoys photography. Visit Ursula at www.ursularenée.com.



HELLO AND WELCOME TO MY WRITING DEN!©
BY MARIA COX

NO RISK, NO REWARD

Risk is a four-letter word that makes so many of us cringe. But, why? Why do some of us wince and shy away at the thought of taking risks? Or best yet, why do some of us downright fear it? In my opinion it all boils down to one thing: comfort zone. The average American is complacent and would opt to play it safe more times than not. The ordinary is less taxing. I should know it was six years ago I was still very afraid of taking chances.

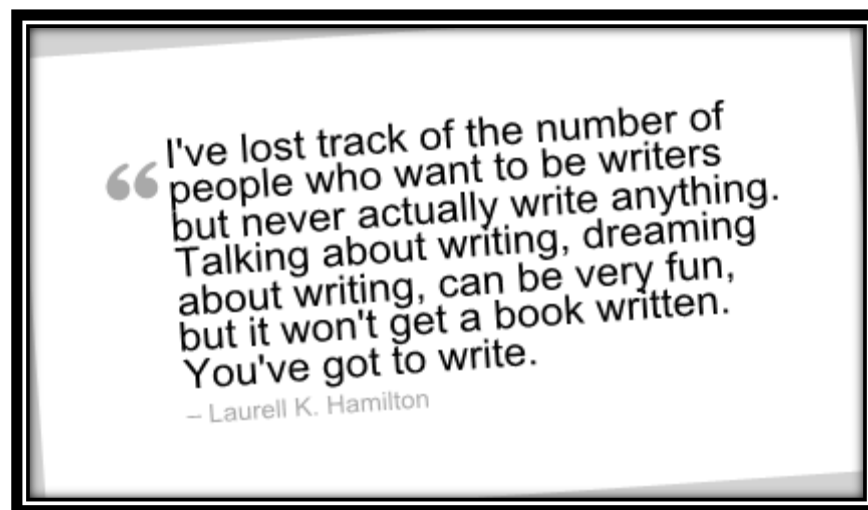


Listen, I'm not going to sugar coat it, taking risks is frightening, this is when we **need** to recondition ourselves. We need not fear risk; we need to see risk as an opportunity to grow.

“... the moment I let risk in, the world became a very easy place to navigate. People who are impossible became easier to deal with. Things began to land at my feet (door, mailbox). This sounds somewhat corny and solipsistic but it's not. It's just that when we use risk at the most optimum level in our writing, it filters into all else. Then the real world seems like child's play. Embrace risk. Eat your meals with it, takes walks with risk, take risk to bed. It will become your greatest friend and ally.” – Susan Tepper, Author.

Fortune favors the bold my friends!♥

Maria Cox is a PRO member of Romance Writers of America; she has also served as President of the Phoenix Writers Club. She has been writing stories since she was a young girl. She picked up her first romance novel when she was just eleven years old and has loved the genre ever since. Maria writes sensual romance, stories that showcase strong, sassy, and sexy characters. When not writing fiction, Maria works as a technical writer. She lives in Queens, New York. Visit her site www.mariacox.net and/or follow her on Twitter.





Embracing my crazy...one character at a time.

EMBRACING MY PARTICULAR BRAND OF CRAZY BY LAQUETTE

THE PURPOSE OF SETTING IN YOUR NOVELS

The setting of your story is much more than where your novel takes place. Setting helps set the tone of your novel. It can also be a tool to help develop the characterization of your character. In essence, setting can actually be a character in its own rite.

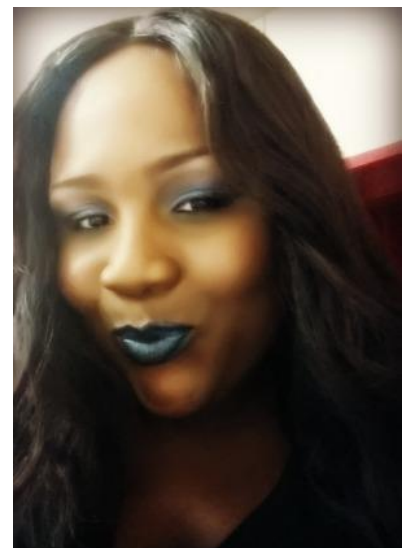
I use setting to connect protagonists to family and community. Why? Think about it this way. When you're getting to know someone, seeing them in an initial setting can limit your impression of them. If you meet a doctor while he/she is working in a hospital they might appear very cold, distant, and clinical. Take that same doctor who seemed almost robotic at the hospital and place them in a room full of their family members, or closest group of friends. I'd wager you'd watch them blossom into someone warm, friendly, and social. Depicting characters in alternate settings allows the reader to engage with the protagonist in a larger sense and not just under the microscope of their relationship with their love interest.

Another method in which I use setting is to depict certain types of relationships, activities, or situations. For instance, I use private settings to convey secrets, internal thoughts, and intimacy. In those moments, the setting has to be something quiet, warm, and dark. Those elements are ripe for creating moments that aren't meant for the eyes of the outside world.

Setting can also be used to augment emotion. The darker the emotions presented, the darker the setting, the lighter, happier the emotions, the brighter the setting. In the black moment of your story, try placing your character in a setting that mirrors his/her emotions to truly get your reader to understand just how potent and dark your protagonists' feelings really are.

This is LaQuette, your friendly erotic romance author, embracing my crazy...one character at a time.♥

2015 Georgia Romance Writers Maggie Award Finalist in Erotic Romance, 2015 Swirl Awards Finalist in Romantic Suspense, bestselling erotic romance author, LaQuette, is a native of Brooklyn, New York. She spends her time catering to her three distinct personalities: Wife, Mother, and Educator. LaQuette loves hearing from readers and discussing the crazy characters that are running around in her head causing so much trouble. Contact her on Facebook, Twitter, @LaQuetteLikes, her website, www.NovelsbyLaQuette.com, Amazon, her Facebook group, LaQuette's Lounge, and via email at NovelsbyLaQuette@gmail.com.



CRAFT CORNER: CONFLICT
BY ISABO KELLY

Weaving Together Internal and External Conflict

External and internal conflict are the meat and potatoes of fiction. Story *is* conflict. And almost all genre stories with any depth will have both internal and external things happen to thwart our intrepid heroes. Internal conflict is a vital part of Romance. It's primarily this struggle that drives the story of two characters finding a way to be in love and have a life together.

But most modern Romance has plenty of external conflict to complicate the internal difficulties.

As a storyteller, where you start in building your various conflicts is up to you (and probably the story). Maybe you start with an idea for a great external fight between your characters, or a brilliant plot idea for a battle against other forces in which your two main characters will have to cooperate to win. Or maybe you start with the internal conflict, pairing up two very different characters with two completely different world views.

Either way, your goal is to interweave these two conflicts and make sure they play off each other to really mess up your main characters' lives. Because that's what good fiction is made of.

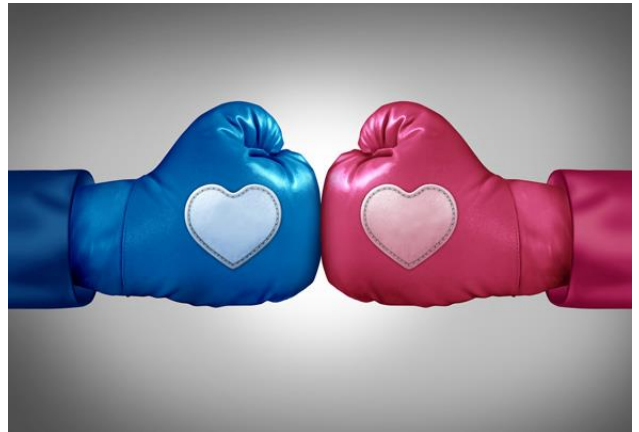
Starting with Internal Conflict

So let's say you start from the internal conflict. As an example, say you have a hero with two daughters, an ex-wife who took herself off to Borneo to live with the orangutans, and no female relatives—just a crusty old father who's excessively macho in his thinking. Our hero can tell, as his daughters get older, that they need a woman in their lives. Problem is, he doesn't trust women to stay, and he refuses to put his daughters through losing another potential mother.

Now you have a heroine who is a free-wheeling, hippy-dippy, happy with life, vivacious woman who is a little flighty—and doesn't know anything about kids. She is uncomfortable in their presence and has no idea how to talk to them. She was an only child raised by a mother and father who treated her as a little adult, so she doesn't even have many memories of "regular" childhood interactions. The trouble is, she thinks maybe she might like to have kids one day, but she feels completely inadequate to the task.

This basic internal conflict for both characters, the struggle within themselves, also creates an internal struggle *between* them that could prevent them from forming a lasting relationship.

Now, if this is where you start, you want to ensure your external conflict plays into and exploits these internal conflicts. You want to put your characters into situations that rub wrong and make that internal conflict even more difficult. For example, maybe something happens that causes the heroine to leave town unexpectedly. She has a great reason for this, but all the hero sees is another flighty



woman abandoning him and his daughters. And maybe something comes up that forces the heroine to take care of the daughters all on her own, pitting her against her own insecurities and inadequacies, knowing the hero doesn't trust her to look after the girls.

Whatever external conflict you throw at them, it should all tie back into their internal difficulties, making it harder for them to overcome the things keeping them apart.

Starting with External Conflict

Now, let's start with an external struggle. Say you have a heroine who is trying to rescue her baby sister from a Bad Guy, and she's willing to do whatever it takes to do that. Then you have a hero who is a cop working undercover with the Bad Guy, and he can't risk blowing his cover to help the heroine and her sister because it could get him and several other people killed. Throw in the Bad Guy telling the undercover cop to kill the heroine, as a test of the cop's loyalty to the Bad Guy, just to really complicate things.

A nice, suspenseful set up of external conflict. Now give these characters internal conflicts that bump up sharply against the external conflict, making it impossible to see a good end to things.

Maybe your hero lost his wife to the Bad Guy, so he's out for revenge as much as justice. But he's falling for the brave heroine and can't stand to see her hurt by the very same man who murdered his wife. Maybe your heroine's father was a criminal and she finds herself drawn to hard men but at the same time wants a kinder life than the one her father raised her in. She might also have a knee-jerk distrust of cops, which will make falling for a cop who has been actively lying to her even more complicated.

As you can see from the examples, it really doesn't matter which conflict grabs your attention first. The trick is to interweave both internal and external struggles to really screw up your characters' lives. The more intertwined these two conflicts are, the more satisfying the resolution will be for your readers.

Make things tough on your characters, from the outside and from within. Make readers doubt they'll ever be able to overcome these complicated forces. And you will keep readers glued to your book, unable to put it down until they see how you get your couple to their happily-ever-after.♥

Isabo Kelly is the award-winning author of multiple science fiction and fantasy romances. Under the name Kat Simons, she also writes bestselling shapeshifter paranormal romances. For more on Isabo and Kat, visit www.isabokelly.com and www.katsimons.com.



GETTING YOUR FACTS STRAIGHT: GREENFIELD VILLAGE**BY URSULA RENÉE**



I did not know much about Greenfield Village except that it was filled with historic houses. For this admirer of living museums, this little bit of information was enough for me to place a visit to the village on my itinerary during my trip to Dearborn, Michigan. Little did I know what was in store for me.

From the moment I walked through the gate, I knew I was in researcher's heaven. I spent the next six hours wandering around the village, visiting dwellings that once belonged to Henry Ford, Thomas Edison, The Wright Brothers and Noah Webster. Guides dressed in period costumes welcomed me and answered all my questions. Some even gave me ideas for future novels.



Out of all the houses, my favorite was the Mattox Family House. For weeks I had been trying to visualize the house for my current work-in-progress. The moment I walked into this two room house, which had a separate building for the kitchen, I knew this was where my fictional family resided.

Even with all the walking I did, I am sure there were a few sites I missed. The costs for admission was \$26.00, however, with so much to do, visitors will get their money's worth and more.♥

Ursula Renée writes historical, multicultural romances set between World War I and the 1960s. When she is not writing, Ursula enjoys photography. Visit Ursula at www.ursularenee.com.

