

# KEYN♥TES

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

APRIL 2015



## NEW MEMBERS!

Sharae Allen  
Jocelyn Koehler  
Xyla Turner

Alexis Camp  
Margaret Palmadessa  
Jennifer Welsh

## NEXT CHAPTER MEETING

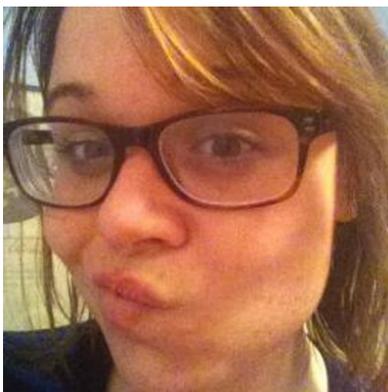
**Saturday, April 11, 12 noon**

TRS, 40 Exchange Place, 3rd Floor



### POETRY FOR WRITERS – CHRISTOPHER RICHARDS

Christopher Richards is an associate editor at Farrar, Straus and Giroux. For FSG, authors he has edited include Mario Vargas Llosa, H. S. Cross, Zachary Mason, Edward White, and Karen Solie and he has collaborated on titles from Marilynne Robinson, Michael Cunningham, George Packer, and Seamus Heaney. His own writing has appeared in *The Nation*, *The New Yorker* online, *The Paris Review Daily*, *Guernica*, and *The Millions*.

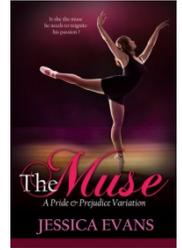


### KAMIKAZE COLD READS – KERRI BUCKLEY

Kerri Buckley got her first taste of the great editorial adventure during a semester-long internship at The Feminist Press in 2001. Thoroughly hooked, she joined Bantam Dell (a division of Random House) after graduating from Kenyon College and stayed there for eight years, editing both fiction and non-fiction for various imprints under the Ballantine Bantam Dell umbrella. Thrilled to have been invited to the digital-first party at Harlequin's Carina Press, Kerri is actively acquiring across all genres but is most interested in building her list in the following areas: romantic suspense, contemporary romance, New Adult, erotic romance, male/male romance, historical romance, and cozy or hardboiled mysteries. Recent releases from Carina include *HATE TO LOVE YOU* by Elise Alden, *BLAMED: A BLOOD MONEY NOVEL* by Edie Harris, *KNOCK OUT* by Michele Mannon, and *GUN SHY* by Eleri Stone.♥

**AUTHOR OF THE MONTH: Jessica Evans**

Jessica Evans is a writer, teacher, traveler, and foodie. She discovered Jane Austen's novels as a college sophomore, and fell in love with their romantic stories and biting sense of humor. Though she began posting her writing on internet forums as early as fifteen, she started writing Austenesque in her twenties. **THE MUSE: A PRIDE AND PREJUDICE VARIATION** is her debut novel. Jessica is a member of the Romance Writers of America's NYC Chapter and the Jane Austen Society of North America's New York chapter. She teaches sixth grade English in New York City and lives in Brooklyn. In her spare time, she reads a lot of romance, fantasy, and Young Adult literature, bikes in Prospect Park, and fancies herself a pretty decent cook. You can find Jessica on Facebook, Twitter (@JEvansBooks), or Goodreads. ♥

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**2015 CALENDAR**

May 2	Jun 6	Jul 11	Aug 1
Sep 12	Oct 3	Nov 7	Dec 5

**KEYNOTES DEADLINE:** 15th of the Month.  
Send articles to [keynoteseditor@gmail.com](mailto:keynoteseditor@gmail.com).  
All articles must be typed and up to 500 words.

**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.

**RWA/NYC BOARD OF DIRECTORS**

President: Ursula Renée  
Vice President/Events: Kate McMurray  
Vice President/Contest: Vanessa Peters  
Secretary: Shirley Kelly  
Treasurer: Tamara Lynch  
Past President: Maria Ferrer

**LIAISONS & COMMITTEES**

Board Liaison: Lisbeth Eng  
PAN & PRO Liaisons: TBA  
Blog/Social Media: Maria Ferrer  
Craft Loop: Isabo Kelly  
Critique: Mimi Logsdon  
Keynotes Editor: Briana MacPerry  
Publicity: Jeanine McAdam, Jean Joachim  
Michael Molloy, Maria Piork  
Website: Ursula Renée

**ATTENTION:** The Board welcomes all comments/suggestions/etc.

Email: [info@rwanyc.com](mailto:info@rwanyc.com).

**RWA/NYC**

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**PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE: IT ALL STARTED WITH FANFICTION**  
**BY URSULA RENÉE**

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Since I was a girl, I made up stories in my head. Quite a few of them were based off episodes of my favorite television shows. However, despite spending hours creating alternative universes, in which beloved characters did not die and they got their love interests, I never considered sharing my stories.

In 1999, while surfing the internet for any information about *The Young Riders*, a western that aired from September 1989 to July 1992, I discovered fanfiction. These stories allowed the characters to continue having adventures long after the episode, or in some cases the series, ended. They also filled in the gaps that were never answered in the original series.

Fascinated, I began writing stories and posting them to a website I have since taken down. At the time, I was not considering in a career as an author. I simply had stories I wanted to share with others who had the same interests as me.

Over time, I noticed that I tended to focus on the developing the relationship between two characters, usually an original character and a main one from the series. Also, I was never satisfied with one story, but continued their adventures through a series of two, three and sometimes four works.

Though I was not writing for profit, I took my works seriously. Just as I do now, when writing a historical romance; I researched everything from the dress to the speech in order to be true to the time period. For one story, I collected books on the Lakota culture and language. For another, I researched the marriage laws in the states during the 1800s. I, also, studied Wild Bill Hickok and Buffalo Bill, whose stories the writers of *The Young Riders* took many liberties with.

I eventually stopped writing fanfiction to concentrate on a writing career. However, from time to time I daydream about alternative universes of my favorite television shows. I also cherish my early stories and the skills I learned while writing them.♥

*Thanks to the support and encouragement of the members of RWA/NYC, Ursula signed her first publishing contract in 2013 for her historical romance, SWEET JAZZ. As President of RWA/NYC, Ursula wants to offer the same encouragement and guidance to other RWA members. Visit her at [www.ursularenee.com](http://www.ursularenee.com).*



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**MINUTES: MARCH 7 MEETING  
BY SECRETARY SHIRLEY KELLY**

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**Board Members Present:**

President Ursula Renée Shand  
Vice President Vanessa Peters  
Treasurer Tamara Lynch  
Secretary Shirley Kelly  
Past President Maria Ferrer

**Board Member Not Present:**

Vice President Kate McMurray

**Committee Members Present:**

Blog/Social Media - Maria Ferrer  
Publicity - Michael Molloy  
Website - Ursula Renée Shand

**Agenda:**

President Ursula Renée Shand opened the meeting at 12:15 p.m. She greeted the members and introduced the Board. Next she outlined the meeting, Our Author of the Month is Alice Orr, our workshop panel of Mary Altman and Cat Clyne, both from Sourcebooks, will be discussing Hooks and Pitches. At the April meeting, Kerri Buckley from Carina Press, will be doing cold readings and taking pitches.

Ursula asked for someone to accept the January and February General Meeting Minutes. Michael Molloy made a motion to accept them; Past President Maria Ferrer seconded the motion.

Ursula said we'll be holding our May Brunch at the restaurant, Manhattan Proper. Information will be on the website. She wants to schedule a critique session for the Chapter Retreat at the Inn at Ocean Grove, which is planned for the weekend of April 17<sup>th</sup>. But she plans to cancel the retreat if no one confirms they're going by later today.

Treasurer Tamara Lynch said we have approximately \$8,900 in the bank. She said a late fee will be added to membership dues after today. She said 3 members have booked a table at the Romance Festival, and thanked the people who have contributed money for the raffle baskets.

Secretary Shirley Kelly said we have 118 members, and has membership forms for anyone who wants to join the Chapter at today's meeting.

Ursula said nominations for the Golden Apple Awards are open until March 31<sup>st</sup>. Members can email her with nominations. If 2 names aren't put forth in a category, that category will be dropped for this year.

Vice President Vanessa Peters said she needs first round judges for our Kathryn Hayes "When Sparks Fly" contest. The contest will be open from June 1<sup>st</sup> to August 31<sup>st</sup>. She's planning a May publicity tour for the contest. She's asking any member with a personal blog to write about what "When Sparks Fly" means to them and post it on their blog. She's also asking for the posts to include a link to the contest information. Members can include excerpts from their own



books. She'll pass around a signup sheet in April. People can also email her at v.peters.619@gmail.com. She also offered Chapter mugs for sale.

Past President Maria Ferrer said our "50 Shades of Sexy" tour is over at the end of the month. She said blog posts give members a chance to promote themselves, and asked for posts for April.

Ursula said the next critique meeting will be held on March 17<sup>th</sup>. She asked people to let her know if they want to join the Critique Loop. She said the submission deadline for the April Keynotes is April 15<sup>th</sup>. The theme is "Happy Endings". She said we need PAN and PRO liaisons.

Michael Molloy of the Publicity Committee said he needs 12 volunteers for the Romance Festival. People can volunteer on the Loop or email him at michaeljmolloy@aol.com.

Kwana Jackson said she and Falguni Kothari are putting together 3 raffle baskets. The first basket will have a "spa" theme, the 2<sup>nd</sup> a NYC theme, the 3<sup>rd</sup> and Grand Prize will be a Kindle. They also plan to include an Amazon gift card in every basket. Kwana also said they'd like to include a few items of swag in each basket, and asked for donations.

Ursula said anyone needing their link fixed on the Meet the Member page should let her know.

The meeting adjourned at 12:32 p.m. After the Round Robin, Ursula encouraged everyone to participate in National's "The End" challenge and join the Chapter's Persistent Loop.♥

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## CHAPTER EVENTS – MARK YOUR CALENDARS

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**MAY 2:** Author Sara Humphreys has been confirmed as our May Brunch keynote speaker. Brunch will take place at Manhattan Proper, 6 Murray Street, downtown, from 12-3:00pm. Fee = \$30, includes entrée, dessert, mimosa (or other drink), tax and tip. You can pay via PayPal on the Chapter website, [www.rwanyc.com](http://www.rwanyc.com), in the Members Only section.

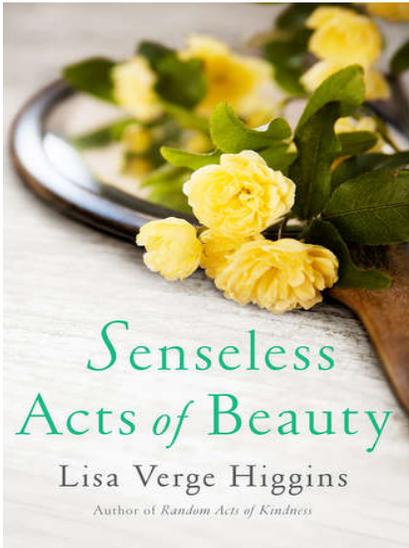


**JUNE 20:** The publicity committee is working on plans for the Second Annual Romance Festival, which will be held on June 20, 2015 at the Morris Jumel Mansion. We will have more information in the upcoming months.

**JULY 22-25:** RWA 2015 Conference is sold out. There is a waiting list if you want to sign up. And everyone can attend the Literacy Autographing on Wednesday, July 22, from 5:30-7:30pm at the New York Marriott Marquis. It's a free event, open to the public. (Hint: get in line early!)♥

**MEMBERS ON THE SHELF**

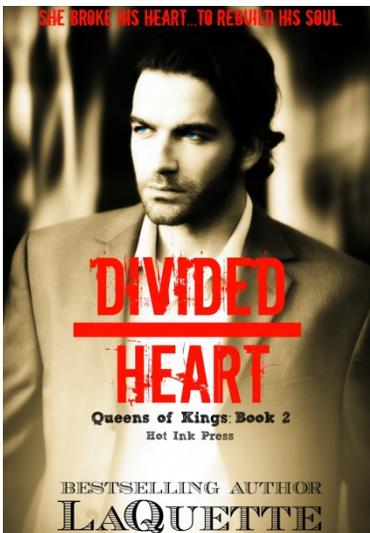
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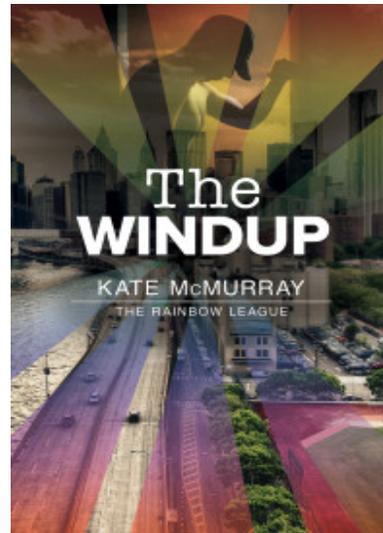
**SENSELESS ACTS OF BEAUTY**  
by Lisa Verge Higgins  
March 2015, Grand Central Publishing  
[www.lisavergehiggins.com](http://www.lisavergehiggins.com)



**DOING LONDON**  
by Chloe Blaque  
March 2015, Loose ID  
[www.chloeblaque.com](http://www.chloeblaque.com)



**DIVIDED HEART**  
**Queens of Kings, Book 2**  
by LaQuette  
March 2015, Hot Ink Press  
[www.laquettelikes.com](http://www.laquettelikes.com)



**THE WINDUP**  
**The Rainbow League**  
by Kate McMurray  
April 2015, Dreamspinner  
[www.katemcmurray.com](http://www.katemcmurray.com)



*Our theme this month is  
“The Happy Ending”*

*Here’s what that means  
to some of our Chapter Members.*

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**HAPPY FOR NOW:  
THE REALISTIC ALTERNATIVE TO THE HAPPY EVER AFTER ENDING  
BY LAQUETTE**

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*And they lived happily ever after...*



How many times have we seen some version or depiction of that sentence at the end of a romance novel? I can’t cite an exact number, however, in my humble opinion, entirely too many. First, let me say that I am not criticizing authors who choose to wrap up their stories in this manner. As authors and readers we each have our own unique and equally relevant ideas regarding romance literature. Some of us gravitate to the more traditionally accepted HEA ending. This is where the hero and the heroine ride off into the sunset at the end of the book. They are eternally suspended in their perfect relationship bubble for the remainder of time. Although this has been the standard—we’ve seen this kind of ending dominate the romance genre for some time now—there are some of us whose tastes tend to bend to something slightly different—the happy for now ending.

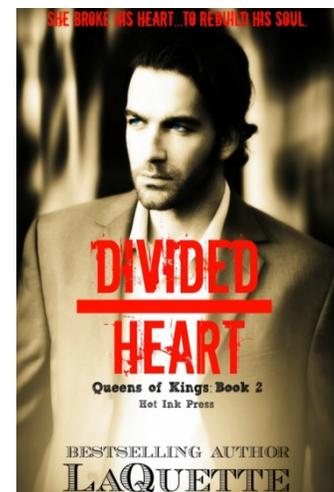
Happy for now endings present situations where the couple ends up together, they are relatively happy after battling through whatever conflicts that were pitted against them during the story, but the author doesn’t resolve every problem or conflict with a neat and tidy solution. If you need a visual, this is the difference between the two types of endings. An example of HEA is after marrying, Cinderella and Prince Charming live happily ever after. While HFN is Cinderella informing Prince Charming that even though she loves him, and is happy to be spending the rest of her life with him, after spending years on her hands and knees taking care of her evil step-family, she’s not about to wash, fold, iron, scrub, or cook another thing and he’d better deal with it the best way he knows how.

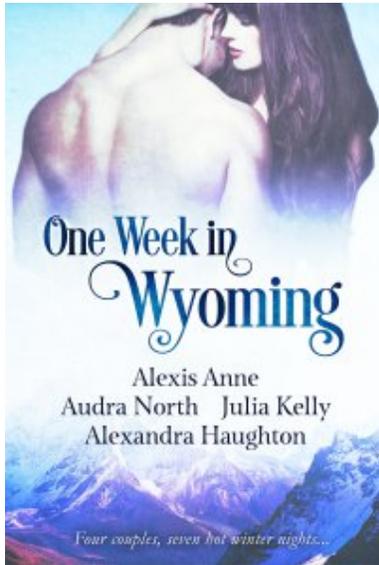


Is the HFN ending perfect, absolutely not, but that's why it honestly appeals to me. HFN, in my opinion, allows authors to bring realism into their stories. Why should we want realism in our romance, don't we read this genre as a means of escapism and fantasy? Yes we do, but we should also strive to connect stories that our readers can see themselves in as well. Although I love the idea of Prince Charming coming to save me, I connect more with stories that depict situations that I as a human being could easily find myself in the middle of. The books I remember, the books I re-read over and over again are the books about real people and their perfectly flawed emotions, thoughts, and actions. These are the books where the characters are not only willing to fight the world for their love, but each other as well. I want to feel raw emotion, the hurt and the pain that can often times be part and parcel to the most wonderful real-life love affairs in our memories and present lives. I want to see relationships that reveal both the good and the bad that goes along with love and being in love.

So for me, the perfect ending is never really all that perfect to begin with. It's beautiful, yes, but it's also messy, complicated, and downright difficult at times. But if we really think about it, isn't that exactly what love is too?♥

*LaQuette—Romance Author: Embracing my crazy...one character at a time. Author of Interracial, African American, Erotic, and Romantic Suspense romance novels. A native of Brooklyn, New York, LaQuette spends her time catering to her three distinct personalities: Wife, Mother, and Educator. Writing--her escape from everyday madness--has always been a friend and comforter. She loves writing and devouring romance novels. Although she possesses a graduate degree in English Lit, she'd forego Shakespeare any day to read something hot, lusty, and romantic. She 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, Amazon, her website, and her Facebook group LaQuette's Lounge. Website: [www.laquettelikes.com](http://www.laquettelikes.com).*






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## DO YOU HAVE TO GET TO “I LOVE YOU?”

### BY JULIA KELLY

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One of the cardinal rules of romance is that a story has to end with a happily ever after. But does that mean a couple has to say, “I love you,” at the end of every romance? Maybe not.

It’s a question I asked myself when I wrote “Seduction in the Snow”. The story unfolds over a week at a ski resort. Both Evan and Lydia tell themselves that their sexy hot tub encounters are just a vacation fling. Lydia is particularly tough to sell on the idea of love. Having seen relationship after relationship fall apart after a few short months, she’s scared of the big “L” word.

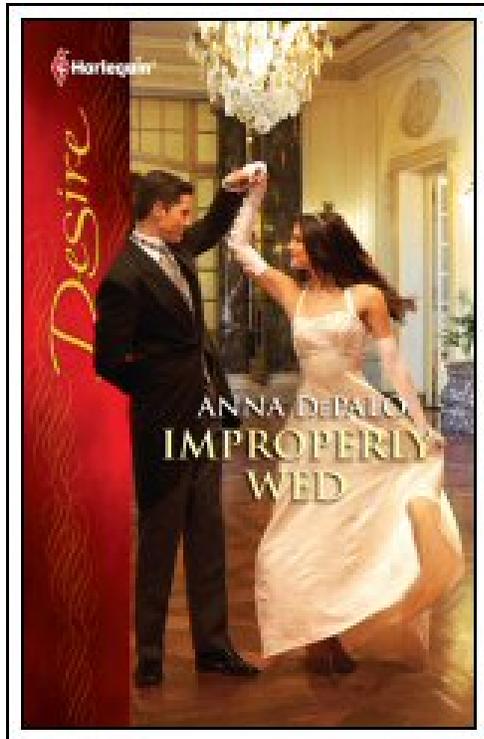
Of course, this is a romance so we all know where the story’s heading—for the happily ever after—but given Lydia’s resistance to the very idea of love, I didn’t feel that a big, “I love you,” exchange at the end of the novella would be fitting with her character. Instead, I decided that Lydia and Evan should show us their deep commitment and potential for future happiness in a different way.

As authors we have a responsibility to really get to know our characters. What are their fears? How can we push them out of their comfort zones? Would they actually say the words that we’re writing on the page? While “I love you,” is the backbone of many happily ever afters, it doesn’t have to be if it doesn’t fit with your character’s personality.

Another thing to consider is your book’s timeline. Romance authors tell stories that unfold over decades, months, weeks, days. There’s such vast variation in the timelines in our genre that a one-size-fits-all approach to the happily ever doesn’t always work. If a character is more in touch with their emotions and open to the idea of falling in love, the, “I love you,” exchange rings true. But we know our heroes and heroines will continue to grow after our stories are complete. If that’s the case, “I love you,” may realistically take them longer to get to.

Whether you decide to have your hero and heroine say, “I love you,” or not, the most important thing to remember is that it’s our job as authors to write a convincing love story. That means you’re not just telling the reader that the hero and heroine love each other. You’re *showing* their deep commitment through the actions and emotions. Write your story with that in mind, and you’ll have your readers falling in love.♥

*During the day, Julia Kelly is an Emmy-nominated producer for a New York City television station. Other times, she writes sexy historical and contemporary romances. Her first novella, “Seduction in the Snow”, appears in the anthology ONE WEEK IN WYOMING. In Autumn 2014, Julia’s sports-set romance novel, SECOND CHANCE GIRL, finished in the Contemporary Romance Writers Stiletto Contest for Unpublished Contemporary Fiction. Visit her at [www.juliakellywrites.com](http://www.juliakellywrites.com).*



## HAPPY ENDINGS & EPILOGUES, TOO! BY ANNA DEPALO

Not only do I believe in happy endings but I believe in happy endings *plus*. In other words, *The Epilogue*. I have even put an epilogue at the end of a short story!

An epilogue can serve several functions. First, an epilogue can tie up loose ends in the story. For example, if the story ends with the heroine resolving to get to know her long-lost father, the epilogue can show the relationship develop. Or the epilogue might show that two secondary characters get their happy ending as well.

Second, even if there are no loose ends in the story, an epilogue can tie up the plot with a nice bow. Readers like to know what happens to the protagonists in the future. This is the place to show the wedding or the arrival of the baby. There's a risk of being anticlimactic after the last chapter, but I think that danger is outweighed by the

benefits. The epilogue gives the reader the assurance that the main characters are not only happy, but they *stay* happy.

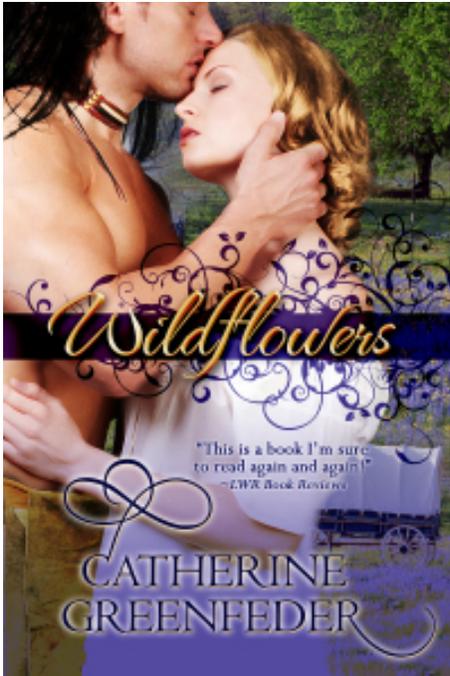
Third, an epilogue can introduce the characters of the next book or set up its premise. Arguably, an epilogue has become more important due to the popularity of series of connected books. So much for Margaret Mitchell famously saying: "For all I know, Rhett may have found someone else who was less—difficult." Actually, that wasn't a popular pronouncement even back in 1945!

I am not a fan of prologues, by the way, which are a completely different animal. Prologues can exacerbate the problem of not starting at the beginning of the story—that is, near the moment of change.

An epilogue can sometimes effectively break the rules governing other chapters. It might use a new and different narrator, be written in a different point of view (omniscient or first person), or be relayed in a new tense (present instead of past, for example). The possibilities abound—another reason the epilogue need not be anticlimactic.

So go head...write that coda to your happy ending! Your readers are waiting.♥

*Anna DePalo is the USA Today best-selling author of a dozen romance novels. She was raised bilingual in Brooklyn, attended Harvard, and practiced intellectual property law. She is a past Vice President, Assistant Treasurer, Contest Coordinator, and Bylaws Committee member of RWA/NYC. She lives with her husband, son and daughter in New York. You can find Anna online at [www.annadepalo.com](http://www.annadepalo.com), [www.facebook.com/anna.depaloauthor](http://www.facebook.com/anna.depaloauthor), [www.facebook.com/AnnaDePaloBooks](http://www.facebook.com/AnnaDePaloBooks) and [twitter.com/Anna\\_DePalo](http://twitter.com/Anna_DePalo).*




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## KEEPING IT HAPPY IN FICTION BY CATHERINE ANN GREENFEDER

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I became a fan of romance novels for many reasons including the sensual portrayals, the blend of historical facts with fiction, strong heroes and heroines, and the happily ever after endings. However, when I began writing my romance stories, I wasn't sure of the characters and conflicts until I got into the stories and worked on them awhile, allowing my characters to develop, the plot to take shape, the historical or paranormal elements to blend in with the fictional worlds, and the sensual or sexual tension to contribute enough spice and interest. I did know the formula called for a happily ever after for the hero and the heroine. It's the one part of plotting I felt sure about, but getting to the happy resolution would require a heck of a lot of work on the part of the main characters. It had to be both satisfying and believable and fit the storyline of the

particular novel.

My western historical romance WILDFLOWERS took place in 1848 during the westward expansion with the heroine and the hero overcoming obstacles along the trail toward Oregon. Their happily ever after would take many conflicts and a few hundred pages before they achieved their tender happy moment at the end.

SACRED FIRES involved soul mates reunited in the attempt to stop a crazed cult with mob connections and discover stolen ancient artifacts in Mexico. The couple find their happily ever after when the crimes are solved.

The heroine of ANGELS AMONG US is guided by her guardian angel to uncover the mystery of her parents' deaths. Not only does she heal from past grief but finds love and happiness as she uses her psychic and artistic gifts.

Most recently my two young adult novels, A KISS OUT OF TIME and A DANCE OUT OF TIME, feature a ghost hunter who must resolve her own inner conflicts in order to uncover the reasons for the hauntings she is trying to stop. Along the way she learns to accept her gift and find romance.

Keeping it happy in fiction is not an easy task when you need to be real as well. I think the journey must also be satisfying and filled with interesting plot twists, captivating characters, and strong conflicts which are resolved before the sense of happily ever after. ♥

*Catherine Ann Greenfeder is a published author of five novels and is currently working on a women's fiction novel. Visit her at <http://www.catherinegreenfeder.com/>.*

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**DEFINE “HAPPY”****BY JOHN LOVELADY AKA TROY STORM**

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Ay, there’s the rub. For in those five little letters abides a world of differing opinions.

I once thought of “happy” in the Wizard of Oz/Norman Rockwell sense. And then I turned eleven, and have ever since been trying to come to terms with exactly what does “happy” mean. Never mind trying to figure out “ending.”

We know all too well what HEA means, and it better not have anything to do with *Into the Woods*, which is anything but. Readers, and editors and acquiring publishers, want a clean finish. No wobbling on the blades. Norman and Dorothy lock-stepping into the sunset destined to spend the rest of their days together in connubial bliss. Or at least canoodling bliss.

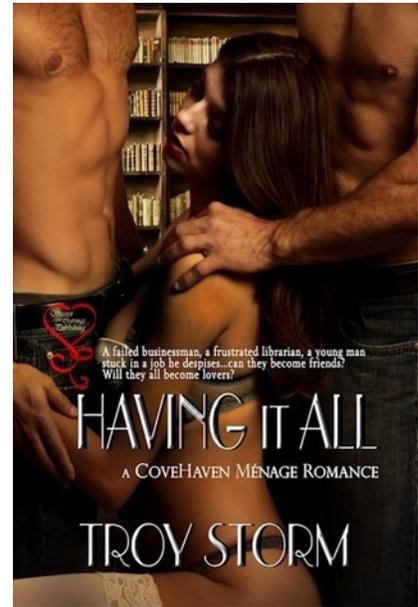
And if Norm happens to be a hunky billionaire with soulful eyes who can incite one to multiple organisms, and if Dot happens to sparkle like the cheerleader(s) who set your nether regions to flame in grade school, so much the better.

Then, the billionaire with a penchant for grey ties and blood red playrooms comes along and/or the cheerleader who has lost her cheeriness but who still boils your hormones like Old Faithful, and things start to get dicey.

The diceyness might not be all, but it has its place in the romance canon. There is room for the not-so-easily defined cowboy or city girl, musician or mechanic, or lord or lady of the manor. I believe many readers have been the HEA route and know it’s not paved with yellow bricks but would like to believe there are still good reasons for tromping on down it and seeing where it leads. I want to provide a route for that escape, by providing characters they can empathize with, get annoyed with, then cheer for, and hopefully in so doing also perhaps provide a little insight into themselves during the process.

I would like my reader to close the book and think not only was that a great read, but also, just maybe, subliminally, feel better about themselves, having been challenged to think a little deeper, feel a little something they hadn’t quite felt before, perhaps give a passing positive thought to an attitude they possibly had been dismissive of. To realize that “happy” can mean a lot of different things for a fictional character...and them.

It may not be exactly bridge crossing time, but every story we tell has the opportunity to plop another stepping stone down in the mire of human emotions. Give your readers characters with lives that matter, with depth and humanity in all its failings and triumphs, and with whom your readers can relate, even the sketchy ones. A villain that touches us can open a pathway into a better understanding of our own badder nature. Every little bit helps.



And of course if those little bits are clothed like billionaires or sheathed like sexy cheerleaders, well, that's what makes it a romance in all its wonderful ramifications and combinations.

That's what makes it happy.♥

*John Lovelady may be several centuries past eleven, but Troy Storm is right in the middle of learning and sharing stories that excite, challenge and give a chuckle—and occasionally a hearty guffaw. Try out his CoveHaven ménages, HAVING IT ALL, GETTING IT ALL, WANTING MORE and NEVER TOO MUCH in all their combinations: MMF, FFM, MMM, FFF and even HEA.*

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### **THE HAPPY ENDING: CUE PLEASURE BY MARIA FERRER**

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Life is not a box of chocolates, and, unfortunately, marriages don't always end with a Happily Ever After. I've learned to live with that reality thanks to romance novels.

I've been reading romances for over 20 years and I am not ashamed to say it or to show off those book covers. (How I miss Fabio!) My love of romance novels and The Happy Ending started in high school. My friend Joanne and I would sit in the back row of Economics class and open these huge tall books in front of us. No one knew that we were really reading Barbara Cartland romances.



Barbara Cartland's were my first romances. They were sweet and all about princesses and princes, who found each other and got married and lived Happily Ever After. —Cue sigh— By college, I had graduated to Kathleen Woodawiss', Johanna Lindsey's and Rosemary Rodgers' romances. These were more adult, more adventurous, even more violent romances but still with that wonderfully guaranteed Happy Ever After.

And that is the key to why the Romance Industry is a billion dollar industry, why romances sell by the millions even in a down-turned economy – the guaranteed Happy Ending

A Happy Ending is the dream of every girl, every woman. And it is a bestselling dream that lasts a lifetime. Oh, we grow up and we know the dream probably/ mostly will never come true, but who cares. The dream and the wish will become more of an escape into the impossible, but that won't stop romance readers.

We want our guaranteed Happy Ending and we want it now, whether one is immersed in the mores of Regency England, fighting pirates off the coast of Barbados, shifting from human to wolf in San Francisco, traveling faster than the speed of light on planet Pluto, or ice skating in Central Park.

And if in the course of our reading, we stumble upon hot, erotic romances where the intent is more of a Happy Right Now, we'll take it. After all, Happy Right Now is just around the corner from Happily Ever After. —Cue grin— Besides, today's modern, liberated woman, living in the 21<sup>st</sup> century can have both. So bring on the HEA and the HRN. We're ready to read!♥

*Maria Ferrer is an avid romance reader. She has been known to devour 3-5 romance in one sitting if the mood is right. Maria is working on her own romance novels. You can read excerpts from her novels at [www.marializaferrer.blogspot.com](http://www.marializaferrer.blogspot.com) and [www.mydelcarmen.com](http://www.mydelcarmen.com).*

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## THE ROMANCE GENRE TAKES CENTER STAGE AT THE POPULAR ROMANCE PROJECT BY STACEY AGDERN

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A happily ever after for the romance genre? I'm not sure what that would mean. But I honestly think that a great deal of it would be what I witnessed over the two days of the Popular Romance Project Event that took place at the Library of Congress. What do I mean by that? Or more importantly, what did I see?

### 1. Romance treated with respect on an academic level.

It's wonderful to see people who read romance discuss what they love with the respect the genre deserves, but seeing academics discuss the genre in the same way they'd discuss works by authors like Dickens, Austen and Shakespeare gets me every time. As someone who didn't study Literature at university, I was never bothered by the wholesale academic dismissal of the genre. That was, until I began to write and read romance on a wider scale. Seeing the genre discussed with RESPECT, with give and take about the genre's classics and whether there is one single list of important romance novels was one of the things I really enjoyed.

### 2. Romance treated as a technological innovator.

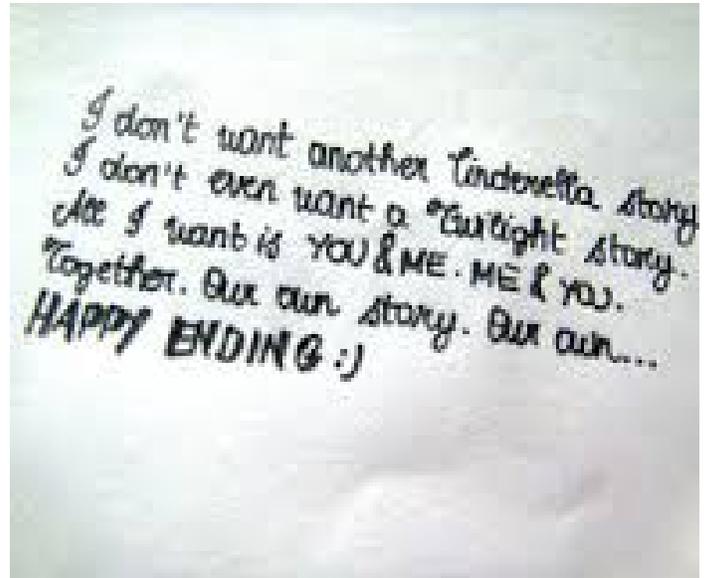
When speaking about technological innovation in publishing, the romance genre is rarely touted as the innovator it actually is. What we as readers and writers of the genre know is how the earliest e-presses served as our genre's small press, and that the history and development of the



ebook (and ereading in general) has been made possible by the voraciousness of Romance readers. Sitting in the middle of the Library of Congress, and listening to people who stand at the front lines of the technical innovation on the writing, the editing, the sales and the publishing sides of the genre was simply fascinating.

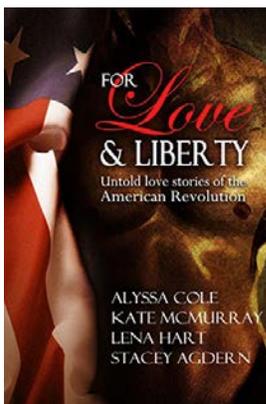
### 3. Recognizing the romance fan community in a way that shows the smart and powerful women we are.

This was, far and away one of my favorite parts of this two day event. Seeing romance readers and writers presenting and moderating panels, acting to diffuse speaker snobbery and speaking with each other in the audience. Even the WRW chapter was involved in this event, both ushering and helping to staff the event.



These three important steps towards a HEA for the romance genre were well reflected in the film 'Love Between the Covers.' This documentary was screened the night before the panels, and it exceeded my expectations. It showed the romance genre, and more specifically the romance community, at its best. There were shots of Lady Jane's salon, two different RWA conferences, conversations with readers, writers and publishers. It was fantastic.

Unfortunately, we're not at the point where you can say the romance genre has received its well-deserved happy ending. But with events like this one, it's easier to say that that such a HEA is closer than it's ever been.♥



*In 2013, Stacey Agdern was named RWA/NYC's Bookseller of the Year. Her reviews and commentaries have appeared in publications as diverse as 50 WRITERS ON 50 SHADES OF GREY to USA Today's HappilyEverAfter blog, Heroes and Heartbreakers and Barbara Vey's column at Publisher's Weekly. Her short stories have appeared in three wildly different anthologies (one under a pseudonym) with more on the way. Stacey was the two-time award winning romance specialist at Posman Books. She lives in New York, not far from her favorite hockey team's practice facility.*

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## ARE HAPPY ENDINGS POSSIBLE? A SPIRITUAL PERSPECTIVE BY BRIANA MACPERRY

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A month ago, I wrote a blog post entitled, "It's Not Cheating, It's Just Sex," in which I reviewed a mountain of neurological, sociological, and psychological research focusing on the battle of the sexes. I cried through every minute of typing that post, having come to the following conclusion: Mr. Perfect is a pipe dream concocted by romance writers to help you orgasm, and that's about it. Science would have you believe all men are philandering horn dogs (if not in action, than in spirit) and settling *is* the only way to go, unless you'd rather be alone for the rest of your life.

But then, I thought about friends and family members, and the husbands of friends and family members, who do not fit the profile of the beer-guzzling, tail-chasing ape many a woman learns to suck it up and love. I asked several of these rare fellows to tell me how they imagined their ideal relationship, as part of a portrait series I am developing.

"In love, when loved, and when loving is truly the only time that real risk and danger can occur," said one 45-year-old, divorced, community artist and father of two, "because it is the only time you are able to discover places within that you didn't know existed. It is not the mystery of withholding; it is the mystery of the explorer, with a partner, on the same journey."

"An ideal relationship, for me, would be full support in personal development," said one 23-year-old, single, undergraduate psychology student and semi-professional athlete, "in every area of life. Endless love for one another, and constant communication."

"Honorable," said one 34-year-old, single, military man and father of two, "and committed."



Okay, so, maybe not *all* men lack control over their hormones, or equate the value of a loving relationship with porn-site loyalty. Maybe it's that I attract only these kinds of men, and/or I am only attracted to them. Psychology would suggest perhaps maladaptive patterns of relating have unconsciously affected my methods of mate selection. But I've had years of therapy. I am, in fact, a therapist. So how can it be that with all the insights and behavioral changes I have made, I still find myself in the same place romantically? Why, God. Why?

Some might argue God has nothing to do with it, but I beg to differ. We often throw around phrases like "Soul Mates," and my repetitious love life would seem to support the theory of "Karmic relationships," but what do those words even mean? I decided to do my own research into the topic, exploring spiritual theories of love. What I found is far too lengthy to include in this article, but I'd like to share the gist, and it begins with the origin of your soul.

One day, God (who is both male and female) gave him/herself a little squeeze, and a drop of "white fire light" fell out. This drop agreed to live a human existence, to learn more about love. So, the drop was divided in half, one half focusing on masculine energy and the other on feminine energy (though both contain aspects of each, like ying and yang). Together, these halves are called "Twin Flames." Separately, each is an "I AM" presence.

Each flame, or I AM presence, sent forth a soul, like a fisherman casting a line with bait on the end. The line connecting the bait to the fisherman is considered the soul's "Higher Self" or "True Self," the part that connects your soul to the most divine aspects of yourself. Through many lives on earth (embodying both genders), a soul seeks to balance Karmic debts (shameful wounds) through transformative feelings of love, in order to find its way back to its I AM presence, and reunite with its Twin Flame. But this is the soul's essential misconception.

As Cyndi Dale, author of *BEYOND SOUL MATES*, asserts, "The soul's dedication to karma supports one repetitive pattern after the other...reinforcing the idea that you have to earn love. But True Self-based, *dharmic* relationships suggest you *are* love. This means you are empowered to allow in only what encourages love and send the same to others." Dale explains this *dharmic* short-cut through Karma is not an unhealthy, boundary-less love where you become a doormat and turn the other cheek in a domestic dispute, but a transformative intention to act with love towards yourself and others, instead of only yearning for it.

At times, there will be an emptiness, loneliness and longing that reveals the karmic nature of a relationship, particularly those that result in marriage. These can be difficult marriages because they may be for the balancing of severe crimes, such as murder, betrayal, or hatred; the worse the karma, the more intense the love and attraction upon meeting. As Elizabeth Clare Prophet, author of *SOUL MATES AND TWIN FLAMES*, states, "Very often the only way to overcome that record of hatred is through the intense love expressed through the husband-wife relationship. We love much because there is much to be forgiven."

Soul mate connections are somewhat different, and not necessarily romantic in nature. Soul mates are kindred souls seeking to master the same issues as you. Sometimes they are part of the same "soul tribe" you've traveled with throughout many lifetimes, and sometimes they are unknown souls you are encountering for the first time. But don't put your life on hold looking for a soul mate. More importantly, learn to give and receive love from the people you meet, because you won't necessarily be struck by lightning when you find one.



Char Margolis, author of *LOVE KARMA*, and frequent guest on shows like *Dr. Oz*, *Dr. Phil*, and *Larry King Live*, states, "We get into trouble when we start to believe that the only relationship worth having is with a soul mate. When the fireworks aren't immediate or the connection isn't instant, this belief makes us think the relationship isn't worth our time. The truth is that we have many soul mates that incarnate in many forms over many lifetimes, depending on the lessons we—and they—need to learn...What if your lesson is to learn about the kind of love that builds slowly?"



Let's recap. Your soul's mission is to love itself without feeling like it has to earn it, in order to be rejoined with its Twin Flame, and return to God (this is the general concept of *dharma*). But in the meantime, your soul isn't buying it, so instead of taking the elevator, it climbs the stairs by balancing karmic debts. This makes the idea of the happy ending (uniting with our Twin Flame) feel too far away and damn near impossible to achieve.

Sylvia Browne, author of *PHENOMENON*, and frequent guest on *The Montel Williams Show*, *CNN*, and *Good Morning America*, challenges us to assume a different perspective. "We share a bond with our [Twin Flames] like identical twins would, but we are certainly not joined at the hip. I am not a half person. You are not a half person. Like all spirits on the Other Side, [Twin Flames] can choose when, if and how many times to incarnate... We make these decisions separately, for our own very specific reasons, and don't forget, in the context of eternity, we leave Home and come back in the blink of an eye. So why coordinate travel plans when you see each other as often as you want on the Other Side?"

Brian Weiss, a prominent psychiatrist and author of *MANY LIVES, MANY MASTERS*, quoted a messenger from "the in-between," through a patient in a regressed hypnotic state, "Our task is to learn. To become God-like through knowledge...By knowledge we approach God, and then we can rest. Then we come back and teach, to help others."

And so, with a little willing suspension of disbelief, perhaps life isn't a shameful balancing act, but more like a party. And you can either mess with the "bad kids," and find yourself in a heap of trouble, or you can get a little tipsy and dance with your friends until the cows come home. Even if you make a poor decision, there's always the next party to make a better one. And a party isn't a party if you sit around waiting for only one guest to arrive. But most importantly, love and happiness doesn't begin at the finish line; it was with you from the start.♥

*Briana MacPerry is a licensed creative arts therapist and adjunct writing and research instructor. When she is not grading or corralling her four-year-old son, she is blogging and working on making that big break happen. To learn more or contribute to her online community for artists and writers, check out [www.brianamacperry.wordpress.com](http://www.brianamacperry.wordpress.com), or visit her on twitter @macperrytweets.*

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**MEMBERSHIP HAS ITS PRIVILEGES: WHY PRO AND PAN ARE WORTHWHILE,  
AND WHAT WE CAN DO TO MAKE THEM BETTER**  
**BY KATE MCMURRAY**

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RWA just conducted a survey of members regarding the PAN and PRO communities. As of when I'm writing this, nothing has been decided, and that may change by the time this column is published, but I wanted to give a quick rundown of what these are and how they affect RWA members. This all may change in the coming weeks, but here is what I think you need to know.

***DISCLAIMER: These opinions are mine and do not reflect the opinions RWANYC Board.***

I believe there are some necessary changes to be made to PRO and PAN, but these communities are not as obsolete as I've seen some argue. Let me explain.

My first book came out five years ago, and sometimes I wish I'd known then even a fraction of what I do now about the industry and our community. I mean, objectively, I knew some things because I'd been working in the industry for a while, but I had no sense of the romance community or RWA or any of it when I submitted my first book in the summer of 2009.

But the romance landscape was a different place back then. Self-publishing was still largely derided and few houses were publishing the kinds of books I was writing. There were definitely options if you wanted to get published—I opted to sidestep getting an agent and submitted to a digital-first house that took unsolicited manuscripts—but it wasn't like now. When my first book—a gay romantic suspense—hit stores, you probably could have counted on two hands the number of gay romances released that week. Now there are hundreds released each week. It's a tougher market, there's more competition. That's true of romance generally, not just LGBT romance.

I say all this to acknowledge that times have changed. As such, there are definitely arguments to be made for why RWA should change some of its practices, particularly those pertaining to PRO and PAN. But I still think both communities have their merits.

Let's break it down:

The goal of PRO was to be a community of practice for writers who had submitted their first manuscript but weren't published yet. From the RWA website, the purpose of PRO is “to promote the interests of RWA members who have submitted at least one completed manuscript, but have not yet been published, and to enhance communication between those members and publishing professionals.” When PRO was established, it wasn't so easy for authors to upload their books to an online retailer and be taken seriously—communication with publishing houses, editors, and/or agents was a necessary part of the publication process.

Given the changes to the market, some change to PRO should be in order. To me, it makes sense for there to be a community of practice for writers who are seriously pursuing a career but are not published yet, and for that reason, PRO still has a purpose. Even as a means to help aspiring writers communicate with publishing professionals, it is useful; not everyone wants to self-publish.



As president of Rainbow Romance Writers, I encouraged the members of my chapter to apply for PRO and PAN because it demonstrated to National that they were in serious pursuit of a romance career, and I still think this is true. So if you've done the legwork to get your first novel out there, even if it hasn't been picked up yet, that's worthy of acknowledgement. That first step is sometimes the hardest in the whole process.

But an issue has arisen among the growing group of writers who are published but not yet eligible for PAN.

These are writers who only write short stories or haven't met the income goals for a single title yet (which I'll discuss more below). PRO doesn't seem like the best fit, but if they aren't eligible for PAN, where do they belong?

Personally, I'd like to see a third community develop, because I think the needs of authors who are already published but who have not yet reached PAN are unique. What are the next steps? How does one get more sales? Where should one submit one's next manuscript? These are tough questions to answer, and having a community of writers at a similar place in their career would certainly be useful.

So, then, what of PAN?

For those of you who don't know, PAN is the Published Author Network, or RWA's community of practice for published writers. In order to qualify, you have to have received an advance of at least \$1,000 or earned \$1,000 in royalties for a single traditionally published book. (To be clear, there is no longer a list of accepted publishers, so this means earning \$1,000 on any single book put out by any publisher.) If you're self-published, you must earn \$5,000 in royalties for a single book to qualify.

I've seen plenty of authors argue these designations are unfair. If you're published, you're published, right?

Well. Here's where I'll disagree.

Full disclosure: I'm a member of PAN. I became eligible with my very first book, actually. So that's my particular bias. Also, I write gay romance and, until recently, was only published by small presses. I'm not trying to brag, I'm just saying: if I can do it, so can you. PAN is not solely the province of those published by the Big 5.

There are some good reasons that threshold exists. All is not equal in publishing. There's a difference between the amount of work I put into every one of my books and someone typing out a story in a few hours and uploading it to Amazon or Smashwords. I think we can all agree on that.

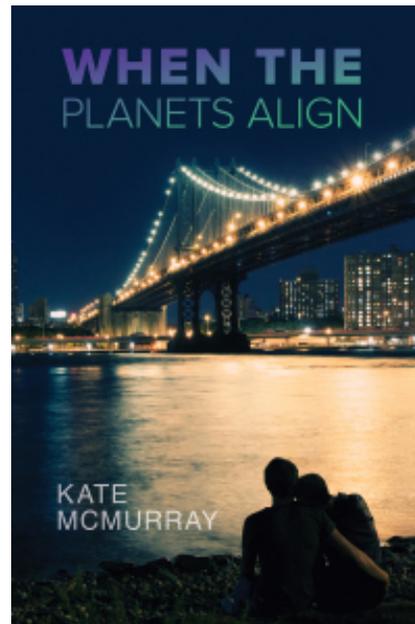
RWA is in the business of advocating for its authors. One of the other reasons for that income threshold is to make sure writers are being published well and not getting swindled. There are plenty of houses that will happily publish your book, but are all of them really serving your interests? Are they giving you a professional edit, an eye-catching cover, and some guidance through the publishing process? Are they doing any kind of promotion, distributing your books to bookstores, and sending your books out for review? If the answer to these questions is, "no," it might be time to reexamine the houses you submit to.

On top of that, having a goal is good. The thing about the income threshold is that it's something to aspire to. If your book hasn't sold enough copies to net you that \$1,000 yet, what can you do to change that? How can you market differently? How can you make your next book better? Don't think of it as an impossible frustration but as a barrier you can (and will!) break through.

So I still think there's a place for PAN or something like it. And, again, the needs of authors who have achieved PAN are different from the needs of authors who are published but haven't qualified for PAN yet. We're at different stages in our careers. There's nothing bad about that, but it's a fact that an author who has made a bestseller list has different career concerns than an author who has just put out her first book. And there should be room in RWA for everyone from the aspiring writer to the *New York Times* Bestseller.

So, to my mind, the best solution is perhaps three communities instead of the two, each designed to best meet the needs of the authors who qualify. My solution is not the be-all/end-all, though; if you've got better ideas, let RWA know!♥

*RWA/NYC VP 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. She lives in Brooklyn, NY. Her tenth novel, WHEN THE PLANETS ALIGN was published in December 2014 by Dreamspinner Press. Visit her at [www.katemcmurray.com](http://www.katemcmurray.com).*





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**ASK ALICE: ABOUT THE ENDING THAT SATISFIES  
BY ALICE ORR**

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**Question:** How do I make my story ending sell my story?

**Answer:** The ending of your story doesn't sell this story as much as it sells your next story. Have you ever finished a book and wanted to throw it across the room? Or maybe actually did throw it across the room? Very often the book's ending made you do that. And also made certain you wouldn't buy that author's next book.

Avoid being thrown across the room. Avoid losing a reader for your next book and the ones after it. Create a story ending that doesn't frustrate. Create an ending that satisfies.

The end game of your story is a danger zone. Partly because you're most likely tired of these people and their situation by now. In fact your head and heart are already deep into your next story. So you must be careful not to write the ending in this rhythm. Gallop – Gallop – Gallop – The End. That ending does not satisfy. That ending lacks the essential Big Bang.

The purposes of a Big Bang ending are – to reverberate after the last page has been turned – to lodge in the psyche of the reader – and most emphatically to be remembered. All the way to the bookstore or the Buy Now button and a purchase of your next title.

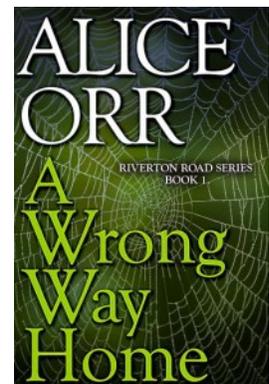
To create a Big Bang ending you must plan the climactic scene in detail. Don't write a word till that plan is perfect. Plan mostly action and dialogue and keep all of this action on stage in the immediate present. There are more steps as well. More steps than this individual column length allows. You will find those steps at my blog at [www.aliceorrbooks.com](http://www.aliceorrbooks.com).

You must stage your final scene step-by-step – the way a choreographer stages a dance. The result will be a powerful climax for your story. A Dramatic Ending at full circle from what will have to have been your Dramatic Opening. And equally or even more thrilling. Secrets to writing that Dramatic Opening are also at my blog.

Now, you must recognize that your story is over. You and your protagonist have exploded out of the explosive situation you exploded into on page one. You absolutely must resist the temptation to hang around a while longer.

You've taken your reader on an unforgettable ride. Leave before she has a chance to catch her breath. Leave before he's had enough. Leave them wanting more. No Epilogues, please.♥

*Alice Orr's latest story is A WRONG WAY HOME – Riverton Road Romantic Suspense Series, Book #1 – Matt & Kara's Story. This is her 12<sup>th</sup> novel and it does have a dramatic ending. Visit Alice at [www.aliceorrbooks.com](http://www.aliceorrbooks.com).*





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**FIT & WORDY: LOSE THE STUFF, LOSE THE FAT**  
**BY LISA SIEFERT**

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Want a quick tip for losing weight? Throw away everything non-essential in your home. It's sucking up your time, energy and money to maintain it. Stuff leaves you stressed, tired and overwhelmed.

The #1 complaint I hear from people who want to work out but can't seem to make it to the gym is that they don't have enough time. I have a solution: become a minimalist. Becoming a minimalist is your fast-track to creating more time in your life.

*"Too many people spend money they haven't earned, to buy things they don't want, to impress people they don't like."* – Will Rogers, 1879

Growing up, my entire family lived for garage sales, flea markets, and antiquing. There wasn't a single space not taken up with a knick-knack of some sort. And when the Siefert family ran out of places to put the newly purchased TJ Maxx chotchkes, we bought entertainment stands and shelving to accommodate and display these great finds.

I know what you're thinking. That neverending purchasing frenzy couldn't go on forever. Eventually they would run out of space and you're right, we did. At which time, we'd hold our own garage sale and congratulate ourselves on all the cash we made. Cash that was used to replenish the recently departed trinkets. It was a neverending cycle.

The thing is, stuff creates clutter and clutter leads to hours upon hours spent organizing, cleaning and searching through piles of stuff for what you really need at that particular moment. This is all wasted time that could be spent writing, working out and most importantly, sleeping. And don't even get me started on all of the money that you'll save.

How do you know if you have a problem? If you have ever bought something, only to discover that you already had it at home, then you have too much stuff. If you haven't used something in over six months, I doubt you need it. Aside from the just in case epi pen to prevent yourself from going into anaphylactic shock due to an allergic reaction, how much just in case stuff do you really need?

*"Have nothing in your home that you do not know to be useful or believe to be beautiful."* – William Morris, 1834

Less stuff affords you a higher quality of life. Not the other way around. It's been proven time and time again that material belongings do not equate with happiness.

How appealing is the desk to the right to write at?  
Probably none, at all.

What about the one underneath? Instead of fantasizing about attending a writing retreat for the space and time to write? Why not declutter your own place and make your home a writing utopia you get to come home to everyday.



To get started:

1. **Make de-owning your first instinct, not scheduling a trip to Target to purchase organizational furniture.** Go through everything you own. Yep, every single piece of anything as you walk in the front door. If you don't need it, toss it.
2. **Eliminate storage units, boxes, bags and all the stuff hidden inside them.** Purge it. You know what I'm talking about: the junk shoved under your bed, in the back of the closet and even worse, the size zero Calvin Klein's from the 90s that you hope to starve yourself into.
3. **Stop shopping.** Just don't do it. Aside from groceries for the week, some toilet paper and other essentials, there is no reason to ever go shopping. Shopping implies browsing and purchasing things you might like to have, not things you need.



For more fitness based tips for writers, go to [www.fitandwordygirl.com](http://www.fitandwordygirl.com).♥

*Lisa Siefert will be teaching a Fit & Wordy workshop at July's RWA National Conference. She is an aspiring NA/Mystery author who lives on the UWS with her dog: Hoppy, a fit and barky 10# miniature pincher. Please visit her at [www.fitandwordygirl.com](http://www.fitandwordygirl.com).*

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## 50 SHADES OF SEXY BLOG TOUR

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Congratulations! Our second 50 Shades of Sexy Blog Tour was a Hit!

Readers loved the free excerpts from New York's Leading Romance Authors – that's Us!

**Many thanks to the chapter members who participated.** For those who didn't/ couldn't, there will be more opportunities in the future.

The excerpts will continue to be available on our blog site:  
[www.rwanycblogginginthebigapple.blogspot.com](http://www.rwanycblogginginthebigapple.blogspot.com). Happy Reading.♥

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**AFTER THE FIRST BOOK: LEAVE THE HOUSE  
BY KATE MCMURRAY**

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We live in remarkable times in which any information we need to know is pretty much available at our fingertips. It means doing research for our novels is pretty dang easy; if I need to know something, I can just Google it.

Unless I can't.

In working on my second historical novel, I ran into a very strange roadblock. I have a hero who was a cop in 1896. I chose this year as the setting of the novel for a number of reasons, the most significant of which is that Teddy Roosevelt was a police commissioner at this time, and TR is a minor character in the book. I've read a bunch of TR biographies and all this background about police corruption in the late nineteenth century. This is all good and helped flesh out the cop character. But when I needed more information about the nitty-gritty daily life of a cop in 1896? Bupkis.

The five boroughs of New York City were consolidated in 1898 to create the modern city we all know and love, and the modern NYPD was created as a result of consolidation. Information on the NYPD after 1898 is abundant on the Internet. Prior to 1898? It's like crickets chirping.

The actual impact any of this information had on my novel was probably tiny. But I had a couple of questions I wanted answers to, and I became a little obsessed. There are limits on what you can do with Internet research, it turns out.

I had to leave my apartment, basically. I ended up doing quite a bit of research for this book at museums and libraries, and I learned a lot of crazy, fascinating things. It's handy that I live in New York and have a book set in New York, because there are quite a lot of resources. I was even able to go look at some of the historical buildings I was writing about. Well, kind of. The vast majority of the architecture that existed in the 1890s, at least in the neighborhoods I am writing about, is long gone, from the brothels and dance halls along the Bowery to the elevated railways that ran the length of Manhattan to the mansions that used to line Fifth Avenue above 50th Street. But some of it's still around, including the Lower East Side tenements, part of the Tenth Ward in the 1890s, one of the worst slums in the city. (The Tenement Museum is a must-see if you're doing this kind of historical research.)

I think it's good to get out anyway. When it's not winter, I find going for a walk is a great cure for writer's block. Sometimes I just need to get away from my computer. I'll turn over a story problem in my head as I walk and find a good solution for it. Google Street View is super useful if you need to describe a setting, but sometimes you just need to go to the site and take a few pictures yourself. You'll notice things you'll never see online.

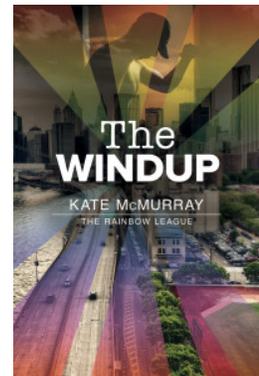


I also like to go on artist's dates. This is a term from Julia Cameron's excellent *The Artist's Way*. An artist's date is basically a visit to somewhere for inspiration. I like to go to museums just for the sake of going, to look at art and recharge my brain. Cameron recommends things like taking a journal outside and writing whatever comes to mind, seeing a movie, doing some gardening, rereading a book, going to a thrift store to spend \$5 on something neat, trying a new restaurant, or reading poetry. Anything to redirect your brain away from what's hanging you up, to refresh and get inspired.

Not to mention, characters live outside. Sometimes the easiest way to get inspired is to just observe. I used to take my laptop to work at this little coffee shop in Park Slope that for a while seemed to be the Public Place Where People Went to Break Up. No idea why, but I witnessed a dozen or so breakups there over the course of maybe eight months. As I tried not to eavesdrop, my mind would race: Why did their relationship fall apart? Why come here to end things? What could they have done differently? And then my mind would be off imagining alternate scenarios for these people, and then I'd have a story idea.

As writers, we need to see and observe and be inspired. Sometimes you can go for hours without leaving your desk, so into your characters and your story that you can't bear to leave them. But sometimes the going gets tough, the story gets stuck, and the best thing for it is to leave the house.♥

*RWA/NYC VP 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. She lives in Brooklyn, NY. Her tenth novel, WHEN THE PLANETS ALIGN, was published in December 2014 by Dreamspinner Press. Visit her at [www.katemcmurray.com](http://www.katemcmurray.com).*



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**THE GIDDY GRAMMARIAN: ONE WORD OR TWO?**  
**BY LISBETH ENG**

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Ah, the difference a space makes. There are many examples in English where a simple space, dividing one word into two, changes the meaning and usage. First, I'll touch on the mix-up between noun and verb phrases, and attempt to clarify a common source of confusion.

"I've forgotten my login so I can't log in."

Here, "login" is a noun, referring to the username and password needed to access a computer. On the other hand, "log in" (two words) is a verb phrase – a verb plus a preposition – meaning the action of the accessing said computer.

There are other cases in which that same principle applies: the noun form is one word and the verb two.

"The acquiring company offered a buyout to shareholders, however, the shareholders did not vote to allow anyone to buy them out." You will note that in this example, the verb phrase "buy out" is split, yet it still comprises a verb and a preposition.

"As the stock price declined, the investor chose to sell off his shares, rather than watch them tumble into the abyss of an accelerating selloff." The noun "selloff" can also be hyphenated (i.e. sell-off); both spellings are correct.

Other examples of how that minuscule but essential space leads to confusion are the following pairs: overall vs. over all; everyday vs. every day; maybe vs. may be.

"Overall" can be used as an adjective meaning comprehensive, or as an adverb meaning viewed as a whole. "Over all," on the other hand, consists of a preposition (over) and a pronoun (all) and means above or on top.

"His overall impression was favorable."

"Overall, we were satisfied with the service."

"The falcon flew over all of the houses in the neighborhood."

"Everyday" and "every day" are frequently confused, though their usage is quite different. "Everyday" is an adjective meaning ordinary or commonplace, while the phrase "every day" functions as an adverb and means the same as "each day."



“I need an adventure. I’ve grown bored with everyday life.”

“I walk to work every day.”

“Maybe” is an adverb synonymous with “perhaps,” while “may be” is a phrase incorporating the modal verb “may” with the verb “to be.” It is used in the same manner as “might be.”

“He didn’t call me today; maybe he’s forgotten that it’s my birthday.”

“There may be something to the rumor that Tom is cheating on his wife.”

This subject falls into the category of “boring but important.” While the differences among these various pairs are subtle, understanding them is essential to writing grammatically correct sentences, and avoiding the embarrassment of appearing careless or poorly read.♥

*Lisbeth Eng works as a Compliance Officer in the financial industry by day and writes historical romance by night. She holds a bachelor's degree in English, and speaks a smattering of German, Italian and French. Please visit her at [www.lisbetheng.com](http://www.lisbetheng.com).*

“If I waited till I  
felt like writing,  
I'd never write at all.  
– Anne Tyler



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**WELCOME TO MY WRITING DEN!**  
**WRITING THROUGH THE FOG**  
**BY MARIA COX**

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Recently, I attended an online class called Writing Through Life's Curveballs. The class was advertised via RWA Notes. Up until recently, I had dealt with several curveballs of my own, and the course description genuinely piqued my interest.

A multi published author who had dealt with several crisis of her own facilitated the one week class. Consequently, the stories shared during the one-week course were moving and inspiring. The adversity some of the writers faced got me really thinking about my own challenges.

No matter our age, cultural background, or social status, we all have those times when life screams at us, "I don't care if you have a deadline, a family, a career. Here comes a curveball!"

Now, without going into too much detail, I'll say that I've worked through two major life-altering events in the past six months. Through it all, however, I kept my obligations: Cared for my loved ones, got dinner on the table, kept the house clean, and met deadlines. I kept the well-oiled machine running. Yet, where I needed inspiration and confidence—well, that's where things suffered. So much in my life was turbulent and my situation was affecting my writing. The anti-muse made an unscheduled visit determined to wreak havoc on my writing life.

Logically, now it's the point in the story where I reveal how I rid myself of that annoying anti-muse for good. Unfortunately, I don't have such insightful advice since dealing with a constant anti-muse isn't easy. What I can tell you is that it wasn't until I began addressing my underlying issues that I was able to put the pieces of my life back together. Little by little I started to write. I wrote about my current situation and kept it in a journal. All the notes were a way for me to keep my head in the game at a time when Life's Curveball was in charge.

We all have to get stuff done, day job responsibilities, family commitments, writing deadlines, but sometimes life forces you to turn away. When this happens all we can do is to take a step back and reassess our current situation. For me, I've learned to separate tasks and deal with the "must dos" and then deal with everything else.

The trick to keeping your sanity is to work through your issues one day at a time. And, try not to get too discouraged. If you make small strides every day you'll soon be on the road to recapturing yourself. And remember, when there's enough room in your life the door to creativity will open again.♥

*Maria Cox has a degree in Business Administration with a Minor in Computer Applications. She also has an accreditation from the Project Management Institute. Maria 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. Her first published novel, WICKED LUSTFUL TALES, was released through Melange*

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*Books in October 2013. Maria writes sensual romance, stories that showcase strong, sassy, and sexy characters. When she's not writing, Maria works a technical writer. She lives in Queens, New York. Please visit her site [www.mywritingden.net](http://www.mywritingden.net) and/or follow her on Twitter. Maria is a member of Romance Writers of America (RWA) and a member of RWA/NYC & RWA Desert Rose. She is also is the past President of the Phoenix Writers Club.*

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## **SOCIAL NETWORKING FOR AUTHORS: TO RETWEET OR QUOTE TWEET BY MARIA FERRER**

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twitter



I love Tweeting. It's short, sweet and to the point. And, all in 140 characters tops!

As always, the object of your tweets is to promote your brand (aka your writing, your name) and to gain friends and followers (aka fans!).

One way to do all that on Twitter is to retweet other's people's tweets. This will get Them to notice You. Most times, people won't think twice and will just retweet those who have retweeted them, sometimes even thanking you. Then their friends will see you and retweet you as well. It's a wonderful cycle.

To retweet, you just press the middle symbol under the tweet message: You will be given two options: retweet (RT) OR quote tweet (QT).

Retweet and quote tweet are two different things:

- a) When you retweet, you are basically copying that person's tweet word for word, no matter the word length. This is the feature you will most often use.
- b) When you quote tweet, you are going in and physically adding/ changing/ shortening that person's tweet. You should use this feature sparingly and only when you want to add a personal note or hashtag to the original tweet.

EXAMPLE:

K.M. Jackson @KwanaWrites

So What's Up (and Down) with Ebooks? [Dearauthor.com/....](http://Dearauthor.com/....)

Retweet: It will appear on your timeline as:

RWA-NYC Chapter @RWANYC

@KwanaWrites: So What's Up (and Down) with Ebooks? [Dearauthor.com/....](http://Dearauthor.com/....)

Quote Retweet: It will appear on your timeline as:

RWA-NYC Chapter @RWANYC

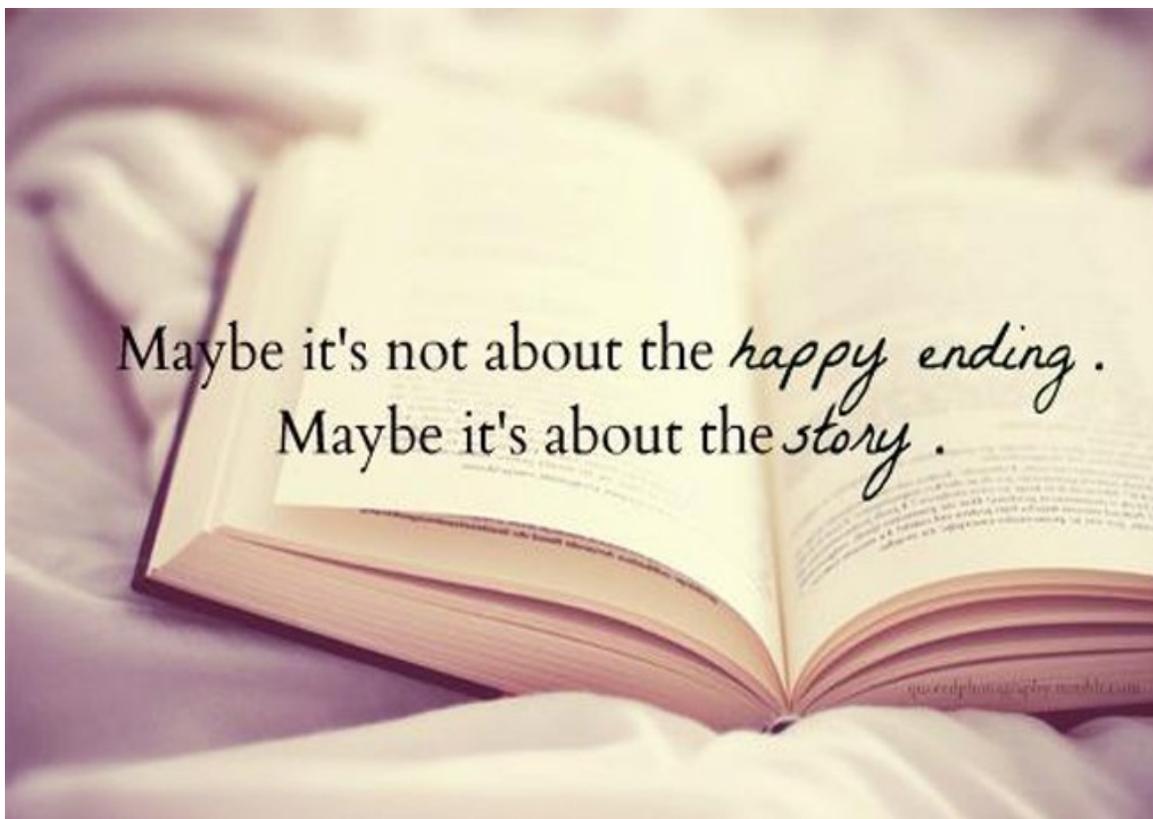
Thank you @KwanaWrites for sharing. [Dearauthor.com/....](http://Dearauthor.com/....) Seems the fight over ebooks continues.

Again, you will use the retweet feature most often; and use the quote tweet sparingly.

**TIP:** An important thing to do **BEFORE** you retweet any tweet that has a link is to first open that link and make sure it works and is linking to the correct site, and that it is not just a sales button. You will not believe how many times the links don't match or it's just a marketing pitch. Because once you retweet, the tweet is **YOUR** tweet and you want to make sure it's correct.

Happy Tweeting!♥

*Maria Ferrer loves tweeting. In fact, she manages six Twitter accounts, which is why the retweet and quote tweet buttons are so important to her. When not tweeting, Maria is writing romance under her own name and her nom de plume Del Carmen. Visit her at [www.marializaferrer.blogspot.com](http://www.marializaferrer.blogspot.com) and [www.mydelcarmen.com](http://www.mydelcarmen.com). Follow her on twitter at @MariaFerrerNYC @mydelCarmen @latinawrite @RWANYC @LatinaBookclub @ReadLatinoLit.*





## RWA/ NYC Membership & Renewal Application

DATE: \_\_\_\_\_

\*CHECK ONE: \_\_\_NEW MEMBER \_\_\_RENEWAL

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ADDRESS: \_\_\_\_\_

CITY/ STATE/ ZIP CODE: \_\_\_\_\_

HOME TEL: \_\_\_\_\_ EMAIL: \_\_\_\_\_

\*NOTE: All RWA/ NYC Members must be members of RWA National. For national membership form, visit [www.rwanational.org](http://www.rwanational.org).

**CHAPTER INVOLVEMENT:** Please volunteer to help out in at least ONE (1) chapter event.

I want to help out with (check all that apply): \_\_\_contest \_\_\_awards reception \_\_\_newsletter \_\_\_website \_\_\_retreat \_\_\_ALL!

**HOW DID YOU HEAR ABOUT US?** \_\_\_RWA \_\_\_Face-book/Twitter \_\_\_Website \_\_\_Other: \_\_\_\_\_

### MEMBERSHIP DUES

#### Chapter dues are due March 7, 2015.

Make checks payable to RWA/ NYC.

There will be a \$10 late fee for all renewals after March 1st; and, \$20 fee on all returned checks. Return completed form with your dues to RWA/ NYC, POB 3722 Grand Central Station NY NY 10163, or you can pay via PayPal at [www.rwanyc.com](http://www.rwanyc.com).

\_\_\_ **GENERAL MEMBER --\$ 40/year**  
(Dues: Jun-Jul= \$30; Aug-Sep= \$25; Oct-Dec= \$20.)

\_\_\_ **CHARTER MEMBER --\$ 35/year**  
(ONLY for members continuously since 1989)

\_\_\_ **ASSOCIATE MEMBER --\$ 35/year**  
(Dues: Jun-Jul= \$25; Aug-Sep= \$20; Oct-Dec= \$15.)  
(ONLY for related professionals not pursuing writing career)

☐ **OPTIONAL:** Check here if you are making an additional contribution to the chapter in the amount of \$\_\_\_\_\_.

**You can also pay via PAYPAL at [www.rwanyc.com](http://www.rwanyc.com).**

#### WRITING CREDITS

CHECK ONE: \_\_\_PUBLISHED \_\_\_UNPUBLISHED

CHECK ONE if you are an RWA National Member of:  
\_\_\_PAN \_\_\_PRO

If UNPUBLISHED, tell us at what stage you are:  
\_\_\_New or \_\_\_Pre-Published (have submitted something)  
Also, please fill out info below on your website and social networks.

If PUBLISHED, in what format? i.e., book-length romantic fiction, short fiction, electronic, confessions, etc.

PUBLISHER(S): \_\_\_\_\_

PSEUDONYM(S)? \_\_\_\_\_

WEBSITE(S): \_\_\_\_\_

BLOG: \_\_\_\_\_

FACE-BOOK \_\_\_\_\_

TWITTER \_\_\_\_\_

# Happy Spring! Happy Writing!

