

KEYNOTES



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

AUGUST 2016

**NEXT CHAPTER MEETING: SATURDAY, AUGUST 6
TRS, 40 EXCHANGE PLACE, 3RD FLOOR, 12-4PM**

TOPIC: BRINGING YOUR A GAME

SPEAKER: DAMON SUEDE

No two authors or careers are alike; our styles, strategies, and even notions of success vary wildly, and yet cookie-cutter promo persists. In this class we'll skip the one-size-fits-all Band-Aids by

- establishing a customized measure of success.
- identifying your approach to genre fiction promo.
- mapping brand assets and an approach strategy.

Make sure your brand is working for you not against you. You'll leave with action items specific to your skills, experience, and career goals so you can unleash your A game.♥

Damon Suede grew up out-n-proud deep in the anus of right-wing America, and escaped as soon as it was legal. Though new to romance fiction, Damon has been writing for print, stage, and screen for two decades. He's won some awards, but counts his blessings more often: his amazing friends, his demented family, his beautiful husband, his loyal fans, and his silly, stern, seductive Muse who keeps whispering in his ear, year after year. Get in touch with him at DamonSuede.com.



CALENDAR

Aug 6-- Chapter Meeting at TRS

Aug 18-21-- BDSM Writers Con

Sep-- Vote on National Bylaws

Sep 15-- RWA/NYC contest deadline

Sep 18-- Brooklyn Book Festival

Sep 22—RWA/NYC Golden Apple Awards

Oct 14-15-- NJRW Conference





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THANK YOU!

To Our Contributing Writers
 Stacey Agdern, Maria Ferrer, K.M. Jackson,
 LaQuette, Morning Lee, Racheline Maltese,
 Kate McMurray, Michael Molloy,
 Mimi Pizarro Logsdon, Ursula Renée

2016 CHAPTER CALENDAR

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.

RWA/NYC BOARD OF DIRECTORS

President: Kate McMurray
 Vice President/Events: Mimi Pizarro Logsdon
 Vice President/Contest: Racheline Maltese
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 Past President: Ursula Renée

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 Keynotes Editor: Ursula Renée
 Publicity: Jean Joachim, Michael Molloy,
 Maria Cox
 Website: Ursula Renée

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.

RWA/NYC, PO Box 3722,
 Grand Central Station, New York, NY 10163
www.rwanyc.com
info@rwanyc.com
rwanycblogginginthebigapple.blogspot.com

SEPTEMBER THEME

BACK TO SCHOOL
 Writing Young Adult and New Adult novels

**CHAPTER MINUTES: JULY
BY SECRETARY STACEY AGDERN**

Board Members Present:

Kate McMurray – President
Mimi Pizarro Logsdon – Vice President
Racheline Maltese – Vice President
Ursula Renée – Past President

Board Members Absent:

Tamara Lynch – Treasurer
Stacey Agdern – Secretary

**NEW MEMBERS**

Adriana Barison
Magda Cavin
Blue Saffire

The meeting was called to order by President Kate McMurray at 12:25 pm. Kate McMurray approved the June 2016 minutes and Mimi Pizarro Logsdon seconded them.

Mimi Pizarro Logsdon announced that the Golden Apple Awards will be held on September 22, 2016 from 6:00 - 8:00 p.m. at the Writer's Den at the Library Hotel.

Racheline Maltese announced that the focus of this year's contest will be the hero/heroine learning something about themselves. The guest judge is Junessa Vilorio from Penguin Random House. The costs will be \$25.00 for RWA members and \$30.00 for non-members. The contest will be opened to unpublished manuscripts from all authors regardless of their publishing status. She will be looking for judges.

The theme for the August 2016 Keynotes will be "Some Want It Hot." Members will be welcome to submit hot excerpts of any heat level.

Michael Molloy announced that the Brooklyn Book Festival will be held on September 18, 2016. The form to reserve a two hour time slot at the RWA/NYC table is on the chapter website. The costs will be \$35.00. He is also looking for volunteers.

The board is brainstorming ideas for a new critique group. They are also looking for a volunteer to run the group.

The elections for board positions will be soon. Members are welcome to run for any position, except president. To be eligible to service as president, members must have served one year on the board. We will need a new treasurer as Tamara Lynch has served the maximum of two years.

There will be a RWA-MWA-HWA Mixer on August 11, 2016 from 6:30 pm to 9:30 pm at (Le) Poisson Rouge - 158 Bleecker Street, New York, NY 10012.

RWA is asking donations for literacy programs. Chapters that raise \$300 or more will be listed in the RWR.

The meeting was adjourned at 12:48 pm.♥

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE: WHAT MAKES YOU HAPPY
BY PRESIDENT KATE MCMURRAY

A romance writing career is a strange confluence of passion and business savvy, creativity and practicality, love and strategy.

I don't think there necessarily has to be a conflict between writing and business, but it can often feel like there is.

We put a lot of hours into our books. Writing is hard work. We make sacrifices to get it done, be it missing a TV show or foregoing housecleaning or losing time with our kids. So we spend all this time with these characters, in this world we've created, but then when the book is done, we have to sell it. You have to detach yourself enough from the work to care about it but endure peer and editorial feedback, to put together a marketing plan, to send the book out for review.

I do think it's possible to love what you do through the whole process, though, and to do it without losing your mind.

I've written quite a lot in the last ten years, particularly since I started pursuing a career as a writer. I've written books I loved. I've written stories that were intensely personal for me. And I've written books that were a real struggle, even a few that my heart wasn't really in. Not everything I write makes it to publication, but one thing I've learned is that, when my heart isn't in it, readers can tell. I wrote something last year, and one of my beta readers—who has read everything I've ever published—sent the manuscript back and essentially said, “What the hell is this?” Because she could tell it wasn't up to my usual standards.

I appreciated being called on that. Because it showed me that I'm a better writer when I'm really invested in my stories. When I care about the characters. When the stories resonate with me emotionally. If I'm just going through the motions, readers can tell.

I think to be a writer, you have to love it. It's too hard and there's too much working against you if you don't. Which I don't say to discourage you, just to say that writing romances is not a ticket to easy money.

I don't know if it's because I've written so much or because my training as an editor has thickened my skin, but I've found that I can love something while I'm writing it and disconnect enough from it to accept criticism during the beta and editorial process. (Reviews are... a different issue.) It helps to know that the aim of a good editor is to make your work better, so if they're pointing out issues, it's so that I can fix them before the book is released. It's like putting a coat of gloss over a piece of furniture.

And if you love writing, you can love the whole process, all of it. I've been reading romances since I was a teenager, I still read them all the time, and I love the genre. I love talking about romance novels, especially ones that aren't mine. And that's part of my marketing strategy. I love attending romance-related events, everything from RWA/NYC meetings to local author readings to big



conventions, because talking to other romance authors and fans inspires me. Being among what I've come to think of as my tribe makes me want to write more. I really love this community, I love these books, and thinking about that inspires me to write.

This is why it doesn't work to write to trends. Sure, if, say, stories with bear shifters are suddenly hot and the book of your heart features a bear shifter, then now is a great time to get it published. But at the same time, no one knows what the next big thing is. Maybe you want to write something completely at odds with what's currently on the bestseller lists, and *that* will be the next thing to catch on. It's hard to know. But if you're writing a bear shifter story because they're trendy and not because your heart is really in it? Readers will be able to tell.

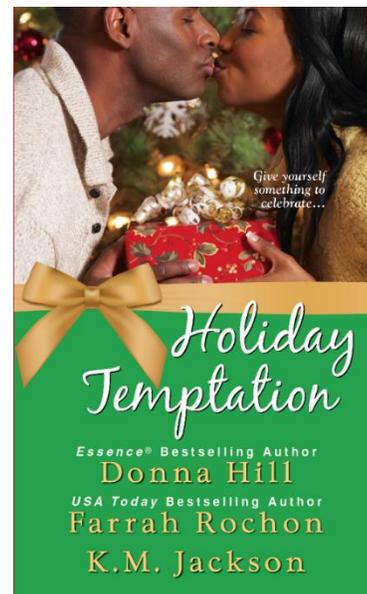
Write what you love, is the bottom line. Embrace it. Feel it. Weave your passion throughout the process, from writing to editorial to marketing. If you love what you do, it'll come across in the way you present yourself online and in person. And if writing what you love makes you happy? There's nothing better than that, is there? ♥

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.

MEMBERS ON THE SHELF



BLIND SPOT
by Katana Collins



HOLIDAY TEMPATION
“From Here to Serenity”
by K.M. Jackson
Kensington Books / Sept 2016

**KATHRYN HAYES "BACK TO SCHOOL" CONTEST
BY VICE PRESIDENT RACHELINE MALTESE**

Just like we are always learning and growing, our protagonists must learn in order to reach their happily-ever-after. Send us a scene showing the moment your protagonists learns something, whether the discovery is themselves or each other.

Eligibility: Authors may be unpublished, self-published, or traditionally published.

***Enter:** A maximum of 20 pages from an original novella or novel that is not contracted and has never been published in any form (traditional, self-published, blog etc.). Include a two-page synopsis providing a basic outline of the story and/or background leading up to the scene. The synopsis will not be judged.

Deadline: 11:59 p.m., September 15, 2016

Fee: RWA Members: \$25; Non-RWA: \$30

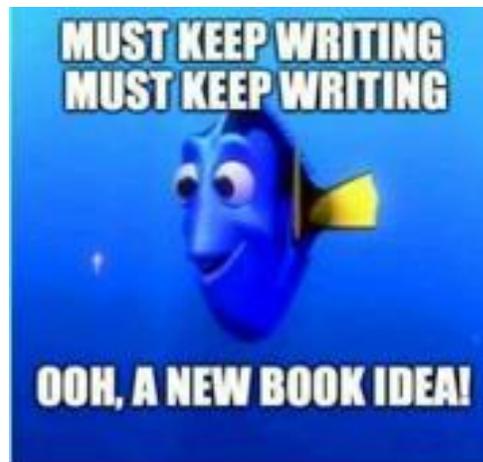
Judges: Published Authors

Final Judge: Junessa Vilorio, Penguin Random House

Prize: \$75.00

Electronic Submissions Only: <http://www.rwanyc.com/entry-form.html>

*Our contest does not have categories, but is open to entries from any genre of romance including erotica and LGBT, and in either category or single-title lengths. For more information, entry form, and rules contact Racheline Maltese at rwanyccontest@gmail.com or visit our website www.rwanyc.com♥



GOLDEN APPLE AWARDS
BY VICE PRESIDENT MIMI PIZARRO LOGSDON

SAVE THE DATE! Please join RWA/NYC in a celebration of romance novels and the publishing industry! We'll be honoring talented people doing good work in the industry.

We'll have cocktails and snacks in a gorgeous setting. RWA/NYC members and nonmember authors are welcome to come mingle with industry professionals, including editors, agents, and bloggers in a relaxed environment.

This is the romance party of the year, and you don't want to miss it!♥



Isabo



LaQuette

September 22, 2016

6:00 pm to 8:00 pm

The Writer's Den

299 Madison Avenue, New York, NY 10017

\$35.00 - RWA/NYC Members // \$40.00 - Non-members

Evites have been sent. Please RSVP asap. And follow our hashtag: #GAA2016. This year's winners are:

Lifetime Achievement Award
Author of the Year

Editor of the Year:

Agent of the Year:

Publisher of the Year:

Media Source of the Year:

Isabo Kelly

LaQuette

Kerri Buckley, Carina Press

Linda Camacho, Prospect Agency

Kensington Books

Dear Author Blog / Jane Little





**GOING THE INDIE ROUTE:
PROMOTING YOUR INDIE SELF ON SOCIAL MEDIA
BY K.M. JACKSON**

So you've published your super fabulous indie novel and your launch was a smashing success. Your first week of sales were more than expected and you even made it onto some of Amazon's top genre list. Awesome! This indie thing is tops and now you're wondering why you didn't go for it earlier. You've got this in the bag! So now you're thinking you'll write and publish your next fabulous book and then the next and then the next, the momentum can only build from there right? Right?! But wait, it doesn't take more than a little sales stalking with the next book to see things are jumping off with quite the same verve as before.

What's an indie published author got to do to get some discoverability in this town? Shouldn't the fans that you gained with your last book be flocking to pick up your next? Oh, wait, you mean to say you mom, cousin, BFF since 4th grade and hairdresser still haven't had a chance to actually read your first book yet, let alone leave a review on Amazon in order to get enthusiastic about your second book?

Deep breath in, slow breath out. No fear, there are ways to connect with readers. Real tried and true readers that will want to reads the words you put out. Now the ways are not quick, and at times, maybe not all that painless, but through social media connections can be made.

Social media. Yes, I realize just the words, for many of us, creative introverts can be a real drain, but nowadays it can be a powerful tool when it comes to building an active base of readers that actually want to buy and read your next book. And as writers publishing indie or considering going indie isn't that the ultimate goal? To connect with readers.

Reasons to jump on board and fully connect social media wise are many but for the sake of this article here are just a few:

- 1) To get your name in front of potential new readers (meaning folks you're not related too) and grow your fan base.
- 2) To firmly establish that fan base.
- 3) To let your fan base know when you have new books for sale.

Now let's start with the first point, getting your name in front of new readers. Social media platforms such as Twitter, Facebook, and Instagram and to a certain extent even your blog (if folks learn from the other platforms to go there) can be wonderful for that. People tend to buy from trusted brands and that is what you, as an author are, a brand. And to be a successful brand you have to build up a certain amount of name recognition. Now this doesn't mean going out and spamming people with flashing neon gifs of "buy my book!", "BUY MY BOOK", but like any other brand, with a successful advertising campaign, you want to tell a story. And I believe that story has to be an authentic story about you as an author and to some degree as a person.



The days of the writer as the recluse creative are, sadly gone. More and more, fans want to know about the person behind the story and how that story came to be. You can do that on Twitter by yes, of course tweeting about your book but a more effective way is actually engaging with people in the reader and romance community on topics that are important to them and you. That way people get to know a bit about as a person and then decide if you are someone they want to follow that has a voice they want to hear more. Trust me, from there

and before they follow you they will click on your name, see your bio and if you've got it set up right they will see that you are an author and can, from there, follow links to your site and see that you have a book or books out.

Now let's get to #2, establishing your fan base with social media. Once you get used to chatting on Twitter or Facebook or posting pictures on Instagram about yourself and engaging in back and forth now's the time to step it up a bit and get in on conversations with more in your community and beyond. Try looking for twitter chats and join in. Hashtags can be your best friend here. For example there is a wonderful one on Sunday nights starting at 7PM eastern time with the hashtag #RWChat co-hosted by our own chapter mate, Alexia Daria, Kimberly Bell, C.L. Polk and Robin Lovett.

But your talk doesn't have to be regulated to being strictly bookish in order to gain readers. I have often gotten new readers by live tweeting TV shows. This is not a hardship for me because I only tweet my reactions to the shows I enjoy watching and I hashtag them with the show's name. When I hit on a particularly good tweet (this is usually organic and by accident) every once in a while it will gain me a new follower and who knows, that person may turn into a reader. In the least, its person who I know has great taste in TV!

And now onto point #3, using social media to let your fan base know you have new books for sale. Hopefully, after you've successfully done points #1 and #2 hopefully you'll have established a good group of core social media friends who now won't mind shouting you out and re-tweeting you when you now send that flashing neon gif that says, "BUY MY BOOK!". You'll have people, who over time, have gotten to know and trust you over the virtual airwaves and they are now rooting for you to have good sales. A re-tweet will come happily from someone who is now truly an internet "friend" and you won't be spamming the airwaves you'll be getting endorsements from people who are now on your side, cheering for you to win. ♥

*A native New Yorker, K.M. JACKSON has won RWA/NYC's Golden Apple Author of the Year Award and is a daily advocate for #WeNeedDiverseRomance. She currently lives in a suburb of New York with her husband, twins, and a precocious terrier named Jack that keeps her on her toes. Visit her online at kmjackson.com, on Facebook at www.facebook.com/KmJacksonAuthor or follow her on Twitter @kwanawrites. Her latest novel, **BOUNCE BACK**, is available now.*



**EMBRACING MY PARTICULAR BRAND OF CRAZY
BY LAQUETTE**



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

STARTING AT “THE END”

Contrary to what some might believe, writing a novel doesn't always occur in sequential order. Plainly put, I don't sit down and start at the beginning of the story and work until I find myself at the end. That has never happened in my history of writing. Never! Not even once.

Usually, whenever I sit down to write, I begin at the end of the story. Why? I'm a very visual writer. I write in pictures. I get these images of scenes in my head and literally just describe what I see. More often than not, the first images that pop into my head when I'm musing about a story is the grand finale.

That might seem strange, but really it isn't. Writing the final scenes of my book first gives me a finishing point to work toward. Simply put, if I know how the book ends I can write the beginning and middle of the story so they will connect and transition smoothly with the end.

For instance, in *POWER PRIVILEGE & PLEASURE: QKB4*, I knew the book would end with the main characters traveling to Azuria, a fictional Mediterranean island that served as the homeland of my heroine, A.J. Tenetti. I also knew the black moment would occur there and the heroine would secret herself away to face her demons alone. Knowing this allowed me to focus my writing on making certain the couple's romance was in peril by that point in the story. Ultimately this created an opportunity for the heroine to make her hero's journey to the top of her mountain to slay her proverbial dragon (remember I told you in a previous article my heroines save their own day).

This method provides me with a story map. As a panster, that's as much of an outline as I can tolerate. I have just enough detail to keep me on a certain track as I'm writing, but it still offers me the flexibility of weaving my story together without the rigid confines of an actual outline (I'm allergic to outlines if you haven't guessed by now).

Lastly, writing my ending first allows me to clear my head for the rest of the story. Sometimes my mind gets so overwhelmed with the epic ending that I can't really focus on how everything begins. Getting those details out first takes the pressure off. It empties my head just in time to make space for all the details that will eventually form my beginning and middle. Thanks for spending a little time with me. 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.

REVIEW: RWA NATIONAL CONFERENCE & PHOTO ALBUM

ROMANCE WRITERS
OF AMERICA

**RWA BOARD OF DIRECTORS
MEETING HIGHLIGHTS**

The 2017 RITA entry process will be staggered. Authors may submit up to six entries, if categories are not full, at a cost of \$50 per entry for the first 3 RITA entries and \$100 per entry for the next three entries. “Mainstream Fiction with a Central Romance” was added as a provisional category and the Inspirational Romance category is now “Romance with Religious or Spiritual Elements”.

A task force will review the Golden Heart Contest to make sure this award maintains value among unpublished members amid changes in the publishing landscape.

Honor Roll policy was amended to include authors who have sold at least 100,000 copies of one book in a single language. Also, authors who hit on any *New York Times* or *Publishers Weekly* bestseller list qualify. Qualifications for the *USA Today* list remain the same.

A task force will study the feasibility of an RWA-sponsored summit on diversity within romance publishing.

Reminder. In September, General Members will vote on proposed amendments to the RWA Bylaws. The bylaws were printed in the June 2016 RWR.♥

**SOMETHING FOR EVERYONE
BY URSULA RENÉE**

I was an unpublished author when I attended my first RWA Conference in 2011. Eager to improve my writing skills, many of the workshops I attended focused on craft and research. I also sat through a few panels that dealt with author and agent/editor relationships to understand what my role as an author is and what agents and editors are looking for as well as what turns them off.

For financial reasons, I was unable to attend in 2012. However, when I stepped into the hotel in Atlanta in 2013, I had just signed my first contract and was eager to learn more about marketing and publicity. I still wanted to improve my skills and attended workshops that focused on craft (there were at least three that dealt with writing sex scenes) and research.

Over the years, I stopped attending workshops that focused on craft and frequented those that addressed that concerns I had at that time in my career. That included workshops on publicity, networking and the writer’s life.



This year, I attended workshops that focused on managing my career. *Plan For Success With Stephanie Bond* made creating the business plan painless. Using the tips I learned, I was able to organize my works-in-progress and determine what my goals were and how I intend to achieve them. *Rocking Reader Retention Rates: Using Tools and Engagement to Keep Readers Coming Back for More* offered tips for keeping readers interested in you between books. Finally, the chats with multiple published authors like Nora Roberts inspired me to go home and “put my butt in the chair.”.

While the RWA Conference focuses on helping authors improve skills and does not give us too many opportunities to get in front of readers, it is worthwhile attending. With the variety of workshops offered, there is something for everyone no matter where you are in your career. ♥



Jennifer Welsh & Beverly Jenkins



Lena Hart, Barbara Freethy & Sylvia Day



A masked Jennifer Welsh



Mingmei Yip at literacy signing

Thank you to everyone who shared their conference photos!

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.♥



REVIEW: JANE AUSTEN'S HOUSE & PHOTO ALBUM BY MARIA C. FERRER

A trip to Hampshire, outside of London, led to a wonderful afternoon exploring Jane Austen's cottage. Jane has become an icon and a symbol of the best of English literature. She has quiet a following; one that may one day rival Shakespeare's. Today, there are novels, cartoons, zombie movies and even one literary reading series in her honor. (*Pride & Prejudice & Zombies* was thrilling!)

I was quite taken with her beautiful brownstone with a tremendous garden, a gift to her mother when one of her brother's inherited the neighboring estate. Most fascinating was the small coffee table near the window where she did all her writing with a quill. I tried writing with a sample quill and don't know how Jane wrote without leaving a mess everywhere nor how she could write in such tiny penmanship.

Jane was an old maid; she shared her room with her older sister Cassandra; had two gentlemen callers; and was even engaged for one day before she called it off. Jane was an independent woman in her own time. I love her quote: "If adventures will not befall a young lady in her own village, she must seek them abroad." It was true for her heroine; true for Jane; and true for all women. Let's all be Jane; let's all be adventurous!♥



Jane's House & Museum



Her bedroom and writing desk



Jane's family tree



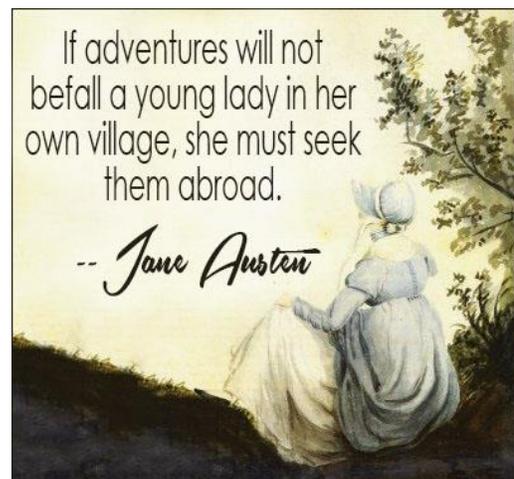
The drawing room where she kept tea leaves under lock and key



Cottage door



Jane's Plaque



Our theme this month is

SOME WANT IT HOT!

The theme for August has traditionally been "Hot". This year we are offering members a chance to showcase their "Hot" scenes. The following excerpts are arranged from mild to HOT!



EXCERPT: BELLA'S BEAST BY MORNING LEE

“Where is she?” Antoine demanded as Denis’s boots scraped across the library’s floor. Normally, he welcomed the other man’s company after supper, but his disappointment in another foiled plot was too great for him to enjoy their usual banter.

“In her room.” Denis leaned against the polished stones surrounding the unlit fireplace. “The poor dear was so exhausted; she was asleep by the time I returned with her meal.”

“Send her back in the morning.”

“¿Por qué?”

Antoine balled his hands into fists. Why did the other man always have to ask ‘why?’ “I have my reasons.”



“Is one of them her lineage?”

“Don’t you dare call me a bigot,” Antoine roared.

He grabbed the leg of the marble-top side table and flew out of his chair. Denis stepped to the side a second before the furniture slammed into the wall next to the fireplace. The crash echoed through the room.



Denis shuddered. “Point taken.”

Antoine stared at the shattered pieces on the floor. He had no business taking his frustrations out on Denis. It wasn’t his valet’s fault he had challenged the upper crust of society and lost...again.

After discovering his wife with her lover, he had returned to the house and proceeded to remove all her possessions. While he packed three wagons and a carriage with furniture, clothes and trinkets she insisted on purchasing because she could afford to, two servants were sent to fetch her and her lover as they were. As soon as they arrived, donned only in blankets, he shoved them in the carriage and sent her back to her father’s house with a note explaining why the marriage was over.

He later learned his wife had not been shamed by his actions. Instead, she earned sympathy for having a husband too uncouth to discreetly deal with an indiscretion. And, him? They laughed at his inability to keep his wife from straying.

Antoine dropped into the chair, leaned forward and covered his face with his hands.

“I’m sorry,” he mumbled into his palms.

“No, you were right. After all you’ve done for me I should’ve never questioned you. It was unfair of me.”

A hand brushed back his unruly tresses. The touch was soothing; one meant to calm an agitated soul. Shaking his head, Antoine turned away. He did not deserve the comfort the man wanted to offer him. He was not worthy.

Unperturbed by the reaction, Denis knelt by his side and gently tugged on his hands. Antoine lifted his head. There was no ill will in the violet eyes gazing up at him. A hand stroked his cheek.

He did not respond to the caress. But, if Denis was nothing else, he was persistent.

The younger man hooked a thumb under his chin. Antoine did not resist as Denis leaned forward. He did not deserve comfort, but his body longed to be held. In the end, the physical need won.♥

Morning Lee writes romance with a little spice and all that's nice. When Morning is not writing, she enjoys drawing and photography.

EXCERPT: TEN DAYS IN AUGUST
BY KATE MCMURRAY



It took a moment, but eventually Nicky opened the door. No wig or makeup adorned him this time. He wore only a flimsy, floral-printed dressing gown, one that looked like it was probably made for a woman. The top parted in a long V down the front of his chest and a thin sash was knotted at his waist. It wasn't doing enough to block Hank's imagination.

"Hello, Inspector," Nicky said, leaning on the doorframe.

He was beautiful. His hair was disheveled instead of carefully combed, which had the effect of making him look a little wild. His exposed chest was flat and strong and lightly dusted with hair. The opening of his dressing gown was like an arrow pointing toward the gentle rise below his belt. He wore no makeup now, no affectation. He was tall and thin with pouty lips and sparkling blue eyes. If Hank had ever seen a more beautiful man, he could not remember the occasion.

"And here you are, just as promised," Nicky said.

It took Hank an embarrassingly long moment to speak. He was dumbstruck, speechless in the wake of Nicky's beauty. But he swallowed and said, "I need some more information."

[...] "I want to help, I do, but I have nothing left to say. I think perhaps you knew I could not share more with you than you already know. But then, you did not come here just for information, did you?"

Hank looked Nicky over, from his mussed hair to his bare chest to his graceful little toes. "Perhaps there was a bit of pretense to my wanting to see you."

Nicky pressed his lips together. Then he said, "Occasionally my admirers come to greet me. When I first began dancing, I was still in the habit of letting men do as they wished to me. I no longer feel the obligation."

"So you turn them away."

"Who I allow in my home, in my bed, must be on my terms. For years, I survived because men paid me to do their bidding. Now I don't need their money. Now I dictate the rules."

Hank respected Nicky's wishes, but he couldn't overlook an obvious fact. "I am currently in your home."

Nicky's shoulders sagged. "Yes, well. It is not every day a handsome police inspector barges into your drawing room."

Hank smiled at that. "You think me handsome."

Nicky waved his hand dismissively. "Don't get a big head."

Hank stepped closer to Nicky. “I don’t believe I’m misreading this situation. You are as intrigued by me as I am by you.”



“Perhaps.”

“If circumstances were different, if we merely met on the street, would you have invited me to your home?”

“Probably not. You are dreadfully overbearing.”

“You can still say ‘no.’”

Nicky took a step away from Hank and crossed his arms over his chest. “Perhaps it is time for some of that honesty you keep insisting on.” He pressed his lips together again for a long moment. “I found myself drawn to you last night. It has been quite some time since any man has done that for me. It was nice to know I haven’t died inside.”

[...]

“I suppose you fancy yourself a hero.”

Hank closed some of the distance between himself and Nicky, stepping close enough to Nicky to smell him, to see the sweat beading at his hairline. “I’m no hero,” Hank said.

“You’re the first person to come along in a very long time who seemed interested at all in doing anything but beating or arresting me.” Nicky finally looked up and met Hank’s gaze. “That seems heroic to me.”

Hank reached over and cupped Nicky’s cheek. Nicky glanced down again, his surprisingly dark eyelashes fluttering, but then he looked into Hank’s eyes.

“On my terms,” Nicky said. “We do this my way.”

“All right.”

The expression on Nicky’s face turned fierce. “I choose you. Money plays no part in this exchange.”

“I understand.” Hank’s heart pounded now.

“Kiss me.” ♥

Kate McMurray is President of the Romance Writers of America / New York City, Inc, and an award-winning author of gay romance and an unabashed romance fan. Visit her at www.katemcmurray.com.

EXCERPT: CUTTING HIM LOOSE
BY MIMI PIZARRO LOGSDON



My sunglasses hid the fact that I wasn't completely paying attention. I pretended to listen, catching sentences here and there. I focused on the waterfall in front of me instead. I saw Rick's face during the rainstorm on that humid afternoon in Central Park. Our rainstorm.

The water drenched us, full force, as people ran out of the park to find their own shelter. Dripping water from my hair down to my body as we hid in the tall bushes. It was spontaneous, risky and hot. My shirt tight, like a second skin revealed the lace marks of my bra. His shirt revealed the definition of his chest. The red birthmark in the shape of a half-moon peeked from the side of his left nipple. He pulled it off and shook the water from his hair. Hiding the shirt in the bush. He placed his hands on my ass and lifted me to him. My legs wrapped around him.

Our bodies grinding against each other. I felt his hard urgency to take me and my need for him extinguished all thought of modesty. I pulled the buttons on the top of his jeans and he tugged on mine. Grabbing my hair, pulling my head back he buried my neck with kisses. I clumsily opened his pants and he quickly snapped my bra open, sliding it off my breasts with one hand while the other carried me. I held on as he suckled my nipples through my wet top, stopping to rub them with his thumb. I grabbed on to my waistband and pulled my pants as low as they could go. I felt my panty slid with them. His hands held tight to my ass and he let out a sexy laugh.

"Baby, you are so fucking hot!" I felt as if I'd start to smoke from the heat. "Pull down my jeans and briefs," he whispered in my ear. They fell to his knees. I guided him in to me. The sounds of crackling thunder and hard rain disguised our moans and whimpers. I rode him hard and he drove me right back. We were alone, unaware, unafraid and savagely wanting. The cold turned into fiery heat that rushed up my body and the sensation made me bury my mouth on his shoulder to cover the sound of my release. He grunted loudly between clinched teeth placing his mouth to my neck. The sound muffled to the world, registered in my ear his satisfaction. We looked at each other and laughed. He took my face in his hands and kissed me long. Bruising my lips. "That was incredible," he whispered. I leaned my forehead against his. "I know."

"So what do you think?" Kevin asked.♥

Mimi Pizarro Logsdon writes paranormal and contemporary comedy romances. She has self-published two books from her Immortals In New York series. A true romantic with a quirky sense of humor, she is a diehard animal lover, who lives in New York with her husband and their four pets, Jim, George, Robin and Isabella.

EXCERPT: SADISTIC PATTERN
BY MICHAEL J. MOLLOY



He tossed his keys on the modest dining room table then suddenly felt what seemed like a bear paw clamp down on his right hip. He spun around like a top until he faced Rebecca head-on. Forget the cordial foreplay. They went right for the heated jugular.

In the privacy of his pad, Logan and Rebecca resumed their passionate kissing begun in the market, only this time with a little more heat. His fingers moved up and down her sides, from her graceful neck to the tops of her thighs. Rebecca broke for air. She was gasping as she tilted her head back, eyes closed, with a soft cry of ecstasy. Logan skimmed his lips over her neck and began to taste her luscious skin with his tongue.

Rebecca began to open her eyes. It was a narrow opening, but the mere slits of her exposed pupils spoke volumes. Her eyes darted up and down over Logan as if he were a package to be inspected. Her mouth was ajar with lust on her mind. Rebecca couldn't contain herself. She clutched his jacket and peeled it off. Next came his shirt, which she pulled over his head without any resistance on his part. His well-defined torso was irresistible.

Logan returned the favor by slipping Rebecca's insulated jacket off her shoulders. Purposely he slid his long, thin fingers under the sides of her sweatshirt and slowly lifted it over her head, all the while rolling his tongue around Rebecca's gums. And unlike Mark on his first sexual encounter with Rebecca, Logan had no trouble unbuckling the back strap of her bra, allowing the undergarment to drop to the floor. Logan gazed at Rebecca's exposed breasts and sported a salacious grin. He remembered her chest area being firm, the nipples inviting his fingers to fondle them. And as Rebecca gazed downward she noticed they weren't the only body part becoming enlarged and stiff. She clamped down on Logan's crotch, not wanting to let go. And then came the unbuckling of his belt. It wasn't too long thereafter that they'd shed every stitch of clothing they had left.

Seeing Rebecca's scintillating naked body brought back great memories. But Logan's sensibility wasn't lost in gawking at it and stroking her silken cover. He had the wherewithal to use a condom.

Logan maneuvered his head between Rebecca's legs, all the while whispering his approval between each lick. And as he slowly and sensuously wigwagged his tongue along the insides of her thighs, Rebecca's orgasmic moans grew louder until they came to a crescendo at that moment of utter coital nirvana. The climax soon followed and it was all over. The pair was gasping for air as if they'd just run a 10K race. Despite perspiring heavily, they still engaged in one more heated lip-lock. ♥

Michael J. Molloy has two books out from Gypsy Shadow Publishing – THE DIAMOND MAN, a contemporary romance, and SADISTIC PATTERN, a suspense novel. He is working on a new romance entitled, SWEET GREETINGS FROM CARTHAGE, based on a true story. Michael is pictured here with his sweetheart and wife Connie. Visit him at www.molloyauthor.com; on Facebook at [MolloyAuthor](https://www.facebook.com/MolloyAuthor) and on Twitter @AuthorMJM.



**EXCERPT: POWER PRIVILEGE & PLEASURE: QUEENS OF KINGS: BOOK 4
BY LAQUETTE**

Hey there, it's LaQuette, your friendly erotic romance author. Our wonderful editor, Ursula, asked for some hawtness. Me being the thoughtful person that I am, I can never turn down a request for some hawtness. Lol Here's a tasty little treat from one of my fave couples, A.J. and Alan. Enjoy!



“Beautiful,” he whispered. She turned her head, full lips turned up into a wide grin. Usually when he saw her smile it was always laced with a stroke of wickedness. A smile from A.J. Tenetti usually meant she was celebrating someone’s demise. But standing here tonight, watching her in front of this incredible view, the smile held no malice. This was genuine, pure A.J, the full-blown version of the woman who’d touched him so caringly with such concern at her parents’ dinner table.

“I know,” her smile brightened. “...this view is killer, isn’t it?” she asked.

“I wasn’t talking about the view,” he replied.

She turned around, her arms now spread wide across the balcony’s edge, her back to the night, her hazel eyes sparkling, pulling him further out onto the structure until he was standing directly before her.

“Quillen, a girl might think you’re trying to pay her a compliment.”

“Simply stating the truth.”

“Truth?” she asked. “I think it was earlier today that you essentially called me the reincarnation of the evil queen. Now you’re ready to fuck me on my balcony.”

And just like that they were back to their dueling corners. He shook his head and stepped even closer, removing any space between them. He said nothing; he knew words weren’t what they needed. She was a master of words, she used them as weapons to protect and attack. Anything he said she’d use against him, and they’d end up in the middle of another argument.

He placed his hands in his pockets and leaned down slightly allowing his lips to briefly pass over hers. He looked down into her face, moments ago there was war in her eyes, now...now they sparked with heat. He pressed his mouth to hers again, removing his hands from his pockets and burying them inside the mass of curls framing her face.

He deepened the kiss, pressing for more, insisting until her resistance finally broke on the sweetest moan pouring from her hungry mouth. He pressed even more, licking inside her mouth, tasting the hint of spices from their shared meal.

He pushed his thigh between hers and cupped a handful of her ass, forcing her to drag her mound against the hard plane of his leg. Her breath hitched and he felt sharp nails raking down his back signaling her growing need. He broke away from the fevered kiss, dragging his lips down the soft contour of her jaw to the exposed flesh of her neck.

When her skin was caught between his teeth he felt her entire body shake. He bore down on that same tender spot again and her body yielded the same all-over tremor. He wanted to spend hours learning what other things made her body shake like that. Licking, biting, twisting, and pinching. Whatever it was, he wanted to know every sultry detail to make her body shake until it broke apart for him.



His cock was rigid, throbbing behind his zipper, begging for a piece of this woman humping his leg on her balcony. If he let this continue any further, he risked hurting himself, or embarrassing himself by blowing his load in his pants like a teenager.

Nope, not in front of this woman.

He pulled his lips from her neck and straightened to his full height. Taking the brief moment that stood between the separation of their bodies, and her realization that he was no longer touching her, he took in the image of wanton lust heating her skin.

She wanted him, but just like before, she'd baited him into touching her. He knew it; he'd known it the moment that comment about fucking her on her balcony fell from her lips. Well if she wanted to play, he was going to play, and more importantly, he was going to win. He would have this woman every which way he wanted her, but only on his terms. Only when she could admit to herself and him that she needed this as badly as he did.

When the wind sailed against her cooling flesh, her eyes opened. Her pupils widening until only a faint glimpse of her cognac irises could be detected.

“To answer your question, no, I’m not going to fuck you on your balcony. Not because I don’t want to, but because when I finally have you, it’s not going to be some quick hump against a wall. I want you spread open on my bed, legs wide, cunt split and dripping, begging for my cock. But as much as I want that, and as much as I know you want that, I’ll never allow it to happen until you cut the shit and just be honest about what you want.”

He could see the orange flame of her anger searing her skin, changing her honey-gold complexion to a richer amber tone. He could see her full lips pulling into a flat line across the tense angles of her face.

“Fuck you Quillen,” she spat. “I don’t beg any man; I don’t chase any man. If you’re not man enough to come for what you want, fuck you. I’ll just find someone else.”

“No you won’t, because we both know that you are most excited by a challenge, and that’s what I am for you. I’m the one thing your rich daddy can’t give you, princess, and we both know that means you’ll eventually do whatever you have to in order to get what you want. You can have me, A.J.; you just gotta stop the games. Until then, seems we’ll both be frustrated.”♥

LaQuette has been named RWA/NYC’s 2016 Author of the Year. She is an award winning erotic romance author and a native New Yorker from Brooklyn. Visit her at www.NovelsbyLaQuette.com.

PAPER DOLLS: FEELING HOT, HOT, HOT!**BY MARIA FERRER**

Baby, it's hot outside! So let's take off all our clothes and let's find delicious ways to cool off.

In celebration of our Hot Issue, I've selected this great picture of lovers in the ocean. Now it's up to You to decide if they need to cool off or heat up.

Look at them—face, body language, setting.

Where are they? Are they married or best friends with benefits? What are their names? What scenarios are running through your mind as you view this picture? Think naughty and nice!!

Remember a picture is worth a thousand words. Let's play Dolls and bring our lovers 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.