



KEYNOTES

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

MARCH 2016

NEXT CHAPTER MEETING: MARCH 5

TRS, 40 Exchange Place, 3rd Floor, 12:00-4:00pm

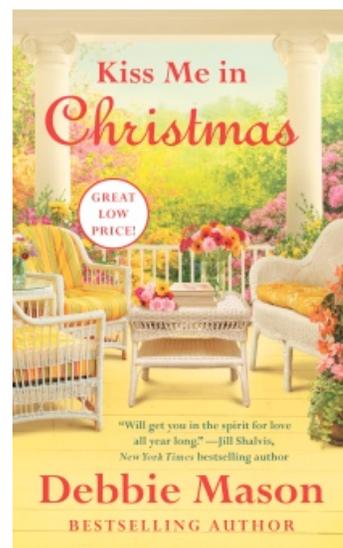
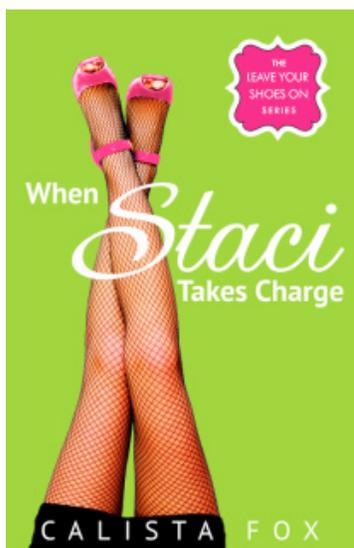
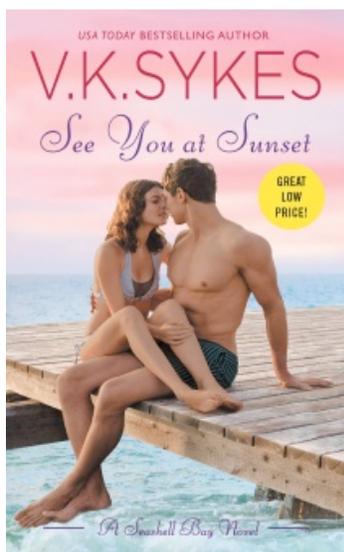


PRESENTATION:

ALWAYS JUDGE A BOOK BY ITS COVER

with Elizabeth Turner, Art Director, Forever Romance

Elizabeth Turner has been working in publishing for almost 10 years. She started out at Penguin Group U.S.A. doing cover designs for commercial fiction. She is currently the Assistant Art Director of the Forever Romance imprint of Hachette Book Group. She loves talking with authors, long walks on the beach, and ogling male models. Below are some of her imprint covers.♥



CRITIQUING & WRITING MARATHON, 3:00-4:00pm

STAY WITH US! Bring 2-3 pages for critiquing and/or Bring your laptop/notepad and write the afternoon away. You can work on your novel or write a 100-word Paper Doll Flash Fiction piece; see p28.♥

REMINDER!
CHAPTER DUES ARE DUE BY MARCH 5.
RENEW TODAY.

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE: GET INVOLVED!
BY PRESIDENT KATE MCMURRAY



This month, I want to talk a little bit about how I found RWA, why it's important, and how you can get the most out of your dues money every month. The key? Participation. But let's take a few steps back.

I've wanted to be a published author since I knew books were a thing. The first thing I ever wrote was a story about a mouse who steals cheese, complete with illustrations, when I was five years old. When I was a teenager, I spent a lot of time in my hometown's indie bookstore, spending my allowance money on paperbacks and fantasizing about the time when one of those books would bear my name.

I have a degree in English lit, and for a while after college, I thought I was writing capital-L Literature, so it took me longer than it probably should have to realize that what interested me most were the relationships between the characters, and so I was really writing romance. It took a few more years for me to really find my voice and decide on the kinds of books I wanted to write. I was finally ready in 2009, and I had a manuscript I had faith in, so I submitted it to a publisher.

The rest would be history, but one of the things I wish in hindsight is that I'd had someone to tell me even half of what I now know about the industry. I had no plan for marketing, no real author brand, no career plan, not even a really solid idea for the next book.

What I had were years of experience working in the publishing industry. Like a stubborn teenager, I thought I knew everything. And, sure, I'd worked in editorial and production, so I knew how books were made. But I didn't know how to be an author.

I joined RWA in 2011, about a year after my first book came out. By then, I had a second book out and a few more in the works. I joined RWA because it seemed like a logical thing to do. I was a romance author, after all. Romance authors join RWA.

I didn't do anything with that membership. I didn't go to RWA conferences or even local chapter meetings. I waited for the benefits to come to me, but nothing happened. After a year, I was questioning whether I should renew, because I wasn't really getting anything out of it.

But then a now-defunct RWA chapter in the south excluded LGBT books from their contest.

RWA has not always been welcoming, and as an organization, it still has some work to do, but what I got out of that particular incident was that there were people in RWA who wanted to further the cause of diverse romance, who agreed with me that romance is romance and so it all belongs under the same umbrella, regardless of the gender or race of the characters. I was writing romances in which men fell in love with each other, and once the dust cleared from this particular scandal, I felt welcomed into RWA. I happily renewed my dues.

And then I thought, I should work a little harder to get something out of this.

So in 2012, I went to my first local chapter meeting. I left the meeting feeling supported and inspired. I kept coming back. And now I'm the president of the chapter.

I think there are probably a lot of members who are wondering, "But what's in this for me? Why do I pay dues every year?" Well, here are a few of them:

- **Networking.** RWA meetings and events are a great way to meet industry professionals and other writers, to build your support network and get advice on everything from crafting your book to where to submit to marketing the book once it's published.
- **Education.** RWANYC has a program at every meeting intended to teach something to our members, but there are other educational opportunities available as well as conferences and online classes offered by other chapters and the national organization.
- **Outreach.** RWA, both nationally and locally, continues to reach out to media and booksellers, and has become an important advocate for its members. This includes guiding authors away from unscrupulous publishers and fighting to help diverse romance gain recognition and acceptance.

The thing about an organization like this is that you get out what you put in. If you don't participate, you won't get much out of it. Participation doesn't have to mean a big time commitment unless you want to make it. I personally have found serving on chapter boards to be rewarding, but I get that not everyone has the leadership aspirations I do.

But I can tell you that, since I started attending meetings, I've met a ton of wonderful people, I've found allies within my particular publishing niche, and I've learned so much that I don't believe I could have learned anywhere else. I absolutely believe that my membership and participation have enriched both my writing and my writing career. But I didn't start to really gain any of that until I got more actively involved.

If you haven't been to a meeting in a while, consider coming back! Start there and see what you get out of it. If you want to do a little more, there are small ways to get involved. Attend a critique meeting. Volunteer to help out at one of our chapter's events. Drop by a Board meeting to get a feel for what that's like. Or shoot me an email and we'll talk about what you can do.

The whole romance industry has changed by leaps and bounds in the six years since my first book came out. Self-publishing has been a game changer, but so have the growing audiences for erotic, LGBT, and multicultural romances. I wish sometimes that I could go tell my 6-years-ago self some of what I now know, but what I can do is apply it going forward, and to keep learning and doing and improving.♥

***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.*



CHAPTER MINUTES: FEBRUARY 2016
BY SECRETARY STACEY AGDERN

Board Members present:

Vice President- Mimi Pizarrio-Logsdon
Secretary- Stacey Agdern
Past President- Ursula Renée

Board Members absent:

President- Kate McMurray
Vice President- Racheline Maltese
Treasurer- Tamara Lynch



The meeting was called to order by Vice President Mimi Pizarro Logsdon, and the January Minutes were approved by Maria Cox, with a second from Michael Molloy.

Secretary Stacey Agdern reported that the chapter has, at last count, 104 members on the roster. She also reminded chapter members to get their renewals in by March.

Treasurer's report (delivered by Stacey as a proxy for Tamara): We have \$6968.07 in the bank, having paid national dues and filed our tax form. She has also put together the budget.

Mimi reported that preparations for the golden apples are underway. Send your nominations in by email starting March first.

Ursula Renee reported that Maria Ferrer is still in the process of setting up blog tours for the year. The topics will be varied enough so that members will be able to participate at least once this year.

Ursula is still going to work with the website, and she's also taking over Keynotes. Of course, as usual, articles are due to Keynotes on the 15th of the month.

Critique: Mimi reports that Critique sessions (or marathons) will take place every two weeks. Invitations will be sent to interested members.

Brooklyn Book Festival: Michael Molloy told the chapter that the festival takes place this year on: September 17th. The process of renting a space has begun.

Maria Cox reminded the chapter that the annual Romance Festival needs volunteers to survive. The preliminary date is June 25th.

Mimi also reminded the chapter that our president, Kate McMurray, is looking for proposals from members who are willing to teach craft workshops. Email her with any ideas you may have.♥

**OPEN LETTER REGARDING DIVERSITY
FROM THE NATIONAL RWA BOARD OF DIRECTORS**



ROMANCE WRITERS
OF AMERICA™

The RWA board of directors has received a lot of feedback from members regarding diversity, and the Diversity Committee issued its first report at last November's board meeting. We would like to update and inform the membership regarding our efforts to increase inclusion for marginalized authors.

RWA's mission is to advance the professional interests of career-focused romance writers through networking and advocacy.

Members have also indicated that education is a primary reason they join RWA and remain members of the organization. Section

4.2 of the Bylaws states that membership shall not be denied to adults because of race, color, gender, age, religion, national origin, marital status, sexual orientation, disability, or political affiliation.

The RWA board and staff are committed to ensuring we fulfill RWA's mission and provide quality education to the best of our ability and on behalf of all of our members. To meet these goals, we are working on the following:

1. Expanding RWA's Educational Opportunities

We are working on expanding our pool of qualified presenters and instructors for RWA workshops to ensure that we utilize the skills and talents of all members. Authors who have been historically excluded from markets due to their race, ethnicity, or sexual orientation have learned to market and sell themselves in ways that others have not had to. However, because of this fact, those authors lacked name recognition within RWA equal to their success. As a result, they were excluded from teaching workshops for which they were more than qualified. Having access to a wider pool of qualified instructors will provide better workshops overall and an even more valuable experience for all who attend or later listen to these workshops. Having more award-winning, best-selling, innovative authors teaching workshops is a goal that serves everyone.

2. Ensuring all members reap the benefits of conference attendance

Members make a significant financial investment to attend the conference and should reap all the benefits of attendance. Our disabled members have suggested ways we can improve their experience at the national conference. From captioning the conference in its entirety to reserving seating for disabled members at the front of workshops and keynote addresses, we are making simple changes to ensure all members benefit from conference attendance. These changes will yield benefits for all members. For instance, conference captioning will eventually allow us to be able to do things like make workshops available for purchase on the website text-searchable, meaning that more content will be discoverable by all members. Reserved seating will result in better flow in the workshop rooms and fewer disruptions.

3. Affirming that all members should feel safe and welcome at RWA events

Most RWA members are generous and welcoming to all at RWA events. Unfortunately, the actions of even a small number of people reflect poorly on the organization. The Diversity Committee fielded reports of incidents where black authors were explicitly told by white members that they were not

welcome at the conference. We heard multiple instances where trans people were treated disrespectfully. There was an instance where a lesbian couple was denied a benefit offered to women in a straight relationship. This sort of conduct is not appropriate in a business setting. RWA belongs to all of its members, and we hope that all RWA members join us in affirming our commitment to making our meetings and conferences a safe space for all authors.

4. Growing the romance market

The market for romance, while vibrant, can be expanded to offer authors the opportunity to write a wider variety of stories and readers the opportunity to enjoy them. Our efforts to advocate are vital in this regard. Over the last few years, many of the break-out successes in television and film, such as *Scandal*, *How to Get Away with Murder*, and *Orange is the New Black*, have been inclusive. When we see people flocking to inclusive entertainment elsewhere in droves, it demonstrates that our industry is behind the times.

Unfortunately, the romance industry has a long way to go. At the Pocket spotlight at last year's conference, attendees were told that books written by or featuring African Americans would be referred to another imprint. At several publishing houses, black authors who have submitted books with white characters have had those books slotted into "African American" lines, and African American authors have also had their romances shelved in the "African American" section, even if the characters are not African American. Both practices diminish potential markets for books based on the author's race.

Discrimination impedes the functioning of the romance market and sends the message to the world that romance is behind the times. Readers of romance should see that romance stories speak to a wide spectrum of experiences and concerns. All romance authors should see RWA as the place to build their careers.

The success of RWA-authors in self-publishing demonstrates that there is substantial demand for inclusive romances today. We think you will find this article, on an author who hit the USA Today list with every one of her diverse, self-published new releases in 2015, demonstrative of the current state of the marketplace: <http://indiereader.com/2016/01/36575/>.

Inclusivity in the genre will attract more readers, grow the market, and bring new fans for all authors.

These steps will take years to implement, but it is important for our organization to do all it can to fulfill its mission and best serve all its members.♥



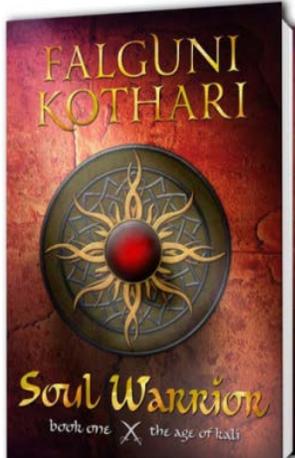
WE ARE ALL WONDERWOMEN!



Handwritten signature

VOLUNTEERS WANTED!

Please consider volunteering to help out at the **Romance Festival** in June at the Morris-Jumel Mansion, and at the **Brooklyn Book Festival** in September. Let Maria Cox or Michael Molloy know, respectively.

MEMBER NEWS

MANY THANKS TO BRIANA! Briana has stepped down as newsletter editor but will continue to contribute articles and the like. We thank her for her service and wish her all the best. Welcome, Ursula.

Lise Horton's BDSM erotic romance **HOLD TIGHT**, published by Loose ID, has been nominated for a 2016 Golden Flogger Award, Advanced BDSM Category. The Golden Flogger Awards will be held at the 2016 BDSM Writers Conference in New York City in August.

Falguni Kothari's book, **SOUL WARRIOR**, was shortlisted for the Book Viral Awards 2015! Fingers crossed!



President **Kate McMurray** has a new book out, **TEN DAYS IN AUGUST**, from Lyrical debuts on March 29. Kate is also co-hosting a sports romance workshop at the 2016 RWA National Conference.

Ursula Renee is also hosting a research workshop at the 2016 RWA National Conference entitled, "I Can't Believe This is History."

Lady Jane's Salon celebrated its Seventh anniversary. They donated \$1000 to Women in Need. Among the readers was co-founder **Hope Tarr**, who read from a new manuscript, **IRISH EYES**.

The New York Times started reviewing romances; among the first reviews was one for **Mingmei Yip's** new book, **THE WITCH'S MARKET**.♥

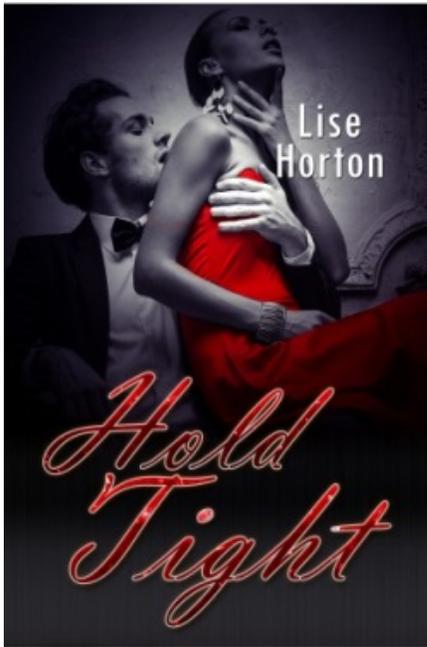
FREE PROMOTION!

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!♥

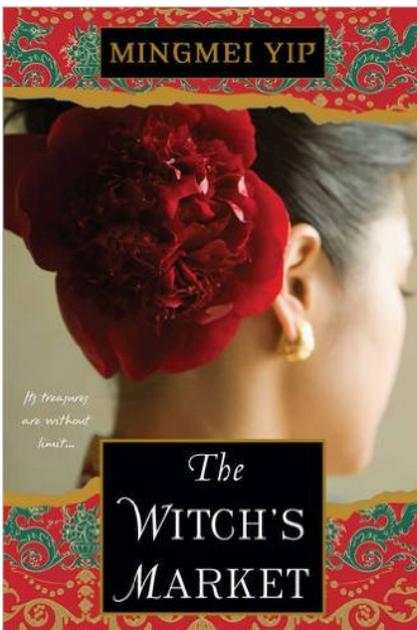
MEMBERS ON THE SHELF



HOLD TIGHT
by Lise Horton
LooseID



TEN DAYS IN AUGUST
by Kate McMurray
Lyrical



THE WITCH'S MARKET
by Mingmei Yip
Kensington

REMINDER!
Chapter Dues
are due on
March 5.



Our theme this month is

WOMEN WHO INSPIRE

Here's what our members have to say.

MY PERSONAL HISTORICAL FAVORITES AND WHY **BY MIMI PIZARRO LOGSDON**

Since I was able to read I've always loved my heroines feisty, intelligent and rebellious, from Madeline to Harriet the Spy.

However, the term historical for me does not just pertain to the Edwardian era or the 17th and 18th centuries. My three favorite historical heroines span from 1872 to 1986, which in our 21st century is considered historical.

I was introduced to my first favorite heroine when I read my first historical in 1974, Rosemary Rogers' *THE WILDEST HEART* which begins in 1872 India. I was introduced to Rowena Dangerfield, the wild, headstrong and scandalously independent young woman traveling to the Southwest to find her father. Her brilliance shines through as she refuses to settle for a conventional Lady's life in Boston and leaves the prospect of an arranged marriage. She navigates the New Mexico frontier and dares to fall in love with Lucas Cord, the stunning Apache outlaw, a true rebel renegade.

You might say, Rosemary Rogers was ahead of her time, as I always thought of this novel as a multicultural romance. Rowena butt's heads with a gorgeous Native American renegade, who after much sexual tension, they fall in love and she gallantly saves his life. Her strength, beauty and bravery is constant throughout this novel. That's why I love her!

My second heroine is Miss Harriet Pomeroy, the Reverend's daughter obsessed with bones and fossils in *RAVISHED*, by Jayne A. Krentz' alter ego, Amanda Quick. She is aggressive, determined and fearless. Any woman who can convince a man called the Beast of Blackthorne to help her rout out thieves hiding stolen loot in her precious caves, is extremely smart. Blackthorne is a big brute of a man with a nasty scar on his face who terrorizes the community run by his family. But he doesn't scare Harriet. In fact, he fascinates her and as she assists in catching the thieves, she tames the Beast. I adore a woman who knows how to bring a big man to his knees. My kind of heroine.

Lastly, there's Evie Garlick, an aspiring actress who at 18 years old leaves Eden, Ohio in 1986, to study theater in London, England. She is my third amazing heroine from the book, *INNOCENCE* by Kathleen Tessaro. I love Evie because I could identify with her bohemian spirit. Her need for adventure and the lessons that shape her to become an amazing woman and finally a mother. She experiences love and tackles heartbreak with a reckless abandon I've never read in any other historical to date. Evie's story is an edgy coming of age romance, but it's also a classic romance for the ages.

These three heroines have the characters that attract me, as a reader, most. They are gifted, independent women with purpose in their lives. All three are determined to fulfill their goals and during their quest to accomplish them, they fall in love. Yet, love doesn't change or weaken them, it enhances them.

I love reading historical romances but I enjoy them best when the heroine finishes even stronger than she began. Where would I be without such characters to love?♥

Mimi Pizarro Logsdon has been writing romance stories since her teens, and loves the Sci-Fi, Fantasy and Paranormal genres. She has worked in the media industry for over 25 years, and currently works at HBO, Inc. She lives in New York with her husband and pets. One of them, an eccentric cat named George she features in her current romance series, "Immortals In New York." Follow her on Twitter: @mimilogsdon; Facebook: mimipizarro.

YOU'VE COME A LONG WAY, BARBIE

BY MARIA C. FERRER

Barbara Millicent "Barbie" Roberts is an icon, a trendsetter, a mirror of women's history for the last 50 years.

I had a Barbie. I was not obsessed with her boobs and tiny waist; I actually was fascinated by the arches in her feet since I have flat feet. But what I remember most are her professions. They ran/run the gamut from superfluous to serious; from child-like to adult.



Barbie has influenced and been influenced by all sectors of our society – fashion, art, music, medicine, even politics. For example, did you know that Barbie has been a Dallas Cowboy Cheerleader, a Baywatch Life Guard and even a Street Rapper? And, did you know she was also a UNICEF diplomat in 1990; a presidential candidate in 1992; and U.S. President in 2000? Barbie can probably give Hilary, Bernie and Trump lessons on winning over voters.

Check out some of Barbie's careers:

1959—Fashion Model (launch)	1990—Pilot Air Force
1961—Ballerina	1992—Street Rapper
1961—Nurse	1993—Police woman
1961—Stewardess	1994—Life Guard
1965—Astronaut	1995—Fire fighter
1973—Flight Attendant	2001—Spanish Language Teacher
1973—Cheerleader	2008—Hair Dresser/Makeup Artist
1973—Surgeon	2008—Chef / TV Chef
1981—Cowgirl	2010—Computer Engineer
1985—Teacher	2010—Actress
1990—Princess	2011—Architect



And Barbie knows a lot about diversity too. No #BarbieSoWhite claims on her. Christie was her first African American friend (1968); followed by Brad (1970) and Curtis (1975). Teresa was her first Spanish friend (1988), and Marisa her Latina friend. Twins Raquelle and Ryan were her Asian American friends (2007); and Nikita and Sunny were friends from India (1993).

Many may doubt Barbie's power as a role model, but think. Barbie showed girls that they could be nurses, teachers, surgeons, astronauts, engineers, beauty queens, fashion models, Olympians, and even President. All I can say is: Thanks, Barbie. Thanks for celebrating women and showing us what we are capable of.♥

***Maria Ferrer** loves Barbie dolls. She didn't have many growing up, but she loved the potential and the power behind the doll. Maria believes in empowering and inspiring girls and women of all ages and races, and if one doll can do that, then more power to her. Go, Barbie! Visit Maria at www.marializaferrer.blogspot.com or visit her alter ego, Del Carmen, at www.mydelcarmen.com.*

“Before you put on clothes, slide into heels, spray perfume or accessorize to step into the world; there is a wardrobe that every women must first put on Bathe in forgiveness, dress in self-esteem, adorn yourself with praise and slip into joy. When you are fully clothed in self-love you are always in fashion.”

— Sharon Rainey

ASK ALICE: WHO WAS THE GREATEST HEROINE IN YOUR LIFE?**BY ALICE ORR**



Grandma is my Heroine!

Answer: I've had many heroines but the first and most powerful was my grandmother.

She hasn't appeared in writing other than my own that as far as I know. Whenever I write a strong woman – as I do every time I create a heroine – Grandma is part of her in one aspect or another.

In the book I'm finishing now – *A VILLAIN FOR VANESSA* – the heroine travels a long way into the unknown to find what she hopes will be a better life. Grandma did that in the late 1890's. The specific year differs in different research sources. The rest of my family has no idea when or how she made that crucial journey.

What isn't disputed is that she traveled alone – a girl of eighteen or nineteen or maybe twenty. She sailed from England in what I imagine was the lowest class of passage. She would have entered this very new world for her by way of Canada.

My best guess from the bits and pieces of fact I've uncovered is that her expenses were paid by a family in Watertown, New York with several children. The family was not previously known to my grandmother any more than she knew the frigid climate where she would live.

I've studied the time when she traveled. I imagine her – in a shirtwaist and skirt and of course a hat – arriving among strangers. No relatives or friends preceded her. She was on her own. To me that seems a wonderfully brave act.

My Uncle John had a picture on the wall of his hallway of Grandma at that young age. Her hair was pulled up in a kind of Gibson Girl poof with a bow in back. But it was her eyes that captured me – young and most likely blue. And her skin – pale and most likely blushing.

Above all I was captured by the same gentle smile I would love decades later when she took care of me. I still love her smile gazing down at me now from her picture on my wall in this room where I write.

The courage it took to put her button-shoed foot on that lonely ship from Plymouth she instilled in me. Her courage carries me through challenge and heartbreak and triumph too. I in turn instill that courage in the strong women I write.

I will always write such heroines because they are the women I admire – the women I consider heroic material. There is something of Grandma in each of them. Not only her bravery but her loving heart too. That's why I hold my heroines dear and consider them good.

Because – as I've said many times before – everything good in my life began with Grandma. Her name was Alice Jane Rowland Boudiette. The photo is of Alice Jane and me.♥

Alice Orr's "Ask Alice" column was born from many years of being asked questions about writing and publishing. She has lists and lists of those questions and attempts to answer some of them here. Alice would welcome your questions as well. A WRONG WAY HOME is Book 1 of Alice's Riverton Road Romantic Suspense series, and a free ebook on Amazon. Visit Alice at aliceorrbooks@gmail.com or at <http://www.amazon.com/Alice-Orr/e/B000APC22E/>



ABOUT PRO

PRO Liaison: Maria Cox

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)

PAN Liaison: TBD

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.♥

**GOING THE INDIE ROUTE: NINE HURDLES TO SELF-PUBLISHING OR
DO YOU REALLY WANT TO BE A PUBLISHER?
BY JEAN JOACHIM**

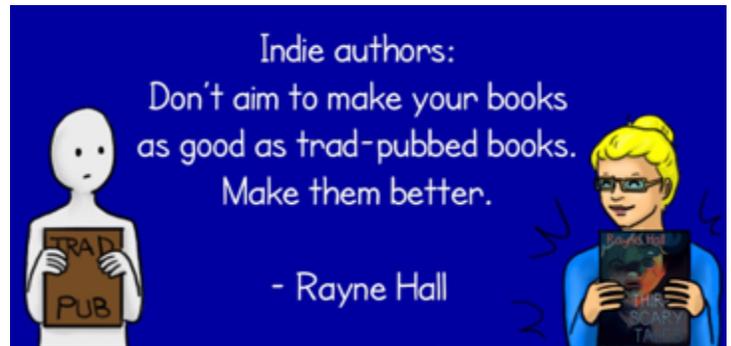


Being an indie author sounds so “cool”, but is it? Self-publishing means you become a publisher. Here are ten responsibilities publishers handle that get dumped on your plate when you self-publish:

- 1) Scheduling. Sounds so great to sign up for pre-order on Amazon – easy peasy, right? Amazon gives you a drop dead date. Your final, perfect manuscript must be uploaded by their drop dead date or you lose the privilege of pre-orders for a year. That’s right, a year! So that means you have to have your book back from the editor and proofreader and do your final read through by a certain date. Or else! What happens if your editor or proofer gets sick? What if other obligations keep you from giving that final polish? Your book goes out unfinished or you can’t pre-order again.
- 2) That brings me to the editor and proofreader. You do have those folks lined up, don’t you? You have to pay for those services. Some small indie publishers give the editors a percentage of sales. If you do that, then you’ll have to keep track of how much you owe them and pay them every month. And then there are forms to fill out for the IRS, like a 1099 to send to your editor and proofer no later than February 1 of the following year.
- 3) You’re not going to use an editor? Yikes! No publisher puts out an unedited book. If you do that, you will have reviewers crawling up your butt complaining and readers who will vow never to read your books again. Not using a professional editor, and, no, mom and your best friend don’t qualify –neither do beta readers, is the mark of an unprofessional writer. Make sure to list editor and proofer on the page where you have your copyright, so readers know your book has been edited
- 4) Copyright page – you are getting a government copyright, aren’t you? You can do it online and the fee is only \$35.00. Don’t fall for that line that as soon as you write something, it’s copyrighted. That won’t do you much good in a court of law if you have to prove a story is yours. Big Five publishers pay for the copyrights for their authors.
- 5) Okay, you’re edited, proofed and ready to go. Where do you upload your book? Do you put it exclusively in Kindle Unlimited or go “wide”—uploading it to other sites? These are important questions. Kindle Unlimited has reduced the pay-out percentage every month for the last three months. Payout dropped 11% in February, 16% in January. If you put your book there, you are captive and cannot list it with any other sales site for three months.
- 6) And what about the cover? If your cover doesn’t look professional, your sales will suffer. If your cover doesn’t grab readers, they move on. Publishers provide covers at their own expense. If you’re self-publishing, you have to find a great cover artist and pay for the cover

yourself. If you have excellent design abilities and know what makes up a good cover, then you might try to create one yourself. You'll still have to buy photos from a stock photo site.

- 7) Where do you find sites to put your book on? Research. I'm fortunate to be in an indie Facebook group where I made a friend who knows everything about self-publishing. He has given me places to put my book that I never would have dreamed of, including a site in China that has translated a book for me, free, and is selling it there. Belonging to a good indie Fb group is essential – not one where authors are dumping promos every day, but one with real, meaty discussions about self-publishing.
- 8) Okay, so now you've got your book up on six or seven sites. What about print? Of course you want your book in print. Createspace is the place to go for print. But you will have to reformat your book and create a print cover. Or hire your cover artist to do one for you. This is also something your publisher would pay for that's now coming out of your wallet. This is POD, or print-on-demand, meaning your book will not go to bookstores.
- 9) What about audiobooks? Translations into foreign languages? And marketing? These are three areas you may have to tackle on your own, even with a publisher. A Big Five publisher will probably put your books into audio and maybe even get some translations done, if your book is a big seller. Smaller indie pubs don't usually handle these tasks. Add these tasks onto a plate that's already full and when will you find time to write? Ever notice that most publishers aren't writers? Perhaps they don't have the time.
- 10) By now, you're probably pointing a finger at me and saying "But you self-publish!" Yes, I do. At first, I only did about five books because my publisher couldn't get them into her schedule. For the past five years, I've been with a small press. During that time I learned about many of the tasks I mentioned earlier. When my publisher closed her doors, I was ready to take on her responsibilities myself. Do I get overwhelmed? Of course. But I've chosen to accept these responsibilities, sometimes amid cursing and copious amounts of wine, rather than go to a fourth publisher. I'm happy self-publishing. I enjoy the control and endless possibilities. I also write and self-publish full time –it's my only job.



I do believe in self-publishing, but authors should go into it fully aware of the workload. When asked, I usually recommend that new authors go to a publisher first and learn the ropes before going indie. Every writer has to make that choice on his or her own. I hope you'll consider all the facts when you do. ♥

Jean Joachim is a best-selling romance fiction author, with books hitting the Amazon Top 100 list since 2012. She writes mostly contemporary romance, which includes sports romance and romantic suspense. DANGEROUS LOVE LOST & FOUND, First Place winner in the 2015 Oklahoma



Romance Writers of America, International Digital Award contest. THE RENOVATED HEART won Best Novel of the Year from Love Romances Café. LOVERS & LIARS was a RomCon finalist in 2013. And THE MARRIAGE LIST tied for third place as Best Contemporary Romance from the Gulf Coast RWA. TO LOVE OR NOT TO LOVE tied for second place in the 2014 New England Chapter of Romance Writers of America Reader's Choice contest. She was chosen Author of the Year in 2012 by the New York City chapter of RWA. Married and the mother of two sons, Jean lives in New York City. Early in the morning, you'll find her at her computer, writing, with a cup of tea, her rescued pug, Homer, by her side and a secret stash of black licorice. Jean has 30+ books, novellas and short stories published. Find them here: <http://www.jeanjoachimbooks.com>. Sign up for her newsletter, on her website, here: https://www.facebook.com/pages/Jean-Joachim-Author/221092234568929?sk=app_100265896690345

“The question isn't who's going to let me; it's who is going to stop me.”

Ayn Rand

Quoteszilla.com

MORE PAPERWORK THAN DRAMA**BY URSULA RENÉE**



Since people have been telling stories, the hero has been larger than life. He is stronger, smarter and better looking than the villain. And, even if he never held a gun before, he always has the ability to shoot a weapon from the villain's hand from one hundred yards away.

Because of the stories that are told and eventually portrayed on television and the movies, people expect certain things from the good guys or, more specifically, the police. Civilians usually believe police officers spend the day in high speed car chases, shootouts with bad guys, and foot chases through yards, over fences and across roofs. They also expect detectives to investigate and solve crimes, with the use of DNA and other forensic evidence, in less than forty-eight hours.

A former police officer told me that during her career she had been run over, shot and stabbed, yet the thing she remembered most was the paperwork. The hours of paperwork required by police officers is never depicted on television. Even on the rare occasion an officer in a drama sits down at his desk, he is interrupted for something more exciting (i.e. another crime only he can solve needs his attention; a witness will only speak to him or someone manages to make it past all check points in the police station and takes everyone hostage and only he can negotiate with the distraught individual).

Authors, however, need to remember that the majority of what is depicted on television has been exaggerated for entertainment purposes. If they do not take the time to research the correct procedures, they run the risk of losing potential readers. Mystery Writers of America and Sisters-in-Crime occasionally arrange for experts in the field of law enforcement to speak to their members. The New York chapter in SinC also organizes field trips; include one excursion to the Office of the Chief Medical Examiner.

For a more hands-on experience, authors can attend The Writers' Police Academy (<http://www.writerspoliceacademy.com/>). There, they can train with police officers, fire fighters and EMTs, and hear lectures from forensic experts and lawyers.

If a trip to The Writers' Police Academy is not in the budget, authors can inquire with their local police department about the Civilian Police Academy. The FBI also conducts Citizens Academies at their field offices.

Finally, authors can reach out to experts on forums like the Crime Scene Questions for Writers loop (<https://groups.yahoo.com/neo/groups/crimescenewriter/info>).

It is easy to rely on what is seen on television and in the movies. However, the scriptwriters use artistic license to increase the drama. If an author wants to attract and retain readers, she should strive to blend realism with drama.♥

Ursula Renée writes historical romances and mysteries. When she is not writing, she enjoys photography, stone carving and drawing. Find out more about Ursula by visiting her website at www.ursularenee.com.

INTERVIEW WITH KENSINGTON EDITOR ESI SOGAH
BY MARISA D'VARI



Kensington Senior Fiction Editor Esi Sogah is a warm, generous, engaging woman who spoke to our local New York chapter of RWA. She began her talk by explaining the importance of proper spelling, formatting, and construction of the cover letter.

The cover letter should clearly say what the book is about, and not be mysterious like a movie advertisement that intrigues but does not detail what the story is about. Whatever you're pitching should be ready to send. After you query, follow up within a few weeks to make sure it has been received.

If you have other books, you can send a synopsis. Esi says they want to build careers, not just one offs. She also likes a synopsis so she can look at the manuscript and jump to synopsis to see what happens and make sure things do not fall apart. She says she read a partial manuscript once and at the end there were aliens – she was quite surprised.

Esi says that Kensington is supportive of writers but reminds us there is a long lead time, so be prepared for this.

During Q/A, she stated that Kensington is open to agented and non-agented fiction. They do all genres of fiction, so knowing who the appropriate person to query is a key. In the query, one should state the length of the novel and the setting. You can also say what else you do besides writing and why you want to write for them.

Personally, she is looking for commercial fiction, mystery romance hybrids, romantic suspense, contemporaries and 1900 – 1930s America (gaslight era).

In terms of social media, I ask if it makes a difference if an author has thousands of followers. Esi said it comes up often in internal meetings. She says the company has a great social media team that can guide authors through the process, but yes, if a writer is social media savvy mention it in the pitch letter.

Another participant asks about series. Esi said if you write a series, mention it in the pitch letter as well. A series is important for marketing and can be helpful for the publicity/marketing people.

When asked about trends, she said the industry might be at tail end of a contemporary trend. She's seeing more funny books; less where everyone is "dark and damaged" and came from abusive homes. Fun, higher concept books are "in." More 'recent history' historicals are a trend. Also books set in different places, such as 16th century Prague. She mentioned the Prague example because that is where/ why their ebook division offers more opportunities for writers.♥

Contact Esi Sogah, Kensington Senior Editor, at: esogah@kensingtonbooks.com, @esisogah.

Marisa D'Vari is a storyteller and can be found at <http://www.marisadvari.com>.



**CRAFT CORNER: PROTECTING YOUR VOICE
BY ISABO KELLY**

The topic of a writer's voice has come up a few times in the blogosphere lately, in different forms, so I'd like to revisit the topic here. Writers are often told by industry professionals that one of the things they're really looking for is someone with a "great voice", but what does this mean for you the writer?

First of all, know right now, you will not find your voice particularly "great". You won't realize it's unique or hear it as anything special. You might not even know you have a "voice". Because your voice is the thing you hear in your head *all the time*. Your voice is you. And you're used to you, so you don't necessarily see the way your voice is interesting.

But it is interesting. The way you choose words and the order you put them in, the rhythms and flow of sentences, paragraphs, and chapters, the way you use things like ellipsis and semicolons—all this is part of your voice. Simply writing in the way that feels natural, like the sound of your own voice in your head, *is* your voice as a writer.

You can hone this voice, make it stronger and more distinct in your writing, by learning your craft, by studying and practicing your art, and by filling your writer's toolbox with as many techniques as possible so you have lots of things to choose from when coming to the page.

You can also bury your voice by following too many writing "rules". There are an infinite number of supposed rules that get bandied about. There is always someone around to tell you what you can and can't do in your fiction. The problem is, most of these supposed rules are just style choices and those choices will change.

In the past, the omniscient viewpoint was used all the time in fiction. Now people will tell you it's bad writing. It's not. It's just a style that's out of favor. That doesn't mean you can't use it. It just means a lot of people aren't used to it anymore and they may have a knee-jerk reaction to it. The poor little oxford comma causes all kinds of debate because some people will tell you it is absolutely "wrong" to use it, while others will tell you it's absolutely "wrong" to leave it out. Actually, this is just another style choice as both ways of approaching the oxford comma are considered correct.

Writers could drive themselves crazy trying to follow every rule someone decides we should follow. And in doing so, you'll drown out that uniqueness that only you can bring to your stories.

The rules are important to know and understand because they are often what is expected. But they're not carved in stone. If you want to use a semicolon, then bloody well use a semicolon. If you hate them, don't bother.

Now there's a difference between grammar, craft, and these "rules" I'm talking about. Learning basic grammar is important because you're trying to convey images via the written word in a specific language—you're hoping to transfer the story in your head, as closely as possible, to a perfect

stranger's head. There are some very basic tools used to ensure clear communication between individuals using the same language. Those are your grammar rules.

Craft is a broader topic that deals with how you use grammar and language to build pictures and manipulate emotions in your readers. It's full of choices and tools, things that help you get what's in your head out onto the page in the most effective way possible. Whereas grammar does have some hard and fast rules to keep language from being nonsensical, craft is the study of techniques, not all of which will be used at any given point in time or on every single story.

It's the craft of writing, which tools you utilize and how, that really brings out your voice, and this is where the art of writing comes from. But then there are the writer workshop/critique group rules: you *must* use third person limited point of view; you *must* change chapters or at least use a line break to change POV; you *can't* mix first and third point of view in a single story; you *can't* use semicolons, or parenthesis, or ellipsis; you *can't* use the same word twice on the same page.

Anytime someone tells you you can't use one of the tools in your toolbox or you *have* to use other tools all the time, give that supposed rule the side-eye.

These are suggestions. These are techniques that are in particular favor right now. These are elements that might be more accessible to modern audiences. They might even help your flow and readability. They could help bring out the strength of your voice.

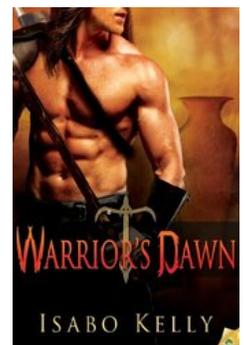
But they *are not rules*. They are style choices, like every other style choice. And if your voice calls for using conjunctions to start a sentence, then toss out the "rule" that claims you can't (as I do all the time).

Always remember these are your stories, this is your writing, and your voice. If you're most comfortable telling stories from multiple points of view and in both first and third, then learn how to do that in an effective way, and ignore the people telling you it's not possible. If you do it well, people will read your fiction and love it because no one else could have told the story in just that way.

Keep in mind, not everyone will like your style choices, and not everyone will love your voice. That's just the way it is. Some voices will suit some people's tastes better than others. You're not writing to please everyone. That's impossible anyway. You're writing to tell your stories in the best way you know how. Some people will love them and others simply won't. But that's not because you've broken some arbitrary rule laid down by a critique group.

Learn as much about the craft as possible, and keep learning. Practice with every story you write. Study storytelling. Read a lot. Watch a lot of movies and TV shows. The more you know, the better you'll be at writing from your strengths and your individual voice. Then protect that voice for all your worth. It's what makes your stories yours. And it's that uniqueness that will draw readers to your books.♥

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



EMBRACING MY PARTICULAR BRAND OF CRAZY BY LAQUETTE



HEAD HOPPING: THE UNFORGIVABLE SIN

Head hopping is an unforgivable sin that no author should ever commit! In the voice of my bestie, Faith, “Lies you tell.” Head hopping is when you bounce from one character’s point of view to another within a scene or chapter. I’ve read many “how to” articles on craft that frequently frown upon the act of head hopping. The logic for this opinion is that it confuses readers by shocking them out of the story when an author abruptly jumps from one character’s point of view to another.

On this point I will agree that authors shouldn’t skip from one POV to another with no warning and especially in the middle of a scene. However, head hopping—when done correctly—can offer an enriching experience for your reader, allowing them to see the same story from several sides of the page.

“You have the sexiest f##@ing mouth I’ve ever seen,” he growled. “It would look so much prettier stretched around my c#@k than spewing the venom you insist on spitting.”

He waited for the slap that he knew was coming. If he’d been on the receiving end of a statement like that he’d certainly have been looking to hit someone. But she didn’t hit him, even though she had every right to. Instead, she stepped closer into his space and spread those f##@able lips into the most alluring smile.

“If you think you’re man enough to get me to put my mouth to use like that, Quillen, then make me. Or are you just all talk?”

Finally! After all these f##@ing years he’s finally catching on.

A.J. pressed herself into Alan’s personal space. She hoped she didn’t have to give him much more of a clue. Shouldn’t her body pressed against his be enough of an obvious statement that he’d get the hint? Well if it wasn’t, for damn sure she was only two seconds away from spelling her desires out frankly and clearly.

The heated exchange they shared was the closest she’d ever come to letting him see what she’d been aching for all this time. She’d known from day one she couldn’t have him, so she’d set out to make him as miserable as his sex appeal made her. She’d decided that the quiet calm he always seemed to be cloaked in was the one pressure point she could attack until he finally exploded. No way was she going to be the only one frustrated in this scenario. If she couldn’t get the d##k she wanted so terribly, then he couldn’t keep that blessed peace he walked around with every day.

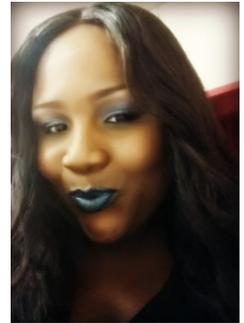
In my opinion, the most effective way to head hop is by making certain a scene is finished—meaning there is a distinguishable conclusion to that character’s perspective during the scene. Once you’ve done that, place a scene break symbol (three to five asterisks: ***) on a line between the end of the paragraph expressing the first character’s perspective and the paragraph where the new character’s perspective begins. Read the excerpt from my novel, *POWER PRIVILEGE & PLEASURE: QKB4* to see an example of how I use head hopping in my books.

Now maybe it’s just my particular brand of crazy, but I really enjoy the opportunity to see inside both protagonists’ heads/emotions/desires. This is especially true when there’s an, “I love you, but I hate you,” sort of theme running throughout the story. Ultimately it helps provide yet another level of understanding of how the characters actually relate to one another. In this case, the reader gets to see what both characters have been thinking before this encounter. They each want each other, but both fight as if they hate each other. Neither revealing to one another the depths of which their desire runs. Isn’t that so much fun?

A subsequent reason to consider using alternating perspectives when writing is it can unlock unexpected needs, desires, and motivations of your characters, bringing a new depth to your story you might not have anticipated. For instance, if you know exactly what you're supposed to be writing, but can't seem to get the words to align correctly on the page, try changing the character point of view. Maybe the current character's perspective isn't the vantage point that will provide that scene or chapter with the greatest emotional or physical depth possible. Just remember when you choose the perspective or point of view, the character that brings the greatest depth of emotion and description to the scene is the one who wins the head hop.

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.



INTERVIEW: CHRISTINA LAUREN, THE BEAUTIFUL SERIES

BY A.C. ROSE

NOTE: This is an excerpt from an interview from A.C. Rose's The Three Tomatoes blog. Enjoy.

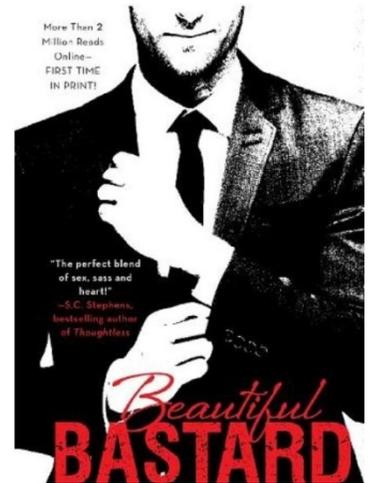


The Beautiful Series has become an iconic series in this new era of erotic romance. It is all thanks Christina Hobbs and Lauren Billings, who, blended together, form the writing team known as Christina Lauren. Self-proclaimed besties, partners, soulmates, and twin-brains they write young adult and adult fiction. The Wild Seasons Series, as well as THE HOUSE and SUBLIME, are among their other published books.

Christina is a former junior high school counselor. Lauren, known by intimates as Lo, has a Ph.D. in neuroscience and was a researcher. These days they are both full time writers, with at least nine *New York Times* best-selling books under their belts, and a penchant for writing stories about super-hot men who fall hard for sassy, sexy, smart, and strong women.

In the Beautiful Series, this dynamic duo has brought us rich characters that not only pair up for crazy hot romance and sizzling sex, but who share comradery and deep friendship that makes readers keep coming back to see them all again from book to book.

We chatted with Christina Lauren about our favorite characters and how this writing team crafts them together.



Q: Bennett Ryan, Max Stella, and Will Sumner have become iconic fictional alpha males. What do you think makes them stand out and gives them staying power with fans?

CHRISTINA LAUREN: Thank you so much! One of the things we work to cultivate is a range of male characters who are strong and ambitious, capable and competent, but who—above all—are supportive of the women in their lives. Bennett wants Chloe to conquer the world, Max wants Sara to embrace her quiet strength—whether that’s kicking ass in the corporate universe, or at home with little Annabel—and Will wants Hanna to take the science world by storm, while still embracing every curiosity she has. There’s also something to be said that these alpha males fell for women who are smart (if not smarter) and strong (if not stronger) than they are. There are no damsels in distress for our Beautiful men, and we think that really resonates with readers who are juggling thirty different things every day and want to see themselves in the books they’re reading.

Q: Erotic tension sizzles between the three duos in the series. What are some of the most memorable things reader's shared about why they fell in love with all your characters in the Beautiful Series?

CL: One of our favorite stories came from a reader who had never run a day in her life, but became inspired by BEAUTIFUL PLAYER, where Will coached Hanna into marathon-shape. This reader wanted to run a marathon and as she read the book, she trained, imagining Will was there at her side. Will is so supportive of Hanna in PLAYER, and even when there’s a question of whether or not she’ll end up with him romantically, he follows through on his promise and is there with her every step of the way, cheering her on. This reader ran her first marathon after reading the book, and both of us were really emotional when she told us about it, and the degree of triumph she felt.

Q: Since the release of BEAUTIFUL BASTARD, you've written many more “beautiful” books and novellas. For new readers, can you give us the order?

CL: BEAUTIFUL BASTARD (BOOK #1); BEAUTIFUL BITCH (BOOK # 1.5); BEAUTIFUL

STRANGER (BOOK #2); BEAUTIFUL BOMBSHELL (BOOK # 2.5); BEAUTIFUL PLAYER (BOOK #3); BEAUTIFUL BEGINNING (BOOK # 3.5); BEAUTIFUL BELOVED (THE BEAUTIFUL SERIES); BEAUTIFUL SECRET (THE BEAUTIFUL SERIES)

While each full-length novel is part of the larger series, you can jump in at any point—BASTARD, STRANGER, PLAYER, or SECRET—without being confused. But why not start at the beginning?

Q: Where does the magic happen? Do you both write in home offices or on the road, or both?

CL: Lo writes in her office at home, but a lot of people would probably die if they knew how much she writes on her phone, too. The key to writing for Lo is that she writes when she has the time, AND inspiration. She's always emailing herself sections she's quickly typed up when an idea hits her. I (Christina) almost always write in my office. I'm not a good drafter when we travel or even at Starbucks. I need to be in a cave with no social interaction or distraction at all. Though, some of my best sex scenes have been in the middle of the night when I've fumbled to type something on my phone. Moral of the story: phones are awesome.

Q: You probably get this a lot, but what is your writing process like? Even-Steven, or you both bring different skills and talents?

CL: We're working writers, which means we treat it like it's our job. We have a schedule and we stick to it. We outline a book in person and then divide it by chapter, POV, or scene, then trade. Sometimes there will be something we know the other person will knock out of the park. Lo can write the emotional heart-clench scenes that leave me in a puddle on the floor. An example would be the moment Max finds Sara in his bathroom at the end of *STRANGER*. IT KILLS ME. When we're done drafting our sections we trade and edit, compile and edit, edit, edit, edit, and oh, edit again.♥

Read more of this interview on The Three Tomatoes.

<http://threetomatoes.com/the-beautiful-series-interview-with-christian-lauren>

Find out more about Christina Lauren at their website, www.christinalaurenbooks.com.

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



**SPEED WRITING
BY ALEXIS DARIA**



During the February 2016 RWA/NYC Chapter Meeting, the topic of writing speed came up. This is something I focused on last year -- well, not writing speed so much as streamlining my process to increase output and finish what I start. After twelve years of doing NaNoWriMo, I could knock out a first draft in a few weeks, but then I was at a loss when it came to revising it. I had a feeling that learning more about pre- and post-production techniques would help me, but I wanted methods that would specifically help me **write even faster**, and with less stress and drama.

These are three of the books I read on the topic:

2K TO 10K: WRITING FASTER, WRITING BETTER, AND WRITING MORE OF WHAT YOU LOVE <<http://amzn.com/B009NKXAWS>> by Rachel Aaron \$0.99 Takeaway: Her revision process has saved me. No joke. I would not be preparing to query right now if I hadn't read her book in November. (And it's only 99 cents!)

WRITE BETTER, FASTER: HOW TO TRIPLE YOUR WRITING SPEED AND WRITE MORE EVERY DAY <<http://amzn.com/B00TUEN7IO>> by Monica Leonelle \$2.99 Takeaway: This prompted me to buy DragonDictate, but more importantly, her description of writing "beats" for each scene has made writing the first draft go more quickly and smoothly. I also started using a detailed spreadsheet and writing journal based on her suggestions.

WRITING FASTER FTW <<http://amzn.com/B011NLV1MA>> by L.A. Witt, Lauren Gallagher \$2.99 Takeaway: A good review of points made in the other two with lots of easily applied tips.

I follow Leonelle and Aaron on Twitter, and they both tweet about writing and reply to questions.

I also read a number of books about outlining last year, and smushed the methods together into something that works for me. The idea being that having a plan would help me write faster, waste less time, and allow me to see story problems before I ran into them during the writing. These two were the most helpful to me:

TAKE OFF YOUR PANTS!/: OUTLINE YOUR BOOKS FOR FASTER, BETTER WRITING: REVISED EDITION <<http://amzn.com/B00UKC0GHA>> by Libbie Hawker \$3.82 Takeaway: This gave me completely different perspective on my approach to planning a novel. The idea of the "flaw" alone (and how it relates to other plot points) made reading the book worthwhile.

ROCK YOUR PLOT: A SIMPLE SYSTEM FOR PLOTTING YOUR NOVEL <<http://amzn.com/B008CC5L8Y>> by Cathy Yardley \$2.99 Takeaway: A clear, concise approach to outlining. Very quick read.

Michael Hague's workshop at RWA15 was also eye-opening. I took extensive notes and can easily send those to anyone who wants them.

Everyone has their own approach and there is no *one* way to write, plan, or edit. I was actively looking to change my process, because whatever I was doing before was NOT WORKING. So I read a bunch of quick, cheap ebooks to help me develop a method that works for me. I'm still refining it as I learn, but so far, the changes are working and I'm seeing results. Hopefully these will be of use to others, too. I'm always happy to share resources and discuss further.♥

Alexis Daria is a writer and an artist. She also tutors kids and teens on writing, and is one of the Municipal Liaisons for the NYC chapter of NaNoWriMo. Visit her blog at <http://creativestaycation.com/about/> or you can find her on Twitter, Instagram, and Pinterest at @alexisdaria.

WRITING TIPS

How to self-edit your writing: 8 tips

Structure the task

Put the largest elements (such as plot structure) first. Once satisfied with these, focus on the details of language (grammar, style, punctuation).

Take a break

After finishing a draft put your work aside for a day, a week, a month – however long you need to be able to return and edit with fresh eyes.

Use free tools

www.hemingwayapp.com is one. Use it to see sentence difficulty ratings and where you can replace awkward words with shorter synonyms.

Read aloud

Read your writing aloud. Hearing the rhythm of words will help you edit for flow. Your ears could help you find errors your eyes miss, too.

Check tense

Errors of tense are common amongst new writers. Ursula le Guin's book *Steering the Craft* has a concise yet thorough overview of tense types.

Mix it up

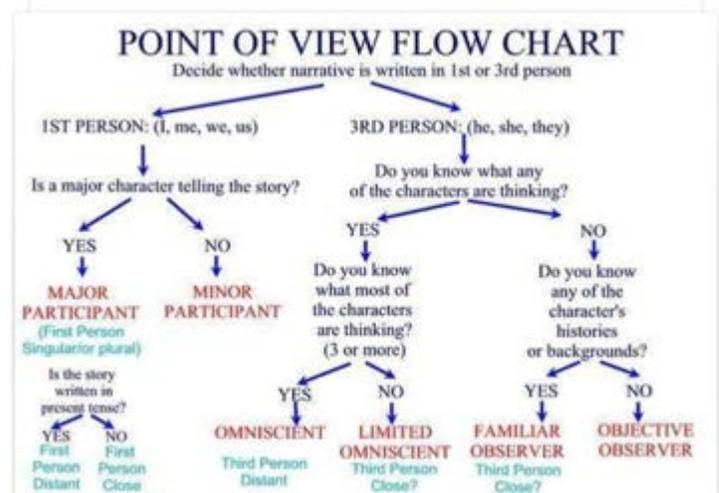
Reading a text over and over might make your eyes used to an error. Try reading backwards from the last word to the first to pick up hard-to-spot errors.

Be ruthless

Don't be afraid to cut parts of your book that aren't working and start afresh – maybe the cut piece was vital preparation for something much better.

Change the picture

Try changing font and font size in your word processor for editing. The altered appearance could help you see the text anew.



PAPER DOLLS: QUEEN OF HEARTS
BY MARIA FERRER



Years ago, Kathryn Hayes, one of our Founding Mothers, and I did a workshop called, Paper Dolls. We gave out photographs we cut out from magazines and asked members to come up with a character profile and a story outline. I've decided to revive the **Paper Dolls with a Flash Fiction Twist** – so this will be a monthly writing exercise and a promotional opportunity.

Since we are celebrating Woman's History Month this March, I've picked out a woman for us.

Take a look at this photograph. Who is she? Who is her family? Was she adopted? Where does she live? What schools did she attend? Who are her friends? Who are her boyfriends? Is she still a virgin? What does she do for a living? Can she drive? Is her idea of cooking take out? Does she get her coffee at Starbucks? Can she have children? Does she give up her seat on the subway to pregnant women and old men? Does she vote?

A picture may be worth a 1000 words, but for our Paper Dolls Flash Fiction, we only need a 100.

Write a *100-word* mini scene (about 6 sentences) using this photo and email it--along with your bio--to **keynoteseditor@gmail.com** by March 15. We will print your Paper Dolls Flash Fiction in the Keynotes and on the Chapter Blog. And you can also post on your blog/website for extra exposure.

Let's play Dolls!♥

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.



RWA/NYC Membership & Renewal Application

DATE: _____

*CHECK ONE: ___NEW MEMBER ___RENEWAL

NAME: _____ NATIONAL RWA MEMBER # (required) _____

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.

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 ___Facebook/Twitter ___Website ___Other: _____

MEMBERSHIP DUES

Chapter dues are due March 5, 2016.

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 NY10163, or you can pay via PayPal at www.rwanyc.com.

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

**You can also pay via PAYPAL at
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WRITING CREDITS

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___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): _____

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