

KEYNOTES



The newsletter of the Romance Writers of America / New York City Chapter #6 NOVEMBER 2016

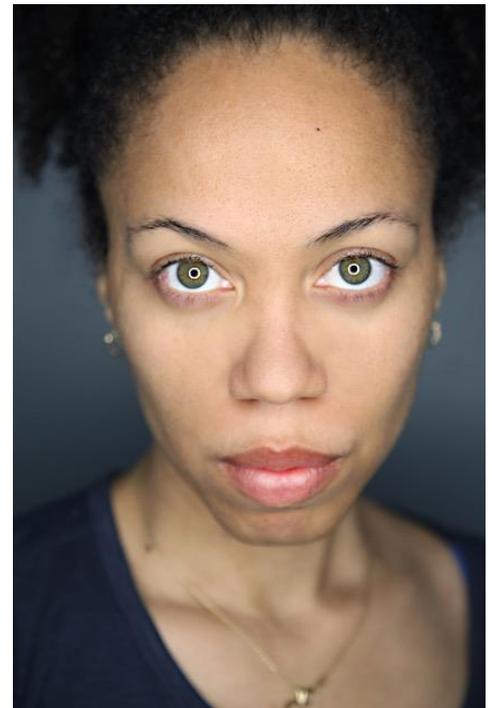
**NEXT CHAPTER MEETING & CRITIQUE SESSION: SATURDAY, NOVEMBER 5
TRS, 40 EXCHANGE PLACE, 3RD FLOOR, 12-4PM**

TOPIC: COVER ART

SPEAKER: TARIA REED

Taria Reed will talk and answer questions about covers and stock art, particularly aimed at people self-publishing who are looking to get their own covers made. Taria is also making her own stock photography to make up for the lack of good stock art with POC models.

BIO: My name is Taria (Maria with a T) Reed. I'm a trained photographer specializing in children and Women's portraits. In early 2011 I felt the need to expand creatively. I started photographing adults for stock websites. In my mind I was shooting for book covers. I'm a romance audio book junkie so I love looking at all the beautiful covers. I've always used Photoshop to edit my portraits but I wanted to go further. I started devouring any and all artistic tutorials. I would practice for hours and turn photos into covers or art. I was approached by a few self-published authors who asked me to create covers for their e-books and I jumped at the opportunities to learn even more.



After some time I started stalking publishing houses to see the covers they were putting out. I worked hard until I felt what I could do was up to snuff. Once I was comfortable with my skills I started emailing publishing houses with cover artist inquiries. I got a great response to my sample work and I'm looking forward to getting even better. Being a photographer professionally I quickly married my love of photography and my growing love for cover design. I became known for shooting my own images for my covers. In August 2013 I opened up my own stock house called "The Reed Files". It's been a wild ride but I love what I do and can't imagine doing anything else for a living.♥

LAST HOUR: WRITING & CRITIQUE SESSION

Join us the last hour of the November meeting for a write-in session and a critique session. Its great preparation for NaNoWriMo.♥





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THANK YOU!

To Our Contributing Writers
 Maria Cox, Alexis Daria, Maria Ferrer,
 Nancy Fields, Lise Horton, Isabo Kelly,
 Kate McMurray, Ursula Renée,
 A.C. Rose, J.N. Welsh

2016 CHAPTER CALENDAR

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
 Secretary: Stacey Agdern
 Treasurer: Tamara Lynch
 Past President: Ursula Renée

LIAISONS & COMMITTEES

Board Liaison: Lisbeth Eng
 PRO Liaisons: Maria Cox
 PAN Liaison: LaQuette
 Blog/Social Media: Maria Ferrer
 Craft Loop: Isabo Kelly
 Critique Group: Ursula Renée
 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

DECEMBER THEME

TYING UP LOOSE ENDS

What are they? How do you tie things up?

NOTE: Keynotes welcomes all topics.

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE: ALWAYS LEARNING
BY KATE MCMURRAY



In researching my next novel, I've been spending a lot of time at the Brooklyn Public Library. On a whim, I checked out the writing craft section recently (call number 808, right near the romance section at the Central Library at Grand Army Plaza). I was really impressed with the selection of books, including three just on writing romance.

I mentioned on Twitter the other day that I was reading Barbara Samuel's *WRITING ROMANTIC FICTION* (which I found at the library) and a lot of writers chimed in to say that they love reading craft books. I chatted with one New York Times bestseller colleague of mine who constantly reads craft books and takes workshops to better hone her craft. I try to emulate that myself. Some books are more useful than others, but I almost always learn something. And when there are so many resources available at the library, there's a lot you can learn for free.

Reading generally has also been crucial to improving my writing. I read for pleasure quite a bit, but sometimes I like to take a step back and analyze why something is or isn't working for me. For example, I read a novel recently in which I really disliked the heroine. I tried to be critical about why that was. In a recent Romance Writer Chat (a Twitter chat that happens at 7pm EST every Sunday; see hashtag #rwchat) we had discussed heroines and how readers are generally more critical of them than they are heroes. There are a lot of complex reasons for that that I won't get into here, but I tried to analyze my own opinions. Was I being unreasonable in not liking the heroine? Was I holding her to a high standard? That was a useful exercise, because I could analyze what I didn't like (she was cynical and stubborn) and whether I thought she was redeemed by the end of the book (I did because of one critical scene where she had to confront and reevaluate her previously held beliefs). I had to think about how the author redeemed her and why it worked.

When I ran a critique group, I got a lot out of it for similar reasons. Being critiqued was one thing, and it's always valuable to get feedback, but what really helped me was looking critically at other peoples' writing. I had to not only evaluate whether or not I liked something, but why, and what I could suggest for fixing it. That level of critical thinking taught me a lot about what I like, what I dislike, and how to fix flaws in my own writing.

And I do think my writing has improved. I have new epiphanies all the time regarding what can improve my story. I consider things like setting, plot, character, theme, how to fix issues with pacing, how to add emotional resonance, how to make the book I'm writing now the best book I've ever written, how to make the next one even better.



Never settle, is what I'm saying. You can write an amazing book, sell it, and be wildly successful, but the key to a sustained career is continuing to learn and grow. And with so many resources available to you—through the library, through RWA, workshops both online and in person, conferences, websites, and so on—there's really no excuse.

I encourage you all to go out and try to learn one new thing this month. Pick up a craft book. Take a workshop. Read critically. It doesn't matter, as long as we all grow and move forward. ♥

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.

EARLY BIRD SPECIAL



Renew your Chapter Membership by December 31, 2016 and get \$5 off.

Renew today at www.rwanyc.com. Go to "Members Only" section. Password is membersonly.

There is a renewal membership form at the end of this newsletter.♥

RWA NATIONAL NEWS

Permission to Forward Granted

SHOWING SERIOUS INTENT

General membership is open to all persons seriously pursuing a romance fiction writing career. Only General members shall have all rights of membership, and only General members shall have the right to vote and the right to hold office in RWA.

1. What does RWA mean by “emotionally satisfying and optimistic ending”?

The RWA definition of “emotionally satisfying and optimistic ending” means exactly what it says. At the end of the story the lovers are together in a romantic relationship, and the future looks promising for them and their relationship.

2. When submitting a manuscript to prove serious pursuit (as is required to maintain general membership/earn PRO status), does it need to be edited/polished?

A complete work does not have to be fully polished, but it must include a beginning, middle and an end, with no obviously missing scenes.

3. How are these manuscripts checked?

We do not use an automated system to check the submission. An RWA staff member reviews every single one. If we have doubt that the story meets the criteria, the staff member gets a second option from another staff member. ♥

CHAPTER MINUTES: OCTOBER

Board Members Present:

Kate McMurray – President
Tamara Lynch – Treasurer
Mimi Pizarro-Logsdon – Vice-President
Racheline Maltese – Vice President
Ursula Renée – Past President

Board Members Absent

Stacey Agdern - Secretary

The meeting was called to order by President Kate McMurray at 12:13 pm. Lise Horton accepted the September minutes. Maria Ferrer seconded the motion.

Tamara Lynch reported that the chapter currently has \$4800 in the bank. Kate McMurray announced that the buttons for Early Bird Renewal is up on the “Members Only” section of the website. Renew your membership by December 31 and pay only \$35 for General Members/ \$30 for Associate Members.

Mimi Pizarro-Logsdon announced that the Golden Apple Awards was a success. Kate McMurray read a letter from LaQuette thanking the chapter for her nomination for Author of the Year. She praised Mimi for a good job and spoke about the importance of attending the ceremony and other events.

Racheline Maltese announced that the deadline for the contest has been extended to October 15. Entries can be up to 20 pages.

Michael Molloy announced that the Brooklyn Book Festival was a successful event. The romance panel, sponsored by Word Bookstore, contained a diverse group speaking on the romance genre.

Ursula Renée announced that the theme for the November Keynotes will be Prepping for NaNoWriMo. We will also have a section celebrating what members are thankful for.

Maria Ferrer reminded authors to send images to her for Book Cover Fridays.

Ursula Renée has created an RWA/NYC Facebook page for the chapter members participating in NaNoWriMo. The chapter is also participating in a Word War against other RWA chapters.

Kate McMurray announced the following members are running for the 2017 RWA/NYC Board:

Kate McMurray – President
Stacey Agdern – Vice President, Events
LaQuette – Vice President, Communications
Maria Cox – Treasurer
Lise Horton – Secretary

Kate McMurray reminded members that the deadline for workshop proposals for the 2017 RWA Conference will be November 15.

The meeting adjourned at 12:35 pm.♥



ABOUT PRO



New to the PRO community! Please join me in welcoming the newest chapter members to join the PRO community:

Alexis Daria

Congratulations on this big accomplishment!

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. (Revised guidelines, April 2015)

Questions: If you're interested in becoming PRO and/or would like more information, you can e-mail me at maria@mywritingden.net.

Yahoo! Group: Anyone who is a PRO member of RWA can join this group, please go to this link below and I will approve your request. <https://groups.yahoo.com/neo/groups/rwanycpro/info>
Thank you and happy writing!♥

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.♥



ELECTIONS

The Secretary will cast one vote on behalf of the Chapter and all nominees will be voted in; their term begins January 2017. They are:

For President – Kate McMurray

For Vice Presidents – LaQuette (contest) & Stacey Agdern (GAA reception)

For Treasurer – Maria Cox

For Secretary – Lise Horton

(Note: Ursula Renée continues as Past President.)♥



MEMBER NEWS

ONCE UPON A HAUNTED CASTLE: A CELTIC ROMANCE ANTHOLOGY, which contains Ruth A. Casie's THE MAXWELL GHOST, made the USA Today best sellers list.

RWA/NYC Members are winners! Congrats to all award winners and finalists.

2016 SWIRL AWARDS

Contemporary Mainstream

WINNER:

10-80: LINE OF DUTY SERIES

by Xyla Turner

Historical

1st Runner Up:

A BOOKIE'S ODDS

by Ursula Renee

Romantic Suspense

1st Runner Up: (TIE)

POWER PRIVILEGE & PLEASURE: QUEENS OF KINGS BOOK 4

by Laquette

Sci-Fi Fantasy

WINNER:

Radio Silence

by Alyssa Cole

2016 INTERNATIONAL DIGITAL AWARD

Historical Romance

Fifth Place

A Bookie's Odds

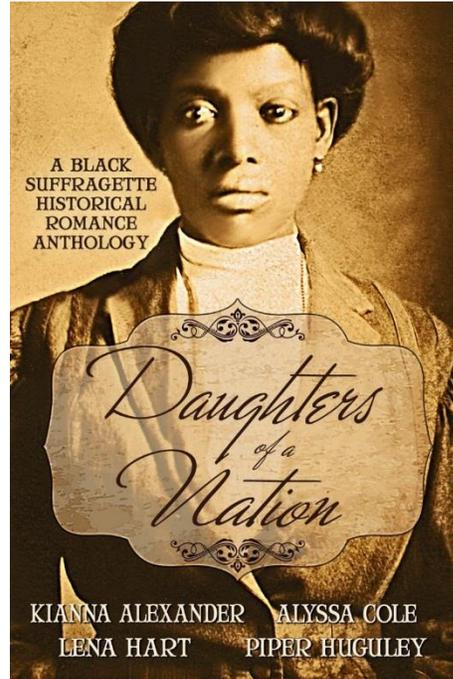
by Ursula Renée



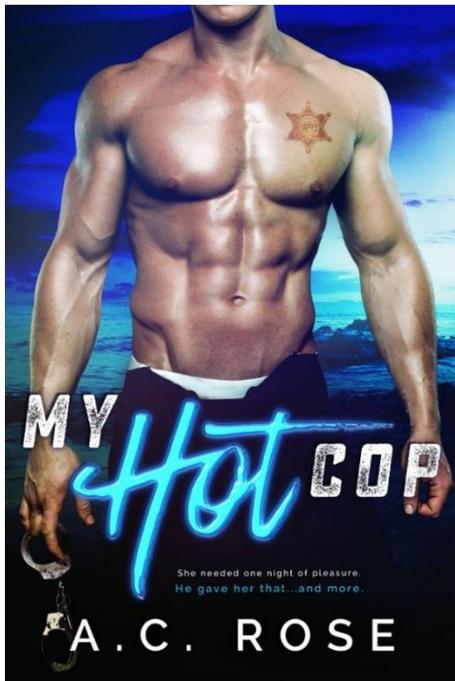
MEMBERS ON THE SHELF



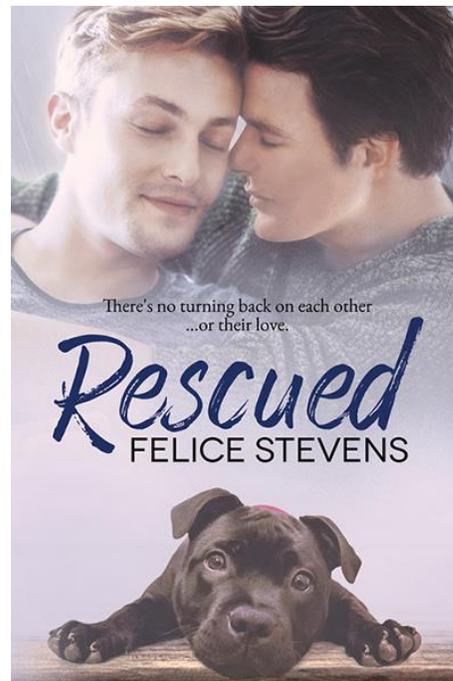
THE MAXWELL GHOST
by Ruth A. Casie



DAUGHTERS OF A NATION
stories by Alyssa Cole and Lena Hart



MY HOT COP
by A.C. Rose



RESCUED
by Felice Stevens

Our theme this month is

THANKSGIVING!



I Am Thankful For...

My active imagination. ~ Ursula Renée

Inspiration from so many great writers. ~ Becky Palmer

Family, Friends and My Magic ~ Mimi

I'm Thankful for Coffee - Anna

Having other writers I can work with and learn from. ~ Michelle Alerte

My vivid creativity. ~ Michael Molloy

New paper notebooks and pens, especially tiny ones that I can throw in my purse or put by my bed. ~ Maria Ferrer

I'm thankful for every reader that I'm connected with, happy that they enjoyed what I write. ~ Tanya Goodwin

I'm thankful for my family, most of all, and the many friends I have made through writing this thing called romance. I hope to continue to be a part of everyone's road to success and there to cheer them on now and forever. ~ J.N. Welsh

I continue to be thankful for the depth and breadth of genres and subjects and energy in the world of romance that offers opportunities for every author. ~ Anonymous

I'm thankful for the never ending well of ideas I've had recently -- more than I can write! -- and my continuing passion and enthusiasm for my work. ~ Kate McMurray

I am thankful for the wonderful characters who entertain me in my own mind, and the stories so many other people have written that entertain me also, and the supportive community I've found at RWA/NYC. ~ Kate Dunn

I am thankful for my kids and family. I'm also thankful for my job and the ability to express my passion for writing within a community of writers. ~ Maria Cox♥

PAPER DOLLS: THANKSGIVING BY MARIA FERRER



Our lovers are meeting the other's family for the first time.

Will they like her? Will they think she is worthy of their golden boy? And does her family accept him? Can he keep her in the style she should be accustomed to?

Bring these lovers and their families to life, and what better stage than during Thanksgiving.

The turkey is served.

Ready. Set. Write!

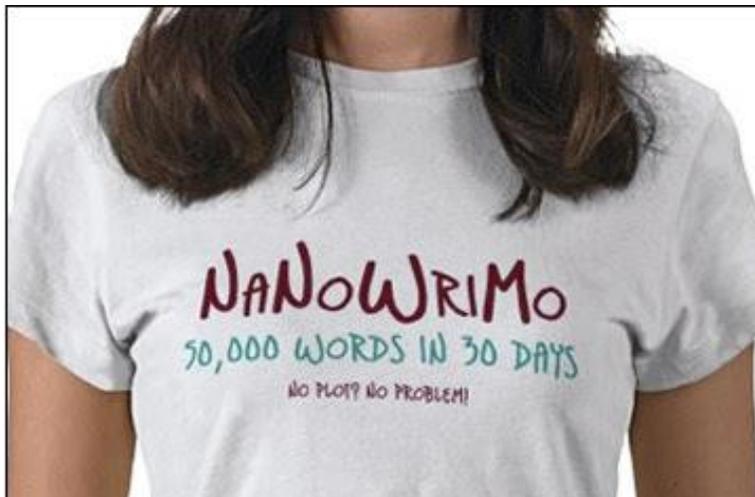
And, let's play Dolls!♥

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.



**NATIONAL NOVEL WRITING MONTH:
WRITING SKILLS FOR NOVEMBER AND BEYOND
BY ALEXIS DARIA**

National Novel Writing Month is a personal creative endeavor that started in 1999 with a “bunch of over caffeinated yahoos” in the San Francisco Bay area. In 2015, the number of participants worldwide rose to 350,000. Every November, people sign up at nanowrimo.org and challenge themselves to write 50,000 words during 30 days with the support of a built-in community. Let’s break that down and explore how these elements can help us in our day-to-day writing lives.

**GOAL**

50,000 words in 30 days = 1667 words per day. Stats and graphs on the NaNoWriMo website allow you to track your writing (and those of your writing buddies) so you can measure your progress. Writing 1667 words per day - or whatever goal you set for yourself based on your schedule - helps you build a writing habit. It also helps you carve out writing time, get your friends and family on board, and to figure out your most productive time of the day so you can set yourself up for success. If we want those closest to us to take our writing seriously, we have to do it first and show that we’re serious about sitting down and doing the work. Having a specific, measurable goal helps with this, and gives us skills we can continue to use beyond November.

Examples:

- Stephen King writes 2,000 words per day, every day.
- Jack Kerouac wrote *ON THE ROAD* in three weeks.
- Nora Roberts writes 6-8 hours per day, although she admits that she now permits herself to take weekends off. (I think she’s earned it, don’t you?)

DEADLINE

By signing up with NaNoWriMo, November becomes a time of creative abandon instead of just a cold, dreary, almost-winter month. Working toward a tight deadline allows the freedom to play and explore creatively. It forces us to turn off the inner editor and stay focused on finishing the story - or at least, hitting that 50,000-word finish line. (Hopefully you’ll go on to finish the story. I’m rooting for you!) This doesn’t mean jump in without a plan and write garbage - in fact, I hit the 50,000-word mark faster when I do have a plan for the month. (I’m totally a revised panster.) Turning off the inner editor means you stop laboring over every sentence, and stop revising the first chapter over and over and over... Even if being a revise-as-you-go writer works for you, it’s worth trying out the lightning-speed first draft method, especially if you have tight deadlines, or even just to measure how fast you can write.

Here's a list of 8 bestselling novels started during NaNoWriMo. Maybe you've heard of them?

- THE NIGHT CIRCUS by Erin Morgenstern
- WATER FOR ELEPHANTS by Sara Gruen
- FANGIRL by Rainbow Rowell
- WOOL by Hugh Howey
- THE DARWIN ELEVATOR by Jason M. Hough
- CINDER, SCARLET, and CRESS by Marissa Meyer

COMMUNITY

NaNoWriMo has a built-in support network that boosts the other aspects of specific goal and fixed deadline. People all over the world are participating in this madness at the same time, and there are regional Municipal Liaisons (MLs) who act as community organizers, event coordinators, and cheerleaders. In NYC, we have parties, social events, and write-ins - both in-person and using an online chat room. There are also forums on the NaNoWriMo website for every genre and craft topic, and you'll receive regular pep talks from well-known writers.

Every year, usually at the TGIO (Thank God It's Over) party in December, a fair number of participants tell me that they've tried to do NaNoWriMo alone in the past - not going to in-person events or making use of the online community - but they didn't hit 50k or gave up before the end of the month. Once they started going to write-ins, they felt more invested and finished out the month. Writers who are new to NYC have told me they look forward to NaNoWriMo events because they know they'll make friends.

The community aspect can play a big role in your success with NaNoWriMo. Your writing buddies keep you accountable, provide story sounding boards, and cheer you on when you're feeling discouraged. You might even find a writing group or critique partners. If you want to attend these events - which I highly recommend - all event information can be found at the calendar linked to the top of the NYC regional forum (<http://nanowrimo.org/regions/usa-new-york-new-york-city>), which you'll have access to once you select NYC as your region. Look for the NaNoWriMo sign, say hi to the ML on duty, and join the group. It's that easy.



**KEEP
CALM
AND
WRITE
ON**

How to participate:

- Go to www.nanowrimo.org
- Set up a profile
- Define your novel
- Discuss writing in online forums
- Go to local write-ins
- Write 50,000 words!
- Validate your novel

BEYOND NOVEMBER

NaNoWriMo has a goal, a deadline, and a supportive community built in, but it's up to you to carry these benefits over into your writing process throughout the rest of the year. As members of RWA, we're off to a head start on the community aspect. But even if you've already got a writing habit and writing buddies, NaNoWriMo can be useful in making the most of the massive

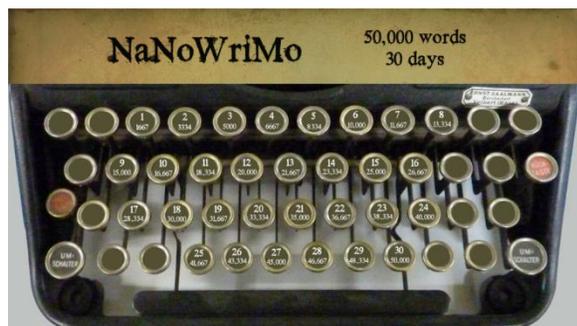
creative energy being generated in November to knock out a quick first draft. And once you have a first draft, you can revise it and turn it into a finished novel.

I've participated in NaNoWriMo every year since 2004. I've made a lot of wonderful friends and writing buddies, and I've been honored to represent NaNoWriMo at conferences and conventions. Personally, I would not have stuck with writing as long as I have if it hadn't been for this yearly challenge and all the people I've met along the way. I have NaNoWriMo to thank for helping me build a writing habit and keeping me accountable. ♥

Alexis Daria is the NYC NaNoWriMo municipal liaison and RWANYC chapter member. Alexis Daria is a romance writer and artist. A native New Yorker, Alexis has a BFA in Computer Arts, but her most fulfilling job was as a group facilitator for a women's empowerment community, where she coached other women in following their creative dreams. Now, when she isn't helping elementary school kids craft essays, she writes contemporary, paranormal, and historical romance. On Sunday evenings she co-hosts #RWchat, a weekly Twitter chat for romance writers. Alexis is a member of the New York City chapter of RWA. You can find her on Twitter, Instagram, and Pinterest at @alexisdaria. Visit her website: creativestaycation.com.

WRITING ON THE GO FOR NANOWRIMO

BY JN WELSH



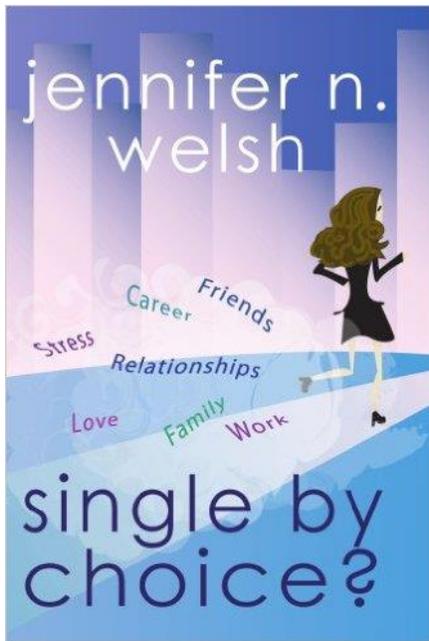
Are you ready to take a huge leap toward achieving your writing goals? Well then participating in NaNoWriMo is a great way to do it. However, I learned very quickly that doing NaNoWriMo during the holiday season presents its challenges on top of attempting to write 50k plus words in one month. People will come out the woodwork to invite you out, and your calendar will miraculously fill up with Thanksgiving preparations. You'll feel like an overbooked ten year-old scurrying from this to that and

all the while thinking, "I have to get my word count in." NaNoWriMo veterans know this well and newbies are fearful. So what do you do when you feel like you don't have any time to write?

Write on the go!

I was recently in a situation where over the course of two weeks it felt like I had to be everywhere at once. "When am I going to write?" I questioned, quite out loud and accompanied by some actual hair pulling. Then I remembered listening to an RWA conference panel called Fast and Furious Writing: Staying Productive when Life Gets in the Way with Carol Ericson, Beverly Long, Julie Miller, HellenKay Dimon and Angi Morgan. One author spoke about writing everywhere, and at any time that presented an opportunity. I thought to myself, "I could never do that."

I tend to have a few hours to write at the time of day when I am most productive. I like writing this way. Any other time, I am just spinning my wheels. I have my computer, some tea and a notepad and I'm



good to go. But when life happened and my time was spread thin, writing time was the single most challenging thing to find time for. So I started to write everywhere; Two hours sitting in a hospital waiting room, a few minutes on line at the grocery store, ten minutes after my work out, a couple minutes during meals (where hands were not required, i.e., a burger), fifteen minutes between teaching my classes, ten minutes before I went to bed and so on. It added up and soon I had written 16,000 words of a story for which I only had an outline.

Here are the takeaways. Take a breath and focus on your writing goals. Even when the situation is not ideal, you can still write the story. Whether you have five minutes or five hours you can write and get your word count in; I suggest something electronic so you can transfer between programs and devices. Every little bit helps. Lastly, if you think you can't get about 1700 words written on Thanksgiving Day, then let me assure you--You can do it! Challenge yourself but be forgiving. If it is really impossible to write on that day, then make

it up the next day. No matter what you can be successful, just don't quit.

Here are a few apps that help me write on the go: Notepad (write your story and transfer it to your favorite writing software later), Voice Notes (record your thoughts or stories and then transcribe later), Pomodoro (timer set to 25-minute intervals). For more suggestions email me at author.jnwelsh@gmail.com.♥

JN Welsh is a native New Yorker who was first published at age sixteen with a poem entitled "Beautiful Sky," after winning a competition for young poets. Her love for romance grew over the years and she published her first novel, SINGLE BY CHOICE? in 2005. Her writing style is humorous, provocative and refreshing. She is an active member of Romance Writers of America and works closely with the New York City chapter. She considers herself a wellness warrior who is passionate about fitness and health especially for writers. In addition to being a full-time author, she is a life coach, public speaker, fitness instructor and part time educator. Visit her at www.jenwelsh.com.

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!♥



GOING THE INDIE ROUTE BY NANCY GOODMAN

Stepping into self-publishing is akin to sitting in the first car of a roller coaster; it's scary as hell and you're nervous, but anticipate the high. If you've been with a publisher, you've been through edits you may or may not agree with, but have to give way to what your publisher wants, most often have an input to your cover but not the final say and sometimes have to wait months, if not a year for release. You may or may not have paperback copies and foreign rights sold as well. For some, there is comfort in having big decisions in someone else's hands, as well as the expense of everything I've mentioned.

Self-publishing is not for the weak. EVERYTHING is on you. You must find an editor you trust. But a content editor is only the first step. You need a good copy editor and a proofer. You can't rely on your own eyes or those of a friend. Then you look for a great cover artist, because let's face it, people love a great cover. I write gay romance, so bare-chested man or clothed? Two men or one? Stock photo or custom photo shoot? All decisions you need to make yourself.

I don't do my own formatting. I found a wonderful formatter and I give it to him to do. He updates all my back matter and keeps me current. I can't do everything and this is the one thing I don't mind handing off to someone else.

One thing that is always on the author's head no matter if you're self-published or traditionally published is promotion. You need to build your own brand, decide what platform you feel most comfortable on and build a reader base. One thing for sure, drive-by promo, merely dumping "Buy my book" posts in Facebook groups or incessant tweets about your new book isn't going to do it. You have to engage people, be yourself. Be natural. Maybe you want to post little teasers of your book for Teaser Tuesday, or a 250-500 word snippet of your WIP progress to entice readers to want to read your book.

You can book blog tours and hope that the blogs a) want to book you and b) want to review you. You can find a dedicated group of readers who love your book and hope they'll talk you up to their friends. But in reality, every day, hundreds, if not thousands of books get released. The trick is to get noticed, to get your book in the hands of as many readers as possible and get reviews. I don't have a magic formula for that; I wish I did! The best you can do is write the best book you can and when that's finished, go ahead and write the next one.

Oh. And don't read your reviews.

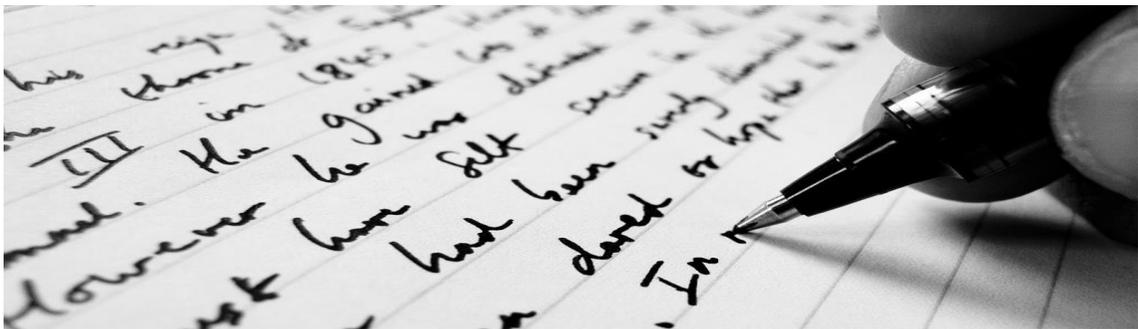
I don't do Kindle Unlimited-KU. I don't believe in limiting myself to one retailer. I sell on all platforms and upload directly to each one, except for Apple, simply because I don't have the time to teach myself how to use iTunes Producer. Yes, I sell the most on Amazon, but after a year and a half, I see my sale slowly increasing across the board. I take advantage of promotions, both paid and unpaid. I do Facebook Ads and see what works; what gives me the most return on investment.



If this sounds exhausting, it is, LOL. I don't sleep much. I work forty hours a week at an attorney. Being a self-published author is a business. I take it very seriously. It is what I want for my retirement career. Everything I do now is geared towards that, when I have the time to write full time. Will I ever go back to being with a publisher? Maybe if the right thing comes along. Right now, exhausting and time consuming as it is, I love being a self-published author.♥

Nancy Goodman has always been a romantic at heart. She believes that while life is tough, there is always a happy ending around the corner. Her characters have to work for it, however like life in NYC, nothing comes easy and that includes love. Nancy lives in New York City with her husband and two children and hopefully soon a cat of her own. Her day begins with a lot of caffeine and ends with a glass or two of red wine. She practices law but daydreams of a time when she can sit by a beach somewhere and write beautiful stories of men falling in love. Although there are bound to be a few bumps along the way, a Happily Ever After is always guaranteed.

REVIEW: OCTOBER MEETING: PLOTTING AND PLANNING BY KATE MCMURRAY



I mentioned at our last meeting that I read a bunch of books in a row in which the protagonist was terrified of getting emotionally attached to the love interest for... reasons. Those reasons weren't provided, which begs the question: do people really walk around daily, feeling terrified they might fall in love, the same way I might worry about tripping on the sidewalk and getting hit by a bus. It's kind of a romance novel convention to have a character who fears romance—it's a natural block toward that character falling in love—but without telling us *why* that fear is kind of meaningless.

I have long thought that plot, character, and setting are not separate actors, but in fact they all go together, so I crafted a workshop I call "Plotting for Pantsers." I had originally intended for the workshop to be from me, an avowed plotter and planner, to writers who disdain formal plotting and planning and prefer to write by the seat of their pants. Because, while I don't believe all authors should outline and I do think everyone has a process that works for them, I also think that, if you want to write faster and produce stronger first drafts, it helps to have a sense of where you're going.

Which is to say, I write fast, and people often ask me how I do it, and that's the answer: I plan out what I'm going to write before I write it. I'm also smart about how I manage when I write.

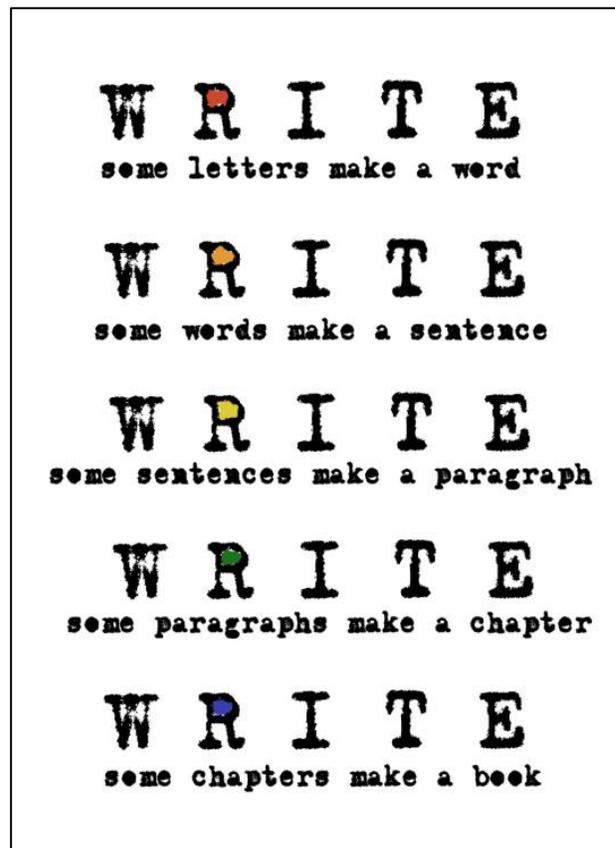
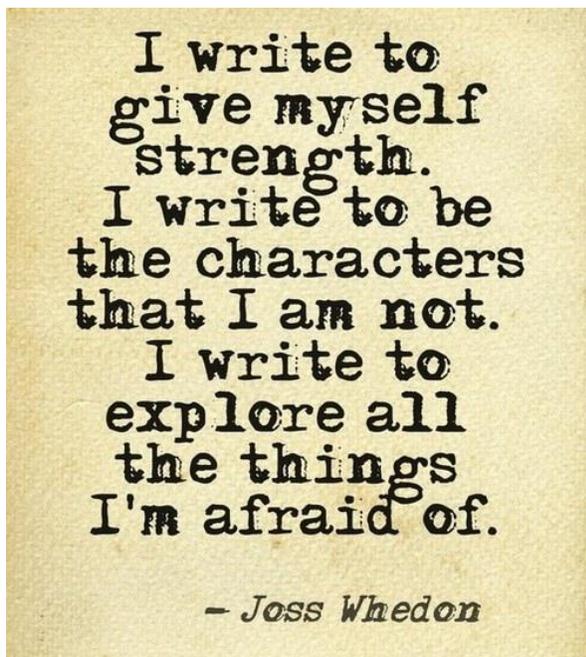
Planning has 2 components: planning what to write and planning when to write.

When you plan what to write, you might make an outline, but you don't have to. There are many strategies for planning: outlining, beat sheets, character sheets, narrative outlines, etc. Pick a strategy that works for you. My philosophy of plotting is not *just* an outline, but rather taking into consideration plot, character, and setting, because all of these things inform the story. (Where the book is set and how the characters react to the events of the story inform the plot.)

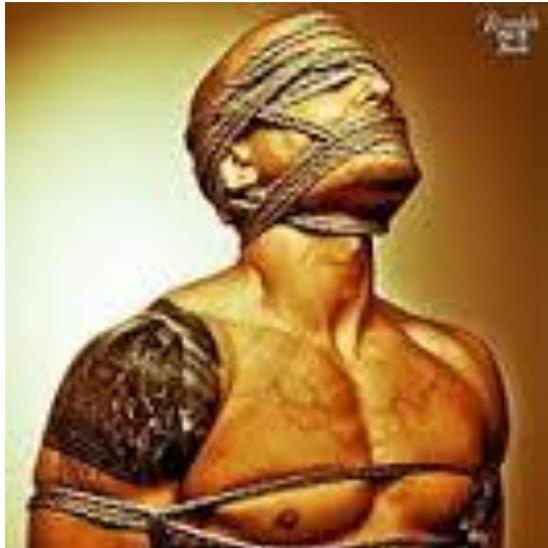
When you plan when to write, it's all about making the most of the time you have. That means working out when not only you have a chunk of time but also when you are most productive. (For example, I'm way more on the ball first thing in the morning. I have more time in the evening, but I'm basically useless after 5pm. So it's better to prioritize writing in the morning and pushing the rest of my schedule later.) Maybe you use word springs or Pomodoro Technique. Maybe you write on the subway or when your kids are at soccer practice.

My workshop handout has a ton of resources in it for both parts of the planning process, including resources and book recommendations for developing stronger plot, character, and setting, as well as some tips for how to plan time for writing. You can download the handout from my website (katemcmurray.com/workshops).

I also highly recommend the book *STORY GENIUS* by Lisa Cron, which gets at this idea that nothing is random, that story starts with who the character is, why they believe certain things (about themselves and the world) and why the events of the story is important. The story goes beyond names doing stuff, basically. ♥



**FLOGGERS & PADDLES & WHIPS, OH MY:
OVERVIEW OF THE 2016 BDSM WRITERS CONFERENCE
BY LISE HORTON**



For the third year, I attended the BDSM Writers Conference this past August. What had started out in 2012 as a small group of writers spending 3 days in a conference room, Dr. Charley Ferrer's brainchild in response to the inaccuracies in *Fifty Shades of Grey*, was reborn as a full-fledged Con in 2014. I had attended the 2013 workshop, and was thrilled when it was expanded and enlarged in 2014. I have attended every year now, and it just keeps getting better.

Dr. Charley is a well-known lifestyle advocate, educator and community activist. Her goal was to ensure that we writers could familiarize ourselves with BDSM and the community in order to accurately portray it in our writing, as opposed to FSOG, which contained many lamentable inaccuracies about the kink lifestyle and personalities

involved (no matter what your thoughts of the caliber of the writing, James did portray BDSM badly). Dr. Charley has succeeded admirably in bridging this gap of information and this year, I think the Con was the best yet.

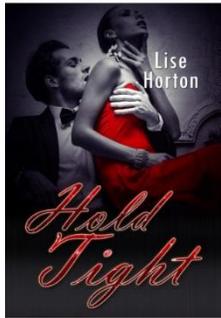
In addition to opportunities to pitch to editors, and contests for unpublished manuscripts that can win a publishing contract from one of several houses, the Con is host for the Golden Flogger Awards in numerous categories for BDSM fiction, and non-fiction. As an author of kinky erotic romance, I, and my brethren, are still subject to objections, misunderstanding, and shaming by others in our romance community, so this event, and this award, hold great affection in our hearts as a recognition of well-written BDSM erotica.

But there was much more! I presented my workshop with Cris Anson on "Sensory Description In BDSM Fiction", and was then free to attend numerous other fantastic presentations and demonstrations. Violet wand electric play, "mind f*cks" (BDSM edge play), craft workshops with Cecilia Tan, and Sierra Cartwright, dynamics of Dominance/submission, "Domming on a Dime" (They call it "Dom Depot" for a reason!) and Bo Blaze's hysterical demo/discussion of impact play and "safe, sane and consensual". People LITERALLY fell out of their chairs laughing.

When our "dungeon party" got cancelled, we were treated to a private "scene" by a Dom and his submissive that was intimate and educational. And I got a personal demonstration of electric wand play that was hugely eye-opening.

Laughter is always the heart and soul of the Con. Despite the irony of discussing knife play, whips, paddles and canes, the attendees laughed for 3 days! This is how accepting, and supportive this community is. I was thrilled to again be welcomed and treated with such generosity. It felt like leaving family when I departed the last Sunday. The special insight and understanding of our genuine selves,

and our differences, where “not my kink” applies to every facet of a person. You are accepted for your kinks, along with your age, race, weight, gender and role.



Ask, and I'll tell you more. Registration is already open for 2017!♥

Lise Horton has been a member of RWA/NYC since 2005. Her 2015 Loose Id release, the BDSM erotic romance, HOLD TIGHT, was nominated for a 2015 Golden Flogger Award. She is published in short erotic fiction as well as novel length erotic romance and continues to try without success to talk her characters down when they insist on more, and kinkier sex. www.LiseHorton.com

CRAFT CORNER: FEAR WHEN COMING TO THE PAGE

BY ISABO KELLY

As I write this, Halloween and NaNoWriMo are approaching, both of which can invoke quite a bit of fear. But the thing that really brought this topic home to me was the editorial letter I got at the beginning of the month. In my editor's comments I recognized a lot of fear—*my* fear that had unfortunately affected the book in not-so-good ways.

There are a lot of fears wrapped up in a writing career—fear of the blank page, fear of failure, fear of success, fear of rejection... But since this is the Craft Corner, I'm going to talk specifically about the fears that plague a writer during the writing process.

Fear in and of itself is neither good nor bad. It's the body's way of trying to protect us from pain. It's evolutionarily very valuable as it's what makes us run away when we're confronted with something truly scary and deadly (like that lion lurking in the tall grass with an eye to her next meal).

Fear *can* be useful in your writing—it lets you know when you're pushing the boundaries and trying something new. It means you're stretching yourself and your craft. It can mean you're tackling uncomfortable topics or putting more of yourself on the page than is entirely easy. That's good. A hint of that fear probably means you're doing something right.

Ah, but then there's the problem of that fear getting the best of you. If you do, you open yourself up to all kinds of troubles that could stop you in your tracks, and worse, make the book you're working on a weak and sad version of what it's supposed to be.



So as a reminder to myself, and hopefully, a useful reminder to you—especially in the midst of NaNo when the fears might have started to creep into the back of your mind as you turn to your WIP—here are 5 ways handy tips for overcoming the fears that are holding your story back.

(1) Leave everyone else out of the writing room. No readers, reviewers, editors, activists, or grandmothers allowed! As you're letting the story unfold for the very first time, you *have* to keep all other voices away and just tell the story that you're trying to tell. The quickest way to screw yourself up is to start worrying about what other people will think while you're still in the middle of the first draft. Don't do this. Unfortunately, this one can be really hard to remember if you intend to publish the book you're working on (which most of us are, let's be honest.) But you have to come to the writing as if no one else will see it.

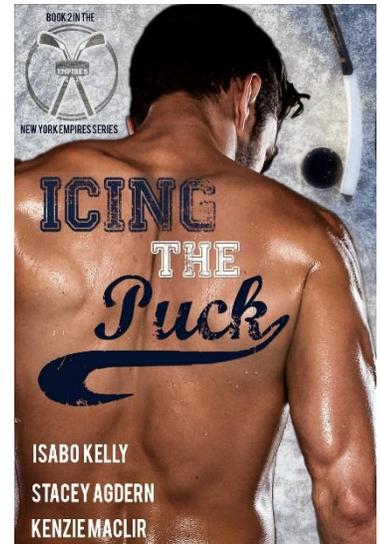
(2) Face the Fear and Do it Anyway. So you're tackling characters or subjects that make you uncomfortable or that you're unsure you're able to handle properly? Are you going into places with your writing you just don't want to go (for fear-based reasons)? Acknowledge that. Let yourself face that what's hanging you up is your fear of these things. Then say screw it and start writing (remembering that first tip as you do).

(3) Be ruthless and don't pull your punches. One of the things that caught me out in my latest book was not wanting to hurt my characters too much, even though I'd put them into a situation where that was almost impossible (and incredibly unrealistic) to avoid. But fiction is built of conflict, and sometimes that requires your characters to get hurt. You can't pull your punches just because you like your protagonist and don't want to see her in jeopardy. Let the story do what it needs to do. Stop trying to hold it back because you're afraid to face your character's pain.

(4) Don't make the book "important." Making a book important brings a lot of fears with it, all of which can really short-circuit your initial draft. If you consider the book you're working on to be a special little snowflake in any way, shape, or form, you will fall victim to your fears when writing the first draft. Our books are not heart surgery. No one dies if we screw up. And none of our books are vital to the life of someone else—they aren't actually life support systems that keep people physically breathing. Even if some readers use books that way, our job is not to provide "important" books for them. Our job is to provide entertainment and escapism. To create good entertainment, you the writer cannot take it too seriously. Fun is not serious! (Even when the topics you're tackling are).

(5) Let go of results, and focus on process. This is a lesson I constantly have to remind myself of in every aspect of this business. If we focus too much on the final results of something we're working on, it's the quickest way to start worrying about those results and lose track of what we're actually doing. Worrying about how the book will turn out while you're still writing it, worrying about how readers will receive it, worrying about sales and promotion and all the other things that go into bringing a book to market, worrying about rejections before you've even finished the draft... All this stuff will stop you cold, make you stumble and hesitate, and that hesitance will show up on the page.

Let all those results go. You can't control any of them. Not a single one. The only thing you have any control over is the process of actually putting words on the page and writing the best piece of entertainment you can. Focus on letting the story come out as it's meant to, and forget everything else—including whether or not the story will actually work once it's done.

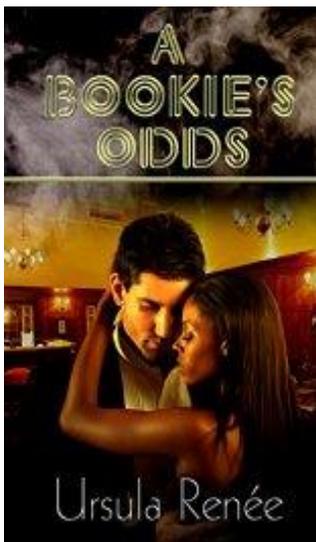


Remind yourself of these 5 points with every new book, and you'll keep that fear monster out of your stories. Then you'll create the strong, entertaining, powerful, and fun novels you're meant to write.♥

Isabo Kelly is the award-winning author of multiple fantasy, science fiction and paranormal romances. She also writes bestselling paranormal romance under the name Kat Simons. Currently, Kat is being reminded to get over herself and write the book the way it needs to be written—without fear! For more on Isabo or Kat visit: www.isabokelly.com and www.katsimons.com

WORKING THROUGH PAIN

BY URSULA RENÉE



On the trip home from the last RWA/NYC Chapter meeting, I received a text from a cousin, asking if I had spoken to either of our mothers. When I replied, “No,” she told me to call her. At this point, I knew whatever had to be said was not good and decided I wanted to hear it from my mother.

The news that my uncle was no longer with us took everything out of me. For a week, aside from calling my mother and her sister to see how they were holding up, I had no desire to do anything but sit on my bed and stare at the television screen. I did not want to deal with anyone on social media, via email or in person. And, my brain could not register anything beyond the words my mother had uttered to me.

Thankfully, during this time, I did not have any contractual obligations that needed to be fulfilled and I was able to take a step back from my writing. I did not feel guilty for ignoring the novel I had promised myself that I would finish by the end of month. Instead, I allowed myself to mourn and focus on other projects until I was ready to start typing again.

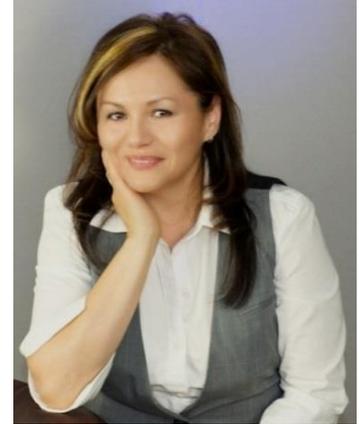
There will be times in your life when a crisis, whether it is the death of a loved one, a sickness or even a hardship will draw your attention away from your work. During those times, do not beat yourself up for coming up short on a word count or missing a deadline. Talk with your agent/editor about extension, letting them know how much time you will need to get things straightened.

When you go back to work, you may not be able to achieve your previous word count right away. Tackle your novel, one word at a time. Eventually, you will find your rhythm again.

Finally, remember to take extra care of yourself. A little pampering, even if it is just a bowl of chocolate ice cream with rainbow sprinkles or an uninterrupted walk around the block, can help you regain your focus.♥

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

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

**HISPANIC HERITAGE MONTH**

In celebration of Hispanic Heritage Month I present to you five world renowned Hispanic authors you should get to know. Please see below in alphabetical order:

Isabel Allende is a Chilean writer who also pens in the “magic realist” tradition.. In 2004, Allende was inducted into the American Academy of Arts and Letters, and she received Chile’s National Literature Prize in 2010.

Jorge Luis Borges was an Argentine short-story writer, essayist, poet and translator. But he was much more than that. Borges contributed to the so-called philosophical literature movement, and he became a literary icon beyond frontiers, though never recognized with a Nobel Prize.

Carlos Fuentes was a Mexican novelist and essayist. This great author was honored with the Miguel de Cervantes Prize as well as Mexico’s highest award, the Belisario Dominguez Medal of Honor. Fuentes, like Borges, never won the Nobel Prize.

Gabriel Garcia Marquez also known as ‘Gabo’, was a Colombian novelist, short-story writer and journalist. He was one of the most significant Latino writers of the 20th century known for popularizing a literary style labeled as ‘magic realism’. Garcia Marquez was awarded with the Nobel Prize in Literature in 1982.

Mario Vargas Llosa is a Peruvian-Spanish writer, a politician, a journalist, and essayist. He won the 2010 Nobel Prize in Literature and is one of Latin America’s most significant writers.

Hispanics have had a profound positive influence on our country through a strong commitment to family, faith, and hard work. If you would like to learn about our unique culture and about prominent Hispanic Americans who have helped to shape our nation, please visit <http://hispanicheritagemonth.gov/>. Thank you.♥



Celebrating
**HISPANIC
HERITAGE**

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

HOT ROMANCE: REAL WOMEN REVEAL THEIR SEXIEST SECRET FANTASIES

BY A.C. ROSE

In this era of the erotic romance books and the shameless ogling of shirtless men on the Internet and in media, it is no secret that women of all ages have vibrant sexual fantasies. Despite any recent scandalous news items involving millionaires, cops, and other Alpha males, romance tropes and female fantasies remain strong.

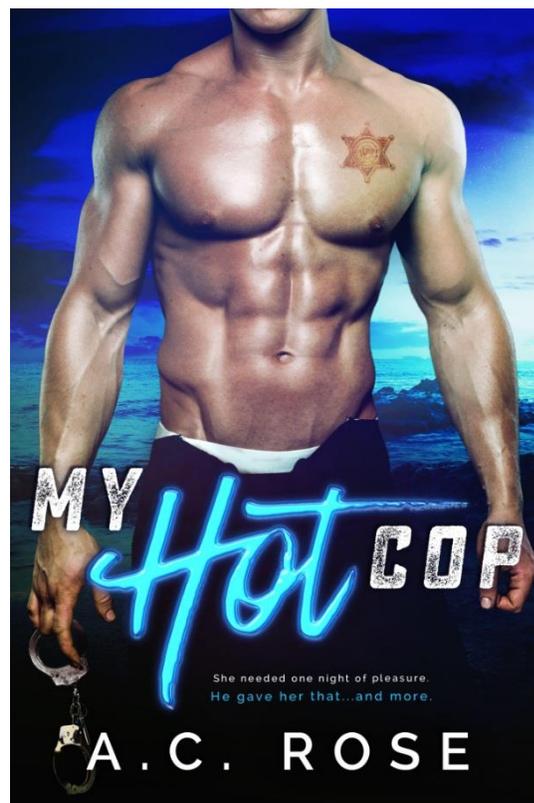
Being swept off my feet by a sexy police officer is one of my favorites--sigh--so I penned MY HOT COP. It's a steamy novelette that features a sexy, dominant cop who is skilled at playing with handcuffs and has plenty of ways to make a woman sigh with pleasure. I recently had a sexy new cover created by Najla Qamber Designs to show off the character's perfectly chiseled abs. This is *exactly* how I imagined him.

We all have our favorite book boyfriends, TV hunks, movie stars, and Adonis's we'd like to, um, *you know*. I asked some ladies who like to read romance to share their sexiest personal fantasies. *What's yours?*

1. Sex with a Hot Cowboy: "I am in a cowboy bar and a handsome cowboy spots me and makes his way across the floor. We dance the Texas Two—Step, and after a night of fun and flirting, he invites me back to his ranch. We hang out beneath a blanket of stars. My body is singing with electricity just being next to him. We talk for a while and then he moves toward me, pulling me in for a kiss. Then he tells me, 'I've wanted to do that all night.' He searches my eyes for permission, and takes me by the hand to his bedroom and slowly undresses me, and then himself. He is tender and polite, and so sexy!" — Alexa

2. Sexy Trip to the Supermarket: "I am grocery shopping and I catch the eye of a good looking younger man. We keep 'bumping' into each other at various locations throughout the store. Each time we see each other, our stares get longer and braver. We check out at the same time, leave the store to find we are parked side by side. As we put our bags into our cars, he stops, approaches and helps me. When closing the trunk, he pushes me against the car and kisses me breathless, as though nothing but this kiss has been on his mind. It doesn't matter we both wear wedding rings that say we belong to others. For those minutes, we belong to each other." —Dee

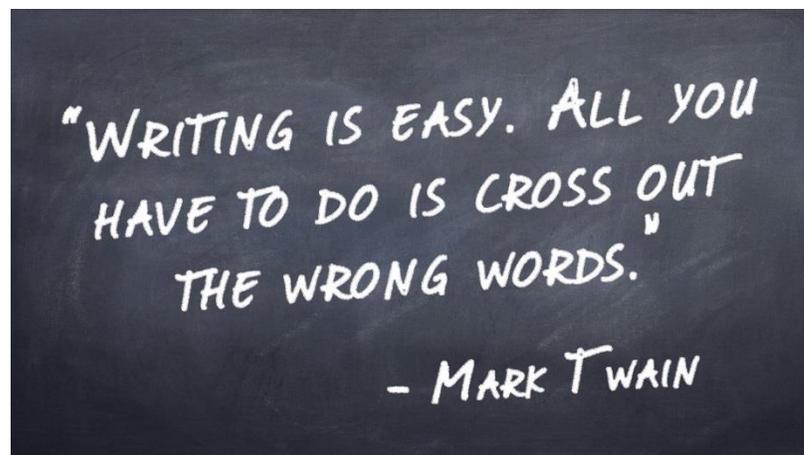
3. After Work Delight: "My favorite fantasy is coming in from a long day of work and the man on the other side of the door says in a deep voice, 'On your knees.' I do as he says and after a few minutes he pulls me up by my hair and puts me on the table, ripping my clothes off, and asks me to tell him what I want. I reply I want oral sex. He responds, making me explode. Then I beg for him to thrust himself inside as he has my arms pinned down on the table so I can't move. He explodes and his knees become weak as he collapses on top of my body." — Jane



- 4. Two is Hotter than One:** “My all-time favorite reoccurring fantasy is with two men. I want one of them to be my hubby and the other to be a hot, sexy guy we meet. I read it in a book and thought it was so hot. Hubby is not wild about it but I am working on him.” — *Cameron*
- 5. Sometimes I’m a Bad Girl:** “I fantasize about having a master, but my role in the scenario differs. In some fantasies I obey, want to surrender to his demands, and say ‘Yes Master.’ Yet in others I resist, disobey his commands, and I fight him and refuse to do anything he says until he finally ties me to the bed and calms me with his rhythmic penetration.” — *Dannielle*
- 6. Thoughts About My Hot Doctor:** “I’m pregnant I sometimes have fantasies about the obstetrician when he does an internal exam, and the way he looks at me while doing it.” — *Kiera*
- 7. He Grabs Me and Kisses Me Hard:** “I’m pressed against a door and passionately kissed long and hard. A tall, dark-haired compete stranger, just grabs and kisses me before I even know what happened. Then he just disappears, leaving me wanting more.” — *Genna*
- 8. Want a Famous Man to Do Dirty Things:** “I fantasize of sex with a hot movie star. We do filthy stuff. He uses silver balls on me.” — *Krista*
- 9. My Own Personal Rock Star:** “My favorite fantasy is of a ‘Rock Star Weekend.’ The entire weekend is sex, wine, food delivered, mutually fun showers with every sex imaginable, including expert oral performances using chocolate syrup, jam, and other edible items of food that made for great sex aides.” — *Denise*
- 10. Beast in Bedroom Who Treats Me Like Gold:** “My fantasy is a passionate man who is a thrilling beast in the bedroom, who knows what he wants and will take charge, but who is also romantic and capable of showing love and treating me like his most prized possession.” — *Crystal*

Read the full article here: <http://thethreetomatoes.com/16-real-women-reveal-their-sexiest-secret-fantasies>.♥

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



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MEMBERSHIP DUES

Chapter dues are due March 4, 2017. 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.

- ___ GENERAL MEMBER -- \$ 40/year (Dues: Jun-Jul= \$30; Aug-Sep= \$25; Oct-Dec= \$20.)
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If PUBLISHED, in what format? i.e., book-length romantic fiction, short fiction, electronic, confessions, etc.

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