

KEYNOTES 2017

The newsletter of the Romance Writers of America / New York City Chapter #6 JANUARY 2017



WELCOME TO THE NEW RWA/NYC BOARD OF DIRECTORS!

President – Kate McMurray
Vice Presidents – LaQuette & Stacey Agdern
Treasurer – Maria Cox
Secretary – Lise Horton
Past President – Ursula Renée

**NEXT CHAPTER MEETING:
SATURDAY, JANUARY 7
TRS, 40 EXCHANGE PLACE
3RD FLOOR, 12-4PM**

TOPIC: NEGOTIATING AFTER SIGNING

SPEAKER: AMY BOGGS

Join **Amy Boggs** from the Donald Maass Literary Agency at the January Chapter Meeting, as she discusses how authors can negotiate with publishers after the contract is signed. Topics that will be covered include working with an editor who makes suggestions that do not stay true to the story; handling covers that have nothing to do with the novel, dealing with a publisher who fails to live up to the contract; and more.



BIO: Amy Boggs is an agent and professional sci-fi/fantasy geek at the Donald Maass Literary Agency in New York City. She has been with the agency since 2009, having previously worked at a psychiatry magazine, a college library and a children's bookstore. She represents all things weird and wonderful in science fiction, fantasy and speculative fiction, whether it's adult, YA or middle-grade. She seeks and supports works and authors that are diverse in any and all respects, such as (but not limited to) gender, race, ethnicity, disability and sexuality.♥

HAPPY 2017! ♥ HAPPY EVERYTHING!



TABLE OF CONTENTS

Page
3—New Board of Directors
4—President’s Message
6—A Christmas Album
8—Member News
9—Members on the Shelf
10—New Year’s Resolutions
12—Favorite Things
13—A Room of One’s Own
15—Time Management: Just Do It
16—Branding
19—The Publishing Game
21—Embracing My Particular Brand of Crazy
22—Real Women Reveal Their Sexiest Secret Fantasies
24—About PRO and PAN
25—Membership / Renewal Form

THANK YOU!

To Our Contributing Writers
Lise Horton, LaQuette, Kate Murray,
A.C. Rose, Lise Siefert, Xyla Turner

2017 CHAPTER CALENDAR

Jan 7 Feb 4 Mar 4 Apr 1 May 13 Jun 3
Jul 8 Aug 5 Sep 9 Oct 7 Nov 4 Dec 2

KEYNOTES DEADLINE

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

FEBRUARY THEME

SELF-SABOTAGE
How to Do It and How to Stop

NOTE: Keynotes welcomes all topics.

RWA/NYC BOARD OF DIRECTORS

President: Kate McMurray
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Vice President/Contest: LaQuette
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Past President: Ursula Renée

LIAISONS & COMMITTEES

Board Liaison: TBD
PRO Liaisons: TBD
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Craft Loop: Isabo Kelly
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Keynotes Editor: Ursula Renée
Publicity: Maria Cox, Lise Horton,
Jean Joachim, Michael Molloy
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.

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RWA/NYC NEW BOARD OF DIRECTORS



President – KATE McMURRAY is an award-winning romance author 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 and is currently the president of the New York City chapter of RWA. She lives in Brooklyn, NY. Visit her at Website: <http://www.katemcmurray.com>.



Vice-President - LaQUETTE is an erotic, multicultural romance author of M/F and M/M love stories. She was the 2016 Author of the Year Golden Apple Award Winner, 2015 Swirl Awards Bronze Winner in Romantic Suspense, and 2015 Georgia Romance Writers Maggie Award Finalist in Erotic Romance. Contact her on Facebook, Twitter, @LaQuetteLikes, her website, www.NovelsbyLaQuette.com, Amazon, her Facebook group, LaQuette's Lounge, and via email at LaQuette@NovelsbyLaQuette.com.



Vice-President - STACEY AGDERN is an award winning former bookseller who has reviewed romance novels in multiple formats and given talks about various aspects of the romance genre. She is also a romance writer. She's a proud member of both LIRW and RWA/NYC. She lives in New York, not far from her favorite hockey team's practice facility. Friend and follow her on Twitter: @nystacey; Facebook: [staceyaagdern](https://www.facebook.com/staceyaagdern).



Secretary – LISE HORTON has been a member of RWA/NYC since 2005. She joined after attending the RWA National meeting that was held in NYC and ran for Chapter Secretary that Fall. Lise has served as Chapter Secretary, Vice President (Contest) and President from 2012-2013. She is published in both novel length and short form fiction by Ravenous Romance, Riverdale Avenue Books, Cleis Press, Carina Press and Loose Id. Visit her at www.lisehorton.com.



Treasurer – MARIA COX is a PRO member of Romance Writers of America; she's also the PRO Liaison for RWA/NYC. Years back Maria served two terms as President of the Phoenix Writers Club. When not writing fiction Maria is a technical writer for a major banking institution, she has worked in the finance industry for over twelve years. Maria has been a member of RWA/NYC for eighteen months.



Past President – URSULA RENEE writes historical romances set between World War I and 1960's. When she is not writing, she enjoys drawing, photography and stone carving. Ursula is the editor of the RWA/NYC newsletter and past president of the chapter. Visit her at www.ursularenee.com.♥

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE: CLEAN SLATE
BY KATE MCMURRAY

I've always been a very forward-looking person. I don't tend to dwell in regret. I've certainly made mistakes in my life and tried things that ultimately failed, but I think it doesn't really serve me well to fret about what happened. It's better to learn from my mistakes and apply what I learned to the next thing.

We have a lot of annual milestones that, I think, offer us the opportunity to wipe the slate clean. The start of a new school year, for example—last year's grades no longer count—or January 1.

So here's a thought exercise for you: what from 2016 can you put behind you?

Did you get a rejection letter? Several? Did your dream agent pass on your manuscript? Were sales lower than you hoped for? Did you miss a deadline? Was there something about your last book that you don't like? Did one of your publishers close?

Think about anything along those lines. Now put it behind you.

Because 2017 is a new year. Your stumbles and falls in 2016 don't matter anymore. If you're trying to hook an editor or agent, maybe do another pass through that manuscript to make sure it shines and send it out again. If something about your last book nags at you, put that energy into making sure your next book is amazing. If you got the rights back to a book—whether by design or not—what can you do with that book now? Find a better publisher for it? Put it out yourself? If your sales were not what you wanted, think about what you can do to improve on them in 2017. How can you find new readers?

Some of that's easier said than done. We all have personal setbacks as well, ongoing stressors, things we have to deal with daily. But what I like about the New Year is optimism.



Here's how I'm looking at 2017: I'm thinking about how the short term can help the long term. Maybe working more and writing less now means I'll have the financial means to write more later. Maybe slowing down to think through the plotting process on my next book means the first draft phase will go faster and more smoothly. Maybe now *is* the time to experiment a little, to write my crazy idea even if it's pretty far outside the mainstream romance market, or to try a new sub-genre.





Maybe it's time to weed out the story ideas I've had that won't work and I won't finish and focus instead on the ideas that have potential. I keep a folder on my laptop that is mostly fragments of ideas, and lot of these have potential to be great books, but some of them admittedly aren't any good and could be trashed. That's another way of looking forward—getting rid of the old, heavy stuff holding you back and looking forward to new projects.

And celebrate your triumphs. If you signed a new contract in 2016, if you put a new book out, if you got a great opportunity or some stellar reviews, take the time to celebrate that. Don't let yourself get mired in the things that don't go as well.

Look forward instead of back. Take 2017 as a clean slate, an opportunity to start anew. Celebrate what goes well and move forward when things go poorly. I'm looking forward to 2017 being a great year, and I hope it is for all of you as well.♥

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

FREE PUBLICITY!



Have a new book out? Entered and won a contest? Have an interesting topic, research, tips you want to share? An event, book, conference you'd like to review?

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

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!♥



DUES DUE!

Renew your Chapter Membership today.

Members can renew online at www.rwanyc.com or complete the Renewal Form at the end of this newsletter and mail it in with their dues. Thanks.♥

A CHRISTMAS ALBUM

RWA/NYC celebrated the end of the year with its Annual Holiday Brunch.♥



Kate (President); Maria C.; John; Lise; Maria F.; Kwana (center); Alexis & Isabo.



Tamara, Mimi and Vanessa



John & Jean

A CHRISTMAS ALBUM - CONTINUED



Michael, Anna, Maria C. and Kate D.



Teresa and Maria F.



LaQuette, Michelle and Jennifer



Jean, Stacey, Kate, Kwana and Alexis



Maria C.

MEMBER NEWS



The RWA/NYC Board of Directors is pleased to announce that the 2016 Member of the Year is **MARIA COX**.

Thank you, Maria!

ALEXIS DARIA had a short contemporary romance story, SOLSTICE MIRACLE, in a Wattpad anthology on December 18, 2016.



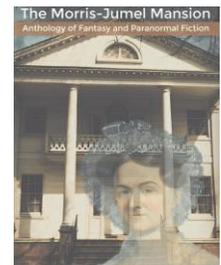
DEE DAVIS is hard at work on a new series, Triad. The first book, FADE TO GRAY, debuts this Spring.

ANNA DePALO is happy to announce that her second book in The Serengetti Brothers series, HOLLYWOOD BABY AFFAIR, will be out from Harlequin Desire in June 2017.

Congratulations to **LISE HORTON**, who received her Provisional PAN status.

JEAN JOACHIM has started a new sports series, Bottom of the Ninth, all about hot sexy baseball players. First one up is DAN ALEXANDER, PITCHER.

KATE McMURRAY has a new contemporary romance, a coming of age tale set at a New England college, THERE HAS TO BE A REASON, from Dreamspinner Press debuting this January.



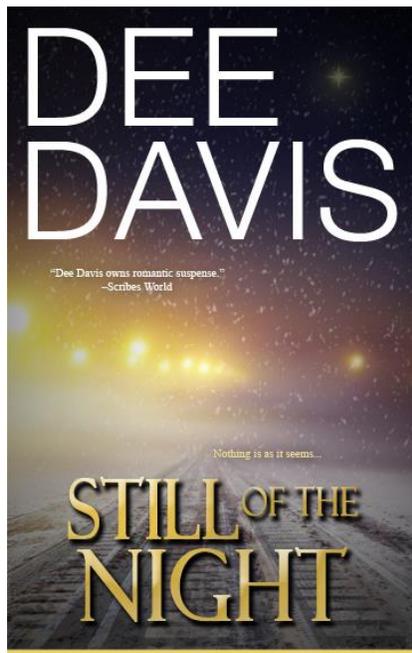
JN WELSH has a short story published in THE MORRIS-JUMEL MANSION ANTHOLOGY OF FANTASY AND PARANORMAL FICTION.



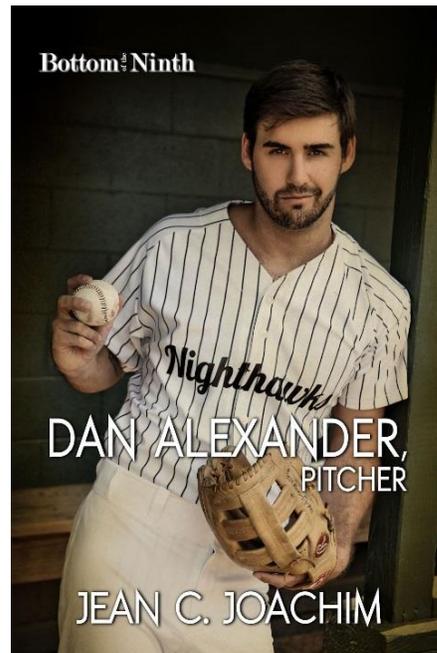
Congratulations to all our **RWA/NYC 2016 NaNoWriMo** winners:

KATE McMURRAY (63,183);
ALEXIS DARIA (60,000);
URSULA RENEE (54,331);
MARISSA D'VARI (52,300);
SHIRLEY KELLY (50,319);
LaQUETTE (50,158);
HARPER MILLER (50,062) and
JEAN JOACHIM (50,057).♥

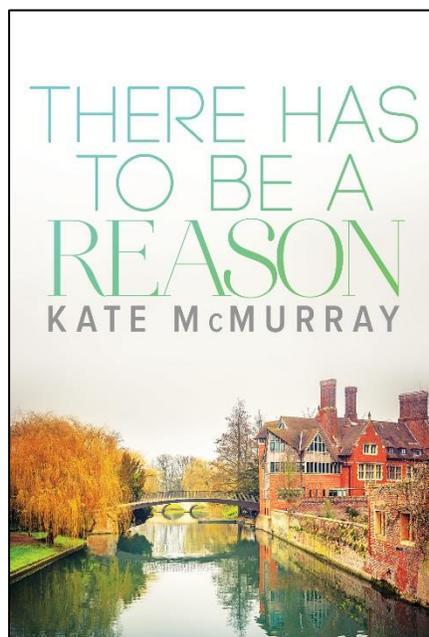
MEMBERS ON THE SHELF



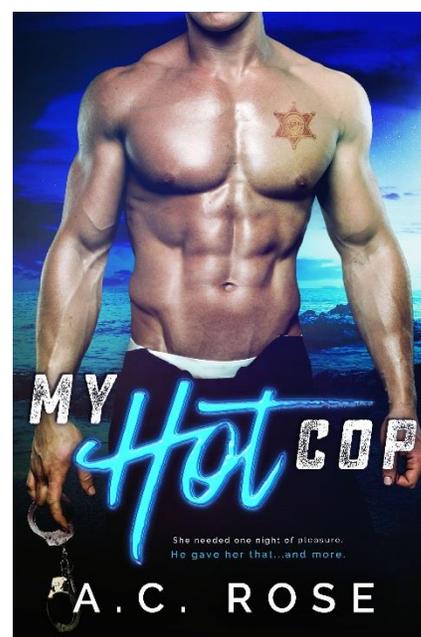
STILL OF THE NIGHT
by Dee Davis



DAN ALEXANDER, PITCHER
by Jean C. Joachim



THERE HAS TO BE A REASON
by Kate McMurray



MY HOT COP
by A.C. Rose

NEW YEAR'S RESOLUTIONS BY LISA SIEFERT

As you get ready to pile on the New Year's Resolutions, I want to challenge you with something different: resolve to do less, have less, buy less, want less and keep less. Become a minimalist. I promise you will be more productive than you ever thought possible, you'll never have debt again and you'll wake up happier every day.

How is this possible? Don't our possessions and full calendar of social activities make us happy? It may result in temporary joy but it rarely lasts, unlike the credit card charge from the shopping splurge you went on or the extra martini you ordered.



Top Reasons Buying More Stuff Won't Make You Happy

- **Things begin to fade** Stuff gets old, it goes out of style and there's always something new and improved right around the corner. How do you feel about your iPhone each time a new version comes out?
- **Purchases add extra stress + worry to your life.** When you're not worrying about your possessions being broken, scratched or stolen, you're busy maintaining them: cleaning, organizing, and managing, which distracts us from things that truly do bring us lasting happiness. Instead of planning a closet organization day, get rid of half your closet. I bet you only wear 25% of what's in there already.

What's the solution? **Minimalism.**

If it weren't for Minimalism, I wouldn't have paid off \$190,000 in student loan and credit card debt. Minimalism is huge and more powerful than any raise you'll ever get because the more you have, the more you spend each month.

Top Reasons Having Less Will Make You Happy

- **Spend Less** There is nothing less essential than yet another dress when you have twenty already sitting in your closet. Buying only the essentials like toothpaste, soap, etc. will give you financial freedom.
- **More Productivity** A smaller apartment with no knickknacks takes less time to clean, is easier to move and cheaper to insure.
- **You'll Own Higher Quality Things** More is not better. Better is better.
- **You'll Be Less Stressed** Every new possession loads us with a new weariness. Stuff weighs you down, causes increased anxiety over worrying about it and taking care of it.

- **Your Apartment Will Be More Visually Appealing** What's not to love about a clear and clean workspace? Who doesn't love an empty desk with nothing on it, a dresser free from clutter, a closet with only your prettiest outfits, a cabinet with only a few items on each shelf? People often go on writing retreats to get away from all of the cleaning and clutter of their own places. Why not make your own home as beautiful and clutter-free as the places you dream of vacationing to.
- **You'll Find Things Easier** Have you ever purchased Band-Aids or another spice for a recipe because you just weren't sure you had it already at home or found it hidden later behind a ton of other stuff in your cabinets? If you own less stuff, you'll find things quicker. You'll never be late again because you wanted 20 minutes searching through tons of clutter, unable to locate your phone or your keys.

Next Steps

1. **Join the Movement** Educate yourself on what can be done with some of these popular blogs
 - a. Becoming Minimalist <http://www.becomingminimalist.com/>
 - b. Be More With Less <http://bemorewithless.com/>
 - c. Exile Lifestyle <http://exilelifestyle.com/>
2. **Read a Book**
 - a. The Life-Changing Magic of Tidying Up: The Japanese Art of Decluttering and Organizing by Marie Kondo <http://bit.ly/declutter2017>
3. **Get Ideas from Pinterest**
 - a. Here's my Board to get you started <http://bit.ly/declutterpins>

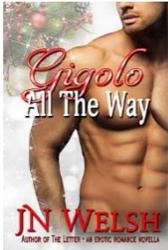
“He who buys what he does not need steals from himself.” - Swedish Proverb

Until next month, live simply, buy less and throw away as much as you can. I promise you'll feel instantly better if you do!♥

Lisa Siefert is a contemporary romance writer who also does freelance graphic design, can fit all of her possessions into a suitcase and few boxes and is proud to say she hasn't bought a single pair of shoes or any clothes in over a year. You can find her online at Lisasiefert.com.

“And suddenly
you know... It's
time to start
something new
and trust the
magic of
beginnings.”

FAVORITE THINGS



RWA/NYC Members shared their **Favorite Things** for the Holiday Season, which was featured on the Chapter Blog Tour. Excerpts are below, along with Holiday Book Covers:

Nothing quite does it like a good Hallmark movie. There's something just so lovely about sitting back and letting Hallmark take me on a happy romantic journey. --Dee Davis



Competing with my husband to see who is funnier. --Mimi Pizarro-Logsdon

Sitting in the living room with the lights off, my white Christmas tree twinkling, my husband holding me as we talk about the things that *Santa* left for the boys. --LaQuette

Food. All the food. --Racheline Maltese

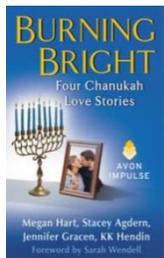
Kissing by the fireplace with a significant other. --Maria Cox



The opportunity for being naughty and nice! --Del Carmen

Good friends, a book, family, my nephew's smile and a hockey game! --Stacey Agdern

Connie and I break out into tearful smiles when we see those innocent creatures adopted so I list pet adoption as my favorite thing, particularly this time of year.--Michael Molloy

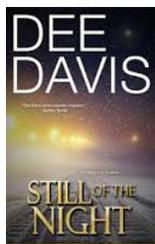


Watching a romantic movie with my husband and then a kiss under the Hanukkah bush.--Joan Ramirez

Rediscovering the creative fountain of inspiration after a year of hardship. --Lise Horton

Visiting family, Rockefeller Center, and the holiday window displays. --Harper Miller

Home baked pie, family gathered around the tree, and city lights. --Kate McMurray

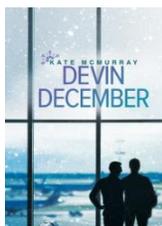


Curling up with a good book on a snowy afternoon. --Ursula Renée

That moment when I fall in love with my heroes, and Christmas cookies. --JN Welsh

Winter! The morning after a huge snowfall, when the trees are sparkling and white. Getting out on my skies and bombing down a mountain in fresh powder.

--Rebecca Brooks



Unveiling the new ornaments that I purchase for my kids every year. The tradition started when they were young, they are now turning 23. --K.M. Jackson

Surfing in February!--Anna Bierhaus♥

**A ROOM OF ONE'S OWN
BY KATE MCMURRAY**

This is a new monthly column. We invite members to share their writing spaces with us.



Virginia Woolf wrote, “A woman must have money and a room of her own if she is to write fiction.”

So I moved this year.

I’ve been writing for as long as I can remember, and where I did that writing has varied a lot over the years. When I was young, mostly I scribbled in notebooks that I kept in a drawer under my bed. When I was twelve, my mom bought a desktop computer for the family. This was in primitive times, so the Internet wasn’t quite a thing yet and the machine ran on DOS and an early version of Microsoft Windows. Basically, if I was home on a weekday afternoon, I used the computer. Sometimes I just played games; we had a bunch that ran off 5-inch floppies, like Oregon Trail and Carmen Sandiego. My mom thought it was important that I learn to type well, so she bought a couple of typing games, too.

Apparently, making something competitive is a good way to trick me into learning it, because I became a great typist by trying to beat the clock. And once I was good enough at typing, I figured out how to use the word processing program my mom used for work, and I started typing stories instead of writing them out by hand. In fact, I wrote my first novel when I was seventeen on that very machine. (I showed parts of that to my creative writing teacher, but otherwise never did anything with the manuscript. It’s on a 3.5-inch floppy disk I still have, although I no longer own a machine that will read those.)

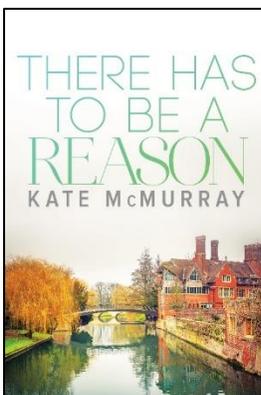
The first computer that was just mine was an IBM desktop with a hard drive smaller than most phones have these days; my dad bought it for me when I was in college. I wrote the sequel to my first novel on that computer while also working on my thesis. Never did anything with that, either, although I still have the printout I made of it. I'm afraid to read it.

I wrote my third novel after I graduated from college on the desktop computer that was a graduation present from my parents, mostly in my tiny bedroom in my first post-college apartment, a share in Manhattan. That book I actually had printed and bound at Kinkos and gave it to a friend to read. She thought it was too autobiographical, which was true. I hadn't learned how to think very far outside of myself and my own experience yet. But on the other hand, I was twenty-two. I'd grow as a writer.

I wrote a lot after that, although not with any kind of regularity. I moved into a studio for two years, where I wrote a couple of mystery novels that weren't very good and that I never showed to anyone.

Then I moved to Brooklyn and joined a writers group. I started writing romance, and I started showing my work to other people. I lived in that Brooklyn apartment for ten years, and my writing space moved around. For a few years, I had my graduation-present desktop computer set up at a table in my bedroom. I bought a laptop that weighed eight pounds, so it was portable, but barely. Still, that gave me the mobility to write in cafes when my two roommates were too loud or distracting. Roommates moved out, others moved in, and when I downgraded to just one roommate, we reconfigured the apartment a number of times. I wrote in the third, now-empty, bedroom for a while, at a desk an old roommate had left behind. Later, I converted our dining room into my office, but I had to dismantle it whenever people came over, so we could, you know, use the table for its intended purpose. And over those ten years, I went from a hobby writer to a professional one, from someone who started a lot of stories but never finished them to a multi-published novelist.

And then this July, I moved. I found a one-bedroom apartment for just myself. I don't just have a room of my own, but a whole apartment. But one thing I've learned over the years is that it's really good to have a designated writing space. It's kind of a Pavlovian thing. If I'm sitting at my desk, I think I should be writing. So I carved out a space in my living room just for that. I set up a desk. The plan is to mount shelving behind the desk to put my writing reference books. I've got a whiteboard, too, for when I need a big space to draw something out. I've got a shelf in the desk for my various notebooks—I write out a lot of my notes by hand, a habit I've never been able to shake from my early writing days.



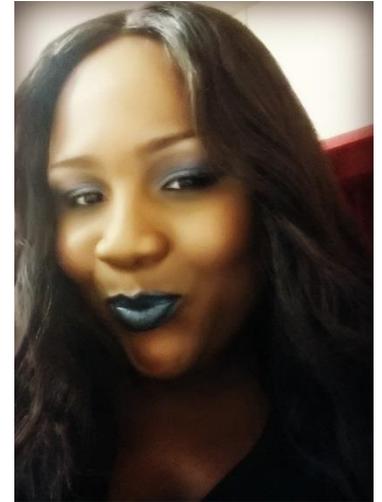
It's not a big space, but it's also New York City, so I'm making due with the space I have. The essentials are a comfortable chair and a hard surface on which to rest my laptop; everything else is negotiable. But I will say, having an entire apartment to myself, where I dictate my schedule and the noise level, has been really good for my creativity, because I feel in control of what I do every day. Or I have no excuses. Sure, there are days when my day job workload or my nephew or something else eats up my writing time, but most days, it's just me and the cats, and I can definitely make time to write then.♥

Kate McMurray is President of the Romance Writers of America/ New York City, Inc. She lives in Brooklyn, NY. Visit her at www.katemcmurray.com.

**TIME
MANAGEMENT****JUST DO IT
BY LAQUETTE**

When people find out I'm an author, one of the first things they ask is how I manage to come up with all those words. The next is how do I manage to find time to write? Let me give you a brief rundown of what my life looks like. I'm a wife, a mother of two small boys, ages six and four—one of whom has ADHD, and on top of all that, I'm an author. For those of you that don't know, being an author is time consuming. It requires hours of sitting in one space at a computer, pecking your thoughts out on the screen one keystroke at a time.

Now that you've been given the full picture of my existence, you're probably raising questions about my sanity—don't worry, I do too. Although my life does sometimes feel out of control, for the most part, it's a carefully balanced ball of organized chaos. So how do I find time to write during all of that? I just do it.



If you want to write, then you must make it happen, no matter the sacrifice. So, I can't be a writer when I need to be a mother, but I can make certain my kids have a fixed bedtime routine to ensure I have at least two hours to myself before I collapse into bed. I might sometimes have to choose between cooking a balanced meal, and ordering takeout so I can meet my word count, but I get it done. When I'm on a deadline, I might not be able to keep up with my housekeeping the way I'd like (and if you knew how much of a neat freak I am, you'd understand how painful this is), it's expected I might be stepping over some things for a few days until I type the end. However, in the middle of me tripping over whatever surprise one of my kids left in the floor, I completed an actual book.

Life can be a greedy narcissistic heifer at times, demanding all your attention and plotting to steal every free second you'd spend writing. Although you may have to bow down to her during the important times, others, you need to make your writing the priority, and life your mistress. Why? Because the only way to do, *is* to do it. That's the only secret I have for time management and getting the work done. I don't make excuses, I write. When I don't want to, when I'm tired, when I'd rather be watching T.V., I sit my butt in a chair, put my hands on my keyboard, plug my earbuds in my ears, crank up my music, and I write.♥



LaQuette is a bestselling erotic romance author, and a 2015 Georgia Romance Writers Maggie Award Finalist in Erotic Romance, and a 2015 Swirl Awards Finalist in Romantic Suspense. 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.

BRANDING
BY XYLA TURNER



In my college years, I saved up my money, put away my pain and went to get my eyebrow pierced. When I returned home to my conservative mother, she had an absolute fit. She wanted to know why and what I was thinking. My only response was, “I liked it.”

I had that eyebrow ring for all of two weeks before I had an interview at a prestigious organization and my mother had my uncle bring his tools over to cut the jewelry that represented my rebellious college years, from my face. Oddly enough, I let them cut it because deep down, I knew my mother had a point. I might not have agreed with her point, you might not even agree with the point but it was one that I subscribed to at that time in my life and to a certain extent, even today.

That event happened almost twenty years ago and how I represented myself mattered then, as it does now. Things may not be the same and depending on the circle you’re in or subscribe to; people will make assumptions about you based on things like the placement of jewelry, body art, hair color or your accent. Now that we live in a digital world, those same assumptions can be made with a click of a button.

As an educator, I do not friend my students, teachers or staff members on social media with my personal account because it’s for me it’s personal. On my professional account, I will add almost everybody and on my author accounts, I am very strategic about who I invite into my world. In all of my various worlds because it does matter.

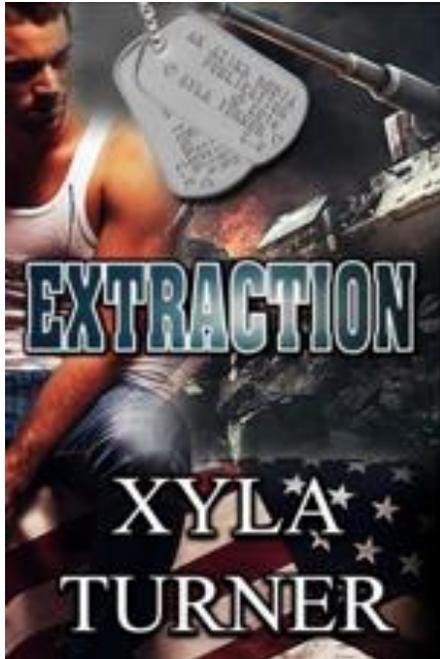
Everything you do online can be tracked, pulled back up and put before you. It can even be used in a court of law. Nowadays, it’s one of the first things official look into, as well as the media when there is something to cover; social media profiles, posts, pictures, etc.

Why am I discussing this topic?

One, because branding is vital to an author’s trajectory in the industry. Two; because branding is often misrepresented with marketing. Three; having the title author comes with a responsibility.

How can an author’s branding advance or hinder their status within the industry? In many different ways including but not limited to logos, website, book covers, signatures, tag lines, books other readers purchased along with your books, collaborations, publishing companies, images, comments and posts.

Most authors know that people do, in fact, judge a book by its cover. I’m not saying they should but the reality is that they do. There is also the fact that certain covers represent different things. A cover with a shirtless man often means that the level of sexual encounters will be present. Versus a fully dressed couple whose foreheads are touching; which can signify a sweet romance. When a reader sees these covers, this also is a part of an author’s branding.



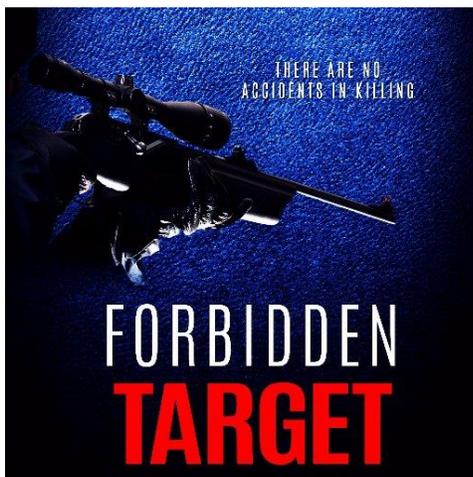
An author's profile picture, posts, retweets, likes comments speak louder than our taglines for our books. Even an email address can also send a message. This may sound a bit snobbish but we are talking about branding. A free email account can say a lot about the seriousness of a business or an author. A professional website could encourage someone to do business with you or not.

I was using a freelancer who was a professional videographer and he resided in Europe. I wanted him to create a video for me and after hiring him, he said, "I looked you up and from the looks of your website, you seem to be a pretty good author but then I saw the prices of your books and then I thought, maybe not."

Honestly, I wasn't sure what to say because it was a compliment, until it wasn't. He was an outsider giving his personal opinion about my brand. My website impressed him; which was great. My prices, not so much. I forget what I told him, but I do know, I started to change some of my prices. Dare, I say, indie authors, prices can also be a part of your branding.

Social Media: There were two unique opportunities that I applied for; one was for the submission of my book for publication and the other was for a contest. One wanted to friend me on Facebook and the other wanted my twitter handle. I've conducted enough interviews to know that they wanted to know more about who I was as a person as well as how I represented myself. I could hire someone to write an excellent synopsis, get the greatest editor money could find but if I conducted my online business, which is my how I post, respond and what I engage in on social media; that could make or break a deal.

As an author, I try to be careful about how I represent myself to my readers, other authors and anyone because you never know what in this industry where you'll be and what you'll need. I always remain who I am, which is also essential to my brand. Branding isn't about being fake or putting on a display; many times it's about time and place.



The overall goal maybe to sell books but in many ways, we are selling ourselves. Readers buy books by great storytellers, people they know or have been highly recommended. As a reader first, if I see messiness coming from an author, I steer clear. As an author, I do not engage because it's a fruitless activity that will benefit me none and sends the wrong type of message I would like my readers and potentials to get from me. Plus, I work in a school and have to deal with drama five days a week.

Branding yourself as a gifted author, that is professional, and a hard worker requires spending money. Logos, covers and anything that comes from your business, enterprise, publisher should not look like it was created by an amateur. Honest feedback is necessary and being open to hearing the truth about



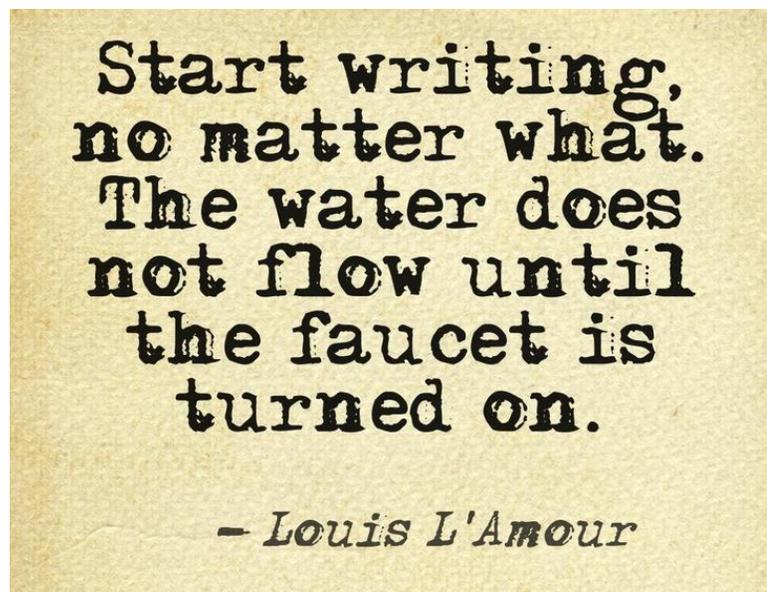
something is important. One of my favorite things to purchase is best-selling covers. You know, those covers that just make you stop. Yes, those. If they make you stop, the goal is to make the reader stop. I always run it past my PA to make sure it's not just me. If she gives me the thumbs up, I usually purchase them.

Logos, swag, and promotional items can be purchased with minimal cost, thanks to organizations like freelancer.com, fiverr.com or upwork.com. These are sites that I've used heavily to create promotional images, videos, bookmarks, t-shirt designs and much more. For some, you can set the price or select a service provider. Either way, the cost remain low and affordable for the author trying to professionally brand themselves, even if it's on social media alone.

How you represent yourself matters and it counts.

The last thing we all want is to be discounted because of poor branding or misrepresentations of our work. Create the brand you want, remain consistent and open for feedback. ♥

Xyla Turner was born and raised in Brooklyn, New York. She has always been a writer, even as a teenager, she wrote short stories and essays that won awards and nation-wide competitions. Xyla is an avid reader of romance novels and a sucker for sassy females and dominant males. She is a lifelong learner, High School Vice-Principal and a pretty good Auntie. Outside of reading, Xyla likes to spend time with her family and friends, experiment with dangerous adventures and travel. She writes different genres, but her favorite is romance. Visit her at xylaturner.com.



THE PUBLISHING GAME©
BY LISE HORTON



Hello, 2017! We cannot know what's to come in the business of publishing this year. It will clearly be a roller coaster ride, but no matter the changes ahead, the one constant for *any* writer is: You must write!

As authors we have an unprecedented number of opportunities for publication. You can pursue traditional publication, go “indie” and self-publish via a number of routes, OR join the growing ranks of hybrid authors who do both. But the one absolute, no matter your chosen route, is that you **MUST WRITE**.

We are business people in the entertainment industry. Every consumer's free time is a competition where we must beat out movies, TV, music, gaming and sports. And **our** entertainment “product” is our writing.

No product? No consumers.

So, as we plunge into this daunting year, the one thing you have control over is your product. How much you produce, how well you produce – that's in your hands. The rest, is in the hands of the publishing fates.

We wear two hats. We are artists. We rely on our imagination and creative energies. But as professionals, we must rely on business sense **and** the demands of our craft.

So how are YOU planning to improve your product, and author business this year?

Do you read craft and/or industry periodicals? Why? Why not?

Do you work on overall craft? On specific elements? Or only focus on craft when criticism is received? **Or** do you work on craft on an ongoing basis – a la a DIY MFA?

Do you belong to a critique group and/or use Beta readers?

Do you regularly self-affirm your status as a writer? Go to writing retreats? Feed your passion?

Do you attend conferences? Workshops? Business and craft panels? Do you study technology attendant to writing and publishing?

Do you belong only to RWA? Or to other writing organizations?

Do you seek out industry information? What aspects of the industry do you feel are important to be aware of?

Do you actively network with industry contacts, authors and others outside of the romance genre?

Do you maintain financial records, and file as a writer, getting deductions for membership dues, conference fees, periodical costs, travel monies, website design and maintenance and domain name costs, etc.?

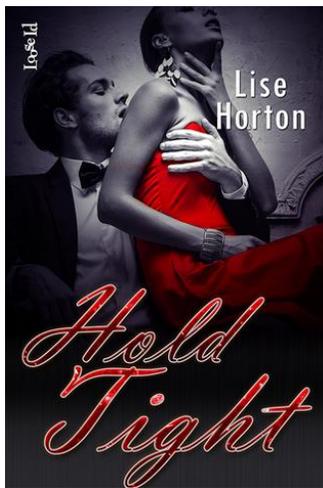
Do you have a business plan with goals of successful output and income? One year? Five? Ten? Or do you write simply for the love of writing?

What's your author brand? Do you actively work to enhance it? Do you use social media for this purpose? Newsletters? Readings, attendance at book events?

Have you identified your author platform? Do you schedule time for marketing and promotion and seek out better methods?

Are you PRO, PAN? Do you enter contests?

Have you mastered the art of the elevator pitch, query letter, synopsis, book blurb, submission process? Do you vet publishers, or submit widely? Are you agented or seeking an agent?

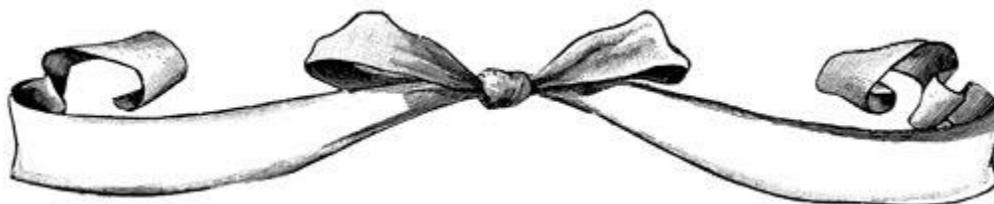


If you had one wish for your writing career in 2017, what would it be?

NOW.

HOW CAN YOU MAKE IT HAPPEN?♥

*Lise Horton is published in erotica and erotic romance, including her Golden Flogger-nominated 2015 BDSM erotic romance, **HOLD TIGHT**, and presented her workshop on sensory description, *A Feast for the Senses*, at the 2016 BDSM Writers Conference. Having previously served on the RWA/NYC Board, she returns in 2017 as Chapter Secretary with Provisional PAN membership accreditation from National. Lise writes smoldering, intense romance replete with laughter, and kink. Visit her at www.LiseHorton.com*



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

**HATERS GONNA HATE**

Most of the articles I've written for this column have focused on blocking out the negativity and embracing your own style of writing. I wholeheartedly believe that writers should be able to tell their stories the way they wish to tell their stories. Stifling your creativity in order to fit into some pre-designed mold is unhealthy. It will kill your productivity and make you hate everything about writing. That being said, I also thought it was important to stipulate that every time someone offers you advice you don't like doesn't automatically make them a "hater."

A hater is a modern term for a naysayer. Someone who always has something negative to say about what you're doing and how you're doing it. It doesn't matter what the subject is, you are always going to be wrong, and they're determined to hate it and let you know they hate it.

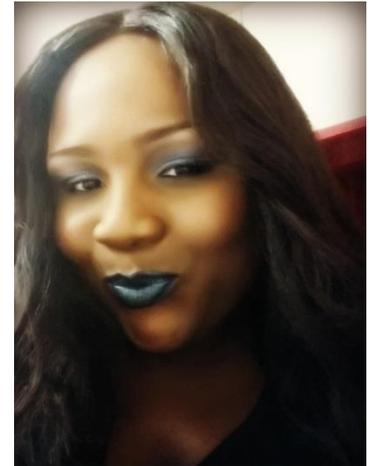
Writing is a very emotional thing. Oftentimes we authors are very sensitive about the work we share with the world. That being said, we can sometimes fall into the trap of treating our finished product like a newborn baby: It's perfect in every way and doesn't need any more work beyond slapping a pretty cover on it and clicking publish.

Constructive criticism helps you improve your writing. It helps you build a skill. Haters just want to suck the joy out of your talent and your experience. You can tell when someone is applying the hate ration because they'll usually ground their comment in opinion and not any factual or textual evidence. You'll hear things like, "Oh, that's how you're doing this? Well, if it were me...I wouldn't do it that way." Constructive criticism usually looks something like, "Subjects and verbs have to agree in number, so when one has an s or an ies, the other can't." See, one has a factual basis that will help you improve your writing mechanics, the other is all fluff that adds nothing to your skillset and seeks to only destroy your little writer's heart.

Thank you to the RWA-NYC chapter for allowing me this platform to voice some of my ideas about writing and the writing process. I have thoroughly enjoyed this year and look forward to a better writing experience in 2017

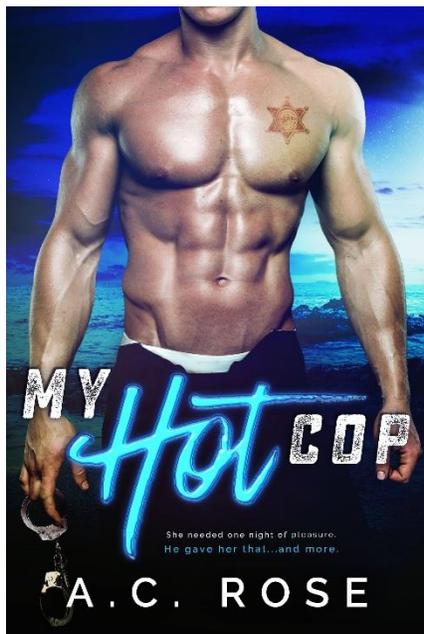
This is LaQuette, your friendly erotic romance author, embracing my crazy...one character at a time.♥

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.



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.

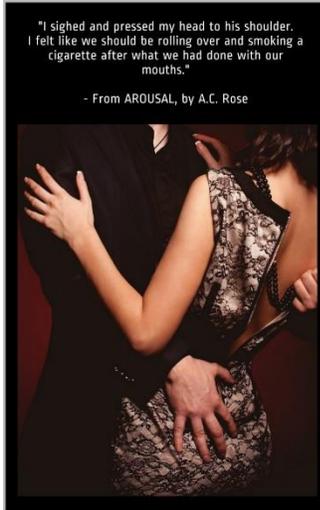
We all have our favorite book boyfriends, TV hunks, movie stars, and Adonis's we'd like to, um, *you know*. I asked some ladies who like to read romance to share their sexiest personal fantasies. *What's yours?*

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/>.



All discarded lovers should be given a second chance,
but with somebody else.
— Mae West

RWA NATIONAL: 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.

To maintain general membership and earn PRO status, a member must submit a completed manuscript. Per RWA: "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." Each submission is reviewed by an RWA staff member. For more information, visit www.rwa.org. ♥

ABOUT PRO



The purpose of the PRO Community of Practice is to establish within RWA a network of communication and support to effectively promote and protect the interests of romance writers in the areas between manuscript completion and PAN eligibility. To help members reach the next level, PRO focuses on the business side of writing rather than craft.

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

ABOUT PAN (PUBLISHED AUTHOR NETWORK)



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

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

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

Works offered through Predatory Publishing companies shall not qualify.

RENEW YOUR MEMBERSHIP TODAY!

RWA/NYC Membership & Renewal Application

DATE: _____ CHECK ONE: ___NEW MEMBER ___RENEWAL

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*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. (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 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.)
___ CHARTER MEMBER --\$ 35/year (ONLY for members continuously since 1989)
___ ASSOCIATE MEMBER -- \$ 35/year (Dues: Jun-Jul= \$25; Aug-Sep= \$20; Oct-Dec= \$15.)
(ONLY for related members who do not meet the qualifications for General Membership)

OPTIONAL: Check here if you are making an additional contribution to the chapter in the amount of \$_____.
You can also pay via PAYPAL at www.rwanyc.com.

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CHECK ONE: ___PUBLISHED ___UNPUBLISHED

CHECK ONE if you are an RWA National Member of: ___PAN ___PRO

If UNPUBLISHED, tell us at what stage you are: ___New or ___Pre-Published (have submitted something)

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

PUBLISHER(S): _____ PSEUDONYM(S)? _____

WEBSITE(S): _____ BLOG: _____

FACE-BOOK _____ TWITTER _____