

# KEYNOTES



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*The newsletter of the Romance Writers of America / New York City Chapter #6 MAY 2018*

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## **CHAPTER BRUNCH: SATURDAY, MAY 5**

Time: 12:00 – 3:00 PM

Location: Bloom's Tavern (208 East 58<sup>th</sup> Street, btwn 2<sup>nd</sup> & 3<sup>rd</sup> Avenues)

Fee: \$35 pp, purchase tickets at [www.rwanyc.com](http://www.rwanyc.com)

RSVP, by May 4

Email Alexis at [vicepresident@rwanyc.com](mailto:vicepresident@rwanyc.com)

## **GUEST SPEAKER: JOANNA SHUPE**

Award-winning author Joanna Shupe has always loved history, ever since she saw her first Schoolhouse Rock cartoon. While in college, Joanna read every romance she could get her hands on and soon started crafting her own racy historical novels. In 2013, she won Romance Writers of America's Golden Heart® Award for Best Historical. She now lives in New Jersey with her two spirited daughters and dashing husband. ♥



Find Joanna on social media:

Website: [www.joannashupe.com](http://www.joannashupe.com)

Twitter: [@JoannaShupe](https://twitter.com/JoannaShupe)

Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/joannashupeauthor>



For contest guidelines, please visit: [www.rwanyc.com](http://www.rwanyc.com).

Congrats to  
Harry &  
Meghan!

May their  
HEA  
encourage  
writers  
everywhere.♥




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## CONTRIBUTING WRITERS

LaQuette, Anna DePalo, Falguni Kothari,  
Maria Ferrer, Kate McMurray &  
Jennifer Welsh

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## MEETING INFORMATION

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.

**ATTENTION:** The Board welcomes all comments/suggestions/etc. Please send emails to [info@rwanyc.com](mailto:info@rwanyc.com).

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## JUNE THEME

### WRITING STRONG HEROINES

Let's hear it for Girl Power!  
Tell us how YOU write strong heroines.

PLUS! We welcome articles on all topics, book reviews, conference notes, etc., etc.

DEADLINE: 15<sup>th</sup> of the month

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## 2018 CHAPTER CALENDAR

Jan 6	Feb 3	Mar 3	Apr 7	May 5	Jun 2
Jul 7	Aug 4	Sep 8	Oct 6	Nov 3	Dec 1

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## RWA/NYC BOARD OF DIRECTORS

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## KEYNOTES DEADLINE

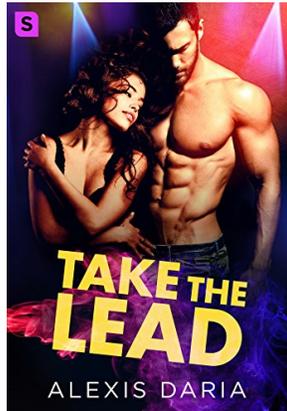
Send articles to [keynoteseditor@gmail.com](mailto:keynoteseditor@gmail.com) by the **15th of the month**. All articles must be typed and up to 500 words. Send pictures as attachments; not in article

# Congratulations

♥ TO OUR 2018 RITA FINALISTS! ♥



DOUBLE FINALIST!!

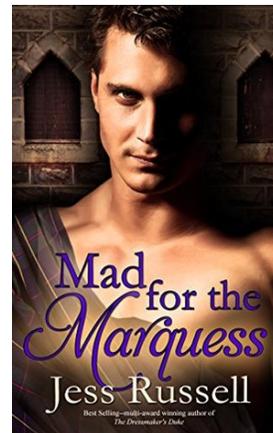


**ALEXIS DARIA**  
**TAKE THE LEAD**  
St. Martin's Press, Swerve  
For Best First Book AND  
For Contemporary Romance Long

**WENDY LACAPRA**  
**HER DUKE AT DAYBREAK**  
Self-published  
For Romance Novella



**JESS RUSSELL**  
**MAD FOR THE MARQUESS**  
The Wild Rose Press, Tea Rose  
For Historical Romance Long



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**PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE: THE PRINCESS CLAUSE (THE REMIX)**  
**BY LAQUETTE**

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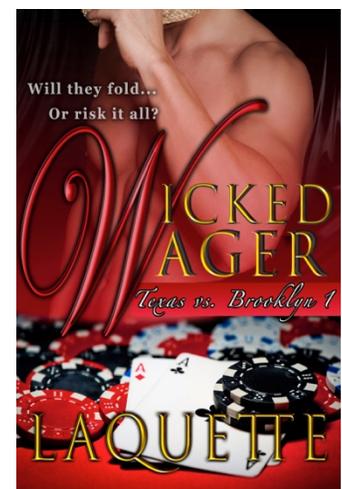
One of the first romantic tropes I encountered came in the form of my favorite fairytale, Cinderella. I'm sure you've come across this trope too. It's called the heroine is saved by the prince theme. In this type of story, the female protagonist suffers terrible circumstances, and cannot obtain her happily-ever-after until the all-powerful and benevolent prince swoops in on his white stallion, and saves her from whatever evils, trials, and tribulations she might otherwise succumb to. As a child, it was the most swoon-worthy thing I'd ever seen. Not to mention, the idea of being born into greatness is still an idea that resonates so strongly with me. Unfortunately (or fortunately, depending on how you look at it), although I still love the idea of being born royal, some of the representations of what it means to be royal, or to be worthy of being loved by a member of the royal family, troubles me in today's romance.

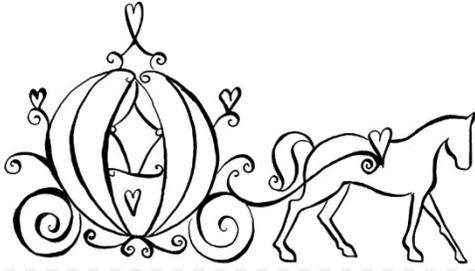
Now, before you get your torches ready, let me explain why this cherished trope in romance has become so problematic for me. The first issue I had with this was princesses in both the fairytales and romance novels never looked like me. It was wonderful seeing Cinderella, Snow White, and Aurora finally get their princes. But as one mainstream heroine after another graced my screens and pages, I began to wonder why there were no princesses who looked like me getting their happily-ever-after with a handsome prince too. Were we not as worthy of such happiness and compassion as our mainstream counterparts were portrayed to be?

As I continued to read this type of trope, I also became uncomfortable with the idea that women couldn't fix their problems without the hero. I wasn't opposed to women needing assistance from men. No, I was opposed to the idea that we aren't rational enough to construct a sound plan to save ourselves. In many of these stories, all is lost until the prince enters the story, and slays the heroine's demons. I honestly began to wonder if it was a prerequisite in royal romances for the heroine to be completely inept. Honestly, how else can we explain the amount of desperately helpless and needy women who are meeting princes in these novels?

Before I continue, let me state that many people read romance to escape their realities. Part of their escape fantasy might be to read about someone taking over all of the things they would be responsible for in their real lives. I completely understand that and have indulged in that kind of escapism a time or five myself. However, that is not what I'm addressing. I'm specifically talking about romances that paint the picture that helpless, intellectually simple women are the only kinds of women worthy of meeting their princes. Sorry, but that's not the kind of message I want floating around in the world.

When I encounter problematic ideologies about normative culture and societal constructs, my reaction is always to subvert the status quo. In this instance, I wrote *Power Privilege & Pleasure* and decided my princess





would first be a princess in her own right. She would not have to marry to be great. Instead, her greatness was a condition of her birth. She would also look like me (in that we were both women of color), while thinking circles around every character in the book, including the hero. And, if you're wondering what role the hero would play if he's not putting on his cape and saving the day, the answer is simple. His job is to support the future queen, be her refuge when her crown becomes heavy.

Instead of putting it all on his shoulders, I wanted my heroine to be responsible for the decisions she'd made. I also wanted the opportunity to explore the beta hero as another type of masculine strength we don't often see portrayed. I wanted to contribute to the idea that a beta hero is sexiest (in my opinion) when he's not threatened by the power his woman wields.

My method of remixing the royal romance trope was to tackle normative culture and societal gender roles. Maybe there's a way you can turn the old into something new, give it a makeover that makes it fun, fresh, and current for today's world. Whatever way you choose to switch things up, never be afraid to put a tiara on your protagonist. Why? Because everything is better with a crown. Keep it sexy! ♥

*LaQuette-President of RWA/NYC, is the 2016 Golden Apple Award Author of the year winner. She writes bold & sexy tales for diverse characters who are confident in their right to appear on the page. Represented by Latoya C. Smith of the L. Perkins Agency. Visit her at [NovelsbyLaQuette.com](http://NovelsbyLaQuette.com) and [LaQuette@NovelsbyLaQuette.com](mailto:LaQuette@NovelsbyLaQuette.com)*

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### EDUCATIONAL CONFERENCE: NOVEMBER 3

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JOIN US! Saturday, November 3<sup>rd</sup>.

RWA/NYC is having a mini-conference.

**Keynote speakers: Piper Huguley, Farrah Rochon, & Eloisa James.**



Details will follow shortly. Think about volunteering. ♥



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**CHAPTER MINUTES: APRIL  
BY SECRETARY JENNIFER WELSH**

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*Attendance: 23 members*

President LaQuette called the meeting to order at 12:09pm

Treasurer: We currently have \$4,423.74 in the bank.

Golden Apples – Alexis: Nominations closes on Monday for the Golden apples. Please send your nominations. Form has been mailed to the loop - May brunch -Joanna Schupe will be our speakers

Kathryn Hayes When Sparks Fly Contest – Harper: Entries are coming in. We currently have about 14 entries. Harper is executing a strategic roll out. Please share on social media. RWR advertising will commence in June and continue in issues for July and August. We are also advertising on Pro and PAN loop. If you are a member, your first entry is free. Connect with Harper Miller to sign up to be a judge.

Promotion and Social Media - Maria F: We are tweeting and posting to promote our chapter and authors. Once we find something of our members, we will find and repost. So make sure to send us stuff so we can promote you. Use us! Andrea Baez will be assisting Maria with social media! Email Maria or Falguni with your information.

### COMMITTEE REPORTS

Mini Con – We are still looking at venues but have interested speakers and are working on organizing all moving parts. More information coming soon!

Brooklyn Book festival – Michael had nothing new to report. It's Sunday, Sept 16, 10am-6pm.

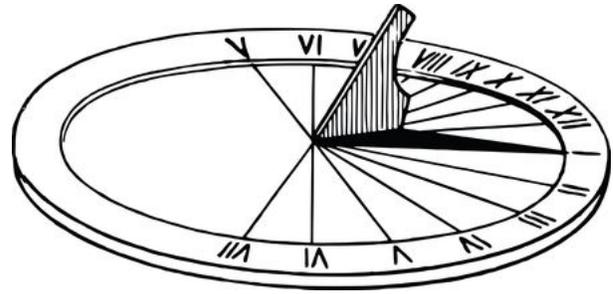
Keynotes - Contact Falguni or Maria with articles. The theme for May, is May Wedding, Royal Romances, in addition to any other articles. Articles due by the 15th of the month.

### OTHER ANNOUNCEMENTS

- Annual Long Island Chapter luncheon. Go to [LIRW.ORG](http://LIRW.ORG) for tickets.
- Book Expo – For readers and fans, May 30th to June1 – For more information go to: <http://www.bookexpoamerica.com/Show-Info/Hours/>
- The chapter had a discussion regarding diversity and inclusivity, and the recent activity on social media

Meeting adjourned at 11:26am

April Speaker: Bestselling author Maya Rodale. ♥



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**WELCOME NEW MEMBERS**

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# Welcome



Victoria Luce

Sarah O'Brien

Elizabeth Mahon

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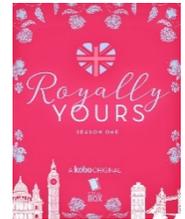
**MEMBER NEWS**

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ATTENTION MEMBERS! Our **Kathryn Hayes “When Sparks Fly” Contest** is now open to published and indie-published authors. Visit the RWA/NYC website for guidelines and registration form. Digital entries only. [www.rwanyc.com](http://www.rwanyc.com).

**Wendy LaCapra, Alexis Daria and Jess Russell** are 2018 RITA Finalists!!!. See page 3.

**K.M. Jackson, Falguni Kothari and Kate McMurray** all have stories in the new “fun, frolicky serial” **ROYALLY YOURS**. It’s all about the one day, five couples, and romance. ♥

**ROYAL INVITATION!**

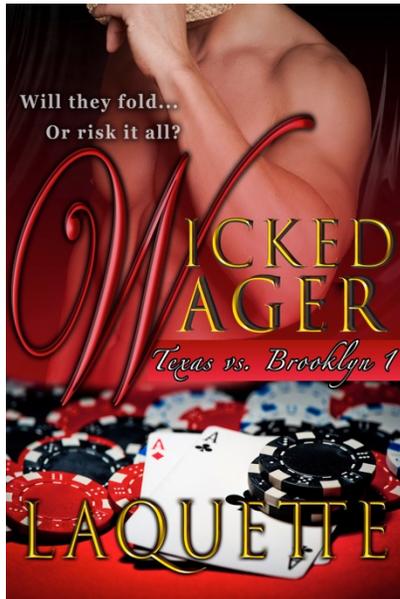
Everyone is invited to a Mother’s Day Panel on Friday, May 11, 7pm with **Alexis Daria, K.M. Jackson, Falguni Kothari** and Priscilla Oliveras at Word Bookstore (126 Franklin Street, Brooklyn).

Do wear your Fascinator! ♥

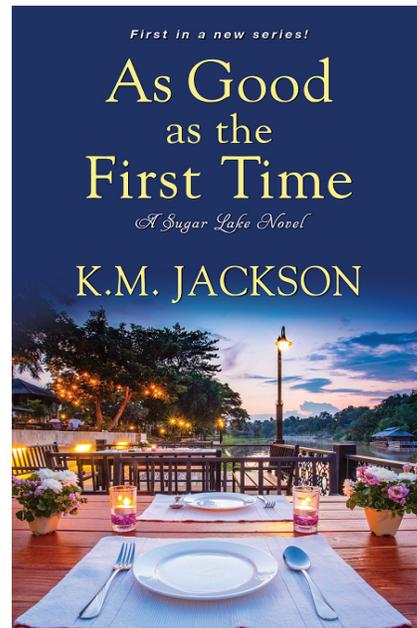


**MEMBERS ON THE SHELF**

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WICKED WAGER  
by LaQuette



AS GOOD AS THE FIRST TIME  
by K.M. Jackson



ROYALLY YOURS (Season One)  
includes stories by  
**K.M. Jackson**  
**Falguni Kothari** and  
**Kate McMurray**

**WANTED: BOOK COVERS!**

Chapter Members are encouraged to send in their book covers to [keynoteseditor@gmail.com](mailto:keynoteseditor@gmail.com) at any time. You will get Double Publicity in the Chapter newsletter and blog. ♥

## HOW TO FIND THE BEST EDITOR FOR YOU

BY KATE MCMURRAY

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*The editorial process seems to be one of those things that seems elusive to newbie writers and some seasoned authors as well. I'm a professional editor who has worked for a number of big publishers, so I thought I could share my expertise from both sides of the red pen, as it were, to help break down what the editorial process is and should be to help you put out the best books you can. This is the second in a series of columns. This month: How to find an editor!*



We established last month that you definitely need an editor. Since you *will* go through an editorial process if you publish traditionally, I'm focusing on the self-publishing side of things for this article. (Which is to say, you may wish to hire an editor before submitting to publishers if you feel like you need to, but it's not mandatory in the same way hiring before you self-publish should be.)

You've written a novel. You've sent it out to beta readers or critique partners, you've done a couple of revision passes, you've cleaned it up as best as you're able. It's a great book! But now you need someone to make it even better. It's time to hire an editor.

Editors are a dime a dozen, but it's hard to find a *good* one. In the wake of the self-pub boom, many people are hanging up a shingle and calling themselves editors without a good understanding of what that means. Reading a lot doesn't make you a good editor, necessarily. (A good beta reader or reviewer, sure. But editorial work requires a certain level of expertise.)

So how do you find one? Many editors have websites on which they list their rates, include testimonials from their other clients, and explain their credentials. You want someone with some years of experience, perhaps at a publishing house, or at least some sort of training that qualifies them to edit your manuscript. Read the testimonials, look at their client lists, make sure they edit quality books. You can even read books they've edited to verify that the quality is what you're looking for.

Ask for word of mouth referrals. Self-pub communities are often happy to exchange names.

You can also look at freelancer websites like [upwork.com](http://upwork.com). You can hire an editor through Kirkus, which has an editor services division. (I used to freelance for them, so I can tell you they're legit, and that they vet their editors pretty thoroughly.) You can also hire an editor through [reedsy.com](http://reedsy.com), which



is a site that connects writers to professionals like editors, designers, and marketers. Some self-pub books list the editors on the copyright page or acknowledgements, so check those pages in your favorite author's books.

Not all writers and editors are compatible, so you can ask to do a sample chapter together before making a larger commitment. That way, you can see the editor's style and whether it works for you. Not all editors will do this for free, but it's worth it to ask. You may find an editor's style doesn't gel with yours—different sense of humor, different style preferences, etc. It's a financial commitment, and you are employing the editor, so you should have some discretion over how the job goes.

"But do I have to?" I hear you saying. "Editors are so expensive..."

Yes. And they deserve every penny.

What do you think is a reasonable hourly rate for doing editorial work? It takes me about 20 hours to edit a novel, sometimes more depending on how long it is and how much work the text requires. Editing text requires training and expertise. Good editors have been at this awhile. Mull that over for a minute.

It's pretty standard to charge at least 1 cent per word, meaning a 75,000 word manuscript will cost at least \$750, or more depending on the editor's experience. (That shakes out to about \$38/hour. That's on the low end. The going rate for most copyeditors with ten or more years of experience from the traditional publishers is \$40-45/hour these days, and more for developmental editors.) I'm just putting that out there so you know what to budget for.

(We'll get into developmental vs. copyeditors and the other phases of the process in a future column. Short version: developmental (or content) editors handle the macro issues, like plot issues, pacing, characterization, etc.; copyeditors handle the micro issues, like spelling, grammar, mechanics, and consistency. Ideally, you want both. Some editors can do both, some are better at one or the other.)

You absolutely can find cheaper editors, but think about what you're getting for your money. Like I said, a lot of editors who have hung up a shingle may not actually have much experience. The price may be too good to be true.

Hopefully I haven't scared you too much! Finding a good editor, one you can work with on multiple projects, can be a blessing, a professional relationship worth holding onto. ♥

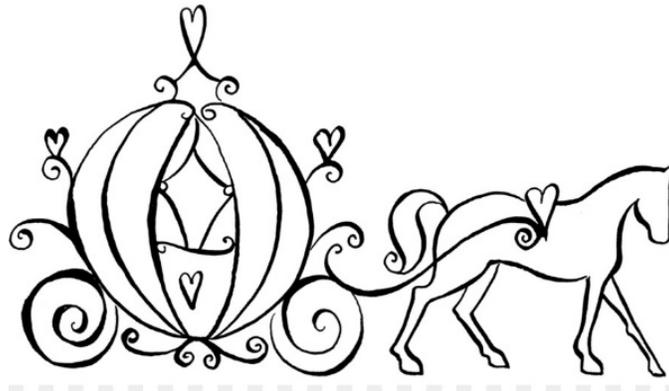


*Kate McMurray is an award-winning author of gay romance and an unabashed romance fan. When she's not writing, she works as a nonfiction editor, dabbles in various crafts, and is maybe a tiny bit obsessed with baseball. She is Past President of RWA/NYC. She lives in Brooklyn, NY. Visit her at [www.katemcmurray.com](http://www.katemcmurray.com).*

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**MONTHLY THEME—ROYAL ROMANCE**

What makes royal romances so romantic? Our members weigh in.



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**ROYAL ROMANCES: NOT JUST FOR HISTORICALS**  
BY ANNA DEPALO

The Prince Harry-Meghan Markle nuptials are fast approaching, and the public interest is just more evidence that royalty romances will never go out of style.

They're not just the terrain of historical romances but of present-day ones, too. Witness the success of Alyssa Cole's recent *PRINCESS IN THEORY*. And Meg Cabot built a cottage industry on similar material with her *Princess Diaries* books.

Now obviously royals are no longer leading armies into battle against neighboring kingdoms (for the most part), so where do you go with a contemporary royal romance? And what's the appeal to the reader?

I think the answer lies in the fact that many modern royals are still rich and famous—and celebrities of a unique kind. Palaces! Castles! Paparazzi! There's also protocol and a hearkening back to a bygone era. Who else is going to ride in a horse-drawn coach? Or curtsy or be curtsied to, for that matter?

Think of the modern royal as more like a CEO or government leader (without perhaps the terrible branding of politicians). Hemmed in by protocol, they are ripe characters for conflict. For example, perhaps your character is the rebellious younger brother prince ("the spare" to the "the heir") who races cars for a living. Duty—or love? Duty—or live authentically? Duty—or live your best life? See where I'm going with this?

And then there's the heroine. For a woman, the conflict can be particularly intense. How does she reconcile her royal role with her modern feminist side perhaps? Was she born a princess and finds it stifling? Or, is she worried about being a contemporary woman marrying and fitting into royal culture?

Because of the built-in conflict, royal romances are entertaining to write and fun to read. So many strictures have fallen away in recent times—all the *shoulds* about what to wear, how to behave, etc.—that contemporary romance writers looking for built-in conflict should give thought to royal romances. ♥

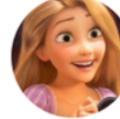
*Anna DePalo is the USA Today best-selling author of more than a dozen romance novels, including the Aristocratic Grooms trilogy: HIS BLACK SHEEP BRIDE, ONE NIGHT WITH PRINCE CHARMING AND IMPROPERLY WED. You can find Anna online at [www.annadepalo.com](http://www.annadepalo.com), where you can sign up for her newsletter, and also at [www.facebook.com/AnnaDePaloBooks](http://www.facebook.com/AnnaDePaloBooks) and [twitter.com/Anna\\_DePalo](http://twitter.com/Anna_DePalo).*



## IT'S A PRINCESS KIND OF THING BY KAY BLAKE



Saturday, April 14, 2018 was one of the best times I had in a long time. I say this because after four months of paying for things, cooking, sending invites and a whole list of others, my youngest cub finally had her special day. It was a day fit for a princess.

<p><b>Ariel</b></p>  <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-says she is not a child anymore</li> <li>-is definitely still a child</li> <li>-kinda boy crazy</li> <li>-curious &amp; adventurous</li> </ul>	<p><b>Aurora</b></p>  <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-sleeps a lot</li> <li>-walks around barefoot</li> <li>-afraid of needles</li> <li>-cat person</li> </ul>	<p><b>Cinderella</b></p>  <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-always day dreaming</li> <li>-takes in stray animals</li> <li>-kind, optimistic</li> <li>-can be snarky</li> </ul>	<p><b>Merida</b></p>  <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-messy eater</li> <li>-likes sleeping in</li> <li>-outspoken, reckless</li> <li>-would definitely beat someone up for you</li> </ul>
<small>fb.com/BestofDisneyWorld</small>			
<p><b>Mulan</b></p>  <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-self-deprecating humor</li> <li>-modest; capable of more than she thinks</li> <li>-loyal, strong, determined</li> </ul>	<p><b>Pocahontas</b></p>  <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-grows plants in the window &amp; talks to them</li> <li>-open minded</li> <li>-regal; most likely better than you</li> </ul>	<p><b>Rapunzel</b></p>  <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-hyper &amp; excited</li> <li>-cute but very powerful</li> <li>-sweet summer child</li> <li>-friends with everyone</li> </ul>	<p><b>Snow White</b></p>  <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-scared of spiders</li> <li>startles easily</li> <li>-good with kids</li> <li>-will make you warm cookies if you are sad</li> <li>-the nicest ever</li> </ul>
<p><b>Tiana</b></p>  <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-hard working</li> <li>-multi-talented</li> <li>-is perfect but is too nice to hate</li> <li>-makes Pinterest recipes better than the original</li> </ul>	<p><b>Belle</b></p>  <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-bookwork, nerd</li> <li>-super smart</li> <li>-independent</li> <li>-feminist</li> <li>-perceptive</li> <li>-sees the good in others</li> </ul>	<p><b>Elsa</b></p>  <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-queen of a kingdom of isolation</li> <li>-emotional shutout</li> <li>-scared, lonely</li> <li>-strong, gentle</li> <li>-learning how to love and be loved</li> </ul>	<p><b>Jasmine</b></p>  <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-stubborn, free spirit, fierce</li> <li>-intimidating at first</li> <li>-is actually very warm hearted underneath</li> </ul>

**Artist Credit: Unknown**

Now, let's talk about princesses. There are so many cool ones. We have Tiana, our first black princess. Smart, sassy and with a vast knowledge of how to make our stomachs happy. We have Mulan who saved her father and a country. Moana who had to stand on her own two feet and followed her heart. Jasmine, a spitfire woman who was loyal to an end. And one of my favorites Belle.

Belle is my ultimate favorite. Why? Because she too is super smart. She too is a bookworm and appreciates what a good story can do. As a writer, books are one of the tools we use to write. Books allowed us to transport anywhere we wanted to and so Belle speaks to me. The library she got from Prince Adam aka The Beast was one to die for. That is a goal of mine to have before I die. But, before I get carried away, she was perceptive of people and valued the importance of women being their own person. I loved that. While, I do appreciate Tiana and Jasmine for having the stubborn, sassy and spitfire qualities, there is something to be said about the girl who has her head in the book.

That is the reason I chose Belle as the princess me and my cub would be for her big day. Though she changed her mind many times, Belle won her over. And to see all the other little girls dressed up as princesses and having crowns, it made me think of how those princesses will grow up to be Queens. Queens that will have their own values and will wreck the good kid of havoc on the world. And while it was only just a kid's party, I liked how determined my cub was in making sure her friends had a good time and that she had things that fit her personality.



So tell me, what princess are you? ♥

*Kay Blake writes sassy, sexy and sweet contemporary and interracial romance. She is from arguably the greatest city in the world. (New York). She is a sarcastic sweetheart who prefers snuggling at home with a good book. She is a mom to three cubs. Kay indulges in strawberry cheesecake, horror movies, Harry Potter, The Walking Dead, wrestling and of course a happily ever after.*

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**ROYAL WEDDINGS AND ROYAL HISTORY**

BY KATE MCMURRAY

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I had never considered myself an Anglophile or even knew that much about England until about eight years ago when I decided I should read GAME OF THRONES. The show had just premiered and I was into it, but I wasn't sure I could make it through all those 1,000-page books. Then I read an article saying George R. R. Martin based a lot of the series on the Wars of the Roses, and since I'm a history nerd, I thought, "I'll read a book about the Wars of the Roses instead of GAME OF THRONES!"



I ended up reading both, and the nonfiction book made me realize that I basically knew jack about British history. Which is sort of sad. I recently had my DNA tested, and it turns out mostly all of my ancestors came from the UK, so I really should know something about where they came from. So after I read all about the Wars of the Roses, I picked up a general book about the history of England... and a book about the history of London... then I bought a 12-hour documentary on DVD... and you kind of see where this is going.

Prince William and Kate Middleton got married around this same time, so it was kind of fun to compare all ceremony and circumstance to the history. For nearly two-thousand years, royal weddings were mostly political affairs. The king needed an alliance with another country? He married one of his sons off to a princess from that country. The bride and groom didn't even need to be in the same place; they could be married by proxy. So wasn't it charming that Wills and Kate seemed to be a love match? And isn't it even more charming that Harry is basically throwing generations of tradition out the window to marry an American?

Although it's not like the prior two millennia of British history were calm and dull. If I've gleaned nothing else from my weird, intense study of British history in the last few years, it's that the whole line of monarchs is nuts. It's two thousand years of drama.

Let me drop a little history on you all.

William the Conqueror's grandson, also named William, attended a party aboard a boat called the *White Ship* that was so hard core, the boat sank, killing all but two of its passengers. His death caused a civil war: the only remaining direct heir was William's sister Matilda, and English nobility wasn't really down with having a *woman* sit on the throne, so Matilda's cousin Stephen showed up to challenge her. They traded the throne back and forth for a bit.

If you've ever seen a Robin Hood movie, you know about Matilda's grandsons Richard the Lionheart and Prince John. Although John is not considered a great king, he did sign the Magna Carta. John's grandson was Edward I, known as Longshanks, who you know if you've seen *Braveheart*. (Edward was... not a great guy.) Some historians think his son Edward II was gay; he favored a fellow named Piers Gaveston who exerted so much influence over him that the ruling barons of the day had him executed. This did not exactly endear Edward II to the barons, and a prolonged conflict ensued that eventually led to Edward being deposed in favor of his 14-year-old son.

If you've read the Shakespeare history plays, you know about the next couple of centuries. Edward II's grandson Richard II married Anne of Bohemia, the daughter of the Holy Roman Emperor, and the union was entirely diplomatic—Richard aimed to shore up England's defense against France. After Anne died of the plague, Richard had an affair with Robert de Vere (and made him Duke of Ireland) and then the war with France got worse and Henry Bolingbroke—later Henry IV—decided he had a better claim to the throne than Richard, and that effectively kicked off the Wars of the Roses. (If you can get your hands on *The Hollow Crown*, the BBC's production of 7 of Shakespeare's history plays, I highly recommend it. Especially if you've got a thing for thin, pasty British actors; Ben Wishaw, Tom Hiddleston, and Benedict Cumberbatch all have major roles.)

Before being buried in a car park, Richard III was defeated by Henry Tudor at Bosworth, ending the Wars of the Roses and beginning the Tudor dynasty. Henry's son Henry VIII was, of course, famous for divorcing and/or beheading his wives; perhaps not romantic as such. His daughter Elizabeth never married.

There may have been some love matches in the royal family tree. The Hanover dynasty kicked off with George I, the great-grandson of Elizabeth's successor James. George's grandson, George III, was thought to love his wife Charlotte; they had fifteen children. You know George III from such projects as the American Revolution and then his subsequent madness, for which his son, George IV was appointed to rule as Prince Regent in his stead (hence the Regency period). George IV spent money the monarchy didn't have on interior decorating, faux military uniforms, and mistresses, though he did have a legitimate daughter... who died in childbirth, leaving the crown without an heir. A scramble ensued to marry off four of George III's sons, and Prince Edward "won"; his marriage to a German princess resulted in a daughter named Alexandrina Victoria. Romantic, huh?

Incidentally, George III instituted the Royal Marriages Act of 1772, which stated that no heir to the throne can be considered to have a valid marriage without the consent of the monarch. This meant the offender did not lose his or her place in the line of succession, but because the marriage was invalid, any children were considered illegitimate. The act was only repealed in 2015, although the first six people in the line of succession must still get the consent of the monarch to marry; without consent, the marriage is still valid, but the couple and their offspring are disqualified from the line of succession. (The Queen gave Harry and Meghan consent to marry under the newer Succession to the Crown Act of 2013. This act also makes gender irrelevant for primogeniture, so a female firstborn could inherit the throne without controversy. Previous female monarchs only ascended to the throne if no dudes were available.)

By all accounts, Victoria and Albert were a love match, despite being first cousins—PBS's *Victoria* is really great, for more on that—and royal weddings in the twentieth century were less political. Though not without scandal; Edward VIII abdicated to marry Wallis Simpson, after all. The royal family did not approve of the marriage, which would have made it invalid under the existing law. Considering the main objection was that Ms. Simpson was American and, worse, divorced—two things also true of Meghan Markle—perhaps the monarchy has stepped into the twenty-first century.



This cheap tour through British history is mainly to support the point that the British monarchy is interesting and weird, and Prince Harry choosing to marry a biracial American divorcée seems almost mundane by comparison. But I still like the romance of it. Also the fashion; I can't wait to see what the various European royals wear on their heads! ♥

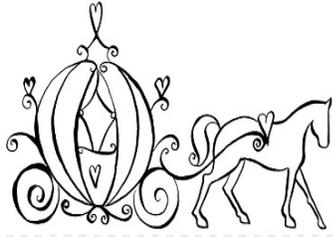
*Kate McMurray is an award-winning author of gay romance and an unabashed romance fan. When she's not writing, she works as a nonfiction editor, dabbles in various crafts, and is maybe a tiny bit obsessed with baseball. She is Past President of RWA/NYC. She lives in Brooklyn, NY. Visit her at [www.katemcmurray.com](http://www.katemcmurray.com).*



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 ROYAL EYE CANDY  
 BY MARIA FERRER
 

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When I began reading romances in High School, I started with Barbara Cartland's romances. They were all about kings, queens, princesses, princes, lords and ladies. I devoured them not only because of the royal romances, but because all the princes were charming and all the princesses were strong and independent. The books were thin volumes that I read quickly, but I would be engrossed from page one. I wish I would have kept those books, but my Mom's idea of cleaning was to throw away everything.

Dame Barbara Cartland died at age 98 having published 723 books and left 160 unpublished manuscripts. It was said she wrote a romance every fortnight. Her books are being reissued and published posthumously as her Pink Collection, and I can't wait to read them again. Meanwhile, here is some Royal Eye Candy for all to enjoy. Note: there are plenty of bachelor Princes still available! ♥



*Maria Ferrer writes contemporary and erotic romances, but who knows, maybe she should try her hand at a prince or two. Happy Writing.*



*Royal Eye Candy:*

*Top: King T'Challa,  
Prince William (w/hair!)  
Prince Harry*

*Bottom:  
Prince Carl Philip, Sweden  
America's Purple Prince!*



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**ABOUT PAN  
(PUBLISHED AUTHOR NETWORK)**


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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.

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**About PRO**


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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.♥