

KEYNOTES



The newsletter of the Romance Writers of America / New York City Chapter #6 FEBRUARY 2019

NEXT MEETING: SATURDAY, FEBRUARY 2

LOCATION: TRS, 40 EXCHANGE PLACE, 3RD FLOOR, 12-3 PM

Topic: Writing Vivid Settings



Setting is often treated as just window dressing, but it can inform every part of a story, right down to plotting and pacing and how characters speak and behave. In this workshop, we'll discuss how to turn Generic Town, USA, into a living, breathing place that your characters inhabit. We'll talk about how to make real places come alive on the page—even places the author has never set foot in, even places that don't actually exist. We'll talk about how to use little details to ground the reader in the setting and make her see the world around these characters. And we'll talk about what tools you can use to help research and flesh out your Generic Town into a place your reader wants to visit.

Kate McMurray writes smart romantic fiction. She likes creating stories that are brainy, funny, and of course sexy with regular guy characters and urban sensibilities. She advocates for romance stories by and for everyone. Find her at katemcmurray.com.

celebrate
BLACK
history MONTH

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CONTRIBUTING WRITERS

LaQuette, Kay Blake, Maria Ferrer,
Barbara James, Falguni Kothari

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.



Our 2019 Board: Alexis, Kay, Adrianna, Harper & LaQuette.

MARCH THEME

WOMEN WHO INSPIRE
March is Women's History Month
What women have inspired you
& your writing

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

DEADLINE: 15th of the month

RWA/NYC BOARD OF DIRECTORS

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KEYNOTES DEADLINE

Send articles to 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

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE: ROMANCE IS IN THE EYE OF THE BEHOLDER
BY LAQUETTE



As romance writers, we are tasked with chronicling the journey our protagonists embark to find love. During this process, we're more than likely going to have to come up with some examples of romance to show the reader how these people endear themselves to one another. You can have them go on dates, or buy pretty baubles for each other, or even throw in a fabulous vacation. I've seen plenty of these examples in countless books, and they're all fine. But my challenge to you when thinking of how your main characters will show their romantic sides, instead of doing what's usual, look to your character to figure out what romance looks like for them.

But aren't lavish gifts and extravagances romantic? Of course, they are. But they are not the only means of romantic expression. And if you ask a million people what their version of romance is, they'll give you a million different answers, and all of them will be correct. Why? Because every person determines what's romantic for them. Understanding that will help us tap into deeper ways of expressing love within our stories.

For instance, if your characters are people who hate city life, traveling to a metropolis just for a fancy dinner might not be their version of fun, maybe a small picnic in a meadow might be more their speed. No, there's nothing wrong with the glitz and glam of the city, but there's equally nothing wrong with spending a beautiful day surrounded by nature and the person you love.

You have to know your characters. If you know who these people are, you're better equipped to create meaningful romantic moments that will resonate with your readers. The magic isn't in the glitz, it's in the undeniably authentic expression of love made by one character to another. Things are better when they appear real to the senses. Knowing your characters well enough to determine what is real for them will always yield that "aww" factor you're looking for.

Let me reiterate, the glittery, wining and dining that has become the standard in romance is perfectly fine. But if we look to our characters to depict what their brand of romance is, we'll find a more creative and personal way for characters to express themselves, and a stronger emotional connection for readers to hold on to. Keep it sexy! 💋

LaQuette is President of RWA/NYC, and 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 LCS Literary Agency. Learn more about her at LaQuette.com and LaQuette@LaQuette.com♥



CHAPTER MINUTES: JANUARY 5, 2019**BY SECRETARY KAY BLAKE**

Attendance: 27 members



Treasurer Alexis Daria called the meeting to order at 12:07pm.

Introduction of the 2019 Board of Directors:

LaQuette, President (returning)
Adriana Herrera, VP of Programs
Harper Miller, VP, Communications (returning)
Kay Blake, Secretary
Alexis Daria- Treasurer

Treasurer: We currently have \$4,825.14 in the bank.

Golden Apples – Adriana: Will be in the Fall of 2019. Volunteers needed to assist with Golden Apples.

Kathryn Hayes When Sparks Fly Contest – Harper: Volunteers needed to assist with contest.

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

- Michael (Publicity): Brooklyn Book festival. Nothing new to report as the event is in Sept 2019.
- Critique Group Organizers: Kate Dunn and Candice Next meeting Monday, January 28th
- Stacey Agdern PAN Liaison (new members want to become PAN speak to Stacey)
- Anna Bierhaus, PRO Liaison (new members want to become PRO speak to Anna)

Keynotes - Contact Falguni with articles. Articles due by the 15th of the month.

OTHER ANNOUNCEMENTS

- Mini Con – Pushed back to 2020. Trying to get a location in the city. More information coming soon!
- RWA Nationals 2019 Non Publisher Party- July 2019 there will be a non-publisher party during the RWA's Publishing party. More information coming soon.

Time Capsule Opens/ Round Robin begins - Meeting adjourned at 12:17 pm

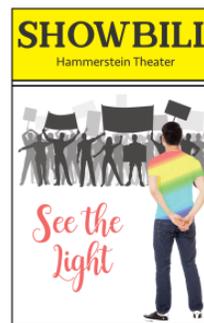
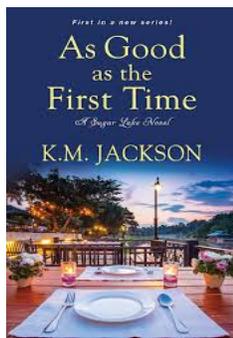
Speaker: Kristin Dwyer. Topic: The Ins and Outs of Running a PR Business.♥

MEMBER NEWS

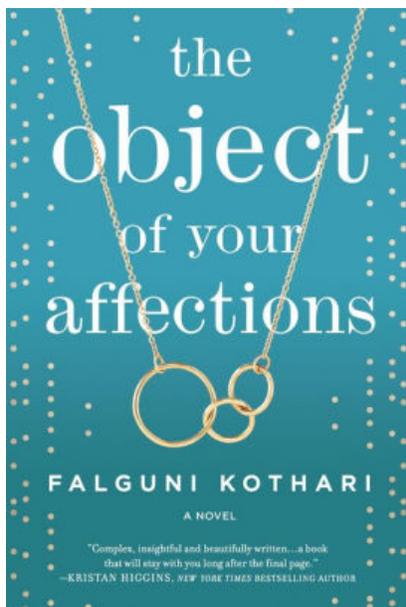
K.M. Jackson's AS GOOD AS THE FIRST TIME won an Earphones Award! (Yes, her books are on audio.)

Falguni Kothari's new book, THE OBJECT OF YOUR AFFECTIONS, releases this month. It's about two BFFs and what they would do for each other. Falguni will be reading from the book at Lady Jane's Salon 10th Anniversary on February 4.

Kate McMurray's new book, SEE THE LIGHT, just debut. It is about Jeremy, an aspiring actor who finally gets his big break, and his best friend, makeup artist Max. Kate created this fake Broadway Playbill for her book and a playlist!♥



Wry, daring, and utterly absorbing, THE OBJECT OF YOUR AFFECTIONS is an unforgettable story about two women challenging the norms... and the magic that happens when we choose to forge our own path.



Paris Kahn Fraser nearly has it all—a successful career as an assistant district attorney, a beautiful home in New York City, and a handsome, passionate husband who chose her over having a family of his own. Neal's dream of fatherhood might have been the only shadow in their otherwise happy life... until Paris's best friend comes to town.

Naira Dalmia never thought she'd be a widow before thirty. Left reeling in the aftermath of her husband's death, all she wants is to start over. She trades Mumbai for New York, and rigid family expectations for the open acceptance of her best friend. After all, there isn't anything she and Paris wouldn't do for each other. But when Paris asks Naira to be their surrogate, they'll learn if their friendship has what it takes to defy society, their families, and even their own biology as these two best friends embark on a journey that will change their lives forever.

LADY JANE'S SALON® CELEBRATING 10 YEARS OF ROMANCING NYC!



Monday, February 4th, 7-9 PM at Madame X, Lady Jane's Salon celebrates its 10th year as NYC's first, and still *only*, monthly reading series dedicated to romance and romantic women's fiction.

Guest authors: Deanna Raybourn, Zoey Castille, Mark Oshiro & Falguni Kothari.

Admission: \$5 dollars—cash only. Net proceeds support Win (Women in Need, Inc.)

Program Highlights:

- ARCs of Falguni Kothari's **THE OBJECT OF YOUR AFFECTIONS** releasing February 19th from Graydon House.
- Cash bar with \$5/\$6 cocktails & "mocktails."
- Presentation of our annual donation to Win.
- Champagne toast courtesy of our fab sponsor, Harlequin Books! ♥



FIVE WAYS TO CELEBRATE BLACK HISTORY MONTH
BY MARIA FERRER

Here are five fun ways to celebrate Black History Month. Feel free to share your plans for the month.

1. Read the Rev. Martin Luther King Jr.'s "I Have a Dream" speech, and visit his monument in DC.
2. Eat traditional Soul Food like sweet potato pie, baked macaroni and cheese, or collard greens. (Let's share recipes.)
3. Read Maya Angelou's poetry. (Add it to your Resolutions for 2019!)
4. Listen to Stevie Wonder's *Songs in the Key of Life* CD...again.
5. Read romances by African-American Authors like Beverly Jenkins, Sandra Kitt, Rochelle Allers, Brenda Jackson & Piper Hughley, or you can read romances by members of our Chapter. We have some great ones.♥



MONTHLY THEME: ROMANCING YOUR CHARACTERS

AN AUTHOR IN SEARCH OF HER CHARACTER
BY BARBARA JAMES

I get up from my seat in the Starbucks at Penn Station. "Lauren, it's so good to see you!" I give her a hug and step back to take in her black slacks, red jacket and blue scarf. "I just love the outfit!"

"It's good to see you as well." She touches the scarf. "It's a gift from Annelise (heroine of *STARTING OVER: RICK*). She and Rick were in town. Denise (heroine of *GOING HOME: ROGER*) lives in New London too, so we all got together during the Christmas holidays. Lots of kids running round. Chaotic, but fun. Can't complain. We're all doing fine. How have you been?"

"I've been fine, the family's fine. I've been getting to know some new characters. And you?"

"That's great! I like Facebook, it's good for keeping in touch with everyone, so I'll check for your updates. Don and I, we've been married several years. The babies are getting bigger and I'm doing nursing part time. Gives me more time with them." She takes out her phone to show me some photos.

I take it and study a picture of her with her children. "I love it, they are so adorable." I return the phone to her. "They're with Daddy this afternoon?"

She nods. "I'm sure they're having some adventures. He's so busy, it's good whenever he can have down time with them. We're still going strong. He's doing great, getting promotions." She smiles at a photo of him. "I just love how much he enjoys being a dad. Our family life is such a blessing."

"It's like a Hallmark movie."

"And you made it possible for us!"

"So which television show would most resemble your life?"

"Something like Black-ish, I think."

"I can see it! So if we made a movie of your life, who would star?"

"Idris Elba as Don, it goes without saying! I would love it if Kerry Washington were to play me."

"She'd be recognizable." I notice the book she placed onto the table. "What are you reading?"

"Michelle Obama's autobiography. Her story is so relatable."

"I agree. She really speaks to so many women's experiences."

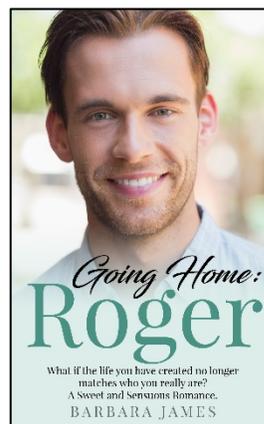
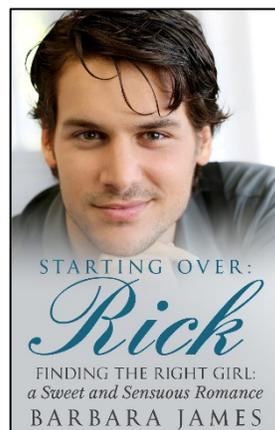
"That's what I really like about you as our author! Perhaps it comes from your training as a clergywoman. Whatever it is, you understand us, our experiences and needs. Everything that has been important for us in getting our happily ever after. Like, you've always respected our privacy, giving us the closed-door bedroom scenes, we prefer. Annelise, Denise and I, we call you our honorary auntie!"

"Thank you, sweetie. That's so lovely to hear."

She hugs me. "You're always welcome."

We get our drinks and continue chatting until it was time for her to catch her train back to Connecticut.♥

Barbara James is the pen name of an Episcopal clergywoman and romance writer. She writes sweet and inspirational romances. You can find her at www.barbarajames.net. If you are interested in learning more about Lauren, her book recently came out on Amazon.



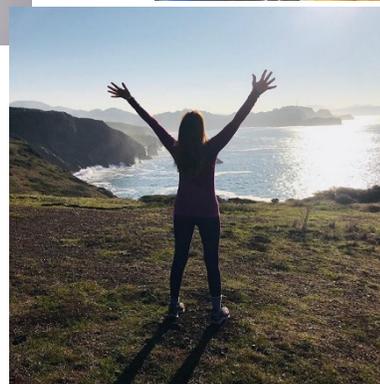
GETTING TO KNOW YOUR CHARACTERS

BY MARIA FERRER



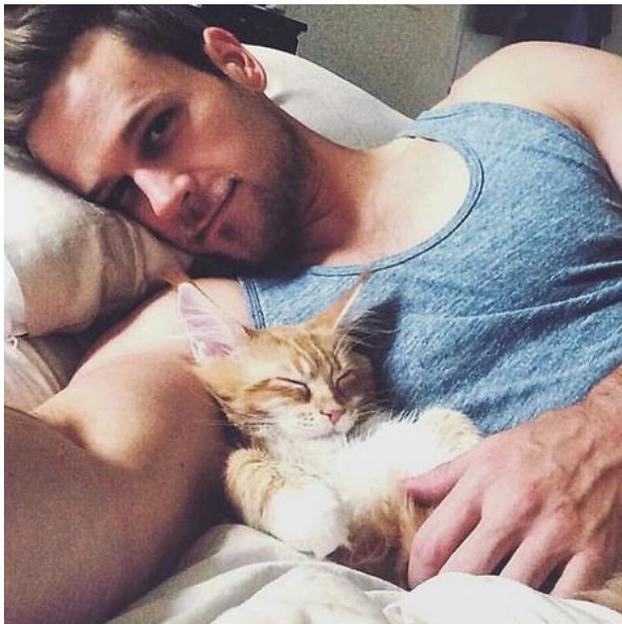
“Getting to know you.
Getting to know all about you.
Getting to like you, getting to hope you like me.”
– Words from *The King and I*

Whether you are a plotter or a panster, knowing your characters is key, and that knowledge helps enrich your story. The days of online dating profiles are gone. Now, we communicate via Instagram with pictures. So here is my Character’s – Marisol’s – Instagram page. From her pictures we can tell that she is a working woman, from a large family, lives in the Big Apple, loves her dog Oreo, and she’s loving the single life. But, what if?



But, what if we now add the following? She is laid off; her parents announce that after 45 years together, they are separating; the world is raining on her parade; and she gets a new neighbor. Such is the complicated road to romance... or not. But, it sure is fun to watch the pictures and see what's next for Marisol and the hunk with the cat.♥

Maria Ferrer loves dogs, hunks without cats and her large family. Twitter is more her speed, but she is enjoying exploring Instagram.



FREE PUBLICITY!



TAKE ADVANTAGE OF US! 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. ♥

**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 a novel or novella, but not yet earned \$1,000 ("Option Two"). Works offered through Predatory Publishing companies shall not qualify.♥

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.♥