

KEYNOTES



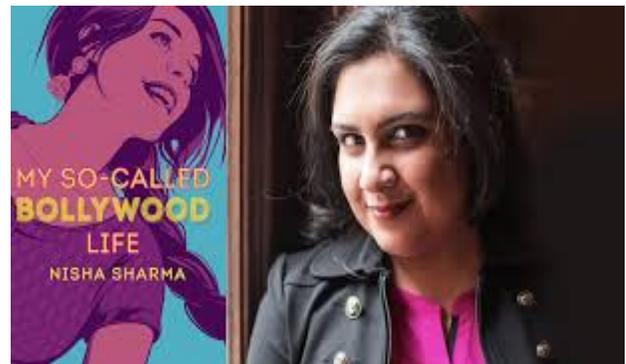
The newsletter of the Romance Writers of America / New York City Chapter #6 November 2019

**NEXT CHAPTER MEETING: SATURDAY, NOVEMBER 2
TRS, 40 EXCHANGE PLACE, 3RD FLOOR, 12-4PM**

TOPIC: HOW TO CROSSOVER GENRES

SPEAKER: NISHA SHARMA

RITA award winner **Nisha Sharma** is the author of **MY SO-CALLED BOLLYWOOD LIFE**, a Kirkus starred reviewed YA romance, and NPR best book of 2018. She is also the author of **THE TAKEOVER EFFECT**, a Library Journal starred reviewed adult contemporary romance, and the first installment of **The Singh Family Trilogy**. Her writing has been praised by *Cosmopolitan*, *Entertainment Weekly*, *Teen Vogue*, *Buzzfeed*, *Hypable* and more. Nisha lives in New Jersey with her Alaskan husband, her cat Lizzie Bennett and her dog Nancey Drew. She credits her father for her multiple graduate degrees, and her mother for her love of Jane Austen and Shah Rukh Khan. You can find her online at nisha-sharma.com or on Twitter and Instagram at [@nishawrites](https://twitter.com/nishawrites).



ATTENTION: NEW CHAPTER LOOP



REMINDER! The Chapter Yahoo Loop is no more. Members are asked to join the RWA/NYC Forum on the RWA.ORG site.

Click here to view steps. <http://www.rwanyc.com/nyc-forum-on-rwas-website.html>



THERE IS NO
WRONG OR RIGHT
JUST WRITE

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Page
3—President's Message
4—Chapter Minutes
5—Member News, Chapter Contest Update
6—Monthly Theme: Writing Anthologies
9—Getting it Down on Paper
10—Chapter Critique Group
11—My Writing Den: Why Audio Books?
12—Free Publicity, PRO & PAN

THANK YOU!

To Our Contributing Writers
LaQuette, Kay Blake, Maria Cox, Alexis Daria,
Anna DePalo, Maria Ferrer, Ursula Renée

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.



DECEMBER THEME

UNFINISHED BUSINESS

Take stock of Your Year
Did you meet your goals? Are you happy?

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

Deadline: 15th of the Month

RWA/NYC BOARD OF DIRECTORS

President: LaQuette
Vice President/Programs: Adriana Herrera
Vice President/Communications: Harper Miller
Secretary: Kay Blake
Treasurer: Alexis Daria
Past President: Kate McMurray

LIAISONS & COMMITTEES

Keynotes Editor: Falguni Kothari
Board Liaisons: JN Welsh and Maria Cox
Blog/Social Media: Maria Ferrer
Critique Group: Kate & Candance
Publicity: Maria Cox, Jean Joachim,
Michael Molloy
Website: Ursula Renée
PAN Liaison: Stacey Agdern
PRO Liaison: Anna Bierhaus

RWA/NYC, PO Box 3722,
Grand Central Station, New York, NY 10163
www.rwanyc.com
info@rwanyc.com
rwanycblogginginthebigapple.blogspot.com

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. Thanks.

**PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE:
BY LAQUETTE**



Hello Everyone,

I'm foregoing my usual message to make certain members are aware we're no longer using the RWANYC loop on Yahoo. As of October 17, 2019, the RWA NYC forum on RWA.org is our new chapter communication home. Please follow the follow steps to access it.

1. Sign in to RWA website
2. Click on "Forums" tab
3. Click on "Communities" Tab
4. Click on "My Communities" Tab
5. Scroll until you see "Chapter: RWA NYC" forum and then click on it to enter
6. Click on "Settings" (directly next to the forum name) and add/edit email you wish to use to receive forum messages
7. Decide on the frequency of those emails

If you have switched over, but you're not receiving messages from the RWA NYC forum on RWA.org, here are the most likely reasons. First, you're not included in the chapter portal because your membership has lapsed. If this is the case, then simply renew your membership on the chapter portal on RWA. Remember, all chapter dues must be paid via RWA as of February 2019. Once your payment is processed, you'll need to follow the steps above to access the forum.

If your membership hasn't lapsed and you're not receiving email notifications from the loop, then the likely culprit is your notification settings haven't been activated. The default setting in the forum is "No Email". So, if you want to receive notifications of newly posted messages, you have to change the default to a selected frequency. To change it, go into the settings and select "Real Time" in order to get notifications as messages are posted.

If you need a visual aid, I've added one on our website in our "Members Only" section. Click here to view. <http://www.rwanyc.com/nyc-forum-on-rwas-website.html>

Thank you!

LaQuette

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 LCS Literary Agency. Visit her at: LaQuette.com and LaQuette@LaQuette.com.♥

CHAPTER MINUTES: OCTOBER 5
BY SECRETARY KAY BLAKE



Attendance: 29 members

LaQuette, President called the meeting to order at 12:08 p.m.

Harper Miller (VP, Communications) approved September's minutes.

Treasurer's Report (Alexis not present): There is \$1,000 in PayPal. There is also \$5,000 in the bank account. Leaves the total amount of money to \$6,100.

Secretary Report (Kay Blake): We are currently at 99 members as of right now.

Adriana Herrera, (VP, Programs): **Dec's Brunch. Blooms Tavern 208 E 58th St, New York, 10022.** First or Second Saturday in December. Most likely first weekend. \$35 a person. 2 Hour open bar and appetizers. 25 professionals confirmed. A mix of agents, editors and journalists. Tickets are available on the website. Also, there are already speakers lined up for 2020. As of right now Dana Kay, LaQuette, and Farah Heron. And, mini con may coincide with Golden Apples to increase money and make it more like a party into the mini con. If anyone has any ideas of workshops they want for 2020 please direct them to Adriana.

Maya Rodale is asking for pitches/scripts for audio episodes. Payment in cash. Theme is Meet Cute. Diverse rom coms. More info will be posted on the chapter loop.

Harper Miller, (VP, Communications): Kathryn Hayes When Sparks Fly Contest – Need the rest of the scores from the judges. Second round judges have been notified and will get stories on the 13th of October.

Michael Molloy (Publicity) - Brooklyn Book Festival: The Brooklyn Book Festival was a success. Michael will have more info for 2020's BKBF in February of 2020. 2020 will be Michael's last year. However, he is willing to stay on in an advisory capacity after 2020.

Andrea Obaez (Social Media) – No new news for social media or the blog at the moment. Just at the RWANYC if there is news to be shared and retweeted.

Stacy Agdern (PAN/PRO) Stacy gave brief intro to members who attended a meeting for the first time, about what PAN and PRO meant for RWA.

Kate Dunn (Critique Group) Next meeting is Monday, October 21, from 6-8pm (come at 5:30 for eating/ chatting; critiques start promptly at 6pm). We will be meeting at Cafe Isadora (www.cafeisadoras.com) 16 East 52nd between Fifth and Madison, on the second floor.

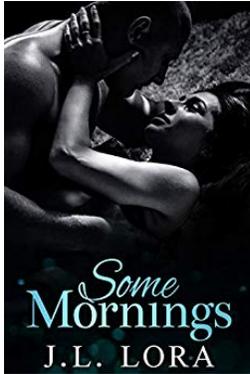
Ursula Shand (Website): If any new members want their website added to the email address please contact ursulashand@gmail.com

Keynotes - Contact Falguni and Maria Ferrer with articles. Articles due by the 15th of the month. Deadline can be pushed back to the 20th.

Round Robin begins - Meeting adjourned at 12:13 p.m.

Speaker: Rhonda Merwarth, Editor- The Balance Between Love & Laughs in Romance ♥

MEMBER NEWS



Rebecca Hefner's book, THE END OF HATRED, placed third in the 2019 Book Buyer's Best contest held by the OCC RWA chapter in the paranormal/fantasy/sci-fi romance category.

J.L. Lora reports that she has a book coming out on October 25 called, SOME MORNINGS.

Kathy Strobos placed third in the L.A. Orange Rose Contest for Women's Fiction with Romance as a Central Element.

Kate Dunn invites all members to the Chapter Critique Group meeting on November 18. See page 10 for more info.

CHAPTER CONTEST UPDATE BY VICE PRESIDENT HARPER MILLER

Emails went out to our second-round judges. I also emailed our finalist's a bit ago. Even better news? OUR CHAPTER MEMBERS SNAGGED A FINALING SPOT IN FOUR CATEGORIES!

Shout-outs to:

- *Alexis Daria for her Contemporary Romance DANCE ALL NIGHT
- *Ruby Scalera aka Gemma Snow for her Erotic Romance WILD FLOWERS
- *Megan Frampton for her Historical Romance LADY BE RECKLESS
- * And lastly, Rebecca Hefner for her Paranormal/Sci-Fi Romance THE END OF HATRED.

Congratulations, Ladies!



MONTHLY THEME: WRITING ANTHOLOGIES & NOVELLAS



**A NOVELLA BY ANY OTHER NAME...
THE BEAUTY OF WRITING SHORTER FICTION
BY ANNA DEPALO**

I'm a write short kind of author. My first published fiction piece was flash fiction that I submitted to *Star Magazine*. Since then I've written fifteen short contemporary romances for Harlequin Desire that, at close to 50,000 words, can be considered overstuffed novellas. In fact, two of those books were part of multi-author series that were later bundled together online by Harlequin.

And these days, Harlequin's standard practice in North America is to release their Desire imprint as both standalones and three book bundles online (sort of like an anthology). In foreign markets (20-30 countries), I've long been repackaged with one or two other authors as well. Aside from my Desires, I also wrote an online serial for Harlequin, MIDNIGHT REUNION, that clocked in at a few thousand words. Then there's the 7,000-word short story, CRUSHING ON THE MILLIONAIRE, that is tied to my Serengetti Brothers series and available for free download to newsletter subscribers—who've also gotten a taste of my writing with other exclusive short fiction. As I said, I like to write short.

SHORT IS THE NEW LONG

So what are the advantages of writing shorter fiction like novellas? Well, obviously, there's the element of catering to shortened attention spans in the 21st century. *Short is the new long*. A number of readers have reported reading my Desire books on their phones. To the extent that there are readers who want more and faster, writing short can mean putting out more works per year. A novella (or the close equivalent) can fill in the gaps between books. It can serve as a lure for readers to try a new series.

And for the author, the advantage is avoiding boredom by being able to start and finish a piece relatively quickly. Shorter pieces lend themselves more easily to flexible retail placement (to attract a new readership) and repackaging (like in an anthology).

CALL TO ADVENTURE

What are the requirements of writing something short like a novella? First, the opening has to be fast and catchy. There's little time for a setup. For those who use the hero's journey arc for plotting, I'll say that I'll often invert the steps so that the "call to adventure" happens before the "ordinary world" setup (which I give a taste of with some backstory interspersed in chapter one, usually after the first few paragraphs are devoted to the inciting incident that gets the story going).

Second, the story has to *move*. Every scene has to count and often serve more than one function (for example, introducing a secondary character *and* a new plot point). Third, the story has to be tightly

focused on usually a couple of main characters and a limited number of secondary characters (with no or thin subplots). Lastly, for more tips, see <https://www.aerogrammestudio.com/2015/04/09/top-ten-tips-for-writing-novellas/>♥

Anna DePalo is the USA Today best-selling author of more than a dozen romance novels. Her latest book, POWER PLAY, the third in The Serengetti Brothers series, was released in September 2019 by Harlequin. You can find Anna online at www.annadepalo.com, www.facebook.com/anna.depaloauthor, www.facebook.com/AnnaDePaloBooks and twitter.com/Anna_DePalo.

3 TIPS FOR WRITING A NOVELLA BY ALEXIS DARIA



According to Wikipedia, the maximum word count for a novella is **40,000 words***. By contrast, my full-length novels are over 90,000. That's more than twice as many words! Some authors excel at writing novellas, but if you're like me and used to writing long, how do you cram a full romance into a smaller package? Well, I do it with a little planning.

Here are three tricks I use to fit an emotionally satisfying romance into a shorter word count.

Focused Conflict

The main story question for romance novels is **“Why can't they be together?”** In full-length novels, both **internal and external conflict contribute toward keeping the characters apart** for the duration of the book. With only 40,000 words or less to play with, I focus more on one or the other—either internal or external.

I usually choose internal conflict. However, since I also tend to write long, it's difficult to fit two full romantic internal arcs into a novella or short story. That means one of the characters has to be all in from the beginning, with the rest of the story focusing on the growth arc of the other character as they resolve their internal conflict and open their heart to love.

(This is not to say there's no external conflict, or that the other main character doesn't change at all from beginning to end. I just mostly focus on one character's internal conflict arc when I'm trying to stay in novella territory.)

So We Meet Again Cute

Another trick to writing an emotionally satisfying romance in a shorter number of words is to craft **main characters who already know each other**. This is why second chance romances or friends/enemies to lovers tropes work so well in this format. You don't have to devote extra words to having them meet and get to know each other. It does help, however, to know their shared history and individual backstories, so you can reference these details during the story.

Since my DANCE ALL NIGHT novella takes place in an existing world and I hadn't done any foreshadowing for it, I went through my character lists from the previous books and picked

individuals who'd work in the romantic scenario I'd envisioned. Even though Nik and Jess hadn't ever been on the page together, it was reasonable to assume they were already acquainted, which helped advance the romance more quickly.

Under Outlining

Even if you're not a fan of planning your story out in advance, **focusing on the big picture and having a sense of the overall scope before you begin can help you stay under a set word count.** Rather than getting lost in the weeds, just focus on the beginning, middle, and end. This can also let you know if you have too much conflict, too many side characters, or too many subplots.

A few years ago, I converted from pantser to plotter and never looked back. When plotting novellas or short stories, I *under* outline. Keeping my total word count in mind, I aim for a lower scene count than I think I need, especially since I know my scenes end up being around 2,000 words each, give or take, and my stories always end up longer than I think they will.

For example, my short story "Solstice Miracle" was supposed to be 5,000 words max. I outlined three scenes—the beginning, middle, and end. It takes place over one night, the characters already know each other, and there are only two side characters. Even so, it still ended up at 6,500 words.

Those are my tips for writing novellas and sticking to a lower word count! Are there any others you'd add?♥

Alexis Daria is a native New Yorker and award-winning author writing stories about successful Latinx characters and their (occasionally messy) families. Her debut TAKE THE LEAD won the 2018 RITA® Award for "Best First Book" and was one of the "Best Romance Novels of 2017" in The Washington Post and Entertainment Weekly. 9

WRITING FOR AN ANTHOLOGY

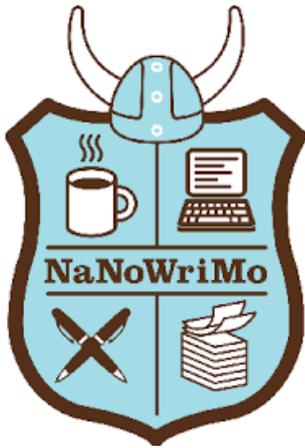
BY MARIA FERRER



JUST DO IT! Writing for an anthology is a great way to break in and get your work and name out into the public. Also, often times the anthology only wants a short story instead of a full novel, which is a big plus. Though a short story can be tough to write because you have to focus on your word choices and making sure to stick to the meat of the story and your characters. But, it is great when your story is accepted and published. And, the very best part of writing for an anthology is the confidence it gives you as a writer. It's a great first step on your writing journey.♥

Maria Ferrer has had stories published in four anthologies as she finishes her full-length novels. She is encouraged and proud of her accomplishments. Her writing journey continues.

GETTING IT DOWN ON PAPER**BY URSULA RENÉE**



Writing 50,000 words in one month may seem like an impossible goal, especially if you have attempted NaNoWriMo in the past, but came up short. However, with some preplanning and a few tricks, it is possible to reach your goal with days to spare.

Outlines

Whether you are a plotter or a pantsler, character sketches can help you keep track of attributes so you do not waste time trying to remember whether the best friend has red or orange hair or if the heroine is right or left-handed.

The outlines can be as simple as a paragraph describing the protagonists' appearance and personality. Or, you can fill several pages for each character and discuss their favorite music, literature, foods, colors and pastimes. You can also include a backstory, which you can later incorporate into your novel.

Setting outlines can help you arrange small areas such as a room, office or apartment/house. You can also use them to plan the layout of neighborhoods and cities. A more detailed outline could also include the history and customs of the neighborhood and/or city, which, like the character's backstory, can be added to the novel.

Or a simple blurb to describe your plot and the characters' GMC (goals, motivations and conflicts) can help keep you on track when you wonder which direction the story should take.

Time Management

Though it may seem like there is no time to fit a project into your hectic schedule, there are many opportunities during the day to jot a word or two down.

While it may be a little slower to work on a cell phone than a tablet or laptop, there are note programs, word processing applications and writing software that you can use to write a few words while you are riding the train or bus. These can later be synced to your main laptop or pc or copy and paste to your preferred writing program.

If you don't like working on a phone and you are lucky enough to get a seat, you can write out your story in a notebook. The only drawback is that you will have to go back and type up what you wrote. But you could get around that task by paying your child to type the sections you feel comfortable with them reading.

You can also use the time in which you are standing in line at the supermarket, bank or department store to write. Or, slip into a phone booth or the stairway at work for five minutes.

If you are moving about and cannot type, you could dictate your thoughts into the voice memo app on your phone or carry a tape recorder for the task.

Tricks

Do not use contractions and spell out numbers. Whereas “don’t” would be counted as one word, “do not” is two. Yes, people normally speak with contractions, but the goal for NaNoWriMo is to get fifty-thousand words on the page.

Type out a character’s full name. You can always go back and take out the middle and last name or substitute the nickname when you edit the novel.

Do all your research before you begin NaNoWriMo. If you come across a fact you need to verify, add a note in ALL CAPS surrounding by asterisks or whatever symbol you prefer. You can always go back after the novel is written and do more research.

If you are stuck on a scene, write a little description about the GMC (goals, motivation and conflict) then go onto the next scene. It is better to write out of order than to spend hours agonizing over a section.

Finally, remember Ernest Hemingway’s quote, “The first draft of anything is shit.” No matter what you write, you will always have to go back and edit it. Therefore, do not worry about getting every word right the first time. Just get them onto the paper.♥

*Ursula Renée writes stories set in the early to mid-twentieth century, when people began challenging society's conventions and expressing their individuality. When she is not writing, she enjoys photography, drawing and model building. You can find more information at www.ursularenee.com or search for *ursed* at NaNoWriMo.org.*

CRITIQUE GROUP INFORMATION**BY KATE DUNN**



The next RWA-NYC Chapter critique group will take place on November 18, from 6-8pm (come at 5:30 for eating/ chatting; critiques start promptly at 6pm). We will be meeting at Cafe Isadora (www.cafeisadoras.com) 16 East 52nd between Fifth and Madison, on the second floor. There are plenty of good food options there.

This group is open to all chapter members. We welcome participants willing to read submissions and offer feedback, even if you don't have anything to submit that month. Thinking critically about other people's work is a great way to learn how to improve your own.

If you would like to participate, let us know and we will send you an invitation to the August Google Group. Submissions of approximately 20 pages are due by August 5. If you have any questions, please email either one of us and we will be happy to chat with you. Dates for the rest of the year appear below. Happy writing! ♥

For more info, write to Kate (kdunn707nyc@gmail.com) and Candace (cklucas1949@gmail.com).

Future dates: November 18 December 16

WELCOME TO MY WRITING DEN!**BY MARIA COX**

WHY AUDIO BOOKS?

In 2009 when my daughter gave me my first eReader I remember the joys of downloading several books at a time. Later when audio books came about the new technology mildly interested me; I really didn't give audio books much thought, but then again, I'm late to adopt new technology.

It was while I was conducting research for this post that I stumbled upon a divisive article on the authenticity of audio books written in 2005, it surprised me that such a heated debate had begun more than a decade earlier.

The interesting fact is that studies found there is no measurable intellectual difference between *reading* a book and *listening* to a book, both methods deliver similar benefits. Daniel T. Willingham, PhD. wrote an insightful [article](#) where he discusses how the brain works and how *it* makes sense of language, whether written or spoken.

Below are two distinct benefits of audio books:

Convenience

Audio books can be read while biking, driving, walking too. Audio books also provide persons with physical disabilities a way to enjoy books.

Portability

No need to lug around weighty books. And, in today's environment you're not restricted to simply one device; you can download audio books onto a Tablet, Android, iPod and iPad.

Whatever form you prefer, one thing is certain, technology will continue to emerge and as readers and writers, we need to change with the times. Worst case scenario you try something new ☺

Happy reading!♥



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



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. ♥

**WANTED: MEMBERS' SOCIAL LINKS
BY CHAPTER KAY BLAKE**

For new members, and members who have been with RWA NYC, I am sending a call for social media links. If you have any website links, Twitter links, Instagram links, or Facebook links that wasn't given or you just want to update them, please send the links to me at info@rwanyc.com. Thank you. ♥

**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.♥