

KEYNOTES

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

January 2015

MARK YOUR CALENDARS

February 7, 2015

Chapter Meeting

TRS, 40 Exchange Place, 3rd Floor

April 17, 2015 – April 19, 2015

Spring Retreat

Inn at Ocean Grove

June 20, 2015

Romance Festival

Morris Jumel Mansion

July 22 – July 25, 2015

RWA 2015 Conference

New York Marriott Marquis

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CHAPTER MEETING - JANUARY 3, 2015

TRS, 40 Exchange Place, 3rd Floor



Writing the Business Plan

Not everyone is a natural multi-tasker, but being a romance writer often benefits from the ability to juggle multiple projects while working towards a single goal -- increased success as an author. We'll talk about developing project plans, setting goals, keeping up with marketing without getting distracted from writing, and how to develop a 1 - 3 year career plan that works for you.

Racheline Maltese co-writes the Love in Los Angeles LGBT romance series with Erin McRae. Set in the film and television industry, the books Starling (September 10, 2014), Doves (January 21, 2015), and Phoenix (June 10, 2015) are available from Torquere Press. Their May/December "gay for you" novella Midsummer will be released Summer 2015 by Dreamspinner Press. You can also find their work in Best Gay Romance 2015 edited by Felice Picano and published by Cleis Press.



Marketing Preparation for Publication

While you're waiting to hear about a submission, or waiting for edits, you can and should be preparing your marketing plans and begin building your brand or persona online.

Good preparation before publication will make the release of your book smoother and more productive. We'll discuss the steps you can take to establish yourself before your book comes out.

Time will be reserved for marketing questions that don't pertain to this topic as well.

Jean Joachim is a best-selling romance fiction author, with books hitting the Amazon Top 100 list since 2012. She was chosen Author of the Year in 2012 by the New York City chapter of Romance Writers of America. Married and the mother of two sons, she lives in New York City with her family. Early in the morning, you'll find her at her computer, writing, with a cup of tea, her rescued pug, Homer, by her side and a secret stash of black licorice.

Continued on Page 3

RWA/NYC BOARD OF DIRECTORS

President: Ursula Renée
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 Maria Piork
 Website: Ursula Renée

ATTENTION: The Board welcomes all comments/suggestions/etc. Please send emails to info@rwanyc.com.

ANNOUCEMENTS

RWA is publishing a second anthology. The theme will be Second Chances. All members of RWA are welcome to submit a story for consideration. For more information, you can go to <http://www.rwa.org/page/call-for-submissions>.

RWA's first anthology will be released on February 9, 2015. The collection of stories from members of RWA was edited by Sylvia Day. For more information, you can go to <http://www.rwa.org/rwapremiere>.

The Golden Heart Award is now open for submissions. The contest is open to romance authors who have not accepted a publishing offer or self-published a work of fiction by January 12, 2015. The deadline to enter and submit work is January 12 2015.

FROM THE PRESIDENT**Something New**

By Ursula Renée



After a week of staring at a blank screen, I decided to write a fairy tale for NaNoWriMo. I had imaged this story, which had been bouncing around my mind for several years, would only have a male/female pairing.

Yet, while I was writing, I reached a scene where it felt natural for the hero to have a relationship with a secondary male character.

I had not attempted to write a male/male scene in the past as I did not feel qualified. I had not read many LGBT romances and was not sure if I could do a good job. However, as usual, my characters talked to me. They explained that the situation they found themselves in called for the relationship.

Thanks to my habit of falling behind during NaNoWriMo, I did not have time to analyze whether or not I could do this. If I wanted to reach my goal of 50,000 words by the end of the month, I had to simply go for it.

I took a deep breath then proceeded to describe the action as it appeared in my mind as well as my hero's thoughts and emotions. Once I was finished with the scene, I was pleased with the results.

Many times we hesitate to try something new. The reasons we are reluctant can vary. Some may think the task is too difficult and doubt they are up for the challenge. Others may fear they are not qualified as they do not have the necessary experience or have not conducted enough research.

Stepping outside a comfort zone could add variety to a work and make it stand out amongst the other novels. A new addition could also help breathe life into a work an author has trouble completing.

In the New Year, vow to step out your comfort zone and try something new. Set a novel in a new time period, explore a new setting, or work with a character who is different from your previous ones. You could discover a new passion.

Whatever goals you decided to work towards, I wish you a Happy New Year and may all your dreams come true.

"And now we welcome the new year. Full of things that have never been."

~Rainier Maria Rilke~

Chapter Meeting - continued**Take A Yoga Break**

Take A Yoga Break is a series of yoga-based moves to help offset the health dangers of sitting, which include obesity, diabetes, heart and kidney disease, and shortened life span. The Take A Yoga Break app, out now on iTunes for iPhone and iPad, was chosen as one of Fast Company Magazine's Innovation Agents.

Suzan Colón is the author of ten books, including the romance novel BEACH GLASS and the inspirational memoir CHERRIES IN WINTER: MY FAMILY'S RECIPE FOR HOPE IN HARD TIMES. Suzan is also the creator of the TAKE A YOGA BREAK app that combats the health dangers of sitting with yoga-based moves that can be done right at your desk. Suzan is certified to teach basic yoga, with certificates in therapeutic yoga and yoga for arthritis.

MEMBER NEWS

Jessica Gibbons, writing as Jess Russell, has made PAN based on sales of her very first novel, her TWRP Regency, The Dressmaker's Duke.

Lise Horton's erotic urban fantasy short, "Bad Santa", a Parade of Horribles short story, was acquired by Lori Perkins for Riverdale Avenue Publishing's holiday anthology.

Lisa Siefert was awarded a Second Place prize in the New Adult category of the MCRW Melody of Love contest.

Jean Joachim signed a four-book contract with Secret Cravings for a new series, called First & Ten, football romance. The first title in the series will be released in February, 2015.

Katana Collins' first indie author releases in her Maple Grove Romance series have launched. The free read introduction, "Meeting You" is now available in digital format, as is Capturing You.

AUTHOR OF THE MONTH**MINGMEI YIP**

Mingmei Yip is a novelist writing in English about the lives and struggles of Chinese women, both in China and America.

Her newest novel, Secret of a Thousand Beauties (Kensington 2014), is about a young woman, Spring Swallow, forced to marry a dead man, which would make her the slave of his parents for the rest of her life. She escapes and finds a home with a former imperial embroiderer who teaches her this art. Her students are to remain celibate, a requirement that forces them to keep their romantic life secret.

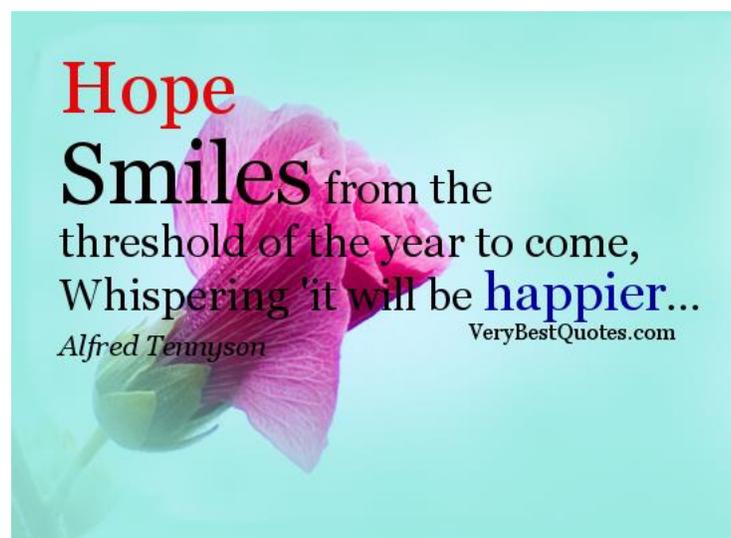
Mingmei's debut novel Peach Blossom Pavilion, the story of the last musician-courtesan of China, has received numerous favorable reviews and is in its fifth printing. It has just been published by Harper Collins Avon in March, 2014.

Mingmei's novels have been translated into nine languages and are currently available in ten countries.

In addition to her novels, Mingmei has written and illustrated two children's books. Chinese Children's Favorite Stories and Grandma Panda's China Storybook, Legends, Traditions, and Fun, both from Tuttle Publishing.

Mingmei is also a renowned qin musician, calligrapher and painter. In Hong Kong, she was a columnist for seven major newspapers. She has appeared on over sixty TV and radio programs in Hong Kong, Taiwan, China and the US. She got her Ph. D. in musicology from the Sorbonne, University of Paris.

Visit Mingmei at: www.mingmeiyip.com.



RWA/NYC HISTORY: GENESIS

By Maria C. Ferrer

In 1979, a group of romance writers and an editor met at a writers' conference in Houston, Texas. The conference totally ignored the romance genre, so these enterprising women banded together to start a group of their own (December 1980). These women were authors Rita Clay Estrada, Rita Gallagher, Parris Afton Bonds, Sondra Stanford and Peggy Cleaves; and editor Vivian Stephens. In June 1981, RWA held its first conference and it was a huge success. By 1982, RWA Chapters were being formed.

Today, RWA National has more than 10,000 members, and 145 chapters around the world and online. One of those chapters is RWA/NYC.

The Romance Writers of America / New York City, Inc. (aka RWA/NYC) was founded in 1985 by Nora Siri Bock and friends Sarah Gallick, Teresa Grazia and Kathryn Hayes. And with the help of the Hudson Valley (NY) Chapter, who paid our chapter fee, RWA/NYC was born. From the beginning our mission has been the same: to promote the romance genre and to help and support our members on their road to publication.

Early chapter meetings were at the CBS cafeteria since Nora was Walter Cronkite's administrator. (Cronkite was a famous news correspondent.) Members were recruited at writers' conferences around the city, and by word of mouth. Slowly and surely, chapter membership grew.

A funny story. One Saturday, during a Chapter meeting there was a fire in the CBS building and the everyone was evacuated, except RWA/NYC members. There was no sound system in the cafeteria, and since we were behind closed doors, no one remembered we were in there. After a while, I went out to check on why there were no new arrivals. I found the building strangely empty. There was no guard at the front desk so I stepped out into the street to barricades at the end of the street.

I don't know who was more surprised -- me at the barricades or the police officer who ran to my aid. He accompanied me downstairs to the cafeteria and escorted us all out of the building. Needless to say there was a sound system in the cafeteria the next month.

Our Chapter has met in lots of different places since those early days. Once Cronkite retired, we lost our space so we tried lots of different locations for our meetings, including a dance studio, a theatre, a diner, a law office conference room and finally, rental space at TRS -- first in midtown for about 10 years; now downtown.

This year, RWA/NYC celebrates 30 years as a chapter. It's a big milestone for us.

It's a time to remember our Founding Mothers -- Nora, Sarah, Teresa and Kathryn. Nora moved to Florida and fell off the radar; Sarah lives in New York and wrote the *New York Times* number one bestseller on Oprah; Teresa lives in Staten Island and used to write Regency romances; and unfortunately, Kathryn passed away.

A note about Kathryn, she was a great mentor to many members, and the Chapter honors her memory by having our chapter contest carry her name.

2015 is also a year when our national organization will come to us! This will be the third national RWA conference in our city, but then again, New York has always been "the heart of the Romance Industry."

We have lots of celebrating to do this year. Let's start with a New Year, a new Chapter Board, a 30th Birthday Party, membership in the triple digits, and the best National Conference ever. Champagne all around!♥

Maria C. Ferrer is a charter member of RWA/NYC, which means she's been a member since 1989. She has served as Chapter Secretary, Chapter President and Newsletter Editor; and was named Member of the Year twice. In 1992, Maria was awarded the RWA Regional Service Award, and served as Region 1 Director on the RWA National Board from 1994-1998. Maria will be sharing chapter stories in this column during the year so stay tuned.

RWA/NYC Presidents

1984-1986 -- Nora Siri Bock
 1987 -- Theresa Grazia
 1988 -- Sarah Gallick
 1989-1994 -- Maria C. Ferrer
 1995 -- Rita Madole (deceased)
 1996 -- Sylvia Baumgarten
 1997-1999 -- Irene Kleeberg (deceased)
 2000-2003 -- Michael Powaznik (deceased)
 2004-2007 -- Elizabeth K. Mahon
 2008-2011 -- Karen Cino
 2012 -- Lise Kim Horton
 2013 -- Maria C. Ferrer
 2014-2015 -- Ursula Renée

2015 RWA/NYC BOARD OF DIRECTORS



President – Ursula Renée

In 2008, Ursula Renée went from wishing to doing when she purchased a digital SLR and registered for a photography class. Armed with the knowledge she obtained from the class, every weekend she toured New York with her camera until she captured the perfect shot of a sleeping red panda at the Bronx Zoo.

Excited by what she could do when she put her mind to it, Ursula decided to pursue other dreams, including drawing, sculpting and writing. She dusted off the manuscript she completed years earlier and took advantage of the workshops and conferences offered by RWA.

Thanks to the support and encouragement of the members of RWA/NYC, Ursula's debut novel, *Sweet Jazz*, was released on September 19, 2014 by the Wild Rose Press.

As President of RWA/NYC Ursula hopes to offer the same encouragement and guidance she was shown by other RWA members. In 2015 she plans to continue offering informative presentations and workshops that will help authors at all stages of their careers.



Vice President – Kate McMurray

Kate McMurray is an award-winning romance author and 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 active in RWA and has served as president of Rainbow Romance Writers and on the board of RWA/NYC. She lives in Brooklyn, NY. Visit her website at www.katemcmurray.com.



Vice President – Vanessa Peters

Born and bred in Brooklyn, I am a freelance artist and writer of Puerto Rican descent. I have embarked on a journey to complete my first multi-cultural romance novel, I am looking to create a story that reflects the people and the world around me. We now live in a world that is different from what is seen in books. Interracial relationships, and the challenges

associated with them, are rarely presented in literature. With the faces of couples in America changing, and the growing number of interracial relationships rising, this population wants to see itself in books. I am currently working on a multicultural romance set in New York.

Also my work as a professional artist focuses on abstract, as well as impressionist paintings and drawings of the human form. A self-taught artist, I've been engaged in art since childhood, when I began drawing the images I found in my father's old art books. My art captures my vision of my surrounding world and how I see myself in it. It also personifies the human longing - that missing piece that often eludes us in love, friendship, knowledge and creativity. My extensive art portfolio is complemented by a BA in Creative Writing from City College, New York.

Website/Blog www.vanessa-peters.com
Twitter/Instagram @VPetersBKNY



Treasurer – Tamara Lynch

Tamara Lynch is a writer and long-time fashion executive whose lifestyle, relationship, race, and culture pieces have appeared on several webzines including Salon.com, The Huffington Post, TheFrisky.com and CNN.com. She has also contributed to the *Madonna Anthology* *Madonna and Me* published by Soft Skull Press. Writing as Chloe Blaque, her debut romance novel *Survival of the Fiercest* was recently published by Loose-Id LLC.



Secretary – Shirley Kelly

Shirley Kelly has always been a voracious reader. Growing up, her favorite genres were mysteries and romance. Her favorite romances were set in the Regency era. Shirley always knew she'd be a writer, but it wasn't until she joined the RWA in 2009, that she got serious about her craft. Since she's been a member, she's written a Regency novel, Regency and Contemporary erotic short stories, a Contemporary Christmas novella, and a children's story. Shirley is a make-up artist who lives on the Upper West Side of Manhattan. She loves cats, enjoys traveling, watches a lot of TV, and is interested in history and politics. She follows tennis and figure skating, and is a life-long Yankee fan.

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2015 RWA/NYC Board of Directors - continued

Past President – Maria C. Ferrer

Maria has been a Charter Member of RWA/NYC since 1989, and has served as Chapter President, Secretary and Newsletter Editor; and was named Member of the Year three times. On a National level, Maria served as Region 1 Director, National Publicity Chairman, RITA Awards Co-Hostess, and coordinated both the Golden Heart Contest and the Literacy Book signing. She was awarded a Regional Service Award for her efforts. Maria writes contemporary romances under her real name, and erotica under her pseudonym, Del Carmen. Her short stories have appeared in two erotica anthologies – WOMEN IN LUST (Cleis Press) and GEEK LUST (Ravenous Romance), and magazines, including *Star*, *Penthouse* and *Cosmopolitan for Latinas*. Visit her at www.marializaferrer.blogspot.com and www.mydelcarmen.com.

SPRING RETREAT!

April 17, 2015 – April 19, 2015

Inn at Ocean Grove

\$99/night plus tax
Breakfast is included

The Inn at Ocean Grove is a small bed and breakfast on the New Jersey Shore. There are plenty of places in the inn to curl up and write.

Ocean Grove, NJ is the perfect place to get the small town feel for those who want use that setting for a story. It is a short walk to Asbury Park.

There will be writing, brainstorm sessions, critique sessions and more writing.

To reserve a room, you can call The Inn at Ocean Grove at 732-775-8847 and mention you are with Romance Writers of America.

Please let Ursula Renée you plan to attend.

HELP WANTED

Keynotes Production Manager

The production manager will work on the look and content layout of the newsletter; add articles and images and format the page(s); distribute newsletter to membership via email; and upload newsletter to Yahoo Groups and Editors loop. The requirements for a production manager include: creativity, knowledge of MS Word and access to internet. Any design or photoshop or design experience is a plus but not necessary.

Craft Loop Moderator

We need a moderator for the RWA/NYC Craft Loop. This person will be responsible for posting one craft related article a week.

PRO Liaison

The PRO Liaison will encourage members who have submitted to agents or editors to file for PRO membership with National. The PRO Liaison will also moderate the Craft Loop, posting at least once a week craft related articles and answer questions that will help authors improve their skills. The PRO Liaison must have been accepted as a PRO member with RWA.

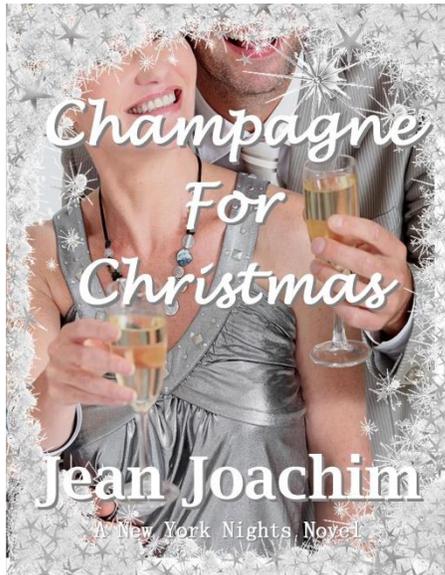
PAN Liaison

The PAN Liaison will encourage members who meet the requirements to file for PAN membership with National. The PAN Liaison will also moderate the Pub Loop, posting relevant information about the publishing industry. The PAN Liaison must have been accepted as a PAN member with RWA.

If you are interested in either position or have questions, please email Ursula Renée at ursula.shand@gmail.com. Thank you for your support.

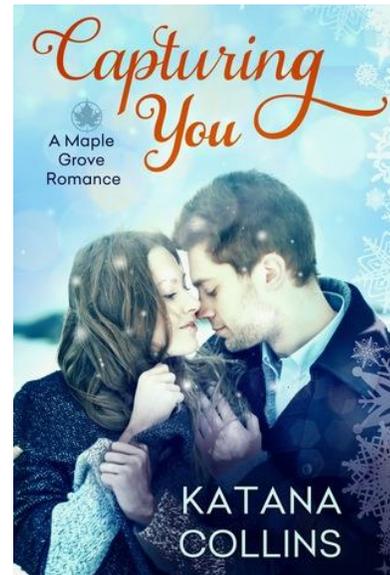
“Hope smiles from the threshold of the year to come, whispering, ‘It will be happier.’”
~Alfred Lord Tennyson~

MEMBERS ON THE SHELF

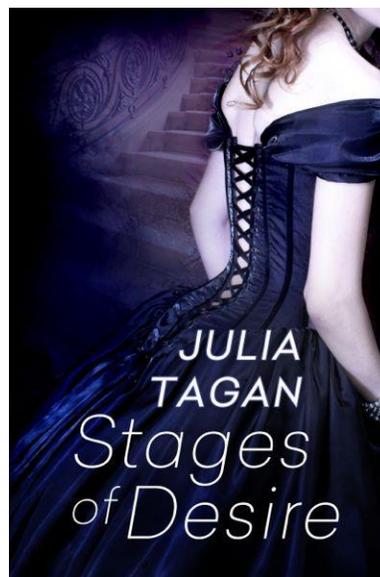


Jean Joachim

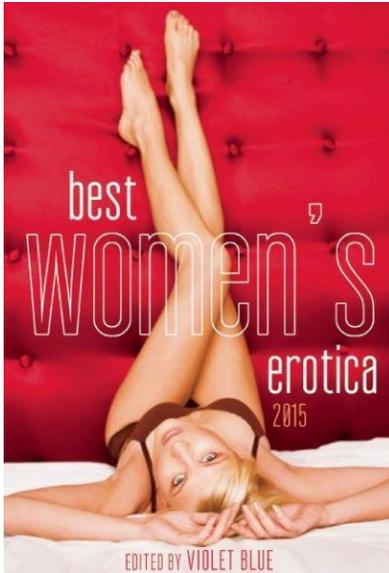
Champagne For Christmas
A New York Nights Novel
Secret Cravings Publishing
November 2014



Colleen Katana, writing as Katana Collins
Capturing You
Maple Grove Romance, Book 1
December 16, 2014



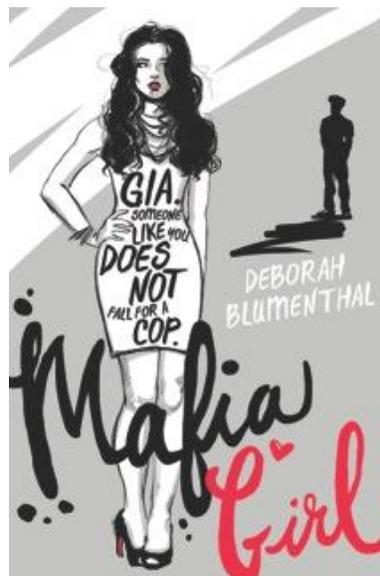
Julia Tagan
Stages of Desire
Published by Kensington Publishing Co.
January 1, 2015



Lise Horton, writing as Lydia Hill
 “A Simple Tryst of Fate” in *Best Women’s Erotica 2015*
 Edited by Violet Blue
 Cleis Press
 January 13, 2015



Sarah Tormey writing as Sara Jane Stone
Hero By Night
 An Independence Falls Novel
 Avon Impulse
 January 20, 2015



Deborah Blumenthal
Mafia Girl
 March 2015

SOCIAL NETWORKING FOR AUTHORS

By Maria C. Ferrer

You've been hearing it all last year -- an author's presence on the social networks helps to sell books.

Yes, it's true! Your Facebook page, Twitter account and Pinterest files are being watched by editors and agents alike. In fact, the number of your friends, likes and retweets can guarantee you a sale.

What does this mean to us authors?

It means that we need to be seen and heard on the social networks.

SEEN

Here are the basic four I recommend:

1. Website -- think of this as your "business card" on the web. This is a stationery location for all your data, including bio, photos, books or works in progress, links to your blog and social networks, excerpts, etc. Keep it updated.
2. Blog -- think of this as your soap box. Chat about your writing, your research, your opinion of the latest episode of *Scandal*, the runway in Paris, etc. You can even do interviews with editors, agents, other authors, etc. These are very popular.
3. Facebook -- great place to catch up with friends and authors and make connections.
4. Twitter -- another great place to chat and one that forces you to be witty in 140 characters or less.

Remember that you can link all your social networks to each other and your website and blog. This way your presence is everywhere.

HEARD

You need to be "heard" on the social networks. Here are some tips on being "heard:"

1. Start by commenting about a TV show. For example, while *"Scandal"* is on, thousands of fans are chatting online. Use the hashtag and join in on the "conversation."
2. Like and retweet comments from other writers, publishers, industry professionals, friends, etc.
3. Make comments of your own to what others are posting. You want to make your presence known.
4. Do interviews with editors, agents, authors and others. Post them on your blog and then promote on your social networks. Again, you want to get your name out there and people commenting on your posts.

Continued on page 14

DIVERSE BOOKS

KNOWING THE NEIGHBORHOOD

By Ursula Renée

Authors take time to research the culture of the diverse characters. They are also careful about stereotypes. However, few realize the importance of researching settings, especially in historical fiction.

It is easy to make assumptions about the history of a neighborhood based on current demographics. Yet, factors, including migration and the economy, can change a neighborhood over time.

In *Wiseguys* by Nicholas Pileggi, the Brooklyn neighborhood of Brownsville was predominantly Italian-American in the 1950s. By the 1980s, the majority of the residents in Brownsville were of African-American and Caribbean descent.

Besides the demographics of a neighborhood, authors should research the history of the businesses in the area. Do not assume an establishment was frequented by the residents of the neighborhood.

From the 1920's through the mid-1930s, Harlem was one of the hottest places to go for entertainment. People travelled uptown to frequent clubs known for their quality entertainment and meals. And, for those who knew where to go during Prohibition, a drink could be included. However, not everyone was allowed to enter.

Though The Cotton Club was located in a predominantly African-American neighborhood, in its early days, people of color were not permitted entrance into the establishment unless they were employed there. Eventually, Duke Ellington protested the policy that barred him from enjoying a meal in the same club he performed. The rules were relaxed to permit affluent people of color entrance.

Besides The Cotton Club, Barron's Exclusive Club and Connie's Inn catered to a predominantly white clientele, while LeRoy's only permitted people of color.

Not every venue that operated in Harlem was segregated. The Savoy Ballroom, where the Lindy Hop became famous, was open to all and it was not unusual to see interracial couples dancing together or simply socializing. Other integrated venues in the 1920s and 1930s were The Apollo and the Lafayette Theatres.

In order to be as accurate as possible, authors need to research neighborhoods as well as characters.

Ursula Renée first interracial, historical romance, SWEET JAZZ, was released in September 2014 by The Wild Rose Press.

THE ETERNAL DEBATE (WELL, IF YOU'RE A WRITER) GRAMMAR VS STYLE

By Isabo Kelly



I am not now, nor have I ever been, a grammar expert. Because of this, I find myself checking on grammar questions and rules all the time—especially

when one editor “corrects” something that another editor doesn’t. The thing I’ve discovered in all this checking is that often people mistake style preferences for grammar rules. I still mistake the two with great frequency (thus, this article).

So first, some definitions:

Grammar is the basic syntax and structure of our language. It allows us to communicate in predictable ways. Language came first. Grammar was the attempt of linguists to define the rules of that language. For most native speakers of any given language, the grammar rules are so ingrained, they are used automatically and without thought. When discussing grammar in relation to the written word, we’re talking about those most basic rules that allow the conveyance of information in a consistent manner. Some good examples of grammar “rules” revolve around sentences and sentence structure. For example:

- Sentences start with a capital letter and end with a punctuation mark.
- In English, basic sentence structure consists of subject, verb, object. Disrupting this order will make a sentence sound weird to a native speaker.
- A sentence needs to express a complete thought, otherwise it’s a dependent clause.
- A single subject requires a single verb (or predicate). For example: The **dog is** cute. If you use “the **dog are** cute”, you’ve broken a basic grammar rule.

Style, on the other hand, is a collection of suggestions on ways to use language so as to refine and improve the readability and understanding of the written word. That sentence, by the way, was grammatically correct but maybe not the best choice stylistically. It’s long and could cause confusion. Sentences that are grammatically correct aren’t automatically the best ways to convey information. That’s where style choices come in. They fill in the gaps left behind by grammar and help refine language to improve understanding. Style is flexible and can depend on a particular house, publication, field, or editor. It also takes reader expectations and context into consideration.

Style changes—sometimes rapidly—while grammar only changes very slowly. Some good examples of stylistic issues are:

- Whether one or two spaces are included after a sentence within a paragraph (this changed to one with the rise of computers and word processing programs).
- Ending a sentence with a preposition—this actually isn’t a grammar rule.
- Whether or not to begin sentences with conjunctions is also a style question; there’s no grammatical prohibition against it.
- Use of active voice versus passive voice—active voice might be preferred in most cases, but passive voice isn’t grammatically “wrong”.

One place where I see grammar and style often confused is in comma usage. One hotly debated “comma rule” is the Oxford comma (also known as serial comma or series comma)—this is the comma that comes before the conjunction in a list. For example: dogs, cats, and pigs. In my school days, this comma was *always* used and taught to us as a rule. Years later, this comma was dropped by many publications (the story, as I heard it, was that newspapers dropped it to save valuable column space, and this passed on to other types of publications).

Adherents to this new “rule” are adamant that the comma before the conjunction is no longer correct. Except it isn’t a rule. It’s a style choice. Whether to use it or not differs depending on the guide you consult.

So how does this affect the average writer?

First, writers should try to learn the difference between basic grammar and style choices. This will save you many headaches and heartaches. It will also give you some perspective when an editor insists something needs to be written a certain way. If it’s grammar, you should probably listen. If it’s style, you’ll need to decide if the change is in keeping with your voice and/or changes the meaning of your prose.

Comma style choices can often change meaning and so must be watched. You might be using passive voice on purpose and changing to active voice would destroy the point you’re trying to make. Splitting your infinitives could have a better dramatic effect and therefore be better stylistically (“...to boldly go where no one has gone...” just sounds more exciting than “...to go boldly...”).

Second, if you’re writing for a publisher or a particular publication, knowing their house style will make your life easier and your work look very professional. It’s important to remember, though, that no one style is “right” or “wrong”. These guides are put together to make things consistent within

house. But again, the “rules” are choices made by the publication, not necessarily “rules” of grammar.

Third, when in doubt, default to a commonly used style reference book (for example, The Chicago Manual of Style’s most recent edition is frequently used for book publishing style questions). This will get you close to the style most editors are expecting to see.

Finally, if you choose the self-publishing path, understand that for consistency, and your own piece of mind, you will have to make style decisions which may or may not adhere to other style guides. This will be a particular issue when hiring editors. These style decisions might just be preferences (like whether or not to use the comma before a “too” at the end of a sentence—some editors hate that comma; others consider it required). The decisions might also affect your voice in a serious way. The last thing you want is to have your voice destroyed by a well-meaning editor. In fact, it might behoove you to write up your own “house style guide” which will not only keep you consistent but will be something you can share with anyone you hire. This will make their jobs easier as well as save you a lot of STETing and/or rejecting in Track Changes.

For any writer trying to ensure readers “get” the picture they’re attempting to convey, both style and grammar are extremely important. However, it’s also important to know the difference between the two. Grammar “rules” should generally be something you adhere to so that readers can easily decipher your prose. Style is flexible and *will* change. Understanding both, will allow you to tell stories in the clearest language so that readers can immerse themselves in your worlds. And when you choose to break a “rule”, be it style or grammar, you’ll know exactly what you’re doing.

For more on this topic, start with these two articles:

<http://michaeljmcdonagh.wordpress.com/tag/difference-between-grammar-and-style/>

<http://www.quickanddirtytips.com/education/grammar/strunk-and-white>

Isabo Kelly is the author of multiple fantasy, science fiction, and paranormal romances. Most of her work, including her most recent fantasy romance WARRIOR’S DAWN, has benefited greatly from someone else having a style guide in place. For more on Isabo and her books, visit her at www.isabokelly.com, follow her on Twitter @IsaboKelly, or friend her on Facebook www.facebook.com/IsaboKelly

MY WRITING DEN©

by Maria Piork

In a perfect world all writers would get eight hours of restful sleep, would never suffer writer’s block, and would never be in a lousy mood. No writer would ever be awakened at night by a sick child or a pet, never have an extra glass of wine or have a fight with a spouse.

I don’t think too many of us live in that perfect world, I certainly don’t... Two nights ago I slept funny and my back is hurting me. These past few months I’ve missed the gym more times than I care to admit. And, despite my flu shot, I’m coming down with ‘something’. In short, I’m grumpy.

So, how do you motivate yourself to write when you really don’t feel like it? Me? I trick myself, and I bet some of you do, too.

Let me explain:

--Treat writing seriously.

Now that my children are adults, my weekends are pretty much mine to do as I please, so what do I do? Saturdays and Sundays I get up early, shower, put on presentable clothes, and I sit at my computer and write, or edit, or brainstorm, or research, something. I don’t allow the thought of it being a weekend to prevent me from writing. When I act and dress the part of a person who has important things to do it helps to get me in a disciplined state of mind.

--Reward yourself.

I cannot sit at a computer and write for long periods of time. So, I set up writing spurts which help to not only boost word count, but also help with motivation.

For me, 10-15 minutes of fast writing is a fair measure. And, once I’ve reached the 10-15 minute mark, I reward myself, I get up, stretch, refill my coffee cup, goof off on the Internet for a few minutes, check email. Then, I begin another 10-15 minute writing spurt; rinse, repeat.

Whatever you do be sure to choose the reward that works best for you and your lifestyle this will keep you motivated throughout the writing spurt process.

--Evaluate

At the end of a timed writing session, ask yourself: Did you say on topic? Did you achieve your targeted word count? Depending on your energy level, can you write some more?

My deepest motivation: I want to make a living as a writer. So, you see, I have a vision and a ten-year plan. And if my dream of being a commercial fiction writer is to ever materialize, I have to work and work hard, harder than the average writer out there.

THE SCOOP ON SCRIVENER

By Fiona Kirk

The must-have software for writers.

For my first historical romance, I wrote the manuscript using Word and stored most of my research in a manila folder. Whenever I needed to find a quick fact – for example, a drawing of a dress my heroine might wear to a ball – I had to rummage through a fairly large stack of papers. More often than not I'd get sidetracked and lose my train of thought (not difficult to do!).

So when an author friend mentioned that the writing software Scrivener was on sale just as I was formulating the plot of my second historical, *Stages of Desire*, I figured I'd check it out.

Now, I am no techno-whiz, and the thought of learning a new program was daunting. But I'd read so many writers and journalists rave online about Scrivener, I figured there was something to it. Two years and two books later, the benefits far outweigh any reservations I might have had.

With Scrivener, each book is saved as a "project." On the left hand side of the screen is a list of icons you've created for that project. Some are chapters or scenes, others might be folders called "Research," "Characters" or "Locations," where you can store Word docs, templates, photos, or whatever else you might need. To the right of that is a split screen.

I type my latest scene on the top screen. When I need to find a photo of a castle that I wanted to use as a place setting, or I can't recall a minor character's name, I simply click on the bottom screen, then on the pertinent folder or document. Shazam: the photo or my list of characters is right in front of me. No rummaging, no searching, instant answers.

Even websites can be saved in folders. My hero in *Stages of Desire* is working on a cure for malaria during the course of the book, and whenever I needed to check out the "history of malaria" website for a quick fact, I could access it without switching to a web browser and covering up the page I was working on.

When the manuscript is ready to be sent out, hit the "Compile" command and it pops up as a Word doc on your desktop, formatted exactly how you like it. I followed the tutorial when I first got it (which has a witty, fun tone to it), and then played around until I felt comfortable.

Continued on page 14

DON'T LET THE NANO 15 WEIGH YOU DOWN

By Lisa Siefert

Did you participate in the National Novel Writing Month (NaNoWriMo)? For those of you who are not familiar with it, NaNoWriMo, or as it is sometimes affectionately referred to: NaNo, is the annual event for writers everywhere to band together for the month of November and crank out 50,000 words.

For most of us, writing output at that level requires intense amounts of sacrifice for anything non-writing related. This list of neglected items could include cooking, laundry, dishes, TV, exercise and even sleep. No task is too small nor too big to go on the do-it-after-NaNo-list.

For my first NaNo in 2012, I aspired to write like the girl on the right, surrounded by nutritious, low-calorie fruits and snacks, but I ended up with



something closer to the girl on the left. The NaNo advice gods preached take-out food and microwavable meals to make it through the month. Another NaNo guru advocated enlisting the help of family members to take over meal preparation. Since the only family member in the Siefert apartment other than myself is Hoppy, my miniature pincher, I interpreted NaNo as the green light I needed to indulge my every fast food, pizza ordering and take-out desire I had.



The end result was reminiscent of the dreaded Freshman 15. To be clear, I didn't gain the entire 15 pounds in one month but over the course of both November and December. December brought great feelings of pride and accomplishment from winning NaNoWriMo the month prior so I decided to keep the party going with more of the same: lots of sitting around with my laptop, tons of rich, can't-put-it-down food and little to no sleep. Not only did I feel productive and prolific, I had the word count to prove it. Unfortunately, I also had the extra weight, unbuttonable pants and double chin to show for it.

It took me over a year to take off what only took two months to put on. This is pretty typical of weight gain/loss. If you remember the guy from Super Size Me who gained 20 pounds from eating McDonald's every day for an entire month, he also had to work for over a year to take off the weight. And that was with the help of his vegan, yoga-loving girlfriend to guide him. It ain't easy.

Continued on page 15

2014 HOLIDAY BRUNCH



THE LONG AND THE SHORT OF IT

By Racheline Maltese

Naturally, I have about two different lengths I write at: 3,000 words and 70,000 words. While my co-author and I have sold pieces at both of those lengths, we've learned quickly that being able to produce stories at a lot of other lengths is also valuable, not just in terms of creating material to submit to publishers but in terms of creating stories that can act as a gateway into our other work.

In many ways, at 12,000 words *Evergreen* is the story my co-author and I never meant to write. It's set between the first and second books in our LGBT romance series, and it focuses on the relationship between secondary and tertiary characters. It's also not a length that's natural for us as writers.

But part of how *Evergreen* will ultimately succeed for us has to do with writing at that length we hadn't previously explored. With 12,000 words we found enough room to show character and conflict in a way that hopefully makes readers want to know more, while also giving them a very clear HEA.

For me, learning to write at different lengths has come from two things: My background in journalism and my love of television. Journalism teaches me that there's always a simpler way to say something if I need to save a few words or sentences. Television teaches me that story structure varies by show length. In the U.S., a half-hour network comedy is 22 minutes when you account for commercials. A cable comedy without commercials will often run a little longer. A 27-minute show without a commercial break has a very different structure than a 22-minute show with several. These stylistic differences become even more pronounced when you look at hour-long and movie-length programming.

To write a shorter mid-series story that would also stand alone, Erin and I quickly realized we'd have to write a "monster of the week" episode designed to fall between season 1 (that is, book 1) and season 2 (book 2, which is out in January) of our series. Once we understood the story's function and structure in terms of the television we'd been watching our whole lives, it became much easier to figure out what needed to be told and how. It also became easier to understand what pieces of the story we'd have to hold back for another occasion.

For writers who want to branch out from their natural storytelling lengths, there is no quick answer. Like anything in writing, sometimes you just have to hammer at it until it works. But the mental exercise of imagining your stories (and other people's) in different formats helps build the muscles

that can have you writing -- and selling -- at different lengths.

Social Networking For Authors - continued

Now before you run off and sign up for every social network in the universe, let's be realistic. Before catching up with all the social networks, let's look at our writing schedule.

Some people recommend posting at least five times a day; others recommend five times a week. I recommend studying YOUR writing schedule and THEN making the best choice for you. But note that even once a day is fine.♥

Maria C. Ferrer is RWA/NYC's Blog Mistress. She is very interested in increasing her presence on the social networks, and is willing to share her findings. Maria hopes others will share as well.

The Scoop On Scrivener - continued

Of course nothing is perfect, and Scrivener does have its quirks. The spell check feature isn't as good as Word at catching minor typos like double spaces, so I always check again after it's been compiled into a Word doc. The upside? I can write fast and accurately and editing is a breeze, with easy access to every scene and chapter without having to scroll through a long Word document.

So take your writing to the next level and check out Scrivener. You can try it free for 30 days before committing. More info at <https://www.literatureandlatte.com/trial.php>.

Happy writing!!

Fiona Kirk writes historical fiction under the pen name Julia Tagan. A journalist by training, she enjoys weaving actual events and notorious individuals into her historical romances. Her Regency romance, STAGES OF DESIRE, releases January 5. For more info, visit juliatagan.com. You can also find her on Facebook at www.facebook.com/julia.tagan and Twitter @juliatagan.

THE GIDDY GRAMMARIAN

By Lisbeth Eng

“Coulda, Woulda, Shoulda...”

You may not be familiar with the term “modal verb” but we use them every day. In fact, I’ve just used one in the prior sentence.

Modal verbs are auxiliary (“helper”) verbs used to modify the main verb in a sentence, and to express modalities such as obligation, ability, permission and possibility. Though not an exhaustive list, here are a few common examples:

Can – ability – “I can write grammatically correct sentences.”

May – permission or possibility – “May I please have another piece of pie?” “He may be able to help you with that.”

Must – obligation – “You must complete the form in order to receive a refund.”

Should – obligation or advice – “One should always be polite when asking a favor.” “You really should read this novel; I think you’ll like it.”

Would – request – “Would you please wait in line until you are called?”

Modals are not conjugated the way primary verbs are. For example, you don’t add an “s” in the third person singular. “They run; he runs,” but not “They can; he cans.”

Words such as “would” can also be used conditionally, such as in the following example.

“Would you please pass the salt?” The implied condition to passing the salt is that the passer is willing to oblige. People often say, “Can you pass the salt?” to convey the same idea, but “you can” literally means “you are able to.” Of course, I am able to pass the salt but perhaps I don’t wish to. If you are asking for a favor, even a small one such as passing a condiment, “would” is more polite than “can.” You don’t want to imply that the favor will be granted, only that you would like it to be.

Similarly, one should not substitute “can” for “may” when asking permission. “Can I borrow that book when you are finished reading it?” Well, of course, you are able to borrow it, but that doesn’t mean I’m going to lend it to you. It is much nicer (and more accurate) to say, “May I borrow that book?”

E-mails, text messages, tweets and other abbreviated forms of communication are notorious for misstatements of this kind. Therefore, please be so kind as to take a few extra seconds to write “may” or “would,” and help make the cyber world, as well as the material one, a more courteous place.

Lisbeth Eng works as a Compliance Officer in the financial industry by day and writes historical romance by night. She holds a bachelor’s degree in English, and speaks a smattering of German, Italian and French. Please visit her at www.lisbetheng.com.

Don’t Let The Nano 15 Weigh You Down – continued

If you too suffer from the NaNo 15, the NaNo 5 or some positive numbered derivation thereof, here are some tips to take it off:

1. Get 8 hours of sleep – Lack of sleep increases your cortisol levels, thereby increasing your appetite and encouraging your body to retain fat.

2. Surround your writing area with only fruits + veggies – They pack a lot of nutrients, live enzymes and fiber creating a fuller feeling of satisfaction and take up space that would otherwise have been used for chips, crackers or cookies. And “I can’t stop eating this raw broccoli,” said no one, ever.

3. Invest in access to fun cardio classes – This could be a gym membership, subscription to streaming fitness videos like the Daily Burn, a set of Beachbody DVDs or a fitness app on your phone. Make it easy and make it something you’ll enjoy.

I still love the idea of NaNo but now I’m a reformed NaNo Rebel. Yes, there’s actually a section in the NaNo forums dedicated to those who don’t said moniker. My new mantra is pretty simple: Fitness first, words second. If I don’t have time to workout and eat right, then I don’t have time to write.

I’m not as prolific as I was before but I’m also much happier and healthier.

For more fitness based tips for writers, go to www.fitandwordygirl.com

“I hope that in this year to come, you make mistakes. Because if you are making mistakes, then you are making new things, trying new things, learning, living, pushing yourself, changing yourself, changing your world. You’re doing things you’ve never done before, and more importantly, you’re doing something.”

~Neil Gaiman~

SIXTEEN CHAPTERS IN ONE PAGE

By Mac Perry

Almost all stories are the same story told in different ways, because all stories follow a certain unconscious, cross-cultural mythic structure. Joseph Campbell examined myths cross culturally and tied in Carl Jung's theories to help us understand mythic story structure, developing *The Hero's Journey*. Christopher Vogler and Blake Snyder also wrote popular guides using the same principles. The one-page template I have provided combines the necessary ingredients from each of these sources, to develop a solid, character-driven plot.

How does it work? Commonly understood myths are populated with archetypes, which are the basis for most popular characters. Understanding basic archetypes can help you understand your character's conflicts and where the story needs to go. Once you have cast the archetypes you'd like to work with the conflict just keeps on coming, and the story practically writes itself. For example, Chiefs are known for their decisiveness. A Boss might see the man's decision as just plain wrong if it clashes with hers. A Professor will think a man foolish for not gathering information before acting, and be more concerned with how he came to a decision, than the nature of the decision. Throw them all on the bridge of a starship and voila, you have *Star Trek's* Captain Kirk and his crew.

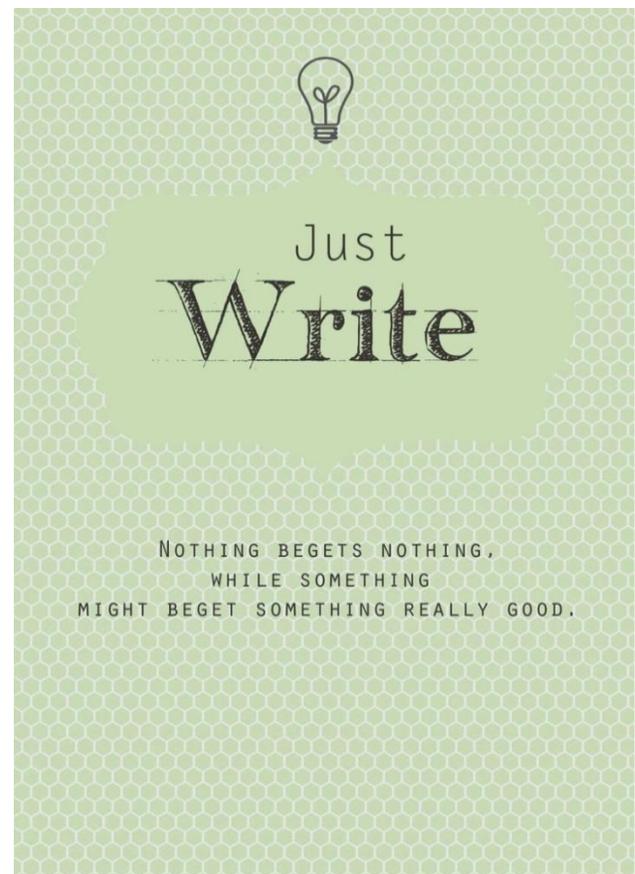
It is important to consider the basis of each archetype's conflicts and make sure they butt up against their internal obstacles at every external turning point in the story. Roughly, these turning points should include the character's Ordinary world, an Inciting incident, The call, the character's Refusal of the call, a major crisis leading to her ultimate acceptance of the call and the First Turning point, a Second Turning Point, a Third Turning Point, the Black Moment, and the Resolution.

Remember, *The Hero's Journey* leads up to a crisis where the protagonist must take a leap of faith, allowing him or her to change for the better, and "return with the Elixir." From an example I used in a previous article: Prince Charming must achieve three things in order to take a leap of faith and find peace within himself and with the Princess. 1) He must shed his beliefs about nobility and worthiness and realize there is more than one way to go about proving those things. 2) He must shed his stubborn independence, and ask for help. 3) He must allow himself to be emotionally vulnerable, allowing the Princess to protect and rescue him for once, because he *is* worthy of it. His 'elixir' is not only the Princess, but his own self regard.

Sixteen chapters is simply the way I chose to organize these essential elements, but each

turning point could take more than one chapter. As long as you have an understanding of your character's developmental phases, you are well on your way to a solid plot. You're welcome.

Mac Perry is a creative arts therapist and adjunct writing and research professor at Pratt Institute. When she isn't corralling her young child she is scribbling away at passion's pursuit. To learn more, please visit www.macperry.com.



STORY ARC/CHAPTER REQUIREMENTS

CHAPTER 1	CHAPTER 2	CHAPTER 3	CHAPTER 4- First Turning Point
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Opening Hook ▪ Ordinary World ▪ Cute Meet ▪ GMC ▪ Subplot Intro ▪ Heart ▪ Devices (possibly, if inherent) ▪ Hook to Inciting Incident 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Inciting Incident ▪ Call to Action ▪ Hint at Strengths and Weaknesses ▪ Stakes (what will he/she fight for and what will he/she run from?) ▪ Hook-what will he/she do? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Refusal of the Call ▪ Encouraged and redirected by a mentor ▪ Mentor might give advice/device 	Crossing the Threshold <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ <u>Major Crisis</u> : External event leaves him/her no out, must accept the call or suffer loss/death physical/emotional ▪ Accepting the Call ▪ Determination is clear but not confident
CHAPTER 5	CHAPTER 6	CHAPTER 7	CHAPTER 8- Second Turning Point
	Tests, Allies, and Enemies		The Ordeal
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Show the scope of the crisis ▪ Protagonist commits and his/her strengths and weaknesses are assessed and "graded" as are his/her devices and allies 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Raise the stakes and insert complications, (make sure the hero realizes he/she has more to lose) ▪ Include the following: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Heroine uses her skills or tools 2. Thus overcoming internal doubts and fears 3. Villain is foiled and reveals a weakness 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Approach to the Inner most Cave, usually involves the hero assessing the second turning point and making plans ▪ Lesser complications are resolved while others worsen ▪ Romantic interests are admitted and explored 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Reversal of Fortune, heroine falls flat on her face ▪ The Heroine and Hero are ripped apart or the antagonist sets a new fire ▪ Villain strikes a major blow ▪ Right and wrong become blurred
CHAPTER 9	CHAPTER 10	CHAPTER 11	CHAPTER 12- Third Turning Point
Rewards from the Ordeal, could include: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. a physical object, 2. a reconciliation and/or love scene 3. The earning of respect or a title 	The Road Back		Dark Night of the Soul
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Dealing with consequences of the Ordeal ▪ Chase scenes and vengeful forces 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ More tests ▪ Hero realizes something about the Ordinary World, he must or could never go back 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Cuts to core fears internally and externally ▪ Want vs. fear face off ▪ Hero utterly alone ▪ Key to success is completely internal "am I strong enough" ▪ Everything learned before is meaningless-old beliefs are shed ▪ Villain boasts ▪ Secrets are revealed
CHAPTER 13	CHAPTER 14	CHAPTER 15- Black Moment	CHAPTER 16- Resolution
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Villian has gained upper hand: has a weapon, secret, hostage, tool... ▪ Action faster and sequels are shorter ▪ Declarative statements and forecasts 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Subplots revealed ▪ Promises met or failed ▪ Red herrings revealed 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Resurrection ▪ Life and Death moment ▪ Mirrors the Ordeal ▪ Hero commits ultimate act of self sacrifice 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Return with the Elixir ▪ Hero wins ▪ Conflicts overcome ▪ External conflict made clear and won ▪ Need is made clear—before hero knew what he wanted now he knows what he needs

STORY ARC/CHAPTER REQUIREMENTS: BASED ON "THE WRITER'S JOURNEY" AND "SAVE THE CAT"

RWA/NYC CHAPTER MEETINGS

Jan. 3rd	Feb. 7th	March 7th
April 11th	May 2nd	June 6th
July 11th	Aug. 1st	Sept. 12th
Oct. 3rd	Nov. 7th	Dec. 5th

Meetings are held at TRS, 40 Exchange Place, 3RD Floor at noon.

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Membership is at the discretion of the Board. Annual dues are \$40. Dues can be paid at www.rwanyc.com or by check. Make all checks payable to RWA/NYC. There will be a \$20 fee on returned checks.

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Romance Writers of America



New York City, Inc.

Romance Writers of America
New York City, Inc.

RWA/NYC
PO Box 3722
Grand Central Station
New York, NY 10163

www.rwanyc.com
info@rwanyc.com
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Make checks payable to RWA/ NYC.

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