

The Power Of Words: Writing Great Book Descriptions

Samantha Charlton



Your book cover helps to attract attention—but it's your book description that converts browsers to buyers! Despite the importance of book descriptions, writing blurbs for an Amazon product page, or Facebook, or an Amazon Ad, can be a huge challenge for

many authors.

I'm an indie-author and a marketing copywriter, but initially I still found it hard to write sales copy for my books. As the writer, you're sometimes too close to your work to be able to isolate the key elements that a product description requires. But the whole process is much easier if you develop a structure to work from.

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Where to start?

The first thing you need is a HOOK. The hook is that exciting one-liner that grabs the reader. After trial and error, I've discovered the best hooks pack an emotional punch while echoing the genre well. I'm talking about the kind of one-liners that make the hair on the back of your neck prickle.

Movie posters are good examples of this—here are a few classic taglines to inspire you!

- *An adventure 65 million years in the making* – Jurassic Park
- *Reality is a thing of the past* – The Matrix
- *The first casualty of war is innocence* – Platoon
- *She brought a small town to its feet and a huge corporation to its knees* – Erin Brockovich
- *In space, no one can hear you scream* – Alien

And for those of us who write romances, here are two classics!

- *What if someone you never met, someone you never saw, someone you never knew was the only someone for you?* – Sleepless in Seattle
- *He thought that magic only existed in books, and then he met her* – Shadowlands

Back to crafting that description...

I hope I've convinced you of the importance of the HOOK, however there's more to writing sales copy for your novel than just starting well. Here are a few tips for writing a book product description that converts:

- Position your novel! Make it easy for readers to identify if it's the kind of book they're looking for. Make its genre, or sub-genre, super-clear.
- Focus on triggering an emotional response in the reader, rather than summarising the novel's plot.
- Share the conflict. Let readers know what's at stake and why it matters.
- Get right into the story and characters with the first line. The first two paragraphs are to hook the reader, the rest are to convert.
- Use a mix of elements that readers of your genre expect, but with new and interesting twists.
- Research the keywords and categories for your genre and weave them into your description. This technique will help readers find your book on Amazon's search engine.

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The best marketing copy makes you 'feel'—and that's the purpose of your book description or blurb. You want readers to feel excited and intrigued when they read your hook. Draw them into the conflict in your story, make them care about what's at stake for the characters. Your description needs to convince potential readers that this is their next great read!

Focus on getting these elements right (easier said than done, I know!) and you're far more likely to get them to click 'buy now'.

Samantha Charlton has been working as a freelance marketing copy-writer and digital content creator since 2011. She also self-publishes Historical, Contemporary and Fantasy Romance under the pen-name Jayne Castel. In 2016, her novel, DAWN OF WOLVES, was a Kindle Scout winner, and was published by Kindle Press.

For step-by-step details on how to write powerful sales copy for your book, sign up to Samantha's mailing list and download a Book Description Template: www.takemyword.co.nz/blog

Write What You Kind Of Know

Yvonne Eve Walus



We all know the bit of advice: "write what you know". Even if it's boring to you, the adage goes, it won't be boring to the reader. After all, even if you work in a shoe factory, your readers don't, so the shoe factory will be fascinating to them. Right?

Not really. Shoe factories are boring. Sorry if you happen to work in one as your day job, but that's the truth. Of course, your unique writer's voice, your quirky narration style and your super-original plots will make up for the dreary setting. The point is- why make it difficult for yourself? Why not apply your unique writer's voice, your quirky narration style and your super-original plots to a setting more marketable to the agent, the publisher, and ultimately to the audience? I mean, if I had the money to buy only one book, and I had a choice between a novel set in a shoe factory and one set in a fake diamond plant, I'd probably go for the setting that sparkled more. (And I'd be wrong, too. The Glass Menagerie, one of my favourite plays, features a main character who works in a shoe factory. But go and explain that to the hordes of readers who forego your brilliant shoe-factory book in favour of fake diamonds.)

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Exercise the writing muscle every day, even if it is only a letter, notes, a title list, a character sketch, a journal entry. Writers are like dancers, like athletes. Without that exercise, the muscles seize up.

— Jane Yolen

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The second reason not to write what you know too well is your own boredom. Writers often write to escape, to grow, to fly. If you don't like your shoe factory very much, why make yourself visit it again at night in your book? You will have a miserable time, and your prose will show it.

That's not to say you should let your shoe factory experience go to waste. The publishing industry is forever on the lookout for something new: a fresh angle, a different-yet-the-same theme, an unusual set of characters.

So write a story that excites you and set it in a place that you'll enjoy visiting every night for a year. If that means research, learning and armchair travel, so be it. Use what you know sparingly: just enough to add authenticity and originality to your book, but not so much that it overshadows what you actually want to say. Make your protagonist have had experience working in a shoe factory, but now he is a scuba diving instructor. Make the shoe factory boss a secondary character in the book. Like that.

In my own thriller, OPERATION: GENOCIDE (Stairway Press, 2013), I used the setting of the 1980's as something that I knew, but I wrote it with the perspective of the 21st-century knowledge. It was fun to speculate about Beta Max and whether computers were just a passing fad. I also wrote about spies and scientific experiments that could threaten the world. Do I have a lot of knowledge about lethal man-made viruses? Not really. But it was a lot more fun to write about those than even the most designer of shoe factories, that's for damned sure.

Yvonne Eve Walus, a novelist and poet, is a member of generation X. Born in communist Poland, she grew up in the apartheid-time South Africa and now lives in New Zealand with her family. Although writing has always been a big part of her identity, Yvonne obtained a PhD in Mathematics and supplements her income working as a project manager, business analyst and trouble-shooter.

An Author who writes in several languages Yvonne is determined to make it to the New York Times Top Ten. She is a full member of Crime Writers' Association (CWA UK) and Romance Writers of New Zealand (RWNZ). Her books include: MURDER @ PLAY, MURDER @ WORK, and OPERATION: GENOCIDE are set in South Africa and published in USA.

To Learn more about Yvonne visit: <http://www.yvonnewalus.com>

"Great is the art of beginning, but greater is the art of ending."

— Henry Wadsworth Longfellow

"If you write one story, it may be bad; if you write a hundred, you have the odds in your favour."

— Edgar Rice Burroughs

The Welcome Mat

We're rolling out the red carpet this month for another lovely group of new members. Welcome everyone! It's great to have you as part of RWNZ!

Karen Dravitski—Porirua

Jacqueline Lambert—New Plymouth

Elizabeth Price—Kaitaia

Meredith Reece—Tauranga

Lisel van Zyl—Manukau City

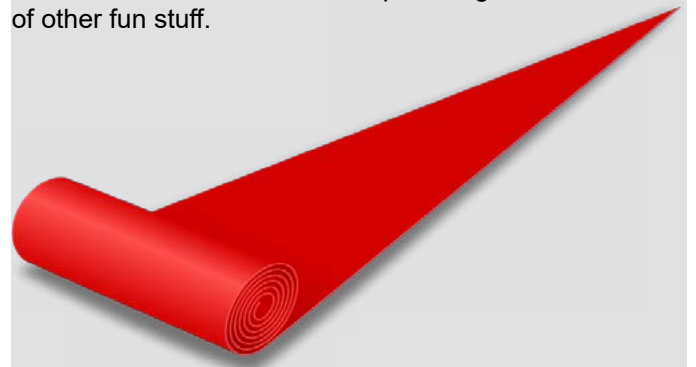
Emma Worseldine—Richmond

You should already have your username and password for the RWNZ site. If not, give Gracie a shout at membership@romancewriters.co.nz and she'll sort you out.

Don't forget to read the INFORMATION FOR NEW MEMBERS page on our website:

<https://www.romancewriters.co.nz/membership/information-new-members/>

Of course, you'll need to login before you can access the members' area, but you'll find information there about how to join up with our Members Only Facebook page and the NZRomance Yahoo loop—along with a whole lot of other fun stuff.



The Final Proof: One Last Look Before We Hit Send

Anne Slight



You've finally finished the writing you've been working on. All you need to do is give it a final proof-read then you will submit, send, print or publish. It's the last hurdle.

Believe me; you need another set of eyes. Fresh eyes, not your own, to help you with this last task. You may choose to pay for a professional service, or use someone in your writing network, or ask a friend. Whatever you do, don't rely solely on yourself. I'll tell you why:

- It is very hard to spot your own mistakes. You tend to see what you think you've written rather than what you've actually written.
- In one of your many edits and rewrites you may have deleted something that impacts on people or events later in your story. But you don't notice it because what you have taken out is still there in your head.
- Because you know all about your characters and their back stories, your brain automatically fills in the gaps when you read. An independent reader will pick up on what is missing or doesn't make sense.
- The parts you have written with the most passion and intensity are the hardest parts for you to look at critically to see how they could be improved.

So, ideally, before you hit 'send', you will get someone to do an initial proofread and copy edit. If you are self-publishing, this is even more vital, as it's all down to you to get it perfect before you go to print. Anyone who thinks self-publishing is a soft option needs to think again!

There are, however, some things you can do yourself to save time and, possibly, money, before you pass on your work to another party:

- Run a spelling and grammar check. Make sure you have selected the correct dictionary (UK or US English, depending on your target market). The spell check is great for picking up hard-to-spot errors but, be warned, it will not show wrong words that are spelled correctly, for example, 'grate' instead of 'great' (yes, I spotted that one recently!).
- Check your facts, especially historical references. If your romance is set in WWII, don't mix up the dates of D-Day and Dunkirk. If your setting is 1850, is your hero going to unzip his trousers, or unbutton them?
- Is your timeline consistent? If a scene specifically

takes place on a Thursday, then four days later it can't be the weekend.

- What about setting? Were your characters frolicking in mid-winter snow last week, but sunbathing at the beach this week, in the same location? Does Johnny live ten kilometres from Suzie's house, but he walks there in five minutes?
- Check your characters for consistency: If Shannon 'flashes her sapphire eyes' in one chapter, make sure they're not 'unfathomable pools of black' later in the story, or that your hero's Aussie slang doesn't suddenly morph into Oxford English.

Tip: Keeping your own Style Guide, with running notes and page references about characters and events, can be a really helpful way of keeping track of all of this. And it is also useful to compile character profiles — a simple card system can work well for this.

Other things to watch out for:

- Unnatural dialogue. Read it out loud. Do people really talk like that? Of course, you will mostly omit the stumbling and hesitations of normal speech, but it should still sound natural. If it seems forced and stilted, keep trying it out loud until it sounds right. You could ask a friend to be a dialogue partner.
- Too many unnecessary adjectives and adverbs used to prop up weak nouns and verbs. Use strong nouns and verbs instead. Rather than: She walked angrily out of the kitchen and shut the door loudly behind her. Try: She stormed from the kitchen, slamming the door behind her.
- Over-use of exclamation marks. In most cases your writing should be emphatic enough not to need the added exclamation.
- Too many clichés. They are boring. Such as: in the nick of time; a rough diamond; head over heels; clear blue sky. Also, pet words and phrases that show up with regular monotony. One of my own weaknesses is a bit. I'll bet you know what your ones are too – do a word search for them.
- Passive voice – Where possible use active voice (subject is doing the action) rather than passive voice (action is being done to the subject). Your writing will have more impact and immediacy. Compare the title of The Beatles' hit: She came in through the bathroom window – (Active); with: The bathroom window was the way she entered the house – (Passive). I don't think that version would have made it onto the charts!

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- Inconsistent points of view – If the first four chapters are all from your heroine's POV, don't suddenly switch to the postman's POV half-way through chapter 5.

Whoever your intended audience is, you want your writing to be well-received. You may have a great story, but if it's riddled with errors and inconsistencies it could end up in someone's 'too hard' pile. Don't let this happen to you.

Anne Slight is a freelance proof-reader and copy editor. She lives in the seaside town of Whangamata, in the Coromandel, with her husband, Richard, and her ungrateful black cat, Bella. She loves working with both published and aspiring authors. Anne is happy to do a basic proofread, or she will work with you and mentor you through every step of your writing process. "I like to immerse myself in your story so I see it through your eyes; that way I can make it the best it can be, while respecting your own unique voice." Find out more about Anne at www.wordworm.co.nz

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From The Editor



Recently I had one of those experiences where; in a spate of coffee fuelled people watching, I played 'How Many Ways to Begin Your Next Novel'. This involves observing the world around you and using the people and the environ-

ment to create the opening lines of your next 1,2,20 novels. I was on a roll, but try as I might I couldn't get beyond the initial idea. Nothing seemed to stick.

As I sat there in a state of frustration I remembered a book my father read to my brother and I as children. As we sat in our jim-jams, scrubbed clean-ish we couldn't wait for this new adventure to begin. Dad opened the

cover of the new brilliant blue hard backed book and immediately we were pulled into the most delicious of adventures. That is until the story abruptly stopped! One page in barely past an introduction and it was over! Then he began another story, once more we engaged only for the same thing to happen again, and again, and again!

Well my brother and I were not amused. We felt cheated by the authors of these potential child masterpieces. My father tried to placate us telling us that the book was designed to spark our imaginations to set us on a journey that we ourselves could complete. We weren't buying it. As far as we were concerned we'd been robbed. Didn't the author care enough to complete the story? Was their manuscript attacked by an overzealous editing fairy? Or scarier still had they lost their imagination and suddenly no longer had any idea how their story should end! [Cue the horrified music].

That has been my writing experience in the last couple of weeks, I have a good start and middle it's the end I am having trouble with. When this happens I do two things. One put my fingers in my ears, two try to deflect from my angst by starting other novels and finally, rework the beginning of the book to the point of near death.

In this month's edition of Heart to Heart – several of the articles focus on what happens when one is close to, or about to publish. Such dilemmas seem a long way off. Yet stories on, marketing final edits and publications, stand as a reminder that one day I too may be focused on my end product and not my beginning - Oh *Happy Day!* To help me get there I have; alongside several others in our local chapter, signed up to NaNoWriMo. This stands for **National Novel Writing Month (NaNoWriMo)** and is described as a fun, seat-of-your-pants approach to creative writing.

Basically on the 1st of November, I and participants across the country and the world will begin working towards the goal of writing a 50,000-word novel by 11:59 PM on the 30th of November.

Valuing enthusiasm, determination, and a deadline, NaNoWriMo is for anyone who has ever thought about writing a novel. So here's looking forward to a whole new level of angst! Feel like taking the challenge – finishing that book? Then sign up to <https://nanowrimo.org>

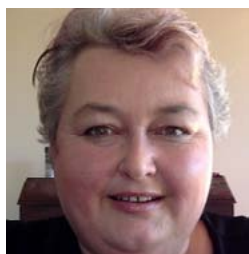
Happy Writing!

Share the Love,

Megan

Determining Your Author Type

Imogene Nix



Recently, I flew over the ditch to New Zealand for the RWNZ Conference. I had a ball, but somewhere, during my time in Rotorua I found myself on more than one occasion, chatting with authors who told me they were “creatives.” It put me in a sticky position, because, you see, I believe that

there are two distinct kinds of author and I fit into the second category.

The first is the Creator/Author and the second the Business Author.

The Creator/Author revels in knowing they've not just produced their book, whilst also being so excited to see their book sell. When you ask them, however, what exactly their book owes them, they look at you blankly. They are usually infinitely attuned to their genre and tend to be great authors.

The Business Author; who is also a creative, is focused on the tin tacks. They need to keep track of the costs and may keep numerous spreadsheets. These are the ones that can look you in the eye on request and quantify what the production costs for their title are, break down the specifics of the cost and even know, down to the penny what the marketing costs are.

Now, in case you think I'm taking this cheap or having a pot shot at other authors, please don't think that's the case. In fact, some of my good friends are from the first category, but for me, while there is the excitement of the sale and the thrill of creation, to me this is a business.

A small sole operator business.

See, for me, I want to be more than just an author, I want to be successful. There are many layers of success. It might mean that until my book achieves my “earn out” figure, I can celebrate a successful release, a fabulous cover or five star reviews. As I draw near to clearing the magic figure of “earn out” the excitement builds. I track my sales and the ranking.

We hear the term “earn out” and usually associate it with books that are traditionally published but that figure is no different for any self-published author. I'm going to peel back the covers on my book *Inheritance Of The Blood*

so you can see the breakdown of costs. My initial “earn out” is \$AUD797.60 and this doesn't include my marketing. (I haven't included them as at this stage there is still some fluctuations to the final figure.) I will also account for the figures in the print earn out later on in the article.

Inheritance of the Blood is an 86K novel so my editing costs were the largest chunk. I'm also exceptionally lucky in that my editor is also one of my besties, so I get “mates rates” and she charged me \$AUD600. (Which, by the way, is an awesome figure and yes, she also edits for a publishing house with a fantastic reputation!)

The cover art cost \$145 (the most I've ever paid!!) and was an “off the shelf” but it was the perfect fit for the book. Often I'll have another of my besties who happens to be a cover artist do my work. Trust me, his work is to die for, but he charges me at a lower rate too as we work together to source the images and pull it all together.

2 ISBN's cost \$AUD17.60 for both and I divided an equal share of Vellum (which allows me to do all my own formatting work for print and ebook) between the titles I've released this year to cover the cost. The share for this book was \$AUD35.

So, in order to achieve my earn out figure, I have to **clear** \$AUD797.60 before I can say I've turned a profit on the book. To some, this may seem pedantic, but that \$797.60 has to go back into my account so I can pay for the editing of my next book. My working bank account (and yes, I keep a separate one) is looking slightly battered at the moment as I've since bought paperback copies and will need to recoup their costs too.

30 copies cost me \$AUD283.71 (328 pages in 5x 8 paperback with a white interior and perfect bound and delivered by Ingram Spark) and I have to cover those costs too. So, while the books actually cost me \$AUD9.46 each, I will need to set a price that allows me to sell them reasonably quickly and cover the costs of cash handling, swag etc. at an upcoming signing in order to draw a line under the outlays. Initial cost for the paperback will be \$AUD18 and will drop at around the 6-month mark to \$15 conference cost and \$16 elsewhere. (In the spirit of making it easy, I need to sell 16 copies to recoup my costs. The other 14 copies will help to offset the costs of my book production.

I follow the same principle with my swag/promotional

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items. Because it's a business, every outlay has to be covered somehow. In this day and age, it's far too hard to make money without knowing where it goes and how we've spent it.

So, here's the thing. Now that you've read a little about the way I've gone into organisation of my business (remember, I'm a member of the second author type) which kind are you? Are you in it as a business? Can you quantify how much it costs to produce your titles or are you a creative?



Imogene is published in a range of romance genres including Paranormal, Science Fiction and Contemporary. She is mainly published in the UK and USA due to the nature of her tales. Imogene is a member of a range of professional organisations worldwide, and believes in the mantra of mentoring and paying it forward. She loves to drink coffee, wine & eat chocolate and is parenting 2 spoiled dogs and a ferocious cat along with her husband and 2 human

daughters. Find out more about Imogene at her website www.imogenenix.net

How Did I Do That?

Daphne Clair de Jong



Some time ago (pre-internet), I read a romance in which the British heroine holidaying abroad reclined romantically against a bank of bougainvillea. Ouch!

I once resurrected my fictional heroine's father, presenting him alive (and I did the kicking, to myself!), several chapters after I'd said he was long dead. An alert reader pointed out my mistake.

A local reader corrected my geography when I moved a hotel on a route I use regularly, from one end of the town to the other. Oh dear!

In another book, a word the direct opposite of what I meant survived 13 professional readings by me, editors and copy editors before the published version hit me in the eye. A few books later, after an editor asked for a bucketful of changes, our own eagle-eyed bestselling Frances H discovered my Big Reveal in chapter ten was now given away in chapter two.

Readers may not know about deadlines, all-night re-writes and stressed editors. They do know about consistency and continuity errors.

Most writers and editors are diligent about facts, real or invented. But in the perilous journey from idea to publica-

tion, mistakes cunningly lurk.

Notes about names, hair and eye colour, and any other descriptive details (houses, street plans) will help. My wonderful freelance editor Lesley Marshall makes great lists. She noted when my heroine cleverly hurled her shoes around a corner.

Keeping written track of the time frame can save the heroine from an eleven month pregnancy, or the hero from working an eight-day week. If note-taking interrupts the muse, marking the place with a highlight or symbol and entering details later works too.

Recording these things while writing, either by hand or in a computer document (or try the "comments" function in MS word's Review), helps in the editing phase.

Mistakes arise from not checking facts, by forgetting details already stated, or new plot twists, rewrites, and edits that don't match what is still there. And sometimes by a copy editor unfamiliar with the setting. (The "smoko" my Kiwi hero and heroine shared became a "smoke" although cigarettes were never mentioned).

The sneakiest mistakes weasel in when the writer knows the route, the background or the activity, but disremembers. Or it's some false fact everyone knows.

Telling readers it's not true without lecturing or having a character do so is difficult but not impossible. If it's important to the story or may harm a reader who believes it, e.g. medical details, it needs double-checking through an expert or a reliable source.

Most experts are happy to talk to a writer and may let drop valuable information or advice. Sometimes truth puts a spanner in the words, but it may lead to interesting plot changes, perhaps a better story.

My heroine wearing her "avid green dress" and "cheerfully watching her step" ("vivid" and "carefully") is a forever testament to pre-computer printing methods.

But Spellcheck is not faultless, and even online publishers frown on post-release corrections. Still, we do try for perfection. (Sigh!)



Daphne Clair has written over seventy-five romance novels for Harlequin lines. As Daphne de Jong she has published many short stories and a historical novel, both critically acclaimed in her homeland. She has won the prestigious Katherine Mansfield Short Story Award, has been a Rita finalist and has either finished or won in other contests in several writing fields. To learn more about Daphne visit <http://www.harlequin.com/author.html?authorid=920>

<http://www.harlequin.com/author.html?authorid=920>

Traditional Vs. Indie

Andrene Low



First of all, I'd like to say that this is only my experience with KU. Other authors may have a completely different perspective!

The story of how I went from the former to the latter – and what it cost me.

The majority of us hope for traditional publishing, with indie feeling like a second cousin at best. Certainly that was my take on being published. I remember well the day when I checked my phone, still half asleep, and found the email telling me my manuscript had been accepted by a small publisher in the states. I was on my feet in seconds doing fist pumps, followed by head spins. Then I burst into tears. Tears of relief. Tears of joy. My work had finally been accepted and given the tick of approval.

The publisher I'd been picked up by had been recommended to me by a fellow author as being okay. They were not vain and knew what they were about when it came to getting your book into print. That was good enough for me. I knew getting past the gatekeepers of the big five was nigh on impossible; especially in New Zealand where literary works are still king. My books might be a lot of things, but they most definitely are not literary.

My initial contact with the publishers was brilliant. I can't speak highly enough of my editor, they got my covers designed by a professional who knew my genre, and the books were beautifully laid out. All good... so far.

I got stuck into the second in the series (of three), finding it a lot easier this time around, due in part to my having gained experience as a writer and in knowing I already had a buyer for the manuscript. The publisher had right of refusal on any novel-length works featuring the same characters, something I'd been thrilled to read in the first contract.

Then the date for my first royalty cheque came, and went. I chased this up and was told, "Oh, I thought we'd updated that in your contract. We only pay every six months now as it was too much hassle paying out every quarter." Strange, I'd been brought up to believe contracts are binding. Apparently not.

I waited until the date the revised schedule said I should receive my royalty cheque. And waited. The anticipation was killing me, so you can imagine my chagrin when I

finally got the notification from Pay Pal that I'd received \$58 for the first six months of sales. Sure it was American dollars, but I wasn't living the dream by any means, especially given the effort I'd put into promoting my single title since it had gone live.

It had to get better with two books, surely?

Not a whole lot.

Three books. Three books would bring me in a decent chunk of change, wouldn't they?

Still not living the dream.

About this time I started to press my publisher into looking at a BookBub promotion. I knew that others in my genre who had done them had not only made their money back but also gained thousands in knock-on sales. Nope. They weren't going near that. What about AMS ads? Nope, we can't afford that. The frustration was that I couldn't promote on Amazon myself as I wasn't the publisher, just the author.

That was when I got a lawyer involved. I was only after the rights back to the first in the series, enabling me to promote it and then the publisher could still benefit from the on-sales of books two and three. I thought it was a very open-handed offer. Not that I got any response from the publisher, until I again chased and chased. I made my contact at the publisher's life a living hell with my constant emails. I figured the greater the annoyance factor, the more likely I was to get my way.

Then the publisher did something really weird. They said I could have the eRights to all three books back but that they were holding onto the publishing rights for the paperbacks in order to recover some of the money they had put into the project. The strange thing about this is that my royalties generally paid out 95% in favour of eBooks with my paperback sales being negligible on the first in the series and non-existent for books two and three. I suspect they thought I was going with another publisher. As if!

I grabbed the deal, got my lawyer to check it (an entertainment lawyer this time around), signed it and within hours my eBooks had been taken down from all platforms. That the paperbacks were still being listed as part of my "Excess Baggage Series", a title never covered in

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the original contracts, is something I'm still asking to be fixed. That I've never received any royalties for the last six months my eBooks were with the publisher, I'm prepared to live with. That I had to shell out \$800 for the lawyer hurts, but again, I'm able to live with this.

The hardest thing to deal with has been how it affected my writing, with my love of craft coming close to being killed off. This whole process has made me very gun-shy when it comes to traditional publishing. In the month since I've relaunched the three books, I've already made more than I would through my traditional publisher. I've also been able to play around with how I promote them and get instant feedback as to what is working and what isn't. I'm about to change the covers again, because even though I love them, they're not 100% true to the genre and my publisher won't allow me to use the original covers, nor the final edited version of the manuscripts.

Personally, unless it was one of the big five knocking on my door, I'd be very careful about signing with any publisher and know others who have been similarly burned. Yes, the publisher I went with was brilliant up front, but hopeless when it came to knowing about things like ARC copies, publishers weekly, net galley, street teams. These are all things I've found out since going indie and boy do they make a difference to the traction of your sales.

Sure I've had to pay to learn about these marketing ploys, but I would have thought a company putting themselves forward as a publisher would know these as a matter of course, given it's their job and why they get the lion's share of the royalties. Without that knowledge there seems no point in going traditional. Hell's bells, I've got more followers on twitter and they don't even do a newsletter. I mean, really. (Sorry, rant over.)

So, be careful what you wish for. Go into any agreement with a smaller publisher with your eyes wide open and ask them how they plan on promoting your book after the launch. This, as much as a great cover, top notch editing and the story itself, plays a huge part in how well your book will rank and sell. These days I'm proud to be indie.



Andrene is a member of the NZ Book Festival committee and will be exhibiting at the Festival, 11 November in Auckland www.nzbookfestival.co.nz. Find out more about Andrene by visiting her website www.andrenelowauthor.com or Author.to/ALOW

From The President

I'm on a book deadline again, not that I should complain but I've been quite quiet this month, busy writing.

I wish I was a fast writer but I'm not. My sister just reminded me to get Dragon Naturally Speaking working again! For those who don't know, Dragon Naturally Speaking is a program aimed at accelerating your writing through a series of techniques which seek to get you to write your thoughts, as easily as you speak. My hero and heroine are both introverts and trying to get them to talk to each other is like getting blood out of a stone—but I digress.

October is that funny month. Daylight savings has started and the days are staying lighter for longer but we have had some really diverse weather in Hawkes Bay. Some 24C days and then back down to 13C. I want summer so bad!

Speaking of diversity, don't forget that if you want a voice, then our Heart To Heart editor, Megan, would love to have articles that cover all aspects, and genres, of romance writing. So please drop heart2hearteditor@romancewriters.co.nz an email. It's your chance to have a voice.

At our executive meeting in September there were three main actions from the strategic plan we agreed would be a priority in the next quarter. These are:

- Developing a grant applications process and making at least 1 application during this twelve month term
- Implementing a webinar program - for newbies through to multi-published authors
- Finishing the website – looking at the directory of resources and members

Our webinar program has been developing well with the Executive submitting a grant application in early November to fund the program. Even if we don't get it this year, we will still look at holding a few craft/marketing/publishing webinars. If you have any ideas of who, or what you'd like as a webinar, please feel free to email me president@bronwenevans.com. We would like to hold sessions for all levels of writers from newbies to multi-published.

That's all from me this month! I shall speak to you in November when we will all be thinking that Christmas is coming far too quickly (again) this year. As always, here's to happy and productive writing.



Bronwen Evans,
President

Woos & Hoos

There's plenty to celebrate this month, with this absolutely bumper crop of Woos & Hoos! Well done to everyone!



JC Harroway published EXPOSED with Escape Publishing, available October 4. She has also signed a three-book contract with Mills & Boon for the new line, DARE. <http://amzn.to/2xMjipR>

Gracie O'Neil's new Romantic Suspense series kicked off September 20th with DEADLY REUNION, Book 1 in the Covert Liaisons series. <http://amzn.to/2xuWzK8>



Cheryl Phipps and Talia Hunter have just released a box set BILLIONAIRE EVER AFTER with 20 other authors. Which this month made the US Today Best Sellers List! Congratulations! <http://amzn.to/2pJgjGH>

Samantha Charlton (w/a Jayne Castel) has just released her Epic Fantasy Romance, RULED BY SHADOWS (Book #1: Light and Darkness). <http://bit.ly/2hdULze>



Tracey Alvarez presents book 4 in her Bounty Bay Series with MEND YOUR HEART. <http://amzn.to/2hbZ5yR>

COMING HOME (The Protectors Book 5) Leeanna Morgan. Look for book 6 in the series due out in November. <http://amzn.to/2hdL6oF>



THE MODERN WOMAN'S GUIDE TO FINDING A KNIGHT a debut novel by Anna Klein. <http://amzn.to/2f62Z81>



Karen Winter published WRITING THE ALPHA HERO in August, available on Amazon. <http://amzn.to/2fgxA6B>

R.L. Stedman has released A MEMORY OF FIRE, Book 3 in the Soul Necklace Stories. <http://amzn.to/2wD1Nza>



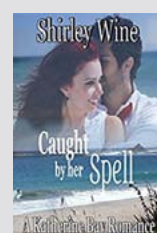
Check out Leah Murray's latest novel EBB TIDE. <http://amzn.to/2xu1UkN>

Louise Groak w/a Louisa George has published THE OTHER LIFE OF CHARLOTTE EVANS, this is a women's fiction book, available from all good e-tailers. <http://amzn.to/2wtoACI>



Robyn Bennett writing as Casey Fae Hewson's new novel, AQUA BAY, available now <http://amzn.to/2wZS7TP>

Shirley Wine has published CAUGHT BY HER SPELL available on Amazon. <http://a.co/2jMuRum>



“Tell the readers a story! Because without a story, you are merely using words to prove you can string them together in logical sentences.”

— Anne McCaffrey



The Theme Scene Challenges invites you to write 300 words to capture the essence of an image or a phrase. This month Kris Pearson steps up to the plate.



Lily daubed and doodled at the big table, loading her brush first with crimson, then ruby, then scarlet. She surveyed the seething mass of jewel-bright tones and wrinkled her nose. It was too vivid and hopeful for the heavy ache in her heart. Andrew no longer bounded into the apartment and pulled her face up for a kiss the instant he found her in the studio. Instead it was a cool “Hi Babe,” from the doorway, followed by a quick retreat.

Lily twisted her head and glared across at the other paintings on the wall. Happy, every one of them. Bright with hope. Filled with swoops of colour, dancing and dazzling. All from the first few weeks of their affair, when Andrew couldn’t get enough of her, or she of him.

She set the brush to soak, determined to cover the bright explosion of red with pure black. Black as her spirits.

Chin on her fists, she breathed in the familiar smells – the turpentine and linseed oil, and the scent of coffee beans from the grounds in her empty mug. None of them brought joy.

Sighing, she picked up her palette knife. The smooth brush strokes were wrong. She needed angry ridges of paint, thick with foreboding and gloom. She squeezed the black straight from the tube, heedless of the cost. The vivid reds seeped through. Thicker and thicker she spread the sooty tide until she’d obliterated every hint of

colour.

Unexpected tears leaked from her eyes, and her shoulders shook as she wept. Desolate, she stabbed the canvas with the knife, slashing right through the fabric, exposing the hidden scarlet beneath. It was as though her beaten and bloodied heart pulsed and yearned from below the blanket of melancholy black.

“Andrew,” she whispered. “Come back to me.”



For more information about Kris Pearson and her books, please visit her websites: <http://www.krispearson.com>; and <http://www.kerripeace.com> or check out her Facebook page: <http://facebook.com/krispearsonauthor>

Interested in taking up the challenge? If you have theme scene prompts, turn them into stories and submit them to H2H for publication in future editions. If you need a prompt(s) please email the editor on heart2hearteditor@romancewriters.co.nz.

“Anecdotes don’t make good stories. Generally I dig down underneath them so far that the story that finally comes out is not what people thought their anecdotes were about.”

— Alice Munro

Introducing Your New (And Returning) RWNZ Executives

Here are the profiles of the new and returning members of the RWNZ Executive for the 2017-2018 year.



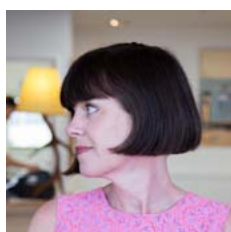
Bronwen Evans President

Bronwen is a *USA Today* Bestselling Historical and Contemporary hybrid author who served as President for the 2016/2017 year. She has also previously held the role as Treasurer, and has been a volunteer on the RWNZ Conference

Committee and co-editor of the Heart to Heart. In her working life she is Chief Executive Officer for the New Zealand Association of General Surgeons, and has been on various boards of small to publically listed Companies. She's excited to be part of a great new Executive team, focusing this year on phase two of the website, grants and sponsorships, and supporting all the amazing RWNZ volunteers in their roles.

Catherine Robertson Vice President

Catherine writes contemporary fiction, and her latest novel is coming out in January. She is active across the New Zealand book industry, as Chair of the Wellington branch of the NZ Society of Authors, the NZSA representative on the Book Awards Trust, and occasional advisor to the NZ Book Council. Of course, her favourite organisation is RWNZ, and she promotes it and our members whenever she gets a chance, through NZ Book Council podcasts, Wellington Writers Week, plus her regular appearances on Jesse Mulligan's RNZ Book Critic slot, and RNZ current affairs show, The Panel. Catherine reviews contemporary fiction, including romance, for The NZ Listener. She's really happy to be back on the Executive, and looking forward to the year ahead.



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Tania Roberts Treasurer

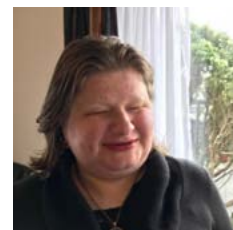
After attending this year's RWNZ Conference, Tania now describes herself as an emerging writer, with one self-published fictionalisation of her family history, one contemporary romance at editing stage

and another two thirds through the first draft.

However, with working full time in her chartered accountancy practice, building a new house, which they are just about to move into and learning the ropes as Treasurer there hasn't been much time for writing. Tania is looking forward to getting the creative juices flowing in her writing room and to wine flowing on her new deck in the sunshine.

Bonnie Mosen Publicity Officer

Bonnie was born on a secret underground military base in Colorado and raised by a family of highly opinionated Siamese cats. No, that's not true, but it did get your attention! She's a Georgia Peach, who has lived all over the South and East Coast of the United States. While in Boston, she fell in love with a Kiwi (man not bird), and was soon whisked off to Wellington with three large suitcases, two laptops, and a dog. Bonnie's been a member of RWNZ since 2014 and writes contemporary romance. She has an extensive background in public relations, having worked for the world's oldest school for training dogs to guide the blind. She now owns Mosen Consulting with her husband. She's a life-long equestrian and serves on the committee for Wellington Group of Riding for the Disabled Association. Bonnie is extremely honoured to be taking over from Wilma McKay as RWNZ publicity officer and is excited to hear new ideas from members on how to spread the word about this great organisation.



Kate O'Keeffe Secretary

Kate is a bestselling author of fun, feel-good romantic comedies set in New Zealand. She lives and loves in beautiful Hawke's Bay with her family, two scruffy dogs, and a cat who thinks he's a scruffy

dog too. (He's not: he's a cat.) Kate is looking forward to carrying on the great work of the previous Secretary, Kendra Delugar, and has just written up her first set of Minutes.

Andrene Low Membership Secretary

While working in advertising as a production manager Andrene undertook a presentations skills course that led to her taking part in a comedy club rookie's night.

It went well and she was asked back, performing on the professional circuit for three years before concentrating on the writing side of comedy. Andrene has now published three full-length chick lit novels and three novellas. Andrene joined the RWNZ because of the strength of their offering around skills and networking.



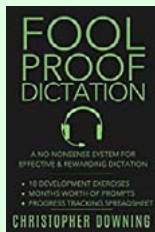
The Bookshelf



Layer Your Novel
C.S. Lakin

<https://www.amazon.com/dp/B074T46QRS/>

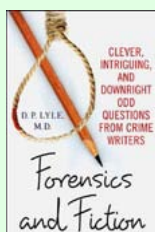
Layer Your Novel introduces an innovative, intuitive method for arranging your scenes and crafting a beautifully structured story. First, you construct the ten most important scenes as a foundation. From there, you choose from one of three methods to craft a second layer of scenes: the action-reaction layer, the subplot layer, or the romance layer. Once your second layer is integrated, next comes the third layer: the processing scenes that the glue your plot together.



Fool Proof Dictation
Christopher Downing

<https://www.amazon.com/dp/B074M5C3SJ/>

Fool Proof Dictation is the only ebook of its kind, focusing primarily on **the mental process of dictation**. It's a self-paced training system that streamlines the dictation process. There are warm-ups, practical exercises, and an easy to follow routine for dictating your scenes.



Forensics and Fiction
D.P. Lyle (M.D.)

<https://www.amazon.com/dp/B0056IAY16/>

As a consultant to many novelists around the world and to the writers of such popular TV shows as *Monk*, *Law & Order*, *House*, and *CSI: Miami*, D. P. Lyle, M.D., has answered many cool, clever, and oddball questions over

the years. *Forensics and Fiction: Clever, Intriguing, and Downright Odd Questions from Crime Writers* is a collection of the best of these questions.



Schedule Your Dream
Liane R. Grant

<https://www.amazon.com/dp/B074HQF5XV/>

Unlike many books that suggest quitting your job or hiring someone to do most of your tasks, this one lays out 8 steps for pursuing a dream starting from your current situation and budget.



How To Write Winning Short Stories
Nancy Sakaduski

<https://www.amazon.com/dp/B01BHYO13E/>

This concise and practical guide includes developing a theme and premise, choosing a title, creating characters, crafting realistic dialogue, bringing the setting to life, working with structure, and editing. It also includes submission and marketing advice.

“Everybody walks past a thousand story ideas every day. The good writers are the ones who see five or six of them. Most people don’t see any.”

— Orson Scott Card

Regional Round-Up Reports

Auckland

Convenor: Pamela Gervai
(pamelagervai.com)

What an informative and fun time we had with Dawn Grant. I think we all have clues on how to fight like a girl now - like, run away if possible. Most important of all, we now know how to write a believable fight scene. 25 attended the meeting. The 7th October meeting promises to be every bit as informative as this one - but it's up to you to think of what to ask. Yvonne Lindsay, Nalini Singh, and Karina Bliss will form the author panel and answer all your questions about writing, craft, publishing, agents, editors - anything that you can think of!

As usual, the meeting will be at the Three Kings Tennis Pavilion from 12.30 until 3.00 pm. Please bring a gold coin donation, a plate to share, and change for the raffles.

Coast to Coast

Convenor: Vivienne Matthews
(viviennematthewswriter@gmail.com)

September saw a cozy group of us descend on Jill's lovely new place in Tauranga. As there were only seven of us we were able to have a 'family' lunch around the big table which was good fun - though meant the chocolate fingers and chips were too easy to reach!! After lunch we had some cold reads which was really fun. We had five samples of peoples work in the end with a mix of SciFi, Historical and Contemporary pieces. Was great to read people's work - man we have some fantastic writers in our group!! Was interesting to hear what different people like or dislike in books which generated good discussions around different aspects of writing, plots and characters. Next month we're in Te Kuiti hearing about Police and Law Enforcement from our guest speaker Rose Ayers.

Wellington/Kapiti Coast

Convenor: Kris Pearson (kris.p@paradise.net.nz)
with Jane Ashurst

We were back at Anna's in September with the waves rolling in and the sun pouring down. After a round table catch-up and a post-conference dissection, blurbs were read out for comments. It's so helpful getting other people's opinions, and it gave us a better appreciation of what each of us is writing. After hearing Moira's blurb we're panting for the book! Because Ellie missed our last meeting she brought her first two pages - and we really want the rest of that, too.

Leeann has just launched her latest, and already it's way

up in the charts. In fact we've been a productive team lately. We'll meet at Anna's in Paekakariki again at 1pm, Saturday October 7th. November will be 'somewhere else' and Giovanna has invited us to her home in Paraparaumu for the December Christmas lunch meeting.

Otago

Convenor: Samantha Charlton
(samanthacharlton@hotmail.com)

The Otago/Southland chapter gathered for a meeting in snowy Wanaka on Saturday 9 September, hosted by Maria King. The weather prevented the meeting from lasting as long as we would have liked, but the five of us managed to spend two hours going over the highlights of the 2017 RWNZ Conference (two of us attended). We also discussed our greatest writing 'aha-moments' over the past year. Thanks to Maria for being such a fab host!

Hawkes Bay Convenor: Kendra Delugar (kend-raonthemove@hotmail.com)

Nelson Convenor: Annika Ohlson-Smith (nelsonromancewriters@xtra.co.nz)

Blenheim Convenor: Iona Jones (ionajones@xtra.co.nz)

Christchurch Convenor: Jane Madison-Jones (mad-diejane@xtra.co.nz)

"In general...there's no point in writing hopeless novels. We all know we're going to die; what's important is the kind of men and women we are in the face of this."

-Anne Lamott