

80+ Barriers to Love: A List of Ideas to Keep Romantic Tension High

Colleen Houck



One thing that every romance writer faces especially when writing a series, is how to keep a couple apart. It's a difficult thing to accomplish and readers hate it, but it's a necessary thing. Otherwise the tension is gone and your readers walk away disappointed.

I am a huge fan of a television show called *Moonlighting* with Bruce Willis and Cybill Shepherd. I loved, loved, loved watching every week to see if they were finally going to be together. For years they dangled the relationship and tantalized viewers until we finally got what we wanted and the couple got married. Then, guess what happened? The ratings fell and the show was cancelled.

This is something nobody wants. I love Happily Ever After endings as much as the next person but to get there too early is to kill the romance. For me, this happened in *Twilight*. When Edward and Bella got married in the beginning of *Breaking Dawn*, I felt like Edward disappeared and mainly became a tortured man wringing his hands on the couch.

Thankfully Jacob was still around.

You see where I'm going with this right?

So, without further ado, here is the list I've compiled from

various internet searches and from my own experience, not personal experience. At least, not all of them. I meant my experience as a writer.

I've basically divided the list into two categories—Physical Barriers and Emotional Barriers.

EMOTIONAL BARRIERS

1. Dishonesty
2. Problem with Touch
3. Instability
4. Distrust
5. Grief
6. Social or Business Rivalry
7. Fear of Intimacy
8. Sacrifice Love for Something Else
9. Not Self Actualized
10. The Friend Zone
11. Feelings of Unworthiness
12. History of Abuse
13. Unforgiving
14. Disappointment
15. Inability to Communicate
16. Forbidden Relationship
17. Competition
18. Value Conflict
19. Control
20. Comparison
21. Misunderstanding
22. Unpopularity
23. Secrets
24. Fear of Being in Public

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25. Evil Ex
26. Inability to Forgive
27. Disapproving Parents
28. Age Difference
29. Fear of Abandonment
30. Cultural Conflict
31. Religious Conflict
32. Arranged Relationship
33. Mistaken Identity
34. Class Differences
35. Pretend Relationship
36. Hubris
37. Fear of Commitment
38. Fear of Rejection
39. Taming of the Shrew Syndrome
40. Poor vs Rich
41. Inflexibility
42. Over-dependency
43. Guilt
44. Prejudice
45. Grudge
46. Anxiety
47. Jealousy
48. Denial
49. Stubbornness
50. Mistrust
51. Influence of Friends or Family
52. Biological Clock is Ticking
53. Romance Not a Priority
54. Work Conflict
55. Inability to Choose
56. Feelings for Another Person
57. Fighting or Arguing
58. Depression
59. Disloyalty
60. Race Differences
61. Stonewalling
62. Unfaithfulness
63. Self-Sabotage

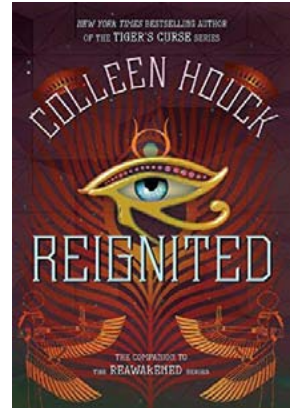
PHYSICAL BARRIERS

1. Disfigurement
2. Physical Separation
3. Death
4. Injury
5. Transformation
6. Illness
7. Coma
8. Mental Lapse
9. Kidnapping
10. Doppelganger
11. Inability to Cross Boundaries
12. One or Both People Doesn't Have a Physical Body
13. Different Species (Alien, Shifter, Vampire, Mermaid, etc.)
14. Cannot Survive/Thrive Where Their Love Interest Lives
15. Contagion/Disease
16. Pain/Discomfort
17. Chemical Dependency

18. Issues with Intimacy
19. Cognitive Disorders

I hope this lists helps. I know I often wrack my brain trying to come up with yet another way to torture my star-crossed lovers. This list is a work in progress so if you have thought of something I've missed, please let me know what it is.

I think it's time to head back to my book now to throw another problem at my heroine and see how she deals.



This article by New York Times Bestselling Author Colleen Houck was reprinted with permission. Colleen is a lifelong reader whose literary interests include action, adventure, science fiction, and romance. Formerly a student at the University of Arizona, she worked as a nationally certified American Sign Language interpreter for seventeen years before switching careers to become an author. Colleen lives in Salem, Oregon, with her husband and a huge assortment of plush tigers. To learn more about Colleen visit <http://colleen-houck.com/>

“Write about the emotions you fear the most.” — Laurie Halse Anderson

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Heart to Heart will be published in the first week of each month except January.

The deadline for every issue is the 20th of the month prior (e.g. 20th August for September issue). Please have all articles, news, reports, and advertising to Gracie at heart2hearteditor@romancewriters.co.nz on or before the deadline.

From The Editor



The accusation that the media is creating fake news is not a new one. History shows us this accusation—and the muzzling of the media—often comes into play as a country prepares for war.

It might not be so in this case. I hope not. None-the-less, the effect is the same: to create destabilization and uncertainty in a world already teetering and fearful.

Those who accuse the media of bias want to move their people away from thinking with their brains to thinking with their fears and emotions. What's going to happen? Who do we trust? What can we do? What's going to happen to my family? To me? Who's going to do something? Who's going to save us?

Where Are The Heroes?

It's a real question. The world today needs heroes and heroines more than ever. Yes, we need them in real flesh and blood, standing in the spotlight in the middle of chaos. But we also need them in our hands. Between the covers of our books. Inside our e-readers. We need their quiet, certain voices speaking through audio books and podcasts.

Where are the heroes?

Right here. You and me.

As writers of real fiction it's our job to take this chaotic and often volatile life and help it make sense. It's our job to give hope. To join the dots. To explain the unexplainable. To show how to love without fear, to trust in spite of past hurt and injury.

In our worlds, good triumphs over evil. The heroine discovers her inner truth and power. The hero discovers he's stronger with the woman he loves than he is on his own. Together, they forge through disaster and despair. The villain is vanquished. The heroes triumph. They deserve their happy ending.

As the world continues to reel under the effects of instability and uncertainty, as the thunderheads of international politics boil, darken, and draw closer, as friends begin to doubt their friendships, and as countries—and even families—start to loosen ties, we need to make a decision.

We can do very little about how the international media is perceived or what will happen next on this increasingly unstable planet. But we have complete control over what happens inside the pages of our books. Yes, let's write a gut-wrenching story. But in the end, to be true to our readers and the desperate need of their hearts and spirits, we have to provide what they're not finding in the real world—an ending where there is optimism for the future.

Write your next book. Get it out there. Be a hero. Give the world some hope.

Gracie

That First Page

Daphne Clair



We all know how very important that first page is for our story. Many readers will scan the first paragraph, then either put the book down or read the rest of the page, perhaps two, and then decide if they really want to buy, borrow or read on.

The first page must establish the setting, introduce at least one lead character, and promise to hold the readers' attention for the rest of the book. And you have at most about two hundred and fifty words to do that.

Editors are overworked and overfamiliar with opening pages. They know all the clichés and commonest mistakes. The heroine looking critically in a mirror, or boarding or disembarking a plane; bumping into the hero and dropping her papers, purse, whatever, or almost getting run over by a subsequently furious hero; found gossiping to a colleague about the new boss's reputation for ruthless business practices and/or sexual conquests just as the hero enters, are likely to cause a sinking sensation within any experienced editor, and possibly with avid romance readers. Also, long sentences like that last one may have an off-putting effect if they appear so early.

Nothing is intrinsically wrong with these openings, but canny authors will avoid them, as they will (generally) mistaken identity, or opening pages showing boorish heroes and hapless heroines.

Dialogue looks inviting on the page, and plenty of white space is conducive to turning to page two. Keep up the pace and your editor or reader may read past page three, which for many editors is their decisive moment. But that dialogue and the surrounding words must draw them into the story.

“You write so beautifully—the inside of your mind must be a terrible place.”
— Anonymous

No problem, huh? Flash fiction writers tell entire stories in that many words. (NB: If you haven't tried it, flash fiction is a great way to practise economy with words.)

Make your dialogue sparkle. Make it interesting. And don't waste words on small-talk that has no bearing on the story.

If dialogue isn't right for your first page, at least get some in before the end of page three, and those three pages had better be riveting stuff. Think action, not a hunk of backstory or reminiscence. Not your heroine angsty over finding her boyfriend with another woman, or pondering about her imminent meeting with the Lord of the Manor or the CEO of his own multimillion enterprise.

You have, unless it's a novella, at least 50,000 words in which to tell the editor or reader all they need to know about the past. You can convey a lot with a little action, some dialogue, a sentence or two referring to what happened when, perhaps obliquely.

Using brief thoughts, subtle hints, description of body language or emotion, one or two brief thoughts, can give the reader hints of drama past and future, and keep her reading to find out more.

The first page may raise questions. The answers can come later, when the reader has come to know and care about the characters.

“Dialogue looks inviting on the page, and plenty of white space is conducive to turning to page two.”



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 finaled or won in other contests in several writing fields. To learn more about Daphne visit <http://www.harlequin.com/author.html?authorid=920>

From the President

Hope you all had a great Christmas and New Year, and managed to find some decent summer weather. It's been a busy period for us on the Executive, with some big (and exciting) projects, like the new website. As there's a lot going on, any important updates that occur between this and the next issue of Heart to Heart, we'll communicate to members by email and via our member-only Facebook group and email loop.

Conference: We had a great response to our survey, and you chose Rotorua as a venue by a two-to-one margin! The 2017 RWNZ Conference will now be held at the Novotel Lakeside Rotorua, 18-20 August. Thanks to the Wellington Committee, it's a great line-up, and the overseas speakers are all excited to be coming to Rotorua. Three members of the Wellington Committee have formally resigned and we thank them for their hard work in developing the exceptional programme. Three others have stayed on, and as I write, we are talking with other members interested in taking part in the new Committee. We're aiming to open Earlybird registrations by 1st March, so stay tuned for that announcement.

New website: This is a huge job that's involving everyone on the Executive—creating the functional spec document, selecting a developer who can do what we need for a price we can afford, supplying content, project managing, etc. Our grateful thanks to Gracie O'Neil and her husband, Jem, for keeping our old site going. We know they'll be relieved when the new one's up, because it will be so much better-looking and easier to use, with loads more functionality. Development has started, and we're aiming to have the first stage of the new website up by 1st March. This means in time for two big events, our Conference Earlybird registrations, and the opening of entries into Pacific Hearts. Timing is tight, as it always is with web projects, but all going well, we'd like to give you a preview late February. We'll keep you posted.

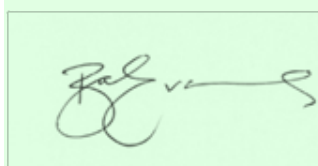
Charitable status and tax update: Last year, we sent out an email explaining in detail why we were applying for charitable status. In brief, when the new Charities Act became law in 2012, all organisations with tax-exempt charitable status had to re-apply. RWNZ did not do so and as a result lost its status. When we lost it, we then became liable for filing tax returns and paying tax on any income outside of our membership subscriptions—for example, income from Conferences, contests etc. However, for whatever reason, this was not picked up by previous Executives or external accountants, and RWNZ has not been filing returns. To fix this issue, we first re-applied for charitable status, but were refused. We were given clear reasons why, and we believe we can make those changes and re-apply. But in the meantime, we've had to file tax returns and pay outstanding tax for the years 2014 and 2015 (not 2013 as we made a loss).

It's possible that the IRD may charge us late-filing and overdue tax penalties, although at the time of writing, we have not heard. To ensure RWNZ meets its tax obligations in the future, we'll make sure the Treasurer's how-to guide has all the information they'll need.

Conference hotel prices: The 2018 Conference Committee has been looking at securing hotels in Auckland. Because demand is so high, many of the hotels we've used before—such as the Waipuna—have raised their costs significantly. We believe we may need to look at doing a multi-year deal with one of the chains, e.g. Accor Group. This doesn't mean being in the same hotel every year, as the chains have hotels in many locations. But it does mean we get security around pricing, which then means we can be sure we can actually afford to hold Conference. RW Australia has a hotel chain deal, for exactly that reason. We will investigate and let you know.

Strategic plan: A plan based on what members want was the foundation of our platform when we stood for Executive. A strategic plan is a living, evolving document, not something set in stone, but it should always put members' needs first. We're in the process of drafting up the first cut, and we're aiming to share it with you in mid-late February.

If you have any concerns regarding RWNZ, please feel free to email me president@romancewriters.co.nz. Take care and productive writing!



Bronwen Evans
RWNZ President



“And by the way, everything in life is writable about if you have the outgoing guts to do it, and the imagination to improvise. The worst enemy to creativity is self-doubt.” — Sylvia Plath

Writing Shots - Author Advice With A Kick

We went out to some of our authors asking for short, sharp shots of encouragement as we face the new writing year. Here's what they said.



Kris Pearson

"If I could give you one piece of writing advice for 2017 it would be that you won't believe how much you can do unless you persist and persist and persist."



Deborah Challinor

"If I could give you one piece of writing advice for 2017 it would be this. Bash out a reasonably solid first draft so you've got something to work with, THEN go back and edit, smooth and refine. Don't obsess about getting it just right the first time – that's what rewrites and edits are for."

Diana Fraser

"If I could give you one piece of writing advice for 2017 it would be to write a set amount of words every day. It doesn't matter how many."



Jackie Ashenden

"If I could give you one piece of writing advice for 2017 it would be ...sit down and finish your damn book."



Yvonne Lindsay

"If I could give you one piece of writing advice for 2017 it would be to write from your heart and work to please yourself, not everyone else out there. If you don't you will, over time, begin to lose your joy in writing and nobody wants that."



Darian Smith

"If I could give you one piece of writing advice for 2017 it would be to quote The Sound of Music: 'Nothing comes from nothing, nothing ever could.' So just DO IT. Don't stop writing, promoting, learning, honing your skills, and, most of all, imagining."

Executive Committee Position Available - Treasurer

As an Exec, we're so sad that Karen Browning has had to step down as Treasurer. She's been the most amazing team member, always there, always cheerful, always looking for ways to improve the role and make it easier for the future. Unfortunately, when she took on the role she hadn't imagined adding a full time job to the mix. But life happens to all of us. We miss her already, but wish her well in her exciting new venture—teaching economics to teenagers.

During her tenure Karen has moved the RWNZ finances away from the complex MYOB accounting program to the far simpler program, Xero. She's not only set Xero up so everything works beautifully, but she's also written an easy "How To" guide so that future treasurers can hit the ground running. In addition, she's sorted out the tax situation of the past five years and put in place much needed financial and expenses policies—which the Executive will bring to members as remits at the next AGM. As an organization, we are in a stronger position because of her hard work and dedication. Thank you, Karen. You're an angel.

Now we need to fill her shoes.

The Treasurer is a vital member of the RWNZ Exec, so it's important that—if possible—we recruit from within our membership. If you are interested in stepping up and joining the Executive Committee as Treasurer—especially if you have any previous experience with Xero—here's your chance to contribute to the organization.

If you're not sure what the Treasurer does, here's a cheat sheet from the Constitution.

7.5.6 Treasurer's Duties. The Treasurer shall:

- 7.5.6.1 Ensure all monies received are receipted and banked;
- 7.5.6.2 Ensure all accounts are paid by the due date;
- 7.5.6.3 Keep annual cash book or computerised accounts showing adequate record of financial transactions to enable a clear statement of RWNZ's financial position to be determined at any time;
- 7.5.6.4 Ensure that the financial statements are ready for review at the end of the financial year;
- 7.5.6.5 Present a financial statement at Executive meetings;
- 7.5.6.6 Present a reviewed set of financial statements at the Annual General Meeting;
- 7.5.6.7 Keep an asset register; and

7.5.6.8 Fulfil any other obligations required by the Executive.

If you're interested in the position but you're worried that your experience with Xero might not be adequate, don't let that put you off. Bron knows her way around Xero and will be available to talk you through any problems.

It's important for you all as members to know that if we don't have any volunteers by the end of February we'll have to outsource the function. This means paying for it.

Want to talk about the role a little more? Drop Bron an email on president@romancewriters.co.nz



Conference News

The 24th RWNZ Conference will be held in ROTORUA at the Novotel Lakeside Hotel from Friday 18th to Sunday 20th August 2017.

Registrations will open in March, but you can book your accommodation now by ringing the Novotel reservations (+64)7/3463888 and telling them you're part of RWNZ. Rooms in the Novotel are \$170 per night, or next door at the Ibis for \$135 per night.

First of all, the Exec wants to give a huge vote of thanks to the Wellington Conference Committee who have worked so hard to bring us what is shaping up to be a fantastic conference.

We'd especially like to acknowledge the hard work and care that Gudrun Frerichs, Jane Ashurst-Smoult, and Anne Kemp have put into making your 2017 Conference an event to remember. Thank you so much, ladies. You put your hearts and souls into it and we're immensely grateful. We understand that the Exec's decision to change venue wasn't an easy one for you. Thank you for your help and care in transitioning knowledge and functions to the new committee. We're sorry to lose you.

We're also delighted that three members of the Wellington committee—Kris Pearson, Bonnie Mosen, and Jude Knight—have decided to take the leap with us to Rotorua. Thank you, ladies. They are joined by Lynne Rasmussen, from Rotorua. Bless you, Lynne. Several of our C2C members have put their hands up for jobs closer to the time and during the event. Many thanks to you, too. The Committee will be in touch as matters arise. The Exec members responsible for Conference oversight and help remain Bronwen Evans and Catherine Robertson.

Now, where are we at with speakers?

We've just confirmed that our Editor for the 2017 conference is **SUE GRIMSHAW**—from Penguin-Random House Publishing Group New York.



Sue Grimshaw is the Category Specialist and Editor at Large, and actively acquires for the Penguin-Random House Publishing Group, Ballantine Bantam Dell, Loveswept and Flirt. Previously, Sue was employed as Romance Buyer for Borders and Waldenbooks stores for almost sixteen years.

Sue works with New York Times bestselling authors Virna DePaul, Tracy Wolff, and Ruthie Knox, to name a few, and USA Today bestselling authors Stacey Kennedy, Tina Waincott, Mira Lyn Kelly, Tina Leonard, Bronwen Evans, Maggie McGinnis and many more talented writers. And she's still acquiring!

Sue is a recipient of the prestigious Vivian Stephens Industry Award from the Romance Writers of America. Other honors include the Melinda Helfer Award from the Romantic Times organization, and the Romcon Champion Award as well as many other RWA chapter group recognitions and corporate awards for excellence. Sue is one of the most knowledgeable people in the industry and truly enjoys sharing her knowledge of the Romance genre.

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*“Don't say ‘the old lady screamed.’
Bring her on and let her scream.”*

— Mark Twain

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Full Day Friday Workshop and Weekend Speaker is KRISTEN LAMB

Kristen Lamb is the author of the top resource for author branding in the digital age, *Rise of the Machines—Human Authors in a Digital World*. She's also the #1 best-selling books *We Are Not Alone—The Writer's*

Guide to Social Media and *Are You There, Blog? It's Me, Writer*.

Kristen has guided writers of all levels, from unpublished green peas to NY Times best-selling big fish, on how to use social media to create a solid platform and brand. Most importantly, Kristen helps authors of all levels connect to their READERS and then maintain a relationship that grows into a long-term fan base. She is the C.E.O. of WANA International and the founder of WANATribe, the social network for writers. You can find out more about Kristen at <http://authorkristenlamb.com/>



Saturday Craft Plenary Speaker is CHRISTIE CRAIG (also C. C. HUNTER)

Christie Craig, an Alabama native, is a NY Times bestselling author, multi-published writer, multi-published photo journalist, motivational speaker, and writing teacher. She's kindly shared an audio file of her workshop at RWA NY called *Polish Me Pretty—5 Tips to take your Writing to the next level*. It's well worth the listen and you'll find it here: <http://www.romancewriters.co.nz/heart-to-heart-september-2016/>



Her romance fiction is widely acclaimed for combining witty humor and heart-felt emotions with a suspenseful, sexy tone. She currently hangs her hat in Texas and writes for Grand Central/Forever. Her backlist titles are available wherever e-books are sold. Check out her website at www.christie-craig.com and her blog at <http://christie-craig.com/blog/>.

Craig also writes the New York Times and USA Today best-selling young adult paranormal romance series, *Shadow Falls*, published by St. Martin's Press/GriFFin under her pen name C.C. Hunter. You can learn more about C.C.'s books at her website, www.CCHunterBooks.com

In addition, Craig writes romance-flavored non-fiction with Faye Hughes, including *The Everything Guide To Writing A Romance Novel* and *Wild, Wicked and Wan-*

ton: 101 Ways to Love Like You Are in a Romance Novel, a humorous self-help relationship book. You can learn more about Christie's books with Faye at www.WritewithUs.net



Weekend Speaker is KYLIE SCOTT

Kylie is a New York Times and USA Today best-selling author of gritty contemporary romance. She was voted Australian Romance Writer of the year, 2013 & 2014, by the Australian Romance Writer's Association and her books have been trans-

lated into eleven different languages. She is a long-time fan of romance, rock music, and B-grade horror films. Based in Queensland, Australia with her two children and husband, she reads, writes and never dithers around on the internet. You can learn more about Kylie from <http://www.kylie-scott.com/>



Weekend Speaker is ANNE GRACIE

Anne Gracie writes fun, heart-warming regency-era romances for Berkley, USA. She's a national bestselling author in the USA, a five time RITA finalist and her books have won a number of awards, both in the USA and Australia. Her books have been translated into 17 languages. In 2016 she was voted "Favorite Australian Romance Author". Visit Anne's website at www.annegracie.com



Agent is VICTORIA CAPPELLO from the BENT AGENCY in New York

Victoria was born and raised in Queens, New York and graduated from the City University of New York, Queens College. Before joining the Bent Agency, she completed internships at Serendipity Literary and the

Carol Mann Agency.

She's looking for both commercial and literary fiction as well as young adult titles. Her favorite genres are historical fiction, suspense, mysteries, upmarket women's fiction, and romance. Find out more about Victoria at http://www.thebentagency.com/agent_victoria_cappello.php

Get To Know Our Authors



J C Harroway

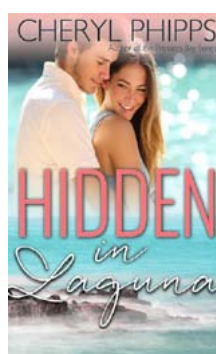
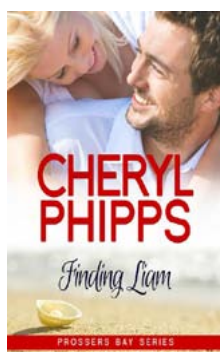
www.jcharroway.com

J C Harroway is part of our Christchurch group. She writes steamy contemporary romances for Escape Publishing, and loves strong, independent heroines who find heroes worthy of them.

Cheryl Phipps

www.cherylphipps.com

Cheryl, one of our Auckland members, writes Romance with a dash of spice and a splash of humour. She's published twelve books (so far!) from Contemporary, Chicklit, and Romantic Comedy to Suspense.



Casey Fae Hewson

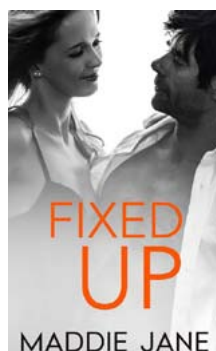
<https://caseyfaehewson.com>

Casey Fae is one of our Blenheim members. She e-published her first novel, **HAVEN RIVER**, a Young Adult contemporary romance in 2016. She is currently working on an adult contemporary romance.

Maddie Jane

www.maddiejanebooks.com

Maddie Jane writes contemporary romance. Her light-hearted stories, which are sweet with a generous dash of humour, are published by Escape Publishing. She is the convener of the Christchurch chapter of RWNZ.



To be featured on this free page, please email **EITHER** one cover **OR** three, **PLUS** bio, **PLUS** buy links to: heart2hearteditor@romancewriters.co.nz by the 20th of the month deadline.

Daphne Clair de Jong First Kiss Award

The first kiss is a moment of transition; the moment when a couple surrender to their attraction and begin to discover where this relationship might take them.

For this contest, we're looking for a single scene containing the first kiss, plus a half-page setup. The scene must be no more than 1500 words, and both scene and setup are judged. The scene must be from a piece of fiction that is unpublished at the time of the contest.

This contest is sponsored by the New Zealand Society of Authors Northland Branch in honour of Daphne Clair de Jong.



Entry fee: \$20

RWNZ members only: published and unpublished authors may enter

First prize: \$150

Opens 1 February 2017, closes 28 February 2017

Entry forms will be available on the website <http://www.romancewriters.co.nz/contests> on 1 February, 2017

“You get ideas from daydreaming. You get ideas from being bored. You get ideas all the time. The only difference between writers and other people is we notice when we’re doing it.” — Neil Gaiman

“We do not need magic to transform our world. We carry all the power we need inside ourselves already. We have the power to imagine better.” — J.K. Rowling

The Welcome Mat

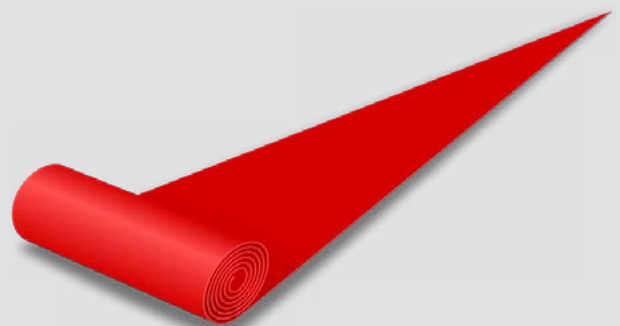
Roll out the red carpet! A huge welcome to our new and returning members! It's lovely to have you with us.

Firstly, a warm welcome to our new members:

Melissa Climo - Taupo
Judy Mohr - Christchurch
Sandy Vincent-Guy - Auckland

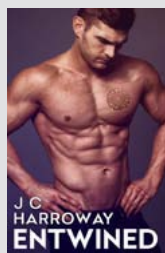
And a huge welcome back to our returning members:

Yelena Boskovic - Auckland
Mandy Edwards - Taupo
Lynne Rasmussen - Rotorua
Rose Small - Queenstown



Woos & Hoos!

What a fabulous lot to celebrate. Well done, everyone!



J C Harroway's second book, **ENTWINED** was released on Jan 15th by Escape Publishing.

Jane Madison-Jones w/a Maddie Jane's latest novel, **TRANSFIXED**, the second in her *Fixed Up* series, will be released by Escape Publishing on 5 February.



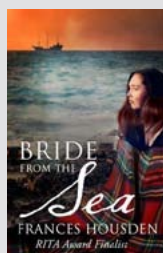
Linda Coles w/a Lucy Bridges has two new books out. **12 GOOD MEN** and **YOU HAD ME AT PIZZA** are available through Amazon, digital only.

Jean Drew w/a Jean Adams' latest novel from the Wild Rose Press, **HONEY'S GREEK BILLIONAIRE**, was released Jan 27.



Nicola Davidson's latest in The London Lords series **RAKE TO RICHES**, a sexy Regency historical suspense, was out Jan 26, and **THE DEVIL'S SUBMISSION** (#2 in the *Fallen* series) an erotic Regency from Entangled is out Feb 6.

Frances Housden's next Escape novel, **BRIDE FROM THE SEA**, was released 25 January.



DEBUT NOVEL: Kellie Watkinson w/a Kellie Hailes' first book, titled **THE COSY COFFEE SHOP OF PROMISES** is being published by HQ Digital—released Feb 10. Congratulations Kellie!



Camilla Urdahl w/a Camille Oster's has released her book **THE DARK COURT: THE SUMMONS**.

Bronwyn Evans has a new contemporary romance series launching 13 February with two books!



LOVE ME (Coopers Creek #1) and **HEAL ME** (Coopers Creek #2).



Kris Pearson's Christmas novella **SANTA CLAWS** is finally released.

Sally Rigby w/a Sara Hantz's Entangled Teen Crush **THERE'S SOMETHING ABOUT NIK** releases 12 Feb.



Samantha Charlton's (w/a Jayne Castel) Historical Romance set in Dark Ages Britain, **THE WHISPERING WIND**, is now available on Amazon. **THE WHISPERING WIND** is Book #1 of her new *Kingdom of Northumbria* series.

What Makes a Good Story?

A FULL DAY WRITERS' WORKSHOP

Presented by Yvonne Lindsay, RWNZ

Sponsored by Romance Writers of New Zealand (RWNZ)

Organised by Nelson Romance Writers.

Open to all writers and writers-to-be
within the Top of the South region.

Date: Saturday 25 February 2017.

Time: 9.00am – 4.00pm.

Venue: Upstairs, Nick Smith's Head Office,
Corner of Waimea Rd and Quarantine Rd.

Fee: \$25 RWNZ members, \$30 non-members.
(Includes morning tea, lunch and afternoon tea)

Registrations to Annika Ohlson-Smith at: nelsonromancewriters@xtra.co.nz

Payment by Direct Credit – details provided on registration

About Yvonne Lindsey:

USA Today! Best-selling author, Yvonne Lindsay, has always preferred the stories in her head to the real world. Yvonne has released 36 titles to date and is a five-time Romance Writers of Australia RUBY nominee, three-time nominee and 2015 winner of the Romance Writers of New Zealand Koru Award of Excellence. She spends her days crafting the stories of her heart and, in her spare time, she can be found with her nose firmly in someone else's book.



The Bookshelf



The Emotional Craft of Fiction: How to Write the Story Beneath the Surface **Donald Maass**

<https://www.amazon.com/dp/B01MU7GJ8V>

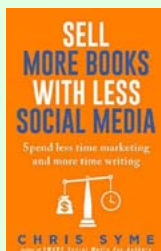
While writers might disagree over showing versus telling or plotting versus pantsing, none would argue this: If you want to write strong fiction, you must make your readers feel. The reader's experience must be an emotional journey of its own... Readers can simply read a novel ... or they can experience it. The Emotional Craft of Fiction shows you how to make that happen.



47 Mind Hacks for Writers: Master the Writing Habit in 10 Minutes Or Less and End Writer's Block and Procrastination for Good **Karen Dimmick & Steve Dimmick**

<https://www.amazon.com/dp/B01MYUMOK4>

Imagine, no more procrastinating. No more interruptions. No more feeling you're not good enough to be the writer you long to be. No more conflicts with family. No more writer's block. Rather than "feel good inspiration", 47 Mind Hacks for Writers takes you through the simple steps you need to shift your mindset so you can write on your terms.



Sell More Books with Less Social Media **Chris Syme**

<https://www.amazon.com/dp/B01M7PKDTK>

Award-winning marketer Chris Syme has worked with hundreds of self-published authors to help them streamline and turbo boost their book marketing process.

This book is ... for serious authors who want to make a living selling books and are looking to make smart business decisions about marketing their books. In her practical teaching style, Syme imparts all the necessary strategies you'll ever need to market with social media backed up with marketing best practices and research. Includes a free online companion course with many bonus tools and videos.

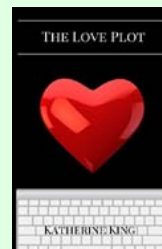


The Fantasy Fiction Formula **Deborah Chester**

<https://www.amazon.com/dp/B01N0396I6>

This is the first book I've ever bought on the strength of its Foreword (by author Jim Butcher)! And I'm glad I did. You don't write fantasy? Me neither. But I learned a lot of good stuff I'll use in my Romantic Suspense.

Along with explaining story construction step-by-step, Chester illustrates each technique with examples drawn from both traditional and urban fantasy. The technique chapters include exercises to assist novices in mastering the craft of writing fantasy as well as suggestions for avoiding or solving plot problems. More experienced writers will find tips for taking their work to the next level.



The Love Plot **Katherine King**

<https://www.amazon.com/dp/B00TEYW00M/>

Romance novels are a labor of love. But writing your book doesn't have to be laborious. Don't reinvent the wheel-- or the plot outline. The elements you need to get plotting and get writing are at your fingertips. Learn how to structure your book with the pivotal and connective scenes listed in the templates that get to the heart of the matter: the buildable plot.

Whether you're writing category romance or romance in general, The Love Plot can get you from the blank screen to the last page. Which is just what you need. No fuss, no frills, no filler. And that's just write. So grab your pen and create something your readers will love!

Regional Round-Up Reports

Auckland

Convenor: Pamela Gervai (pamelagervai.com)

Twenty-six attended a delightful Christmas party at the beautiful home of Kathy Servian. The large kitchen island overflowed with delicious food and drink. There were some exciting raffle prize contributions too—many thanks to the thoughtful donators of those prizes. It was a delightful occasion for us all.

Our first meeting 2017 meeting will be Saturday 4 February. Daphne Clair de Jong—Writer, Writing Coach/ editor and tutor—has kindly agreed to critique our cold reads. Daphne is a Rita and Ruby finalist with close to eighty books printed, and is the recipient of many other literary awards. Last year, she was Honorary President of the NZ Society of Authors. Several now best-selling writers credit Daphne's Kara School of Writing with contributing to their success. She loves helping other writers refine their craft.

Each attendee should bring two copies of a printed page from an unpublished manuscript. This will be anonymous—please see my group email for details (or if visiting, email gervaipamela@gmail.com). Discussion from the floor—including positive constructive ideas for improvement—is welcome. But remember, putting your work out there can be stressful. Let's make it an encouraging experience.

Hawkes Bay

Convenor: Kendra Delugar
(kendraonthemove@hotmail.com)

Our December Christmas Lunch was held at Jackie's house. We spoke about everything romance-writing, industry, marketing—and had a beautiful lunch out in the sun. Then we wrote down our goals for 2017 and sealed them in an envelope to be opened next Christmas (oh the pressure!).

Our next meeting will be held at Kate's on the 12th of February at 1pm, where we'll be talking about what we want to get out of our group for 2017. I look forward to seeing everyone there.

Wellington

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

Our Christmas meeting was a shared lunch at Ellie's home in Paraparaumu. First, we welcomed new member Holly, and then caught up on everyone's news. We read out our personal aims for 2016 from the slips we put into the envelope on our first meeting of the year. It was interesting to hear who'd managed to achieve anything close to what they'd set. The answer was Leeann!

Diana and Leeann have lots of new books planned, Anne and Jane have bought back some rights from their publishers and will be self-publishing their books with better covers and marketing. We discussed the new Amazon advertising for authors. Both Diana and Leeann have had success with it, so more of us will be trying it. Next meeting will be the first Saturday in February, and an email will be sent re venue.

Nelson

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

We had our Xmas Lunch on Saturday 26/November. Plan A was a lovely spot at the back beach of Tahuna, but rain and wind meant plan B—Annika and Allan's patio. Annika created a great beach effect by 'To the Beach' signs and surfing boards on the steps to the patio. The Pot luck/Bring A Plate method of catering is a great way of getting yummy and creative food. Jacquie's awesome carrot cake and Annika's strawberry and cream cake went down a treat. 'Santina' sent her best friend from Fairy High School to deliver this year's gifts—to the usual amusement of all.

Next year will start busier than ever with a workshop by Yvonne Lindsay in February. Then there's the launch of our short story competition 'Holiday Romance' in May or June. Have a successful writing year in 2017 everyone!

Coast to Coast - Contact: Vivienne Matthews
(viviennematthewswriter@gmail.com)

Otago - Contact: Samantha Charlton (samanthacharlton@hotmail.com)

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

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

"A non-writing writer is a monster courting insanity." — Franz Kafka