

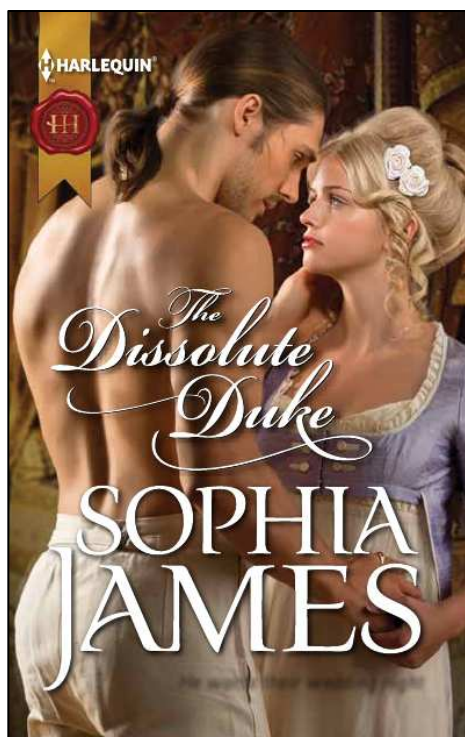
HEART TO HEART

From the Black Moment to Happily **Ever** After with **Sophia James**



A good ending comes from answering the question 'what is the protagonist really after and why?'

A good ending comes only after great odds are overcome and the reader feels satisfied that the hero and heroine are suited down to the bone to each other, soul-mates who have experienced great personal heartache to arrive in the world in the one place that they should be; in each other's arms.



Someone once said to me that they wrote their endings first and then they wrote the story.

As a pantsier I could never quite see how this would work. For me a satisfying, on the edge ending can only arise out of the conflict in the story and comes organically from the characters and how they interact with each other. As I only have a vague outline of my story when I begin to write I need to get to the end to know what will happen.

An ending that arises out of the conflict and makes the reader question how on earth can the author actually work out a 'happy ever after' for this couple, is a great ending.

One of the nicest letters I have had recently said;

'I so didn't know how you'd get them together, it seemed doomed for such a long time. But it was perfect. I loved it. I love how real you make your characters and how much I liked them. I wanted to be in that keep with Isobel and listen to that ocean. I wanted to roam her forests.'

This was written of my newest release

'Lady with The Devil's Scar.'

Donald Maass in his workshops says this.

Work out a thing your character would never do and make him/her do it.

Write out something your character would never sacrifice and make him/her sacrifice it.

Work out your characters greatest fear and make her/him face it.

A happy ever after comes only after the black moment, when everything seems lost, when all that the protagonist thought was possible is suddenly taken away leaving heartache and hopelessness.

If you can use this moment in conjunction with a hero/heroines greatest fear or secret etc then the black moment will have that extra resonance.

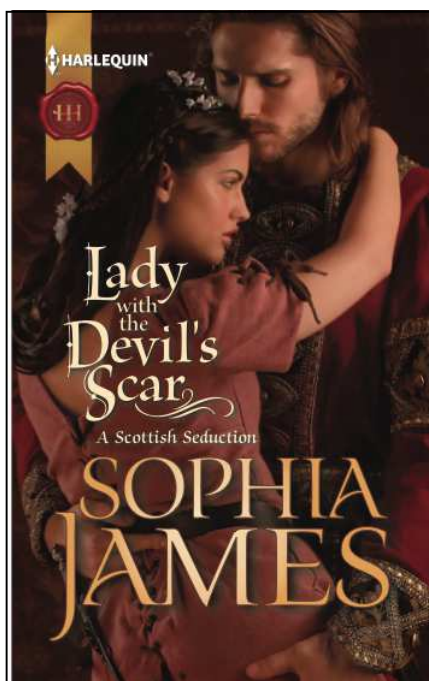
E.g. A blind hero who has kept his lack of sight a secret from everyone because he is an intensely private man who hates pity, but then has to come out of

the closet in an attempt to save his heroine will grab the attention of a reader. Actions speak so much louder than words. I love you is in every groping step that hero makes in a grey and murky ballroom filled with all those who now know the exact and poor state of his health. This is from my book 'One Unashamed Night.'

The black moment in a book is the part that needs to really resonate with the reader. Don't make it a tiny misunderstanding or a lighter shade of grey.

Black moment means knocking your reader sideways and having them reach for the tissues.

According to every reader related blog I have ever read these are the pages the reader savours more than any other part of your book. Romance readers want a tear jerking, nail biting, shocking heart-squeezing climax. They want to feel what the hero/heroine does. They want to be surprised or at the least, worried to death. They want to know that this story in the hands of this author is going to be well and truly handled and they will



come away with the glow of an ending they can believe in and savour.

The black moment has to be intrinsic to the book you are writing. This ending could only happen to these people because of all the personal characteristics you have brought into the book. Black moments can't be generic. Black moments come from the heart of the conflict between the characters in your particular story.

So no one black moment can ever be the same.

Conflict and struggle capture a reader's interest like no other one thing can. Convenient problems will stop a reader caring for your book. If the problems inherent between the characters seem insurmountable but then are handled with finesse, the HEA in your story will be so much more satisfying.

I was thinking of some of the great endings in romance books I have read...the black moments and the resolutions.

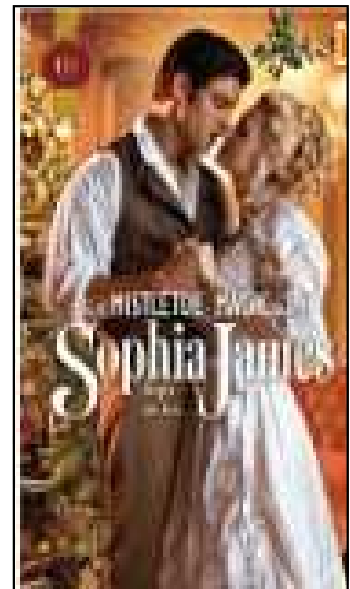
A Kingdom of Dreams Judith McNaught

The hero goes into a tournament promising the heroine he will not hurt her family because previously he has killed her oldest brother. When the family turns on him and attempts to kill him he tries every single thing he can to not hurt them. The heroine sees this from the sideline, sees that in his promise to her he is in effect allowing his own death and not fighting back. He is the world's greatest knight and yet for her love he is allowing her gruesome family to stab him to death.

All the conflicts of the story are at play here and only with these particular characters could this ending be possible.

White Lies Linda Howard

The identity of the hero has been an



integral part of the plot and conflict throughout the whole story. The heroine knows his real identity but has not said. When the hero regains his memory very quickly in the black moment whilst in the middle of battle he sees that she has lied to him all along, a woman who has taken care of him for money and refuge and forgotten about all the things he needed i.e. the help of his family and the knowledge of who he was in a world that has been difficult and uncertain. He thinks she has betrayed him and in effect she has, but the reason was not for advantage but for love and a sense of place that she has not known before.

All the conflicts here come from the particular personalities in the story. A dangerous menacing military spy and a solitary lonely betrayed woman.

One thing that really good endings have in common is the world known before the black moment has to fall apart and then be remade again so that each character has a different and better understanding of the others thoughts and actions.

In romance more than almost any other genre readers really identify with the characters. They worry and

cry and hold their breath, putting themselves in the position of one of the protagonists and imagining what that must feel like.

Readers want the big bang ending before the HEA so that they can go off contented.

Often the reader has been on a bit of a roller coaster ride, stabbed in the heart, betrayed, twisted with worry. She then needs an ending that resolves all the angst felt whilst reading your book. Don't be too abrupt after the happy ever after...give the readers a few pages to see how the characters have changed, to feel the afterglow, to bask in the knowledge that these two characters will now be together for all eternity because there is not another soul on the entire earth's surface who would suit them more.

An epilogue here is a good way to transition to the new reality, though I once read a romance book where the epilogue was the main character's funerals a good few years later. This did not work for me on so many levels. I wanted to know the now, I wanted to hear the proclamations of forever, the living breathing hero and heroine with fifty good loving years before them wrapped in their little cocoon of happiness.

One of the best ways I have found to really focus on the conflict for the black moment is to write myself a one liner about the heart of conflict in the book you are writing. A little tag line, if you like, that you can keep in mind all through the book and one that is the underpinning conflict in the final black moment and resolution.

E.g. In *Lady with The Devil's Scar*, Isobel wants to keep her clan safe from the greed of the Scottish king whereas Marcus wants to finally find his place in the court of Scotland after a life of being an outsider; two opposing desires that

will lead them into conflict with each other, two wildly divergent world views.

What will they have to give up and sacrifice to find love? What is the greatest fear they face to be able to survive together?

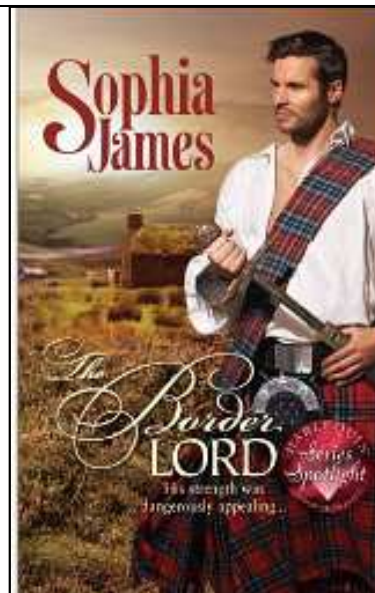
Tag lines take you away from the academic and into the particular and you can then web out things that might happen to your hero and heroine. In my opinion, by the black moment I think it is a good idea to have love firmly placed in the heart of at least one of your protagonists. Often in a black moment a character who has not realised yet that lust is really love will discover this momentous truth in the face of imminent loss.

After the black moment and before the happy ever after is often a tricky time for writers.

How long do you keep the reprisals up or do you just send them into a hungry kiss without any real resolution between them? For me every book is different though I see a trend of black moments in my writing coming closer to the happily ever after. Let your characters direct you. You have to resolve points of conflict properly because a reader will expect this but don't over-talk it to such a degree that all the words overcome the emotion. A tricky tightrope. **I'd err on the side of passion.**

In conclusion I would say don't limit yourself to a standard ending. Think bad and then worse. Take your protagonists from the frying pan into the fire with a leap of faith that they will then explain to you how to get them out of it.

Remember too, that the uncompromising black moment and the final happy satisfying ending is what will bring your reader back for a copy of your next book.



Follow up Sophia's books at

<http://www.harlequin.com/author.html?authorid=1690>

Watch out for *The Dissolute Duke*...this releases in April 2013

Sophia James writes historical romance for the Harlequin Historical imprint in London and has published ten books, all of which have been translated into various languages around the world. A double winner of the R*BY 2010 & 2011 (in the long romance section) she was also a finalist in the 2010 ARRA Awards, the 2008 R*BY Award and won the inaugural Clendon NZ in 1998. Sophia has been a mentor at both of the RWA 5 Day Intensive workshops at the Griffith University in Brisbane (2010 & 2011) and has run a similar mentorship programme in NZ in 2012. She has a degree in History & English from the University of Auckland and a background in teaching. Visit Sophia at sophiajames.net <http://twitter.com/#!/sophiajamesnz>

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**Anything I've ever
done that ultimately
was
worthwhile...initially
scared me to death.
Betty Bender**

Editor's Desk

Here at last is the December issue of Heart to Heart, the final newsletter for 2012, and my last as editor. Who can believe we are counting down to Christmas already?

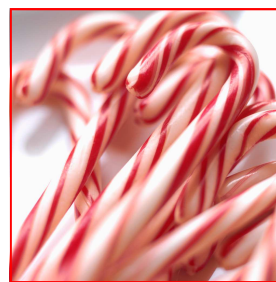
Where did November go? Where has this incredible year gone?

Before we gather up handfuls of tinsel, baubles and candy canes to decorate these pages, please take a moment to thank all the busy authors—published and yet to be published—who generously give their time, expertise, and passion to RWNZ and H2H: exec members, conference planners and volunteers, contest conveners, judges, and contest readers, regional conveners, and ALL contributors to H2H.

Special thanks to Ellie and Chris for your wise and cheerful support in those wee OMG moments. And welcome aboard to our new editors, Angelique Jurd and Marjan van Waardenberg, it is great knowing H2H is in safe and loving hands.

Wishing everyone a happy Christmas and New Year—may you write, read, and write some more, and have fun with your muse.

See you at conference in Wellington in 2013,
Viv Adams.



Announce: Online Writing Classes Group Digest #810

[What a Wicked Web We Weave - A Spider's Approach to Subplots in Storytelling](#)

Tue Oct 30, 2012 12:02 pm (PDT) . Posted by: ["Julie Rowe" juliemrowe](#)

Instructor: Theresa Meyers. The difference between writing and writing big has to do with adding multiple layers to your stories. But how do you weave a story with multiple threads that interweave into an intense read without losing track or weaving in too much?

In this course you'll:

- * Discover the uses for sub-plotting
- * Learn spiderweb plotting board techniques for tracking multiple subplots
- * Find ways to strongly connect story threads so that they are interdependent
- * Learn why subplots aren't just add ons to your plot, they support it like a spider web
- * Discover ways to draw subplot from secondary characters

WHEN:

Dec 10, 2012 - Dec 21, 2012

COST:

\$10 for Premium Members
\$20 for Basic Members

Cancellation policy: Registrations are non-refundable except when the workshop is cancelled by Savvy Authors.

<http://www.savvyauthors.com/vb/> REGISTRATION:

Click Here <http://www.savvyauthors.com/vb/showevent.php?eventid=1681> to

Register at Basic Member rate

INSTRUCTOR:

Always a lover of books and stories, Theresa was a writer, first for newspapers, then as a freelancer for national magazines. She started her first novel in high school, eventually <http://>

www.savvyauthors.com/vb/ enrolling in a Writers Digest course and putting the book under the bed until she joined Romance Writers of America in 1993. In 2005 she was selected as one of eleven finalists in the nation for the American Title II contest, which is the American Idol of books for her Scottish historical. Her most recent book, a Nocturne Bite titled Salvation of the Damned was released by Harlequin/Silhouette in March 2009, with another Nocturne Bite out in Oct. 2010 and two more full length paranormal romances to follow from Silhouette's Nocturne line in 2011.

Find her online at www.theresameyers.com.

Tags:
Craft

See all our workshops at: <http://www.savvyauthors.com/vb/workshoplist.php>
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Chats and webinars are here:

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Want to know about other events at Savvy Authors - Conferences, Chats, Webinars, Contests and Special Events? Join our very low volume, announcement only mailing list and stay connected: <http://groups.yahoo.com/group/Savvyevents/>
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Looking for ways to promote your new release - blog for us. Contact us at savvyauthors@gmail.com

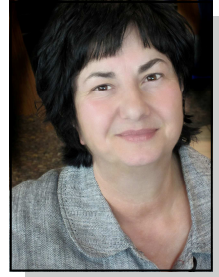
Got a workshop you'd like to present? We're scheduling - savvyauthors@gmail.com

Permission to Forward Granted and Encouraged!

From The Pres.

What's happening in RWNZ?

President Giovanna Lee brings us up to date with the news.



This is the last issue for 2012. We wish everyone a merry Christmas and happy New Year and we look forward towards the exciting things planned for next year.

A very special thanks to Viv Adams who every month produces the Heart to Heart, our much loved newsletter. This is Viv's last issue but she will be there helping our new team of Angelique Jurd and Marjan Van Waardenberg who are taking over. Many thanks to these two ladies for taking this up. The newsletter is a very important part of our association as it keeps our members in touch with each other and with what is happening in our industry. Many thanks also to Ellie Huse and Chris Taylor who proofread the newsletter.

First up in February there is a free on-line workshop for every RWNZ member. It is kindly offered by Carol Hughes. She says, "The whole purpose of the DS lessons is to help writers everywhere to make their dream of being a published author come true. And the best way to do that is by helping each other accomplish that dream." More information on the workshop can be found in this newsletter.

The Executive have been working hard to set up a new full manuscript competition for unpublished authors. We are hoping that it will bring success to the winners as the Clendon has done. The "Pacific Hearts Award" competition will open for entries on the 1st February and close on the 1st March. The winner receives 20 hours of mentoring with our Daphne Clair and the Reader's choice winner receives a three day weekend conference kindly donated by the Rome family. Birgit Davis-Todd will judge the top three manuscripts

The first round is for 10,000 words but please make sure that your manuscript is ready to submit by the 15th April. A very special thanks to Ellie Huse who had spent hours setting up the forms. More information will be posted on our website as we finalise them. Many thanks for all the feedback on what is an unpublished author.

Our annual conference being held at the Intercontinental hotel, in Wellington, is coming along very nicely and we are excited about our guest's line-up. So far we have the very popular New York Times, USA today, and Publishers Weekly bestselling author, Nalini Singh, New York Times and USA Today bestselling author Shirley Jump, Chick lit author Catherine Robertson whose novels reached number 1 spot on the NZ bestseller charts, popular Maree Anderson, Agent Nalini Akolekar from the Spencerhill agency, and Entangled editor Stacy Abrams.

Leeann is organising a tour for Thursday. She is also planning an exciting evening to replace the Friday's cocktail party. Mark your calendar-23-25th August.

Congratulations to those who have entered the NaNoWriMo challenge this year. Well done. You have a manuscript to shape into submission.

A final reminder that I always put any RWNZ news first into our email loop. Because of time constraint, sometimes this is the only venue I can use because any other bulk emails may end up in the spam folders. You can register on the loop and receive them in Digest form, which won't clutter your emails.

As we close for the year, I want to give my thanks to the Executive, the conference Committee, the group's coordinators, the newsletter team, our three loops coordinators and every member who helps RWNZ and its members to be the friendly and thriving association that it is.

Merry Christmas to all and see you in February.

Giovanna Lee, RWNZ President

Giovannaalee@yahoo.com



Your Core Story

With Julie Rowe

In 2005 at the RWA National Conference in Reno I attended the Pro retreat and listened to keynote speaker and best-selling author Jayne Ann Krentz talk about how she's reinvented herself as a writer several times over the years. She stressed that no matter which sub-genre of romance she writes in she still tells the same core story.

Jayne discussed the importance of discovering our own core stories as one of many keys to long-term success in the writing industry. She said that once you know what kind of story you write it's easier to move from sub-genre to sub-genre, because you'll have a better grasp on what you need to do to fit your story into that new sub-genre.

I walked out of that retreat wondering just what my core story was. How I could discover it? And, could I use that knowledge to help me become a better writer?

I thought long and hard about it. It was clear Jayne hadn't been talking

about long winded paragraphs describing what kind of stories she wrote. Even a full sentence description felt too long. No, in order to identify my core story I needed to boil my stories down even further, right down to a single concept; one or two words at most.

The idea that every writer has a core story was a breakthrough moment for me. I'd been writing for over eight years, and in that time I'd churned out thirteen books. I tried writing romantic suspense and inspirational before I found myself drawn to medical romances. There, finally, I found a genre that suited my voice and style. I thought it was all a genre problem, but after listening to Jayne, I realised genre had very little to do with it. It was my core story I'd been fighting. I'd written Rescue stories, but they didn't feel comfortable, so I tried something new with my last two books, medical romances. They were fun to write, and I also thought they were my best work. When those two books finalled in the 2006 Golden Heart contest I realised that I'd figured out something important, something that helped me refine my writing process. I felt as if my creative self had been set free.

My core story is Healing, not the Rescue or Crusade stories I'd tried to write early on. Armed with this information I set to work on a new medical romance. I began November 1, 2005 and finished the first draft in four weeks. I'd never written so fast, nor enjoyed it so much. Every word I wrote led to two more and in no time I had a story I loved.

Does that mean every writer should analyse their writing to discover their core story?

No.

Many writers never learn what their

core story is and are quite successful without ever needing to discover it.

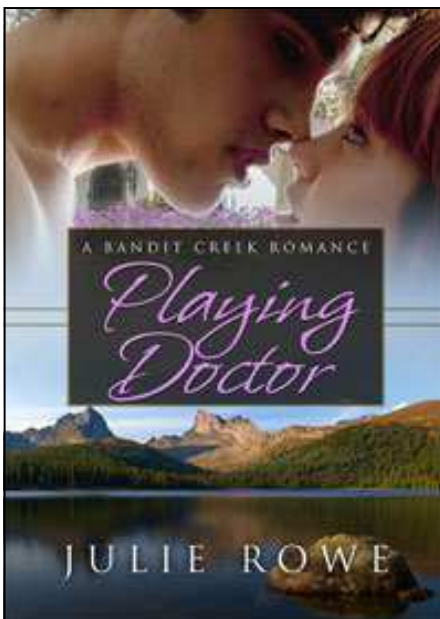
"It isn't absolutely necessary to analyze your personal core story," says Jayne Ann Krentz. "I know writers who have written successfully for years without ever thinking about it. You can get by brilliantly on instinct alone so long as you have found your proper niche in the market and providing nothing shifts in that market. Hey, I'm of the if-it-ain't-broke-don't-fix-it school.

It is only when things aren't working that you need to take a hard look at the basic conflicts and relationships in the story you are telling and decide what it is that truly compels you as a writer. What themes do you go back to again and again?

You may need to strip your story to the bone and give it a different backdrop as I did when I went from futuristics to historicals a few years ago. My core story remained the same but I had to change the setting drastically because in those days few romance readers were interested in a futuristic backdrop."

Many writers who burn out or become disillusioned with writing rediscover their love of storytelling when they discover their core story.

"I write rescue stories where the hero and the heroine are rescuing each other. I have written other stories but I didn't like doing it and they weren't very strong stories. It makes me wonder if one of the reasons I stopped writing is because I didn't like writing other types of stories," says Patsy McNish, who wrote as Alyssa



<p>Dean.</p> <p>"There's nothing so difficult as to go against the natural grain of what you do," says author Dianne Drake, author of over twenty books for Harlequin/Silhouette. "I truly believe that writers can write just about anything if they put their mind to it, but writing outside that core is hard to do, and for me, the hardest writing I've ever done came way outside that core. It's much easier (and much more enjoyable) to know where your core is and stay someplace close. That doesn't mean that you shouldn't take risks. Risks are great, and they expand your writing muscles. But you still need to keep a bit of that comfort zone around you."</p> <p>So, what's your core story?</p> <p>Your core story is the basic concept behind your characters, their conflicts, goals, and motivations. Most writers write the same story over and over again. It's the story you're compelled to write regardless of how you clothe it in plot, setting or genre. You can go from traditional to kick-ass heroines or from sweet romances with no sex to full frontal erotica. It doesn't matter, none of that will change your core story.</p> <p>Your core story is also a very personal thing. There are as many core stories out there, as there are writers, but most fall into one of several categories.</p> <p>Types of core stories:</p> <p>Acceptance</p> <p>Crusade</p> <p>Healing (wounded hero/heroine)</p> <p>Protector</p> <p>Redemption (righting past wrongs)</p> <p>Rescue</p> <p>Second Chance</p> <p>Transformation (change)</p> <p>Knowing your core story can give you excellent insight on what kind of conflicts you can use and how they can be resolved for your characters to obtain their happy ending.</p> <p>In an Acceptance story, the characters go on a journey to find</p>	<p>their place in the world. The journey can be a physical, emotional, or spiritual one. This is difficult because it means leaving what is safe and known for the unknown and possibly unsafe. Characters, at the end of an Acceptance story, find their place in the world and are accepted for who they are.</p> <p>In a Crusade story, the characters go in search of something they think will make them happy. The outcome must be that they find what they need, even if it's been sitting next to them the entire time. Again, this search can be an actual trip to an exotic destination or a trip of discovery through their local library archives.</p> <p>In a Healing story, the characters begin wounded and must allow themselves to heal. This requires trust. When that trust is returned, the wound heals and the character emerges as a new whole person at the end.</p> <p>In a Protector story, the characters assume responsibility for someone or something else (sometimes it's the character themselves). During the story's resolution, the character learns to accept this responsibility and/or learns to set free those that no longer need protection.</p> <p>In a Redemption story, the character must right a past wrong. They must find a way to make appropriate reparations for that wrong, follow through, and ask for forgiveness. During the resolution, forgiveness is granted and they move forward in their life.</p> <p>In a Rescue story, the characters must rescue someone from danger. The threat can be physical, emotional, or spiritual. During the resolution, the character succeeds in saving the person or thing they seek to rescue, and probably themselves as well.</p> <p>In a Second Chance story, the characters must allow themselves the opportunity to pursue the one thing they wish they had pursued years ago. As the story is resolved the character experiences closure, even if it means making the same mistakes, but knowing they've done their best.</p> <p>In a Transformation story, the characters must change, grow, and sometimes leave their old life behind to achieve their goal. In the resolution, the character successfully transforms himself and emerges as a new, mature, content person.</p> <p>Not every core story will fall neatly into</p>	<p>only one of the above categories. Some may be a combination of two or three.</p> <p>"Redemption, healing, belonging. I consider that the theme of my writing," says <i>Heartsong</i> author Linda Ford.</p> <p>How to identify your core story – writing exercise:</p> <p>Ask and answer the following questions in as few words as possible:</p> <p>Thinking about the book or books, you've written or want to write...</p> <p>...what are the goals of the H/h?</p> <p>...what motivates the H/h?</p> <p>...what are the conflicts?</p> <p>...how are they resolved?</p> <p>Do these goals and motivations fit into any of the core story types?</p> <p>Look at your current work in progress. Can you see a core story in it? Can you envision, with more clarity, the characters, conflicts and resolution? Are the goals and motivations of each character more clearly defined?</p> <p>Before you begin your next book, whether you extensively plot out your manuscript in advance or write by the seat of your pants, write down your core story on a sticky note and tack it to your computer monitor where you can see it. Keep that core story in mind as you write. That one word (Healing in my case) helps keep my writing tight and focused throughout the entire book. I know where the story has come from, where it is right now and where it has to go.</p> <p>"Such simple questions, Julie, but by golly they have made me look at my manuscripts in a whole new light," says author Vicki Chatham.</p> <p>Knowing your core story can help with more than just writing your manuscript. It can help with putting together a focused pitch and synopsis, too.</p> <p>"Knowing my core story has made writing a synopsis so much easier," says author Kellie Finley. "I write romantic suspense and often struggle with which scenes – romance or suspense – to include</p>
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and emphasise when writing a synopsis. Understanding my core story helped me tremendously by keeping me focused on the key scenes necessary to advance the romance and highlighting the suspense scenes that keep the tension high between the hero and heroine."

Lynne Marshall, whose first book, *Her Baby's Secret Father*, due out in September, 2006, says this about discovering her core story, "The prompts you provided in your writing exercise to discover my core story were very helpful. I had a hunch I knew what it was going in, but seeing your suggestions and choices helped me clarify it. Knowing that the core of every story I write involves some form of transformation will help me zero in on the heart of my next book."

Lynne put it beautifully. Zero in on the heart of your next book. Stay true to it. Stay true to you as a writer. Write your core story.

A Golden Heart double finalist in 2006, Julie Rowe has been writing for eight years and has completed thirteen manuscripts. Her freelance work has appeared in numerous magazines and newsletters. She admires all writers everywhere. If this article has inspired you, Julie would love to hear from you at julie.rowe@shaw.ca.

Medical Romance & Adventure

A double Golden Heart finalist in 2006, Julie Rowe has been writing medically inclined romances for over ten years. She's also a published freelancer with articles appearing in *The Romance Writer's Report*, *Canadian Living*, *Today's Parent*, *Reader's Digest (Canada)* and other magazines.

Julie is an active member of RWA and its subchapters, Heartbeat RWA, Calgary RWA, The Golden Network, Hearts Through History and RWA Online. She coordinates Book In A Week, and online workshops for Heartbeat and Calgary RWA.

Julie is now teaching for Keyano College in her home city of Fort McMurray, AB, Canada. She teaches a variety of workshops for the Workforce Development department at Keyano College.

*Julie enjoys teaching and volunteering, and is a passionate promoter of life-long learning. She's the owner/moderator of the **Announce Online Classes email loop**, which promotes online classes for writers, and which is hosted by a large number of writing organisations on a wide variety of topics and at various skill levels. The classes are taught by some of publishing's best writers and writing instructors.*

To subscribe to the Announce Online Classes email loop, send an email to:

Announceonlinewritingclasses-subscribe@yahoogroups.com See her list of classes on the [Classes I Teach](#) page.

Announce: Online Writing Classes Group Digest #804

[\[Announcing Celtic Heart Romance Writer's Upcoming Workshops!\]](#)

Fri Sep 28, 2012 8:01 am (PDT) . Posted by:

["Julie Rowe" juliemrowe](#)

**Upcoming Course:
January 14-25**

**Writing Fictional Dialogue for you
Scottish/Irish Romance**

Instructor: Eliza Knight

Learn the mechanics of writing dialogue, and how to make your character's conversations pop using a Scottish/Irish "flare".

Includes LIVE CHAT with Eliza Knight!

- Craft/mechanics of writing dialogue
- Scottish Dialect
- Irish Dialect

- Gaelic / Word Translation
- What to write and what not to write - What is too much?
- What moves the story along
- Tags/action tags
- Mixing dialogue with action/narrative
- Making character GMC shine through speech
- Viewing individual personality traits/morals/values through speech
- Weaving back-story into dialogue (using current events in history to make it come alive.)

Multiple lessons, exercises and critiques provided each week. Your readers will be able to "hear" what your characters are saying.

Instructor Bio:

Eliza Knight is the multi-published author of sizzling historical romance and erotic romance. While not reading, writing or researching for her latest book, she chases after her three children. In her spare time (if there is such a thing) she likes daydreaming, wine-tasting, travelling, hiking, staring at the stars, watching movies, shopping and visiting with family and friends. She lives atop a small mountain, and enjoys cold winter nights when she can curl up in front of a roaring fire with her own knight in shining armour.

Visit Eliza at www.elizaknight.com or her historical blog: [History Undressed: www.historyundressed.com](http://HistoryUndressed.com)
Twitter: [@ElizaKnight](https://twitter.com/ElizaKnight) and Face book: <https://www.facebook.com/elizaknightauthor>

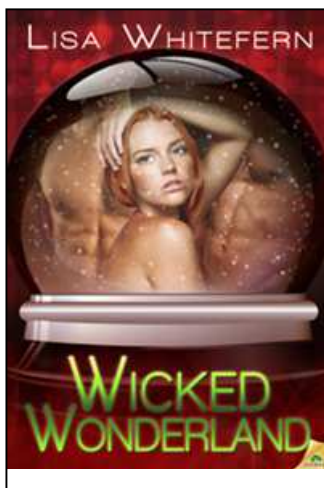
Writing About Magic in your Paranormal Romance

With Lisa Whitefern

Paranormal romance novels have been consistently popular since around the year 2000. So why is paranormal romance so popular?

Most romance novels are in essence fantasy. Magic and paranormal elements can add to a reader's pleasurable illusion of stepping into a completely different world. Paranormal and fantasy stories give us that freedom to pretend we are the people who can read minds, we can ride that magic carpet, we can fight that dragon. I also have a theory that paranormal romance is popular in the twenty first century because it allows those sexy alpha heroes to seem less like jerks in our modern age. They have a good excuse for being a domineering, wild and a little sexist, since they aren't fully human and their magic or supernatural powers make these fantasy men even more exciting.

So what is important when writing about magic in your romance novel? Logic and



consistency are important. There is a famous quote by Anton Chekhov about a gun. He commented that if you put a gun on stage in the first act, it must be fired in a later act; otherwise the gun should not be there in the first place.

The primary point of Chekhov's advice was to caution against including unnecessary elements in a story. I think this is especially true and important when adding magic or paranormal elements. When I was writing my paranormal erotic romance *Wicked Wonderland* from (Samhain Publishing ISBN: 978-1-61921-213-8) I knew my half-fae characters could shift into a form with wings, but that this shifting was very painful for them. I thought to myself if they have wings that cause them pain and that they do not like to use, then it is essential that I include a scene where they are forced to fly using their wings because of an emergency at some time in the story. **If you add any kind of magic element to your story it must serve a purpose.**

Another element that can be particularly challenging when writing fantasy or paranormal romance is making magic relevant to your story, and a meaningful part of the conflict within the characters.

My new critique partner Renee Wildes, who writes fantasy with romantic elements for Samhain Publishing, quotes science fiction writer **Arthur C Clarke as saying "Magic is just science undiscovered."** Wildes says this resonated with her inner geek and she decided to make it her mantra that the magic in her stories would be "concrete" with rules and boundaries and limitations. The more "real" and the less "magical" the more feasible the magic would become to the reader and the less they would have to suspend their disbelief

There are various schools of thought about how you should approach writing about magic. One school of thought is

that you can write whatever you want, however you want. If you want to have a science fiction character that can squeeze her eyes tightly and blow up the earth by simply imagining destruction, then so be it. The character has this ability - consequence free.

Other writers like Wildes believe that any magic powers your characters have must come at a cost. The magic in your story should be a plot driven. The problem with consequence free magic is that it can tempt an author to solve story problems with magic. Reading about easily solved problems is boring and disappointing for a reader who wants an intense build up of conflict that will create an emotional punch.

The Latin phrase *deus ex machina* or "God from the machine" comes from a practice by the playwright Euripides who when finding his plots had become too complicated would send an actor onto the stage in some kind of contraption, the actor dressed as God would come out of the machine and fix all the problems with a wave of his hands. This was immensely unpopular with the audience and is equally unpopular today. **People read to see characters work themselves out of situations. Readers need to relate.**

Diana Gabaldon author of the best selling time travel novel *Outlander* Dell (ISBN-100440212561) agrees. In her article for the Romance Writers of America about Paranormal Romance she states "you can invent worlds and situations to suit yourself in your paranormal romance, but you'll have to deal with the consequences." The example she gives is that if you've

announced somewhere that your heroine time travels when she looks in a mirror, you cannot let her do it later by snapping her fingers and whistling Dixie backwards. In other words, **Gabaldon says “making things up does not exclude you from the obligation to make sense.”**

In Harry Potter (Scholastic ISBN-10: 0439064872) for example there are a set of rules in place that tell him he cannot use magic outside of his wizard's school. There are many situations Harry finds himself in during his school holidays with the Dursley's where he would love to use magic. However, if he were to use magic, he would risk expulsion from school and have to live permanently with people who hate him. Magic comes at a cost to him. At other times when he is allowed to use magic he uses it against wizards and creatures who are as powerful as himself so that the reader cannot be too certain who will win.

Likewise in The Lord of the Rings Mariner Books (ISBN-10: 0544003411), Frodo has a magic ring, but the more he uses its powers the more he becomes enslaved to it.

As you are pondering how magic will work in your story, consider what is important to your character, and associate the cost of using the power with this important thing. In the examples above, Frodo can't risk being consumed by the ring. He has to destroy it, or it will destroy him like it did Golum. Harry Potter feels his true home is at Hogwarts, and to be expelled due to some careless act would be terrible as it would consign him to a life with the dull and cruel Dursleys. These powers come at high risk thereby causing compelling conflict.

What does this mean for your writing? Simply put, there is an established pattern for magic systems in successful writing. If you want to make your writing magical, you will follow them.

So, what are the writing rules for magic systems?

First, you have to establish a set of rules. Fantasy author **Phillip Athans** states that **when you are devising a magic system, consistency is key.**

He gives the example of a wizard who can conjure a ball of purple fire that engulfs an entire village, but a hundred pages later, he watches in impotent horror as a marauding gang of bandits storms down a hill. Athans points out that readers will ask why he doesn't just conjure up that purple fire again to destroy the bandits.

The rules you create for your paranormal or fantasy romance should clearly convey what the magic in your story is, and what the consequences are for using it. These rules should be related to your plot, and to your story. **Do not arbitrarily create magic and consequences. The most powerful writing ties the magic and its consequences to the story.**

Next, have someone (or something) deliver the rules of the magic system to your character. This can take many forms in writing. One example is the archetypal wise old woman or wise old man that Christopher Volger talks about in his book The Writer's Journey. He gives the examples of God walking in the garden of Eden with Adam, Merlin guiding King Arthur and The Fairy God-mother guiding Cinderella. This person's role is to deliver and teach the rules of the other world to the main character. This is the mentor that helps the main character prepare to face the antagonist in the story. Often times this includes teaching the main character the magic of the other world, and how to use it without feeling the brunt of the consequences. There are other devices that can be used, and you should explore them all.

Many systems of magic stem from a source. For example in some magic systems magic is sourced from a place such as from rivers, and so in this scenario a wizard must be near a river to create magic. You must decide if there is both good and evil magic in your world or if magic is a neutral force. Is magic in your world divided up by the four elements like in astrology, or is magic brewed up with potions and spells. Are your magic characters aware of the source where the magic comes from or is it a mystery?

Following the introduction of the rules to your characters, you will then want to create scenarios in which to put

your characters that test these very rules.

For example in my paranormal erotic romance Wicked Wonderland (release date December 4th from Samahin Publishing), my half-fae characters are immortal, but healing magic is very dangerous for them. Trying to heal the vital organs of a dying human being can put them into a coma from which they never wake.

In your writing, you need to **create situations in which the cost of using magic is something that risks what the character holds dear.** This will create conflict, and your readers will want to keep reading.

Some other possible examples of consequences for the use of magic or limitations to magic include

1. Time sensitive magic

This is when a character's magic only works when IT wants to on it's own time. There is no pattern to it and no rhyme or reason that the character can use to control it. This limit is often used when a protagonist has precognition because a protagonist with the gift of always being able to see the future would almost certainly ruin any story.

2. Magic that can be blocked

With this type of limitation the heroine may have a magic power but the villain may be able to block it. Or the good magic may have some bad side effects for example the instant healing powers can at times cause mutations.

3. Magic that can be Painfully Overwhelming

This limit is often used when the heroine is psychic. The character's abilities are always working on some level or switch on unexpectedly and can drive the protagonist crazy. For example a psychic is always reading others thoughts when she doesn't want to and finds it distressing. The character usually has to fight to gain control of his or her power.

4. Magic that is Unexpected

Similar to the overwhelming magic, in this scenario the magic kicks in randomly and

unexpectedly when the protagonist is startled or excited or otherwise upset. In this scenario the hero or heroine may have trouble controlling a power such as teleportation and must learn to self-control or risk tremendous calamities.

5. Magic that is Exhausting

I use this kind of magic in *Wicked Wonderland*. My half sylphs cannot heal a human without draining themselves and if they try to heal a human injury that is too serious they risk going into a coma from which they may never recover (a useful conflict when you have immortal characters who can't be killed.) This kind of magic sucks up serious energy when used and can make the hero or heroine tired or hungry or both. A character may lose power until he or she sleeps or eats to replenish her energy.

6. Magic That Can Only Occur Under Specific Circumstances

This magic can only occur under certain conditions often linked to the environment such as the moon being full or the sun shining on a stone or other circumstances such as singing a tune or being immersed in water. With this type of limitation you can build suspense, will the sunlight hit the magic rock at the right time of day etc.

7. Magic that can only be used a certain number of times

The classic example being you only get three wishes.

8. Magic Restricted by the Protagonist themselves or by the Original Power Source

For example the heroine may have sworn an oath never to use her magic powers for personal gain or to harm anyone or she may have been told she will pay a terrible price if she does use her powers in a certain way.

9. Magic that Corrupts

The more the hero indulges in the power the more it corrupts him. For example Gollum becoming enslaved by the evil power of the ring, vampires need blood but can lose their humanity by drinking from humans etc...

10. Magic with a Price

The magic carries a price. The hero might have to pay in some way every time he casts a spell or uses magic to stop a villain. The more magic power needed, the more the hero must sacrifice. Perhaps when magic is used by the heroine, the evil force is strengthened? The possibilities are endless.

11. Magic that requires a Recipe

In this scenario there is no instant magic. Magic requires a lot of ritual, long preparation and exotic ingredients, chanting in a magic language etc...A missing ingredient, wrong positioning of an object or an interruption can ruin the spell or cause a disaster. This is a huge limit on magic.

Finally avoid the pitfalls of the God in the machine. Don't create omnipotent heroes who have free rein over their magic. Its weak and it comes across as cheating. In addition to a strong romance, your reader wants to read about struggle, and conflict in your paranormal romance. Make your magic and paranormal elements dangerous. Make them risky.

LISA WHITEFERN had her first short story published in the New Zealand Herald at age 10. She has a Masters Degree (hons) in English Literature and is a member of Romance Writers of New Zealand. She has had several short stories published and has a novella *Waking the Witch* available from Freya's Bower. Follow Lisa on Twitter [@LisaWhitefern](https://twitter.com/LisaWhitefern)

You can buy her paranormal erotic romance novella *Waking the Witch* from the Freya's Bower website. http://www.freyasbower.com/index.php?main_page=advanced_search_result&search_in_description=1&keyword=Lisa+Whitefern

Or you can buy it for kindle from Amazon.com

Lisa's erotic fantasy romance novel *Wicked Wonderland* has a release date of December 4th 2012 from Samhain Publishing with trade paperback to follow at the end of 2013.

<http://store.samhainpublishing.com/wicked-wonderland-p-7081.html>

<http://www.amazon.com/author/lisawhitefern>

<http://lisawhitefern.wordpress.com/>

FREE ONLINE WORKSHOP

February 4

2013

Deep Story Structure & Techniques

With Carol Hughes

Carol Hughes has kindly offered her workshop to RWNZ members. It is free to our members. It will start on the 4th February on our workshop loop.

If you are not on the workshop loop and would like to take part please send an email to rwnzworkshop-subscribe@yahoogroups.com and Jean Drew will approve you.

Title: Deep Story Structure & Techniques

Instructor: Carol Hughes

Learn about the 18 scenes that every story contains, no matter its length or genre. Find out how to identify your character's mental gender and what impact that has upon readers. Discover how your character's arc drives your story and how your story drives your character's arc. Learn the four throughlines of every story and how to weave them together.

Every successful story contains characters who come alive for the reader. Every successful story is built on a solid, easy-to-master, story structure that works every single time. Every successful story lives on in the hearts and minds of readers because their authors have mastered the simple secrets needed to turn them into writing super stars. And you can, too.

Instructor Bio:

From Oscar's Annual Bash to Cannes' glitzy Red Carpet. From fabled palaces to rat-infested tunnels. From the floor of the Coral Sea to the vacuum of space. From the rain slicked streets of midnight Paris to the bombed out streets of Beirut at high noon. Writer Carol Hughes has lived and written about sights, adventures and characters that have dazzled audiences, and raised more than a few eyebrows, around the world. Dashing Alpha males, deadly killers, fictional red-haired mermaids, and celluloid heroes - she's known them all. She's navigated the killer-infested back alleys of Europe's grandest cities and the shark-infested corridors of Hollywood's studios as a writer/producer - and has picked up enough secrets and tips to make a living - and writing - an adventure in itself.

For more about Carol visit: carolahughesauthor.com

RWNZ CONFERENCE 2013

Please Welcome Our Guests



Stacy Cantor Abrams

Stacy Cantor Abrams is the editorial director for Entangled's main print lines, both adult and teen fiction, as well as for the short romance digital imprint Bliss. She started in the publishing industry in 2002, most recently leaving a seven-year stint at Bloomsbury Publishing's children's division to join the Entangled team. With Entangled Stacy has edited such high-calibre and best-selling authors as Roxanne Snopek, Rachel Astor, Lisa Burstein, Rachel Harris, and Ophelia London. In addition to editing, she has been a freelance copy editor for several major New York publishing houses. She earned her Bachelor's in English at Northwestern University and currently resides in New York City with her husband and too-cute puppy. Find her on Twitter at [@StacyAbramsEdit](https://twitter.com/StacyAbramsEdit).



Nalini Akolekar

When Nalini Akolekar was growing up her mother would frequently ask her in exasperation, "What are you going to do with your life? All you ever do is read romance novels!" Little did she know, her daughter was building a career for herself—one captivating page at a time.

Nalini joined Spencerhill Associates after a lengthy editorial career and several years in advertising sales. Agenting provided the perfect opportunity for combining her editorial instincts with her sales, marketing, and business experience.

Nalini specialises in romance and women's fiction in the adult market, but she also loves thrillers. Many of the new authors she's worked with have gone on to sell multiple books to major publishers.



Maree Anderson

Maree Anderson writes paranormal romance, speculative fiction romance, fantasy, and young adult books. She's a Kiwi who's addicted to chocolate — the darker the better (not to mention coffee, and the occasional glass of excellent NZ wine). She's not quite so addicted to her local gym — she'd much rather do a karate class or go Ceroc dancing than pound the treadmill.

She shares her home with a neurotic cat who likes to bring in the neighbour's dog's bones, and a depressed goldfish who likes to scare her by lying at the bottom of the fish-tank and playing dead.

To date Maree has published three novellas, six novels, and two young adult novels. Her latest release is *Freaks in the City*, the sequel to her multi-award-winning self-published YA novel *Freaks of Greenfield High* (optioned for TV by Cream Drama, Inc.). She's currently working on a fantasy trilogy.

To find out more about Maree's published books please visit her website:

www.mareeanderson.com



Shirley Jump

New York Times and USA Today bestselling author Shirley Jump spends her days writing romance and women's fiction to feed her shoe addiction and avoid cleaning the toilets. She cleverly finds writing time by feeding her kids junk food, allowing them to dress in the clothes they find on the floor and encouraging the dogs to double as vacuum cleaners. Look for her Sweet and Savory Romance series, including the USA Today bestselling book, *THE BRIDE WORE CHOCOLATE*, on Amazon and Nook, and the debut of her Sweetheart Club series for Berkley, starting with *THE SWEETHEART BARGAIN* in August 2013. Visit her website at www.shirleyjump.com or read recipes and life adventures at www.shirleyjump.blogspot.com.



Catherine Robertson

Catherine Robertson was born in Wellington, New Zealand. She left for a while to live in San Francisco and Buckinghamshire, but is now back home. She lives in a house by the sea with her husband who sheds bicycle bits, a black Labrador who sheds hair, a cat who sheds bits of whatever it's just eaten and two sons who shed all of the above. Her first novel is *The Sweet Second Life of Darrell Kincaid* and her second *The Not So Perfect Life of Mo Lawrence*. Both novels reached number 1 spot on the New Zealand bestseller charts (Catherine is not ashamed to say she did a little dance).

www.catherinerobertson.net

www.facebook.com/catherine.robertson.nzauthor



Nalini Singh

Nalini Singh is the New York Times, USA Today, and Publishers Weekly bestselling author of the Psy-Changeling and Guild Hunter series. Though she's travelled as far afield as the deserts of China, the Highlands of Scotland, and the temples of Japan, it is the journey of the imagination that fascinates her the most. She's beyond delighted to be able to follow her dream as a writer.

You can find out more about Nalini and her books on her website:

www.nalinisingh.com

Nalini is also on Twitter (www.twitter.com/nalinisingh) and Facebook (www.facebook.com/authornalinisingh)



Heart to Heart Welcomes Our New Editors



**Angelique Jurd and
Marjan van Waardenberg**

A natural chatterbox, I've always loved words and the stories that can be told with them.

Fiction, non-fiction, poetry, songs, prayer, news. I began writing when I was a little girl – and for the longest time ever all I wanted was to be a journalist.

My journey took me to University where I discovered two things – I was quite a good writer and I hated writing about politics. In a fit of female contrariness I turned my back on writing, and threw myself into my other love: languages. Yes, words still – that never changed

I followed the path to Paris where I completed a Masters – and almost in brackets married The French Man and had a baby boy. When that baby was four we came back to New Zealand and in time gave him a brother and a sister.

As so often happens on a journey, a cross roads was encountered and The French Man and I followed different paths.

Soon after, a love of one of the great wordsmiths of all time, rock singer Bruce Springsteen (I've been a fan since I was 12), brought me to The Kiwi Man who now accompanies me on my journey.

The baby boy is now 20, his brother 14, and his baby sister 12. Together with The Kiwi Man we have settled by the sea on the south east coast of Auckland with three insane cats, a mountain of books and an obscene number of Springsteen music and mementos.

The journey continues and words are again designing the map. After working for several years as a newspaper editor, I now work as a social media and content creation consultant with a very funky company called Sales Systems.

If you're still curious you can find me in almost all the social media sites (link, like, follow, circle, pin, invest – whatever you do, I'll return the gesture) and on About.me.

Should our paths ever cross, be sure to say hi – and I'll see you a little further on up the road.

Angelique Jurd

Always wanted to write but it's been a slow process getting there. I had to learn English first, having migrated to NZ as an 11 yr old. Then I trained as a nurse, married, had four children - very much the story of the seventies really. At some point I decided that life is too short to wait for 'the moment'. I went to uni, studied classics and languages, dead and live, reclaimed the single life (the story of the '90s really) and started writing - policy papers, copy writing, short stories, and research reports and struggling with the elusive novel.

My home is in Wellington but currently I am 'home continuity person' for a granddaughter whose mother works in films. We spent last year in Toronto, this year in London – next year is a surprise. It's been a great opportunity to research the historical novel, and get going with the writing (difficult when research is so tantalising). In between the school runs, the freelance copy writing and research in the London Library and various museums, I will get the words down!

I am looking forward to working with the H2H editorial team – and getting those words down.

Marjan van Waardenberg



AFTER THE FIRST SALE

© Laurie Schnebly Campbell

Whether or not you've hit that point yet, you know all about the expectations. We're not talking about the practicalities here—the questions of how (or whether) to deal with your publisher, agent, deadline and contract terms. What we're talking about here is the other part of what happens after the first sale.

The emotional part.

Good and bad.

Ask any published author to tell you about her first sale, and you'll see her eyes light up. It's like asking a bride to tell you about how she got her engagement ring—it's the story of a validation, of having attained a coveted status, of being able to tell the world "I made it!"

And it's a great feeling. No question. But in a world where we all know that an engagement ring doesn't guarantee a hundred-percent happy future, it's good to remember what Anne Lamott said in *Bird by Bird*, or rather what she quoted a coach as saying about victory: "If you're not enough before the gold medal, you won't be enough with it."

Try replacing "gold medal" with "book sale," and the author's conclusion makes sense: "Being enough was going to have to be an inside job."

So okay. I know that. I know perfectly well that selling my first book (or any book) isn't going to make the difference between my feeling like a worthwhile person and a worthless piece of protoplasm.

But it's amazingly easy to forget that when all the congratulations are pouring in, the electronic cards are glittering with fireworks, the

roses are being presented amidst thunderous applause and the clerk at the champagne counter is repeating in tones of awe, "You actually sold a book?"

(Take a minute to enjoy anticipating or remembering the feeling, okay? As writers, we can put ourselves in any scene we want, and we might as well take advantage of that gift!)

Okay, now that we're all tingling from that warm, happy glow...there is nothing—repeat, nothing—wrong with enjoying the glorious hubbub of a first sale. It's wonderful. That sense of validation is nothing more than what we deserve after having worked so hard, for so long, with so little acknowledgment. We're entitled to bask in all the glory we can get, for as long as we can get it. We've earned it, and we darned well deserve to enjoy it!

The only danger is in thinking that it's the beginning of a whole new life of fireworks and roses and champagne, and (because we're realistic) maybe even a few problems, sure, like how to make the next book even better and which publisher to cosy up with and how to combine the demands of a family with those of an adoring editor...we're rational adults; we understand there are always going to be problems.

We know that. And we're ready for it.

So it's all the more devastating when the problems that arise aren't the problems we expected.

What are they?

For me, the problem was that my editor didn't want the next manuscript I sent her. Or the next one. Or the one after that. I was stunned—everyone else I'd seen sell a first book had kept right on selling. What was the matter with me?

For a friend, the problem was that she didn't sell to the line she'd hoped for...it was a sale, yes, but not the one she'd dreamed of. "A bittersweet victory," she called it.

For another writer, the problem was that the publisher who bought her manuscript folded before the book could hit the shelves. For another, it was the realisation that she didn't feel the same dazzling sense of competence and control attributed to those renowned authors in all the glowing articles. Another found that some of her fellow writers looked down on her publishing house, which meant she didn't get quite the same sense of status other first-sellers got.

Still another discovered that getting her book published didn't yield the kind of money she'd been expecting. Another, that the editor didn't call her for input on cover art, publicity and so on. Another... Shoot, this is getting depressing. Let's switch from the problems to the solutions.

Actually, there are only two solutions. But they cover a lot of ground.

The first solution is forget your expectations.

That's a hard one. We all have expectations. We live with them. We expect that the sun will rise tomorrow morning, that the friends who liked us yesterday will still like us next week, that nobody's gonna come racing down the wrong side of the road and crash into us head-on...and almost always, we're right.

But anytime we're disappointed, it's because an expectation has not been met. There is no disappointment which isn't preceded by an un-met expectation.

And in fact, the people who stay the happiest, the longest, about their first (or any) sale are those who either see all their great

expectations come true...or those who didn't have any unrealistic expectations in the first place.

A writer who expects to sell her first book and then open a bottle of champagne is not likely to be disappointed (always assuming the liquor stores are open when she sells!) because that expectation is something she can control...even if it means stocking up on champagne the day she puts her manuscript in the mail.

A writer who expects to sell her first book and never get another rejection letter is far more likely to be disappointed, because—right, you got it. (Even 40- and 50-book authors still suffer rejections...which I wouldn't have believed if I hadn't heard it directly from them!)

Okay, so "forgetting expectations" is the first solution. The second one is..."enjoy the process."

The writing process is really the only thing you can control. (And if it's causing you more grief than pleasure, maybe it's time to think about finding some other pursuit.) But the joy of writing that first got you started, the fun of making up characters who live out scenes only you can create...regardless of what happens with the rest of the business, that endures.

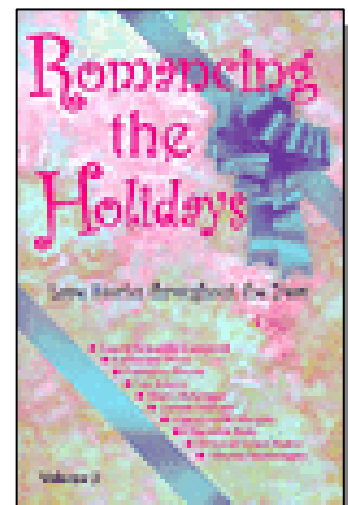
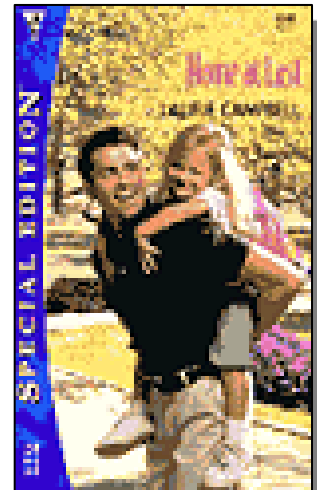
Regardless of expectations...regardless of disappointments...the writing process itself is all you can really control.

And if you total up the thrills that accompany a first sale, then weigh that against the total of thrills that accompany writing story after story, scene after scene, book after book...it's no contest. Enjoying the process lasts far, far longer than any first-sale fireworks.

Good thing it's as close as the keyboard. :)

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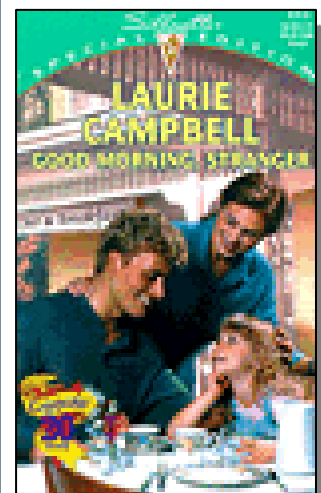


Laurie Schnebly Campbell loves giving workshops for writer groups about "Psychology for Creating Characters," "Making Rejection WORK For You," "Building A Happy Relationship For Your Characters (And Yourself)" and other issues that draw on her background as a counselling therapist and romance writer. In fact, she chose her website (www.BookLaurie.com) so people would find it easy to Book Laurie for programs. But giving workshops -- for students from London and Los Angeles to New Zealand and New York -- is just one of her interests. During weekdays, she writes and produces videos, brochures and commercials (some of which feature her voice) for a Phoenix advertising agency.

For several years she would turn off her computer every day at five o'clock, wait thirty seconds, turn it on again and start writing romance. It finally paid off. Her first novel was nominated by Romantic Times as the year's "Best First Series Romance", and her second beat out Nora Roberts for "Best Special Edition of the Year".

But between those two successes came a three-year dry spell, during which Laurie discovered that selling a first book doesn't guarantee ongoing success. "What got me through that period," she says, "was realizing that the real fun of writing a romance is the actual writing. Selling is wonderful, sure, but nothing compares to the absolute, primal joy of sitting at the computer and making a scene unfold and thinking 'Wow! Yes! This is great!'"

After six books for Special Edition, she turned her attention to writing non-fiction -- using her research into the nine personality types to help writers create plausible, likable people with realistic flaws. Her other favourite activities include playing with her husband and son, recording for the blind, counselling at a mental health centre, travelling to Sedona (the Arizona red-rock town named for her great-grandmother, Sedona Schnebly) and working with other writers. "People ask how I find time to do all that," Laurie says, "and I tell them it's easy. I never clean my house!" For a complete list of Laurie's upcoming sessions, delivered once a month, email LaurieClass-subscribe@yahoogroups.co. And visit WriterUniv.com for more info.



To find out more about Laurie's books visit :
<http://www.booklaurie.com/>

WriterUniv.com

RESULTS OF THE NELSON SPRING ROMANCE SHORT STORY COMPETITION 2012.

First Prize to:

Lynne M Kokshoorn in Greymouth for her story ***Come back to me.***

Judge Sue MacKay's comment: I loved this story – all that emotion – you really touched me. I kept wondering will Remi come home? Won't he? That's awesome writing.

Second Prize to:

Donna Capil in Stoke (Nelson) for her story *Molly's Crush.*

Judge Sue MacKay's comment: I loved this story. It is so real, so emotive.

Third Prize to:

Liz Elson in Wellington for her story *The Way Home.*

Judge Sue MacKay's comment: I enjoyed this story. It depicts well the quandaries of people, whose families have left home, and are now left facing their own time to do something for themselves.

Also in the Top 10 that was sent to the final judging by Sue MacKay were (in alphabetical order):

Andrew M. Underwood's *Flap Jack*,
Andrew M. Underwood's *Aquarius*,
Andrew M. Underwood's *At A Dentist's Waiting Room*,
Emily Fredrickson's *New Beginnings*,
Jo McNabb's *Roses*, Jon Harrey's *A Southern Harvest*,
Virginia Suckling's *The Rendezvous*.

Well done everyone and heartfelt congratulations to you all!

Also a warm thank you to our judge Sue Mackay for a great job!

The 1st prize basket included:

A full year's membership in Romance Writers New Zealand (RWNZ), donated by the RWNZ Nelson Chapter.

Three hardback Mills & Boon Medical Romance novels, written and kindly donated by Sue MacKay.

A bottle of red wine, kindly donated by Te Mania Wines, Richmond.

A box of natural skin care products, kindly donated by Carol Priest.

Some chocolate skin care products, kindly donated by The Body Shop, Nelson.

Some Avon skin care products, kindly donated by Nelson Romance Writer Karen Mead.

A heart shaped pendant, kindly donated by Nelson Romance Writer Annika Ohlson-Smith.

A bag printed with the cover of the Romance novel *Affinity*, written and kindly donated by Nelson Romance Writer LaVerne Clark.

Heart shaped ginger cookies, baked and kindly donated by The Swedish Bakery, Nelson.

A sprinkle of Hershey's Chocolate Kisses, donated by the RWNZ Nelson Chapter.

The 2nd prize basket included:

A bottle of white wine, kindly donated by Te Mania Wines, Richmond.

A bag of natural skin care products, kindly donated by Carol Priest.

Some chocolate skin care products, kindly donated by The Body Shop, Nelson.

Some Avon skin care products, kindly donated by Nelson Romance Writer Karen Mead.

A Thriller novel and a Romance novel, kindly donated by Nelson Romance Writer Judy Tregurtha .

Heart shaped ginger cookies, baked and kindly donated by The Swedish Bakery, Nelson.

A sprinkle of Hershey's Chocolate Kisses, donated by the RWNZ Nelson Chapter

The 3rd prize basket included:

A bag of natural skin care products, kindly donated by Carol Priest.

Some chocolate skin care products, kindly donated by The Body Shop, Nelson.

Some Avon skin care products, kindly donated by Nelson Romance Writer Karen Mead.

A Romance novel, kindly donated by Nelson Romance Writer Judy Tregurtha .

Heart shaped ginger cookies, baked and kindly donated by The Swedish Bakery, Nelson.

A sprinkle of Hershey's Chocolate Kisses, donated by the RWNZ Nelson Chapter.

All three baskets were kindly wrapped and beautifully decorated by Creative Occasions/The Party Shop, Nelson.

A HEARTFELT THANK YOU TO ALL OUR GENEROUS SPONSORS IN NELSON!

Also a big thank you to the papers and other media all over the country for advertising our competition.

The Top three stories will appear on the following websites:

www.cherieleclare.com &
www.laverneclark.blogspot.com

Annika Ohlson-Smith

Convenor

RWNZ Nelson Chapter

COME BACK TO ME

Lynne M Kokshoorn

FIRST PRIZE WINNER

in the Nelson Spring Romance Short Story Competition



Remi's rucksack hits the kitchen floor with a thud. He sits down beside me at the kitchen table and I breathe in the fresh scent of him, savouring it, committing it to memory as if it is the last time.

"You look very handsome," I say.

He smiles and drops a kiss on my lips. When he smiles that slow smile of his it makes my heart race.

"So you like a man in uniform?" he teases keeping things light.

"Only my man," I reply.

He squeezes my hand. I draw a shaky breath, Remi is being deployed today. The news bulletins have been full of skirmishes in the war torn country his unit is being sent too.

Remi hates to travel on a full stomach so I have made hot buttered toast; marmite for Remi, honey for me and a pot of English breakfast tea to go with it.

I can see our reflections in the shiny teapot, him with his olive skin and dark brown eyes and me with my wild auburn curls and serious grey eyes. I keep staring at the shiny chrome teapot as if it were a crystal ball. Hoping forlornly that it will predict the future; praying that it will bring Remi safely home to me.

We have moved often during Remi's army service. Our slightly dented teapot is always the first thing we unpack.

We were almost twenty the summer we met. Remi was selling fresh farm produce on his family's market stall. I was looking after my aunt's stall when he ventured over to where I was sitting pretending not to notice him.

To gain my attention, he admitted later, he brought the teapot. His choices were limited as the stall sold crockery, jewellery and women's clothing.

"Carly," Remi whispers, sensing my fragile state he pulls me into his arms. "I'll come back to you."

Daylight creeps through the window. Remi's ride will be here soon.

We've agreed that I don't see him off at the station. We tried it a few times but we both ended up in tears.

I stroke the dark stubble at his jaw and run my fingers through his short army hair cut. This is Remi's last tour of duty, when he returns we will begin a new life on his parents' farm.

We know each other so well that I'm sure he's not fooled by the smile I paste on my face. I don't want to cause him concern; he has a difficult job ahead of him.

There is a toot at the gate. We have precious few moments left.

He kisses me one last time.

"I love you babe. I'll come back to you," he promises again.

I hold back my tears. "I know you will. I love you too," I reply.

"Don't watch me go. Visit Lena," he suggests gently.

And then he is gone, and I'm alone with my thoughts.

Cooking aromas drift through the kitchen window. Lena, our neighbour, is a polish refugee. She cooks to comfort others. Today it is for me but my tummy feels queasy. I don't want to offend her but I don't think I will be able to eat.

The weeks pass by and Remi gets in touch with me, we talk of nothing and everything. There are things I keep back, things that I would love to share with him, but it is best that he is free to focus on his duties.

I have plenty of time in the next few months to think about how lucky we were to find each other. We married young, there were rumours that I was pregnant but nothing was further from the truth. And nothing could have prepared us for our unexplained infertility.

And then I was pregnant. Such happiness! Remi comes from a long line of jade and wood carvers, so it was only natural that he crafted a cradle for our child.

It wasn't to be. When we lost the baby, Remi's parents put the cradle in storage at their farm reassuring us that one day we would need it.

A restless energy drives me. The waiting never gets any easier. One moment my appetite is ravenous and the next it has disappeared. I avoid the TV fearful of breaking news.

Sometimes during the night I wake and reach across the bed for my soldier. My hand comes up empty, I wonder what he is doing and I pray that he is safe in that far flung country.

I never question his mission, like Remi I believe that helping suppressed people to obtain peace is the right thing to do.

To pass the time, I visit with Lena and her little dog. My mother died when I was young and Lena, who knows all about war but does not speak of it, is a surrogate mother to me. She calls me, Corka – daughter.

"Your soldier, he will return, have faith," she tells me constantly.

News filters through of an attack on a base camp. After an agonising wait Remi gets in touch.

"I'm fine, love. I'll be home soon. Start packing," he says.

Remi is alive! My heart sings for joy but is also sad for the other brave soldiers and their loved ones that have not been so lucky.

At first, I think I am dreaming when I hear the familiar thud of Remi's rucksack hitting the bedroom floor, and then he slips in beside me.

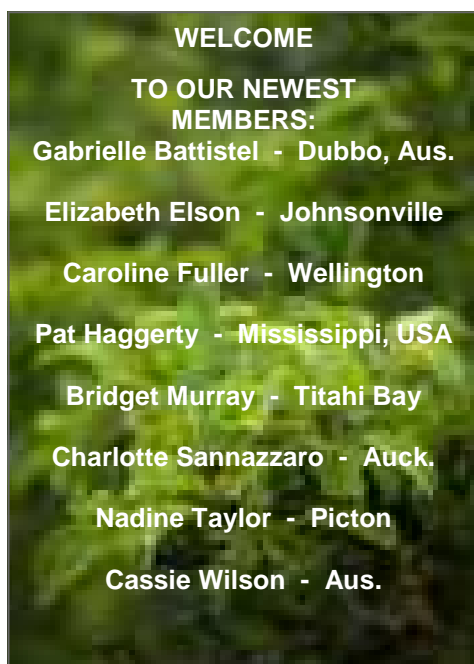
"Surprise!" he chuckles, but the surprise is all his!

He yells and in one movement he throws the cover off and reaches for the light. He stares at my large baby bump and I laugh at his stunned face.

"Oh my god! I don't believe it?" he shouts even louder.

"I didn't want you to worry. You're cutting it fine soldier our baby is due next week."

We laugh and cry together and daylight arrives before we finally fall asleep in each other's arms.





POTENTIAL MARKETS

with P.D.R. Lindsay-Salmon



MoonPhaze Publishing

Electronic format, print later
Open to all

Seeking: Fantasy, Romance, Science Fiction, Paranormal, Mystery, and Western. Do note that paranormal does not mean horror nor does romance include erotica

Length: Stories 1,000 words plus, Novels up to 100,000 words

Response time is six weeks

Payment and rights are discussed in the contract which can be downloaded from the website

Website: <http://moonphazepub.wix.com/moonphaze>

Email submissions to: MoonPhazePub@hotmail.com

Writers' guidelines:

<http://moonphazepub.wix.com/moonphaze#!authors1>

Diamond Heart Press

Ebooks and print

Open to all

Seeking: YA Paranormal Romance

Length: 60,000 to 100,000 words - prefer around 80,000

Payment discussed under contract

Details: website: <http://diamondheartpress.com>

Guidelines:

<http://diamondheartpress.com/submissions/>

Email and submissions use the online system:

<http://diamondheartpress.com/submissions/>

Jukepop Serials

E-publisher publishing serials

Open to all

Seeking: adventure, American gothic, crime, cross-genre, dystopian, fantasy, horror, mystery, paranormal, sc-fi, sc-fi western, slipstream, steampunk, superhero, thriller, and young adult

Length: each episode under 5,000 words

Payment is 2 cents per word

Details: website: <http://www.jukepopserials.com>

Email queries and subs using the online system

Guidelines:

<http://www.jukepopserials.com/home/submissions>

Dreamspinner Press

Ezine and print

Open to all

Seeking: gay male romance stories in all genres. While works do not need to be graphic, they must contain a primary or strong secondary romance plotline and focus on the interaction between two or more male characters

Length: 15,000 plus words

Payment and Rights: \$500-\$1,000 advance is paid in a single payment upon receipt of the signed contract. Once the advance is satisfied, novels earn 40% royalties for digital sales and 30% royalties for paper-back sales

Details: website:

<http://www.dreamspinnerpress.com/store/>

Email queries and submissions:

submissions@dreamspinnerpress.com

Guidelines at:

<http://www.dreamspinnerpress.com/store/pages.php?pid=6&CDpath=0>

The Zharmae Publishing Press

Digital, royalty-paying small publisher

Open to all

Seeking: Erotica, Romance, science fiction, fantasy, young adult and exceptional children's science fiction & fantasy, horror, mystery, action & adventure, thriller/suspense, historical fiction

Length: 75,000 plus

Payment: an advance above \$2,500 is rare and reserved only for Authors with previous sales records and/or a backlist of several titles. On average, a first time author may expect a competitive advance that will meet the membership criteria of the major writers' associations (SFWA, HWA, MWA, and RWA)

Details: website: <http://www.zharmae.com>

Email submissions to: Email:

manuscripts@zharmae.com

Guidelines:

http://www.zharmae.com/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=43&Itemid=66

Storytelling reveals
meaning without
committing the error of
defining it.
Hannah Arendt

Write down the thoughts of
the moment.
Those that come unsought
for are commonly the most
valuable. ~Francis Bacon



INTERNATIONAL CONTESTS

with Angela Bissell

Great Expectations Contest (North Texas RWAmerica)

Deadline: December 28, 2012

Eligibility: Unpublished in category entered during the last three years (2010, 2011 and 2012).

Enter: First 25 pages of your manuscript plus a micro-synopsis of 300 words maximum.

Fee: US\$30 RWA members / US\$35 non-members (\$5 early-bird discount before 8 December).

More info: www.ntrwa.org

Winter Rose Contest for Unpublished Authors (Yellow Rose RWAmerica)

Deadline: January 18, 2013

Eligibility: RWA members who have not published a novel in the last five years.

Enter: Opening 25 pages of your romance novel (projected length of at least 50,000 words).

Fee: US\$25

More info: www.yellowroserwa.com

Little Gems Contest (Romance Writers of Australia)

Deadline: February 1, 2013

Eligibility: Unpublished and published RWAustralia members.

Enter: Romantic short story to 3,000 words maximum. PG rating. Theme gem: sapphire.

Fee: TBC (via website)

More info: www.romanceaustralia.com

The Ella (Romance Writers of Australia)

Deadline: February 4, 2013

Eligibility: Authors of romance novellas (10,000 to 40,000 words) first published 2012.

Enter: Seven copies of the book (if ePublished, bound hard copies to be submitted).

Fee: A\$22-45 (depending on membership and location – refer website for more detail)

More info: www.romanceaustralia.com

Contests for Published Authors

Golden Quill Contest (Desert Rose RWAmerica), January 11, www.desertroserwa.org

Write Touch Readers' Award (Wisconsin RWAmerica), January 11, www.wisrwa.org

Booksellers' Best Award (Greater Detroit RWAmerica), January 15, www.gdrwa.org

Gayle Wilson Award of Excellence (Birmingham RWAmerica), Jan 15, www.southernmagic.org

Winter Rose Contest (Yellow Rose RWAmerica), January 19, www.yellowroserwa.com

Bean Pot Contest (New England RWAmerica), January 30, www.necrwa.org

HOLT Medallion Contest (Virginia Romance Writers), Jan 31, www.virginiaromancewriters.com

Award of Excellence Contest (Colorado RWAmerica), January 31, <http://crw-rwa.ning.com>

R*UBY (Romance Writers Australia), February 8, www.romanceaustralia.com



Woos, Hoos, and News

Celebrating our members' achievements.

Email Jean Drew jeandrew@extra.co.nz
with your successes to be included in this page.



THE SILVER ROSE by Rowena May O'Sullivan was released 26 November 2012 with Crimson Romance and is available through Amazon, iTunes, Barnes & Noble and eCrimson Romance. Rowena's website is www.rowenamayosullivan.com. Rowena also signed with Cascade Literary Agency late November.

FIRST SALE: A big woohoo to **Serena Clarke** who has signed with Crimson Romance for her first book, **ALL OVER THE PLACE**, scheduled for release February 18.

Bronwen Evans has released the third novella in her **Wicked Wagers** trilogy, **TO CHALLENGE THE EARL OF CRAVENSWOOD** and it went straight into the top 100 on Amazon-Books-Romance-Regency. **Bron** has also sold her new Regency series, **Disgraced Lords**, to **Sue Grimshaw** at **Random House Loveswept** – three books all out in 2014: **A KISS OF LIES** in January 2014, followed by **A TOUCH OF MARRIAGE** and **A PROMISE OF MORE**.

Annie West has released **DEFYING HER DESERT DUTY** with **Harlequin Mills & Boon Sexy**. Here's the link to Annie's page. <http://www.annie-west.com/desertduty.html>

Lisa Gardiner w/a Lisa Whitefern has **WICKED WONDERLAND** coming out from **Samhain Publishing** on **December 4th** available from the Samhain website, Nook and Kindle.

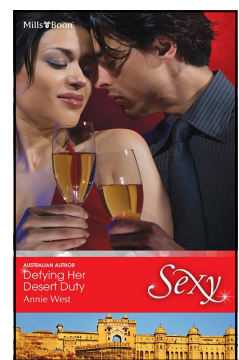
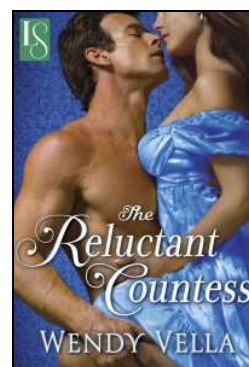
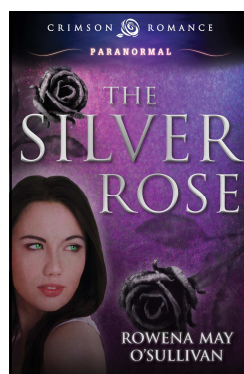
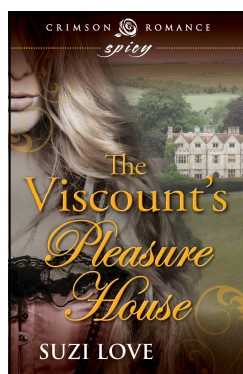
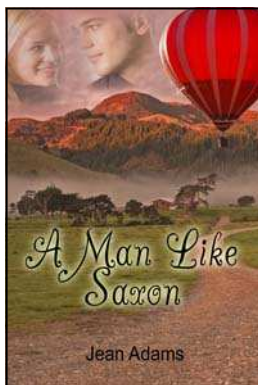
Frances Housden has had her Scottish Medieval Romance, **THE CHIEFTAIN'S CURSE**, accepted for publication with **Harlequin Escape**.

Julie-Ann Miskell is a finalist in the Romantic Suspense category of the **Spacecoast Authors of Romance RWA Launching a Star Contest**.

Faye Robertson w/a Serenity Woods has sold another two books to **Samhain** - **SIX NAUGHTY NIGHTS** comes out March 2013, and **MAKING SENSE** will be published in July 2013. Faye has also sold two books to Harlequin's new Australian company, **Escape Publishing**. **SUMMER FLING** will be out in December, and **ONE HOT NIGHT IN WINTER** (working title) in 2013.

Sue Webb w/a Suzi Love has a December release. **THE VISCOUNT'S PLEASURE HOUSE**, an historical erotic romance, releases from **Crimson Romance** on the December 3. Excerpt on Goodreads - <http://www.goodreads.com/book/show/16114591-the-viscount-s-pleasure-house>>Goodreads

FIRST SALE: **Wendy Vella** **THE RELUCTANT COUNTESS**, **Random House-Loveswept** Jan 2013
A MAN LIKE SAXON by **Jean Adams** releases in January from **Wild Rose Press**.





REGIONAL CONVENORS

Auckland: Pamela Gervai

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Otago: Sarah Addison Rowe

email: rowefamily3@xtra.co.nz



RWNZ News Around the Regions

Keeping in touch with each other.

Auckland

We had a most informative meeting yesterday with Lisa Gardiner's (writing as Lisa Whitefern) presentation of 'Writing on Magic' – as usual, well researched. Members who were disappointed they were unable to attend will be able to read her talk in two parts in the next issues of 'Heart to Heart.' Nalini Singh who has recently returned from a productive trip overseas, told us about the huge Frankfurt Book Fair. We gleaned some very useful information from her as well – thank you Nalini.

We also had several success stories with people having been published or accepted for publishing.

Louise Graham has very kindly offered her house in Grey Lynn as venue for our Xmas Party. This will be on Saturday 1 December at 12.30 p.m. Email me for the address if you are coming. Please bring a plate for lunch and a drink to share. Chapter will provide tea and coffee. There may not be enough chairs so if you don't mind sitting on the floor, please bring a cushion too. We will have our usual raffle so bring some change as well. This is our chance to have a catch up chat rather than our usual writing craft session.

Thank you everyone for your support over the year. A big thank you to our speakers for presenting such interesting talks over 2012. I particularly want to thank Jo Fereday for managing the Accounts, Lynette Leong for being our efficient Tea Lady, Amanda Wilson (writing as Amanda Antonio) for stepping in as back-up, Louise Williams for acting as our Librarian for the second-hand books and Marian Rocco (writing as Cody Young) who as ex-tea lady has also helped out. Thank you too to Helen Tomkins who until recently took the minutes for our meetings.

I look forward to seeing you all at Louise's on 1 December. Pamela.

Central North (C2C)

An extremely diverse (on oh-so-many-levels) group of the lovely C2C ladies met for our final meeting of the year. The weekend retreat can only be described as amazing/entertaining/relaxing/full of laughs/and informative; professionally and personally. Sophia James was giving and genuine; her time with our group enhanced our overall experience. We've forward booked the venue for next year's end-of-year 2 day event

www.paradisevalleylodge.co.nz If you're looking for a retreat for writing or painting - this place is it! Gorgeous gardens, quiet, vistas, walk down to the river at the bottom of the garden...

Our first 2013 meeting will be at Jeanne Drake's home in Tauranga. More details will follow. Planning of next year's events and the meeting venue schedule is currently in progress. A big thank and welcome goes to Helen McFarlane - our incoming convenor for C2C. Next year promises to be even more exciting than this one...Happy Christmas and blessings to you all! Gaylene.

Hawkes Bay

We have all been busy with maintaining our writing goals that we have set for ourselves. With Christmas time coming up I think that we are all looking forward to a break in our routine whether that is getting loads of writing done or having a break from our writing schedule. We hope everyone has a fantastic Christmas and we look forward to getting together again in the New Year.

If anyone is interested in joining the Hawke's Bay group, please feel free to contact Kristina at maple-leaf@hotmail.co.nz

Wellington

Our November meeting was a jolly affair, attended by visitors Carole and Jenny from Palmerston North and Eketahuna. Our writing exercise was a page describing a place where one of our scenes was set. Jenny won hands down with her atmospheric piece of New Zealand bush. We also had a reading from Meryl's nearly-finished book. She'd be very pleased if anyone would like to read it and comment. Contact www.merylbrew@xtra.co.nz

Our next meeting will be our slap-up Christmas lunch at Meryl's at 12 noon, Saturday December 1st. Because Heart to Heart is coming out later to include Nano results we'll be emailing around and arranging food beforehand. Merry Christmas everyone – and happy writing over the holidays. Kris Pearson.

Nelson

The Nelson Branch met early, as Sally and Annika were off on a writers' retreat the following weekend.

We started things off by using the Mental Olympics exercise in this month's H-to-H. Our winning entries were - Most original use of a spoon - As a mirror for a mouse, and use of a brick - To be a friend to other bricks. This latter particularly appealed to me, because if you're destined to spend maybe hundreds of years attached to each other, it's pleasant to think that your neighbour is a chum.

The main purpose of the day was to create decorations for our tree, which will be one of the entries in the Nelson Cathedral's Festival of Christmas Trees. Our theme is 'On the Twelve Days of Courtship,' and we have cherubs, hearts, feathers, engagement rings and love knots, not to mention the bride and groom which will top the tree. As might be anticipated, our members were wonderfully creative.

Next month we're meeting for a festive lunch, and hope that the judge of our recent competition, Sue Mackay, will be able to join us. (Grandparenthood is imminent, however, so we may be usurped by the anticipated grandson.)

We wish everyone at H-to-H a very happy festive season.

NaNoWriMo Winners

Jeanette Petherick

Gold Medal Lover
Contemporary Romance
Word count - 50,083.

Shirley Wine

Rewrite Of One Hour To Midnight
NaNoWriMo Count – 78,000

LaVerne Clark

The Talisman
Romantic fantasy/suspense
NaNoWriMo count - 50,269 (but still at least 10K off from being finished)

Viv Adams

Catch Me
Historical Romantic Suspense
NaNoWriMo count - 81,330 (still going)

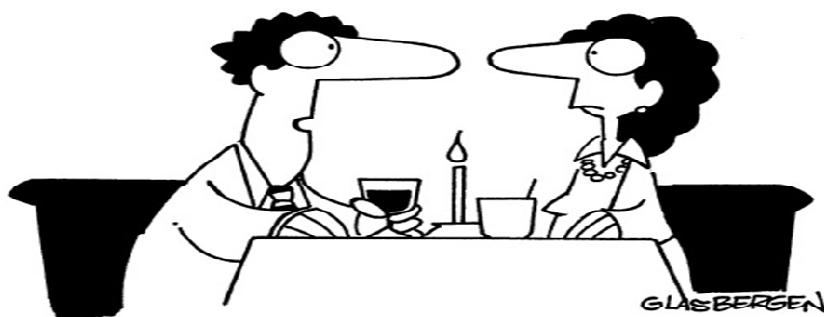
Attention all NaNoers...here is your **NEW Deadline...**mark **December 10** on the calendar and keep writing that MESSY First Draft! **Avon Romance** has opened a brilliant opportunity for us – they invite us to submit our romances online to **Avon Impulse** their digital first arm (original novels or novellas - **50k plus** words). **Go to** www.avonimpulse.com and **tag your submission 'NaRoWriMo'**. They are seeking new talent for 2013 release and are looking to launch careers – **could you be their new voice?**



Follow Love and it will flee – Flee Love and it will follow you -John Gay

Joanna Penn offers tips on measuring your writing goals like the countdown to the Olympics on <http://www.thecreativepenn.com/2012/08/11/measuring-achievement-by-olympics/>

Want to get those creative juices flowing? No problem! How about drawing the dictionary suggests Artbistro on <http://artbistro.monster.com/benefits/articles/11950-5-unique-ways-to-get-creative-juices-flowing>



**"Our romance is over and I need to
get on with my life. Will you marry me?"**

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NZromance-subscribe@yahoogroups.com

or contact Suzanne Perazzini

suzanne.perazzini@orcon.net.nz
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