

# HEART TO HEART

## Crafting Sexual Tension

***How do we get our sex scenes to sizzle in the readers' minds?***

*In this extract from her "Sex On The Page" workshop, Mary Buckham talks about how to use biological imperatives to develop intimacy.*



To write really sensual, sexy books, you need to understand the basis of the sex drive, and how extremely powerful it is—not the birds and the bees part of it, but why we make love as we do. You can't write about sex and intimacy until you understand it. You can call them love scenes, or you can call them sex scenes. It doesn't matter what you call them so long as you understand enough about the genre to know that the emotional attachment has to be there before your two main characters become physically intimate.

—Linda Howard

**I** have analyzed hundreds of romance novels and non-romance novels (yeah, I know, all that research was hard, but someone had to do it ☺). In reading good sexual tension, and *okay* sexual tension and *just so-so* sexual tension and—yes—some *great* sexual tension and, after reading and analyzing enough, I found some very specific differences between scenes that sizzled and made one's pulse accelerate and those that didn't.

I learned that there are common traits between the writers who understand sexual tension and those who just missed it. Each year I teach writers both online and in live workshops how to understand what intimacy is about, and how and why it works to increase sexual tension in our novels when you use it correctly.

I'm not advocating that we all write in the same way—and the authors I use for examples and whose words we'll examine certainly are not copycat writers. Far from it. But they do

understand both the concept of sexual tension—what drives us biologically as a species—and how to translate that concept into words; key words at key moments in their novels so that readers are aware of what's being shown, even if they can not put their fingers on it.

Bottom line. To understand writing great sexual tension one must understand the basis of the human sex drive.

The question then becomes how to use the stages of sexual intimacy to create outstanding sexual tension—scene after scene, book after book. But I don't want you to take my word for what I'm about to share. I want you to grab your favorite book, or books, and read along. Stop reading like a fan, and start reading like a writer about to uncover clues to a treasure chest. They're present, you just may not have understood them before.

First I want to address an issue that's paramount to understanding sexual tension. An issue that drives sexual tension—biology and evolution.

When we describe sexual tension we are describing a biological evolution that's been propelling the reproduction of our species since we first walked on land—and earlier. Don't worry, this will not be a science lecture. But by understanding what's compelling men and women at a subconscious level, it makes it easier for us as writers to use these universal human drives at a conscious level when writing sexual tension.

In her novel *Kill and Tell*, Linda Howard has her heroine realizing what we as writers should know in order to craft great sexual tension.

Looking back, she saw how he had led her, inevitably and without a pause, straight to his bed. Hindsight wasn't worth a damn, though. She hadn't felt even a tingle of warning at the time. Using means both swift and subtle, he had fostered a sense of intimacy between them and capitalized on it. The man knew his stuff.

The day before had been one long seduction. Her entire acquaintance with him had been a seduction. She had studied human sexuality, knew the signals, and still had missed them: only in retrospect were they crystal clear.

First had come the concern, the solicitousness for her well-being, the touches disguised as courtesy. She remembered his hand on her arm, sliding down her back, resting on her waist. He had won her trust, lured her into accepting his constant touch without suspecting the sexuality behind it, and then aroused her to the point where she hadn't even thought about calling a halt to their lovemaking.

In these three simple paragraphs, Howard details the secret of her own popularity as a writer of strong sexual tension. Secrets we're about to explore in greater detail.

Let's face it, most readers will not understand why one writer writes great sexual tension and another doesn't, but they do know, at an instinctive level, when it's there or not. They understand, subconsciously, the difference between intimacy and sex, even if they can't put

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- 3....**PRESIDENT ABBY GAINES** updates us on the latest Exec and Conference news.
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- 5....**JANET WELLINGTON** gives us examples of pitch techniques.
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- 8....**MARIA V. SNYDER** shares the secrets to sexual tension when writing for Young Adults.
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### RWNZ CONTEST SCHEDULE 2011

#### FIRST IMPRESSIONS CONTESTS

Final Judging in Progress

#### STRICTLY SINGLE CONTEST Closes Friday, 23 September 2011

Final Judge:

Alex Logan,

Grand Central Publishing

Agent Judge:

Elaine Spencer, The Knight Agency  
(Entry information is available on RWNZ's website.)

If you have any questions, contact  
Viv Constable, Contests Coordinator:  
[vconstable@xtra.co.nz](mailto:vconstable@xtra.co.nz)

### Romance Writers of New Zealand Inc.

#### Notice of Meeting

It is hereby given that the tenth Annual General Meeting of the Romance Writers of New Zealand Inc. (RWNZ) will be held on Saturday 20 August 2011, at the Crowne Plaza Hotel, Auckland.

## Editors' Desk

The focus of this month's *Heart To Heart* is "Love Scenes". How do you write them? How do you make them realistic? How do you find your comfort zone when you're writing one that includes sex? How graphic do you get? How kinky? What are you aiming for in a sex scene? What's the difference between sex and sensuality? How do you avoid writing a bedroom scene that reads like a sex manual for a three-armed, four-legged, asthmatic pole-vaulter?

Well, first off, don't ask me! My bedroom scenes suck the big kumara—just ask my critique partners!

However, one of our contributors this month is Clinical Sexologist, Dr Charley Ferrar, author of the book *BDSM For Writers*, and something she said absolutely hit it on the head for me: that when writing a sex scene many writers completely forget one crucial factor... *the function of the reader's imagination*.

In her article Dr Charley's talking about imagination in the context of erotica. But we don't have to confine it to erotica because what we're doing with any love scene is inviting the reader into the most intimate, personal part of a relationship between two people who they have come to care about (we hope!). In fact, we're giving the reader a set of coloured markers so they can draw their own picture from our words.

Isn't that a cool thought? Now all we have to do is figure out which words will give the most colourful, dramatic, sensual, imaginative result in our readers' minds. Easy!

In other fun news this month, Emma Wildes is offering a signed book to the winner of her contest on Page 7, and if you spotted my (coughs gently) deliberate layout mistake in last month's article by Janet Wellington you may find yourself in the draw for something special! Consult page 14 for details.

Now, read on, and enjoy!

Gracie, Rachel, Bron, & Karen

## How To Be A Great Judge

Bronwen Evans

**W**e've all been there—got the scoresheet and realized the judge in our contest has not understood his/her mandate. Yes, we are all romance readers, but perhaps we have not clearly understood what our role is as a judge? Surely all judges read someone's work to help them score as high as is honestly possible? Ask yourself, what can I find *right* about this

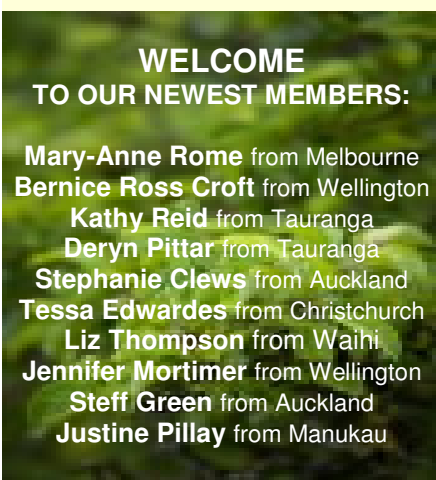
story? To do this you must think about the *scoresheet*.

Most budding writers take contests seriously, investing time and often considerable financial resources in their entries. As a result they expect some level of professionalism in the standard of judging. So, here's some advice if you're considering the plunge into the judging circuit.

**1. Don't judge things not on the scoresheet.** This is the main cause of ALL judging problems. A lot of judges do it, but if it's not on the scoresheet it shouldn't be judged. What do I mean by this? I mean, read the judging question and apply *that question only* to the manuscript. How can we expect a contestant to learn from a contest where she's being judged on things she didn't know were "judge-able"? *If it's not on the scoresheet, don't judge it.*

**2. Don't play the role of expert.** In other words, don't contradict facts presented in the manuscript. Big no-no, unless it's a contest designed for fact-checking. Only judge or mark on this if you have been asked to. Another judge rule to emphasise: *Don't mark down for a questionable fact.* Write a comment like, "You may want to check this fact".

**3. Unless you are an expert in a contest category, don't mark down**  
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#### WELCOME TO OUR NEWEST MEMBERS:

Mary-Anne Rome from Melbourne  
Bernice Ross Croft from Wellington  
Kathy Reid from Tauranga  
Deryn Pittar from Tauranga  
Stephanie Clews from Auckland  
Tessa Edwardes from Christchurch  
Liz Thompson from Waihi  
Jennifer Mortimer from Wellington  
Steff Green from Auckland  
Justine Pillay from Manukau

# From The Pres.



## *What's happening in RWNZ?*

*President Abby Gaines brings us up-to-date with the latest news.*

By the time you receive this newsletter, conference will be maybe three weeks away. Delegates will be polishing up their first pages for the cold read sessions, desperately trying to sum up their story in one sentence for Bob Mayer's *Writing a Novel* workshop, and rehearsing their editor and agent pitches. Oh, and figuring out what they're going to wear to the cocktail party and awards dinner, of course!

Behind the scenes, there's still a ton of work going on to make sure every single attendee has a fabulous conference. Erin Mills, our Hotel Liaison, is working with the Crowne Plaza to ensure the food is suitably delectable, the conference rooms organised, and the sound systems in place. Registrar, Diana Holmes, will be preparing last minute confirmations and instructions, answering numerous questions, allocating pitch slots, and more. Tessa Radley will be briefing our speakers and making sure we have everything they need. Jackie Coates will be handling the inevitable media enquiries that arise when the press hears about our star-studded speaker lineup. Yvonne Walus will be collating raffle prizes. Sue MacKay will be marshalling her trusty volunteers who help make the whole weekend run smoothly. Trudi Caffell will be using the downtime between feeding her new baby to crack a whip over the entire team. And a whole bunch of us will be collecting goodies for goody bags, then filling those bags with treats for you to take home... plus sorting out the myriad other details involved.

If you haven't registered for conference yet, there's still time (though not at the Earlybird rate, sorry). But even at full price you'll leave the weekend feeling you've had value for money—check out [www.romancewriters.co.nz/conference](http://www.romancewriters.co.nz/conference) for more details and registration info. If you have a raffle prize to donate, or goodies for goody bags, email Yvonne Walus on [yve@xtra.co.nz](mailto:yve@xtra.co.nz). To volunteer for a small job at conference (or a big job, if you're keen!) email Sue MacKay at [ismackay@ts.co.nz](mailto:ismackay@ts.co.nz).

### **Christchurch Relief**

Some months back we asked RWNZ members what they would like the organisation to do to support our Christchurch members affected by the earthquake. We received a number of suggestions (many thanks to Angelique Jurd for collating these), which the Executive has now considered. While we may develop some of the ideas further, we wanted to offer something of immediate benefit to all Christchurch members—who are only now starting to get their regular meetings back on track. To that end, Christchurch members will receive a discount on their 2012 RWNZ subscription. We'll be contacting you individually when we send out renewal notices.

### **RWNZ Membership Subscription Rates 2012**

Yes, it's that time of year again. RWNZ's subscription year ends on August 31, which means next year's subscriptions are due September 1. After much discussion, the Executive has decided to remove the \$5 early payment discount for

2012, a step necessitated by the increase in GST (which we didn't pass on to members last year), plus increases in postage costs and bank charges. **The annual membership fee will be \$59** (plus we will add a \$5 late payment admin fee—total \$64—for people paying after September 30). We will email renewal information to all members over the next few weeks, and will have renewal forms available at conference. You can also go ahead and renew right now at <http://www.romancewriters.co.nz/membership/membership-renewal/>. Please renew on time. Not only does it save you money but it makes a big difference to the workload of our incredibly patient and hardworking Membership Secretary and Treasurer.

### **And It's Goodnight From Me...**

This is my last column as RWNZ president—not just for this term in the role, but ever, as I've now served the maximum four years permitted under RWNZ's constitution in any single executive role. It's been a privilege to be a part of the leadership of this incredibly professional organisation, which is instrumental in developing the talents and careers of so many writers.

My presidency ends August 31, as do the existing terms of all current serving members of the Executive. On September 1, **Iona Jones**, our current Vice-President, steps up as President. Iona is an impressively multi-faceted woman, full of energy and ideas, and backed up by legal and management skills. She's also a talented writer, as shown by her contest results over the past couple of years. It's wonderful to know RWNZ is in such great hands. These hands are not only Iona's but also those of our new Vice-President, **Tyree Connor**, plus re-elected executive members **Miriam Paxie** (Treasurer), **Louise Groarke** (Secretary) and **Kris Pearson** (Membership). No nominations were received for the role of Publicity Officer, but we hope to announce an appointment to this position soon.

Huge thanks to the Executive who served over the last 12 months—including Publicity Officer Jackie Coates, who is taking a well-deserved break this year, but who has promised us she's not retiring from service permanently. Dangerous words, Jackie!

That's it from me! I can't wait to see you all at conference. In the meantime, keep writing, and keep submitting.

With best wishes, Abby Gaines RWNZ President

### **Show Me The Money**

To view the RWNZ accounts for the last financial year visit:

<http://www.romancewriters.co.nz/member-area/#financial-statement>

The Username = romance

The Password = rwnz345





# Woos, Hoos, and News

*Celebrating our members' achievements.*

*Tyree Connor keeps us in the loop with RWNZ's successes here and overseas. Let her know yours at [rocker.t@xtra.co.nz](mailto:rocker.t@xtra.co.nz)*

**SALE!**

Rebecca Skrabl has just signed with agent **Jessica Faust** of BookEnds LLC, and inked a three book deal with **Sourcebooks** (editor Leah Hultenschmidt). Bec will also be lead title for the month of release.

## Competitions

### RWAust Valerie Parv Award

Congratulations to our members who have finalised:

- Jennifer St George
- LeeAnn Morgan
- Michelle de Rooy
- Rebecca Skrabl

Susanna Rogers came **second** in the **Cleveland Rocks Contest** in the Mainstream With Romantic Elements category.

Michelle de Rooy has gone through to the **second round** of the **Heart of Denver's The Molly**—Paranormal section.

## First Impressions

### Finalists in First Impressions No.1:

- Ann Russell
- Diana Holmes
- Faye Robertson
- Kendra Delugar
- Peta Mobberley

### Finalists in First Impressions No.2:

- Angela Bissell
- Jackie Coates
- Kamy Chetty
- Nina Wagle (x 2)

### Finalists in First Impressions No. 3:

- Amanda Wilson (x2)
- Faye Robertson
- Kamy Chetty
- Kendra Delugar
- Viv Adams

**I write emotional algebra.**

Anais Nin

## The Clendon Award 2011

### Finalists

- Diana Holmes—Sexy/Presents
- Iona Jones—Historical
- Jenny Yates—Historical
- Kendra Delugar—Special Edition
- Leeann Morgan—Superromance
- Michelle de Rooy—Fantasy
- Michelle de Rooy—Science Fiction
- Rebecca Skrabl—Paranormal

### Highly Commended

- Bernice Greenham (w/a Lexi Greene)—Sexy/Presents
- Diana Holmes—Sexy/Presents
- Lisa Anderson—Blaze
- Nicola Davidson—Historical
- Sandii Manning—HQN Romance
- Shirley Wine—Special Edition

### Commended

- Amanda Wilson—Desire
- Christine Slater (w/a Alex Eden)—Presents
- Jennifer St. George—Desire
- Kris Pearson—Blaze
- Leeann Morgan—Superromance
- Shirley Wine—Special Edition
- Thiloshini Govender (w/a TG Ayre)—Young Adult
- Tracey Alvarez—Romantic Suspense
- Tyree Connor—Paranormal

**Only the united beat  
of sex and heart together  
can create ecstasy.**

Anais Nin

## Harlequin Great Beginnings 2011

### Final Placings

1st: **Diana Holmes**

2nd: **Faye Robertson** Entry No. 1

3rd: **Faye Robertson** Entry No. 2

Congratulations also to the other finalists, **Kendra Delugar**, **Jackie Coates**, and **Bernice Greenham**.

## Release Success

**Nalini Singh's** *Kiss Of Snow* (hardcover in the U.S., trade in NZ) hit the **NYT Bestseller List**, the **USA Today Bestseller List**, the **Publishers Weekly Bestseller List**, and the **New Zealand International Fiction Bestseller List**.

**Sandra Hyatt's** novella *Mistletoe Magic* won the **GDRW Booksellers' Best Award** for the **Novella** category.

## Here Comes The Judge!

Have you ever thought about volunteering as a judge for one of RWNZ's great contests but been put off because you weren't sure about the judging process? Are you already a judge but would like a bit of a refresher? Well, we have the answer for you. RWNZ's Judge Training Scheme is now underway.

By enrolling in the scheme, not only will you receive some great guidelines on how to score, what to score, what to look for and what not to look for, but you'll also get a chance to study some pre-judged samples to see how it's done. After that, it will be your turn to have a go at judging a sample piece of writing in a non-competitive environment and you'll get feedback to let you know how you went. So, how about it? Ready to give it a go?

If so, then email the Judge Training Coordinator at

[rwnzjudgetraining@gmail.com](mailto:rwnzjudgetraining@gmail.com)

# Building the Perfect Pitch

## Where do you start?

Writer, speaker, instructor, and independent editor, **Janet Wellington**, continues with her article on how to survive the Editor/Agent appointment.



**N**ext, I'll be providing examples from *Publishers Lunch*, which is a free online newsletter that lists manuscript sales and publishing industry news. The reason I like to utilize the sales blurbs from *Publishers Lunch* is because many of them read like short pitches.

Here's where to subscribe if you're interested:

<http://www.publishersmarketplace.com/lunch/subscribe.html>

### Examples Of One-Liners

Here's the first example: (I'm just including the blurb, not the agent/editor information that is also listed in the blurb).

**Dan Simmons's *The Terror***, which recalls Melville and Conrad and packs the jolt of Stephen King to tell an epic story inspired by a true historical event—the confrontation between the crews of two ice-locked 19th century British expeditionary ships and a terrifying supernatural presence.

This one feels like an agent pitching an editor, don't you think? With the references to Melville, Conrad, and King, this acts as a shorthand way to provide the listener with a feel for style and pacing (in my opinion). It utilizes the "inspired by a real event" hook, and the "terrifying supernatural presence" hook.

**Spider Robinson's *Orphan Stars***, set in the world of *Variable Star*, a genius inventor and a handful of fellow survivors of a cosmic disaster must race time itself to warn the Orphan Stars, the scattered outposts of humanity, so that the human race can safely navigate its way to survive the forthcoming onslaught triggered by the explosion of Earth's sun.

This one is a concise summary, I think, that would have worked as a short pitch at an appointment (with a little tweaking to explain the "Variable Star" to the uninitiated). We get an idea of the setting (the future), characters (I'm assuming the genius inventor is the main character); we get a hint of a ticking clock (racing time), know the story goal (warning the outposts) and

the conflict (surviving the forthcoming onslaught). So, it pretty much covers setting, character(s), story goal, conflict. Hook-wise, I guess to me it would be the whole concept itself—imagining what it would be like to deal with something as traumatic as the sun exploding.

**Janet Dean's *One Bride: Sealed And Delivered***, about a debutante who changes places with a friend and becomes a mail-order bride to escape her father who's ruined the family name and lost their fortune gambling, and her farmer groom who can't admit his past as a riverboat gambler.

I think this one uses a descriptive title, which is kind of hook-y to me; the blurb clearly describes the heroine, gives enough about the plot so I know what to expect, and there's a hint at the conflict (with her father and also the groom with a past he regrets). Even if the category wasn't stated, we assume it's historical—and the use of debutante and riverboat help set the time period, right?

**Vicki Sobota writing as Emery Lee's debut historical romance *Blood Will Tell***, a tale of lost love, betrayed friendship, ambition, greed, deception, treachery, and vengeance set against a backdrop of war and horse racing in the mid-eighteenth century.

This one really concentrates on the conflicts and the setting/time period. Even though it doesn't mention the characters, it provides a feeling of anticipation—do you agree? And, I'm assuming it would generate questions from an agent or editor. To me the hook has to do with the "backdrop of war and horse racing in the mid-eighteenth century." Different.

Here are a few more for you to read for hook-factor, style and content.

**A.D. Scott's *Faultlines***, about a young Scottish boy who is found dead in a canal lock, the 1950s Highlands newspaper staff—including the female typist embroiled in an abusive marriage and her boss, a seasoned journalist determined to revamp the paper—who uncover the crime, and their small town, which harbors deep and troubling secrets underneath a polished veneer.

Author of the forthcoming YA novel, **The Season**, Sarah MacLean's *Nine Rules To Break When Romancing A Rake*, a Regency set romance about a twenty-something spinster who, on the eve of her younger sister's wedding, sets out to seduce the Marquess of her dreams by breaking every rule by which a lady of high society is supposed to abide.

Gerry Swallow a.k.a. Dr. Kremlin Soup's *A Whole Nother Story*, about three atypical kids who, with their dad, a sock puppet named Steve, and a hairless fox terrier with psychic abilities, must outrun the international superspies coveting their dad's nearly complete invention, which, when finished, will allow the family to travel back in time and rescue their mother before the bad guys poison her.

Karen Kincy's debut *Other*, about a seventeen-year-old, half-pooka shapeshifter who struggles with her identity while evading a serial killer hunting people like her, from werewolves to tree-spirits, in a small town prejudiced against them.

### Short Pitch Technique #2

Another easy "one sentence" format I found is from an article by Lee Nordling, the executive editor of the Platinum Studios Comic Book Department. He says that a good short pitch gives away the good part, reveals the ending, and tells the listener what to pay attention to.

In his method you fill in the blanks:

This is the story about a \_\_\_\_\_ who \_\_\_\_\_, only for \_\_\_\_\_ to discover \_\_\_\_\_.

The second part of the sentence has to be thematically connected to the first part of the sentence, and it needs to be about the protagonist, and it needs to identify the core problem and resolution—acts one and three—of your story, so... you need to really know what your story is about in order to write this kind of pitch sentence.

Here's his example:

This is the story about a man who tries to buy everything in the world, only for him to discover that he can't buy back

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# Contests and Markets

*P.D.R. Lindsay-Salmon shares some potential markets and Rachel Collins suggests a few contests.*

## Potential Markets

### Rosa Mira Books

Rosa Mira Books is a New Zealand based e-publisher with a mission to provide quality reading for discerning readers. Submissions of well-written fiction and non-fiction manuscripts are welcome.

**No query letters** please. It's the brief synopsis which will sell your work.

**Guidelines:** <http://rosamirabooks.com/why/index.html>

**Email:** A 'succinct synopsis, 200 words maximum, the first chapter plus one other in a Word or RTF document to: [submissions@rosamirabooks.com](mailto:submissions@rosamirabooks.com)

**Website:** <http://rosamirabooks.com>

### Avon Impulse ebooks

Looking at weekly publication.

No advance, royalties 25% rising to 50% after 10,000 sold.

**Seeking:** Short stories, novellas and novels.

**Guidelines:** <http://www.avonromance.com/avon-romance-submission-guidelines/>

**Website:** [www.avonimpulse.com](http://www.avonimpulse.com)

### Inceptus Press

New UK press publishing e-books as novellas and novels. Romance is one of many genres they publish.

**Query:** [InceptusPress@gmail.com](mailto:InceptusPress@gmail.com)

**Include:** A cover letter and a description of your work including a short synopsis. **Do not send attachments.**

**Guidelines:** <http://inceptuspress.blogspot.com/p/general-submissions.html>

**Website:** <http://inceptuspress.com>

### Samhain—Retro Romance

A new lease on life for older novels. Samhain is looking for out of print romance novels from the 1970s to the 1990s. Writers must hold the rights. The novels will be reprints in e-book form.

**Guidelines:** <http://www.samhainpublishing.com/submissions>

**Submissions:** Submissions and inquiries can be sent to: [RetroRomance@samhainpublishing.com](mailto:RetroRomance@samhainpublishing.com)

**Website:** [www.samhainpublishing.com](http://www.samhainpublishing.com)

Check out their two anthology calls at:

<http://www.samhainpublishing.com/special-calls/>

### Total-E-Bound

British epubliher of erotica. Currently seeking novels and novellas.

They also publish anthologies and have a regular want list of short stories for them.

**Submissions:** <http://www.total-e-bound.com/submissionguidelines.asp?>

**Details:** [www.total-e-bound.com](http://www.total-e-bound.com)

## International Contests

### 2011 Melody of Love Contest

**Deadline:** 1 September, 2011

**Eligibility:** Not published or contracted in category entered.

**Enter:** Electronic. First chapter (up to 25 pages) of unpublished novel-length manuscript (40k+).

**Fee:** \$27.00

**Email:** Jody Wallace at [contest@mcrw.com](mailto:contest@mcrw.com)

**Website:** [www.mcrw.com](http://www.mcrw.com)

### 2011 Reveal Your Inner Vixen Contest

**Deadline:** 1 September, 2011

**Eligibility:** Published and Non-Published writers.

**Enter:** Up to 20 pages that showcase sexual tension between hero and heroine, plus un-judged 1-page set-up (optional).

**Fee:** \$20 MRW members, \$25 non-members

**Email:** [mrwvixen@live.com](mailto:mrwvixen@live.com)

**Website:** [www.marylandromancewriters.com](http://www.marylandromancewriters.com)

### 21st Annual Hold Me, Thrill Me! Contest

**Deadline:** 1 September, 2011

**Enter:** First 20 pages. New This Year—All Electronic.

**Fee:** \$25.00

**Email:** [contest@swfrw.org](mailto:contest@swfrw.org)

**Website:** [www.swfrw.org](http://www.swfrw.org)

### Hot Prospects Contest

**Deadline:** 1 September, 2011

**Eligibility:** Any RWA member in good standing.

**Enter:** First 25 pages of any un-contracted work and 5-page synopsis (30 pages total).

**Fee:** \$30.00 US

**Website:** <http://www.valleyofthesunrw.com/vos-hot-prospects.htm>

### Show Me the Spark 2011

**Deadline:** 2 September, 2011

**Enter:** Up to the first 25 pages. New this year: Finalists will be given a week to incorporate judges' comments into their entry before sending to the final judge.

**Fee:** \$30 RWA member, \$35 non-RWA member.

**Website:** [www.heartlandromanceauthors.com](http://www.heartlandromanceauthors.com)

### The 7th Annual Get Your Stiletto in the Door Contest

**Deadline:** 6 September, 2011

**Eligibility:** Unpublished authors.

**Enter:** First 5,000 words

**Fee:** \$15–25.00

**Website:** <http://chicklitwriters.com/stilettocontest/>



# It Isn't What You Say...

...but how you say it.

Best-selling author **Emma Wildes** shows how to build emotional intensity in a love scene.



**W**e all know how it is done. The mechanics of a sex scene are difficult to make unique, so it has to be (to make it interesting to a reader) about the emotions of the characters. How that is handled by an author is the key to a good romance novel, in my opinion.

Picture a candlelit bedroom, our hero in his eagerness ripping the buttons off his shirt as he stares at the heroine who is clad only in her chemise, the anticipation of having his wicked way with her making him practically fall over as he tries to remove his boots, hopping around on one foot...

Well, that sounds more comical than sexy, and if our clumsy hero actually survives getting undressed, there aren't high hopes from the sentence above that he will be a considerate lover, are there?

Yet, wait, it could be a very sexy, sensitive scene if written with the right choice of words to convey the reactions of the two people about to share a very intimate, entirely personal experience. Dialogue is always important, but also the narrative used to show how the characters move, touch, smile or look at each other affects the overall sense of how they feel—not just in a physical sense as they make love, but the depth of their commitment to each other.

Shall I give it a go? I'll do my best and you let me know if I succeed.

Phillip was nervous, damn all, and that was certainly a first. At eight and twenty he was hardly inexperienced—quite the opposite given his reputation—but this was...different.

Very different.

She was unique, God help him. This was no smooth seduction like the affairs of his past.

## Have Fun And Win!

The person who gives the best back-story blurb on the couple in this partial (Phillip and Alexandra) will win a signed copy of one of Emma's books. The blurb should be no more than 200 words.

Email your entries to [romance@bronwenevans.com](mailto:romance@bronwenevans.com) by the 10th September and Emma Wildes will select the winner.



When the devil had that happened? He truly cared about the outcome of this much anticipated evening.

When an ivory button from his shirt went rolling to the floor because of his haste, he had to take in a deep breath and stop, both amused and chagrined. He held out his shaking hands. "Do you see how much I want you?"

Better? So now he isn't so much a bumbling overeager male but we see how his emotion affects his actions. Building the sensual tension involves making sure the reader knows how both characters perceive what is happening. Is it romantic, or is it merely based on physical attraction?

Perhaps we need to find out how she sees the same scene as we go on...

Alexandra stared at his extended long, elegant fingers and saw that they did indeed tremble.

It was gratifying to know he wasn't the sophisticated, polished lover that everyone whispered over because she sensed it cost him in pride to acknowledge his desire for her actually affected him so deeply.

A tension inside her relaxed.

"I want you also." She was hardly a siren; her first marriage had been lackluster at best and she didn't know how to entice a man, but in this case, she loved him.

"Take my word for it, I've never been so damned glad to hear anything in my life," he muttered and tugged at the heel of his boot.

And she laughed, albeit in a slightly breathless way. While a gentleman should never curse in front of a lady, at the moment she didn't feel much like a lady but instead just a woman eager for her lover.

He'd given her that. The notorious Lord Tremayne. His reputation didn't matter to her any longer. If this night was the only one, so be it. It was not a particularly easy decision, but since he was shedding his clothes—or attempting to—she realized she should do the same.

Never in her life, even though she'd been married for over a year, had a man seen her naked. The flickering candlelight seemed quite bright suddenly as she tugged free the ribbon on her shift and let the lacy garment drift down her shoulders to pool on the floor at her feet.

It was quite obvious the usually smooth and suave man she'd met on that fateful

night at London's most prestigious social event lost his concentration. He almost fell over with his boot half-off, uttering a low curse as he grasped the bedpost at the last crucial moment before he toppled to the floor, his gaze riveted on her exposed body.

Alex stifled a laugh, for the first time empowered as a woman, and said with a very uncharacteristic sultriness, "Come to bed, my lord."

So now we understand that she is in love, he also has deeper feelings that make him uncomfortable (why is it we have to treat rakes with kid gloves as they realize they are falling in love?), and the stage is set for a scene that isn't about sex, but obviously means more to both of them. True, it is about desire, but it's also about sex and love. In those short paragraphs, I hope it shows that by actions and a few choice words, you can depict emotion in a sensual scene even without the background story, and do it effectively.

It is all in the words.

By the way, this is not from any of the novels I've previously written, but I just had fun making it up as I wrote this article...and I'm intrigued now (as if I don't have enough to do). Hmm. What is their story? Perhaps I need to find out... ♥♥♥

*Award-winning author Emma Wildes writes for NAL's Signet Eclipse line but she started in e-publishing where she has garnered an Epplie, a Lories Best Published, and a WisRWA Reader's Choice Award. She has been a #1 bestselling author at Fictionwise, Capa nominee, and received several gold star awards from JERR. Recently, Publisher's Weekly said of "An Indecent Proposition" (Signet, April 2009) that it provides a spectacular and skillfully handled story that stands head-and-shoulders above the average historical.*

*Emma was born in Minnesota and she lives in the Midwest, though she grew up in Albuquerque, New Mexico. She attended Illinois State University where she majored in geology, and there she met her husband, Chris. They have three children, a temperamental cat named Poot, and are lucky enough to live on a beautiful lake. On warm days, she does enjoy a glass of wine on the dock now and then, and always loves to sit at her desk, winter or summer, and tap at her keyboard. Visit Emma at: [www.emmawildes.com](http://www.emmawildes.com)*



# Chemistry, Epic Forbidden Love and High Wires.

Conference Presenter **Maria V. Snyder** talks about *Sexual Tension* when writing for Young Adults.

**S**exual tension and teenagers go together like rugby and number eight fence wire. It's part of their everyday life.

From their own raging hormones to being bombarded by it on television, the internet, in school, in movies, and in books, they're all very aware of it. As a writer of young adult (YA) fiction with characters that might become romantically involved, you must be aware of it as well.

## What Exactly is It?

According to Jon Bradbury<sup>(1)</sup>

**Sexual tension happens when a character has instant explosive chemistry with another character, so much so that the reader knows that it's where and how the characters will get together, not if.**

Sounds like love at first sight, but the character reactions are mostly physical when they first meet. That's why many of the clichés regarding it includes reactions such as sweaty palms, racing heartbeat, being breathless, and weak-kneed upon meeting. This in itself is not sexual tension, just physical reactions. The tension comes when the character does not give in to her body's desires, but attempts to control them or stop them or deny them altogether. The tension increases when both characters are trying really hard to resist each other. And it's off the scale when their relationship is forbidden! Romeo and Juliet, anyone?

An example can be found in this review of the YA bestselling *Vampire Academy* Series, by Richelle Meade<sup>(2)</sup>

**The sexual tension between Rose and her mentor/ teacher Dimitri is a driving force of the story... And this isn't just sex, this is Epic Forbidden Love. The reasons that they should not be together far outweigh the potential of their relationship and yet they cannot stay apart. The drama of their never quite on-again-off-again relationship is hot!**

Other popular books with Epic Forbidden Love are the *Twilight* Series (vampire vs. human) by Stephanie Meyer, *The Iron Fey* Series (fairy vs.

human) by Julie Kagawa, and the *Wolves of Mercy Falls* Series (werewolf vs. human vs. parents) by Maggie Stiefvater.

And if the Epic Forbidden Love isn't enough to add tension to your story, there is always the love triangle. Team Edward, anyone? Not only are there oodles of sexual tension with a love triangle, there is the added conflict between the two suitors, and the internal struggle of the protagonist.

However—instant chemistry, epic love, and triangles aside—there also has to be a story with a plot so the relationship between these characters doesn't dominate. If it is the only conflict in the story, then when the characters finally get together, the story is done. Which is fine for a single book. However, series are very popular with YA readers. Very. And you can't maintain the tension or reader interest throughout multiple books if that is the sole problem.

## Balancing Act

Like all fiction writing techniques, incorporating sexual tension is like balancing on a high wire. If there is too much, your YA readers will be rolling their eyes while their parents will be very concerned. However, if there is romance (or chemistry) in the story, there should be a certain amount of tension.

The tension should serve the needs of the story. There should be a reason behind every single encounter. Each scene should either advance the plot, show characterization, add conflict, or reveal new information.

Jonathan Maberry, author of the YA novel, *Rot & Ruin*, emailed me,

**... To a limited degree I deliberately work it [sexual tension] into my plot, but only where it would legitimately occur. I don't go out of my way to construct scenes just so I can play up the sexual tension... It's up to the author to write from a place of integrity rather than exploitation.**

Deciding how much tension to include is determined by the type of story you're writing. Plots that are heavily

concentrated on the relationship between the two main protagonists will naturally have more than those where the romance is a subplot.

For example, in the *Twilight* books the sexual tension is high throughout the first three books because the main plot line is about Edward and Bella's relationship. While in my book, *Inside Out*, Trella and Riley don't spend much time together as they're busy dodging Pop Cops and trying to help their world. Their romance is a sub-subplot and therefore the tension is also low.

## Building Tension

Below are a few ways to show the sexual tension between two characters:

**Internal and External Conflict.** There must be a good reason why the two characters can't be together. In *Inside Out*, Trella is a scrub and Riley is an upper. The external conflict they face is the Pop Cops don't want uppers and lowers to mix—they even live on separate levels. Internally, Trella hates the uppers so how could she like Riley?

**Details.** When the characters are together, they will notice many little details about the other that they wouldn't notice about anyone else. Don't limit these to sight. Use all the senses. In my *Glass Series*, Opal notices how Kade smells like the sea.

**Internal Dialogue.** Characters may say one thing, but be thinking something completely different when they're together. Also their thoughts can be quite informative while they resist physical urges like the desire to kiss. When the characters are apart, they also will be thinking of each other. However, this can be overdone especially when the romance is a subplot. When Trella is running from the Pop Cops, she isn't wasting energy to think about Riley. But when she's hiding and has nothing to do but wait, she's wondering what happened to him.

**Physical Contact.** To quote Rachel of Bookshelf Lust<sup>(3)</sup>

**...Sometimes little gestures like**  
(Continued on page 16)



# Dageus MacKeltar Interview

**What does Karen Marie Moning's dark hero really think about romance, sex, and love?**

**Renowned author and sex therapist Tracey Cox finds out.**



**W**ant to know what the hero of *The Dark Highlander* really thinks about romance, sex and love? We asked renowned author and sex therapist Tracey Cox to sit down with Dageus MacKeltar. Cox not only posed questions to our sultry leading man, but also evaluated him from a professional perspective to see what—and how much—he knows about women. Quite a lot, as it turns out... His answers alone may make most women swoon.

**TC:** Why are bad boys so good in bed?

**Dageus:** Och, that's an easy answer, lass. With me, a woman can be as bad as she wants to be, because no matter how bad she is—I'm worse. And if she wishes, she can blame it all on me, I doona mind. Women have long been held to rules of conduct that are contrary to their nature. I celebrate a woman's nature, every facet of it. There is only one rule in my bed—there are no rules. Anything a woman wants. Anything at all.

**TC:** And therein, Dageus, lies part of your tremendous appeal. The freedom to let our hair down, kick our heels up, and unleash our down-and-dirty side (because even the "nicest" girls have one). Far from judging us, you've given us official permission to let loose. I'm starting to realize why...

**TC:** Once a woman has been with you, she's ruined for all other men. Come, on, let us in on your secret. What do you do that other guys don't?

**Dageus:** 'Tis not any one thing, but a combination of many, and with each woman 'tis different. I listen to my lover, both in bed and out, to discover her deepest desires. I adore women, everything about them. I learn what pleases her, then I take control in bed. I suspect it doesn't hurt—though women are politic enough to claim size doesn't matter—that I am exceptionally well-endowed.

**TC:** You've hit on the two crucial ingredients of a good lover: recognizing that what worked for one woman won't necessarily work for another, and

recognizing that although mouths are good for lots of things in bed, their most important function is for talking and telling each other what feels good and what doesn't.

**TC:** What about in reverse: what's the sexiest thing a woman has ever done for you?

**Dageus:** The sexiest thing a woman can do for me is let me see how much she needs me. It makes me wild to fulfill her desires. Nothing shatters my control more completely than a simple glance across a crowded room that says "get me out of here and make love to me now." I am that woman's willing slave.

**TC:** I wish I could make women the world over read that answer and absorb it completely. You have no idea the number of women who tell me they're scared to appear too eager for sex in case he thinks she's a "tart" or a "bad girl" for wanting it as much as he does. The fact is our libidos are equally as high as men's. And they always have been. I think this fact just got buried beneath the nappies and washing up.

**TC:** If you had to seduce a woman using just one technique, what would it be?

**Dageus:** Seduction begins with the promise of touch, not touch itself. The deliberate withholding of it until the moment is exquisitely right. I've been known to devote days to heightening the tension to the perfect pitch. To seduce a woman using just one thing? My mouth, I confess, for selfish reasons. I adore slow, hungry kisses, trailing them over every inch of her body. Where sex with me can sometimes be demanding, my tongue is always gentle. Relentless, but gentle.

**TC:** Blimey! You know all those cloning experiments that are happening at the moment? Well, I don't suppose you'd consider volunteering, would you? Just a thought... Anyway, where was I? Once again, you've managed to pinpoint the secrets to female sexuality: Tease us. Let our imaginations go into overdrive; for most women, this is the

best bit of sex. Reality tends to fall far short of the expectation. You being the obvious exception, of course—and any other man who makes a concerted effort. (We're not that difficult to please, guys, really! All it takes is reading a few books and asking us what we like.)

**TC:** What's guaranteed to make you weak with desire?

**Dageus:** The sound my woman makes when I touch her. That's it, lass, roar.

**TC:** I agree! There's nothing sexier than making love to someone who so obviously enjoys what you're doing to them. And on that subject...

**TC:** What's the quickest, most effective way to give a woman an orgasm?

**Dageus:** Och, there are a thousand ways, but the important thing a man must remember is that with each woman, 'tis different. 'Tis my preference to be with one woman for a long time so I can discover everything about her. Och—you said the quickest? Quick and effective have no place in my bed, wench. The best is slow, and not always easy. However, I doona stop till she's been completely sated. Till she's weak and drowsing like a purring kitten in my arms.

**TC:** If you could give women one piece of advice on how to be irresistible to men, what would it be?

**Dageus:** Three words: confident, unashamed desire. Nothing turns a man on so much as a woman who knows what she wants and isn't afraid to tell him. And though I am aggressor to the bone and prefer the dominant role in bed, I find it fascinating when a woman attempts to dominate me. Given my proportions, 'tis far from easy for a lass to manage it.

**TC:** Hear! Hear! Women would be far better off worrying less about being seen as "easy" and more about being seen as "boring". Bravo for being one of the many men who celebrates a sexually assertive woman and doesn't find her scary. Still, it makes sense for real men to adore real women. And you

*(Continued on page 15)*



# Love & Other Crimes

## ROMANCE WRITERS OF NEW ZEALAND

CONFERENCE AUGUST 19TH - 21ST 2011

Sponsored by  **HARLEQUIN®**

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NYT and international bestseller Elizabeth George

### FRIDAY AUGUST 18

7am-8:15am	Friday First: Cold Read Workshops—with Jessica Faust (BookEnds Literary Agency) or Sue Grimshaw (Ballantine Bantam Dell).
9am-5pm	Bob Mayer—One-Day <i>Writing a Novel</i> Workshop
1:00pm-5:45pm	Maria V. Snyder—Writing Fantasy and Paranormal
6pm-7pm	First Timers' Welcome Reception
7pm-9pm	"Royally Romantic" Cocktail Party (free to weekend conference attendees)

Join New York Times best-selling writer Bob Mayer for an all-day workshop on writing the novel, beginning with the original idea and core conflict, developing plot and character, working with point of view, pulling everything together, selling your book and the business of writing.

### Supporters Wanted!

One of the most fun parts of conference is being handed your goody-bag when you sign in.

We all love those little treats!

If you have friends or family in a business that might be willing to supply goodies for our conference goody-bags, we'd love to hear from you! Past goody-bag supplies have included:

**beauty product samples**

**magazines**

**pens**

**stationery**

**books**

**snacks**

**sweets**

**chocolate**

**breakfast items**

Your imagination is the limit!

Please contact: Abby Gaines

[abby@abbygaines.com](mailto:abby@abbygaines.com)

if you can help.

### SATURDAY AUGUST 20

7:00-8:15am	Saturday Starters: Cold Read Workshop—with Lucy Gilmour, editor, Harlequin Mills & Boon, or Angela James, executive editor, Carina Press.
9am	Weekend Conference starts.
	New York Times-bestselling author Tess Gerritsen. Keynote address: <i>Find the Heart of Your Story</i> . Learn how a New York Times-bestselling author uses emotion to tell a good tale.
	Lucy Gilmour, Editor, Harlequin Mills & Boon—Spotlight on Harlequin.
	Bob Mayer on Conflict
	Breakout Session 1—Choose ONE of: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Special Forces—Bob Mayer</li> <li>Giving Them What They Don't Want (Putting Conflict on Every Page)—Molly O'Keefe</li> <li>Writing Paranormal—Maria V. Snyder</li> <li><b>Published Authors Only*</b>: The Sharp End—Tess Gerritsen</li> </ul>
	Breakout Session 2—Choose ONE of: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Thrill Me, Chill Me—Tess Gerritsen on thrillers</li> <li>Ask an Agent—Jessica Faust, BookEnds Literary Agency</li> <li>Carriages and Carriage Driving Through the Ages—Vicky English</li> <li><b>Published Authors Only*</b>: It's a Digital World—Angela James, Carina Press</li> </ul>
	Jessica Faust spotlights BookEnds Literary Agency—how the agency works, who's who and what they're looking for, what the agency is experiencing in the current market.
	Bonus <b>Published Author</b> Breakout Workshop with Bob Mayer—Guerilla Tactics for Surviving the E-Publishing Jungle.
5:15pm	RWNZ Annual General Meeting—all members are invited to attend.
7:30pm	Harlequin Awards Dinner—Romance World Cup

NB: Times, topics and speakers are subject to change \*Published Author Workshops are open only to authors published in book-length fiction

## Things You Need To Know

### Conference Last-Chance

If you haven't yet registered for *Love & Other Crimes*, RWNZ's annual conference, you're nearly out of time. Conference runs August 19-21 at the Crowne Plaza Hotel in Auckland. For information and to register, visit [www.romancewriters.co.nz/conference](http://www.romancewriters.co.nz/conference)

### Important information re Breakout Workshops

This year, we'll be running our breakout workshops American-style: you don't have to choose your workshops ahead of time. This gives you more flexibility and means you won't miss out on your choice of workshops. But please note, although we'll allocate what we think will be the most popular workshops to the largest rooms, it'll be *first-in, first-served* when it comes to getting a seat.

### Fab Prizes to be Won

RWNZ's conference is the conference that gives back! This year, as always, we'll be offering a ton of great prizes via raffles, plus a couple of draws for a free conference, along with a host of spot prizes that you can win just by being there.

### Earlybird Draw

Everyone who paid their weekend conference registration by July 18 will go into the draw for a free weekend (Saturday and Sunday) conference in 2012. **Please note: This draw is only open to paying delegates registered for the weekend conference.**

### Out-of-Towners Draw

Delegates from out of town will be automatically entered into the draw to receive a refund of this year's weekend (Saturday and Sunday) conference fee. So come to conference, and you might get your money back! **Please note: This draw is only open to paying delegates registered for the weekend conference.**

### Friday Raffle

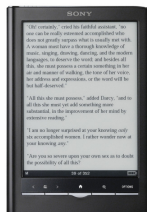
Author **Frances Housden** is again donating a fabulous gift basket for our Friday raffle. Tickets will be sold, and the winner drawn, at the cocktail party.

### Saturday and Sunday Raffles

We're delighted to announce that **Sony New Zealand** has kindly donated a Sony PRS650 Reader ebook reader as first prize in our Saturday raffle. You

SUNDAY AUGUST 21	
8am-9am	Bonus <b>Published Author Session*</b> Chat with Sue Grimshaw, Ballantine Bantam Dell
9am	Sunday sessions start
	Dystopia with Maria V. Snyder—Dystopian fiction is hot, hot, hot
	Editor talk—Sue Grimshaw, Spotlight on Ballantine Bantam Dell
	Breakout Session—Choose ONE of: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Medical Alert: How to create a great Medical romance—Lucy Gilmour (Mills &amp; Boon editor) and Sue MacKay</li> <li>Nailing the Synopsis—Bob Mayer</li> <li>A Reader's Take on Romance—Sue Grimshaw, Ballantine Bantam Dell</li> <li><b>Published Authors Only*</b>: Everything You Wanted to Know But Were Afraid to Ask—Jessica Faust, BookEnds Literary Agency</li> </ul>
	Harlequin: Let's Do Lunch Harlequin hosts RWNZ delegates at a special lunch.
	Hook 'Em—Molly O'Keefe Practical tips for identifying and using hooks to make your story stand out.
	Cristina Lee—Sales and Marketing Director, Harlequin Australia
	Conference closes around 4pm

can store 1200 books on the PRS650 (more if you add a memory card), and the battery can see you through two weeks of reading before you recharge. You can also read PDFs and Word documents on it—perfect for reading your manuscript. The only problem will be wrestling it away from your hubby/kids/critique partners!



The other big prize on Saturday is a wonderful package (books, voucher and more) from romance bookstore and tea shop **Chapter Books**.

On Sunday, our headline raffle prize is a bumper book pack donated by **Barbara's Books**, to the value of \$300. Also on the list is a night for two (complete with bubbly) at the Crowne Plaza.

Other prizes on Saturday and Sunday include a \$200 personal stylist consultation, food goodies from Sabato, gorgeous cosmetics, prize packs from RWNZ regional branches, coffee packages and, of course, books, books, books.

If you'd like to donate a prize, or you know someone else who would, please contact raffles coordinator Yvonne Eve

Walus at [yve@xtra.co.nz](mailto:yve@xtra.co.nz)

### Dine with the Stars

We'll also be holding individual raffles to win breakfast or lunch with our keynote speaker Tess Gerritsen, or with agent Jessica Faust, or with editor Sue Grimshaw... it's the kind of thing you spend a fortune on when you're bidding at an auction, but it could be yours for a few dollars' worth of raffle tickets. This is your opportunity to learn firsthand what it takes to make it in this business, or what the editor or agent is looking for and whether your work is a good fit... or just to be a fangirl!

### Important information re Crowne Plaza accommodation

When this newsletter went to press there were still rooms available at the Crowne Plaza Hotel for the fantastic conference rate of \$128 per night on Friday and Saturday. But Thursday rooms are thinner on the ground. If you have trouble securing a room on Thursday August 18 at the conference rate, please let us know.

**The perfect lover  
is one who turns into a pizza  
at 4:00am.**

Charles Pierce



(Crafting Sexual Tension cont. from page 1)

their fingers on the why of the matter. The challenge becomes not only how to write stronger sexual tension but what, scientifically that tension is based upon.

For example. It's a biological fact that the cost to women in having sex is considerably higher than it is to men, purely because women must deal with the consequences of pregnancy, even in this day of contraceptives. Pregnancy requires energy and resource allocation for a nine-month gestation period, plus the physical cost of birth—which until only the last three to four generations meant a high mortality rate—and then, unless she abandons a child, the post-gestation raising of a child is considerable.

The nurturing of a human infant is biologically the longest in the animal kingdom. None of this shooing a human child out the door at six months, or two years, or even five years. Twelve years, is approximately the consensus age that scientists consider a human child capable of surviving on their own (and anyone who has raised a pre-teen will doubt that ☺).

This biological core issue—the cost of pregnancy—is one of the major subconscious factors that differentiate a woman's immediate response to mating from a man's. Until the introduction of, and wide-use of, The Pill, women entered sexual encounters with the subconscious knowledge that there was a high-risk factor and every woman, reader or writer, understood that. It was in part what creates strong sexual tension, and created strong sexual tension in books written before the advent of The Pill, and historical novels set before use of The Pill (other contraceptives having a higher risk of failure and thus producing a pregnancy).

**Sex itself creates conflict—when to have sex means physical risk, to deny sex means emotional risk—thus conflict.**

The point that we now have stronger and safer contraceptives, or if a pregnancy is not possible, does not negate this awareness that is biologically programmed into women of the species. Our intellects may say “no problem, there's no risk of having a child”, but our biology says “be wary of the male of the species whether he's sixteen or sixty—he is a stronger, larger and more aggressive animal and his drive to mate is not necessarily ours”.

One of the convoluted facts of life is that a two-sex system—requiring both a male and a female to produce an offspring—is incredibly, unbelievably inefficient for species survival in a predator's world. Deborah Blum, in *Sex on the Brain*, says,

**Sex demands a relaxing of vigilance—there's a concentration requirement that interferes with a species' normal alarm systems—for wild animals the act of mating can be a flirtation with death—which is why they do it so rapidly (7 seconds for common chimps, 15 seconds for pygmy chips and 1 minute for gorillas who are big enough that most predators aren't going to mess with them if they are busy mating).**

On the other hand, a one-sex system would have doomed the species the minute a lethal genetic mutation occurred. Mating offers a quick and constant way to reshuffle the genetic deck. In other words, the biological objective of sex is genetic flexibility.

So you have your biology driving you to mate—and if you don't think hormones are powerful, think teenage angst or PMS—then you have your sense of self-preservation putting on the brakes.

Nancy Etcoff, in her book *Survival of the Prettiest* describes this phenomena.

**Irony is a world where men and women try to stave off pregnancy for the majority of their sexual encounters, and yet sexual preference is still guided by ancient rules that make us most attracted to bodies that look the most reproductively fit.**

Biologically, on a cellular level, women approach sex and sexual bonding in a different manner than men. Richard Dawkins, in *The Selfish Gene*, describes the biological function of attraction and resistance thus:

**Long courtships give women the chance to look over and judge potential mates in several areas—willingness to commit and provide, ability to provide, etc. Courtship, time or other forms of proof (his going to extreme lengths to protect) allow her to commit as she's been reassured a male is willing to put off immediate returns (sex) if and only when he's determined the prize (her and his offspring with her) is worth the wait.**

The mating ritual we describe so intimately in our novels is about the age-old dance of attraction, based on survival of the species, and hesitation, based on the risks involved in making the wrong choices.

**Survival of the species is the single most powerful instinct in existence.**

Sex is all about survival of the species and, in understanding this, you understand the core conflict inherent in sexual tension.

**Courtship is the means by which the male of the species coaxes the female of the species into noticing him, responding to him and, if all goes well, reproducing with him.**

By subtle signs he monitors her responses to key small stages of intimacy.

This is not based on age signals, it is based on sex signals. If he is male and she is female then this pattern exists.

If at any of the stages of intimacy she gives him clues that his advances are not welcome, she is telling him she is withdrawing and, if he does not force the issue and force her to change her mind, the relationship is terminated. Three-fourths of the twelve stages of intimacy, from stage one through nine, can be and usually are conducted in public, *for no other reason than to increase the trust level of the female.*

So romance writers have for years consciously written about what is, in fact, a biological conflict—how does a woman go about deciding that a specific male is the best male for her, not only to reproduce with, but also to help in the raising of the offspring? It's not an easy answer, but it is what we write about. If the only issue is about picking good gene material, there'd be no need for advice (which, by defacto, we give as writers). In fact, women would be just like men have always been.

For men, mate selection is all about signs of fertility. On a genetic level a man focuses on whether a woman is healthy, because health signals a good chance of fertility. His next stage is receptivity. If he receives signals that she is both—he's a happy guy.

Nancy Etcoff, in *Survival of the Prettiest*, describes women's subconscious choice of mate material based on other criteria. While healthy men constitute a better gene pool than unhealthy men, a woman also evaluates a man's ability to provide.

**A woman makes her evaluation of a man more slowly, and if another woman offers a differing opinion, she may change her mind. Mate choice for women is not just about fertility—most men are fertile most or all their lives—but about finding a helpmate to bring**

(Continued on page 14)

# Defining Erotica

## What is erotica?

Clinical Sexologist **Dr Charley Ferrer** shows how to help our readers use their imaginations to get the most out of their reading experience.



**A**s a Clinical Sexologist I'm asked hundreds of questions about sex and sexual dysfunction. Everyone wants to know the #1 technique to make sex great and the best way to get what you want out of sex. The answer to that is really simple when you understand how "sex" is really spelled. Nope, it's not just s-e-x. It's actually spelled:

T-A-B-O-O

F-E-A-R

P-A-S-S-I-O-N

A-C-C-E-P-T-A-N-C-E

L-O-V-E

R-E-L-I-G-I-O-N

E-X-P-E-C-T-A-T-I-O-N

And the list goes on and on.

As you become consciously aware of all the nuances such as societal dictates and cultural norms that we've been taught to accept or reject, you'll be able to not only experience mind blowing erotic sex, you'll be able to write it. It is this unconscious ambivalent connection we have with sex which is responsible for the way we respond and how we judge this one act in ourselves and in others.

As we explore the sexual realm further, we come across another door, this one even more intense and at times more frightening than the first—erotica. Here we're not only listening to what we've been taught about sex but we've actually added an emotional component to it. We've added desires and fears, longing, even hope. Erotica breaches those stoic doors of our daily lives and appropriate behavior and promises us rapture if we dare to embrace it. However, it's not that easy is it?

Erotica is a plethora of emotions, including that primal lust and passion which lies within us all. By its very nature erotica elicits a response. It opens the floodgates of our imagination, our cravings, and rushes forward to capture our

imagination. These emotions can be deliciously wanton, beckoning us into its embrace or frightening us into a hasty retreat where we'll become angry and bitter. Ah, that double edged sword—it mesmerizes and cuts in the same breath.

However, erotica isn't merely about the emotional; it encompasses the physical as well as the imagination. It's a heady combination of the emotional and physical response to what you're seeing, what you're reading, what you're hearing. Each emotion has its own flavor—its own degree of intensity as it connects us to lust, desire, pleasure, anger, romance, confusion, rapture, fear, excitement and so on.

Here are a few examples of what is and isn't erotica:

**He fucked her against the wall hard and fast.**

That was raunchy and blunt, not erotic at all, and might even turn you off. What's missing? That I would actually classify as a "sex scene".

**He made love to her as he pressed her body against the wall. He tried to slow down but he couldn't. Hard and fast was all he had to give.**

Ok better, getting closer to erotica. I'd say this would fall under the romantic heading more so than anything else.

**He buried his fingers in her hair, tightened his grip and pulled harder as he felt her resistance, exposing her throat to his needs. "I'm going to fuck you here—against this wall. Fast. Hard. Till you beg me for more." He punctuated each word with a sharp nip of his teeth along her racing pulse before he buried his teeth into her flesh, making her crave the rest of him.**

This one has it all: erotica, romance, desire, longing, even a bit of dominance and submission.

The trick to writing great erotica is the combination of the emotional and the physical. Allowing the reader to not only read the action but *feel it—experience it*—and most of all, *imagine it*.

Unfortunately some writers think this means their "erotic scenes" should be a

sexological lesson on cunnilingus and fellatio. They erroneously believe that if they give you 3-5 pages of a "sex scene" where the hero is being "oh so attentive" to the heroine's vaginal area, this means erotica. I don't know about you, but I don't want to know the characters that well. These authors have missed the one crucial factor of erotica—imagination.

Erotica works best when it's left up to the imagination to complete the scene for you. The brain has to fill in the blanks—it can't function unless it does. Here are a few simple "wholesome" examples:

**M&M's melt in your mouth not in your \_\_\_\_\_.**

**Now I lay me down to \_\_\_\_\_.**

**Ham and \_\_\_\_\_.**

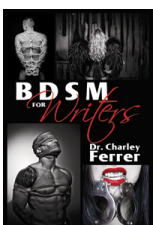
You've filled in all the blanks, didn't you? It's automatic. Now let's incorporate a little naughty imagination:

**He had her spread before him. All he could think about was burying his tongue in her \_\_\_\_\_.**

Okay, you did it again, didn't you? You filled in the blanks. I bet your imagination took it one step further and positioned her the way you wanted. For instance, was she facing up or down? Was she bound? Just where did he have her spread out? What was she wearing—or was she nude? Notice, I never filled in these blanks for you. I allowed your imagination to do it and thus allowed you to build the depths of your erotic connection at your comfort zone with just two simple lines.

My point is you don't have to describe every second of the sex act for your reader. Allow their imagination to take control. Let them spread their wings. You're not a sexologist teaching a patient how to become orgasmic; you're a writer helping a reader connect with their imagination using your story as the catalyst. Set up the scene for them and let it go. Give them the time to enjoy. Let their minds fill in a few of the blanks.

(Continued on page 17)



(Building The Perfect Pitch...cont from page 5)

his lost childhood.

Citizen Kane, reconceived as a single sentence.

Here's what Lee says—and I think it's really something important to remember:

**The trick to writing a hook to a [short] pitch is that you have to ignore most of the characters, settings and plot machinations...and cut right to the heart of the story. To accomplish this, you must repeat the following mantra: 'Just tell the good part.' You don't have to tell the whole story in one sentence. That's what the rest of the pitch is intended to do.**

Following are some samples from *Publishers Lunch* that hint at this technique. To me, it's almost like they each could have started with Lee's sentence structure, and then the sentence evolved as the writer tweaked it to make sure it was polished and had enough hook in it to intrigue the listener.

**2006 Edgar Award nominee *Officer Down* author Theresa Schwegel's *Person Of Interest*, in which an undercover cop's wife invites disaster when she covers up a mistake made by her rebellious daughter.**

Let's rewrite this into Lee's format...

**This is a story about the wife of an undercover cop who invites disaster, only for her to discover the source of trouble is the cover-up of her daughter's mistake.**

It's a little awkward in this structure, but I can imagine it starting in this sentence

format, and then the writer could have kept revising it (which is what you would want to do in tweaking the pitch until it reads "right" for your story).

Author of *The Wheelman* Duane Swierczynski's *Violent Type*, about a journalist who invents a source—only to have the source come looking for him.

**This is a story about a journalist who invents a source, only for him to discover the source is real and now looking for him.**

This one fits the structure pretty well, don't you think? The posted version reads more smoothly, of course. My point is to illustrate that the components exist in the one-sentence format—showing you that if you start with Lee's format and then keep working with it, you'll end up with something just right for your story.

William R. Forstchen's *One Second After*, in which an attack on the US cripples the electronic infrastructure, following one small town without food, medical supplies, outside contact, or electricity, as it fights to stave off worse catastrophe.

**This is a story about a small town that survives a crippling attack on the US, only for it to discover there's worse trouble to come.**

Well, I can force it to fit, which I think does capture the essence of the story, but it improves with some details added, right?

Are you beginning to see the power of the fill-in-the-blank sentence, though?

If you can capture the essence of the story, then you have something to work with so you can create a solid one-line pitch.

So, now it's your turn to try these techniques and see what you come up with for your story. If you find yourself frustrated, take a novel you love and really know—or even a movie—and see if you can boil down the essence of the story to fit one or both of these techniques. Then go back to your story and give it a try. ♥♥♥

*Janet Wellington is an award-winning author of two short contemporary romances and two time travel historical romances. She is currently following her bliss and working on a middle grade novel, which she recently pitched at a children's writing conference... and, yes, she was nervous! If you would like some professional help in constructing the 3 different length pitches for your current manuscript, you might consider taking Janet's private four-week online PITCH PERFECT class (which includes grueling homework and honest feedback!). You may contact her directly for more information: [mail@janetwellington.com](mailto:mail@janetwellington.com)*

### Oops!

For those who spotted the intentional (cough) mistake in Janet's article last month we have something very special up our sleeves for you. **Answer this question:** Who were the three writers named in the last paragraph of Part 1 in the July issue?

Use the Subject Line of "Gotcha Gracie!" and email your answer to Bron at: [romance@bronwenevans.com](mailto:romance@bronwenevans.com)

(Crafting Sexual Tension cont. from page 12)

up baby.

So as we write about protective Alpha heroes, and caring Beta heroes, and show them not only as being good gene material—tall, dark, and handsome—but 'proving' by their actions that they will care and provide for a female, and her offspring—we are reinforcing what our ancestors understood and accepted as biologically sound and smart.

Now let's step away from biology for a moment and touch base on a few key craft points that, when combined with the universal biological understanding we've already discussed, set apart writers who write great sexual tension.

What are the key craft techniques these authors use to create sexual tension?

Technique Number One: they

understand conflict. Not the bickering kind, or angry confrontational kind, but the type of conflict that runs soul-deep through the best novels—hard issues that are not easily solved until one or both of the main characters grow and change over the course of the story. The kind of conflict where one or the other must compromise, or even relinquish something dear and important to them, in order to give to the other. The kind of conflict that pits one's deepest wants and needs against another's deepest wants and needs in each and every scene. Tension on the page is a result of conflict on the page. You can't have one without the other. So even if you write erotica with lots and lots of sex (which can decrease the tension), as long as you have strong conflict—reasons the hero or heroine can not commit to love—you can still have sexual tension.

What the best authors of strong sexual tension understand is that love is not easy. It's not always neat and pretty, coming along in the expected way at the perfect time. In fact, just the opposite happens more times than not.

Ever wonder why some of the 'older' romance novels, the kind we grew up with as kids, seemed riper with sexual tension? Because it was far easier for writers to write sexual tension when engaging in sex meant societal and physical conflict for the hero and heroine. Today, when having sex in and of itself does not need to create risk, the act of sex itself releases tension. So when as writers we're free—and often encouraged—to rush our characters into bed sooner rather than later, we're forced to make sure we have other strongly motivated

(Continued on page 16)



(Dageus MacKeltar Interview cont. from page 9)  
are very obviously a real man. And how!

**TC:** While we're on the topic, why do you think women find you irresistible? Apart from the blatantly obvious, of course.

**Dageus:** I suspect a large part of that goes back to the bad-boy question. Women sense that they can do or be anything with me. They sense that not only will I not tolerate inhibitions, I will strip them away one by one. 'Tis not merely in bed I seduce a woman, but out of it as well, into being the woman she's always wanted to be. Women crave such freedom.

**TC:** You've obviously got bucketloads of charisma, and with all that sexual expertise and such an exquisite understanding of female sensuality, you'd have them queuing up around the block. Add the freedom to let go and be forced to drop all our hang-ups and most would be feeding you peeled grapes as well!

**TC:** What's your favorite part of a woman's body and why?

**Dageus:** The sleek curve of a woman's naked back where it widens into her hips. Why? I have no bloody idea. It's delicate, yet strong, intensely erotic to me. It's where I love to grip her with both hands when I drive into her. It makes my knees go weak and makes me hard. Dinner in a romantic restaurant with a woman who's wearing something backless is sheer torture for me.

**TC:** Yet another thing which should score you huge points: Women are used to being admired for their obvious bits (like breasts or bottoms). A man who admires our less obvious sexy parts—like the small of our back—wins every time.

**TC:** Which is better sex, the first night with someone you've lusted after for ages, or sex within a great, long term relationship? In other words, can love stop you from giving into the temptation and undeniable erotic appeal of a new body in your bed?

**Dageus:** I'm a man who has sated his every fantasy, Ms. Cox. A man who has denied himself nothing. Hence I know how empty fantasies are, a moment of physical release, nothing more. 'Tis not only a woman's body but a woman's heart that I need. I've had sex with more women than you would care for

me to count... yet I've not found the woman with whom I can make love.♥♥♥

*Tracey Cox is one of the world's foremost (and hottest) experts on sex and relationships. Her books "Hot Sex: How to Do It" and "Hot Relationships: How to Know What You Want, Get What You Want, and Keep it Red Hot" were international bestsellers and are published in 40 countries. Cox was born in England, and spent many years in Australia, where she was associate editor of "Cosmopolitan". She has a degree in psychology and contributes regularly to leading women's magazines around the globe. Visit her website here: <http://www.traceycox.com>*

*This interview was originally published in The Dark Highlander excerpt booklet printed by Bantam Dell in 2002. ©2002 Karen Marie Moning, LLC, all rights reserved. Reprinted with permission of the author.*

*Karen Marie Moning (rhymes with 'awning') is the # 1 New York Times bestselling author of 12 novels, including the Rita-award winning Highlander novels and the internationally bestselling urban fantasy Fever series. Her books have been published in 21 languages, and her events draw fans from all over the world.*

*Moning began her career writing paranormal romance set in Scotland but as she became increasingly fascinated with Celtic mythology, she switched genres to Urban Fantasy and location to Dublin, Ireland, so she could focus on the Tuatha de Danann, or Fae—an ancient race of immortal beings who have lived secretly among humans for millennia. Moning is currently completing a graphic novel for Del Rey, featuring an original story about MacKayla Lane and Jericho Barrons, and has contracted with Random House Publishing Group for three more books set in the Fever universe. She divides her time between the mountains of Georgia and the beaches of Florida.*

*You can visit her at*

*<http://www.karenmoning.com/kmm/>*

*(How To Be A Great Judge cont. from page 2)*  
**for anything you think may be out of place or unsuitable.** For instance, one judge told an entrant that an opium addict hero would never sell in an Historical Category romance. That story won the HMB online historical pitch. Focus on the scoresheet and leave your personal feelings out of it.

**4. When you're judging a category you don't normally read it is even more important to stick to the scoresheet questions.** Don't mark down for things you find odd—you can leave a comment. For instance, if a word is used several times and you don't know what it means, ignore it and perhaps leave a comment.

**5. Don't be too judgmental on formatting.** Some contests stress formatting, some don't. Again, follow the scoresheet for guidance. Some entries from outside NZ come with a variety of differences—punctuation, spelling, phraseology, even paper size—but unless you're directed to do so, don't mark down.

**6. Even higher scores need feedback.** Yep, high scores deserve feedback, even if it's a simple, "Good job!" Unless you have given a top score (i.e. 5/5) you should **always** comment. If you have given a 4/5 but cannot explain why it did not get a 5, then ask yourself if it's because you are being picky and, in fact, you should have given it a 5. You should be able to explain your scores! Don't be lazy. If the roles were reversed wouldn't you like to know why it didn't make a 5? How can she improve if she doesn't know where she went wrong?

**7. Don't give unkind/hostile remarks.** Focus on constructive criticism. Blunt, unkind, and unhelpful comments such as, "Their names were dumb" aren't constructive. A name can be changed. Does it affect the overall quality of the story? No? Move on. Unkind comments are never acceptable and any judge who gives them should not be judging.

**8. Lack of feedback on low scores.** One of the reasons unpublished writers enter contests is feedback. If an entry deserves a low score, it also deserves an explanation why. Entrants pay big bucks to get that feedback, and a low numerical score without a reason is wasted money, wasted time and yes, even wasted emotional investment. **It is morally mandatory for judges to comment on scores!** Again, if you're not prepared to do this then don't offer to judge. It's unfair on the contestants.

Overall, remember that proverb—do unto others? Think "How would I like someone to judge *my* work?" and apply that rationale. Work to give the entry the highest score you honestly can, while providing the best feedback ever. Don't be scared to recommend courses or books to help the entrant.

Judging can teach a lot about your own writing while you help and support other authors. I'm sure you, as a writer, have had work judged. Perhaps it's time to return the favour. It's not scary if you simply follow the scoresheet questions and apply them to the story.

Join the judging loop for RWNZ and learn how to help get our authors' work in front of more editor and agent judges. Contact Kamy Chetty on [kamychetty@yahoo.com](mailto:kamychetty@yahoo.com) ♥♥♥

conflict present in our novels.

We must make sure that not only is there underlying conflict between the hero and heroine but also that the conflict is deepened in each and every scene between them, especially as they reach each of the twelve stages of intimacy.

Technique Number Two. In the best books you should be able to pinpoint the twelve stages. Sometimes they stand alone. Sometimes they're jumbled together and not always in order, but at each stage you'll also see conflict. From the first eye contact to the first kiss to the first sex act—every time one of these stages is met, instead of life getting better, it gets worse in some way because the conflicts—the stakes to the hero or the heroine—have been raised and the risk is greater.

Which leads to Technique Number Three. Writers of great sexual tension do not skimp or skim over the twelve stages of intimacy. They linger, dwell, focus a reader not only on the physical action of each stage, but the emotional reaction, the impact of each stage on the key characters. He does not glance at her for the first time and see nothing. She does not brush against him and feel nothing. Words, powerful words, are used to alert a reader to the fact that something monumental is happening, whether the characters want it to be happening or not.

I can not underscore the above

enough. If you want to focus a reader in on the fact something important is happening (i.e. one of the twelve stages of sexual intimacy is being approached, met and accepted, thus allowing the characters to move to the next) then do not rush through these stages in your novels. We're not talking pages here—unless it's appropriate. We're talking enough word count to make the point that awareness is increased, intimacy is deepened or challenged, and an emotional response is created as a result. You'll see this time and again as we go through some great examples of each of the stages. Don't rush!

Technique Number Four. There is not only a focus on physical response in the development of intimacy, there's an emotional response. The best authors don't leave a reader with a physical description of a touch, a look, a kiss, without showing the impact of that touch, look or kiss on one or both of the main characters.

Below are listed the Twelve Stages of Intimacy. Check your manuscripts to see if you have 1) included them and 2) made sure the reader knows the stage is reached with the conflict present and 3) as the relationship grows and changes the reader can see this by seeing some, or perhaps all of the twelve stages revisited.

### The Twelve Stages of Intimacy

By Desmond Morris

1. Eye to Body

(Chemistry, Epic Forbidden...cont. from page 8)  
**accidental touches, or covert looks at the love interest say more than taking things further could. I've even read books where—because the author knows what they are doing—simple hand holding is sexy!**

**The Interruption.** Just when the two are about to kiss the door bangs open and another character (or explosion) interrupts them (don't make it look too contrived). The interruption can also be caused by an internal conflict from one of the characters. In *Twilight*, Edward frequently backs away from kissing Bella because he's afraid he'll lose control and kill her.

**The Long Wait.** Don't break the tension too soon. Most books hold off the first love scene until the last third of the book.

**Almost, But Not Quite.** Just when the two characters resolve a conflict and

are about to get together, bam! More conflict drives them apart.

### Homework

To quote Rachel again,<sup>(3)</sup>

**There are dozens of great books where the sexual tension is so intense, it nearly lights up the pages.**

One of the best ways to learn how to improve the tension in your YA manuscript, is to read as many YA books as you can. Books like, *Angel Burn* by L.A. Weatherly, which, according to Brooke Lynn G,<sup>(3)</sup>

**...is basically filled to the max with sexual tension. You are dying the whole time for something! ANYTHING!**

Many websites like Goodreads.com and Amazon have lists of popular YA books. And there are hundreds of teen book bloggers out there like Rachel with lists and honest reviews. The teen

2. Eye to Eye
3. Voice to Voice
4. Hand to Hand
5. Arm to Shoulder
6. Arm to Waist
7. Mouth to Mouth
8. Hand to Head
9. Hand to Body
10. Mouth to Breast
11. Hand to Genital
12. Genital to Genital

If you want to learn more about the fascinating subject of writing great Sexual Tension join Mary in September for a month-long workshop at [www.WriterUniv.com](http://www.WriterUniv.com) called *Sex on the Page: Understanding and Crafting Sexual Tension*. Can't make the class event? Not a problem. Mary sells the lectures in a 153 page lecture packet from her website:

[www.MaryBuckham.com](http://www.MaryBuckham.com) ♥♥♥

*Mary Buckham is an award-winning romantic-suspense author and co-author of "BREAK INTO FICTION™: 11 Steps to Building a Story That Sells" who, before becoming published in book-length fiction was a freelance article writer, selling hundreds of articles to local, regional, and national publications. She was also an editor of a regional magazine. Mary co-founded [www.WriterUniv.com](http://www.WriterUniv.com) an online educational resource for writers and is a sought-after speaker and writing craft teacher for both online and live presentations throughout the United States and Canada. For more on Mary visit [www.MaryBuckham.com](http://www.MaryBuckham.com) or [www.BreakIntoFiction.com](http://www.BreakIntoFiction.com)*

sites are also a great resource for insight into the teenage mind.

### In Conclusion

Now that you're armed with the various ways to incorporate and increase sexual tension in your YA novel, the next step is to put it all together just like rugby and number eight fence wire and write!

### After the Conclusion

Number eight fence wire? Seriously? ♥♥♥

### Works Cited:

<sup>(1)</sup>How to use Sexual Tension in Fictional Stories <http://www.suite101.com/content/how-to-use-sexual-tension-in-fictional-stories-a224695#ixzz1S6VcwEku>

<sup>(2)</sup>Vampires aren't Sexy? <http://www.suite101.com/content/vampires-arent-sexy-a371143#ixzz1S6Usefkz>

(Continued on page 17)

(Defining Erotica... cont. from page 13)

Timing is another error I see in erotica. Some writers rush through their love scenes as if they're embarrassed to be writing it in the first place. If this is true for you, my suggestion is write three sex/erotic scenes a day until you're comfortable with it or stop writing them all together. Another possibility is taking the class, *From Shy to Steamy Love Scenes (Overcoming Your Inhibitions)* hosted by Savvy Authors, August 18. Rushing through a love/sex scene is the fastest way to disappoint a reader and that means you've just lost a fan. Always keep in mind no one wants to be disappointed in sex, especially if they're paying for it.

Don't worry about trying to get the romance into your story. The romance weaves itself into your story as you write it. Don't push it or try to force it into the scene. That's another area where authors destroy the very erotica they're trying to create.

For instance, in a hot and steamy scene there's passion, lust, primal energy. **Do not** add slow tender touches, kisses, or flowery adjectives. Come on. This is passion. Lust. It's supposed to be hot! Allow your heroine to enjoy it wild. *Afterward* he can "hold her tenderly and kiss her softly".

Don't be ashamed of your characters' desire for wild adventurous sex. If you are and can't overcome it, then don't write it—or team up with someone who is comfortable writing erotica. Another alternative is to join a sensual writing

course, or finding a Sexologist who's willing to help guide you in opening up to this side of yourself.

What about adding BDSM and Dominance and submission as an erotic flavor for your story?

Ugh... here is where I get frustrated with some authors. Apparently the latest craze is adding a little bondage or BDSM to a story. Most individuals think that if you have a scene where the hero ties her up, or spansks her, or pulls out a whip that's what BDSM is all about.

*Wrong!* Dominance and submission is about the Power Exchange, about respect and service. Most of all, it's about the emotional and psychological connection the couple makes with each other and within themselves as their connection grows. Throwing a BDSM scene into your book just to fulfill your word count or because you wanted to spice up a scene but never set up the Power Exchange dynamics is like jumping into the ocean when you don't know how to swim.

If you're not familiar with D/s and want to add it to your books, please ensure you do your research. I invite you to take my *BDSM For Writers Workshop Series* being hosted by Savvy Authors beginning August 15 where you'll discover everything you need to know to write a believable BDSM romance—even increase your erotic repertoire. I guarantee readers will love you as you'll not only be able to portray the unique dynamics of this highly erotic lifestyle, but you'll also open new doors

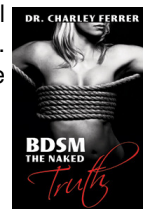
for them to explore which will have them flocking to you—possibly even chaining you to your computer so you'll write more of those wonderfully erotic stories for them.

As you know, this topic is vast and we've merely touched the surface. Perhaps Gracie will be kind enough to invite me back soon and we can address erotic BDSM in more depth as well as address some of your questions. I invite you to visit my website [www.bdsmforwriters.com](http://www.bdsmforwriters.com) and contact me at [doctorcharley\(at\)bdsmforwriters\(dot\)com](mailto:doctorcharley(at)bdsmforwriters(dot)com) to learn about upcoming workshops and private Coaching/Mentoring.

I want to thank you all for sharing your time with me and thank Gracie for contacting me. I'm so thrilled to be here with you... in New Zealand! Okay even though it's virtual it's still so awesome for me. Hopefully someday, I'll be able to see you all live.

Live with passion,

Dr. Charley Ferrer ♥♥♥



*Dr. Charley Ferrer is a world-renowned Clinical Sexologist, TV/Radio Producer and award winning author. She teaches workshops on BDSM and erotica through Savvy Authors. She also provides private Coaching and Mentorship on BDSM as well as Sex Therapy for men and women around the globe. Contact her at [doctorcharley\(at\)bdsmforwriters\(dot\)com](mailto:doctorcharley(at)bdsmforwriters(dot)com) or, for more info, visit her website [www.bdsmforwriters.com](http://www.bdsmforwriters.com)*

(Chemistry, Epic Forb...cont. from page 16)

<sup>(3)</sup>Bookshelf Lust Blog <http://bookshelflust.wordpress.com/2011/06/14/sexy-scenes-in-ya-what-are-your-favorites/>

**Maria V. Snyder is a New York Times bestselling author of fantasy and dystopian fiction. Born and raised in Philadelphia, PA, Maria V. Snyder studied meteorology at Penn State University.**

**After writing many science fiction short stories, Maria started "Poison Study", her novel about a food taster. Published in October 2005 in both adult and young adult versions, "Poison Study" won three awards, was nominated for four others, and received a starred review from Publisher's Weekly.**

**Maria's second book, "Magic Study", was published in October 2006 and was a 2006 Booksense pick. "Magic Study" also finalled for the RITA Award. Maria's third book, "Fire Study", was published in March 2008 and spent two weeks on the New York Times bestseller List.**

**Maria's next book, "Storm Glass" was released in April 2009. Most recently, Maria's young adult dystopian thriller**

**titled "Inside Out" was released in 2010. The second book in the series came out in March 2011. Maria has a Master of Arts degree in Writing Popular Fiction from Seton Hill University.**

## Volunteers Needed

Attending the RWNZ conference? Then how about putting your hand up for a wee job? Every year we depend on a small group of people to do all those little jobs that help make the conference run smoothly for everyone.

If this is your first conference then volunteering is an excellent and easy way to meet people.

Interested? Then please contact Sue Mackay at [ismackay@ts.co.nz](mailto:ismackay@ts.co.nz)

Even if you have told other committee members that you'd like to help, please contact Sue.

**Love has nothing to do with what you are expecting to get—only with what you are expecting to give—which is everything.**

Katharine Hepburn

**Passion can never purchase what true love desires: true intimacy, self-giving, and commitment.**

Unknown

**Among men sex sometimes results in intimacy; among women intimacy sometimes results in sex.**

Barbara Cartland





# First Time At Conference?

Whether you're a long-time member or a newbie, attending your first conference can be daunting. **Abby Gaines** tells us what to expect.

**W**e love to see new people show up at conference! Your badge, which must be worn at all times, will indicate that you're a first-timer, so that our older-timers know to make a special effort to welcome you.

## Who will you meet?

RWNZers are a mixed bunch—at conference you'll find women aged from twenties through to sixties-plus, and from all over NZ (and Australia!). City people, country people. Lawyers, accountants, housewives, retail assistants, journalists, teachers, students, people who do a bit of this and a bit of that... A mix of published and unpublished writers—mostly unpublished—which reflects our overall membership.

So, whoever you are and whatever you do, whatever stage you're at in your writing career, there's every chance you'll meet someone you have something in common with. You might even forge a lasting friendship, like I did at my first conference with Karina Bliss, who's still one of my besties and a valued writing buddy today. But even if you don't meet a BFF, you'll strike up acquaintances, meet potential critique partners, and generally find people who want to talk to you.

## What do writers talk about?

The food! This is very important to romance writers, and you'll find plenty of good food on offer at conference... We also talk about writing. A lot.

## Some good ice-breaker questions:

- How did you end up joining RWNZ?
- What do you write?
- What did you think of that last speaker?

## Some bad ice-breaker questions:

- How much do you earn?
- Will you read my manuscript?
- Will you recommend me to your editor / agent?

## How does the conference actually work?

If you attend Friday, you'll spend most of the day in one large room (that's if you're attending just Bob Mayer's workshop). Seating is "classroom style"—long tables with chairs. The hotel usually provides pens and notepads, but best to bring your own, too, because you can end up taking a lot of notes. I buy a spiral-bound A5 size notebook for conference each year, and usually find I more than half-fill it with notes.

We have breaks for morning tea, lunch, and afternoon tea. Morning and afternoon tea will be served outside the conference room, while lunch will be buffet-style in an area of the hotel restaurant set aside for conference-goers. The food is one of the best things about conference!

If you're attending the weekend conference, you move around a bit

more. In addition to the main conference room sessions we have two breakout workshop sessions on Saturday, and one on Sunday. You have a choice of three or four different workshops to attend at these times. Main session talks range between 20 minutes and one hour, and the workshops are about an hour and a quarter. There's time for a stretch between many of the sessions.

Raffle tickets are on sale throughout the weekend and we draw prizes at the end of the day on Saturday, and mid-afternoon on Sunday. If you have an editor or agent pitch you can just slip out of the conference session to attend that. Speakers are aware that people have appointments and meetings, so it's perfectly acceptable to duck in and out. Barbara's Books has an onsite conference bookstall open throughout the weekend, so you can also go shopping without leaving the hotel.

Although there's lots of learning going on, the conference atmosphere is very relaxed. It's not like being in school.

## To make you feel extra welcome...

All first-timers registered for the weekend conference will be invited to attend a welcome gathering (drinks and nibbles) immediately before the cocktail party on Friday night. The idea of the gathering is for you to meet a few seasoned conference-goers, who can answer your questions, and also to meet other first-timers. This way, we guarantee you'll walk into the cocktail party knowing several people! Make sure you check the "first conference" box on the registration form, so we can let you know the time and location of the welcome event. ♥♥♥

## Romance Writers of New Zealand Inc.

### Agenda

For the ninth Annual General Meeting of Romance Writers of New Zealand Incorporated (RWNZ Inc.) to be held at 5.15 p.m., on Saturday 20th August 2011, at the Crowne Plaza Hotel, Auckland.

#### Business:

1. Confirmation of the minutes of the eighth Annual General Meeting of RWNZ Inc. held on Saturday 21st August, 2010.
2. Presentation and adoption of the President's Report.
3. Presentation and adoption of the Treasurer's Report for the year ended March 31st, 2010.
4. Presentation and adoption of the Membership Report.
5. Introduction of the new Executive Committee.

Abby Gaines, President  
July 2011

**I have a terrific marriage,  
but unlike a lot of relationships  
where they ebb and flow,  
no matter what happens  
you fall deeper and deeper  
in love every day.  
It's kind of the best thing that  
can happen to you.  
It's thrilling.**

Hugh Jackman  
(Go Hughie!!!)

# RWNZ News Around the Regions

*Keeping in touch with each other.*

## AUCKLAND

The next Auckland meeting will take place on August 6th at 12.30 pm in the Three Kings Tennis Pavilion at the corner of Mt Albert and Mt Eden Roads. Sandra Hyde is our speaker. It will also be my last meeting as convener as I will be handing over to Pamela Gervai after the conference. It has been a while since I took over and I look forward to attending meetings someone else has arranged. Thank you to all the Auckland members, it's been great. ♥♥♥

## CENTRAL NORTH C2C

We had a fantastic July meeting in Matamata. Thank you to the Davidson household for hosting us. There was a good muster of enthused writers with more brave new members. Welcome to Deryn and Lizzi. Extra special thanks to Nicki for providing an inspiring workshop, *Turning Up The Heat*. It went down a treat. The workshop, the post-it notes, and reading aloud (200 words leading into the first 'hook-up' scene) provided the foundation for lots of extra and enlightening chat. Remember, there's no meeting for us in August—and it is not too late to register and go conference. Our next meeting will be in September at Helen McFarlane's home in Rotorua (scheduled for the second weekend—either the 10th or 11th), and there will be the usual email sent out prior; workshop details and directions included. ♥♥♥

## HAWKES BAY

We haven't met for the past few months but that isn't to say we haven't been busy writing. We still aren't sure how many of us are attending the RWNZ conference but I'm one of the lucky ones, attending two conferences this year. If anyone would like to join our group they can email me at the contact address. ♥♥♥

## WELLINGTON

Wellington/Kapiti branch had a hugely enjoyable July meeting—and we congratulated Leeann on being a Valerie Parv finalist. Quite a number of us bravely brought two pages for a cold-read session and soaked up the helpful comments and critiques. An amazing variety of writing styles and topics burst forth!

Next meeting is 1pm, Saturday August 6th at Meryl's. We'll be practising conference pitches, and because we had fun writing a couple of pages using specified words a while ago, we're doing it again. Choose four from this list: *insatiable, dusk, skyline, iridescent, Lamborghini, parachute, frolic, email*. ♥♥♥

## CHRISTCHURCH

The core group of hardy souls braved the winter night. With conference so close it was naturally a topic for discussion. Those of us not going discussed previous guest speakers and the benefit of attending. That led into talking about the Clendon, and what we are writing now. Plenty of new writing starting but getting words on the page seems to be a struggle. Discussed writing habits, 500 words per day versus 5 hours in the weekend, and how much back story do you actually need to write.

It's great to get together and enjoy the company of others with the same passion. If nights are too cold for you, a group is starting on Wednesday afternoons 2pm to 4pm. Email [sandramarkle@yahoo.com](mailto:sandramarkle@yahoo.com) for more information. Next meeting 8th August at 7.00 – Discussion Topic: exotic locations. ♥♥♥

## NELSON

We had a good meeting in front of a cozy fire with the rain tapping on the windows. A heart-shaped Love cake with pink icing with our cuppa made it even more cozy.

This month's H2H had a lot of good material to talk about. Cherie shared with us her experience of going to an RWNZ conference and pitching. We all cheered Annika's niece, who is preparing for her first pitch at this year's conference.

Then Cherie and LaVerne told us about a spontaneous writing retreat they had been to the previous weekend and we all decided that this is a really valuable thing to do now and then. To be able to focus on our writing without interruptions of phones, emails, family etc is worth gold—and doesn't have to cost much if you are prepared to live a bit "basic" for a weekend.

As homework for the next meeting we have to think what we want from a workshop that Sally has promised to give us in November and also come up with ideas for a new competition to be launched early next year.

Our next meeting will be Saturday 13 August, at 2pm at Annika's 63 Golf Rd, Tahuna. Everyone's always welcome! ♥♥♥

## OTAGO

In July we revamped our meetings and accepted the challenge to become "craftier" writers. As a mixed bunch of pantsters, planners, and a blend of both, we agreed our WIPs will benefit if we all take targeted risks with our writing. To create with purpose. So, borrowing the formatting used in the First Impressions Contests, and with March's H2H at hand as our resource, we offered our First Page of a new "Dynamite Beginning" to the group for comment. As our power-packed parcels of prose show so much promise, this month's task is to submit their back cover blurb in 150 words or less. Join us on August 13. Contact Viv for details. ♥♥♥



### REGIONAL CONVENORS

**Auckland:** Frances Housden  
email: [Fhousden@xtra.co.nz](mailto:Fhousden@xtra.co.nz)

**Central North (C2C):**  
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**Otago:** Viv Adams  
email: [whitecliffodge@xtra.co.nz](mailto:whitecliffodge@xtra.co.nz)

The difference between  
sex and love is that  
sex relieves tension  
and love causes it.

Woody Allen

Writing is like making love.  
Don't worry about the  
orgasm,  
just concentrate on the  
process.

Isabel Allende

# Clendon Award: aka Finish The Damn Book 2011

**Whose manuscripts are on their way to Mary-Theresa Hussey in NY?**

**Barbara Clendon answers this burning question.**



**T**his year's competition is one of the hardest we have had. We'd have loved to send the top 15 manuscripts to an editor—with lots of notes, telling them how good each one was. Unfortunately we can't do that; but Mary Theresa Hussey has agreed to read the top *eight* manuscripts. Fantastic.

A sincere congratulations to all entrants; there were very, very few manuscripts we didn't enjoy reading.

**Note:** all these lists are in alphabetical order of the writer's first name.

## The 2011

### Clendon Award Finalists are:

<b>Diana Holmes</b>	<i>Sexy/Presents</i>
<b>Iona Jones</b>	<i>Historical</i>
<b>Jenny Yates</b>	<i>Historical</i>
<b>Kendra Delugar</b>	<i>Special Edition</i>
<b>Leeann Morgan</b>	<i>Superromance</i>
<b>Michelle de Rooy</b>	<i>Fantasy</i>
<b>Michelle de Rooy</b>	<i>Science Fiction</i>
<b>Rebecca Skrabi</b>	<i>Paranormal</i>

For the first time ever, we have had two finalist manuscripts written by one writer. Well done Michelle.

*Huge* congratulations to all these finalists.

Final placings will be decided by Mary-Theresa Hussey. The winner will be announced during the Awards Dinner at the 2011 RWNZ Conference.

## Highly Commended

<b>Bernice Greenham</b> (w/a Lexi Greene)
<i>Sexy/Presents</i>

<b>Diana Holmes</b>	<i>Sexy/Presents</i>
<b>Lisa Anderson</b>	<i>Blaze</i>
<b>Nicola Davidson</b>	<i>Historical</i>
<b>Sandii Manning</b>	<i>HQN Romance</i>
<b>Shirley Wine</b>	<i>Special Edition</i>

All of the Highly Commended manuscripts in the 2011 Clendon Award could have been sent to New York. If your manuscript was Commended or Highly Commended, you can be *hugely* proud of yourselves, as the standard is exceptional.

## Commended

<b>Amanda Wilson</b>	<i>Desire</i>
<b>Christine Slater</b>	(w/a Alex Eden) <i>Presents</i>
<b>Jennifer St. George</b>	<i>Desire</i>
<b>Kris Pearson</b>	<i>Blaze</i>
<b>Leeann Morgan</b>	<i>Superromance</i>
<b>Shirley Wine</b>	<i>Special Edition</i>
<b>Thiloshini Govender</b>	(w/a TG Ayre) <i>Young Adult</i>
<b>Tracey Alvrez</b>	<i>Rom Suspense</i>
<b>Tyree Connor</b>	<i>Paranormal</i>

No competition is flawless. The very fact that entries deal with emotions, and are read by human beings, means everybody will respond differently to each romance, making it very important for us to know what our scorers tastes, attitudes and reading preferences are.

The Clendon Award judging is made even more difficult by the quality of the entries, and 2011 was more difficult than most. In my professional opinion, the top twelve books ought to have been sent to editors. Because it was

impossible to split out the top group of manuscripts, this year we've decided to award an unprecedented number of certificates.

Running the Clendon Award is a massive job. The logistics of getting manuscripts to readers all over New Zealand, ensuring the readers are varied and consistent, making sure that the 'soft' markers are balanced by 'harder' markers, and getting the books read by those who are most going to enjoy the story, is as much art as science, and can make a huge difference to where a manuscript places. Then there is the mammoth job of adding, and check adding, hundreds of three page evaluations.

The one thing Peter and I noticed this year was that, on a score alone basis, all the highly commended manuscripts scored as high as the manuscripts which were sent to New York in 2009. This is a staggering number of top quality manuscripts.

Another feature of the 2011 Clendon Award was the number of new writers. Awesome.

RWNZ members are incredibly good writers, and it is a privilege to read your work.

Many of our readers really, really want to be able to buy the Clendon Award stories they've read, and are very reluctant to send the manuscripts back for other readers.

Our advice to all entrants is to Submit! Submit! Submit!♥♥♥

Barbara and Peter Clendon

Clendon Award

Barbara's Books

[www.barbarasbooks.co.nz](http://www.barbarasbooks.co.nz)

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