

# Heart to Heart

December/January 2015

ISSN 2324-1799

## Featuring...

- ♥ 2016 RWNZ Conference
- ♥ Creative Cookies
- ♥ What Is A Story Beat?
- ♥ Member News
- ♥ Chapter news from around the regions

## *Santa's Elves Are Wondering ...*

...if you've paid your RWNZ subs?  
Many thanks to those members who've renewed their subs. Unfortunately quite a number are still outstanding—we'd really appreciate it if you could please renew online asap at [www.romancewriters.co.nz](http://www.romancewriters.co.nz)  
Questions? Email [rwnz.membership@gmail.com](mailto:rwnz.membership@gmail.com)





# Welcome!

Hi Everyone,

Here's to another great year of H2H and our final issue for the year! The next newsletter will be in February 2016. Please send in your reports and any articles by January 15, 2016. Thank you all for your help and support in making Heart to Heart a success. Send us in your photos too—we'd love to feature pics of member events and regional gatherings !

Well done on the new releases and to the participants who took on the challenge of NaNoWriMo, I hope it brings you closer to achieving your goal and a big hello to our new members, Welcome! Here's to a Happy Christmas and a Fruitful New Year! May 2016 bring you many more words and success.

Happy Writing!

*Sapi*

Sapi Heald, H2H Editor

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## New Members

**A very warm welcome to our new members...**

Rochelle Carlton, Auckland  
Teresa Schischka, Wellington  
Morgan Cathro, Burnham  
Jackie Rutherford, Napier  
Lyndsay Campbell, Rotorua  
Sue Simon, USA

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### ***What's happening in RWNZ?***

*President, Lizzi Thompson, brings us up  
to date with the news...*

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Hello Everyone!

I hope you're all creating that essential time—Writing Time—I'm loving so much. This Presidency has eaten into my writing time significantly, but taken against what RWNZ has done for me as a writer, I appreciate the opportunity to put back some of what I've been given!

So how many of you NaNo survivors are out there?

I love NaNoWriMo...It's taught me so much, but mostly how to keep writing and not continually look backward to edit. Plenty of time to do that later...who knows, you may even take whole chunks out, or move them...and have to re-edit them!

News from the Executive:

2016 Conference Planning is well underway—see our "Save The Date" page later in this newsletter.

The website is progressing too, I hope you've all taken the opportunity to use the new online registration and found it straightforward! If not, please tell our Webmaster, Matthew!

Shar Barratt and Carole Brungar have swapped places on the Executive. Now Carole Brungar is part of our Publicity Officer Team and Shar Barratt is the Membership Secretary. You can reach Shar at the Membership Secretary's email address—[rwnz.membership@gmail.com](mailto:rwnz.membership@gmail.com)

Have a fantastic holiday. I hope you and your families, as well as the rest of the world, have a peaceful time. Let's send out some love into the world to stem the ugliness that seems to be reaching for us, even as far as NZ. A little love goes a long way. Just think what a lot of it could do!

Take good care and be safe.

Write heaps!

A handwritten signature in green ink that reads 'Lizzi'.

Lizzi Thompson

President, RWNZ

Email: [rwnzpresident@gmail.com](mailto:rwnzpresident@gmail.com)

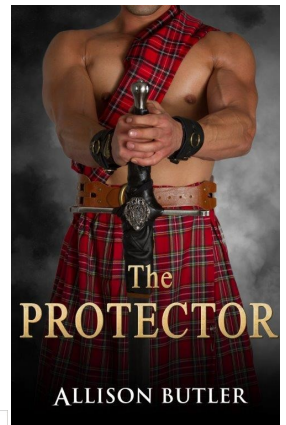
# Woos, Hoos & News!

## Celebrating our members' achievements.

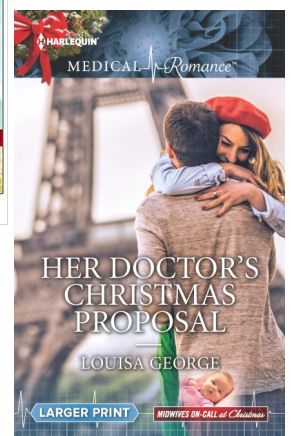
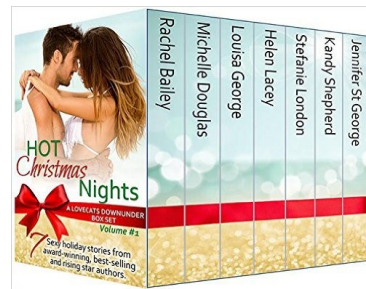
To be included on this page, email your successes to

Jean Drew at [jeandrew@xtra.co.nz](mailto:jeandrew@xtra.co.nz)

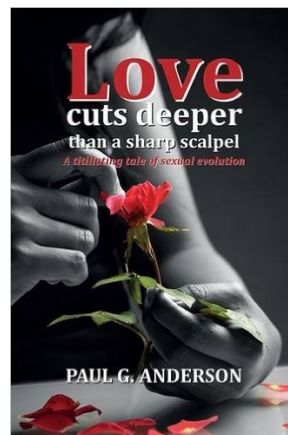
Alison Butler's *THE PROTECTOR*, the first in her Highland Brides series is due December 8 from Escape Publishing.



Louisa George has two releases in December: *HER DOCTOR'S CHRISTMAS PROPOSAL*, a Harlequin medical romance, and a self-pubbed novel-la titled, *BABY, IT'S HOT OUTSIDE*, in the Love Cats Downunder Boxset, *Hot Christmas Nights*.



Paul G Anderson's *Love Cuts Deeper Than a Sharp Scalpel* – a titillating tale of sexual evolution from Austin Macauley Publishers Ltd  
[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=TOK\\_SPhGR6A](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=TOK_SPhGR6A)

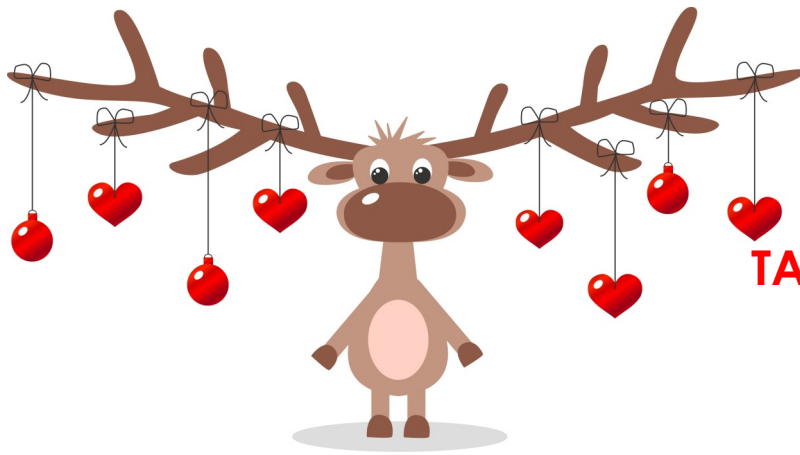


Isabella Hargreaves' historical rural romance, *JOURNEY'S END ON THE WESTERN PLAINS*, set in outback Australia in 1924. This is the sequel to *ALL QUIET ON THE WESTERN PLAINS* and tells the story of Bill and Matron Marion's romance.



That's all for this year guys and gals. Looking forward to all your 2016 releases.

Stay safe,  
**Jean**



# Creative Cookies

## TASTY BITES OF INSPIRATION

### Editing: The Fish Head

"When you clean a fish, the first thing that goes is the head. Generally manuscripts should receive the same treatment because they, too, often have indigestible heads. This is especially true of fiction. The first thirty pages... may be background—a warming-up that's necessary for the writer—but uninteresting and not useful to the reader. Perhaps you may find the true beginning of the book on page 31...."

- *A Writer's Time*, Kenneth Atchity



### Negative Thinking of "I must be perfect."

"Telling yourself "I must be perfect, I couldn't stand it if I made a mistake" will greatly increase the chances that you'll need procrastination to buffer you against the pain of failure and criticism. It also means that part of your self-talk is centered around condemning any small steps of progress as being insignificant compared with what you think they should be...

The more perfectionist and self-critical you are, the harder it is to start on a project that you already know will never be quite good enough... Ironically, being a perfectionist and criticizing yourself about mistakes makes failures more likely and worse.

"I decided, "I am going to write out of myself."  
Once I made the decision, all inhibition was gone.  
It was like accepting my accent."

- *Irini Spanidou*

**Replace "I must be perfect" with  
"I can be perfectly human"**

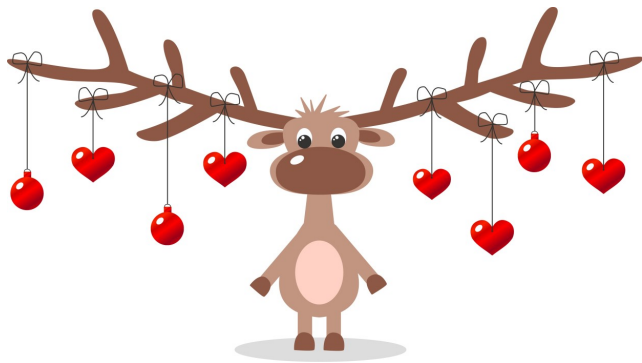
- *The Now Habit*, Neil Fiore

"Passion for one's creative work isn't necessarily positive passion. There will be plenty of days when the thought of going to your accustomed writing place and taking up your work will make you swear. Some days, you'll feel that the time was wasted. You'll feel frustrated. You may even come to hate the sight of your tools.

At these times, continuing on may seem like madness. You may decide to stop writing. There is nothing dishonourable in that decision.

Or you may choose to accept the side of you that swears in impatience of frustration—and then writes anyway."

- *Walking On Alligators*, Susan Shaughnessy



### Belief

"Belief is a powerful force. It is frightening in its power.

If you believe you cannot write, you surely can't.

If you believe you can write, your work may not immediately satisfy you—or an editor—but it will strengthen in time.

- *Walking On Alligators*, Susan Shaughnessy

### Listen To The Tongue In Your Shoe

"You can always tell where a person's focus is if you watch his or her actions, and you can tell where your focus is by looking at your behaviours. Think about it. There's a tongue in your mouth and another one in your shoe, and it's that second one that will tell you the truth about what you really want. It speaks the language of the body, and the body never lies about what we really want.

- *Seven Steps On The Writer's Path*,  
Nancy Pickard & Lynn Lott



### Write Anything

"One time honoured trick that professional writers use to tackle the blank page is to simply start writing—anything. Sometimes when you freeze up at the computer it's because of a fear of failure, fear of success or fear that you aren't good enough to be a writer...

If you find yourself in this type of quiet panic, bust through it by writing anything. Write down what you had for lunch that day or how you slept the night before. ... Simply start putting words on paper to get the flow started. Like an athlete stretching out prior to a big race, it will loosen you up, get the blood flowing, and move you easily into your writing project.

- *Time To Write*, Kelly L. Stone



"The biggest mental obstacle—in writing, in war, in life itself—is fear. Fear paralyzes. It shrinks the mental faculties. It keeps us from action, in this case, writing words in order to get them published. And while fear is a fact of existence, it need not lead to defeat. Consider a certain amount of fear to be a built-in mechanism to keep us alert. That's really what it is. It shows you are engaged and awake and not a lawn chair.

- *The Art Of War For Writers*, James Scott Bell







save the date!

## RWJNZ Conference, August 12 - 14, 2016

Waipuna Conference Centre, Auckland

Conference Planning is well underway by our merry band of volunteers. We're delighted to confirm that Michael Hauge will be conducting his Story Mastery full-day workshop on Friday and speaking throughout the weekend.

We also have a terrific line-up of speakers over the weekend—details to follow in the New Year, but we promise that there'll be something to inspire, educate and entertain writers at all stages of their writing journey!

We do have a need for some volunteer help in the form of a *Conference Sponsorship Dynamo*. **Could this be you?** We desperately need someone (or group of people) to help solicit corporate sponsorships for our 2016 conference. This would involve approaching businesses for goody bag contents, raffle prizes, and general financial sponsorship in return for naming and branding rights over specific events. Working closely with the friendly Conference Team, this role can be performed by any member, regardless of location (thanks to Skype) and would be the busiest in the earlier months of 2016 as we ramp up conference preparation. Keen to help? Drop Bernadette an email on [frond@wave.co.nz](mailto:frond@wave.co.nz). We'd so appreciate your help in making this an awesome conference for all!

Stay tuned!

*The Conference Team*



MICHAEL HAUGE has been one of Hollywood's top script consultants, story experts and authors for more than 30 years. He coaches screenwriters, novelists, filmmakers, speakers, and marketers, helping transform their stories and their audiences using the principles and methods of Hollywood's most successful movies. Michael has consulted on films starring Will Smith, Tom Cruise, Reese Witherspoon, Julia Roberts and Morgan Freeman, and has presented lectures and workshops to more than 70,000 participants worldwide. According to Will Smith, "No one is better than Michael Hauge at finding what is most authentic in every moment of a story."



# WHAT IS A STORY BEAT?

by Nina Harrington

## ***What is a Story Beat?***

**Short Answer? A beat is a unit of a scene in a story where there is an exchange between the characters and the action/ reaction/revelation advances the story and shape the turning of that scene.**

**Long Answer? I can only give you my personal understanding based on my experience. And sorry, but I can only do this in the long way...**

*From the viewpoint of a Fiction Writer!*

Many years ago I was thinking about writing fiction and looked around for a writing class – no luck, but there was a screenwriting class by a bloke called Robert McKee over two days in London on something called Story Structure. This was in dark days without Internet but I took the chance – when I got there, it was full of well known actors and movie directors! Scary!

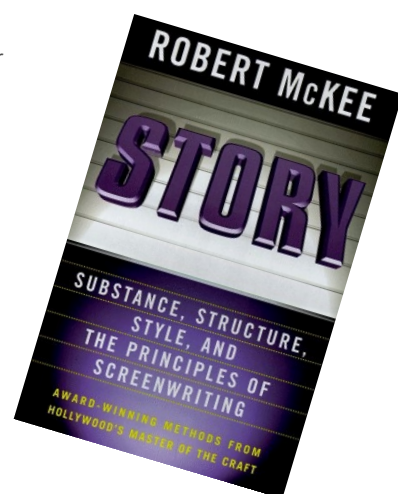
I went in on a Saturday morning and by Sunday teatime my brain would never be the same again. Until that weekend I had no clue that every second of a movie is choreographed on the page to create the precise emotional and visceral response in the viewer sitting in the dark in the cinema.

They achieve this through the Structure of the Story.  
How? By working to find the best way of expressing that story in the most powerful and effective manner possible – and that means structure.

**Acts broken down into Scenes. And each Scene is broken down into Beats.**

This is how [Jenny Crusie](#) defines Acts better than I could:

**“Act One:** The conflict begins and while the protagonist is fighting the beginning skirmishes, the entire book is set up—all characters introduced at least by reference, all subplots begun, the mood, time, and place, etc. This is the promise you make the reader which must be fulfilled in Act Four. So Act One is set-up while you’re telling your story. It can’t just be you setting up everything, the story has to begin on page one and escalate to the turning point/climax. Remember Act One is a story of its own.





# WHAT IS A STORY BEAT?

**Act Two:** The turning point has thrown the protagonist into a much more dangerous/desperate story, and here the conflict builds. You're not setting up anything any more, now you're revealing character change as the action escalates. You build in tension to the middle turning point where something happens that is so radical that it forces the character to act in ways he or she has never done before, thus cementing character's change halfway to his or her complete change at the end. I like to make this act shorter than the first one for pacing purposes, but it almost always ends up shorter anyway because I've got so much heavy lifting to do setting up the book in Act One.

**Act Three:** The conflict continues to build (which is why screenplay structure considers Act Two and Three one act, they have the same definition: Build). The stakes are much higher, the protagonist's desperation much greater, etc. ending in the third turning point, often referred to as "the dark moment" when all is lost and your protag is on his or her knees. For pacing and tension purposes, I recommend making this act shorter than the last one.

**Act Four:** This is the shortest, fastest act, everything in motion, hurtling toward the climax and resolution. This act is where you resolve everything including all subplots before the climax. Answer all questions, end all character arcs, finishing everything before the protag and antag face each other in the final climactic scene, the obligatory scene.

Everything in the book rests on that final climactic scene.

## Think of your plot as a triangle balanced on its point.

The climax is at the point. You can have a short resolution scene after the climax, just enough to give the reader breathing space, a chance to relax within the story before it ends. But keep it short; you want the reader remembering the climax, not the resolution. "



Okay. Each Act then has to be broken down into scenes.

Let's say that I am writing a short contemporary romance – say 50,000 words.

I like to write scenes which last from 4 to 5 pages, so that something happens every 4 to 5 pages. If one page = 250 words, 4 pages = 1000 words, 5 pages = 1250 words. So, I would expect to create between 40 and 50 scenes, divided up into chapters.

Think of it as a storyboard. This is the flow of the story. Here are my hero and heroine and this is how he/she is acting and feeling and how the romance and the storylines are working in that chapter.

THAT scene has to give the reader THIS information/ part of the story so that the chapter works within the bigger framework of the story.

If you have 50,000 words, and, for example, 11 chapters, you only have 4000 to 5000 words a chapter. That's 4 scenes. So each scene has to achieve many functions. So you challenge that scene, you interrogate it, you ask it hard questions.

# WHAT IS A STORY BEAT?

## Now to answer my own question. What is a Story Beat?

A Story Beat is how you build up a scene, step by step, so that the scene does its job in that chapter in that place in your story.

There are so many examples I could use but this is one from a Harlequin Mills and Boon I read last week –

### **Beat sheet – ‘Steamy Surrender by’ Ally Blake \***

Questions you have to ask about the scene:

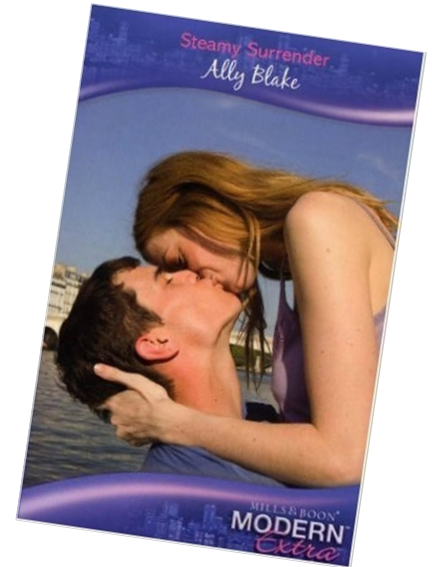
Who is my viewpoint character or characters.

What does the hero want in this scene? Why are they here? Why now?

Who is going to block that want? How?

What are the turning points?

How does the whole scene turn from start to end?



Okay, so here goes my pathetic look at the opening scene of this short contemporary.

I think there are 10 beats to the point where the hero and heroine actually talk to one another for the first time. At the end of this scene the story launches into another scene, still in the shop, where the detailed dialogue takes off. That has a separate series of turning points and an escalation of the tension in the scene which leads off into the main Chapter One Turning point.

**1**

Morgan pushed her large sunnies higher onto her nose then stared across Como Avenue, the ice cold Melbourne street in which the cabbie had left her. She rubbed fast hands down her arms to ward off the insidious chill in the air. And she frowned. This was reason she had spent twenty-four hours seated on planes, fifteen of those hours next to a guy who hadn't showered in at least a week?

When lawyers had contacted her in Paris less than two weeks earlier with the news that she'd inherited five shopfronts in Carlton, she'd been silly enough to allow herself to imagine a quaint florist, a charming café, maybe even a funky boutique or two.

But considering the bequest had come from her grandfather on her mother's side she ought to have known better. The Kiplings had two great talents; self-preservation, and intra-family disharmony. Passing on prime real estate in a move of last minute conciliation would just have been out of character.

*We know that the heroine is called Morgan. She has travelled from Paris on a 24 hr flight after receiving an inheritance from her grandfather – where there is trouble within the family – and now she has come to inspect the five shopfronts in Melbourne. It is an ice cold day.*

# WHAT IS A STORY BEAT?

2

2.

As it turned out, her inheritance offered a city full of savvy shoppers a drycleaner, a real estate agency with faded advertisements lining a cracked window, an Indian restaurant with dusty red curtains and crazed vinyl chairs haphazardly lining the footpath, and a place called Jan's Wool and Fabric with a sign so old it was missing the tenth digit which had been added to all Australian phone numbers many years before.

The final shopfront was the building's saving grace. With new signage, golden down lights and clean windows, the façade of the Bacio Bacio Gelateria was like a sunburst of panache within the hotchpotch of ancient, dilapidated outlets. And though the idea of gelato seemed ludicrous considering it was at most five degrees outside, it was enough for Morgan to decide to start her stealthy reconnaissance there. She stamped her half numb feet against the cold cracked concrete, took a gulp of her lukewarm, over baked, congealing, takeaway coffee for courage, and checked the street before crossing, reminding herself to look right first and last. Yet while nearby Lygon Street hummed with constant traffic, Como Avenue had none. 'You sure ain't in Paris anymore,' she told herself before jogging across the empty road.

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*Five shops. The last one is new and shiny. A gelateria. The empty street is quiet with cracked concrete. She plans to start her 'stealthy reconnaissance'. Her decision is to start with the ice cream shop. Note the detail here – she needs the money and this is her inheritance.*

3.

Saxon sang along with his favourite Elvis Costello CD as he turned Bessie, his beloved midnight blue 1968 MkII Jaguar, off Lygon Street and into Como Avenue. When she purred to a full stop in the staff parking area at the back of the run of shops, he gave her his habitual loving stroke of the dash, and told her what a good girl she was before getting out.

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*This is the hero. English classic car and English old style music. He has good taste, stylish, and talks to his car – an endearing touch – treats it like a girl. Instantly appeals.*

4.

'Sheesh,' he said to no one in particular when the freezing wind whipped about his face and leached through his jeans. He didn't remember it having been this cold in years. Not since the halcyon days of cruising Lygon Street in nothing warmer than a T-shirt and Levi 501s, the tape player in his hotted up Monaro cranked loud with Billy Joel while his similarly under-dressed cousins shouted offers to the lucky ladies on the sidewalk as they thundered by. He pulled his beanie tighter over his ears and his sheepskin collar higher around his neck. Not all was lost. The sky was crystal clear indicating fresh snowfall on the northern mountaintops. He might still get the chance to take Bessie for a run up to Mt Buller before the week was out. Skiing, mulled wine by the open fire, with a little Tom Jones on the CD player. If he played his cards right perhaps even a warm willing ski bunny in faux fur and tight pants might help take the edge off.

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*He grew up here – knows the street and the area, and used to cruise with his cousins. He knows the good life – sporting, good food and wine, music, and he is single. Looking for some female company. He likes ladies and fun. Has a business and has money.*

5

The sound of a distant tinkling bell split the air, drawing him out of his daydream. He'd know the sound of that particular bell anywhere. For him it meant business.

He popped a stick of cinnamon gum in his mouth, waiting for the peppery sweetness to warm him as he jogged to the back door of the shop. He knew he ought to just give his cousin Darius his weekly kick in the pants and leave Trisha to handle the customers. But the thrill of the chase warmed his blood more than any Tom Jones song ever had.

Nope. Darius wouldn't get much of a wave before he spent a busy lunch hour doing what he did best. Selling ice-cream to Eskimos.



# WHAT IS A STORY BEAT?

5.

*He is a business man and this is his business. He should leave the work to his cousin and staff – but he loves selling ice cream. This is what he does best. He has cousins who he used to hang out with. Hint at his musical tastes/ cultural refs. Time of day.*

---

6

The soft tinkling of an old fashioned brass bell heralded Morgan's introduction to The Bacio Bacio Gelateria. She slid her knee length knitted scarf from around her neck and tied it around the handle of her oversized designer bag – one of a trillion freebies she received as a perk of working as a photographic set designer for a top fashion mag in Paris. Then she strolled deeper into the room, her creative eye skimming over numerous visual delights.

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*She is a set designer for a top fashion mag in Paris. And she likes the décor.*

---

7

Rendered walls were painted a deep golden yellow bar one feature wall covered in an impression of Tuscan hills. A huge gleaming bronze espresso machine took up a tidy portion of the long mahogany counter top, leaving the remainder of the space for curved glass cabinets, cleverly backlit to make the most of at least three dozen long trays filled with towering swirls of multi-coloured gelato, flat spoons sticking out the top of each perfect mound like the first flag on Mount Everest. It was the kind of place someone in her job dreamed of stumbling upon. A perfect blend of colour, texture, and lighting. It bombarded the senses in such a way it sold not just foodstuffs, but an image, a feeling. She could imagine men in fedoras crowded around the several tiled wrought-iron tables talking football spreads and planning heists, and little kids in newsboy caps sticking their noses against the large window, wishing they hadn't spent the last of their pocket money on some silly toy. It was a pity she was here on not nearly so pleasant a task as scouting out a Chic Magazine set. A great pity. Instead, by the end of the week she would have to have made a decision: up the rent astronomically to make the place viable, or sign off on the plans burning a hole in her bag and raze the building to the ground.

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*She is an artist and has an artist's eyes when she looks at the place. It creates a feeling, not just an image. But her imagination goes riot. Then reveals – she had to decide whether to increase the rent, or sign off on the plans burning a hole in her bag – and level the place. What plans? Why by the end of the week? asks questions in the reader.*

---

8

Once inside, Saxon replaced his beanie for a black Bacio Bacio cap, left his leather jacket over a chair in the staff room, and tied a deep red apron around his waist, tightening the knot in front. He tucked his hair behind his ears, decided he'd better get a hair cut before his mother saw him again, and then hastened out into the warm inviting surrounds of his home away from home to find a woman had entered his haven.

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*He has to cut his hair before seeing his mother – a woman he respects.  
The shop is his home from home. And a woman had entered his warm and inviting space.*

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9

He slowed. For this was not just any woman, but a woman who deserved a second glance. And a third. And dinner and a movie and at least an attempt at a nightcap. Blonde she was. Dirty blonde with luscious waves trailing long and unkempt down her front. Huge dark sunglasses covered half her small face. At least three gold chains hung around her slim neck, carrying oversized charms that jingled against one another as she moved through the room, giving her a kind of musical quality. And poking out from her ridiculously high-heeled bronze sandals the nails of her dainty toes were painted working-girl-red. Actually she was kind of small all over; the class of woman his father would say fit nicely into one's pocket. Her pint-sized loveliness was sheathed in a tight gold V-neck top that adhered lovingly to some seriously eye-catching curves, like caramel sauce over ice-cream. now-you-don't sliver of skin between the bottom of her top and the top of calf-length cargo pants kept him riveted for a good thirty seconds.

# WHAT IS A STORY BEAT?

9

*He is good with details and appraises women in a certain way.  
[ and you can't help notice that she is wearing high heeled sandals and bare feet – and it is freezing outside. This could be a plot device or a symbol that she is a phoney all surface girl.*

10

Saxon made a concerted effort to rein in his libido which had become overexcited astonishingly quickly for such a cold winter morning. For simmering just below the initial wham bam thank-you ma'am attraction he felt a thread of residual discomfort, like a red flag waving in the very corner of his sub-conscious. Something about this woman was making him itch.

He caught Trisha's eye instead and motioned that he'd get this one. The grin on Trisha's face told him she'd been more than half expecting it. He curled his lip and it only made her giggle behind her hand before she snuck out the back to take her morning break before the lunch rush set in.

Alone with the mystery woman Saxon leaned on the counter and began his signature pitch that had sold a million gelatos and turned his family's one small suburban shop into a trans-Tasman empire. 'What's your poison?' he asked.

*This is not the first time Saxon had looked after female customers.  
He senses something different about this woman.  
He has a sales pitch – and he has turned the small family business into an empire. So he is a successful entrepreneur. And he has thought about both his parents and his cousins as working together. Contrast with Morgan's family on her mother's side = self-preservation and family disharmony.*

## **What does the hero want in this scene?**

Morgan has come to see the five shops she has inherited from her grandfather- and decide whether to raise the rent or go with the plans and level the place – and she had to decide by the end of the week

## **Who is going to block that want?**

The occupants of the five shops and especially Saxon, the ice cream seller

## **How is the conflict going to escalate in this scene?**

Saxon sees her and is attracted to her

## **What are the turning points?**

Morgan decides to start her investigation at the ice cream shop. Saxon decides to serve in the shop instead of leaving it to the cousin and staff, and then he sees Morgan and is attracted – and stays. How does the whole scene turn from start to end? Morgan is wearing sun glasses in the freezing cold – ends with Saxton in the warm and inviting shop.

**MOST OF THE TIME, YOU DON'T NEED TO WORRY ABOUT BEATS; IF THE SCENE IS WORKING, DON'T MESS WITH IT, EVEN IF IT DOESN'T HAVE ESCALATING BEATS.**

**ALL THAT MATTERS IS THAT IT WORKS ON THE PAGE, NOT THAT IT CONFORMS TO SOME ABSTRACT SET OF RULES. BUT WHEN YOU HAVE A SCENE THAT YOU KNOW IS BROKEN, ANALYZING ITS BEATS CAN BE A WAY TO FIND THE BROKEN PLACES.**

**- JENNY CRUSIE**

# WHAT IS A STORY BEAT?

## KEY POINT

Some people break down the scene this way before they write. MOST writers I know create the 'discovery draft' as Nora Roberts I think calls it, then use Craft and structure to make the story as strong as possible.

Do you do this type of 'Scene Design' for every scene? You could, but your brain would explode, or your book would take a very long time. But certainly for the opening scenes which have to work hard and key turning points in the book.

\*<http://www.allyblake.blogspot.com/> – from her book extracts. Great book!

## Resources?

Terry Rossio and Ted Elliott wrote 'Shrek' and 'Pirates' and have a superb database of articles on Craft. <http://www.wordplayer.com/columns/wp32.Plot.Devices.html>

Google 'Story Structure' or 'Story Beats' and procrastinate for hours.

OTHER-

Robert McKee wrote a well known book '[Story](#)' and there are two long chapters on scene design and scene analysis – his analysis of scenes from the movie 'Casablanca' is amazing.

There are hundreds of other books on Amazon on structure, but life is too short.

YouTube? Who has time to YouTube. Think of all those Beats I have to correct!

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*Congratulations to our finalists:*

**Susan Frame  
Jo Harris  
Elizabeth King  
Emma Lowe**

# Congratulations!

Congratulations to our four finalists in the 2015 Great Beginnings Contest, sponsored by Escape Publishing. The finalists entries are now being final judged by Carly Byrne, Editor at Harlequin, and Patricia Nelson, Agent at the Marsal Lyon Literary Agency. Final placings will be announced at our 2016 RWNZ Conference Awards Dinner.

- Jude Knighton, Contests Co-Ordinator



### **2016 Golden Quill Contest (Desert Rose Romance Writers of America)**

Deadline: January 8, 2016.

Eligibility: Membership in Romance Writers of America is required. Entrants must be members in good standing with current membership paid. Entries must be book-length fiction with a minimum of 40,000 words (except for the romantic novella category, which accepts stories of less than 40,000 words). The copyright date must be between January and December 2015, or first North American printing/release date between January and December 2015, or if submitting in electronic format first electronic publish date between January and December 2015.

Enter: Five (5) copies of each book entered.

Fee: US\$30 (1 entry) US\$75 (3 entries)

More Info: <http://desertroserwa.org/golden-quill-rules>

### **Golden Heart Award (Romance Writers of America)**

Deadline: Entries must be submitted to RWA's contest site no later than 5 p.m. CT, January 11, 2016.

Eligibility: The Golden Heart contest is open to RWA members who have not accepted a publishing offer for, or Self-Published, a work of original fictional narrative prose of 20,000 words or more by January 11, 2016. Entered works must not be published as long as they are under consideration for the Award.

Enter: Partial manuscript and synopsis, cannot exceed 55 pages.

More Info: <http://www.rwa.org/p/cm/ld/fid=539>

### **Readers' Choice Contest (New England Chapter of RWA)**

Deadline: February 1, 2016.

Eligibility: Books must have a 2015 copyright date.

Enter: Author must submit three autographed PRINT copies of the entered book.

Fee: US\$25

More Info: <http://necrwa.org/blog1/contests/#beanpot>

### Desert Breeze Publishing

#### SEEKING

romance fiction in a variety of sub-genres, as well as mainstream women's fiction either with or without romantic elements.

#### LENGTH

25,000 to 30,000 words and 55,000 to 100,000 + words.

#### PAYMENT

Discussed under contract

#### DETAILS

Website: <http://desertbreezepublishing.com/> sub via the online system.

### Source Books

US print and may be e-books.

#### SEEKING

Romance novels, any sub-genre, erotica included.

#### LENGTH

90,000-120,000 words

#### PAYMENT

Possible advance, royalties and discussed under contract.

#### DETAILS

Romance Submissions, Sourcebooks, [www.sourcebooks.com](http://www.sourcebooks.com);

Email subs to: [romance@sourcebooks.com](mailto:romance@sourcebooks.com)

### Loveswept and Flirt

Digital imprints of Random House

#### SEEKING

Romance novels, contemporary, paranormal and historical, women's fiction and erotica.

#### LENGTH

40,000 words upwards.

#### PAYMENT

Royalties, discussed at contract.

#### DETAILS

Website: [www.randomhousebooks.com/loveswept-flirt](http://www.randomhousebooks.com/loveswept-flirt)

The Weekend Read is part of the For Books' Sake community

#### SEEKING

Short stories written by women

#### LENGTH

2,000 to 6,000 words, must be original, not reprints

#### PAYMENT

Not mentioned

#### DETAILS

The Weekend Read, website: <http://forbookssake.net/weekend-read/>

### Blind Eye Books

#### SEEKING

Science fiction, fantasy and paranormal romance novels featuring gay or lesbian protagonists.

#### LENGTH

70,000 or over 150,000 words

#### PAYMENT

Discussed under contract

#### DETAILS

Blind Eye Books, website: <http://blindeyebooks.com/>

### Clean Reads

#### SEEKING

Wholesome reading without compromise. We don't believe a story has to have profanity, sex, or graphic violence to catch a reader's attention.

#### LENGTH

15,000 to 100,000

#### PAYMENT

Details at contract time

#### DETAILS

<http://cleanreads.com>, <http://cleanreads.com>



# THE CAMBRIDGE ... AUTUMN FESTIVAL

## SHORT STORY COMPETITION

SPONSORED BY  
**cooney insurance**  
life | disability | health  
[www.cooneyinsurance.co.nz](http://www.cooneyinsurance.co.nz)

THEME:

**Convincing Lie**

LIMIT:


**1500 words**

ENTRIES CLOSE:

**14 February 2016**

**FIRST PRIZE**

**\$1000**

To enter, visit 



**WAIPA  
NETWORKS** 

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



# News from around the regions



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## C2C (Central North Island Coast to Coast)

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The November C2C meeting was held over a weekend at the Paradise Lodge in Rotorua. It was part writers retreat and part Christmas gathering.

During the retreat, writing, discussing writing and learning about writing was the focus. Khushi ran a seminar on writing poetry and everyone produced a heart rending work of brilliance. Deryn coordinated a critique session where first chapters of works in progress were submitted and everyone read and commented on them. Both sessions were interesting and extremely helpful.

And the food and company were amazing as usual.

Our next meeting isn't until February and will be held at Lizzie's place. It will be our first attempt, thanks to Matthew who has the knowledge, at using Skype so those who can't attend the meeting can participate.

Members will be notified of the details of this meeting and the logistics involved in Skyping nearer to the time.



*Coast to Coast Chapter Retreat, 2015!*

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## REGIONAL CONVENORS

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**Auckland:**

**Pamela Gervai**

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**Central North (C2C):**

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**Jane Madison-Jones**

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**Otago:** Interested in helping out as convenor? Email VP Bernadette!

[rwnzvicepresident1@gmail.com](mailto:rwnzvicepresident1@gmail.com)

# News from around the regions



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## Nelson

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At our November meeting we had a speaker coming at 3pm, so that gave us an hour to make decisions about immediate tasks and deadlines regarding the Anthology, when to create Xmas tree decorations with the theme 'In Love With Nelson' for the Cathedral's Xmas Tree Festival and the theme for dressing up at our Xmas lunch on December 12<sup>th</sup>, we decided 'Book Award Glamour'.

Sue Holmes, Neonatal Nurse, arrived with a baby doll the size of a 2 kg newborn child. After telling us a bit about herself, and how she became a Neonatal Nurse, Sue gave us a good picture of her work – the happy side and the sad – telling us anecdotes from her long time working with mini-babies and their parents, both at the hospital and in their homes. Listening to Sue's tales was fascinating and no doubt she really loves her job. More than one of us are keen to make our next heroine a Neonatal Nurse. Even Sue's own love story is very tempting to use.

We Wish You All A Very Merry Christmas and see you again in 2016!

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## Wellington/Kapiti

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Our November get-together took place at Kris's, and we were honoured that Janet drove all the way from Wanganui to be with us, collecting Carole on the way.

Everyone seemed to have interesting news. Juliet has launched her first book, Diana has new sheikhs lined up, Carole has swapped the membership secretary's role with Shar and is now publicity officer for RWNZ. Bonnie has a non-fiction book out, Janet's next Scottish comedy will be launched by the time you read this, and Anne brought her friend Kirsty along to see if she'd like to join. Hope we didn't scare her off! After this we talked book promotion, and concluded the field was very wide. A summary of notes was emailed out.

By the time this newsletter is published, our Christmas lunch at Ellie's would have been held. Merry Christmas everyone!

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**Christchurch:**

**Jane Madison-Jones**

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[maddiejane@extra.co.nz](mailto:maddiejane@extra.co.nz)

**Otago:** Interested in helping out as convenor? Email VP Bernadette!

[rwnzvicepresident1@gmail.com](mailto:rwnzvicepresident1@gmail.com)

# News from around the regions



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## Auckland

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A big thank you to our treasurer, Ruth Bell for taking the 7/11 meeting. Here is her report; "22 attended. Jackie's ( [www.jackieashenden.com](http://www.jackieashenden.com)) talk was very informative and prompted a lot of discussion amongst members. She spoke of how the 'core' of our stories is always the same – how we are drawn to particular themes, characters, conflicts etc that we return to constantly – and how, with this in mind, we can adapt our stories and change settings of other elements to make the story more commercially viable without losing the essence of the story we want to tell. "We were fortunate to have American author Rosalind James attend the meeting. A huge thank you to Joanne and Nalini for encouraging her to come along."

Our wonderful Christmas lunch was kindly hosted by Louise Williams at her lovely Maraetai home. Many thanks Louise and those who attended!

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## Christchurch

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Our most recent meeting was held at the Upper Riccarton library early in November. Unfortunately numbers were a bit low that day, but it didn't stop us from having a couple of enjoyable hours chatting over our takeaway coffees. Our group has become good friends and is very supportive of one another. We hold monthly movie nights and we now have a Facebook group, which is proving to be a great way of getting answers to pressing questions and keeping in touch in between meetings.

Our next meeting is our annual Christmas brunch, which will be held on Sunday 13 December at On Cafe at Oderings Garden Centre. All are welcome. RSVP to [karenwhite@xtra.co.nz](mailto:karenwhite@xtra.co.nz)



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**Otago:** Interested in helping out as convenor? Email VP Bernadette!





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Treasurer	Ritu Pandey <a href="mailto:rwnztreasurer@gmail.com">rwnztreasurer@gmail.com</a>
Secretary	Moya Bawden <a href="mailto:rwnzsecretary@gmail.com">rwnzsecretary@gmail.com</a>
Membership Secretary	Sharyn Barratt <a href="mailto:rwnz.membership@gmail.com">rwnz.membership@gmail.com</a>
Immediate Past President	Kamy Chetty <a href="mailto:kamychetty@yahoo.com">kamychetty@yahoo.com</a>
Joint Publicity Officers	Trudi Caffell Kristina O'Grady Carole Brungar <a href="mailto:rwnzpublicity@gmail.com">rwnzpublicity@gmail.com</a>

*Romance Writers of New Zealand was founded in September 1990 by Jean Drew.*

### COMMITTEE:

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