

# HEART TO HEART

## The Black Moment with Sue Mackay



The Black Moment is when your character believes all is lost. In the romance genre, which is what I'm referring to in this article, that's usually when the character doesn't see any way ahead with the person they've fallen in love with. That could be because he or she can't accept something the other has done. It could be because of something he or she believes or wants. Or it might be that for your hero to give the heroine

what she wants he has to let her go.

Your readers will know this crisis will be resolved; what they won't know is how.

Your story is a succession of black moments; mainly small ones as the characters nudge up against each other's conflicts and bringing down the barriers to a relationship one by one.

**The final black moment is bigger, more confronting, and appears insurmountable. This big black moment is the climax of your story.** It is what you've slaved away at your computer for. It's what your readers stay up late at night for. It is what gives those readers that very emotional ah-ha moment when the hero and heroine finally overcome their difficulties to get their happy ending.

**So where does this black moment come from?**

Your characters' conflicts – internal and external – which are the core of your story.

Conflicts are the things that keep these two people from having a coffee and sorting whatever's

bothering them.

The deep internal issues that make your characters who they are, make them do what they do, and believe what they believe.

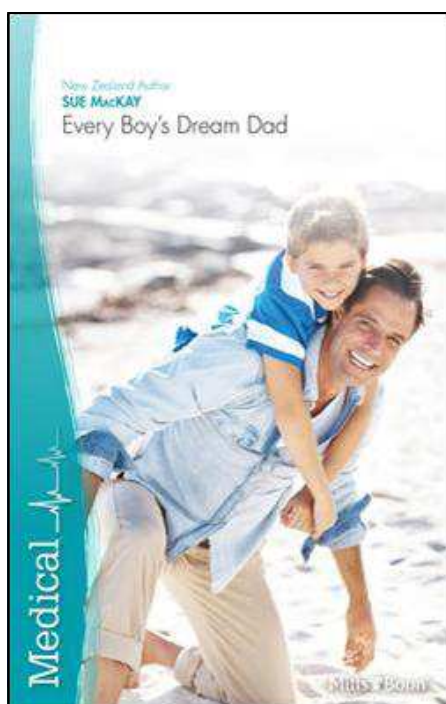
If your conflicts are set up well in the beginning the BM follows on logically. **It grows naturally from the start of story as your characters are tested again and again, as they learn to overcome long-held beliefs that are holding them back from their goal – love.**

It comes from that conflict when your character is confronted with their internal issues set up in the beginning of the book.

They haven't moved on as much as they'd thought from those deep internal motivators.

To achieve the loving, committed relationship they want they need to let go those beliefs.

When it comes to plotting I kind of step out of the plane without a parachute. Starting a story, I haven't a clue what the black moment is going to be. But before I put fingers to keyboard I do spend time thinking about



my hero and heroine's conflicts, both internal and external. If I get these right I know the big black moment will happen because it comes from these conflicts. It comes from the nudges (small black moments) along the way. It's a natural progression of the story.

**The black moment cannot be contrived. It comes from everything you've set up at the beginning of your story.** You can't suddenly come up with a new issue that pits your hero and heroine against each other. That would have your readers wondering what the heck's going on and probably be very disappointed.

Instead **it is resolved by your characters facing and dealing with those internal conflicts you gave them right at the start.** They may have been moving ahead throughout the story with little black moments making them face up to their internal and external conflicts but the big final moment really tests how far they've come in moving past those hang-ups.

The characters are put in a position where the revelation of something to do with the other

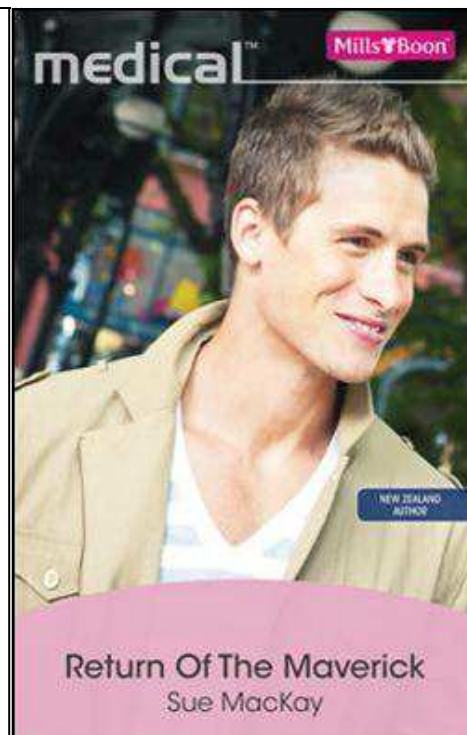
person is so huge it shocks them into reacting in the way they used to at the beginning of your story. All those internal conflicts rise to the fore and dominate their thinking, their reactions.

Throughout the story to this point you as the writer have built up how much your character wants something and now has to sacrifice, or you've had him or her avoiding doing something that he or she now has to do to be able to move on and obtain the goal they're after.

In my HM&B Medical coming out in December, Christmas with Dr Delicious, the hero, Fraser McCall, has a core belief that makes him always look out for those close to him, makes him protective of them no matter what. In the back story he'd dumped the heroine the night before their wedding with no explanation, because to tell her why he was leaving would cause her too much grief and pose too many difficult decisions that he couldn't ask her to make. And it would also test how much she did love him and he was afraid of the answer.

But when he returns home and falls in love with the heroine all over again he slowly begins to tell her what was behind his abrupt departure. Despite the horrendous news he tells her she doesn't forgive him because he never trusted her enough in the first place to share what had happened and to stick with him. Finally he realises that if he wants to win her back again he has to face the same issues he ran from the first time round and that is: would she love him enough to stay by his side? Instead of protecting her he has to ask her to become a part of what happened to him. He has to jump in and hope for the best. Whatever the outcome he has to find out what Nikki will say. It's going to hurt.

Do you see how setting up strong



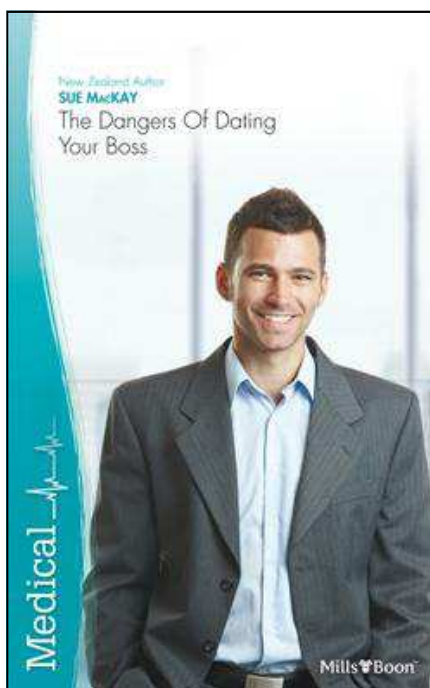
conflict right from the get go makes the black moment a natural progression of your story? In that story everything came back to the beginning and all the issues Fraser had avoided first time round. And until he does face up to them he can't move forward in his life. Even if he fails to win Nikki back he's better off than never having tried; and this is what he finally realises and what pushes him to tell her the whole truth.

**The black moment has to hurt your characters big time.** It has to drag out all those emotions, make them suffer, cause them to face up to their actions – and want to change. It has to strike at the root of their ingrained beliefs.

**Be hard on your characters.**

The more it hurts, the more emotion you squeeze from them, the more your readers will feel satisfied with the resolution.

It's that old goal and conflict principle. Without a goal the conflict doesn't cause a problem. With a goal that the conflict disrupts, that conflict causes pain. That pain grows, and won't go away until the conflict is resolved. Or the goal is changed.



It's a bit like banging your character over the head repeatedly until he finally gets, that unless the situation is faced up to, he's not going to achieve his goal.

**So go ahead, beat up on your characters and give us a powerful, emotional read. Better to give them too much conflict than not enough.**

Sue MacKay

HM&B Medicals

Every Boy's Dream Dad – out now

Christmas with Dr Delicious – out Dec/Jan

You, Me and a Family – out April/May

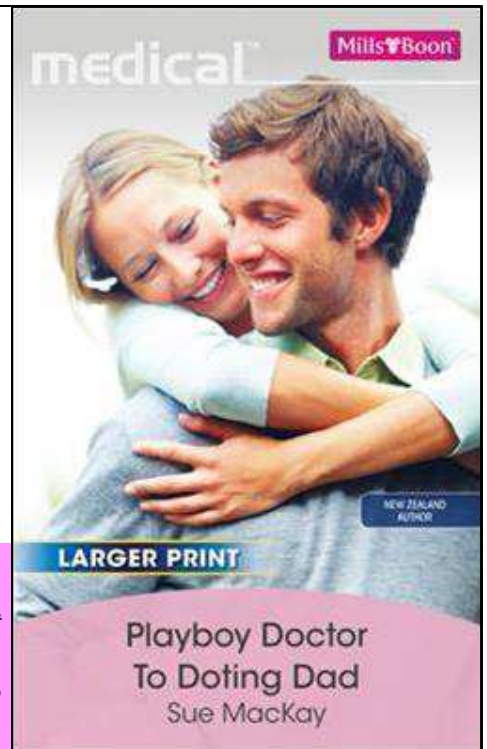
[www.suemackay.co.nz](http://www.suemackay.co.nz)

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*With a background in medical technology and a passion for storytelling, it is no wonder Sue MacKay writes medical romances. She wrote her first story about a prince (and herself) at the age of eight, and hasn't stopped telling stories yet. But it wasn't until eleven years ago that she started trying to sell her books.*

*After training and working in medical laboratories, Sue took six months out to learn to fly. It was the most exhilarating—and terrifying—thing she has ever done. With her Private Pilot's license in hand she wasn't ready to return to work, so she headed to Vancouver for six months, where she "discovered" coffee and hot spicy food—and learning to drive on the wrong side of the road—a skill that wasn't always appreciated when she returned to New Zealand.*

*Sue and her husband live in the Marlborough Sounds at the top of NZ's South Island, where they enjoy walking in the bush-clad hills and partaking in various water sports. When time allows she likes to cycle around the Sounds roadways. She is currently furthering her medical skills by training as an ambulance officer.*



Check out Sue's books:

<http://www.millsandboon.com.au>

## Announce: Online Writing Classes Group Digest #809

### [WriterU classes for Nov, plus invitation](#)

Tue Oct 16, 2012 12:20 pm (PDT) .

Posted by: ["Julie Rowe":](#)

[juliemrowe](#)

okay to forward

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**First the news -- WriterU's services are expanding, and you can get all the information (plus some bonus freebies) when you ask to keep receiving our monthly update.** To do that, just open the email that's coming in the next few days with a subject line of "New from WriterU." Now, onto the classes:

~ ~ ~

### **Scene and Sequel by Patricia Kay**

November 5-30, 2012

\$30 at [www.WriterUniv.com](http://www.WriterUniv.com) <<http://>

[www.writeruniv.com/](http://www.writeruniv.com/)>

Are you finding it hard to understand and apply the principles of story construction using Scene and Sequel?

If you are, you're not alone. Many writers, even multi-published veterans, find the concept a difficult one. But now help is at hand. By utilizing a combination of fourteen lessons, homework, class discussion, and feedback on your written work, this class on building blocks to great fiction will take the mystery out of Scene and Sequel.

### **You'll learn:**

- \* What a scene is and isn't
- \* Planning and revising scenes for maximum effect
- \* How and when to use sequels
- \* Controlling pace with scene and sequel
- \* Choosing the best point of view
- \* Writing for the strongest emotional

impact

- \* Flashbacks: when and how to use them
- \* How to write a unique love scene

Patricia Kay is the USA Today bestselling author of more than 50 novels of romance and women's fiction. An acclaimed teacher, she formerly taught writing classes at the University of Houston and has given workshops all over the country. She now limits her teaching to online classes. You can learn more about her on her website at

[www.patriciakay.com](http://www.patriciakay.com)

<<http://www.patriciakay.com/>> .



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### WELCOME TO OUR NEWEST MEMBERS:

Linda Hills - NSW.

Carol Silva - Wellington

Wendy Scott - Hokitika

I love writing.  
I love the swirl and  
swing of words as  
they tangle with  
human emotions.  
~James Michener



## Editor's Desk

Welcome to just a brief check in so people who are preparing for the busiest month of the year can dive straight into our 24 pages of excellent reading. Please excuse me for a moment...

HOOAH!

Hear the battle cry as H2Hrs accept the NaNoWriMo challenge to write a new novel into life in thirty days. From November 1 to 30, we will kick all doubts into touch and fire at least 50,000 brand new words onto screen or page. Whether we're planners with an outline in mind, or free-styling pantsers we'll disregard spelling and grammar and accept every good, bad, ugly—even clichéd word. For four weeks, messy first drafts will reign supreme.

There is still time to join us...visit <http://www.nanowrimo.org>.

A wild idea—hatching right now as these fingers attack these keys—is for you to send your name, title, genre, and total word count for the challenge to this ed's desk ([whitecliffledge@xtra.co.nz](mailto:whitecliffledge@xtra.co.nz)) by midnight on November 30 and we'll celebrate you in the December issue of H2H. Don't worry, we'll be awake putting the finishing touches to our last newsletter for 2012.

May your words flow, and good luck, Viv, Ellie, and Chris.



## Announce Online Writing Classes: Digest No.804

**Julie Rowe (juliemrowe)**  
**announces upcoming workshops  
for writers.**

**November 15 - December 30, 2012**

**The Scottish Highlands: 16th &  
17th Centuries**

**Instructor: Sharron Gunn w/a  
Sheila Currie**

**Prerequisite:** a love of, and an interest, in the Scottish Highlands.

In the 16th & 17th centuries, the laws and customs of the Scottish Highlands were considered archaic; they were common in western Europe in the High Middle Ages, but had disappeared by the Renaissance. Highland chiefs were still inaugurated, not crowned, in ancient ceremonies and revered by their clansmen as quasi-sacred figures. A Highland assembly for justice in the 17th century resembled a Viking Thing of the 10th or 11th centuries. Secular marriage outside the church was normal. What really frightened Lowlanders and English

was the chiefs' ability to raise a small army at little cost to themselves. The Jacobite Rebellions would have been impossible without clan armies. This course shows how life in the Highlands was different from the Lowlands and other parts of Great Britain and how similar to Ireland.

### **Instructor Bio:**

Sharron lives in British Columbia, and teaches Scottish, Irish and medieval history part-time at university. While living over eight years in Europe, she studied the languages and history of Great Britain and France, and has a BA in French and an MA (2nd first degree) in Scottish History and Celtic Studies from the University of Glasgow. She is working on an historical fantasy set in WWII.

### **Register today at:**

<http://www.celtichearts.org/workshops/>

**\*\*Permission to Forward\*\***

Please note the deadline for content for Heart to Heart is always the 15th of each month. Material arriving after this date may have to appear in the next issue.

## From The Pres.

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

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

Where has October gone? Have you written any words this month?

At one of the Australian conferences I attended, Anne Gracie asked members what they had done during the year to achieve their dreams. Replies ranged from entering a contest, finishing a manuscript, querying agents and editors to receiving the "call". I've added self-publishing to that list. Make one of these your goal for the coming year.

What has the Executive been working on this month? Kris and Deborah have been busy with membership renewals, which have been pouring in, and now the extra fee applies. If you have not renewed, now is the time to do so before we update the e-loops. Jo is updating our website and Leeann is working hard on our grant applications, but so far we have missed out. Grant money is scarce at the moment, and we might have to accept that we do not receive any, but we'll keep trying. Sue is doing a brilliant job getting our organisation's name out into the public arena, and Elise and I are also working in the background.

The committee has been working towards offering a full manuscript competition to replace the Clendon Award. Huge thanks again to Barbara and Peter Clendon for all their hard work and generosity towards RWNZ. Theirs will be a hard act to follow, but we hope the new contest will enjoy the same success as the Clendon Award.

We need a name for the new contest. What do you think of "Pacific Hearts"? Any other suggestions? We also need reader judges. If you know someone who loves reading romance, and who would be happy to read entries online, please let us know. Judging guidelines will be provided. There is still a lot of work to be done and, as details are finalised, more information will be made available.

Diana Holmes, (writing as Diana Fraser) has kindly agreed to moderate the RWNZ Indie loop. This is a place to share information and experience on all aspects of indie/self-publishing from formatting, covers and editing through to retailing and marketing. The reason for a separate loop is to avoid cluttering the main loop with extra emails, especially for those members who are not interested in self-publishing. To join, send an email to: [RWNZ\\_Indie-subscribe@yahoo.co.uk](mailto:RWNZ_Indie-subscribe@yahoo.co.uk) (underscore between RWNZ\_Indie).

The conference committee is moving ahead with arrangements. I can't believe 2013 will be the 20th anniversary of the RWNZ conference. A few of us have been to all of them (me included). This is the final call for workshops. If you are planning to attend the Wellington conference, please tell us what kind of workshops you want us to provide. We will try to accommodate you. If you wish to present a workshop, send us your proposals. If all goes well, we hope to open registration sometime in late February.

Finally, are you on the main email loop? Conference and contest announcements will be made on that loop as details are confirmed.

Until next month, be safe and happy writing,

Giovanna

[Giovannaalee@yahoo.com](mailto:Giovannaalee@yahoo.com)

RWNZ President.



# LOVE YOUR VOICE

With Julie Rowe

**Writers pray they have it, agents live to sell it and editors want to print it, but what is it? We hear about voice all the time. In rejection letters (great Voice, but the story just wasn't right for us), contest score sheets and critiques (awesome Voice, but work on your hook), and that all important CALL from an agent or editor (love your Voice!).**

But what makes someone's Voice great? Where does Voice come from? How can you develop more Voice? Is it possible to change your Voice?

When I set out to write this article, I did a lot of reading first. I read craft books, motivational books and articles written by other writers on the topic of Voice. What I discovered surprised me. First, there isn't a whole lot written about the subject, and second, what was available didn't go into any great detail. Yet, **Voice is what sells books. Voice is what readers want to read over and over. Voice is what agents and editors look for in**

**every submission. They want to find the next great Voice.**

Voice is an author's trademark; it's the one thing that sets them apart from other authors. Its value is unparalleled. Yet, despite its importance, Voice is among the least understood and the most difficult to explain aspects of a writer's work, because it comes, not from technique per se, but from deep inside each writer. Voice is an extension of who the writer is. In effect, Voice is a writer's personality on paper.

That's not to say Voice can't change, because it can. Like a person, Voice matures over time, and with practice. As a writer learns and improves through the act of writing, from discussion with other writers, from taking workshops and classes, and reading widely, so too, does a writer's Voice evolve.

Voice isn't one-dimensional any more than a person's personality is one-dimensional. Many elements come together to make up a writer's Voice. Elements like emotion, core story/theme, description, pacing and even mechanics. All these elements work in concert with the others to create something unique, an end result we call Voice.

## Elements of Voice.

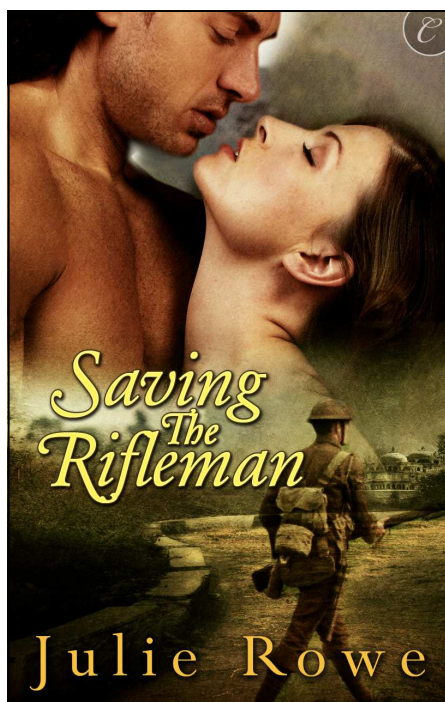
**Emotion** - Alan Ziegler, author of The Writing Workshop Note Book says, "It is easier to experience Voice than to describe it...the reader should feel there is a writer behind the words."

I love this definition. It puts one of the elements of Voice centre stage: emotion. The reader should feel there is a writer behind the words. What is not always obvious to the author, however, is that Voice is about the emotions of three very different audiences: the writer, the character and the reader.

A strong Voice provokes emotion from the writer as you are writing. Donna Alward, author of The Soldier's Homecoming, Harlequin Romance, February 2008, says that her first sale came with the book that made her cry while she wrote it. When she tapped into her own powerful emotions, her Voice became more evocative, and engaged the emotions of a writer's other two audiences: the character and the reader.

Without emotion, the story, the characters and the conflict are flat. Your characters need to feel, and they need to emote those feelings. If they don't, the reader won't care and will stop reading. That's why we so often hear the phrase, "Torture your characters!" Part of your Voice is how well you show those character emotions on the page, how often you describe emotions, and what kind of emotions you choose to describe. Do you gravitate toward terror, grief, anger, despair or love? Five examples of different emotions, in combination would result in an infinite number of very different books and an equally infinite number of Voices.

The emotion of your reader is one of the most important considerations of Voice. Readers buy romance novels because they want to be swept away by the story, become a part of it and feel emotionally satisfied at the end. This emotional journey is what keeps a reader coming back for more. Every writer's Voice provides a different emotional journey and when a reader loves your Voice, that reader is going to want to read more of your books. That's why you should never directly compare yourself to another writer, editors don't want





another Janet Evanovich, they already have one. They want someone new, with an equally powerful, but different Voice. They're looking for a new emotional journey that's going to appeal to lots of readers.

I'm reading a book by Michael Kudas called *High Crimes*. It's set on Mount Everest and is based on true events. I've read several books set there, also based on true events, but despite my experience with the subject, Michael's book has me riveted. Here's an example of why:

"Their descent had run hours late, and the other climbers who had made it to the summit that morning had been back in the shelter of the high camp for hours. Help was impossibly distant. Mingma Shirpa, standing beside his friend and co-worker Dorjee, had made his first ascent to the top of Everest that morning. He knew enough to be terrified, but lacked the experience to recognize the myriad ways in which the mountain was trying to kill them. Dorjee, however, was coming down from his tenth trip to the top, and could see death coming at them from every direction."

In five sentences Michael provides us with the details of the entire relationship between these two men, and their life and death predicament. He puts us on Everest with them, death at our shoulders. This is Michael's Voice. Powerful, descriptive, raw, yet the emotion sneaks up on you and only strikes home with the last few words.

In contrast, here is an excerpt of author Mark Jenkins' article *Ice Warriors* from the January issue of *National Geographic* magazine:

"Unspeakable cold. A cold so unearthly, the two Polish mountaineers, even in their benumbed state, recognize it for what it is: the angel of death. She has wrapped their wasted bodies in her icy wings and is feeding on them while they're still alive—gnawing at their wooden fingers and frozen toes, eating away their cheeks and hardened noses."

Mark's Voice is entirely different from Michael's, yet it's just as emotional. Mark's voice is fluid,

filled with metaphor and almost literary. The emotion is with you the entire time, twisting your gut, leaving you horrified for the two mountaineers.

These are the kinds of emotional journeys I enjoy. You can bet I'll be searching out and reading more of Michael Kudas' books and Mark Jenkins' writing. It's this emotional reaction that all writers seek to evoke with their Voice.

### Core story/theme

"It doesn't matter what you write, what you believe will show through" – Theodore Surgeon, sci-fi writer.

Your personal message makes up a very important part of your Voice, as most writers tell the same core story or theme in every book they write. I write healing stories where the plot is outwardly concerned with the healing of the physically sick, but the deeper conflicts are concerned with the emotional healing of the hero and heroine. This is integral to my Voice. I wouldn't matter if I wrote a historical, a paranormal or a romantic suspense, I'd still be writing the same story of healing. Examine your own writing, what familiar themes do you see? **Some types of core stories or themes are:**

Acceptance

Crusade

Healing (wounded hero/heroine)

Protector

Redemption (righting past wrongs)

Rescue

Second Chance

Transformation (change)

Description

What we choose to describe and how we choose to describe it is another part of Voice that reflects how a writer views the world they've created, and how they want their reader to see that world. The art of description is extremely personal and unique. It comes solely from each writer's point of view.

When I asked Linda Ford, author of *The Road to Love*, *Steeple Hill Love Inspired Historical*, May 2008, to describe her Voice, she responded with, "descriptive, emotionally responsive and gentle". But when she asked others to describe her voice she got a variety of responses:

"A lushness of description that was surprising and delightful. There's almost

a perfume of place in her descriptions."

"A Marilyn Monroe kind of whisper. Throaty, sexy, luscious."

"Deeply emotional with a touch of humour."

"So full of attitude, personality and imagery."

Description has an important role to play in a writer's Voice. It's the vehicle by which the writer inserts the reader into the story. Not enough description will leave a reader questioning where they are, too much will drown the reader in a million unimportant details. It's important to find a balance that suits you.

### Pacing

How fast a story progresses is another element of Voice. Do you write stories that are action-packed, dramatic, suspenseful, humorous or some combination of all of these? Pacing is a subtle element that most readers aren't consciously aware of, but one the writer must pay attention to. If the pace is too fast, a story will exhaust the reader. If it's too slow, the reader will become bored. Either way, they stop reading.

Pacing starts with the opening lines of your book and carries on throughout. I don't mean that the pace stays the same from the first page to the last, because your pace can and should vary so as to keep things interesting, but as with every piece of music, there is a rhythm to the words that must be present for the story to come alive. That rhythm is unique to each writer and essential to the writer's Voice.

### Mechanics

"One of the most mysterious of writing's immaterial properties is what people call voice...There are probably all kinds of literary sins that prevent a piece of writing from having a voice, but there seems to be no guaranteed technique for creating one. Grammatical correctness doesn't insure it. Calculated incorrectness doesn't either. Ingenuity, wit, sarcasm, euphony, frequent outbreaks of the first-person singular – any of these can enliven prose without giving it

voice" – Louis Menand, "Bad Comma", The New Yorker, June 28, 2004.

Getting the mechanics right seems simple, but really isn't. You might argue that mechanics is all about the rules – grammar, spelling, punctuation, POV – all of these have rules. The problem is, a writer with a powerful Voice knows these rules so well, so completely, that they've internalized them, uses them unconsciously, and knows with seeming instinctiveness when to break them. If you attempt to break them on purpose, because you've not yet absorbed them, the writing will end up sounding stilted and forced. It will lack Voice.

### How to develop your Voice

**Write, read, learn, then write some more. All of these can help you develop and hone your Voice, but the act of writing is the number one way. Here are several writing exercises geared toward helping you develop your Voice.**

**Tap into your subconscious** – Keep a notebook or journal next to your bed. As soon as you wake up write for ten to fifteen minutes. Write anything that comes to you, don't edit or prejudge, just write. Do this daily. You may surprise yourself with the creativity that comes out of you and the problems you solve while your dreams are still fresh.

**The small details** – consider your next project – write a list of what your new heroine has in her purse and why it's there. Do the same for your hero's pockets/person. What do these items say about your characters? How can these items illustrate your character's emotional conflict? During the course of the story do you think your characters will change the contents of their purse/pockets/person? How can you use these items in your story to illustrate their emotional growth?

**Write, edit, revise** – write a 50-word opening to your next book. Now, double the word count, add anywhere, begin sooner, end later and/or follow any detail you wish in

between. Next, revise it back to 50 words, but not the exact same 50 words you started with. Repeat. What did you keep? What did you get rid of? What about these words appealed or not to you?

**Writing between the lines** – pick your favourite of the following pairs of famous persons and write a one-page conversation between them. Try to keep the dialogue as true to each person as possible. You are only allowed to do ten minutes of research about each person before beginning the exercise, and you must complete the page in twenty minutes.

Mother Teresa and Elvis Presley.

Julius Caesar and Bill Gates.

Castro and Gandhi.

Benjamin Franklin and Sir Edmund Hilary (the first man to reach the summit of Mt. Everest).

Aristotle and Chuck Yeager (test pilot and the first man to break the sound barrier).

Mark Twain and Hillary Clinton.

Now write a second one-page conversation between the pair of persons you like the least. Does the dialogue you write surprise you? To really stretch yourself, continue with all the pairs.

**Writing outside the box** – in two minutes, write down no fewer than four alternate uses for the following objects:

A paperclip:

A brick:

A spoon:

A piece of paper:

A shovel:

This kind of free association exercise helps you let go of traditional restraints and views of the world, and pushes you to see unexpected relationships and make unfamiliar connections.

**100 questions** - make a list of 100 questions that are important to you. Any kind of question as long as it's significant to

you. Write the entire list in one sitting. Write quickly; don't worry about spelling, grammar or repeating a question in different words.

**Why 100 questions?** The first 20 or so will be off the top of your head. The next 30 or 40 will often show some common themes, and **the last bunch will likely reveal unexpected, but profound questions you never knew you had in you.**

### Medical Romance & Adventure

**A double Golden Heart finalist in 2006, Julie Rowe has been writing medically inclined romances for over ten years.**

*She's also a published freelancer with articles appearing in The Romance Writer's Report, Canadian Living, Today's Parent, Reader's Digest (Canada) and other magazines.*

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

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

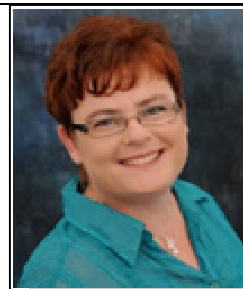
*Julie enjoys teaching and volunteering, and is a passionate promoter of life-long learning. She's the owner/moderator of the **Announce Online Classes email loop**, which promotes online classes for writers, and which is hosted by a large number of writing organisations on a wide variety of topics and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

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

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



# WHY ENTER WRITING CONTESTS?



## With Kylie Griffin

### Kylie Griffin's Blog

Tuesday, October 2, 2012

#### TOPIC: Why enter writing contests?

Again, and because contest season is just around the corner, another re-post, this time one about why enter writing contests - previously entitled *"Do you have the contest bug?"*



RWA Valerie Parv Award

This is a timeless topic often discussed among writers—the value of entering contests.

Some are for entering them and are vocal advocates of the benefits of doing so, others advise against entering as many seem to "encourage writers to write to the contest" or they see the writer receiving little value out of them.

I fall into the former category of advocates. The name "contest diva", "contest queen", or the more affectionately yet derogatory "contest sl\*\*" was often mentioned in the same sentence as my name (\*grin\*). In the course of my unpublished career as a writer, I entered almost 100 contests over the nine years since tackling my first.



RWNZ Clendon Award

When considering whether or not you should enter a contest ask yourself this - *why are you entering?*

Is it to get feedback on your work? Is the contest aimed at judging 3 chapters, a short story or a full manuscript? Is it to final? Is it because you want to get in front of a particular agent or editor? Is it to get a contest résumé under your belt?

Let's consider each question.



WHRWA Emily Award

**Feedback**—entering can be a cheap way to get feedback on your work, particularly if you find a full manuscript contest that gives comments (eg. RWA Emerald Award or the RWNZ Clendon Award).

If you belong to a writing organisation, ask yourself this - can I get feedback any other way besides through contests?

Some writing organisations have mentoring schemes, critique groups or critique partner schemes running, so this might be another avenue for you to pursue in your quest to get feedback.

- **Contest criteria**—entering a specific type of contest can help your craft. I avoided entering any sort of synopsis contest, purely because I hated writing them. But because it was a weakness I'd identified in my craft skills, I forced myself to enter several of these to get feedback before I sent my work out on submission.

- **To final**—this is a feather in any writer's cap. I used this as a benchmark to see whether I was improving in my craft but then, in the context of where I was as a writer (geography and isolation, not the level of skill) and the services I had access to, this (era of time) proved to be the only option available to me to measure this. (So context is important.)



**RWA Emerald Award**

**Getting your work in front of an editor/agent**—if you have the budget, you can enter as many contests as you like, and some have done this. Most writers don't have unlimited funds, so choosing which particular contest—based on reputation or final judges or specific feedback—and this may determine your decision on whether you enter or not.

Toward the end of my unpublished contest career my goal for entering was driven by who the final judge was. I wanted to get my work in front of an editor or agent who acquired my genre.



**RWA Golden Heart**

**Contest résumés**—racking up finalist kudos, placings or wins is certainly a way to impress potential editors and agents but it doesn't always help. Some take no notice of your achievements. I admit, one of my main goals for entering contests, in the latter part of my unpublished career, was to build a résumé for each manuscript but it wasn't the only avenue I relied upon to get my work in front of editors/agents.

I think the secret of entering any contest is to identify why you're entering it, what you're hoping to get out of it as a result and to understand that it's one of many strategies, not the only one, to help you in your journey to publication.

So, with the RWAustralia and RWNZ contest season about to start fresh, I know there will be some of you keen to try the contest circuit (and good on you, go for it!). There are a wide range of ones for you to enter here and overseas.

Keeping that in mind, here are a few links you might like to explore to find the sort of contests you'd like to enter:

[www.romanceaustralia.com](http://www.romanceaustralia.com)  
[www.romancewriters.co.nz](http://www.romancewriters.co.nz)  
[www.rwa.org](http://www.rwa.org)  
[www.stephiesmith.com/contests.html](http://www.stephiesmith.com/contests.html)



**RWNZ Readers' Choice Award**

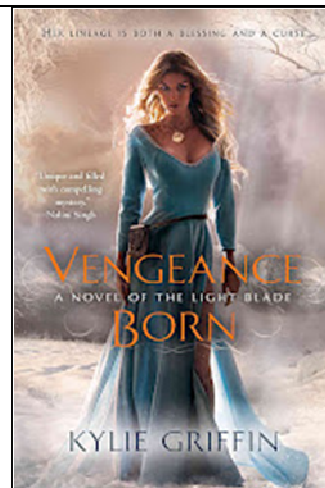
But, just remember, I've seen many friends who've taken the contest circuit route in the attempt to get published and I know of others who haven't entered any contests yet been picked up through submitting their work.

There are valid reasons to try both paths, one isn't better than the other.

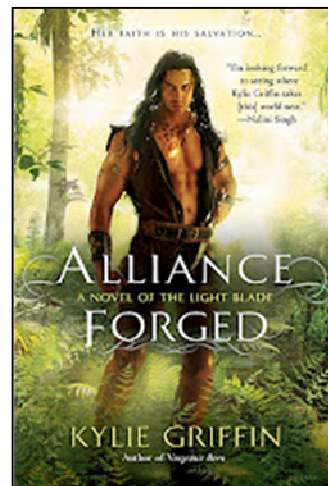
It's whatever works for you.  
 Posted by Kylie Griffin at 1:00 AM

<http://www.kyliegriffin.com/Home.html>

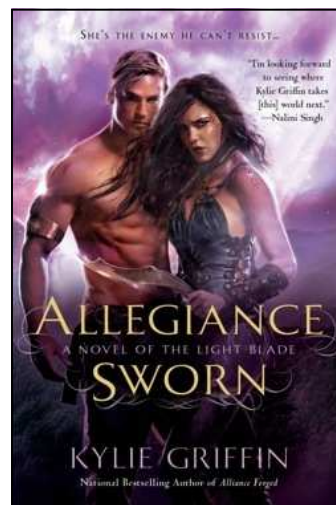
An author who breathes, lives and loves the sci-fi/fantasy/paranormal romance genre. I write paranormal romances for Berkley SensationKylie Griffin .



**Book One in the Light Blade Series, published on February 7, 2012, Berkley P.G. With mass market paperback coming in April 2013.**



**Book Two in the Light Blade Series, published in paperback and e-book July 3, 2012.**



**Book Three in the Light Blade Series to be published in paperback and e-book April 2, 2013.**



# Self-publishing

## Update



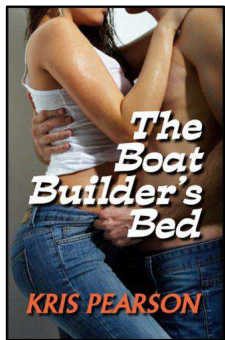
## Kris Pearson

This is a frustrating but fascinating business. Although sales started with a great roar in January, they fell away for the northern summer. It was exceedingly hot in North America this year, and apparently few people wanted to curl up with a good book on their e-readers when they could be cooling down at the beach or river. And the Olympics were on TV. And a lot of traditionally-published authors self-pubbed their back-lists. Competition really is fierce.

However, now that winter's approaching, e-book sales are on the rise again. This is not just my impression – various people on the world-wide Indie loop are saying the same.

So what's a girl to do to grab her share? In an effort to achieve a nice bump, I've increased the size of my name on all my covers to make me look more important than I actually am. I've released two new books – *Out of Bounds* and *Resisting Nick* - and both have taken off rather well. I've made my best book, *The Boat Builder's Bed*, permanently free so people can have a decent sample. I'm writing this on October 10 and it is currently sitting at number seven on Amazon's free contemporary fiction list. Amazing! *Out of Bounds* has made number 8 on the Apple itunes paid romance list for Australia, number 12 in the UK, 30 in Canada, and 53 in the USA. Things are looking up. And now that I've found my feet, I've released some of the books on Smashwords. This means they're available at other book retailers besides Amazon, and for other e-readers besides Kindle.

And what's made the most difference? I DON'T KNOW, or I'd do some more of it!



The BBB has been free for less than a month, and more than 39,000 copies have been downloaded through Amazon alone. I've no idea how many were downloaded through the sites like itunes that Smashwords distributes to. So if even 1% of those 39,000 bother to read it, and enjoy it, and buy another one.....

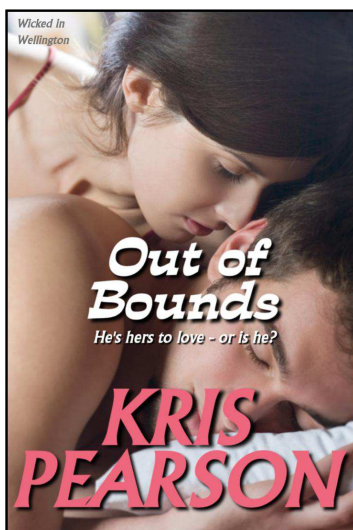
Currently it's sitting at **Amazon Best Sellers Rank: #25 Free in Kindle Store** (See Top 100 Free in Kindle Store)

#5 in Kindle Store > Kindle eBooks > Fiction > **Contemporary Fiction**

#7 in Kindle Store > Kindle eBooks > Fiction > Genre Fiction > Romance > **Contemporary**

**(which sounds very impressive - but it's FREE!)**

(Apologies to Kris and readers from Viv. These links work in Publisher but won't in PDF.)



Kris has been the Membership Secretary of RWNZ for the past couple of years. If it's fine, what spare time she has is spent gardening, and if it's wet, she writes. If the writing's going well, the weeds get a bit of extra time to flourish. She's a multi-published short story writer, a double Clendon finalist, and has been self-publishing her novels since December 2011.

<http://www.krispearson.com/>





## Breaking News — RWNZ\_Indie Yahoo Group

A new yahoo group has been set up for members of RWNZ interested in indie/self-publishing. Whether you've been self-publishing for a while or just thinking about it, the new group provides a forum for people to pick each other's brains on all aspects of self-publishing: from the nitty-gritty of formatting and cover design to marketing, social and otherwise. Anyone interested in joining the group, please email [RWNZ\\_Indie-subscribe@yahoogleups.co.uk](mailto:RWNZ_Indie-subscribe@yahoogleups.co.uk) or click the following:



[Click to join RWNZ\\_Indie](#)



## POTENTIAL MARKETS with P.D.R. Lindsay-Salmon



### 1. Storm Moon Press

Ebooks and print.

Open to all.

Imprint, WildMoon Press.

Romance seeks great stories for an anthology in celebration of the 'plus sized woman'. 'Big Damn Heroines'. Unpublished stories, 10,000 to 20,000 words.

**The deadline is December 28th, 2012.**

Payment and Rights are discussed at contract stage.

Generally, it is a three-year exclusive, with 'a single payment of US\$75-\$150 for the story based on length'.

Details: Storm Moon Press, imprint: Wild Moon;

Website: <http://www.stormmoonpress.com>;

Email submissions to: [submissions@stormmoonpress.com](mailto:submissions@stormmoonpress.com);

Guidelines: <http://www.stormmoonpress.com/anthologies.aspx>;

### 2. Alter Press

Ebooks and print.

Open to all.

Seeking submissions for an anthology, 'Dread Time Stories'. Childhood favourite stories turned inside out and back to front and 'ruin some childhood memories'. Length 4,000 to 8,000 words.

**The deadline is December 31st, 2012.**

Payment is US\$10 per story and a free copy.

Details: website: <http://alter.lefora.com>

Email submissions to: [alterbooks@gmail.com](mailto:alterbooks@gmail.com);

Guidelines found at: <http://alter.lefora.com/2012/09/20/alter-press-presents-dread-time-stories/>

### 3. Sybarite Seduction

E-publisher.

Open to all.

Publishing 'quality, sensual short stories'.

Stories must be erotic and sensual short stories, in all the usual romance sub-genres.

Length under 20,000 words.

Payment is by royalties negotiated under contract.

Details: website: <http://sybariteseductions.com>;

Email queries and subs to:

[submissions@sybariteseductions.com](mailto:submissions@sybariteseductions.com);

Guidelines: <http://sybariteseductions.com/submissions>

### 4. Wanting Magazine

An ezine and print magazine.

Open to all.

Erotica only for women.

Seeking 'risqué' fantasies and provocative tastes in short stories and the occasional novella.

Length: Check the very specific guidelines but range from 1,000 to 40,000 words.

Payment and rights are set out in the special guidelines and range from US\$2.50 to US\$75.

Details: website: <http://www.wantingmagazine.com>;

Email queries and submissions online using the submission system.

Guidelines at: <http://wantingmagazine.com/submission-policy-and-guidelines-erotica-magazine/>

## 5. Musa Publishing

Digital, royalty-paying small publisher.

Open to all.

Romance.

Seeking 'special seasonal love stories for their Erato and Calliope ebook imprints'.

Length 15,000 to 100,00 words, can be any heat level from sweet to erotic.

Deadlines for Autumn and Winter are February 15th and May 15th 2013. Check the website for next year's Spring and Summer deadlines early in 2013.

Payment is by royalties, and rights and royalties are arranged under contract.

Details: website: <http://musapublishing.blogspot.co.nz>;

Email submissions to: [headeditor.erato@gmail.com](mailto:headeditor.erato@gmail.com) or [head.editor.calliope@gmail.com](mailto:head.editor.calliope@gmail.com)

Guidelines: <http://musapublishing.blogspot.co.nz/p/submissions.html>

## 6. Cup of Tea Books

Imprint of PageSpring Publishing, an American Small Press.

Print.

Open to all.

Seeking women's fiction with 'finely-drawn characters, a compelling story, and deft writing'.

Length 50,000+

Payment and rights are negotiated under contract.

Details: PageSpring Publishing, P.O. Box 21133,

Columbus, OH 43221, USA.

Website: <http://cupofteabooks.com/women's-fiction>;

Email submissions to:

[weditor@pagespringpublishing.com](mailto:weditor@pagespringpublishing.com);

Guidelines also at: <http://cupofteabooks.com/women's-fiction>

## 7. Lady Lazarus-Press

Ebooks and print.

Written by women only.

Seeking 'different fiction', creative, original, edgy, humorous or thought provoking and no-nonsense, no-bullshit, non-clichéd writing'.

Length 60,000+

Rights and payment are negotiated under contract.

Details: website: <http://www.ladylazarus-press.com>;

Email questions to: [ladylazarus\\_press@yahoo.com](mailto:ladylazarus_press@yahoo.com); [submission](mailto:submission)

Guidelines at: <http://lp.submittable.com/submit>;

Submit at the website using the online system, under the correct genre.

## 8. Pugalicious Press

Small Press print and ebooks.

Open to all.

Seeking children's and YA books. 'Great books, books that may not fit into the catalogues of the typical big publishing houses,' in the genres of fantasy, high adventure, historical fiction, and rather special dystopian novels with a fantastical element.

Payment is an advance and royalties, as agreed under contract.

Details: website: <http://www.pugaliciouspress.com>;

Email queries and submissions to:

[submission@pugaliciouspress.com](mailto:submission@pugaliciouspress.com);

Guidelines: <http://www.pugaliciouspress.com/submissions>;

prof pdr lindsay-salmon

e-mail: [pdrilindsay@slingshot.co.nz](mailto:pdrilindsay@slingshot.co.nz)

[rowanlindsay@rowanlindsay.co.nz](mailto:rowanlindsay@rowanlindsay.co.nz)

website: [www.rowanlindsay.co.nz](http://www.rowanlindsay.co.nz)

<https://twitter.com/#!/RowanLindsay>

Publishing Co-operative: [www.writerschoice.org](http://www.writerschoice.org)

Reviews at: [www.thedeepening.com](http://www.thedeepening.com)



*A note from Rowan. My writer's C.V. includes sales of over a hundred short stories to magazines, zines, soundzines and literary journals around the world. In the U.K. I've sold popular fiction to 'The People's Friend', 'My Weekly', 'Woman's Weekly', and more literary stories to 'Solander', 'Stand', 'QWF', and many of the Small Press literary magazines. You can hear my literary stories as podcasts at 'Bound Off', 'Snipbits' and historical stories at 'Tales of Old'. I also write for the British 'Writing Magazine' with 'Writer's News', freelance occasional articles for New Zealand's 'Freelance' and 'Heart to Heart' writing magazines, and review novels and interview writers for the Historical Novel Society and the Deepening: World of Fiction.*

*(<http://www.thedeepening.com/world-of-fiction>) where I am a reviewer and 'featured writer'. p.d.r. lindsay.*

*[@RowanLindsay](https://twitter.com/RowanLindsay)*

*A very busy writer, reader, tutor, farmer and traveller. New Zealand and the world.*

*<http://www.rowanlindsay.co.nz>*



# Clichés: Avoid Them Like the Plague

With Laura Hayden

(From Laura Hayden's "Left-Brain-Right-Brain/Creativity Program")

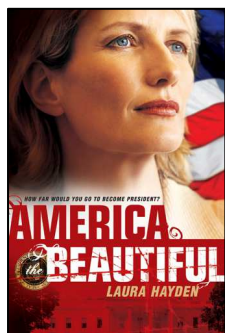
<http://suspense.net/whitefish/cliche.htm>

[suspense@suspense.net](mailto:suspense@suspense.net)

**They're great titles, but lousy writing:**

**---A---**

ace in the hole  
ace up your sleeve  
acid test  
airing dirty laundry  
all in a day's work  
all talk, no action  
all booster, no payload  
all hat, no cattle  
all foam, no beer  
all hammer, no nail  
all icing, no cake  
all lime and salt, no tequila  
all missile, no warhead  
all shot, no powder  
all sizzle, no steak  
all wax and no wick  
all that and a bag of chips  
all thumbs  
all wet



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all's fair in love and war  
almighty dollar  
always a bridesmaid  
ambulance chaser  
another day, another dollar  
ants in your pants  
apple-pie order  
arm and a leg  
armchair quarterback  
army brat  
art imitates life  
artsy-craftsy  
artsy-fartsy  
as luck would have it  
as old as time  
at loggerheads  
**---B---**  
babe in the woods  
back against the wall  
back in the saddle  
back to square one  
back to the drawing board  
bad to the bone  
badge of honor  
Badonkadonk  
ballpark figure  
balls to the wall  
baptism of fire (baptism under fire)  
bare bones  
bark is worse than the bite  
bark up the wrong tree  
bat out of hell  
bats in the belfry  
battle royal  
beat around the bush  
beat the bushes  
beats me

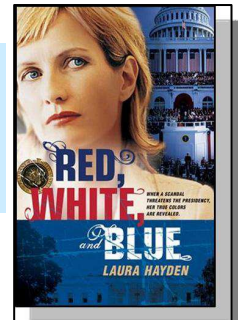
behind the eight ball  
bent out of shape  
best foot forward  
bet your bottom dollar  
better half  
better late than never  
better mousetrap  
better safe than sorry  
better than ever  
better (to deal with) the Devil you know than the one you don't  
between a rock and a hard place  
beyond the pale  
bib and tucker  
big as life  
big fish in a small pond  
big man on campus  
bigger they are (the)  
bird in the hand is worth two in the bushes  
birds and the bees  
birds of the feather  
bite the dust  
bite your tongue  
bitter disappointment  
black as coal  
blast from the past  
bleeding heart  
blind as a bat  
blood is thicker than water  
blood money  
blood on your hands  
blood sweat and tears  
blow this pop stand / joint  
blushing bride  
boil it down to  
bone of contention



booze and broads  
 bored to tears  
 born and raised  
 born with a silver spoon in your mouth  
 born yesterday  
 bottom line  
 brain drain  
 brain dump  
 brass tacks  
 bring home the bacon  
 broken record  
 brother's keeper (thy)  
 bull by the horns  
 bull in a china shop  
 bump in the night  
 busy as a bee  
 but seriously  
 by and large  
 ---C---  
 calm before the storm  
 candle at both ends  
 can't cut the mustard  
 case of mistaken identity  
 cat out of the bag  
 cat got your tongue  
 caught red-handed  
 chapter and verse  
 checkered career  
 chickens come home to roost  
 chomping at the bit  
 cleanliness is next to godliness  
 clear as a bell  
 clear as mud  
 cold shoulder  
 communist conspiracy  
 conniption fit  
 could care less  
 couldn't care less  
 couldn't get to first base  
 count your blessings  
 countless hours  
 creature comfort  
 crime in the street  
 curiosity killed the cat  
 curry favor

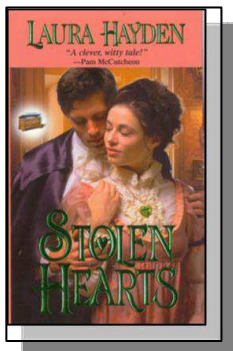
cut a fine figure  
 cut and dried  
 cut to the chase  
 cut to the quick  
 cute as a button  
 ---D---  
 darkest before the dawn  
 dead as a doornail  
 death and destruction  
 death and taxes  
 death's doorstep  
 devil is in the details  
 dim view  
 dog days  
 dog in the manger  
*dog won't hunt (added)*  
 don't count your chickens before they're  
 hatched  
 don't do the crime if you can't do the time  
 doubting Thomas  
 down and dirty  
 down in the dumps  
 down pat  
 down the drain/toilet  
 down the hatch  
 down to earth  
 drive you up a wall  
 dutch uncle  
 dyed in the wool  
 ---E---  
 E-ticket  
 ear to the ground  
 early bird catches the worm  
 easier said than done  
 easy as 1-2-3  
 easy as pie  
 eat crow  
 eat humble pie  
 enough already  
 even money  
 every dog has its day  
 every fiber of my being  
 everything but the kitchen sink  
 evil twin  
 existential angst

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experts agree  
 eye for an eye  
 ---F---  
 facts of life  
 fair-haired one  
 fair weather friend  
 fall off of a turnip truck  
 fat slob  
 favor us with a song  
 fear and loathing  
 feather your nest  
 fellow traveler  
 few and far between  
 field this one  
 fifteen minutes of fame  
 fish nor fowl  
 fly by night  
 fly the coop  
 for the birds  
 fox in the henhouse  
 Freudian slip  
 fun and games  
 fun in the sun  
 --G---  
 garbage in, garbage out  
 get the sack  
 get your groove back  
 gets my goat  
 gift horse in the mouth  
 gilding the lily  
 give a damn  
 give me a break  
 gives me the creeps  
 go him one better  
 goes without saying  
 good deed for the day

good time was had by all	in your face	knock on wood
Greek to me	inexorably drawn	knock your socks off
green thumb	info dump	knocked up
green-eyed monster	influence peddling	know him from Adam
grist for the mill	intents and purposes	know the ropes
guiding light	it was a dark and stormy night	know the score
---H---	it won't fly	knuckle down
hair of the dog	--J---	knuckle sandwich
hard to believe	Jack of all trades	knuckle under
have a nice day	jockey for position	---L---
head honcho	Johnny-come-lately	labor of love
heart's content	joined at the hip	lap of luxury
hell-bent for leather	jump down your throat	last but not least
hidden agenda	jump in with both feet	last-ditch effort
high and the mighty (the)	jump on the bandwagon	last hurrah
high on the hog	jump the gun	law of the jungle
hold a candle to	jump her/his bones	law of the land
hold your horses	junk in the trunk	lay down the law
hold your tongue	jury is still out	leaps and bounds
hook or by crook	justice is blind	let sleeping dogs lie
horse of a different color	---K---	let the cat out of the bag
hot knife through butter	keep an eye on you	let's split
how goes the battle?	keep it down	liberal media
--I---	keep it simple, stupid	lie like a rug
I beg to differ	keep up with the Joneses	life and limb
if the shoe fits	keep your cards close to vest	life imitates art
I'm okay, you're okay	keep your chin up	life's a bitch
in a nutshell	keep your fingers crossed	lighten up
in a pinch	keep your powder dry	lights out
in a wink	kick ass	like a sore thumb
in harm's way	kick butt	like butter
in the tank	kick the bucket	like the plague
in your dreams	kick up your heels	like there's no tomorrow
	kick you to the curb	lion's share
	kick your feet up	litmus test
	kid in a candy store	little black book
	kill two birds with one stone	live and learn
	King's English	long and short of it
	king's ransom	long lost love
	kiss and tell	look before you leap
	kiss ass	lounge lizard
	kiss of death	loved and lost
	kit and kaboodle	low man on the totem pole
	knee-high to a grasshopper (or toad-frog)	luck of the draw
	knock it out of the park	luck of the Irish



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---M---

make my day  
male chauvinist (*pig*)  
man's best friend  
many moons  
many-splendored thing  
mark my words  
meaningful relationship  
mellow out  
moment of glory  
moment's respite  
Monday morning quarterback  
monkey suit  
monkey see, monkey do  
motherhood and apple pie  
movers and shakers  
moving experience  
my two cents

---N---

neat as a pin  
needless to say  
nip it in the bud  
no guts, no glory  
no love lost  
no pain, no gain  
no stone unturned  
no time like the present  
nose to the grindstone  
not in my back yard  
not on your tintype  
number one fan  
numerous to mention



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Trade: ISBN: 978-0765330219  
Hardcover: 978-0765327093  
Kindle Nook

---O---

off the wagon  
old college try  
old meets new  
older and wiser  
older than dirt  
older than Methuselah  
on the bandwagon  
on the nose  
on the wagon  
on thin ice  
one born every minute  
one foot in the grave  
one in a million  
only game in town  
only to be met  
out of pocket  
out of the frying pan  
out on a limb

---P-Q---

p's and q's  
pain and suffering  
panic button  
party pooper  
patter of little feet  
pass the sniff test  
pay through the nose  
peas in a pod  
perfect storm  
pig in a poke  
pillar of society  
pinko  
plenty of fish in the sea  
poison pen  
poor as a churchmouse  
poor excuse for  
pot calling the kettle black  
proud possessor  
put my/your foot down  
quick as a bunny  
quick and the dead

---R---

radical chic (*in contrast to radical sheik*)  
rags to riches  
raining buckets

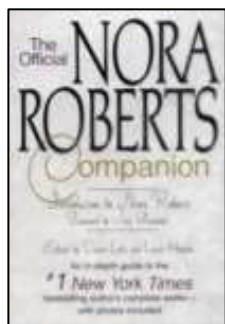
raining cats and dogs  
rank and file  
read my lips  
red herring  
redheaded stepchild  
reign supreme  
remember the Alamo  
road to hell is paved with good intentions  
rob Peter to pay Paul  
rock and a hard place  
rocket science/scientist  
rope a dope  
run it up the flagpole  
running dog lackey

---S---

safe than sorry  
salt of the earth  
save face  
scared stiff  
scared to death  
school's out  
screaming meemies  
senses reel  
set the record straight  
shake a stick at  
shoulder to the wheel  
shouldered his way  
shut your trap  
sigh of relief  
significant other  
silence is golden  
slept like a log  
small world  
snake in the grass  
snow job  
snug as a bug  
some of my best friends  
something the cat dragged in  
spade a spade  
spare the rod  
spitting image  
spring to life  
squeaky wheel gets the grease/oil  
start from scratch



stick in the mud  
 stick in your craw  
 still waters run deep  
 stop and smell the roses  
 store bought  
 stranger than fiction  
 straw that broke the camel's back  
 stubborn as a mule  
 stuff that dreams are made of  
 stuffed shirt  
 ---T---  
 take one for the team  
 take the bull by the horns  
 take the plunge  
 takes one to know one  
 talk turkey  
 (*touch with a*) ten foot pole  
 the earth moved  
 the final analysis  
 the real McCoy  
 the same old story  
 these things happen  
 thick as thieves  
 think outside of the box  
 third time's the charm  
 this day and age  
 this point in time  
 three strikes and you're out  
 through the grapevine  
 throw in the towel  
 tiger by the tail  
 till the fat lady sings  
 time and time again



**THE OFFICIAL NORA ROBERTS  
 COMPANION . Berkley**  
 ISBN: 0425183440  
 please <http://www.authorauthor.net/>

time is of the essence  
 tip of the iceberg  
 'tis the season  
 to err is human  
 to the best of my knowledge  
 tongue-in-cheek  
 too hot to handle  
 touch of blarney  
 tough as nails  
 tough luck  
 tough row to hoe  
 traditional family values  
 trials and tribulations  
 tried and true  
 trip down memory lane  
 true blue  
 turn your smile/frown upside-down  
 twist of fate  
 twists and turns  
 two to tango  
 --U-V--  
 under the gun  
 under the same roof  
 understated elegance  
 unexpected twist  
 until the cows come home  
 up his sleeve  
 up the creek  
 up the wrong tree  
 very real concern  
 view with alarm  
 ---W---  
 wakeup call  
 was my face red  
 watch your tongue  
 web of intrigue  
 week of Sundays  
 what a bummer  
 what comes around, goes around  
 what the cat dragged in  
 what the dickens  
 what the heck/hell  
 what you see is what you get  
 what's not to like

wheeler-dealer  
 when in doubt, punt  
 when push comes to shove  
 when rubber meets the road  
 when the cat's away  
 when the going gets tough, the tough  
 get going  
 who has everything  
 whole ball of wax  
 whole hog  
 whole nine yards  
 whole other story  
 wild goose chase  
 wild oats  
 will wonders never cease  
 wimp  
 win friends and influence people  
 win one for the Gipper  
 winning is everything  
 wisdom of the ages  
 without benefit of clergy  
 wolf at the door  
 words fail  
 work like a dog  
 worst nightmare  
 wrong side of the bed  
 ---XYZ---  
 years young  
 yellow journalism  
 you are what you eat  
 you can run, but you can't hide  
 you know what they say  
 young and foolish  
 young and restless  
 yuppie  
 ---Numerical---  
 20/20 hindsight

# Change these Slang Clichés into Better Expressions:

1. After what seemed like an eternity, the bell finally rang.
2. The H1N1 virus spread like wildfire through several elementary schools in Tennessee.
3. After losing too much money playing cards, I decided to throw in the towel.
4. Trying to write a good essay is easier said than done.
5. The children were quiet as a mouse on Christmas Eve.
6. It's a crying shame how Rihanna Fenty was treated by her boyfriend Chris Brown (he punched her in the face, bruising her).
7. Abused women sometimes have to walk on eggshells to avoid upsetting their men.
8. The music group "Journey" sang, "She's as cold as ice, she's willing to sacrifice our love."
9. He always had to watch out for so-called friends who might stab him in the back.
10. Although they had been smoking for many years, they wanted to kick the habit.
11. In this day and age, everyone should know how to type on a computer.
12. I had to get up at the crack of dawn in order to go fishing with my Grandpa.
13. Every March, when Spring is in the air, allergies make me sneeze.
14. Trying to repair a television is fraught with danger because of the high voltages inside.
15. Although the D.C. government banned gun ownership, the NRA stuck to their guns and successfully convinced the U.S. Supreme Court that American citizens should be able to own guns.
16. Even though Betty is dangerously obese, she ignores her doctor's advice like water off a duck's back.
17. Tiger Woods finally had to face the music, and he apologized to his wife about his multiple affairs.
18. Some teachers are very strict about deadlines, but my attitude is usually "better late than never".
19. When Billy-Bob printed out his paper, he was not happy with what he saw. He forgot to set his word processor in "what you see is what you get" mode.
20. Everyone makes fun of Bubba's odd-looking girlfriend, but "Love is blind".
21. The Democrats are trying to improve health insurance, but the Republicans keep saying, "If it ain't broke, don't fix it!".

Revised 10 February 2010

# Euphemisms for "Stupid":

A kangaroo is loose in the top paddock (Australian).

All foam, no beer.

Body by Fisher, Brains by Mattel.

He couldn't pour water out of a boot with instructions printed on the heel.

He couldn't think his way out of a paper bag.

He donated his brain to Science, but Science sent it back.

He fell out of the Stupid Tree and hit every branch on his way down.

*He has bats in the belfry (added).*

He's as useful as teats on a boar hog.

His bread ain't done.

His cheese slid off his cracker.

His elevator doesn't go to the top floor.

His pilot light isn't lit.

His yeast went bad.

If brains were dynamite, he couldn't blow his nose.

If you gave him a penny for his thoughts, you'd get change.

It takes him an hour to cook Minute Rice.

Somewhere, a village is missing its idiot.

The gates are down, the lights are flashing, but there is no train.

The light is on, but nobody is home.

There's nothing in the attic but cobwebs.

The starting gate is open, but he's still asking directions.

The wheel's turning, but the hamster's dead.

## He or She Is:

A few cans short of a six-pack.

A walking advertisement/poster boy for birth control/ planned parenthood.

Dumber than a bag of hammers.

Dumber than a box of rocks.

Not the brightest crayon (*or bulb*) in the box.

Not the sharpest knife in the drawer.

One brick shy of a load.

One fry short of a Happy Meal®.

One pickle short of a barrel.

One sandwich short of a picnic.

One step short of a flight (of stairs).

One taco short of a combination plate.

<http://suspense.net/whitefish/cliche.htm>

<http://www.authoraauthor.net/>

Born and raised in Birmingham, Alabama, Laura Hayden began her reading career at the age of four. By the time she was ten, she'd exhausted the children's section in the local library and switched to adult mysteries. Laura always wrote as a youth, but became sidetracked in college where differential equations were more important than dangling participles.

But one Capstone engineering degree, one wedding, two kids and three military assignments later, she ended up in Colorado Springs where she met people who shared her passion for writing. With their support, instruction and camaraderie, she set two goals for herself: winning the Romance Writers of America's GOLDEN HEART award and after that, publication of the winning manuscript.

Only Laura did it backwards.

Shortly after selling her first book, a romantic suspense, Laura won the GOLDEN HEART for her time travel/ Western/ mystery/ romance novel, **A MARGIN IN TIME**.

Laura has now published eight full-length novels, three short stories published in anthologies, two mystery novels and one non-fiction. (Detailed below.) Her upcoming book is **ANGEL**, written with Nicole "Coco" Marrow.

The wife of a career military officer, Laura has moved with surprising frequency and practiced

efficiency from Alabama to Texas to Virginia to Colorado to Kansas back to Virginia to North Dakota to Montana, Colorado and finally back to Alabama. Laura now lives near Montgomery, where, besides writing, she owns Author, Author! Bookstore.

When not at the keyboard of her computer, Laura can be found at the keyboard of her piano.

Her list of books includes:

- **SOMEONE TO WATCH OVER ME**
- **A MARGIN IN TIME**
- **A KILLER SMILE**
- **CHANCE OF A LIFETIME**
- **HERO FOR HIRE**
- **THROUGH THE EYES OF A CHILD**
- **DOUBLE EXPOSURE with Susan Ford**
- **STOLEN HEARTS**
- **SHARP FOCUS with Susan Ford**
- **THE OFFICIAL NORA ROBERTS COMPANION with Denise Little**
- **AMERICA THE BEAUTIFUL**
- **RED, WHITE & BLUE**
- **ANGEL with Nicole "Coco" Marrow**

Her short story collection includes :

- "Steel Crazy" in **ENCHANTMENT PLACE**
- "Nine Tenths" in **A DANGEROUS MAGIC**
- "Guardian Angel of the Peace" in **GUARDIAN ANGELS and "Twelve Days"**

## in MURDER MOST ROMANTIC

For her other non-book works, please visit her OTHER WORKS page. For assorted photos, please visit her PHOTO page.

## MEMBERSHIP/OFFICES HELD:

- Romance Writers of America
- Member since 1990
- National board member 2000-2001
- Awards Ceremony Chairperson 2000, 2003, 2004, 2006, 2007, 2008, 2009, 2010, 2011
- Pikes Peak Romance Writers (RWA chapter): Various positions held
- Southern Magic Inc (RWA chapter): President 2008—2010, Treasurer 2011
- Pikes Peak Writers: President 2002-2006. Conference Director: 2001, 2002, 2003, 2004, 2006, 2007 & 2010
- Mystery Writers of America: Member since 2005



# INTERNATIONAL CONTESTS

*with Angela Bissell*



## **GOTCHA! Contest (Silicon Valley RWAmerica)**

**Deadline:** November 1, 2012

**Eligibility:** Not published in the category entered in the past five years.

**Enter:** First 15 pages of your manuscript.

**Fee:** US\$25

**More info:** [www.svrwa.com](http://www.svrwa.com)

## **Hook, Line and Sinker Contest (Hudson Valley RWAmerica)**

**Deadline:** November 1, 2012

**Eligibility:** Unpublished and published writers.

**Enter:** First three pages of your manuscript.

**Fee:** US\$10

**More info:** [www.hudsonvalleyrwa.com](http://www.hudsonvalleyrwa.com)

## **Emerald Award (Romance Writers of Australia)**

**Deadline:** November 23, 2012

**Eligibility:** Unpublished RWAustralia members.

**Enter:** First 10,000 words of unpublished romance or romantic elements manuscript. Note: manuscript must be completed.

**Fee:** A\$38.50 inc GST per entry

**More info:** [www.romanceaustralia.com](http://www.romanceaustralia.com)

## **Selling Synopsis Contest (Romance Writers of Australia)**

**Deadline:** November 23, 2012

**Eligibility:** RWAustralia members.

**Enter:** Category: maximum four-page double-spaced synopsis. Single Title: maximum six-page double-spaced synopsis.

**Fee:** A\$20 (outside Aust) / A\$22 (within Aust, inc GST)

**More info:** [www.romanceaustralia.com](http://www.romanceaustralia.com)

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

### **ALL ENTRIES ELECTRONIC**

**Opens:** November 15, 2012. Contest limited to 1,200 paid entries.

**Deadline:** January 2, 2013

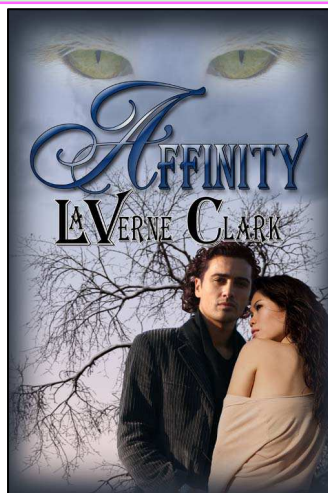
**Eligibility:** RWA members who have not accepted a publishing offer for, or self-published, a work of original fictional narrative prose of 20,000 words or more by January 2, 2013.

**Enter:** Entries must be a work of fictional narrative prose in the romance genre of at least 40,000 words. Entrants must upload a synopsis (maximum 15 pages) plus a partial (synopsis and partial combined not to exceed 55 pages) plus complete manuscript.

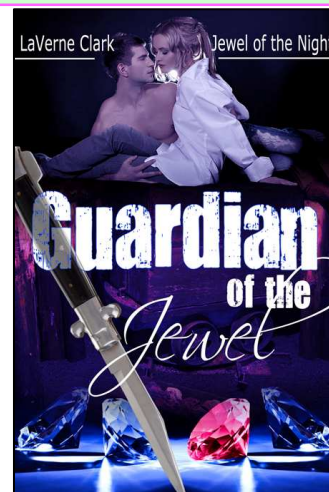
**Fee:** TBC – refer website nearer opening date.

**More info:** [www.rwa.org](http://www.rwa.org)

**The difference  
between the right  
word and the almost  
right word is the  
difference between  
lightning and a light-  
ning bug.  
Mark Twain**



Many thanks  
to La Verne  
Clark for  
sharing your  
stunning  
covers with  
H2H .





## Woos, Hoos, and News

*Celebrating our members' achievements.*

Email Jean Drew [jeandrew@xtra.co.nz](mailto:jeandrew@xtra.co.nz)  
with your successes to be included in this page.

**Barb Jeffcott Geris'** (w/a **Barbara DeLeo**) debut book **CONTRACT FOR MARRIAGE** has released with **Entangled Publishing's Indulgence** line.

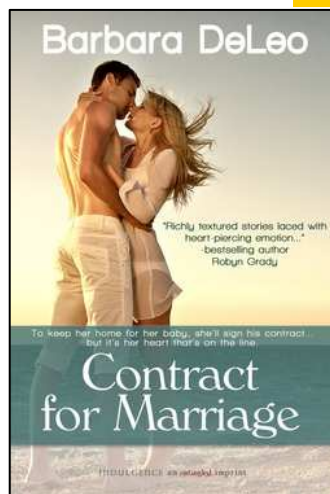
**Vonnie Hughes'** Regency novella **CAPTIVE**, coming out with **Musa** in their **Aurora** line, releases on November 9, 2012.

**MIDNIGHT'S WILD PASSION** by **Anna Campbell** won the **historical** category of the **2012 Ancient City Romance Authors Readers Choice Award**.

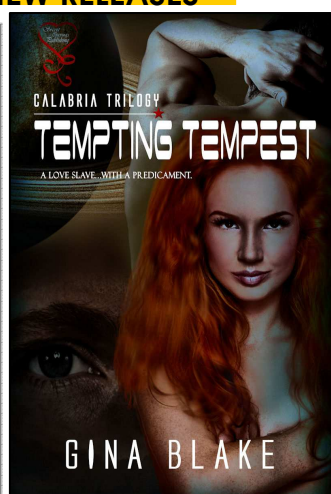
**Suzanne Hamilton** (w/a **S E Gilchrist**) is part of an erotic anthology to be released progressively by the new **Momentum Publishing**. The anthology is called **Hot Down Under** and Suzanne's story, a post-apocalyptic romance titled **PAYING THE FORFEIT**, releases on December 1.

**Jean Drew** (w/a **Gina Blake**) has her second erotica cover in her **Calabria** trilogy **TEMPTING TEMPEST** releasing in November.

### NEW RELEASES



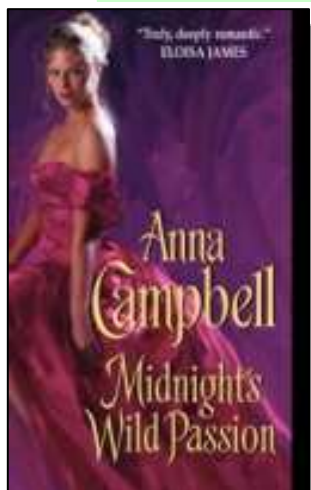
**Contract for Marriage** - Out now! -  
**Entangled Indulgence**  
[Website](#) [Facebook](#) [Goodreads](#) [Twitter](#)



Get ready...**Tempting Tempest**  
releases in November...

### WINNER

**Congratulations Anna on Midnight's Wild Passion winning the historical category of 2012 Ancient City Romance Authors Readers Choice Award.**



### Announce: Online Writing Classes Group Digest #809

**Master Class: Cops, One on One  
-- How Your Law Enforcement  
Officer (LEO) Relates to His or  
Her World by M.A. Taylor**

**November 12-23, 2012**

\$55 at [www.WriterUniv.com](http://www.WriterUniv.com) <<http://www.writeruniv.com/>>

**Prerequisite:** Must have a story (at any stage of completion) featuring a law enforcement officer.

There's a reason the divorce rate among law enforcement officers is so high. Most of it is due to the manner in which the officer relates to, or expresses himself to, the people in his life.

- \* Why is the spouse the last person to know about a particularly nasty day?
- \* What makes some LEOs so unreasonable with their children?
- \* How can any LEO be friendly with a convicted paedophile?

During this in-depth look at how LEOs relate to the people around them, M.A. Taylor's lectures and

scene discussions will explore:

- \* Personal relationships with family, friends and off-duty acquaintances;
- \* Relationships with criminals, from informants to targets;
- \* Working relationships with partners and supervisors;
- \* The balance between law enforcement and non-sworn officers;
- \* Professional relationships with other agencies and departments;
- \* Relationships with the public and people LEOs meet through work.

M.A. Taylor spent more than twenty years in law enforcement. After seven years with the California Highway Patrol (CHP), she became a Special Agent for the California Department of Justice (DOJ), spending over a decade in Narcotics...including assignment to a Federal DEA-HIDTA Task Force. Margaret's areas of expertise range from surveillance to wiretaps to tribal gaming, sexual predators, investigations and more.

# RWNZ News Around the Regions

*Keeping in touch with each other.*



## REGIONAL CONVENORS

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Special H2H thanks to Anne Russell for contributing photos snapped of RWNZrs enjoying Love is in the Air— see page 9, H2H October 2012. . Remember H2H loves photos, so please keep them coming and we'll share these whenever we can:).

### Auckland

We had a successful gathering yesterday for our October meeting. Kate Kyle whose work as a psychiatrist and psychotherapist gives her a professional working insight with people, gave us an illuminating talk and opportunity to discuss Developing your Story from Character. Twenty-one of us attended the meeting, including out-of-town visitors. Several members expressed their disappointment beforehand at not being able to attend. Kate will write up her talk as an article for 'Heart to Heart' for those who missed out.

Several members have had wonderful success in publishing lately. Their stories were inspiring for the rest of us who are still working with submissions or towards publication.

Our last meeting with a guest speaker this year will be Saturday 3 November. As usual this will be at the Tennis Club Rooms at Three Kings Tennis Courts at 12.30 to 3.00 p.m. Please bring a gold coin donation, change for the raffles and a plate to share. Lisa Gardiner who has given us excellently researched presentations before, has kindly offered to talk to us on Writing About Magic. (Magic is all around us – and I would say Romance is the greatest magic of all.) Happy writing everyone,

### Central North (C2C)

Our October 13th gathering, at Jaci Petherick's inspiring Thames home, was the perfect place for writers to 'retreat' to. Jaci's pre-set homework was to write a poem on love/romance (or a 'pro-em' as one writer suggested) and what it means to you, or a character, in your WIP; using this short-form of writing to get into a character's head proved a worthwhile exercise. Next month (November 9th, 10th and 11th) will be our Christmas end-of-year gathering at Paradise Valley Lodge (just out of Rotorua). And Sophia James is guest-speaker on the 10th. There's one bunk left! If anyone, from any other group is interested, contact me (Gaylene) at [ada.farms@xtra.co.nz](mailto:ada.farms@xtra.co.nz). Full schedule of events will be round-robin to confirmed attendees (23), asap.

### Wellington

Our October meeting was a select gathering of seven at Meryl's lovely home. We all had a good chance to speak, and Kris brought examples and info about the Readers' Digest 100-word short story contest. It will be the last time we see Bernice for a while – she's off to Surrey to look after a Manor House.

Next time (because *no-one* did the exercise last time), please bring one page, double-spaced, describing a PLACE where one of your scenes is set. Fresh, vivid, somewhere unexpected. Yes, you can include some action so it doesn't get boring, but we're after atmosphere here.

The next meeting will be at Meryl's at 1pm on Saturday November 3rd, and we're hoping the girls from our Central North Island group will be visiting us.

### Nelson

Saturday, 6 October saw almost the whole group with their eyes deeply reading the entries we had received for our Romance Short Story Competition 2012. As usual it was an interesting and fun job to sort out the ten best stories to be sent to our final judge Sue MacKay. The final result should be able to be announced within a couple of weeks. Some laughs and some sighs could be heard, but otherwise an unusual silence being a meeting of ours.

As we've been quite clucky lately, 2012 seems to be a good year for Grandmothers, Annika (who'd just got her fourth grandchild) dished up some 'breast-feed' for our cuppa. That is muffins with a round top of icing and a halved red grape in the middle! After the laughter calmed down, the muffins went down a treat. Our November meeting will also be held a week early, as Sally & Annika will be away on a Writers Retreat on our normal meeting weekend. That meeting's top of the agenda will be creative decorations for our Romance Christmas Tree – theme 'Love Conquers All'. Our critique group still meets every second Monday.

### Christchurch

A very exciting meeting. A new person, a new ipad, and a new app that directly updates the writing from your ipad to your computer. No more multiple versions saved in various places.

Two people are trying their luck with short stories, and Gwen did a reading of her work. If you want a taste of her work, check her web site.

November writing month is just about to start so next month should be productive.

Next meeting is Monday, 19 November at 7.00pm (the Monday after show weekend), at 283 Memorial Ave, Christchurch.



# the back page

with Raina Singh

**“You should be kissed, and often, and by someone who knows how.”**

{Dialogue from Gone with the Wind}

Freelance Writer and Editor Julie Collins offers some insights on managing multiple projects on ...

<http://julietrieswriting.blogspot.co.nz/2010/03/project-management-for-freelance.html>

What's the story behind the world's top characters? Australian Author Eamon Evans tells the story on more than 300 people who have helped inspire classics in his book *The Godfather Was a Girl...* but to get a snapshot of it one can download it on audio from this web page:

<http://www.abc.net.au/radionational/programs/bookshow/true-stories-behind-the-worlds-best-loved/2938760>



(Source: Squidoo.com)

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Heart To Heart (H2H) is the official publication of Romance Writers of New Zealand (RWNZ) and is published eleven times a year.

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[suzanne.perazzini@orcon.net.nz](mailto:suzanne.perazzini@orcon.net.nz)  
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