

# Heart to Heart

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ROMANCE WRITERS  
OF NEW ZEALAND

June 2018

## Forensics For Fiction Flubs - Circumstantial Evidence

Geoff Symon



**One of the most frequently mis-used terms from the investigative community by writers of entertainment is “Circumstantial Evidence.” Quotes like “it’s circumstantial at best,” “you brought me in here for this circumstantial case? My client will walk!” and “All you have is circumstantial evidence! You got nothin’!” express a belief that circumstantial evidence is weak, inapplicable and useless in a case. The truth is it’s the exact opposite.**

Circumstantial evidence is just that – *Evidence*, and therefore by definition it works to prove or disprove an allegation. There are two main categories of evidence: Direct and Circumstantial. Direct evidence is an unquestionable statement of fact. It is evidence that requires no interpretation because the evidence itself (the statement) tells the story. Legally, what that boils down to is an eyewitness account of the crime. In the digital age this can also mean a video recording of the crime. So, when a witness testifies that she saw the suspect shoot the victim with a gun, there is no inference that needs to be made. The suspect shot her. The only thing a defense team can do is try to discredit the testimony as an outright lie or misinterpretation. But, there is no wiggle room as far as what the account tells. To be clear, not all eyewitness accounts are counted as direct evidence. The description must be a first-hand account of the crime itself. If this witness saw the suspect in the vicinity of the shooting at the approximate time it occurred, that would fall into the circumstantial category.

Circumstantial evidence, then, is everything else that is not an eyewitness/video account. Officially, it is evidence that requires some level of inference. For instance, in the example above where the witness simply saw the suspect in the area, this requires us to take extra steps in our minds to put the gun in his hand in order to conclude he shot the victim. Seems pretty flimsy as far as evidence goes, doesn’t it? Except there’s so much more included in this category. Fingerprints, footprints, murder

weapons and yes, even DNA are all considered circumstantial evidence.

They all require you to create the story in your mind to put it all together, unlike direct eyewitness testimony that tells the story for you. But, I think we can all agree that a case that has fingerprints, DNA, and possession of the murder weapon is a VERY strong case. And yet, it’s *merely* a circumstantial case.

Many argue that direct evidence is stronger than circumstantial evidence, but the concession must be made that circumstantial evidence can be extremely powerful on its own. The reality of the world we live in is the vast majority of crimes don’t have an eyewitness or a video capture. So if circumstantial evidence was deemed to be ‘useless’ then hardly any wrongdoing would be solved. The U.S. legal system accommodates this by having a “Burden of Proof” requirement. In layman’s terms this simply establishes how much circumstantial evidence is needed for us all to agree this suspect is guilty.

There are different levels of the Burdens of Proof, depending on the severity of the infraction. For example, in civil cases the Burden of Proof is a *Preponderance of the Evidence*, which means, does the evidence show the suspect is more likely guilty than not? It’s a 50% rule. If the evidence can make the judge feel 51% certain the suspect did it, he’s guilty. In criminal cases, however, the Burden of Proof becomes much greater. It’s no longer the “most likely” standard, but instead rises to *Beyond a Reasonable Doubt*. This means that an average person would have no doubt that the suspect is guilty. If there is a legitimate doubt whether the suspect did the crime, then he cannot be found guilty. This is much more difficult to prove than a Preponderance of the Evidence.

Using the Beyond a Reasonable Doubt standard in a circumstantial evidence case, if the only proof the prosecution had was the suspect was seen arguing with the victim earlier in the day, there would not be enough to erase the doubt that he was involved in the shooting. People have arguments all the time - that does not mean they shoot each other. Likewise, not all shootings are because the two argued earlier that day. But when you start adding other circumstantial evidence so that not only were they seen arguing early in the day, but gas receipts show his car was out at 3AM (around the time of the shooting), his footprints were found outside her window and his fingerprints were found on the gun, you now have a very

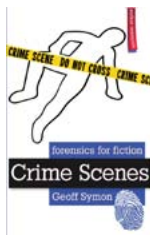
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strong case against this suspect. Each of these pieces of the evidence, however, is still only circumstantial evidence. All of it works together to make a case just as strong as any direct evidence investigation.

So be careful using dialogue like, “it’s just a circumstantial case,” because circumstantial evidence is what often brings the bad guys to justice.

Geoff Symon is a 25-year American federal forensic investigator, teacher and consultant. For the past several years, he has shared his expertise by teaching authors about real-life forensics through lectures, online courses, and his *Forensics for Fiction* series of books. Find him online at [www.geoffsymon.com](http://www.geoffsymon.com) or on Twitter: @GeoffSymon



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

*“The more closely the author thinks of why he wrote, the more he comes to regard his imagination as a kind of self-generating cement which glued his facts together, and his emotions as a kind of dark and obscure designer of those facts. Reluctantly, he comes to the conclusion that to account for his book is to account for his life.”*

— Richard Wright

## Interview with Leah Hultenschmidt, Editor at Grand Central

Catherine Robertson



**Q1: What kind of authors’ voices are you loving at the moment?**

I’m loving a number of #ownvoices projects and particularly keeping an eye out for them. I also enjoy sexy contemporaries with great banter, smart historicals featuring strong women, and women’s fiction that varies from light, fun beach reads to ones with twisty family secrets I never saw coming.

**Q2: How does commercial women’s fiction differ from romance?**

I usually define women’s fiction as a woman’s journey—often involving sisters, best friends, mothers/daughters, or a host of other combos. A woman is at some kind of turning point in her life and has to figure out what to do. There may be a romantic element, but that isn’t necessarily the focus of the book. A romance, on the other hand, is all about the building relationship and love story between the main characters.

**Q3: How optimistic are you feeling about the market at the moment?**

We’ve just gotten some fantastic bookseller feedback on a number of our late summer/early fall releases, so I’m feeling particularly good at the moment. On the print side, it’s very much about positioning a title to be in keeping with what’s selling well. On the ebook side, discovery can remain a challenge for new authors, but we’re always experimenting and have been encouraged by some of the growth that’s brought. It’s also so wonderful to be able to connect and build relationships with readers, authors, and bloggers through Facebook and Instagram.

**Q4: What trends are you keeping an eye on?**

I love seeing some of the romantic comedies coming back in trade paperback—books like *The Hating Game*, *The Wedding Date*, *The Kiss Quotient*, and *The Good Luck Charm*.

**Q5: What’s your favourite part of working with an author?**

Calling to say they’ve hit the bestseller list is pretty wonderful, of course. Every author is different and works differently, so it’s no surprise that my favorite part varies

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as well. For some, it's brainstorming plot ideas on the phone and having wild "what if..." conversations. For others, it's honing the perfect copy for the cover and online description. Although most authors generally agree *their* favorite part is when I send them cover models.

**Q6: Why do you like most about being at Grand Central?**

I love that we're a large enough house to have leverage with accounts and that Forever is a small enough team under the Grand Central umbrella to feel like a family. Our publishers and CEO are always willing to try new things, and they often look to our romance division for experimentation and innovation.

**Q7: What's your preferred setting for a book?**

I don't think I have a preference for one particular setting, but whenever or wherever the book is set, I want to feel like I'm there—whether it's WWII-era Paris, contemporary New York City, Regency London, or down home on a ranch.

**Q8: What are you looking forward to most about coming to New Zealand?**

The flight. Just kidding! In addition to meeting so many writers, I'm looking forward to learning more about the culture, checking out the glowworm caves—and Hobbiton, of course.

**Q9: If you had one piece of advice for writers pitching to you at Conference, what would it be?**

Relax, and let's just have a conversation.

**Q10: Heels or flats?**

Cute and comfy is all I'm after.

**Leah, thank you for taking the time to answer these questions for us, and I know our members will be jumping at the chance to pitch to you.**

*Leah started her publishing career at age four at her local library, where she insisted on "helping organize" the children's section...by colour. She's currently the Editorial Director of Grand Central Publishing's Forever and Forever Yours romance lines, part of the Hachette Book Group. Her current authors include New York Times bestsellers Grace Burrowes, Jodi Ellen Malpas, Jamie McGuire, Carolyn Brown, Helena Hunting, and Katie MacAlister, among a number of others.*

## The Making Of A Good Villain

**Kris Pearson**



**A villain needs to be real, realistic, a living and breathing possibility. He or she is much scarier then. Mind you, I think all fictional characters should seem as real as possible. That's only my opinion though because I have no interest in creating cocky bad boys with**

**no sense of personal responsibility, or flighty heiresses only interested in clothes and putting other people down, or billionaires planning to buy virgins to despoil, or anyone setting up to peddle drugs or to inflict great pain on their fellow human beings. I don't know people like that – and I don't want to. But they all sell well!**

I think a good villain is all the more evil for appearing as real as you or me. Witness the incredible story of 'Doctor Death' which played again recently on TV. Dr Harold Shipman was a real doctor. Much admired. A grey-haired old sweetie who everyone trusted and loved and praised – until they found they couldn't. Over twenty years he killed more than two hundred and fifty people. He's Britain's worst-ever serial killer. Such a nice, kind man. Such an incredible villain. He may have started out with the best of intentions, but those intentions slipped downhill pretty rapidly once he got a taste for killing.

A villain, of course, doesn't have to be a killer. Maybe creepy unpleasantness is enough for your story? In my first sheikh novel my (then teenage) heroine came to the very sad conclusion that it was in her best interests not to report the son of the family for constantly masturbating outside her window. If she didn't watch, he created problems with her foster parents - his real parents. Even something like that can set your teeth on edge and really make you hate a person. Job done!

A villain who is purely evil with no redeeming humanity is far from fascinating. I'm writing two villains at the moment. One has a drinking problem and doesn't see that he's constantly crossing an invisible line and being offensive and dangerous. I'm not saying his drinking excuses him in the least – indeed it drives him to some absolutely unacceptable behaviour – but you can kind of see why he does it, and how his frustration with his own lack of worth leads him into a spiral of increasing evilness. You can have a tiny bit of sympathy for him.

The other is a funny villain, because I'm changing tack in

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my writing and trying something completely different. Again though, I'm needing to give him a real life and believable problems or he'll come off as nothing but a spoofy cardboard cut-out.

Really, your gun-waving chaos-causing baddies have to be real people first and foremost. Then it's a shock to find they're not who you thought they were, or not doing their dastardly deeds for the reasons you initially expected. A twist is never a bad thing.

So what might lead a perfectly reasonable person to turn bad? It's no doubt something in their past. Dig around and see what formed your proposed villain. Was he bullied at school? Over-indulged by wealthy parents? Not given proper attention by the rest of his family because of some unfortunate trait or incident? Molested when younger? Abandoned by someone who mattered, and left with a huge chip on his shoulder? That's only a tiny start, and they're pretty obvious reasons, but I'm sure you see what I mean. Get creative!

Good luck writing your next villain – if villains are your thing.

*Kris Pearson's working life has revolved around writing advertising. After stints at Hawkes Bay and Wellington radio stations she moved to TV, several advertising agencies, and then spent many happy years as a retail ad manager. Totally hooked on fabrics, she followed this by going into business with her husband as a curtain installer. (Obvious career progression!)*

*It was finally time to write fiction. In twenty years she hasn't fallen off her ladder once through drifting off into romantic dreams. All the places she's visited and people she's met on décor jobs have been wonderful inspiration for her settings and characters. She once stole a whole spectacular house, although politely 'built' some on to disguise it. She has indie-published fifteen contemporary romances, some translations, and is now heading toward mysteries.*

*“Everywhere I go I’m asked if I think the university stifles writers. My opinion is that they don’t stifle enough of them.”*

*– Flannery O’Connor*

*“Rejection slips, or form letters, however tactfully phrased, are lacerations of the soul, if not quite inventions of the devil—but there is no way around them.”*

*– Isaac Asimov*

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# The Dreaded Back Story Dump

Allison Lane

**Words had been flying onto the screen for nearly two hours when my fingers suddenly came to a screeching halt. I gulped, reviewed the 20 pages of rough draft I'd just written, then groaned. No wonder it had been so easy. My hero had used a friend's question to segue into an internal monologue on his childhood. I'd just dumped backstory.**

Now this particular bit of backstory IS important. The trauma the hero suffered forms much of his internal conflict and explains most of his motivation. But chapter five is way too soon to expose every nitty-gritty detail. A hint is all we want at this point. Actions or reactions that tell discerning readers he has old, unresolved issues. Perhaps he should sidestep his friend's question in a way that shouts his discomfort with the subject. Or maybe he should overreact to another character's comments, giving his friend the chance to shake his head and mutter about old sins casting long shadows. What should NOT happen in chapter five is smacking the reader upside the head with a meandering flashback unrelated to current plot action.

My warning collection contains a good example of how to misuse backstory. The plot in that particular book is decent. The conflicts are interesting. The motivation is strong. However, none of that starts unfolding until chapter eight. Why? The first seven chapters give potted histories of every person arriving at a country house party. The attention paid to the hero and heroine is no different from the attention given to the least important of the fifteen other characters outlined across these chapters. We don't even know who the hero and heroine are until the action starts. Since they aren't the first arrivals, we don't know who we are supposed to become attached to or who the villain is. Seven chapters of limbo is not endearing to most readers.

No matter how interesting the individual characters might be, this approach is boring. If I want to read brief biographies, there are numerous nonfiction books that can give me that experience. I pick up fiction for the story. Yes, I need to know about the characters, including their strengths and weaknesses. And yes, these strengths and weaknesses are usually rooted in their histories. But this information should be doled out in small packets spread throughout the story. Divulging a major pre-existing trauma should form one of the turning points. It should not be dumped up front. While it's true that authors need to know the entire backstory before starting a book – characters can become shallow or inconsistent otherwise – the readers don't need the whole thing, and they don't

want it.

So I'll be moving these twenty pages into my 'axed' file. Bits and pieces will move back into the manuscript as needed, though much of it will remain unused. The core of this particular trauma won't re-emerge until just before the black moment, when its revelation will form the wrenching confession the hero makes to the heroine.

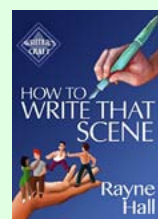
I never pitch the axed file for any book, by the way. Its contents can sometimes be recycled into future work. For example, I had to ax a ballroom scene from an early manuscript, a glittering masquerade that turned out to be mostly fluff. The only relevant action from that scene was a brief conversational exchange the heroine could easily repeat to a friend the next morning. But several books later I needed a masquerade, so I pulled that scene out. With only a few changes, it became the perfect vehicle for an important turning point of that later story. And when I again needed a masquerade, that hostess's event became an annual affair that ultimately turned up in several books.

But that happened long ago. For now, I have to figure out how to fill chapter five...



Award-winning author Allison Lane has enjoyed a lifelong affair with books. Born in Minnesota, she earned degrees in mathematics and computer science from the University of Illinois, then embarked on careers designing computer software and teaching classical piano, before settling on writing novels. Among her many awards is the Romantic Times Career Achievement Award and being named a finalist for RWA's RITA award. Allison and her husband currently reside in California. Visit her website at <http://www.eclectics.com/allisonlane/>

## The Bookshelf



### How To Write That Scene

Rayne Hill

<https://www.amazon.com/dp/B07B3ZZZMM>

Learn how professional authors craft scenes, and apply the techniques to your fiction. This book shows you how to choose the cast of characters and the point-of-view, how to work with plot events and create conflict, how to build tension and conflict, and how to rework a dull scene to make it sparkle.

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### How To Write A Swoon-Worthy Sweet Romance Novel

Victorine E. Lieske

<https://www.amazon.com/dp/B07BT526JC>

Romance novels aren't like other genres and hitting all the things that romance readers want can be tricky. How do you make your readers believe your characters are falling in love? How do you show that sizzle of attraction? How do you write a good kissing scene? How do you bring in the much-needed tension but still have your characters flirting and getting closer? In this book NYT Bestselling author Victorine Lieske deconstructs one of her romance novels (Acting Married) and uses it as a teaching tool—basically interrupting the story to tell you what she was thinking and why as she wrote the book.

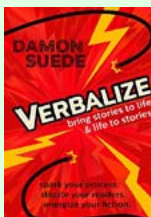


### The Secrets Of Story

Matt Bird

<https://www.amazon.com/dp/B01N7HV0CT>

The Secrets of Story provides comprehensive, audience-focused strategies for becoming a master storyteller. Armed with the Ultimate Story Checklist, you can improve every aspect of your fiction writing with incisive questions. To succeed in the world of fiction and film, you have to work on every aspect of your craft and satisfy your audience. Do both—and so much more—with The Secrets of Story.



### Verbalize

Damon Suede

<https://www.amazon.com/dp/B07B63CTKX>

Fascinating fiction starts with characters who make readers care. This Live Wire Writer Guide presents

a simple, effective technique to sharpen your hook, charge your scenes, and amplify your voice whether you're a beginner or an expert.



### How To Write A Dynamite Scene Using The Snowflake Method

Randy Ingermanson

<https://www.amazon.com/dp/B07CLT4QPQ>

The secret to writing a dynamite novel is to first write a dynamite scene. Because if you can write one terrific scene, you can write a hundred. And that's a novel. This is a short book, with just one goal—to teach you the simple principles you can use right now to design a powerful scene before you write it. If you've already written your novel, you can use these same principles to make each scene better.



### 400 Things Cops Know: Street-Smart Lessons From A Veteran Patrolman

Adam Plantinga

<https://www.amazon.com/dp/B00NM6R21O>

Nearly everyone has wondered what it's like to be a police officer, but no civilian really understands what happens on the job. "400 Things Cops Know" shows police work on the inside, from the viewpoint of the regular cop on the beat—a profession that can range from rewarding to bizarre to terrifying, all within the course of an eight-hour shift. Written by veteran police sergeant Adam Plantinga, "400 Things Cops Know" brings the reader into life the way cops experience it.

*"All the information you need can be given in dialogue."*

— Elmore Leonard

# Rock-Chic & Glad Rags: It's That Time Of Year Again

Kendra Delugar



As I sit here writing this it's two and a half months until the RWNZ 2018 When Loves Come to Town Conference. (And by the time you read this it will be less than two. Getting close, huh?)

This year we have two themed events...

The first is the Friday night 'Rocktail' Party in honour of our U2 and BB King inspired conference name. So, with that in mind, come as your favourite rock star, music decade, dig out that old Rolling Stones t-shirt, or get your punk rock on—its completely up to you. You can go as full on or as low key as you want. And just in case you're not feeling very rock'n roll right now and need to get a little pumped, this should do it for you: <https://bit.ly/1A3Q8L9> (\*laughs\* For those of us on the conference committee it has become the backing-track of our lives right now.)

And the second event is Saturday night's 25th Anniversary Silver Awards Dinner. It's a huge milestone for the RWNZ, so come 'sparkle in silver' with us. Whether it be in silver strappy sandals, a silver tie or cufflinks, a pretty brooch, a silver throw, or maybe you'll decide to empty your *entire* jewellery box. Come and add to the bling.

And remember, if dressing up isn't your thing, that's fine too. We have those who (like me) have never grown out of it, and those who just want to come along, have fun and see the sights. So no pressure—we always have a mix of both.

I look forward to seeing you there,

Kendra Delugar  
RWNZ Conference Convenor, (2018)

## From The Editor



Hello! This is Gillian. It is with great pleasure that I bring you the June issue of Heart to Heart. We are a little later than we'd like to be, as this month saw a lot happening. Megan is on her way to America as I type this, the culmination of a

**lot of last minute planning. I became an Aunt for the second time, and I also published one novel, finished the first draft of another one, and attended a pony themed birthday party (seventeen under-fives—yikes!). I'm still waiting for the dust to settle!**

Megan and I were planning to write this editorial together. It was to be symbolic of the magazine passing from one editor to the next. Unfortunately life happened, and the handover did not happen exactly as planned. I hope you'll excuse us, and give us our support as we work on future issues. Megan is sticking around to give me guidance and moral support as I get the hang of this. I also have Ruth, our veteran formatter, as I settle in, the encouragement of the Christchurch chapter and past editors, so I feel like I'm in good hands.

There is no better time to get involved with Heart to Heart than now! I'm looking for anyone who would like to contribute a regular feature—an ask the editor section where a copy editor or developmental editor member answers writer questions? Or perhaps one of our more established writer members would be willing to contribute a brief monthly summary so we can see what a year in the life of a best-selling author looks like. If you've got other ideas for a recurring section, let me know!

I'm also keen to feature member articles. This organization has an amazing amount of knowledge and a wonderful willingness to share it. In July, I'm looking for articles about staying healthy while writing—think managing stress and self-doubt, and balancing taking care of your physical well-being while also juggling writing commitments, family and social activities. In August, the theme is travel. How do you use setting? How to market kiwi romances to International audiences? In September, I'm thinking about the tools of a writer's trade, so if you'd like to review a piece of software, an ergonomic keyboard, or a productivity app, let me know!

I'd also like your feedback on how I can make sure that Heart to Heart continues to serve the needs of RWNZ members. Please get in touch at [heart2hearteditor@romancewriters.co.nz](mailto:heart2hearteditor@romancewriters.co.nz) with any comments, questions or suggestions!

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And finally, I'd like to finish this editorial how it started—with Megan. I've left her picture at the top, because she did most of the work putting this issue together in some very hectic circumstances. She's done an amazing job as editor, and I hope you'll all join me in thanking her for her hard work—and hoping that she sees all the squirrels her heart desires in the States.

*Gillian*

## Heart To Heart Format & Layout Designer Wanted

We have an exciting opportunity to join the H2H team. Our current format & layout designer is stepping down and we're on the lookout for someone to take the reins and, together with Gillian, continue to make the H2H the great magazine it is.

As format & layout designer your job will be take all the content gathered for the issue and put it all together into the finished product - ready for sending out to all our members. No specific experience is required and style guides and sample layouts will be available for you. This is an opportunity to leave your own mark on the H2H as there is some leeway to design the pages and collate the content so it makes the best use of the space available.

You can use any software programme you feel comfortable using.

If you have any questions or you would like to volunteer, please contact: [heart2hearteditor@romancewriters.co.nz](mailto:heart2hearteditor@romancewriters.co.nz)

*“All the words I use in my stories can be found in the dictionary—it's just a matter of arranging them into the right sentences.”*

*— Somerset Maugham*

## The Welcome Mat

We're rolling out the red carpet this month for another lovely group of new and returning members. Welcome, everyone! It's great to have you with us.

Anna True - Australia

Debra Deasey - Australia

Delwyn Jenkins - Australia

Denise Henigan - Auckland

Fiona Simpson - Australia

Janette Hankinson - Australia

Joan Wright - Australia

Karen van Geelen- Australia

Linda Hills - Australia

Madeline Williams - Australia

Maggie Mundy - Australia

Melanie Milburne - Australia

Michelle Vernal - Christchurch

Phillipa Clark - Australia

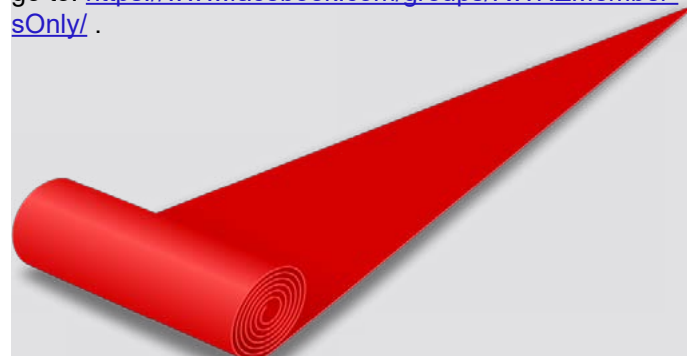
Renee Geelen - Australia

Suzanne Hamilton - Australia

Don't forget to read the INFORMATION FOR NEW MEMBERS page on our website

<https://www.romancewriters.co.nz/membership/information-new-members/>

Of course, you'll need to login before you can access the members' area, but you'll find information there about how to join the RWNZ Members-Only Facebook page, go to: <https://www.facebook.com/groups/RWNZMembersOnly/>.





# Eureka: Blending Speculative Fiction into Romance

**Eleni Konstantine**



**When I wrote my first novel during a correspondence writing course, it was a sweet contemporary romance.**

**However, something was missing from it.**

**I 've always loved all sorts of stories, but the ones with the biggest wow factor for me were the stories with a speculative fiction (spec fic) slant.**

## **What exactly is speculative fiction, I hear you ask?**

It's an umbrella term of fiction narrative containing fantastical elements, such as fantasy, science fiction, superhero tales, horror and supernatural, a combination of these, and their sub-genres.

Basically, this includes everything from myth and magic, space travel, discovery of new planets/worlds, ghosts, monsters, zombies, dragons, wizards/witches, scientific discoveries, 'evil' entities, survival, disasters, showing different societal and political structures (some to the extreme), and questions the human condition.

There is something extraordinary about escaping this known world and entering another unknown one, which takes to the 'what if' question to another level. What isn't there to like - anything could happen!

It was influences such as Jennifer Roberson, Marion Zimmer-Bradley, and David & Leigh Eddings that fuelled my passion for fantasy as an adult. When I started writing another manuscript, it became a quest fantasy.

I could let my imagination run wild.

But this time, it was the romance aspect I couldn't let go of. After all, love including romantic love, is what people want in their lives whether they know it or not.

Eureka - I could combine the two genres! The story thus became a fantasy with romantic elements and writing it 'felt' right.

Adding spec fic elements to romance (or vice versa) is a strong combination and can attract a variety of readers. While the speculative world can provide great plot devices, it's the emotional world including romance that makes that world believable. The reader can relate emotionally even if the situation and world is beyond belief.

I am a member of a group of like-minded writers who enjoy writing and reading speculative fiction with a varying degree of romance or romantic elements - the DarkSide DownUnder (DSDU). Our work falls into a wide range of sub-genres. These can overlap and is part of the joy of writing speculative fiction.

It also has made it difficult for mainstream publishers and book sellers to know exactly where to place these stories. With the rise of digital and self-publishing, multiple 'shelving' with categories and keywords, it has allowed these cross genres to find a home easier, especially for niche markets. In some cases, it has allowed an indie author cross into the mainstream (e.g. Amanda Hocking).

Some spec fic sub-genres DarkSiders write include:

- Dark Fantasy / Horror
- Dark Urban Fantasy / Urban Fantasy
- Dystopian / Post-Apocalyptic
- Fantasy / Fantasy Romance
- Mythological Romance
- Paranormal / Paranormal Adventure / Paranormal Romance
- Romantic Erotica / Erotic Paranormal Romance
- Sci Fi / Space Opera / SFR - Sci Fi Romance / Futuristic /Futuristic Romance
- Steampunk

The varying range shows there's no limit to the imagination.

You can find tales with:

- A fantasy world with demons fight half demons and humans (Kylie Griffin's The Light Blade series).
- Futuristic Melbourne with werewolves and vampires (Keri Arthur's Riley Jensen Guardian series and it's spin off, the Dark Angels series).
- Gladiators in space (Anna Hackett's Gladiator series).
- Mythological creatures paying a Magic tax and hunted by the Magic Mafia (Nicola E. Sheridan's Myth and Magic series).
- The world of fairy (Shona Husk's two Annwyn series).
- Worlds where magic and technology live hand-in-hand (Denise Rossetti's The Four-Sided Pentacle).
- A Paranormal Investigator (Janni Nell's Allegra Fairweather series).
- Reapers (Shelley Russell Nolan's Reaper series).
- A teenage cyborg (Maree Anderson's Freaks series).

And the stories go on and on...

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- Gods (Efthalia, Juanita Kees, Peta Crake, Lana Pacherczyk).
- Shifters (Mel Teshco, Khloe Wren, Leisl Leighton).
- Vampires (Daniel de Lorne, Christina Phillips, Astrid Cooper, C.M. Simpson)
- Demons (T.J. Nichols, Cheryse Durrant, Cathleen Ross)
- Life in Space (S.E. Gilchrist, Imogene Nix, Donna Maree Hanson)
- Steampunk (Lilliana Rose, Theresa Fuller)
- High fantasy worlds (M.J. Scott, Rowena Cory Daniells)
- Genetic engineering (J.L. Addicoat)

And so forth ...you can find more DarkSiders and their stories at our website: <http://darksidedownunder.com>



Eleni Konstantine writes speculative fiction. She has a number of shorts published and is currently working on longer fiction. Eleni lives in Adelaide, Australia with her family and feisty Rottweiler and is the website/blog mistress for the DarkSide DownUnder. You can find Eleni at her website: [elenikonstantine.com](http://elenikonstantine.com).

Get *Apprentice Bound*, a free fantasy short story: <https://bit.ly/2HLBJeX>

*“And as imagination bodies forth  
The forms of things unknown,  
the poet’s pen  
Turns them to shapes and gives  
to airy nothing  
A local habitation and a name.”*

— William Shakespeare (from *A Midsummer Night’s Dream*)

## From The President

Half way through 2018, isn't this year speeding by? I'm right in the middle of my current WIP due to my editor 1 August, and I picked that date so I could enjoy RWNZ conference conscience free. I didn't want to have to be writing while at conference. I better not be late with this book then (those of you who know me I am often late, so bad!).

That's one of the things you learn when you begin publishing. Your life revolves around deadlines. Sometimes I feel like I'm back at school or university, where I have to hand in a project or essay by a due date. I hated it then and I hate it now, but that is how this industry works.

I know some writers self publish because they don't want this deadline pressure. But even if you are self-publishing you need to be disciplined enough to set your own dates. If you book in an editor or copy editor for instance, you can't muck up their schedule. Freelance editors plan out their bookings, and bookings means they earn money. If you miss a delivery date that is work they are no longer getting paid for that month. So you are playing with someone's livelihood. Professionalism is often mentioned in our writing world and it is so true. It's a business like no other, and yet the same as others.

I have several projects on the go with different publishers and I use a large COLLINS Wall Planner and mark all my important dates on it so I can see each day when things are due.

I'm sure you all have different ways of managing your yearly output. Perhaps we should share some on our RWNZ Members FB page because even if you aren't published, sometimes it's a great motivator to have a circled date on your calendar to keep you motivated to finish the God Damn Book, as Barbara Clendon use to say.

Speaking of dates. We have changed the contest dates for RWNZ. You can view the changes on our website. <https://www.romancewriters.co.nz/contests/>. We needed to spread the contests out more so that we can manage them appropriately. One of the main changes is to the date for the start of the Pacific Hearts (our unpublished authors) Contest. It now opens 1 February 2019. So that is our unpublished authors' first date on the calendar. 1 February for the completion of your manuscript.

Good luck!

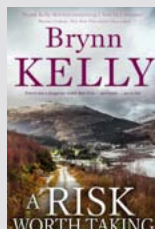
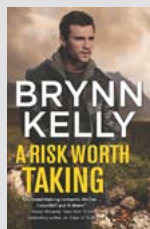
Happy Writing

Bronwen Evans



## Woos & Hoos

Join us and celebrate this month's woos & hoos.  
Congratulations to everyone mentioned!



Brynn Kelly's New Zealand-set novella *Forbidden River* has finalised in the RITA. The final book in her Legionnaires series for HQN, *A Risk Worth Taking*, has just been released.

Forbidden River: [www.amazon.com.au/Forbidden-River-Legionnaires-Brynn-Kelly-ebook/dp/B07C83LLBN/](http://www.amazon.com.au/Forbidden-River-Legionnaires-Brynn-Kelly-ebook/dp/B07C83LLBN/)

A Risk Worth Taking: [www.amazon.com.au/Risk-Worth-Taking-Legionnaires-ebook/dp/B07B11RDKK/](http://www.amazon.com.au/Risk-Worth-Taking-Legionnaires-ebook/dp/B07B11RDKK/)



*Making Up*, the third book in Lucy Parker's London Celebrities series, releases on May 28 in e-book and audio, with paperback to follow in July. The books are all set in the West End theatres of London, with this one featuring a circus artist heroine and makeup artist hero.

<https://goo.gl/CTLJJd>

Samantha Burton (w/a Jayne Castel) is releasing *Battle Eagle* (Book #3 in The Warrior Brothers of Skye) on 31 May 2018. The novel, set in Dark Ages Scotland, is currently available on pre-order. <https://www.amazon.com/dp/B07BGD73C7>



Gillian St. Kevern released the fourth book in her Deep Magic series: *Morgen Prince*. <http://www.amazon.com/dp/B07CZW7G8H>



Annie Seaton has a busy month with three new releases:

1 June: *Beach Walk*

<http://www.annieseaton.net/bondi-beach-love.html>

8 June: *Bondi Beach Love Boxed Set*

<https://www.amazon.com.au/Bondi-Beach-Love-Boxed-Set-ebook/dp/B07CBT449B>

15 June: The long awaited new Outback series from Annie Seaton: *Second Chance Bay*, the new book in the Her Outback Playboy series: <https://www.amazon.com.au/Outback-Playboy-Second-Chance-Book-ebook/dp/B07C31C6Z5>



Lissa Carlino's debut adult contemporary, *Woman Enough* is out now on Amazon & select US stores. She will have a release party/book signing in USA in July followed by one in September in Wellington. *Woman Enough* is about an exotic dancer who faces down social stigma and struggles with addiction as she fights for her right to dignity in a world saturated with #metoo abuses. Find out more at [lissacarlino.com](http://lissacarlino.com) <http://a.co/8OfgOZG>

*"A blank piece of paper is God's way of telling us how hard it to be God."*

— Sidney Sheldon



# Book Review: The Emotion Thesaurus

Gillian St Kevern, Judy L. Mohr & Emma Lowe

**This is a book review with a difference. Three authors, all writing in different genres/sub-genres, reviewing the same book. Since the theme of this month's issue of Heart to Heart is wounds, what better book to look at than one that aims to help writers convey those all important wounds without leaning on the dreaded info dump? I asked Emma Lowe and Judy L. Mohr to join me in reviewing The Emotion Thesaurus by Angela Ackerman and Becca Puglisi**



**Emma Lowe**

I'm sure we all have a favourite book. One that becomes a constant companion on our writers' journey. For me, that book is in fact a series of books. But I'm going

to introduce you to just one for now. Angela Ackerman and Becca Puglisi's 'Emotion Thesaurus.'

Romance is all about emotion. Be it in actions, reactions or simply words. The whole romance arc leads back to the journey between our hero and heroine. For me, my early journey was often blighted by repetitive actions... 'he nodded', 'she rolled her eyes', 'he shrugged' - all very valid terms, but they didn't really help reflect the emotion of a scene.

Then I attended the RWNZ conference in Auckland, and the Emotion Thesaurus was in the book shop. It proved to be a real eye opener, and has since become a constant companion.

He rolled his eyes, in a contemptuous context became a sneer, a shaking of the head, cold eyes and a pinched mouth. Things that I didn't necessarily relate to contempt until I used the thesaurus.

She shrugged with disbelief became a loss for words, she paled, she ran her hands through her hair and turned away. Or she double took.

Each section is narrowed down to a specific emotion, be it Anger, Irritation, Disbelief, Gratitude, Nervousness. Then that emotion is further narrowed down into sections that include a definition, physical signals, internal sensations, mental responses, etc. All emotional markers that we can see if we people watch as so many writers do, but skips the lengthy journey to recognising those emotions and offers it all in a paperback book that is right there, within reach at any time. What more can we ask for?

For me, the Emotion Thesaurus stays in my bag every

day, and when it's not in my bag then it's sat on my desk along with its companions The Emotional Wound Thesaurus, The Positive Traits Thesaurus, The Negative Traits Thesaurus, The Urban Settings Thesaurus and The Rural Settings Thesaurus, and every other thesaurus my husband bought when I said I needed one!!

I seriously recommend it for any writer, no matter what stage of their career they're at. It's a worthwhile investment.



**Judy L. Mohr**

Within my own writing, I find that I'm an "immediate" writer. What I mean by this is that while I do plot, it's when I'm writing that the flavour of my voice comes in. The emotional impact of a scene needs to be present from the word go and not some-

thing that's developed through edits. As a consequence, I rely on resources that help me to bring the show to my storytelling, quickly. If a resource forces me to read through a mountain of text to get that one little tidbit of information, I won't use it.

The Emotion Thesaurus by Angela Ackerman and Becca Puglisi and its companion Emotion Amplifiers are among the books that live by my computer. While the beginning parts of The Emotion Thesaurus delves into the concepts behind show vs tell, the bulk of the book is just a series of lists of the reactions that a character feeling a particular emotion might express—external and internal. Emotion Amplifiers is the same. In some cases, the reactions will contradict one another, but it's my job as the writer to choose exactly how my characters would react. Those books only provide ideas that are worth exploring.

I adore these books so much that I have both the Kindle version for when I'm out and about, and a printed version for at home. However, I will admit it's not that easy to flick through the Kindle version quickly, so it doesn't get used as often as the paper copy.

As a freelance editor, I'm selective about the books that I recommend for others to use. I will always ensure that there is some intrinsic value to the book itself.

The entire collection of books by Angela Ackerman and Becca Puglisi are always at the top of my list. These books are structured in such a way that you can get to the crux of information quickly, without getting bogged down into details. For the writer who just wants to get on with writing, these books are well worth the money.



**Gillian St. Kevern**

The Emotion Thesaurus is one of those books for writers that gets recommended time and time again. I rolled my eyes when I first heard about it. A thesaurus of ways a character could react in a given situation—what was that but a sure fire way to ensure cookie-cutter writ-

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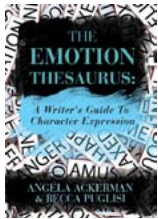


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ing? To me, the book seemed a sure-fire way to kill the creative joy associated with writing. Without ever having picked it up, I knew this book was not for me.

Flash forward to November last year. I'm at a writing group, and we're sitting around a table, catching up on each other's progress. While sipping my chai latte, I notice a pile of books on the table. 'The Emotion Thesaurus' is at the top. *That* book. Out of curiosity, I pick it up. Flicking through it, I am immediately struck by how many internal and external cues for each of the emotions are listed--and guiltily conscious of the e-mail I got from my editor recently. Apparently I'd used the phrase 'Ben chewed his lip' eleven separate times in the same novel.

Okay, fine, I thought. Maybe this would be helpful. Reluctantly, I picked up a copy on Amazon--and to my surprise, it's become a really useful resource, primarily in the editing stages. It's been especially useful in deepening the emotional nuances of my writing and adding depth to characters--something that I'm still working to improve! I think this is a useful tool for writers at any stage of their journey. As an added bonus, the introduction includes one of the best examples of 'showing not telling' I've encountered in a writing book, so if that's advice you get a lot, I'd highly recommend this book for that alone.



#### **The Emotion Thesaurus Blurp:**

One of the biggest problem areas for writers is conveying a character's emotions to the reader in a unique, compelling way. This book comes to the rescue by highlighting 75 emotions and listing the possible body language cues, thoughts, and

visceral responses for each.

Using its easy-to-navigate list format, readers can draw inspiration from character cues that range in intensity to match any emotional moment. The Emotion Thesaurus also tackles common emotion-related writing problems and provides methods to overcome them.

This writing tool encourages authors to show, not tell emotion and is a creative brainstorming resource for any fiction project.

*Em Lowe is the author of several short stories under various pseudonyms. Her principal publications though are written academically with a focus on literature and tourism. These days, when she's not being wife, mum, chief cook and bottle washer, she finds herself in coffee shops and libraries around Christchurch with her well-recognised pink laptop, losing herself in the romance stories she writes.*

*Kiwi Judy L Mohr is a writer of thrillers, fantasy and science fiction. She is also a freelance editor with Black Wolf Editorial Services, working on projects from writers around the world. When she isn't writing, editing, or doing something for writing within the local community, she is hosting her own radio show about science on KLRN Radio. You can follow her crazy adventures on her blog ([judylmohr.com](http://judylmohr.com)) or on Twitter (@JudyLMohr).*

*Gillian St. Kevern has written everything from contemporary comedy to vintage mystery, and is currently exploring high fantasy--all with an LGBTQ focus. Her main love is the paranormal, in particular vampires.*

## Regional Round-Up Reports

**Auckland**  
**Convener: Ruth Bell**  
([ruth.s.clough@gmail.com](mailto:ruth.s.clough@gmail.com))

Our June speaker was Ada Maria Soto who very kindly (and bravely) stepped in at the last minute when our scheduled speaker was unable to attend. Thanks so much Ada for agreeing to present your topic a month earlier! Ada's topic was Fanfiction Is Good For You. During her presentation, Ada gave us the low down on all types of fanfiction and how it can be used to better your writing. It's a great way to learn various writing skills such as dialogue, word building, characterisation etc without having to start from scratch. Fanfiction allows you to play in someone else's sandbox and learn and hone your writing skills in an established universe. It's like having training wheels or as Ada put it - a safety wire as you walk across a tightrope at circus camp. It's also great for trying your

hand at new genres, getting feedback and learning accountability and disciplining yourself to write regularly. We also learned that there is a fanfiction community and/or fandom for absolutely everything - and they are just a google search away!

**Coast to Coast**  
**Convener: Vivienne Matthews**  
([vivienmatthewswriter@gmail.com](mailto:vivienmatthewswriter@gmail.com))

In our May meeting Netta Newbound spoke to our group about her company Junction Publishing which opened up to authors in October 2017 (previously Netta was self-publishing under Junction Publishing). In the seven months they've been operating Junction have signed on five of our C2C authors - some previously published by other companies, some self-published and some not yet

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published authors. The main point that seems to set Junction Publishing apart from other publishers is the marketing. They actively assist you to get your books out in the public eye and as a team the authors signed up under Junction promote each other's work via Facebook, Twitter, banner competitions and more. It sounds like a supportive and fun group to publish with. If you're interested, check them out at [www.junction-publishing.com](http://www.junction-publishing.com)

**Hawkes Bay**  
**Convenor: Kendra Delugar**  
( [kendraonthemove@hotmail.com](mailto:kendraonthemove@hotmail.com) )

Our May meeting was held at Mariana's, where we caught up with on what we'd all been doing, and celebrated the fact that I'd (grins) finaled in the RWNZ First Kiss Contest. Then we got onto our homework, which was to look at how each of us tackled characterisation in our books. Several girls had to leave early, but the ones that stayed on went through the introduction of their heroine, showing how with a few precise words, or the odd sen-

tence you could highlight a character's personality/goals/background/weaknesses even without losing the pace of the opening few pages. We meet on the first Saturday of the month at 1pm, and new members are always welcome. Our next meeting will be held on the 2nd of June at Bronwen's and we'll be working on backstory and how to deliver it.

**Wellington/Kapiti Coast**  
**Convenor: Jane Ashurst**  
([11131.nz.move@googlemail.com](mailto:11131.nz.move@googlemail.com))

A great turn out this week saw us arrive en masse at Anna's home in Paekakariki. A few familiar faces were missing - sadly including Floyd the cat, but we were finally able to welcome Anne to the group in person due to her heroic use of annual leave. After introductions and updates, we warmed up with a group story-building exercise and ended up with some severely entangled relationships that caused more than a few laughs and raised eyebrows. A brief discussion of the new GDPR laws and also Instagram left us with some homework to do. Jane shared her adaptable checklist for launching, and the group was able to give some critique on covers and blurbs. Blurbs are the intended focus for the gathering next month on the 9th of June, 1pm; venue will be confirmed via email.

**Nelson**  
**Convenor: LaVerne Clark**  
([nelsonromancewriters@xtra.co.nz](mailto:nelsonromancewriters@xtra.co.nz))

Although we were only a small group this month due to various reasons, Lorna Croft's second session of her workshop on Show vs Tell was very well received. It was a really informative presentation and will be a great help to all of us who strive to keep improving our writing. Even though Annika wasn't well enough to attend the meeting, she still managed to spoil us with yummy cake

to have with our coffee and tea. Next month, we're looking forward to have Dave from CopyPress, a local self-publishing company, come and talk to us about some of the options open to writers these days. It promises to be a fabulous meeting! Next month's meeting is Saturday 9 May at 2pm, venue: Nick Smith's meeting rooms on Quarantine Road. All welcome!

**Christchurch**  
**Convenor: Lyssa Randolph**  
([lyssarandolph@hotmail.com](mailto:lyssarandolph@hotmail.com))

The Christchurch chapter group met on Sunday afternoon for an interesting session lead by members, Megan Herles-Mooar and Em Lowe. Megan and Em spoke about character wounds in relation to plotting, and the importance of wounds for driving conflict between the protagonists and the plot of a romance. Megan brought along Angela Ackerman and Becca Puglisi's *Thesaurus*; many have found this a useful resource. The workshop addressed the range and nature of wounds that a character might experience, and how these might be manifested throughout stages of the character's life/development. Together we explored how psychological wounds might be manifested in two characters, exacerbate each other's, and discussed the importance of deepening the wound at each stage. The group would like to thank the talented and generous Megan for her work as editor on the *Heart to Heart* magazine over the past year, and to congratulate and thank Gillian St Kevern for taking on the role of editor next. The next meeting of the chapter will be Sunday 10 June from 2-4pm at the South Library.

**Otago**  
**Convenor: Maria King**  
([franciscowie@gmail.com](mailto:franciscowie@gmail.com))

We had an informative meeting at Rhubarb Cafe on Saturday May 5th, with four of our small group in attendance, including our newest member Carol-Ann. We spent the first hour in general discussion about what we were all up to writing wise, then went on to discuss Facebook advertising, character development, and each of us shared our favourite resources that are available on the internet. Our next meeting is June the 16th all going well with the Otago weather.

**Blenheim Convenor: Iona Jones** ([ionajones@xtra.co.nz](mailto:ionajones@xtra.co.nz))