

# Heart to Heart

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ROMANCE WRITERS  
OF NEW ZEALAND

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## Why Every Writer Should Visit Berlin

Rachel Stedman



**I first visited Berlin in 1992. The Berlin Wall had come down three years prior, but in '92 its metaphorical shadow still loomed large, and long lengths of it remained.**

**Back then, West Berlin felt cosmopolitan but soulless while East Berlin was drab and bleak. The city was full of road works, because the tram tracks in the East didn't match those in the West, and if you visited the East, it was hard to phone out as the phone system of East Germany was *seriously* antiquated.**

The crumbling apartment buildings and roads of East Berlin were in disrepair and the place was full of soviet-style cars pouring exhaust fumes into the narrow streets.

Fast forward to 2017, when we returned.

It's hard to understate the changes. Berlin is now a vibrant metropolis. It's full of fascinating alleys and side streets, amazing restaurants, art galleries and the best sector of all is the old East Berlin. Once-drab apartments have been restored, and now the place is clean, bright and exciting. I found it safe, too – when walking at night, I was never threatened or felt uncomfortable.

To my mind, every creative should visit Berlin once in his/her life. This is why:

### 1. The Wall.

Seeing the remains of the Berlin Wall and its profoundly tangible consequence is a stark reminder of why artificial barriers always fail. Sectioning one element of a community from another weakens the entire community - but we never learn, do we? Every generation, another leader

comes along and says "these people/this religion/this political system is bad, and we must separate ourselves from it, lest it overwhelm us". Yet, the truth is, of course, that the mixing of ideas and communities is inevitable. But still, we delude ourselves that ideas can be quarantined.

### 2. Stumbling Stones (Stolperstein).

The stolperstein are cobblestone-sized plaques. They're set into the footpaths outside Berlin apartments and bear the name and life dates of victims of Nazi persecution. [Link: <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Stolperstein> ] It's sad (and disconcerting) to step daily over the names of those who once lived in the same building as you. It's hard to forget the past once it wears a human face. And what is more human than a name?

### 3. The gardens and parks.

Berliners appreciate their public spaces. That's because many were almost destroyed in the War; much of the urban landscape of Berlin is relatively recent. There's nothing like nearly losing something to make you value it. The Wall has left its mark, too - the corridor marked by the Wall became a haven for wildlife. Some parts of Berlin are greener and more beautiful as a consequence of the Wall.

### 4. Culture.

According to Time Out, [link: <https://www.timeout.com/berlin/en/art-galleries/best-berlin-art-galleries>] you can't fling a currywurst without hitting an art gallery in Berlin. From traditional to contemporary, Berlin is full of the galleries and sculpture. Plus, the architecture is amazing: from Prussian-establishment to Soviet style, the cityscape is extraordinarily diverse.

### 5. What price art?

Berlin is also known for its reflective, regretful installations. The most moving is the *Memorial to the Murdered Jews of Europe*, [Link: [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Memorial\\_to\\_the\\_Murdered\\_Jews\\_of\\_Europe](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Memorial_to_the_Murdered_Jews_of_Europe)] a 19,000 sq metre site of grey concrete coffin-shaped stelae. The installation slopes downward so the stelae grow deeper and the space grows darker as you move through.

But for me the most thought-provoking place was the Kunsthau Dahlem, [Link: <http://kunsthau-dahlem.de/en/history-of-the-building/up-to-1945/>] former atelier of popular Third Reich sculptor Arno Breker. This small-but-monumental space was commissioned by the Fuhrer for

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Breker. After WW2, Breker maintained he had never been a supporter of the Nazis, merely an acceptor of their patronage. [Link: [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Arno\\_Breker](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Arno_Breker)] Now, looking back I wonder: was Breker's art good, or bad?

Berlin's vibe of restoration, regret and rebirth is a heady mix. If you go there, take good shoes and plenty of time, because it's a large city with plenty of parks, galleries and historical places to explore.

It's true, Berlin has seen more than its fair share of tragedy. But this makes it a perfect city to visit - because in every tragedy there's a possibility of redemption, and in every tragedy there's a tale to be told.

*Writing as R. L. Stedman, Rachel weaves award-winning tales of fantasy and magic for adults and kids. Visit her on her website [www.RLStedman.com](http://www.RLStedman.com) and download [Welcome To Faery](#), a free collection of fairytales.*

## Romance Down Under

Tracey Alvarez



**Back in the good ol' days before self-publishing became a thing (and then an even bigger thing) we were told by the publishing 'industry' that settings other than the USA and UK were a no-no in romance. Times**

**have definitely changed and Romancelandia has opened up for readers to travel vicariously to our little corner of the world. And, in my experience, they are HUNGRY for NZ and Australian set books. Both the two biggest powerhouse markets (the US & UK) are loving the freshness of Down Under settings, and there's no better time to capitalize on that fascination. We do live in a paradise that we often take for granted, forgetting that to a reader in Oklahoma or London, everything about our landscape and customs are new and exotic.**

**Some things to think about...**

### **Fictional setting vs. IRL**

In my two contemporary romance series I have done both, and there are pros and cons for an author when making this decision. Let's start with an IRL setting, in

my case, the small town of Oban on Stewart Island. I preface all my books with a licence of creative expression (AKA fudging some details to suit the story) because sometimes a 100% real life setting detail won't work. I've renamed Oban businesses like the town's hotel/bar/restaurant and added fictional ones, switched the location of playing fields and other less important landmarks, and made up names for bays and streets. But even my IRL setting is partially fictionalised, there is an authenticity that works believably with that setting. There are no skyscrapers, trains or pizza delivery in my world, because in Oban's world, that wouldn't make sense. Believability (even if locals reading your story might roll their eyes a little because you've got a traffic light on the wrong corner) is the key to sucking readers into your IRL world.

Onto fictional settings. My second series is set in a small-to-medium sized beach town in the Far North of New Zealand, which I named Bounty Bay. Although fictional, it's loosely based on a mash-up of Ahipara, Kaitiaia, and Ninety Mile Beach – for those of you who know the area. I lived in this part of the country for almost a decade, so I've got some factual insight, but I decided I only wanted to use parts of the setting to create Bounty Bay. The key to fictional settings is consistency, and again, believability. It's adding enough detail that readers think they could step onto the streets of your fictional landscape and easily navigate around.

Tip: In both fictional and IRL New Zealand settings, Google/Google Maps/Google Earth and networking with other authors are your best mates.

### **How much local flavour is too much?**

**Dialogue:** I imagine most of us have heard a non New Zealander or Australian trying to mimic our accent and cringed with embarrassment. I don't enjoy seeing that kind of stereotyped, "G'day mate, toss another snag on the barbie, sweet as," in books. While international audiences may have some expectation of that kind of slang (thanks Crocodile Dundee etc) it can translate to awkward stereotypes in fiction. As with any type of good fiction, it boils down to character. Go into any public area in any part of the country and listen to how people talk. We're all New Zealanders (or Aussies, or people who've immigrated here etc) but we all express ourselves completely differently, and thanks to the exposure to US/UK culture via media, we've adopted many words/phrases into our everyday language. Don't think your characters have to 'sound' a certain way to be authentic to their country of origin, but on the flip-side, be careful not to make them so neutral that they lose their special Down Under-ness.

**Spelling:** Do you use UK or US English spellings? This question is tossed around a lot. IMO it's up to the individual author to decide and then stick to throughout their body of work. I made a decision at the beginning of my publishing career to cater to the US audience, by far the

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biggest group of readers. My books use US spelling and grammar, even though they are set in New Zealand. Whatever you decide, be consistent.

**Word choice:** Cookie or biscuit? Boot or trunk? Tap or faucet? Similar to spelling, there are hundreds if not thousands of words/phrases used that are different internationally. I use a mixture of both US and NZ terms because as I mentioned earlier, international boundaries have shrunk and ‘cookies’ is no longer an exclusive US term (for example). I rely on my US beta readers to alert me to any kiwi-isms that they really don’t understand, and if it makes sense (eg they didn’t know what ‘put the jug on’ meant, as opposed to ‘put the kettle on’) I’ll change it so as not to pull readers out of my story.

**Maori words/place names:** One thing I get thanked frequently for is the glossary of Maori words and NZ slang definitions I include in some of my books. I never realised how tricky some of our place names were until I heard tourists fumble them. In both my series I have Maori characters who have some words/phrases mixed in their dialogue. As well as having a glossary, I keep in mind this is fiction and I try to make the unfamiliar word understandable in the context it appears in. You don’t want your reader constantly having to refer to your glossary!

**Haters gonna hate:** Believe me, you’ll always come across readers who’ll take time out of their day to e-mail you with their complaints that your book is too New Zealand for them to understand, or too Americanised. Brush it off: you can’t please everyone.

### **Familiar but...a little different.**

Regardless of where your book is set, readers need to find a connection with your setting. They want familiar but...a little different. Let them relate with the similarities of a cafe in Palmerston North and a diner in small town America, (Hint: coffee is always the answer) but also in the slight differences that make a New Zealand café unique. Beaches can be familiar, but digging for tua-tuas is a unique NZ twist.

### **Scenic description or travel-blog writing?**

Again, this can be a no-win situation. Some readers clamour for more description of flora/fauna/scenery/culture and would happily read pages of it. Others, not so much. I’ve no real advice here other than to be true to your vision and author voice. There are many fantastic books about setting as a character, and of course, what each of your characters notices about their surrounding is part of creating their POV. New Zealand, I believe, has a very visceral beauty to it and I love making this come alive to my readers. Sharing that love of landscape and people is what’ll make your words shine.

*Tracey Alvarez is a USA Today Bestselling Author living in the Coolest Little Capital in the World (a.k.a. Wellington, New Zealand). Married to a wonderfully supportive IT guy, she has two*

*teens who would love to be surgically linked to their electronic devices.*

*Fuelled by copious amounts of coffee, she’s the author of contemporary romantic fiction set predominantly in New Zealand. Small-towns, close communities, and families are a big part of the heart-warming stories she writes. Oh, and hot, down-to-earth heroes—Kiwi men, in other words.*

*When she’s not writing, thinking about writing, or procrastinating about writing, Tracey can be found with her nose in her e-reader, nibbling on smuggled chocolate bars, or bribing her kids to take over the housework.*

Tracey’s latest book is *Break Your Heart*, the fifth book in her *Bounty Bay* series.

### ***Fake girlfriend. Real sizzle. What could possibly go wrong?***

*Single mum Vee Sullivan has a little girl to provide for and an eye on Bounty Bay’s newest shopping center to expand her clothing business—if only she could afford it. So when Sam Ngata offers her a fake girlfriend deal in exchange for his retail space, Vee is tempted. But saying yes might mean risking a broken heart...*

**Amazon US:** <https://www.amazon.com/dp/B07CZHB9ZF>

**Amazon UK:** <https://www.amazon.co.uk/dp/B07CZHB9ZF>

**Google Play:** <https://play.google.com/store/books/details/Tracey-Alvarez-Break-Your-Heart?id=oFhaDwAAQBAJ>

**B&N:** <https://www.barnesandnoble.com/w/books/1128654330?ean=2940155251231>

**Kobo:** <https://www.kobo.com/us/en/ebook/break-your-heart-1>

**ibooks:** <https://geo.itunes.apple.com/us/book/break-your-heart/id1375833991>

*“Exercise the writing muscle every day, even if it is only a letter, notes, a title list, a character sketch, a journal entry. Writers are like dancers, like athletes. Without that exercise, the muscles seize up.”*

*—Jane Yolen*



# Erotic Vs Erotica

Imogene Nix



**One of the biggest bugbears I face as an erotic author is people who think and comment that I'm writing porn (and boy have I heard that before!) Every time you say Erotic Romance they tend to trot out 50 Shades of Grey along with the "oh you write smut or porn." For those of us writing within this genre, there are even more subgenres, such as vanilla, ménage and so on. The subtleties are, however, great big dividing lines that allow us to describe what our genre is.**

With the proliferation of authors and titles, it's easy to get confused, however today I am going to focus on one of the least understood differences: that of Erotic and Erotica and Porn.

Let's start with the basic, dictionary definition.

**Erotic:** of, relating to, or treating of sexual love; amatory: an erotic novel.

**Erotica:** sexually explicit art, photographs, sculptures, or the like, depicting human sexuality.

**Porn:** Sometimes por•no [pawr noh]/ por•nou/ 'pornography; sexually explicit videos, photographs, writings or the like to elicit sexual arousal (often used attributively) arrested for selling porn; a porn star; porn films.

When it comes to crafting a romance novel, there are significant differences between these three genres.

An erotic romance deals with romance, which grows between two (or more) characters. The sexual aspect (of open door sex scenes) highlights the progression of the relationship and furthers the story while using the sexual growth as an indicator. The sexual scenes are an integral part of the tale, but not the reason for the story. An erotic romance requires either a Happily Ever After (HEA) or Happy For Now (HFN) conclusion to the story. An erotic romance may contain BDSM, ménage and other themes but the inclusion of these does not make the story erotica.

Conversely, while erotica deals with the sexual journey of one or more characters, there is no requirement for a Happily Ever After (HEA) or even a Happy For Now (HFN). Any story crafted is about the sexual journey and growth and while it may contain a couple or multiple partners, and the end may culminate in a romance, this is not the aim of the tale. It should also be noted erotica and porn are significantly different.

Pornography (Porn) has no requirement for growth — sexual or emotional (although this can be present.) It may even contain a series of encounters or a single scene. The final aim of pornography is sexual completion and/or gratification.

At this point, the industry struggles with a poor understanding of these diverse genres, due to a lack of education and poor marketing.

So, the next time you pick up a book featuring an open-door sex scene, take a moment to consider what category it falls into. There are clear indicators, which you will see once you understand the difference.

*Imogene is published in a range of romance genres including Paranormal, Science Fiction and Contemporary. She is mainly published in the UK and USA due to the nature of her tales. In 2011, Imogene Nix (the pen name not Imogene herself) was born. Imogene sat down and worked tirelessly for 3 months culminating in the books Starline, which became the first in a trilogy titled, "Warriors of the Elector." Imogene has successfully been contracted for twenty-five titles. She has also completed several others. In 2017 Imogene decided to self publish most of her further works - a plan which is in train. Imogene is a member of a range of professional organisations world wide, and believes in the mantra of mentoring and paying it forward. She loves to drink coffee, wine & eat chocolate and is parenting 2 spoiled dogs and a ferocious cat along with her husband and 2 human daughters. Visit her online at <http://www.imogenenix.net>*



Elspeth Forster, the eldest spinster sister and part owner of Forster Shipping Line has never known passion.

On the youngest Forster sister's marriage, Elspeth and her middle sister Isabelle determine to use their ships for more than just business by taking the adventure of a lifetime. In India she might find a man who can teach her all the things that will keep her warm in her advancing age. But she never expected that an unscheduled stop would put her within Aeddán Fitzsimmon's sights.

Returning from a top-secret mission, English spy, Aeddán Fitzsimmons, finds passage on the Zephyr, a vessel in the Forster fleet. From the moment he stepped aboard the statuesque redhead entices him like no other ever has. Now in India he has a new mission: keep the elegant Elspeth safe while wooing her into his bed.

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*"I am irritated by my own writing. I am like a violinist whose ear is true, but whose fingers refuse to reproduce precisely the sound he hears within."*

— *Gustave Flaubert*

# In Defence Of The Maligned “Was” - Debunking A RWA Myth

Lois Winston



**In my former life as a Contest Diva, I often received similar comments from judges. They'd circle every “was” in the entry and write in large capital letters -- PASSIVE VOICE. Somewhere at some time in some RWA chapter or national workshop, someone told these**

**judges, as well as many other RWA members, that “was” is a no-no. Editors like action verbs. “Was,” along with its brothers and sisters (is, am, are, been, were) is passive voice and a sure-fire way to a rejection letter.**

## WRONG!

Passive voice is when an action is acted upon the subject, rather than the subject acting. *The car was driven by Anna* is a passive sentence. *Anna drove the car* is an active sentence. However, *Anna was happy to drive the car* is not a passive sentence. Anna is expressing emotion. She is acting, rather than being acted upon. Of course, there are more interesting ways to write the sentence to show Anna's emotions, but that's a separate discussion.

One of the easiest ways to tell whether your sentence is active or passive is to analyze the position of the subject, verb, and direct object. In active voice, the subject (the one performing the action) will come before the verb (the action), and the verb will come before the direct object (that which is being acted upon.)

There are instances, though, when passive voice is necessary to the unfolding of a story or better suited to the realism of the dialogue. When we speak, we don't first think whether our sentences are active or passive before uttering them. We just speak them. Manipulate a sentence to avoid passive voice in conversation, and you often transform snappy dialogue into stilted dialogue.

For example: *Billy ran into the house and cried, “Mom! Come quick. Snoopy was hit by a car!”* This passage accurately illustrates the way a child might respond to a car hitting his dog. *Snoopy was hit by a car* is a passive sentence because Snoopy is being acted upon by the car, but the child mentions Snoopy first because the dog's welfare is uppermost in his mind. Also, by placing the last sentence in passive voice, the author is actually ratcheting up the tension. We don't know until the very end exactly what hit Snoopy. A stray baseball? A nasty neighbor? A falling tree limb? Although *A car hit Snoopy*,

is active voice, using it actually lessens the impact of the sentence.

Still squeamish about the use of “was”? After you have finished your manuscript, do a search of the word. Check each sentence to see if you can rewrite it to avoid using “was.” If you can, and it doesn't detract from the pace, dialogue, or meaning of the passage, do so. If not, leave it. Some “was” were meant to be.

EXCEPT in the subjunctive.

The *what*, you ask? Subjunctive case or mood is one of the most misunderstood rules in the English language -- and virtually unknown to most contest judges who will circle a “were” and write in a “was” because the subject is singular.

I once had a contest judge, a college English instructor in her “day” job, circle a “were” I had used in a subjunctive sentence, draw a happy face, and write a comment expressing her delight at seeing the sentence written properly. Apparently, it doesn't happen very often.

The subjunctive applies to cases of “wishfulness” or “what if” situations. In these cases, “was” becomes “were,” as in, *I wish I were taller*. “Were” is also used when a sentence or clause uses “if,” “as if,” or “as though,” but only in instances where the statement is contrary to fact. Examples include: *If I were taller, I could see the stage better*, *Her twelve year old son acts as if he were in kindergarten*, or *The maid behaved as though she were queen*. Because I cannot grow taller, the twelve-year-old is not in kindergarten, and the maid is not a queen, all the statements are contrary to fact, and “was” becomes “were” even though the subjects are all singular.

Keep in mind, though, that the key statement here is “contrary to fact.” “If” statements that are not contrary to fact retain the singular form of the verb. *If I was at Starbucks that day, I don't remember* is a correct sentence because the statement is not contrary to fact whether or not I can recall the event.

So don't be afraid to use “was” and “were” in your writing as long as you use them correctly. And the next time you judge a contest entry, please make sure the sentence really is passive before circling that “was” or not in the subjunctive before doing likewise to a “were.”

*USA Today bestselling and award-winning author Lois Winston writes mystery, romance, romantic suspense, chick lit, women's fiction, children's chapter books, and nonfiction under her own name and her Emma Carlyle pen name. Kirkus Reviews dubbed her critically acclaimed Anastasia Pollack Crafting Mystery series, “North Jersey's more mature answer to Stephanie Plum.” In addition, Lois is a former literary agent and an award-winning craft and needlework designer who often draws much of her source material for both her characters and plots from her experiences in the crafts industry. Find her online at: [www.loiswinston.com](http://www.loiswinston.com)*

# Eloping To Elands

Renee Dahlia



**After some, cough, fourteen years of marriage, it's probably too late to elope. I just liked the alliteration. The truth is always blander. Our kid's school did some fundraising recently, and one of the grandparents put their farm cottage (B&B) in the silent auction. Hubby threw in a bid and his parents agreed to watch our mob of children for the weekend. This would be only the second time we've ever spent two nights away from them.**

We drove north out of Sydney, through the small NSW town of Taree, and then inland to Elands. Without stops, the drive takes just under five hours. It's over 360km, and the final section to the farm cottage was 38km of dirt road. For context, it's about a third of the way between Sydney and Brisbane.

The biggest redeeming feature of the cottage was that it was only the two of us, and a wood fire. We had the whole of Saturday to ourselves. Bliss. We decided to check out the Ellenborough Falls – the second highest waterfall in Australia, and only a short drive from our little cottage. If you read my last article, you'll know I tore two ligaments in my ankle a few months ago. My physio recently recommended that I do more stairs to build the strength back into the joint. I don't think he meant the 614 steps down to the bottom of the Ellenborough Falls – although it was the going back up again that took its toll! The falls are spectacular, even in drought.



As we drove along the dirt road towards the small town of Wingham, we spotted a sign "Jimmy Governor Plaque". We detoured down the side road to see what on earth was worth a plaque way out here in the bush, only to find an interesting story.



"Aboriginal Outlaw  
Jimmy Governor  
Captured at this point  
on  
27-10-1900  
by Messrs A Cameron. T Green. W  
Moore. F Moore. T Moore. T Moore  
Jnr. J McPherson J. Wallace"

The small museum at Wingham shed more light on the sorry tale. Jimmy Governor was employed as a police tracker, and in 1898, he married a white woman, Ethel Page. Jimmy started working a fencing contractor and got on well with his employer, John Mawbey, however, life wasn't as easy for his wife, who did housework for the

same family. Mrs Mawbey, and her friends, taunted Ethel about her marriage, and things became "very strained." One can only imagine the horrors covered by that rather understated comment. Mrs Mawbey's friend took it too far

one night, and Jimmy lashed out, killing Mrs Mawbey, her friend, and the three Mawbey teenage daughters.

Jimmy, and his brother Joe, went on a fourteen-week bushranging "rampage" until Jimmy was caught near the Ellenborough Falls. His brother was killed a few days later near Singleton. Jimmy stood trial for murder in Sydney, and was hanged at Darlinghurst Gaol on 18 Jan 1901. The Wingham museum made no note of what happened to his wife Ethel, and it was only further research that uncovered her story. She'd had a son with Jimmy (not mentioned by the museum) and remarried a year later, and had nine more children with her second husband.

Life was tough back in the early years of Australia, and while I'd never condone the 'good man gone bad' trope, Jimmy's actions are understandable in the context of Aboriginal dispossession and rampant racism. I'm struck by the bravery of Ethel – and the erasure of her from the story as told by the museum.

The great thing about travel, even small local trips, are the stories of discovery. Jimmy and Ethel's story is just one of many stories about Australian history that need to be told so we can understand how our past frames our current society.

I would like to acknowledge the people of the Biripi nation, who are the traditional custodians of the land that the Ellenborough Falls is on.

*Renée Dahlia is an unabashed romance reader who loves feisty women and strong, clever men. Her books reflect this, with a side-note of dark humour. Renée has a science degree in physics. When not distracted by the characters fighting for attention in her brain, she works in the horse racing industry doing data analysis. She writes for two racing publications, churning out feature articles, interviews and advertorials. When she isn't reading or writing, Renée wrangles a husband, four children, and volunteers on the local cricket club committee. Find her online at [www.reneedahlia.com](http://www.reneedahlia.com).*



**The Bluestocking Romances** are Victorian-era historical romances. Each book in this series works as a stand-alone book. Three remarkable young women, Josephine, Marie and Claire, graduate from Amsterdam University's Medical program in 1887. <https://books2read.com/u/3yZGRe>



## From The Editor



**Welp.**

**I was hoping the July issue of Heart to Heart, with its theme of writer wellbeing, would prevent a repeat of last year's health disaster. It almost worked! This time, I was only a sick for an entire week.**

**Thank you to the Heart to Heart team, in particular Kris, who picked up the slack while I was recovering.**

It's lucky Heart to Heart is not a one-person job. It's a team effort, and I want to take a moment to acknowledge a very important member of the team, Ruth Bell, who is stepping down as formatter with this issue. Ruth has done an amazing job, not only of keeping Heart to Heart looking great, but also of easing new editors into the role. I'm very grateful for your help Ruth—thank you! Emma, our new formatter, thank you for volunteering, and I'm thrilled to be working with you.

As conference approaches, volunteering has been on my mind more and more. I arrived back in New Zealand after eight years in Japan only two days ahead of my first RWNZ conference, and I will admit I was a little (okay, a lot) intimidated. Luckily Carole was there to greet us newbies and make us welcome. The conference went seamlessly thanks to the volunteers and the many, many people who cheerfully included me in conversations and groups. The only problem: names, my kryptonite (yes, even despite the fact we were all wearing name-tags). I did not have a clue who any of these nice people were.

Luckily, Jude was recruiting a contest manager for Great Beginnings and I volunteered. I had no idea what I was signing up for, and made a ton of mistakes, such as referring to myself as the contest coordinator for the first month of managing Great Beginnings. Fortunately, Jude was there to help, as were the judges, many of whom were veterans. I learned quickly, and ended up taking on First Kisses as well.

I learned so much through contest managing. Most importantly, I was talking to a lot of people. I learned names. I started connecting them to personalities. And when I went to my second conference in Rotorua last year, I could connect them to faces! Meeting (or meeting again) the people I'd been corresponding with was a true highlight of my conference, and I'm even more excited for this year's conference. Pro-tip for any shy, introverted types out there: want to make friends at conference? Become a contest manager!

Contest managing also gave me the confidence to take on editing Heart to Heart. Again, I had no idea what I was getting into with this role, but I knew I had the support

of Megan, Ruth, Kris, and the executive team. It's been great.

Speaking of Heart to Heart, look out for our survey! I want to make sure Heart to Heart serves the RWNZ members, and I'd like your input on what works and what doesn't, what you'd like more of, and any other thoughts you have. We're always looking for articles, book reviews, woos and hoos, authors to feature, and any other content you'd like to provide.

For me, this month's issue was a chance not only to reflect on the importance of setting to our stories, but also to escape the Christchurch winter for a little bit! House-sitting is great, but as the home-owners I sit for are usually off to some exotic location, it is also a constant reminder that other people are having more fun than I am! Thanks to this month's articles, I've added Berlin and the Wingham Museum to my travel-list, experienced Bath's pump water vicariously, and am more confident working on my current project, which is set in New Zealand. Thank you to this month's contributors! I hope you enjoy this issue.

Now, time to start packing for conference! (Remember, leave perfume at home. The RWNZ conference is a scent-free zone!) If you're going to Ellerslie, see you there!

Yours,

*Gillian*

[Following my editorial we have a special note from one of our previous editors. Megan was unable to submit something for this issue but joins Gracie and myself in thanking Ruth and wishing her all the best!]

*I'd like to say my own huge thanks to Ruth. Ruth came on board as H2H formatter during my time as editor and she was a wonderful partner in the work. Always interested in ways to improve the magazine, Ruth not only took my ideas and made them look good but also offered her own and fit them in with seamless precision. She also put up with my nit-picking—I mean, obsessive attention to detail—with grace and humour. It takes a really special person to do that. :-)*

*Ruth, you've done a fabulous job. Thanks so much for making the magazine such a great asset to the RWNZ community. We're going to miss you!*

*Hug!  
Gracie*

# Editor/Writing Tips: Quick Tips To Help Your Writing Be Amazing!

**Raevyn McCann**



## Would you like a comma with that Conjunction?

When do you need a comma before 'but' or 'and' or any other conjunction?

**\*\*If what follows is a complete sentence, then a comma should be placed before**

**the conjunction.**

*Yesterday we went to the zoo, but it started raining.*

**\*\*If what follows is not a complete sentence, the comma isn't needed.**

*It was a downpour but stopped before we got to the car.*

--There are exceptions to the rule for 'and', but you can follow this simple rule for the other conjunctions.

## Redundant Redundancy

When you read through your manuscript, look for the added words that make phrases redundant.

Examples:

*She sat down* - sitting typically means down  
*each and every* - they mean the same thing  
*He nodded his head* - nodding is done with the head

The extras just add to word counts, not meaning.

## Remove or Replace

### That

If the sentence makes sense without 'that,' delete it. 'That' is one of the most overused words in books.

### It

Replace 'it' with description to make the narrative fuller.

### Was

When used in a descriptive sentence, the sentence should be written to show rather than tell.

*Example: She was tired. = Struggling to keep her eyes*

*open, she bit back a yawn.*

*Raevyn is a lover of books...just about any type. She is also Hispanic, panromantic, asexual, and genderqueer, which gives her a different view of the world around her. Her life-long goals have been to make a modest living doing something with books, visit Machu Picchu, and most importantly, build social consciousness in herself and others. After a career as an editor, Raevyn is now the managing director of NineStar Press. Find her online on Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/raevyn.mccann>*

[mccann](https://www.facebook.com/raevyn.mccann)

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*Heart to Heart* will be published in the first week of each month except January. The deadline for every issue is the 20th of the month prior (e.g. 20th August for September issue). Please have all articles, news, reports, and advertising to Megan at [heart2hearteditor@romancewriters.co.nz](mailto:heart2hearteditor@romancewriters.co.nz) on or before the deadline.

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## WHO ARE THE SPA GIRLS?

Wendy Vella, Trudi Jaye, Cheryl Phipps and Shar Barratt are four Kiwi full-time authors successfully self-publishing fiction in the romance, urban fantasy, young adult and mystery genres. In addition, for more than two years, they've hosted the popular SPA Girls podcast for beginning self-publishers—one of the top globally-downloaded podcasts for indies.



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## Woos & Hoos



JC Harroway published *Exposed* with Escape Publishing, available October 4. She has also signed a three-book contract with Mills & Boon for the new line, DARE. <http://amzn.to/2xMjjpR>

Congratulations to Brynn Kelly won the RWA RITA for Best Novella for *Forbidden River* - this is awesome news! <https://www.amazon.com/dp/B075JGZ2PQ/>



And congratulations to Lola Goulton who edited the winner of the RWA RITA for Best Romance with Religious or Spiritual Elements *Then There Was You* by Kara Isaac. <https://www.amazon.com/dp/B07147KXD4/>

Michele Powles has just released the first book in her first fully self-published series. After years with indie presses, this is a significant milestone--congratulations, Michele! Another Shot With Summer looks amazing! <https://www.amazon.com/dp/B07FFCS1J4/>



Huge congratulations to Teresa Schischka who is celebrating a major milestone! She published her first finished novel on June 27, a novel started twenty-two and a half years ago. Despite having ten other novels on the go in this time, Mackerel Sky has always been the one Teresa wanted to publish. This is a fantastic achievement—well done!

*“If you can tell stories, create characters, devise incidents, and have sincerity and passion, it doesn't matter a damn how you write.”*

— Somerset Maugham

## Book Review: My Torin - K. Webster

Paula Phillips

**The BOOK: My Torin**  
**AUTHOR: K Webster**

*I'm a freak, a misfit, an odd end. Abandoned and unloved. But my happiness is so close I can taste it. Until he shows up.*

*Gorgeous. expensive, and all man. Sad brown eyes and a brilliant smile. And he wants me to go with him. His intentions are hidden. His motives are unclear. Yet, I leave with him because there's no happiness here.*

*What he promises feels too good to be true... A castle. A fortune. And horses too. It's too easy. Nothing in my life has ever been easy.*

*What's the catch? There's always a catch.*

### THE REVIEW: Paula Phillips



Where to start with this review. This book was utterly amazing and will have you hooked from the very first page. From the beginning when a baby girl Casey is found outside the church in a manger. To her growing up and being bounced from foster home to foster home and ending up with Guy. Her therapy sessions with the Doctor. The meeting of Tyler and Torin Kline which will make her not only frightened but feel an immense love for both of them and from them. To the heartbreak when she discovers tragedy is looming. To the discovery of Torin's disability and her acceptance of it and more importantly to him. To the love, passion, and understanding that Casey develops towards Torin. Then to the epilogue of the happy family that Casey has always wanted and dreamed of and then the author bringing it back to a full circle linking the last chapter to the beginning. This is one review where I don't want to get too much into the story as it will give it away, but I will tell you that if you can only read one book for 2018, then *My Torin* by K.Webster should be that book for you as it will tug your heartstrings and make you feel probably harder than you have before.

*Paula Phillips lives in Tauranga. She works by day as a Children and Teens Programme Specialist at the local library and by night she is The Phantom Paragrapher – a book review blog. She has also had two short stories published and a third being released at the end of August. Find her online at: <http://thephantomparagrapher.blogspot.com/>*

# From The President

## Bron's farewell but not goodbye.

Well, it's the end of another Presidential term for me with RWNZ and I'm stepping down. I've completed two years as President and loved every minute of it. I hope I have served RWNZ to the best of my abilities and appropriately. That's all we can ask members to do.

I will of course still be on the executive as Past-President, which is very useful for those taking over, as it keeps some consistency and history.

It's a tad disappointing that at the time of writing this we still do not have a President for RWNZ. Those of you who are new to writing and RWNZ, I understand your hesitation. Maybe step up after you've been with us a few years. However, that means it falls back on those who have been members for longer.

Because we are a small organization, we may have to serve more often than we think. I have a personal mandate that if I belong to an organization for a few years I should step up and help—**take my turn, offer back**. I was Tuesday night club captain for my bridge club, I was treasurer for the Beau Monde one year, and for RWNZ I have held many positions over the years—treasurer for two years, newsletter editor for a year, on two conference committees, and now President for two years. I did not do all of this in a row. There were gaps in-between.

Like any volunteer role you get out of it what you put in. I've made new friends, met some amazing authors, and hopefully delivered for RWNZ. I think the strategic plan has helped, as it has given us direction. The other thing to note is we have made members aware that an Executive can only take on what they can achieve as volunteers. We all have busy lives, children, jobs, writing etc. No member is expecting the world from the executive and if you are, that is not fair. Just pick one or two things to deliver and you'll do it.

In the two years I have been President (with a fantastic Executive team with me), the executive has managed to deliver a new website, a new contest (First Kiss, submit several Arts Council grant applications, surveyed members, gotten a new sponsor for our conference (to be announced), sorted out a historic tax situation, and set up an appropriate email and filing system.

For two years worth of work, it doesn't sound a lot does it! But it was for us as volunteers. Please remember it's not a full time job, it's not even a part-time job, it's a volunteer role and you achieve what can be done.

Please don't be frightened of accepting or applying for any of the Executive Committee or volunteer roles. They are so rewarding and they do lead to new friendships,

mentors etc. If you sign on and then things get too much simply step down. I had three members do this over the past two years. Life is unpredictable. No one is asking you to sign your life away. All I'm asking is that we each look at how we might be able to give back to our organization. And when you do step up...I swear it's absolutely worth it!

So come on – one of you must be keen to be President and we also need a Publicity Officer. The roles are described on our website and those previously in the roles can advise you on amount of time etc. <https://www.romancewriters.co.nz/membership/agm-remit-proxy-form/> Email me and let me know: [president@romancewriters.co.nz](mailto:president@romancewriters.co.nz)

Finally, I'd like to thank everyone who has worked with me over the past two years on the Executive Committee and as volunteers. It has made my two terms pleasurable and so satisfying.

Catherine Robertson who is stepping down this year too from vice-president has been my rock and stabilizer! Tania Roberts who is staying on as our amaze-ball treasurer is the key role on this executive. Without our finances under control it would all fall over. Angela Bissell and Kate O'Keeffe who have agreed to stay on this year have been fabulous to work with and great friends. Angela has ironed out the web membership issues. Bonnie Mosen had to step down a few months ago due to work commitments, but she played a role in getting us some PR.

To Ruth and Megan and Gracie and now Gillian who kept and keep our H2H Magazine churning out! I applaud you all. It's just as much, if not more work, as being on the executive!

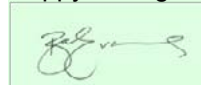
To all out contest mangers and Jude who is stepping down as contest coordinator, thank you all so much. It is quite stressful running contests and having to deal with late score sheets and overseas judges!!!

To this years conference team headed by Kendra and Bronwyn—it's been a pleasure to leave it to you! And Iona and Melissa for 2019, the same thing. You've all been brilliant.

I can't thank you ladies enough for your help and support and clear decisive decision-making. I look forward to handing over my role but also being there to help if those replacing me need it.

Thanks so much! Best wishes to the new Executive and all the volunteers. I wish you every success. It's a fab organization to be a member of!!!

Happy writing



Bron





# Can't Travel? Avoid These Setting Research Hazards

Olivia Helling



**Gravel crunched as I skidded down a snaking road. On either side, steep stairs climbed up twin cliffs. And in front, on a concrete-covered lot the width of two parked cars, was Port Meudwy.**

**I'd travelled a thousand miles to get here, completely rearranging my UK itinerary to drive two hours along the sliver of Penn Llŷn in North Wales.**

**And it wasn't what I imagined at all.**

In the middle of booking my great British adventure, I'd gotten obsessed with Gillian St Kevern's *Deep Magic* series. After finishing book 2 and 3, and then re-reading the whole series again from the start during my Christmas break, I'd hounded Gillian about the next book. There had to be one, right?

There would be, but in the meantime, I couldn't wait. I found out that the series' Welsh hamlet setting Aberdaron really did exist, and that I really could travel there. My husband agreed. A week to relax on the coast would be fantastic, he said. Relax, sure. My whole purpose was to fangirl out.

So there I was in Aberdaron — Port Meudwy, to be exact, about a thirty minute walk from the hamlet proper, so long as one avoids the coastal path up and down the cliffs. In the first book *Deep Magic*, the main character Oliver sees a ghostly visage of the man he loved in this boat harbour.

In my head, as I read the passage, I saw a spacious stretch of beach with some vague idea of fishing boats, and maybe some cliffs behind the action.

In reality? This port was a tiny sliver between cliffs just wide enough to park the boats and manoeuvre a forklift to take them down to the water's edge.

The passage's details were correct, but my sense of spatial distance was totally wrong.

Writing teachers and authors kept telling me that you absolutely must visit the locations you write about. You can't fully describe the streets and the water and the feel of the city without having lived it. I was even told this by a writer who visited Sudan for her novel and came back with both research notes and PTSD. Not exactly encouraging.

Perhaps that was once true, but today we have Google Maps streetview and online photos and a hundred travel websites to tell us exactly what each city and building in every city is like.

Besides, I write historical and fantasy romance. In the former, the city I'm writing about no longer exists. In the latter, the city never existed to begin with. Research has to be enough.

But there, in Aberdaron, I started getting the inkling that maybe those authors were onto something. They just didn't convey this one key concept:

We're all a bit biased when it comes to settings.

I grew up on the Canadian prairies. We have wide roads, detached houses, big yards, and even bigger skies. Saskatchewan is the flattest place on earth outside of the ocean.

So when I read a book set in Regency-era London or contemporary Aberdaron, my imagination inserts a lot of space, big skies, and flatness where there's cramped roads, steep hills and townhouses. But give me Jordan L Hawk's *Fallow*, a prairie farming town, and my mind's eye is pretty accurate.

That's a problem. When I'd written my paranormal regency *Nocturnal Confession*, I spent a lot of time researching Bath, England in 1810. The more I learned, the more I yearned to actually see this place. Unfortunately, I only got the chance on this trip, three years after the book's release. Then I realised just how many limitations my research had.

Does this mean that if we can't travel somewhere, we have to stick to writing about our hometowns?

No, but to do our best to convey our settings accurately and authentically, we do need to be aware of our biases and research limitations.

So here's a few of my experiences to get you started.

## You can't turn a photo or a painting

In *Nocturnal Confession*, I needed a secluded countryside location, and so searched for a suitable location through contemporary sketches and paintings. I settled on *Panorama of Bath* by J.W. Allen (1833). As the title suggests, the painting shows Bath from the top of Beechen Cliff.

But what a painting can't do is let me manoeuvre it so I can take a look over the hillside — which, my erstwhile travel companions only realised as we climbed up Devil's Drop path to see this vista for ourselves — is actually a cliff. It's all in the name. What seemed like a grassy hill all the way down was actually a steep drop thick with beech trees and bushes.

*continued on page 13*

continued from page 12

### Photos skew your sense of scale

When it came to where my protagonists would take up residence, I chose the Royal Crescent, mainly because No 1 now exists as a museum, complete with an online floor layout and photos of rooms furnished as they would have been in the Georgian era.

The Royal Crescent is now a huge tourist landmark, with crowds gathering in the public park below to snap photos of it, so I had plenty of exterior photos to refer to.

Except that when I looked at the photos, I couldn't imagine how they could fit a stately residence befitting gentry and nobles into these itty bitty holiday homes. Judging from the layout of No 1, there's lots of spacious rooms. Was this some kind of Time Lord science where the inside is bigger than the outside?

I couldn't really grasp the answer until I approached the Royal Crescent. Even dozens of yards away, the Royal Crescent towered above me.

Each ceiling has to be at least twelve-feet high, with three floors, plus a basement for the kitchen and attic for the servants. Standing on the sidewalk, I barely came up to the main floor's window sills — and I'm almost 6 feet tall. Each townhouse may be comparatively slim, but they also extend far back. They really were grand holiday mansions.

Nor did I realise that the grounds of the Royal Crescent were designed to look like a country estate when looking out the window, giving the visitors the combined luxury of country living with the closeness of society. (Okay, that tidbit came from a museum volunteer, as she explained that what's now the public side of the lawn used to be cow and sheep pastures. But still.)

### Photos convey one sense only

If you've read any Regency romance ever, you'll likely have heard of the Pump Room and the waters of Bath. Taking the waters was the sole reason why my protagonists went to Bath at all, and so the Pump Room was at the top of my trip bucket list.

However, I was not so keen to pay 18 pounds for a ticket to the Roman Baths museum in order to take the waters. So I snuck into the Pump Room. (It sounds more adventurous than it actually was. The Regency-era Pump Room is now a restaurant, so I asked if I could go in and see the fountain. The waiter said it was all right, and even gave me a goblet of free water.)

There, I discovered that Bath Water is not as foul as I'd imagined it would be or been led to believe. It's like drinking hot water, if it was a little oily and had a slight metallic aftertaste. It'd hardly be a hardship to drink a couple of litres of the stuff today — unless you live in an era where drinking water meant death, and so avoided it.

### Distances are deceptive

This one is especially important for historical and fantasy romance writers, as it's the one that's most different for us.

In 1810, when *Necromancer Vow* takes place, Bath was two days away from London by stagecoach. Thus, visitors generally stayed at least a month, or even years. Getting to Bath was an ordeal. These days, it's an easy day trip with an hour-long train straight from London.

There's also the problem of distance when it comes to different sized countries. Living three hours away by train in England isn't living close by — it's half the country. But in Canada, three hours isn't so bad. You probably still both live in the same province.

Or two places might look close together on a map, but take hours to get between. I once got off the bus to take a shortcut through a park. Only that park turned out to be a State Park more than five miles wide, with a two hour march under the hot sun with no water. It would have been faster (and healthier) to spend another hour on the bus.

### Conclusion

The next time you research a setting you can't visit yourself, keep questioning yourself. What might you be misunderstanding or mis-seeing? What assumptions are you using in your work? Have you ever been to a similar place? And by that questioning, you'll get closer to the real authentic feeling of the place.

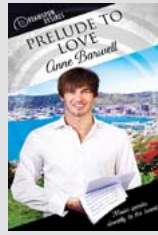
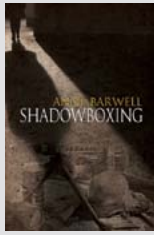
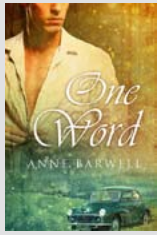
*Olivia Helling writes wonderfully dark fantasy, including the GODSBANE PRINCE series and the historical fantasy romance series DAMON SNOW. Although she grew up an avid book lover, she couldn't find the LGBTQ fantasy she'd always wanted. So now she writes them herself. Get her beautiful and tragic love story, GOD CURSED, for free at: [oliviahelling.com/yourfreebook/](http://oliviahelling.com/yourfreebook/)*

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*“My own experience is that once a story has been written, one has to cross out the beginning and the end. It is there that we authors do most of our lying.”*

*— Anton Chekhov*

## Meet The Authors



**Anne Barwell**

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

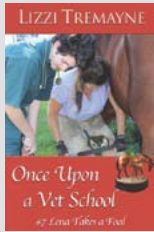
Anne Barwell lives in Wellington. She works in a library and is an avid reader and watcher of a wide range of genres. She enjoys writing fantasy, SF, and historical, with a touch of contemporary. Music often plays a part in her stories and/or her characters are musicians.



**Cheryl Phipps**

<https://cherylphipps.com/>

Cheryl is a USA Today bestselling author writing cozy mysteries and chick lit as C.A. Phipps and contemporary romance as Cheryl Phipps. No matter the genre, she loves writing about wonderful small towns, mixing in a little romance, humor, and in the case of the cozy's - delicious recipes! Apple Pie and Arsenic: <https://amzn.to/2LwxqU3> Bagels and Blackmail: <https://amzn.to/2ser4j5>



**Lizzi Tremayne**

<https://lizzitremayne.com/>

Lizzi grew up riding wild in the Santa Cruz Mountain redwoods, became an equine veterinarian and practiced in the California Gold Country before emigrating to New Zealand. She writes awarded historical fiction and veterinary fiction/non-fiction—all with a horsey flair.

## Characterisation Isn't Just For Heroes

**Allison Lane**

**The current chapter isn't going well. The action feels right. My hero is behaving in a solidly heroic fashion. But the villain is starting to sound clichéd, which means I don't understand his motivation well enough. So before I can move on, I have to crawl deeper into his head and find out what makes him tick.**

Crawling into a character's head is an essential part of writing. But crawling into a villain's head can be scary, as I learned all too well while writing *Devall's Angel*. That villain presented a charming face to the world. He was beloved by nearly everyone, so when my heroine felt uncomfortable in his company, people raised their brows and criticized her poor judgment. I knew he wasn't heroic, of course. I designed that book from the beginning as a play of good versus evil, with a subtext of *don't judge a book by its cover*. But when I started, I didn't really understand the depths of his evil or the reality that drove him.

Not until well into the book did he finally let his innermost thoughts spill out, revealing the true depravity of his mind. When that monologue ended, I stared at the screen for a good ten minutes, shaking so hard I couldn't move. Where had that come from? Was I insane? Was there something horribly wrong with me that I could produce such horror? I'd heard the injunction to *write what you know* often enough that the scene scared the daylights out of me.

His history was so disturbing that I feared it couldn't be realistic, so I showed that scene to a couple of psychologists. The first shrugged, then confirmed that she saw nothing wrong with the mindset, especially since the story took place before the invention of psychology so no one would have understood where his childhood oddities might lead. The second agreed, adding that she prayed no one like this would ever walk into her office, because she would be terrified to be alone with him.

That was one of the very few scenes I've written that needed not a single word change between first draft and publication. I still shudder when I read it. But I no longer fear for my own sanity. Part of being a good writer is the ability to think one's way into any mindset. It's how we make our characters come alive. Our villains need to be just as alive as the heroes and heroines, which means occasionally crawling into a sewer or becoming a candidate for an asylum. So I can't postpone probing more deeply into my current villain's head.

*continued on page 15*



*continued from page 14*

There is something in there that is driving his actions. I just haven't found it yet...

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/>

## Book Review: Demon Familiar

Anne Barwell



**The BOOK: Demon Familiar**  
**AUTHORS: Bellora Quinn & Sadie Rose Birmingham**

*Sometimes when you don't know what you want, life gives you what you need. When Neil Markovic witnesses the murder of his mother by Bone Men his world is thrown into turmoil. On the run from*

*the assassins that killed her, his sorcerer father and the police, Neil finds help in the form of a tall half fae alchemist named Malachai. Mal seems more accepting than most of Neil's demon bloodline, but curiously immune to his charms.*

*Malachai Valentine, disgraced scion of a noble Leprechaun clan, back in the Old Country, is happy living as an anonymous scrap dealer. Using his talent for alchemy to make fuel and potions, most days he doesn't even think of his ruinous past. When a scared young man with a fancy car crashes into his life, at first, Mal thinks he can do without the hassle. But as Neil begins to get under his skin, Mal starts to reassess his hopes and ambitions.*

*Harassed by megalomaniac fae and stalked by sorcerous killers at every turn, Malachai and Neil must fight to be free, and to find what they both truly wanted.*

**Reader advisory:** This book contains scenes of violence, murder and non-consensual sex.

<https://www.pride-publishing.com/book/demon-familiar>

**The REVIEW: Anne Barwell**

I'm already a fan of the authors' Elemental Evidence series so when the opportunity came

up to read the first book in a new series I grabbed it. It didn't disappoint, and now I'm hanging out for book two. I got hooked into this book less than a chapter in.

The world building in *Demon Familiar* is fabulous. It's based on our world, but isn't as this one has plenty of demons, fae, and the ilk amongst its population. The descriptions are very visual, and I could feel the overhanging darkness, which is accentuated by the Bone men and shadow/dark magic. This first book in the series sets up the world nicely without info dumping and left me wanting more.

The action scenes are edge-of-your-seat. I could feel Neil's desperation not to be caught. I also loved the descriptions of magic, which added to the tense, exciting fight scenes, and in particular the mix of demon and fae magic.

The characters, however, both main and supporting bring their own version of light. I love that, despite what Neil is, he's naive, and a bit of an innocent. It's a good twist on what I'd usually expect. Mal is an interesting character with more to his past than he's letting on just yet, and I'm hoping we learn more about his experiences—and his wings—as the series progresses. Neil and Mal complement each other well, and I liked that they doubted that each other felt the same way, and that Neil had to learn about the human side of himself in that regard. Merc is an interesting character. I liked how he was the voice of reason, not entirely trusting Neil at first, which is realistically what I would expect.

I'd recommend *Demon Familiar* to readers who enjoy fantasy with fabulous world building, interesting characters, and a story that keeps you reading and leaves you wanting more.

Anne Barwell lives in Wellington, New Zealand. She shares her home with two cats who are convinced that the house is run to suit them; this is an ongoing "discussion," and to date it appears as though the cats may be winning. She works in a library, is an avid reader and watcher of a wide range of genres, and is constantly on the look out for more hours in her day. Anne likes to write in series and even so called one shots seem to breed more plot bunnies. Her writing is like her reading - across a range of genres, although her favourites are fantasy, SF, and historical. Anne also plays piano and violin, so often music plays a part in her stories and/or her characters are musicians. Find her online: <http://annebarwell.wordpress.com/>



*"Not that the story need be long, but it will take a long while to make it short."*

— Henry David Thoreau

## 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.

Liz Dempsey - Whanganui

Sharon Greally - Wellington

Simon Hertnon - Auckland

Melissa Heyrick - Christchurch

Belinda King - Christchurch

Cherie Mitchell - Christchurch

Efthalia Pegios - Australia

Melissa Smith - Australia

Zoe Sojourner - Palmerston North

Marjan Van Waardenberg - Wellington

Debbie Williams - Havelock North

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/>.

## Farewell & Thank You!

As most of you know, I'm stepping down from my role as formatter and this is my last issue of Heart To Heart. I've been in the role for just on two years and I've had the pleasure and the opportunity to work with some wonderful people.

Firstly Gracie, who took me under her wing and gave me lots of advice and guidance as I was learning how best to put the H2H together. Gracie has a wonderful sense of humour and a strong eye for detail and she helped to define the H2H at a time when it was in need of a refresh. She was always willing to answer any questions I had and was constantly seeking to improve the quality of the newsletter.

Secondly Megan, who I was fortunate to meet at Conference last year at the start of her tenure as H2H editor. Megan is such a kind hearted and caring person and she brought fresh ideas and amusing, thought-provoking editorials to the H2H each month.

And lastly, Gillian, who I have only worked with over the last few months. Gillian has done a great job and has really stepped up to make the role her own and to take a look at the H2H with fresh eyes. She has recently put out a survey asking for feedback and I would encourage you to take the time to fill it out as it will enable the Heart To Heart to be the best it can be and give our members the content they want.

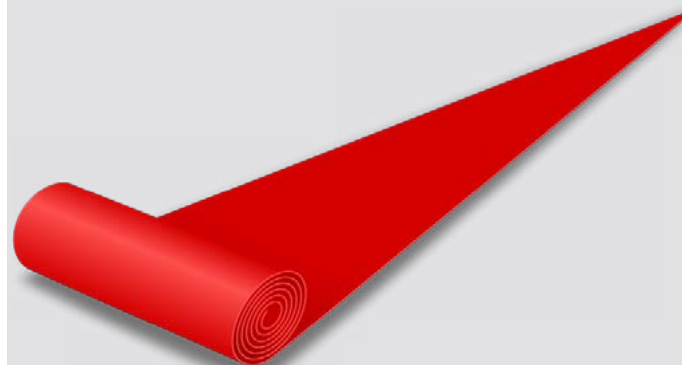
Gracie, Megan and Gillian - I have enjoyed working with each of you on the H2H. You have all brought something different to the table which is what the H2H needs. A big thank you and a round of applause for all your hard work and I look forward to seeing you at Conference.

Finally, to Gillian and Emma (our new H2H formatter) - I wish you all the best for the future. I know that the Heart To Heart is in good hands and that you are going to make it into something special for all our members.

Ruth

*"Tell the readers a story! Because without a story, you are merely using words to prove you can string them together in logical sentences."*

*— Anne McCaffrey*



# Regional Round-Up Reports

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

Our July meeting was a Cold Reads session with feedback provided by Nalini Singh and Frances Housden. We had a lot of great submissions across diverse genres and all entries were much discussed and plenty of feedback was given. Everyone who attended really enjoyed this session and I will definitely be putting more Cold Reads sessions on the schedule for 2019.

Our next meeting will be held on Saturday 4 August at the Three Kings Tennis Pavilion from 12:30 to 3:00 p.m. Please bring a donation for Chapter, change for the raffles and a plate to share. Next month we have no speaker, but we will be discussing all things Conference and we will also have a pitch practice session for those members who want a trial run before Conference. See you then!

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

This month we took the opportunity to get to know a little about the people in our neighborhood. We've got such an awesome mix of people, backgrounds and experiences within our Chapter and it was great to take some time to hear a little bit more about each person. Also really handy for when we're writing to know who's around us that may have experiences or knowledge that may be useful. Was certainly both an entertaining and educational time.

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

Our July meeting was held at Ginny's, where we welcomed a new member - Debbie Williams. Then we talked about what we'd been up to and the vagaries of entering contests. Something a lot of us have been doing of late. Then...pitch practice. We have members 'speed date pitching' in Denver at RWA Nationals, and then just a couple of weeks later repeating the process at our own conference in Auckland. It was very interesting to see how a tweak in wording (often just one word or phrase) can change the entire feel of the pitch. So hopefully now everyone's ready - or as ready as you can ever be.

We meet on the first Saturday of the month at 1pm, and new members are always welcome. But with conference in early August, our next meeting won't be held now until the 1st of September.

**Otago Convener: Maria King** ([francis.cowie@gmail.com](mailto:francis.cowie@gmail.com))

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

The Wellington / Kapiti chapter met on the 7th July at Anna's lovely beachside house in Paekarkariki. After a round-table catchup we did a short and fun creative exercise, around character development. Then we spent some time reviewing how we construct our back-matter in books. After another break for snacks, we practiced cold reads, and then had a lively discussion about book promotions, and noted some personal recommendations about good sites to use. Next month's meeting will be the first Saturday in August, venue TBC.

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

Saturday 14 July we had announced to have Lorna giving us the third and last workshop on Show versus Tell. Unfortunately, it coincided with the school holidays, so not many of us participated. Those who did, had missed the previous workshop, so quick decision to have a repeat of that one instead and save the third part to our August meeting. We are so fortunate to have Lorna in our group and that she's willing to share her knowledge of such a tricky subject. This time Jacquie spoils us with a very tasty apple & cinnamon cake. Anyone who's looking for a group to learn about writing and/or is curious about writing romance is very welcome to our meetings. We meet on the second Saturday of the month at 2pm at Nick Smith's Head Office, corner of Waimea and Quarantine Rd.

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

Good attendance at this meeting, lively and positive energy and discussion of 'cold reads,' as well as a general good buzz in anticipation of conference. In addition to discussing pitching at conference, we were able to read and critique several people's opening pages. A variety of genre and sub-genre were represented, but some common points around point of view and deep point of view in order to establish character were made, as well as building context and setting, establishing tone and mood with careful language choice. All welcome to the next meeting, to be held the weekend after conference on Sunday 19th August from 2-4pm at the South Library, Christchurch.

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