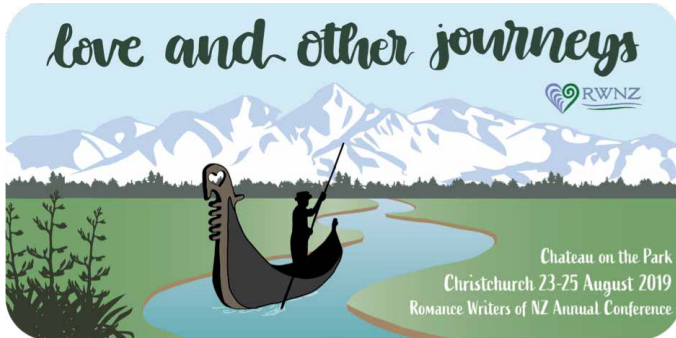


# Heart to Heart

ROMANCE WRITERS  
OF NEW ZEALAND

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## An Interview with Melissa Storm

Ashlee Robinson



**This year we are lucky enough to have Melissa Storm speaking at the RWNZ Conference. Melissa is the USA Today bestselling author of sweet and inspirational romances, as well as the founder of several book-related businesses including LitRing, The Author Site, Your Author Engine, Sweet Promise Press and Novel Publicity.**

*Thank you so much for agreeing to speak with us, Melissa!*

*1. How did you first get into writing and into publishing independently? What journey did you take to get where you are now?*

My indie journey all began with a book club in Ann Arbor and a book review column I used to write. After trying the normal submission and rejection cycle many authors go through, I decided to flip the script and make the agents come to me. It was a crazy move that normally doesn't

work—only this time, it did. I got an agent and a deal. But the deals I was being offered didn't fit me, so I decided to strike out on my own with my first book *Farsighted*. I self-published it and it became *Writer's Digest's* best YA Self-Published Novel of that year. Since then, my interests have completely changed and I've also experimented with other ways to publish. Normally, though, I find myself back self-publishing because I like the control and the ability to react quickly to market changes.

*2. You specialise in writing inspirational romances. What is the book that has most inspired you?*

There have been so many books that have inspired me through the years. For quite a while, I was a classic literature junkie with a special fondness for the Russian masters. These days I mostly read Contemporary Fiction and Cozy Mysteries. Out of all of the many wonderful books out there, I'd have to say the one that's inspired me the most is *Jane Eyre*.

*3. You've said before that many of your books are based on personal experiences. Are any of your stories or characters particularly close to your heart?*

*Love's Prophet* is the one that immediately jumps to mind for me. I had a very difficult pregnancy with my daughter, and throughout the whole thing I was terrified that I would die and not get the chance to meet my little girl. So for *Love's Prophet*, I used that experience and thought about how I'd try to care for my daughter and my husband even if I was no longer around. So far, it's been the most personal book for me, although I do plan to eventually write *Mr. Storm's* and my love story (along with all the troubles and setbacks we went through to find our way to each other) as part of a two-book set.

*4. Are you a plotter, a pantser, or a combination?*

I'm a plotter... to a point. At a certain point in the story (usually around the 2/3 mark), everything just unfolds for me. I usually toss my outline or greatly restructure it so that I can work in threads I hadn't initially planned for but that the characters presented me with anyway.

*5. You and your husband run Sweet Promise Press which publishes heart-warming, entertaining, clean and wholesome reads. What kind of stories and voices is Sweet Promise Press looking for?*

Actually, I run Sweet Promise Press with my fabulous team, while my husband runs Rising Storm where he publishes kind of the opposite of Sweet Promise Press. I often like to say he's the devil to my angel. He doesn't like it when I say that though! At Sweet Promise submissions must be clean—no swearing, sex, or gore—and fit into the guidelines for one of our series. We published shared





series that involve the lead author and I coming up with the concept and guidelines together based on what we believe our readers will love, then authors submit to write specifically for those series. We're still fairly new, but so far the reception has been fantastic!

6. *For anyone hoping to submit to Sweet Promise Press, what advice would you have?*

Do your research! Read some of the other books in our catalogue to get a feel for the style we love, then submit a sample that is consistent with our guidelines. The more you can tell us about your goals as an author and why you think we're a good match, the better your application will be received. We don't just look at the writing samples, though, we also check out your Amazon page and author website. A great platform can definitely help boost a submission closer to a YES!

*"Everyone has their own journey when it comes to writing."*

7. *If you had one piece of advice for beginning writers in general, what would it be?*

Everyone has their own journey when it comes to writing. We all start at different levels and with our own unique strengths and challenges. Don't compare your journey to anyone else's. Keep striving to be the best you can. Don't work to be the next Nora Roberts or JK Rowling. Work to be the first you.

8. *How do you structure your time between the competing demands of your businesses and the books you release regularly?*

I've learned to be a good delegator. If it wasn't for the amazing team of professionals I've assembled, I don't think I'd be publishing nearly as regularly as I am.

9. *You work with other authors in a number of different contexts. Do you have a favourite thing to work with other authors on, or a favourite aspect of working with other authors?*

One of the great parts of my job is the initial call with authors. I love getting to chat with them about their books, series and lives and getting to know them. I can't even begin to explain how many times I've gotten on the phone with a client and gotten off that same call with a friend.

10. *With all of the hours you put into work, do you manage to squeeze any non-writing related hobbies into your day?*

I guess reading isn't considered a non-writing hobby, is it? According to Goodreads, I read about one-hundred books per year these days. My family and I watch a little bit of TV, but not much. Favorite shows are America's Got Talent, the Masked Singer, and other talent competitions we can watch with our five-year-old daughter and all enjoy. Honestly, I love my work, so haven't made time for many outside hobbies!

11. *What's your proudest moment?*

Now, some might accuse me of pandering, but really, my proudest moment was getting invited to speak at RWNZ and RWA this year. When I started Novel Publicity in 2011, I never imagined I'd one day be in New Zealand talking about writing. Even now, it still kind of feels like a dream.

12. *What are your favourite genres to read? Do you read primarily in the genres you write?*

My favourite genres tend to cycle from time to time. For a while, I was reading mostly psychological thrillers and historical fiction, but now I'm devouring cozy mysteries at a rapid clip. I recently started writing them under my new pen name, Molly Fitz, and have become absolutely obsessed.

13. *We're so excited to have you in New Zealand. Have you been here before? What are you most looking forward to?*

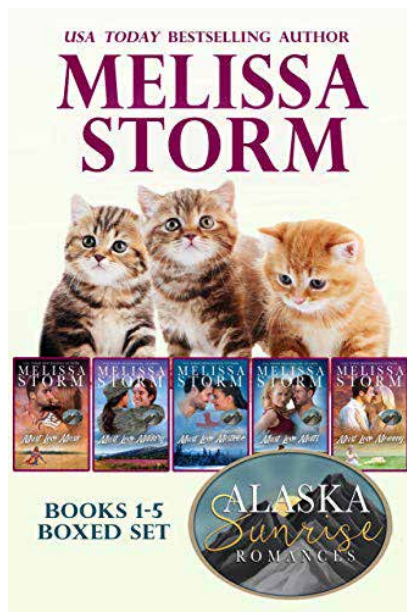
This is my first visit to New Zealand, and I couldn't be more excited. Since all my American friends expect it and keep asking, I'm going to have to visit Hobbiton as a rule. More than anything, though, I'm excited to see the cultural sites. One of my favorite book series of all time takes place in nineteenth century New Zealand; it's called In the Land of the Long White Cloud by Sarah Lark. I've also read New Zealand fiction by Diney Costeloe and Lark O'Neal. I can't wait to see all the places that inspired such beautiful prose.

14. *If you feel like sharing, we'd love to see a photo of your dogs!*

It's hard to get all six in a single shot, so here are two pictures. The Chihuahua mixes are Sky Princess and her mother Mila. This photo was taken on Sky's first birthday. We first adopted the puppy, and then when her mom needed to be rehomed, we took her in, too! The second pic shows our four "bigger" dogs, Polo is an 11-year-old Golden Retriever. We also have Cricket the Pomeranian, Sitka the Pomsy, and Michael Biscuit the Corgi pup!







### ALASKA SUNRISE ROMANCES BOOKS 1-5

*Because love has a funny way of finding us when we least expect it... Read FREE in Kindle Unlimited!*

*Three brothers and their two cousins learn that love has a way of finding you when you least expect it. From rescue dogs to avalanches and every possible scenario in between, the one thing that doesn't change is how hard each is willing to fight to secure a happily ever after.*

*This special boxed collection includes five full novellas—Must Love Music, Must Love Military, Must Love Mistletoe, Must Love Mutts, and Must Love Mommy—each with a charming, funny story inside.*

*This collection of quick, light-hearted romances will put a smile on your face and a song in your heart. It's time to indulge in a sweet Alaskan get-away!*

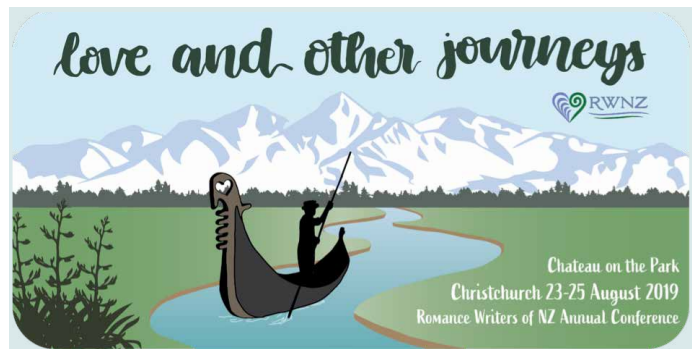
Buy Alaska Sunrise Romances [here](#)



*[Melissa](#) is a mother first, and everything else second. Writing is her way of showing her daughter just how beautiful life can be, when you pay attention to the everyday wonders that surround us. So, of course, Melissa's USA Today bestselling fiction is highly personal and often based on true stories.*

*Melissa loves books so much, she married fellow author Falcon Storm. Between the two of them, there are always plenty of imaginative, awe-inspiring stories to share. Melissa and Falcon also run a number of book-related businesses together, including LitRing, Sweet Promise Press, Novel Publicity, Your Author Engine, and the Author Site. When she's not reading, writing, or child-rearing, Melissa spends time relaxing at home in the company of a seemingly unending quantity of dogs and a rescue cat named Schrödinger.*

*Melissa maintains active memberships in Romance Writers of America (RWA), American Christian Fiction Writers (ACFW), Novelists, Inc. (NINC), and the Alliance of Independent Authors (ALLi).*



## An Interview with Nalini Akolekar: Vice-President Spencerhill Associates

Emma Lowe



**Hello Nalini!**

***We're so looking forward to meeting you in August and have a few questions to help us get to know you a little beforehand.***

***We read that you always wanted to work within the literary industries. What is it that excites you most about your role as an agent?***

To be honest, I always wanted to be in publishing, but I never wanted to be an agent. I worried that the tougher side of being an agent—negotiation, dealing with conflicts, fighting for my clients, etc.—would be difficult for me. What I've discovered is that when I am fighting for someone other than myself, I can be fierce. I'm also very good at finessing difficult relationships (sometimes). I really enjoy being an advocate for my clients. That said, the most exciting part for me is the idea that every query I look at or pitch I take could be IT. Every new book I see has the potential to be the next blockbuster. When I decide which clients to work with, I'm placing my bet. It's exhilarating.

◀◀  
*Why did you move from editing to agenting?*

I had been away from editing for several years when the opportunity to join Spencerhill came about. I love reading manuscripts and picking those that I think will do well, and I love working with authors on big picture revisions to make the books the strongest they can be. However, I am not that keen on line editing and I don't think it is my strong suit. Being an agent allows me to do what I love most. It also has a much stronger income potential, although, as I said before, every project is a gamble.

*What's hot in romance right now? What are agents looking for, and what would you be most excited to have pitched to you at RWNZ?*

What's hot now is the most difficult and frequently asked question in the business. We all ask it. It is, however, the wrong question. What we need to focus on is "what will be hot in 2 years?" That's hard. Right now own voices, multicultural, diverse characters are in great demand. Comedy is also popular. Will readers be interested in those things in 2021? We'll see. I think we all really need to look to the millennials to see what direction to go in. They are the emerging market we need to court.

For authors or prospective authors: What influences your decision to read a submission: the query letter; synopsis; snappy tweet; etc.

A good query letter will get me to look at a submission every time. However, a less unique query letter will not necessarily make me pass by a submission. If you have a less than thrilling query, but you tell me things about previous publishing successes, or high value contest wins, or multiple request from editors, you will peak my curiosity. Genre, storyline, and elements like humor or danger could also ring a bell and make me turn the page. Once I start reading a submission, though, not even the most outstanding query will get me to take on a project. It's all about the book.

*What is the biggest no no you see in submissions that make you reject them?*

Find out about the agent/agency before you submit. I get annoyed when someone states that they have researched me and are impressed with my successes in children's books. Spencerhill Associates doesn't do children's books; most of my list is romance and women's fiction. Do the research, spell the person's name correctly (more difficult in my case than many), and follow the submission guidelines unless you've been invited to submit directly. All of that matters, but once again: it is the work that matters most. If the work is outstanding, I will overlook numerous faux pas.

The other thing that is a no no for me is being pitched books that have already been self-published. There is very, very little I can do with a title that has already been published. Even if you have had outrageous success self-publishing, already-published works have limited value. If you have had outrageous success in self-publishing and pitch me a new work that you want to sell traditionally, that is a different story.

P.S. Anything below 25K copies sold (free copies not included) is not great success. Even 25K is borderline.

*Will you share some encouraging words for authors still struggling for that elusive first contract?*

Be patient. Publishing is the slowest industry on the planet. I've had books on submission for more than a year before I got an offer. It takes a really, really long time in the traditional publishing world to get things going. Once you have success things speed up (a little), but breaking in takes time and persistence. My biggest selling title was rejected by numerous editors before it finally sold, and even then it only got a tiny advance.

*"Ask questions! Don't be afraid to ask questions of anyone. This is a complicated industry and no one starts out knowing everything."*

Ask questions! Don't be afraid to ask questions of anyone. This is a complicated industry and no one starts out knowing everything. Also, be careful of who you choose to work with. There is a tremendous welcoming community in romance, but that doesn't mean everyone you meet will have your best interests at heart—that goes double for agents and editors. Most are amazing and wonderful, but bad ones do exist, and they can damage your career.

My other piece of advice is to write YOUR book. You need to know about trends, listen to critiques, and be sensible about what the market will respond to, but ultimately you must write the book of your heart. Those are the books that breakout. If you change your voice and chase trends you are less likely to find long-term success. Listen to criticism and suggestions, but don't allow them to change your voice. If you don't have passion for what you are writing, it will come through on the page.

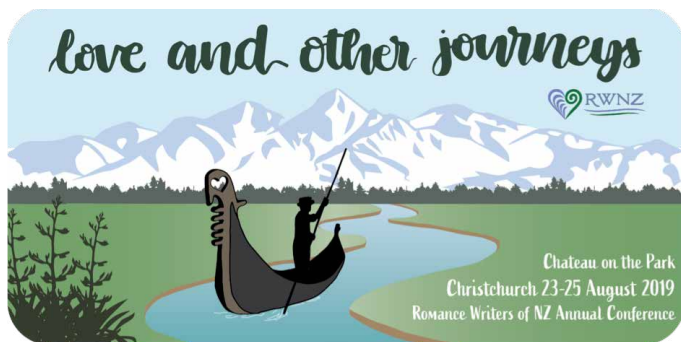
*A slightly off-the-cuff question: Has there been one specific highlight of your career that resonates?*

There have been tons of highlights. I love what I do. Being a part of someone's dream of being published come true is awesome. When a writer has worked really hard and achieves success it gives me a wonderful feeling. If I had to pick one moment, I would say that walking up on the stage last year to accept a RITA award for RWNZ's own Brynn Kelly was tops!



*Nalini Akolekar joined Spencerhill Associates after a lengthy editorial career and several years in advertising sales. Being an agent has provided the perfect opportunity to combine her editorial instincts with her sales, marketing, and business experience.*

*Nalini currently represents several bestselling authors, and has placed books with a wide range of publishers, from the Big Five to Amazon, Harlequin, indies and E-first. Nalini specializes in romance and women's fiction in the adult market, but she also loves thrillers, horror and true crime. "I like to develop strong relationships with my clients. I see the author/agent relationship as a true collaboration."*



## Want To Have More Fun At Conference?

Sue MacKay



**Put your hand up to volunteer for one (or more) of the many little jobs that make RWNZ Conferences so wonderful.**

So you're coming to Christchurch for conference where you'll be wowed and bedazzled by wonderful speakers, and have a lot of laughs and deep and meaningful conversations about the highs and lows of writing. You'll catch up with friends you haven't seen for a year, and you'll meet new people as well. It's exciting from beginning to end.

Another way to increase the benefits of attending conference is by partaking as a volunteer.

### HERE'S A SAMPLE:

- Coercing others into coughing up dollars for raffles,
- Introducing a well known author to a workshop,
- Time keeping at cold reads - you can't sleep in for this one,
- Stuffing bags with books and other goodies,
- Registering attendees - you get a chance to meet everyone here,
- Greeting people as they turn up for the cocktail party or dinner.

This is seriously the best way to get amongst the crowd, and have fun while you're doing it. Let's face, we're all there to have fun, along with the learning, talking, sharing info, but enjoying yourself is right up there.

If you're a newbie then being a volunteer, doing a small job - or a few - is how you meet people you might otherwise miss out on. If you're a regular at conference then you know how great it is to catch up with friends you haven't seen in the past year.

I had only attended two conferences when I was asked to be the volunteer organiser for the next one. Scary? Yep, and I did the job for ten years, because how could I not? I got to know so many members as more than faces and names, and have made lifelong friends through doing this. And I'm only asking you to do one job. But hey, if you are happy with more then tell me. There are plenty of things that need doing over the three days and I'm happy to slot you in.

Don't be shy about nudging your friends to put their hands up too. Or do it for them, but that might cost you!

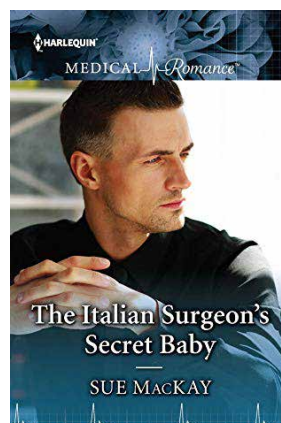
Think about it. Why do you go to conference? Not to hide in a corner and talk only when spoken to. Writing is a lonely occupation - which is probably why the noise level at conference can sometimes be off the scale, especially at the cocktail and dinner parties where a wee drop of wine loosens things up. It's always great to come home at the end of the weekend with new contacts on your phone to stay in touch with and discuss those sticky writing moments.

And how better to meet people without feeling under pressure than to be registering them at the desk, or selling them a raffle ticket? Oops, raffle tickets plural.

What to do? Email me, Sue Mackay, at [ismackay@ts.co.nz](mailto:ismackay@ts.co.nz) to register your name. If there's something you really would not like to do then tell me. (And I promise to give you that job!) No, I wouldn't, really. Not everyone's comfortable standing up and talking in front of a group so introducing a speaker would be out for those people. Just let me know.

Volunteers are awesome people who love giving to their organisation. So, I'm expecting to be inundated with offers of help.

### ITALIAN SURGEON'S SECRET BABY



*From top surgeon...*

*To single dad?*

*Before nurse Elene Lowe's best friend died, Elene agreed to raise her baby daughter, Aimee, and is now traveling to Italy to find Aimee's dad—sexy surgeon Mattia Ricco. Mattia is shocked to discover he's a father, but the sparks flying between him and Elene soon ignite an irresistible attraction. With Elene and Aimee's life back in New Zealand, they're worlds apart, unless Mattia can*

*give them both a reason to stay.*

Buy Italian Surgeon's Secret Baby [here](#)



[Sue Mackay](#) writes for HM&B in the medical genre. She's sold 30 books and has many more loitering in the back of her head. Her stories are set in many countries around the world, as well as in New Zealand. She started writing as a seven year old but waited until her forties to sell. Her mother always said she hadn't experienced life enough but finally she ignored that and used all the experiences she had accumulated to start getting serious. Sue believes writing is the best career she's ever had. All she needs is her laptop and she can take it anywhere. It has brought her some wonderful friendships, especially through conferences - and volunteering!



# News from the President

Kendra Delugar.



I'm sitting here writing this on a beautiful sunny day with a dark chocolate, a milk chocolate and a white chocolate Lindt bunny by my side (I'm an equal opportunity bunny eater!).

The 2019 RWNZ 'Love and Other Journeys' Conference registration is filling up nicely, but for those of you who have been holding off, Early Bird fees close on the 31st of May! So if you want to get in at the discounted rate, you're going to need to do so fast. The conference runs from the 23rd to the 25th of August, and we have a fabulous list of International Speakers – Sophie Jordan, Laura Kaye, Amy Andrews and Melissa Storm. Register here:

<https://www.romancewriters.co.nz/event/rwnz-2019-conference/>

By the time this magazine comes out our last contest for the year, the Chapter Short Story Contest, will be closed and judging will be underway. Good luck to all of those who entered!

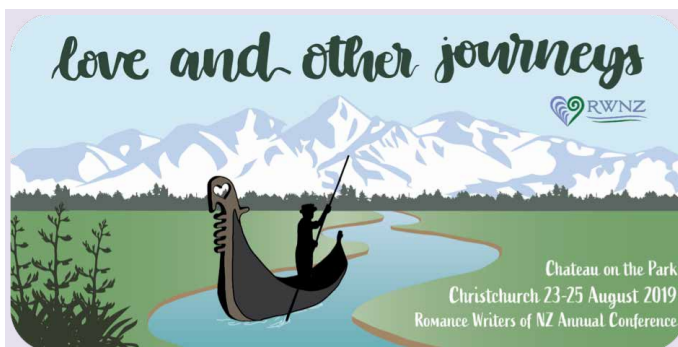
Speaking of lasts, the RWNZ year (September to August) is really starting to wind up now and with that comes the very important issue of nominations for next RWNZ year's Executive. I have written a separate article on this, but there are people leaving the Executive (myself included) and we are going to need people to stand up for these roles.

Yes, being on the Executive does take time but you make friends for life doing this, and I cannot recommend it more. It's the ultimate way to support and shape your organisation. You honestly won't regret it.

You can find the full roles and position descriptions here:

<https://www.romancewriters.co.nz/membership/agm-remit-proxy-form/>

*Enjoy your long weekend!*



## Improve Your Manuscript Through Self-Editing

Iola Goulton



**I'm thrilled to have been selected to present at the 2019 Romance Writers of New Zealand conference. Attending is always a highlight of my year, and it's an honour to be joining a stellar line-up of speakers.**

I'm a freelance editor, and my workshop will be on editing—the main mistakes I see in manuscripts from new (and experienced) writers and showing you how to identify and fix them.

We'll cover:

1. Structure
2. Conflict
3. Motivation
4. Dialogue
5. Dialogue tags
6. Character thoughts
7. Point of View
8. Telling
9. Overused words
10. Grammar and punctuation





That's the what. Today I'm talking about why. Why should you self-edit your manuscript? Doesn't the publisher edit? Yes, they do. At least, the good ones do. (I'd steer clear of any publisher that doesn't edit ... or charges you for editing. But that's another conversation).

If the publisher is going to edit your manuscript, why do you need to edit it first?

It's a cliché, but you only get one chance to make a first impression. You need to make it count—which means presenting the agent or publisher with the best possible manuscript. Don't destroy your chances by submitting something that's less than your best.

### TRADITIONAL PUBLISHERS

Publishers, like most businesses, are under pressure to produce financial results. Editing takes time, and time is money. Few publishers can afford to sign an author with a great idea but poor writing.

Publishers do edit. Publishers know authors make typos. They know we all have writing glitches or concepts we never grasp. Publishers understand that. But publishers want to work with manuscripts that have been written and edited well enough to enable them to assess the plot and characters, to judge the overall saleability of the story. They don't want to be wading through complex and convoluted sentences that seem to say one thing but could say something different entirely.

### LITERARY AGENTS

In fact, many publishers (especially US and British publishers) don't even consider direct submissions from authors. They only accept submissions from reputable literary agents. Agents are paid on commission, usually 15% of the author's advance and royalty. It makes sense that agent want to work with competent writers, as they get paid for selling manuscripts to publishers, not for editing those manuscripts in the hope of making a sale. It's going to be easier to sign with an agent if you have stellar writing and self-editing skills.

### SELF-PUBLISHING

What if you intend to self-publish? Then you definitely need an editor ... and not just a proofreader. Traditionally published books will typically go through three or four rounds of editing: developmental editing, line editing, copyediting, and proofreading.

Most editors charge by the hour. Some quote based on a word count or page count (a standard manuscript page is 250 words). Even if they're quoting by the word or page, they're budgeting on editing X words per hour or Y pages per hour so they earn their target hourly rate (and we'd like to earn more per hour than our teenagers earn at McDonalds).

So the more work your novel needs, the longer it's going to take to edit, and the more expensive it's going to be. That's why it's important to learn writing craft, and learn to self-edit.

Let's look at some of the free or low-cost alternatives to help you learn to self-edit and reduce your need for paid editing:

### READ CRAFT BOOKS.

Read books on writing craft. Read to learn, and never stop learning. (You can also mix this up with reading blog posts, and reading about publishing and marketing—two more subject you'll need to master.)

### WORK WITH A CRITIQUE PARTNER.

Many authors work with one or more critique partners, often swapping a chapter at a time. You revise and edit their chapter or manuscript, and they do the same. This is a great option, as long as your critique partner knows the craft of writing fiction—otherwise they could be giving you bad advice.

### WORK WITH BETA READERS.

A beta reader is a volunteer who reads you full manuscript and offers feedback on specific issues. Some authors use beta readers for the final proofread, after the copyeditor has covered the manuscript with (virtual) red pen. But it's more common to work with beta readers before the manuscript goes to an editor. After all, there is no point in polishing a novel with underlying plot or character issues.

### ENTER CONTESTS.

Contests are a cost-effective way of getting feedback on your writing. Most contests for unpublished writers offer feedback from the judges. Even contests that only judge the first five or fifteen pages can be useful, as most recurring writing issues show up in those early pages.

### JUDGE CONTESTS.

You don't have to be a great writer or self-editor to judge a writing contest—many contests are actually looking for reader judges (for example, RWNZ is currently seeking reader judges for the Koru Award).

If you're a new writer, then reading a published novel with judging criteria in mind is a great way of learning what agents, editors, and publishers consider important in a novel, and will help you with your own writing. If you're a more experienced writer, then judging is a great way of giving back to your favourite writing organisation!

### HIRE A WRITING COACH.

Some writing coaches have expensive packages, but many charge by the hour. You can learn a huge amount in a couple of hours when the coach is specifically focused on your writing.

*"Freelance editors don't always charge hundreds or thousands."*

### HIRE AN EDITOR.

Freelance editors don't always charge hundreds or thousands. Most charge by the hour, and many will offer a free sample edit. Many will also agree to edit a sample of your manuscript (e.g. the first 5,000 words) for a reasonable fee. This won't identify overarching plot or characterisation issues, but will show you your writing strengths, and the areas you need to work on.

### TAKE A COURSE

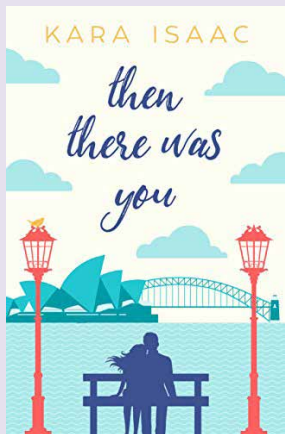
I'm a big fan of Margie Lawson's online training courses ([www.margielawson.com](http://www.margielawson.com)), and credit Margie's Deep Editing techniques with helping me with my contest wins. There are other great options out there: Author Accelerator, One-Stop Shop for Writers, and My Book Therapy, to name a few. Also check out the Romance Writers of Australia OWLs and the RWNZ webinar recordings.



## ATTEND A CONFERENCE

Attending a conference (like RWNZ) is a great way of learning more about the craft of writing. It will also help you connect with potential agents, publishers, critique partners, beta readers ... and freelance editors. If you have a question, track me down at conference and ask! Or contact me via my website: [www.christianediting.co.nz](http://www.christianediting.co.nz).

To conclude, no matter how you plan to publish, it's in your best interest to learn to edit your own work. It will reduce your overall editing costs, and will improve your chances of attracting the attention of your dream agent and publisher. Check out some of my options, and I'll look forward to seeing you in my session at conference to share my Ten Top Tips to Improve Your Manuscript.



## AND THEN THERE WAS YOU

Normally, our contributors share a book they've published. Lola has asked to share a book she's worked on—Kara Isaac's RITA award winning *Then There Was You*.

*Paige McAllister needs to do something drastic. Her boyfriend can't even commit to living in the same country, her promised promotion is dead on arrival and the simultaneous loss of her brother and her dream of being a concert*

*violinist has kept her playing life safe and predictable for six years. Things need to change. A moment of temporary insanity finds her leaving her life in Chicago to move to Sydney, Australia. There she finds herself, against many of her convictions, as a logistics planner for one of Australia's biggest churches, and on a collision course with her boss's son.*

*Josh Tyler fronts a top-selling worship band and is in demand all over the world. But, in the past, his failed romantic relationships almost destroyed both his reputation and his family. He's determined to never risk it happening again. The last thing he needs is some American girl tipping his ordered life upside down. Especially one who despises everything he's ever worked for and manages to push every button he has.*

*When Josh and Paige are thrown together to organize his band's next tour, the sparks fly. But can they find a way to bridge the differences that pull them apart? Or will they choose the safety and security of what they know over taking a chance on something that will require them to risk everything?*

Buy *And Then There Was You* [here](#)



[Lola Goulton](#) is a book reviewer and freelance fiction editor with a degree in marketing and a background in human resource consulting. Lola copyedited *Then There Was You* by Kara Isaac, which won the 2018 RITA® Award from Romance Writers of America (Romance with Religious or Spiritual Elements).

*lola has completed writing and editing courses with Lawson Writer's Academy, Michael Hauge, Author Accelerator, and the Christian Proofreaders and Editors Network. When she's not working, lola is usually reading, or writing her next book review. lola lives in the beautiful Bay of Plenty with her husband, teenage son, and spoiled cat.*

# Point of View 101

Charlotte Brentwood



**In a story, the point of view is the narrator's position in the description of events. Is the narrator a participant in the events being told, an observer of those events, or someone reconstructing the events from a distance? Are they visible or invisible?**

Here are some questions to consider when choosing a type of point of view for your story:

Which character's eyes (if any) are we looking through at any given moment?

Do we also have access to their thoughts?

If so, how closely should the words on the page resemble the character's own way of speaking?

Witnessing the events through many pairs of eyes gives the story breadth.

Sticking to just the one viewpoint has the advantage of depth.

It boils down to the demands of your particular story and the effect you are trying to achieve.

## THE MAIN TYPES

### First Person

First Person is when you use the pronoun "I" to tell the story. The narrator is the main character. Think "Bridget Jones's Diary". First person is quite common in young adult.

You are normally limited to only one character's point of view when using first person. So the narrative will always be biased and incomplete. You won't know anything about the people or events that this character hasn't personally experienced. You can use that to your advantage – having an unreliable narrator is very trendy these days - but it can be limiting, particularly for romance writers.

### Second Person

The story is told to "you." This point of view is not common in fiction, but it is common in nonfiction, song lyrics, and even video games. The narrator is relating the



◀◀ experiences of another character called “you.” Thus, you become the protagonist, you carry the plot, and your fate determines the story. It’s very hard to use this technique for a whole novel.

#### *Third Person*

The story is about “he” or “she”, with an invisible narrator. This is the most common point of view in commercial fiction. The narrator is relating the experiences through the eyes of one character at a time.

Choose either Third Person Limited, when the focus is limited to only one character for the whole book, or Third Person Multiple where the narrator can follow multiple characters in the story. If you decide to have more than one point of view character, remember each character needs their own fully developed story arc.

In Third Person Omniscient, the narrator knows EVERYTHING. The narrator can know things that others don’t, can make comments about what’s happening, and can see inside the minds of other characters. This used to be very common, but has fallen out of favour. It can get very confusing, especially if you are tempted to show the emotions of all of your characters all the time.

### **ROMANCE GENRE CONVENTIONS**

As a general rule, romance fiction is written in the third person multiple, past tense. Most books alternate between the hero and heroine’s point of view. It’s a hallmark of the genre – if you don’t have both points of view, it’s usually not a romance novel.

Some romance novels do use other points of view in addition to the hero and heroine, such as their relatives or friends. These scenes are used to illustrate more about the main character or show important action which the main character isn’t privy to. Personally, I would avoid doing this to start with as it takes you out of the love story. There are other ways to bring in more information.

#### **TIPS**

1. Make it clear when you’ve changed point of view. You can do this by inserting a scene break or starting a new chapter. Don’t just change point of view in a new paragraph without any other visual clues.
2. Make it clear whose point of view it has changed to. It’s very annoying for a reader to get several paragraphs into a new scene or chapter, thinking they are reading the thoughts on one character but it turns out to be another. So name them right away, or use another detail that will make it very obvious whose head we’re in.
3. Make each character’s voice distinct – if the reader picks up the action in the middle of a scene they should be able to tell whose POV it is.
4. Try to give a roughly equal share of voice to your hero and heroine, and alternate throughout the book. This can be tweaked during revisions.

Things to avoid:

1. Headhopping

When you switch point of view characters too quickly, or dive into the heads of too many characters at once, you

could be in danger of what editors call “head hopping.” When the narrator switches from one character’s thoughts to another’s without an obvious scene break, it can jar the reader and break the intimacy with the scene’s main character.

2. Writing men who sound like women...

...or giving characters all the same voice.

3. Changing point of view part way through your story

Don’t start in first person and change to third and vice versa. A more subtle distinction is starting out with a great deal of distance from your character’s thoughts and emotions, and then being very close by the end of the book. Be consistent.

4. Avoid including action that would be impossible for the character to see or know about.

You can’t have the hero see something happening in another room, or knowing about an event they haven’t been privy to. Be sure to restrict the action to their actual experiences. You can find other ways of weaving in the extra action without compromising the point of view. Another example of this is describing the character’s appearance when in their point of view. That’s impossible; they can’t look at their own eyes – unless they’re looking in a mirror, which is a cliché. It’s much more interesting to have their love interest describe them instead.

### **HOW DO I DECIDE WHOSE POINT OF VIEW TO USE IN A PARTICULAR SCENE?**

Generally the answer is – whoever has the most at stake. Who is being impacted the most by these events, or who is driving the action?

You might have an important scene in your romance in which both the hero and heroine have equal transformation. Which point of view to choose?

My suggestion would be to write the whole scene twice, once from each point of view. This exercise in itself might help you choose, as one may flow more naturally, or just have more tension or pacing.

Sometimes, you don’t have to choose only one point of view for a scene, particularly if it’s a long scene. Stay in one point of view until a point of great tension, and then insert a scene break – or better yet, a chapter break. Then change to the other person’s point of view. This is a great way to keep the reader turning pages.

### **HOW DO I DEEPEN THE POINT OF VIEW?**

New writers can be reluctant to use third person. First person can seem the most natural as it keeps us close to the character’s thoughts and seems more personal and immediate. This poses problems though if we want to write the story from more than one point of view – more than one person using the “I” pronoun gets confusing. So how can you use third person and still feel as close to the character?

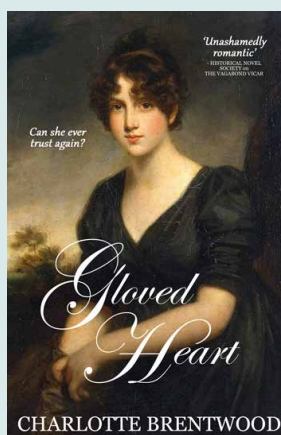
The easiest way to do this is the technique called ‘deep point of view’. This means eliminating any words or phrases which distance us from the character’s thoughts and feelings. The action is only seen through their eyes.



Some examples of words which distance us from the character include: thought, felt, watched, wondered, saw, believed, noticed. You'll have observed these are all verbs. They are all telling us what the character is seeing, thinking or feeling, not SHOWING it to us.

Instead of using these words, we must narrate the action directly as if the character has put the words down on the page... almost like a stream-of-consciousness. Often, we can just remove these words altogether to make a sentence stronger.

Deep point of view is something you can work on after you've finished your first draft. Don't become so hung up on using those kinds of verbs that interrupt your flow. Just get the story down, and then you can come back and make your scenes deeper once you know which ones are keepers. You'll want to know your characters really well before you can write like this.



### GLOVED HEART

Charlotte's new release, *GLOVED HEART*, was released on April 20th. It's the second book in the *Hearts of Amberley* series, but can be read as a standalone.

Amy Miller is struggling to come to terms with her new life as a mother, while being a reluctant guest in a rigid gentry household. A victim of abuse, she is determined to never trust a man again.

Henry Russell has loved Amy for as long as he can remember, but his family want nothing to do with her. A chance encounter with Amy rekindles a friendship which might save both of them.

The discovery of a secret which holds the key to Amy's past will change them forever, and jeopardise any chance they have for happiness. Can Henry show Amy that true love will give her everything she could ever need?

Buy *Gloved Heart* [here](#)



[Charlotte](#) developed serious crushes on a series of men from age fifteen: Darcy, Knightley, Wentworth and Brandon. A book-worm and scribbler for as long as she can remember, Charlotte always dreamed of sharing her stories with the world.

Earning a degree in communication studies, she was seduced by the emerging digital world and has since worked with the web and in marketing. She is a member of the Auckland chapter of RWNZ.

Now mother to an adorable human tornado, Charlotte is trying to find the time for reading, seaside walks, warbling at the piano and quaffing far too many hot chocolates.

## “Just How Things Were”: Bigotry in Historical Romance

K J Charles



Historical detail is my jam. I am not here for histrom that is modern day people in silly hats; that takes all the fun out of it. I don't want magic horses that are basically cars with legs, or letter-carrying boys who work with the speed of text messages, and I really don't want dukes who come with belief in full social equality ready installed. If I want modern things I'll read contemporary.

Regency romance in particular has as one of its main joys the social stratification, the play of power and status and reputation and responsibility. I wrote a Regency about a marquess's brother in love with his valet where the entire conflict depended on the power imbalance between the two, and it took a good half of the book for the lord to get beyond his ingrained assumption that he makes the rules, that he is the one who gets to decide that this relationship is impossible and morally wrong, and the valet has no input into that decision. (The valet disagrees.) It was massive fun to do precisely because the power imbalance and the attitudes were such a big gnarly mess.

Social attitudes of the time are a huge part of historical fiction. But historical fiction is still a thing of its own era. If you read books written by Victorians set in ancient Rome, you'll learn a lot about Victorian England, because people write themselves, their concerns, their views of what's right and wrong.

I don't see that as a flaw in historical fiction; I see it as a feature. I am writing books in 2018 for an audience reading them in 2018, and I don't think the fact they're set in 1818 is a reason in itself to write things that will be repugnant or wrong to a modern audience. My characters can be at least partially people of their time without being rancid by my own time's standards.





I dare say you've encountered the form of 'historical accuracy' often used as an excuse by writers or a critique by certain readers. This is the 'accuracy' that insists that any woman in a medieval type setting must be raped, preferably on-page. That everyone in the past must have been virulently homophobic, that everyone was a bigot, that it's impossible that humans ever cared about people unlike themselves. This is the 'accuracy' that denies mixed marriages happened before about 1980, and doubts that white Brits in the Georgian period would have boycotted slave sugar, and writes to inform authors that their white hero was implausible for not raping their black heroine on sight. (All examples recently seen in the wild on social media. God help us. It's funny how rarely you get told off for not being progressive or liberal enough, for ignoring the many people who fought for other people's rights, or who fell in love and lived happily, or who existed as people of colour in Europe before 1950. It's almost like some people have a vested interest in making the past seem a crappier place.)

I am not, of course, arguing that historical romances shouldn't deal with hard subjects or have bigotry on page. Writers like Alyssa Cole, Piper Huguley, and Beverly Jenkins engage with American racism continually and directly; Rose Lerner's *True Pretenses* deals with English anti-Semitism; EE Ottoman's *The Doctor's Discretion* handles transphobia, homophobia and racism; and I could name you a dozen more historical romances that take on appalling historical attitudes, sometimes even voiced by the main characters.

But these narratives don't simply present bigotry as a thing, a fact of life like corsets and taxation. These books show us the cruelty and wrongs done by bigotry; where main characters are responsible they learn as part of their arc that earns them a HEA; where other characters are responsible, the narrative engages with that. These books critique past attitudes from the perspective of the present, because it is not the Regency now. It is 2018 and I am not here for historical hatred as a feature, a bit of window dressing, just how things were. Don't make a fuss, it's historically accurate. That's very easy to say if you're not the reader who's been slapped in the face by another bit of dehumanisation or violence presented as entertainment.

*"Romance is all about our engagement with the main characters. Well, I'm not engaging with unredeemed bigots. I don't want to see their HEAs..."*

Romance is all about our engagement with the main characters. Well, I'm not engaging with unredeemed bigots. I don't want to see their HEAs; I don't want them to have the happiness they'd deny to other people. I don't care if it's probable that someone in 1800 would have displayed unexamined bigotry; that doesn't entitle them

to an HEA in the book I'm reading right now.

And that is not shying away from historical reality. On the contrary, I think refusing to engage with historical attitudes that present bigotry as acceptable is shying away from current reality, in which the same attitudes are making a comeback. Historical attitudes changed because people fought them. Sometimes failing to take a stand is a stand.

Authors don't have to deal directly with bigotry when writing historicals, of course. You can just not put it in the book, along with all the other things we don't put in books. Very few historical romances mention headlice, or menstruation, or bad breath, because those are not things most readers want to dwell on, and I'd far rather read about the MCs' headlice than their hatred. Or you can sketch bigotries in lightly, without shoving them in the reader's face. Or you can give those attitudes to someone who isn't the hero or heroine of the damn book. You can do a whole lot of things.

But what you can't do is depict vile attitudes without examination or consideration, and expect modern readers not to care or object or decide your character can go step on Lego just because the book's set in the past. It may be; we're writing and reading right now.

#### **SOME DIVERSE HISTORICAL ROMANCE:**

Beverly Jenkins is the queen of the Old West. Her historical romances with African-American leads are hugely popular for a very good reason. Try *The Taming of Jessi Rose* with its wonderfully hard-yet-soft heroine, a roguish outlaw turned marshal, a great capitalist villain, loads of entertaining banter, and all with a brutal undercurrent of realism and cruelty to anchor the romance. A triumph.

*Spring Flowering* by Farah Mendlesohn is a marvellously real f/f set in Birmingham in the 1800s. More of a lesbian coming of age than a classic romance structure, but with a delightful, quiet heroine, a proper HEA, and the most glorious historical grounding. A quiet joy.

*The Doctor's Discretion* by EE Ottoman brings together a black doctor excluded by the US medical system and a trans man working within it for a lovely m/m romance in a squalid, frosty 1830s New York.

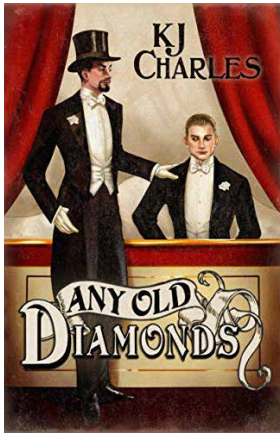
Alyssa Cole's *An Extraordinary Union* was deservedly one of the books of the year everywhere. Our heroine is a black woman posing as a spy in a Confederate household during the Civil War, who is not ready to fall in love with a white Union sp. It's a tense adventure, a sweeping romance, and a blast of outrage. Terrific.

*Brothers of the Wild North Sea* by Harper Fox is the Viking/Anglo-Saxon monk romance you didn't know you needed. Beautiful, mystical, wild and wonderful, full of deep humanity. If you like this you'll love her 1950s *Seven Summer Nights*.

*Behind These Doors* by Jude Lucens is a gently paced romance well grounded in the Edwardian setting, featuring a poly setup with a married couple whose plus one falls for another man as well. Sexuality, gender, and class intersect across the tangled web of more than one three-way relationship. Gentle, thoughtful, deeply positive romance that accepts love in all its many forms.







### ANY OLD DIAMONDS

Lord Alexander Pyne-ffoulkes, the younger son of the Duke of Ilvar, holds a bitter grudge against his wealthy father. The Duke intends to give his Duchess a priceless diamond parure on their wedding anniversary—so Alec hires a pair of jewel thieves to steal it.

The Duke's remote castle is a difficult target, and Alec needs a way to get the thieves in. Soldier-turned-criminal Jerry Crozier has the answer: he'll pose as a Society gentleman and become Alec's new best friend.

But Jerry is a dangerous man: controlling, remote, and devastating. He effortlessly teases out the lonely young nobleman's most secret desires, and soon he's got Alec in his bed—and the palm of his hand.

Or maybe not. Because as the plot thickens, betrayals, secrets, new loves, and old evils come to light. Now the jewel thief and the aristocrat must keep up the pretence, find their way through a maze of privilege and deceit, and confront the truth of what's between them...all without getting caught.

Buy *Any Old Diamonds* [here](#)



After twenty years in UK publishing including a stint at Mills & Boon, [KJ Charles](#) is now a full-time writer. She lives in London with her husband, two kids, an out-of-control garden and an increasingly murderous cat.

KJ writes mostly historical romance, often with some fantasy or horror in there. Her paranormal romance *Spectred Isle* is a 2018 RITA® nominee.

*To do the useful thing,  
to say the courageous thing,  
to contemplate  
the beautiful thing:  
that is enough  
for one man's life.*

— T.S. Eliot,  
The Use of Poetry and the Use of Criticism

## Public Speaking and Presentations for Writers

Matthew Mole/Matthew Treymayne



Normally locked in their writing cave, intermittently hissing at intruders that disturb their creative flow, writers occasionally have to emerge blinking into the daylight to face their readers. For many this is a traumatic experience, but it need not be. In this article, I, Matthew Mole, Professional Corporate Song and Dance Man, will show you how to put your writing principles and skills to use, crafting a presentation that will hold your audience enthralled and have them clamouring to buy your books.

This article is based on a presentation I put together for the Coast 2 Coast chapter of the RWNZ. The inspiration was our recent road trip to the South Island. During this trip, Lizzi Tremayne presented multiple times at various country libraries and I was able to analyse and refine her presentation as we progressed through our journey. I'll use that presentation to illustrate this talk.

### PART ONE: THE GOOD NEWS

The good news is, as a writer, you already know how to tell a story. That's exactly what we are going to do here. This story will be about your work and you. There are several ways to present this material, but it will always come down to these same basic points.

If I'm presenting for a company, I will lead with the company overview, pitch, and mission statement, emphasizing our product differentiation. For an individual author, you need to tell your version, i.e. an overview of you and what you write:

- the core subject of your talk: the pitch for your novel or series
- what you are trying to achieve with your writing, and most importantly
- what makes your writing different.



These things together drive audience interest and will turn them from simple audience members into your diehard fans. While you're considering this, remember the following points:

- the audience doesn't know you very well, if at all. Believe me, they want to.
- they are willing you to succeed.
- they want you to be interesting.

"But I'm not interesting! Why would anyone be interested in hearing about me!"

Trust me, you're more interesting than you think. Your life experiences are unique and colour your writing.

"But I'm just a housewife and mother who's lived in small-town NZ her whole life."

One of the world's most interesting characters, Miss Jane Marple, was a spinster who lived in a single village for almost her whole life. Really, don't underestimate your experiences and insights. Channel your inner Jane Marple.

There is a natural wonder in all audiences that someone, who appears to be like them on the surface, apparently has the superpower required to be an author.

"I don't have a superpower. I'm just ordinary. I'm just..."

I don't care if you've written one book or twenty, trust me, you have a super power and your audience is in awe of it. They want to know how you did it. They want to know why you did it, and they want you to excite them about it.

When you're creating your presentation, always return to the fundamentals of story. Use the skills you already have to present both yourself and your work to an audience, who probably has never heard of you before and who may not have heard of your subject or genre.

Structure each section of the presentation to build suspense and provide dramatic relief just as you would in your stories. Use hooks to engage the audience and encourage feedback and interaction. More on this later. Your ultimate objective is to make the audience interested enough to want to read your books immediately, preferably handing out cold hard cash for a signed copy at the end of the talk. You also want them to write five-star reviews and remember your name next time they are in the library, bookshop, or Kindle Store.

See? It's not that hard.

## **PART TWO: WRITING YOUR PRESENTATION OUTLINE**

As a writer, you already know the most important concepts: introduction, hooks, build up, and punchline! For a presentation, we have one other consideration: time. Presentation time limits are the equivalent of writing to a word count. You will be given a time slot and will need to edit your presentation to fit. Writing can be anything from a piece of flash fiction to a multi-volume epic. Presentation time slots are anywhere from ten minutes up to a maximum that would test the bladder control of your audience. If you're not given a fixed length, don't take this last point as a challenge. Most audiences can passively absorb information for a couple of hours.

Children's attention spans tend to be much shorter.

For the moment, I'm assuming you'll use a presentation program like PowerPoint or Mac Presenter. Later, I'll cover what to do if you don't have a presentation, or worse, if the technology lets you down and you are suddenly doing your author talk a cappella.

### **OPENING SPLASH PAGE AND WELCOME BLURB**

This page will be up on the screen when people come into your talk. It should be your portrait or logo with your name, the title of your talk, and a greeting.

During Lizzi's recent South Island tour, the senior librarians gave the introductions based on Lizzi's press pack she'd sent them several weeks in advance. Your host may not have qualified from Toastmasters and may not know what to say, so solve their dilemma by providing an intro blurb ahead of time. Emphasise that they don't have to use this intro, but it's there if they need it. The look of relief on their face will tell its own story.

For example, here is Lizzi's intro blurb, mainly taken from the author bio on her website:

Welcome to this talk at ----- by New Zealand author Lizzi Tremayne, aka equine veterinarian Elizabeth (Lizzi) Thompson.

Unpretentious, eminently readable Contemporary and Historical Fiction... by a horse vet.

Lizzi writes about Historical Scotland, the Old West, Tsarist Russia, and Colonial New Zealand, as well as veterinary fiction and non-fiction—all with a horsey flair.

She grew up riding wild in the Santa Cruz Mountain redwoods, became an equine veterinarian at UC Davis School of Veterinary Medicine, and practiced in the California Pony Express and Gold Country before emigrating to New Zealand.

Lizzi has two wonderful, grown-up boys and an awesome partner in this sea of green. When she's not writing, she's swinging a rapier or shooting a bow in medieval garb, riding, driving a carriage or playing on her hobby farm, singing, or working as an equine veterinarian. She's multiply published and awarded in fiction and veterinary nonfiction.

### **SCENE-SETTING SLIDES**

The audience now knows who you are, has clapped politely, and is now sitting attentively waiting on your every word. In your novels, next, you'd set the scene, right?

The classic scene setting is to simply tell them who you are and what you're going to tell them. Treat these slides the same way you would open your stories. You need an opening hook to engage the audience, then a short development to intrigue and lead them into the main body of your presentation.

This section can be short, as you are going to reveal more about yourself during the main body of the presentation. Like any good opening scene, it needs a hook.

For example, Lizzi's has a welcome screen with a professionally photographed portrait. The two opening





slides are about her veterinary life and what motivated her to start writing—a physical injury which came close to ending her career, combined with her introduction to RWNZ, an organisation she'd never heard of before. This section ends with the question, but what should I write about?

### MAIN BODY OF PRESENTATION

This is the meat and potatoes of your talk. You may be pitching one book or a series. Either way, each section in your presentation must have its own intro, hooks, build up, and punchline.

- Intro: The opening statement or story, indicating the direction of the talk or section.
- Hook: A statement or question for audience to engage them.
- Buildup: The body of each section of the presentation must build up to a.....
- Punchline: A punchline is a wow moment: a surprise, a victory, or a disaster

As with a chapter in your novel, the end of a section should include something leading into the next section or provides a fulfilling conclusion.

### LIZZI'S INTRO:

Lizzi's first section is about how she came to choose the Pony Express as the central feature of her first award-winning novel. This leads to the key background feature of the novel, namely, what does the audience know about the Pony Express?

### LIZZI'S HOOKS:

Her first hook is: "Who has heard of the Pony Express?" The responses to this question vary widely.

Lizzi's second hook? "How long did the Pony Express run?" This question is given in the form of a multiple-choice question.

How long did it run?

- a. Around 50 years
- b. Around 15 years
- c. Around 10 years
- d. Around 2 years

The audience is typically surprised and engaged to hear it only ran for 18 months and was out of action for much of that time due to another key event in the novel, the Paiute Indian War.

The third hook in this section involves the magnitude of the Pony Express. This is called a "numbers hook". In the presentation, Lizzi talks about the massive undertaking. Here, you just give the numbers and then use the presentation text reveal function to show what the numbers relate to.

- Several hundred
- 400
- 120
- 180

After asking the audience to speculate on what areas of the Pony Express these numbers pertain to, she then reveals them one by one.

- Several hundred station and stock keepers, carters, etc.
- 400 horses
- 120 riders
- 180 stations

### LIZZI'S BUILD-UP:

Lizzi's core slides deal with her research into the story and her visit to Utah to meet with her contacts from the Pony Express association. Her real-life experiences on the trip offered great photo opportunities for the body of the talk as she roamed through the world experienced by her characters in her stories.

### THE PUNCHLINE:

The punchline, or climax, of a section is an important way to conclude this part of your presentation story. Options include, but are not limited to:

A discovery during your research.

A hook to your story which you hint at, but do not reveal, such as:

"The journey from Salt Lake City to San Francisco would have taken the fastest rider six days, during which the heroine would have to... but you'll have to read the book to find out.

### LIZZI'S PUNCHLINE:

Lizzi has a great two-slide punchline for her A Long Trail Rolling presentation:

Slide One:

So, you've...

-done the research

-written the book

-included a foreword written by the Pony Express Association president...

What do you do next???

Slide Two:

YOU RIDE THE PONY EXPRESS!

Lizzi has pictures of the Pony Express re-ride, in which she rode, along with some stories of the extraordinary experience.

If she was presenting several books or series, as she was in the South Island tour, Lizzi would now repeat this sequence for each new series or book. The sequences vary in length from the first and may be about an individual book or a series, but each follows the same rules of Intro, hook, build-up and punchline.

### CONCLUSION OF TALK

After you've repeated these sequences for each books or series, you lead into your closing slides, which must each lead to a "what's next" for the audience. You can use these ideas below for your closing slides.

- What's coming next?
- New books, new series, works in progress.
- A new cover reveal.
- A reading from a new work.
- Offer of signed books or other merchandise.





- A word about the importance of reviews for indie authors on BookBub, Amazon, and Goodreads.
- And finally, the all-important closing slide with links to your website, a thank you, and a request for any final questions.
- For the record, on her recent South Island tour, Lizzi used all of the above.

### COMMON POWERPOINT MISTAKES

Now you have a format for your presentation, we need to have a little talk about some mistakes to avoid. I'm going to give you my top five. If you want a laugh, search YouTube for the master of PowerPoint humour, Don McMillian. I have a link to one of his sets on presenting with PowerPoint on my Facebook author page: <https://www.facebook.com/matthewtremayneauthor>

1: Wordiness. Use Bullet points to highlight what you want your audience to remember and as reminders for you. It should not be your script.

2: Use Speal cheek. I mean speel chunk, or even spell check. And also use the same basic context editing rules you use when editing your manuscript. Nothing makes you look more stupid as a writer than having basic spelling and editing mistakes in your presentation.

3: Colour scheme. Pick a good easily visible template from your options and stick with it. If you have a personal theme, perhaps taken from your web site, then by all means use it, as long as there's enough contrast to be visible in all parts of the room. Consider colour blind individuals.

4: "Can you see me at the back?" Part 1: Text.

Many PowerPoint templates use overlarge titles, leave too much unused space, and have a small font size in the body. They look good on your screen when you're editing but are impossible to read from a distance. Keep it big, keep it punchy, and use all the space. Lizzi's earlier presentations needed work here.

5: "Can you see me at the Back?" Part 2: Pictures

Don't crowd your screen with multiple pictures. One or two pictures are the maximum you should have on a page. Just because it makes sense on your monitor doesn't mean people at the back of an audience can make sense of it. Lizzi's earlier presentations also needed work here.

If you have O365, use the Design Ideas feature. It will give you a number of interesting options particularly when you're using pictures.

### PART 3: PRESENTATIONS WITHOUT POWERPOINT

Some people simply don't want to use PowerPoint and sometimes the gods of technology conspire against you and you can't use it. Either way, this section is for you. So, you don't end up presenting your novel via improvised interpretive dance, I make the following recommendations.

Practice your presentation, as written, without your slides. Once you have created and practiced with your slide deck, you will be surprised at the flow you now have. Add a few of the options below to illustrate your talk and keep the audience engaged.

Whiteboard presentations are easier than you think. The

hooks used in Lizzi's Pony Express presentation are easy to illustrate on a whiteboard, for example. You don't have to be Michelangelo when drawing diagrams. Basic shapes are fine.

Props engage the audience's interest. Touching and inspecting a physical object focuses immediate interest, especially if it's something they wouldn't normally get to experience. Lizzi and I presented "Sword Fighting for Authors" a few years ago at an RWNZ conference. One of the highlights for several people was being able to handle the weapons.

Pictures really do tell a thousand words. Having printed images can be invaluable if you're not using a projector, or in case your projection doesn't work. This is an alternative solution to the problem of "Can you see me at the back?"

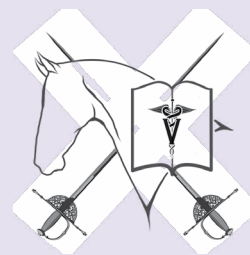
*"If you're presenting immediately after lunch or at the end of the day, changing the format wakes up the audience."*

If you're presenting immediately after lunch or at the end of the day, changing the format wakes up the audience. If other speakers are all using PowerPoint on the day, consider using a whiteboard and handouts instead. Or possibly brush-up on those interpretive dance skills.

### CONCLUSION

You won't get it right the first time but planning and practice will get you a long way towards creating an effective and entertaining author presentation. Practice on your friends, family, or your local RWNZ chapter, before you go out to face your public. If you want professional help, you can engage Lizzi and I by contacting us at our literary consultancy: [Horse, Geek and Sword](#)

Good luck! Send me an invitation to your next talk so I can cheer you on.



[Matthew Mole](#) writes under the name Matthew Tremayne. He is a computer network and security engineer who has been working for major clients in New Zealand for over twenty years. His professional clients have included national and international corporations but he is most proud of his work with Weta Digital, for whom he worked from the beginning of the Lord of the Rings through the first of the Hobbit trilogy. In his spare time Matthew is a historical re-enactor, studying and teaching historical swordsmanship in New Zealand and overseas. He has entered multiple writing competitions while refining his craft, and assuming that he can concentrate on one thing for long enough, he should be publishing his first mystery and suspense novel, this year.

# Crossing the Publishing Line

Jay Hogan



**'Crossing the Touchline' is a New Zealand MM Romance set around the notion of the first out gay All Black.**

**Like most writers, my experience of getting to the point of being published was a long slow journey having started trying to write fiction about twenty years ago (gulp). In my twenties and thirties I had some poetry published, and then decided to try my hand at fiction. I did write three books over the next ten years, two thrillers and a fantasy. It was in the days before self-publishing was a really a viable thing. It didn't even occur to me.**

None of those got picked up, and I was really starting to pull my hair out wondering if I'd ever get there. I was, however, most definitely trying to write in the wrong genre, for me. At the time, I read mostly thriller, detective and some fantasy, and so I tried to write in the genre I was reading. Surprisingly for me, I found I didn't enjoy it at all.

I hadn't read a lot of romance at that stage and I admit I was probably a bit disparaging of it. Why? No good reason at all. Just paid too much attention to the usual book snobbery comments I'd read. Then I tried a few and guess what? I discovered some amazing authors out there doing great stuff. Go figure. J D Robb had me from the first In Death book.

*"I discovered some amazing authors out there doing great stuff. Go figure. J D Robb had me from the first In Death book."*

I still don't think I'm a mf writer though. Those stories simply don't appear in my head the same way, and maybe that's because I'm part of the rainbow community. As much as I love some of the mf romance I've read, when I picked up an mm romance for the first time only a few years ago, I was immediately hooked. I didn't even know the genre existed. And wow, there are some amazing authors out there.

The move from reading to writing mm romance made complete sense. I am nothing if not a relationship person, with a background in Intensive Care nursing teaching, supervision, coaching and family planning education. So, writing about relationships? Yeah, I should've seen that one coming.

The first book I wrote, 'First Impressions', the first book in the Auckland Med Series, I was lucky enough to get contracted and then published last year. It took me a year to write and lots of anxiety. I have three more books coming out this year, but that first book contract offer... wow...I can still remember the total disbelief; where I was, what I was doing, how it felt.

The publisher was a small US imprint of a larger company. They took a chance on me and I think the NZ setting helped as a point of difference. I'll always be grateful and I learned so much through that first editing process. I had to cut 30,000 words out, no mean feat, and that taught me a sharp lesson in pacing. The book was hugely better for it in the end.

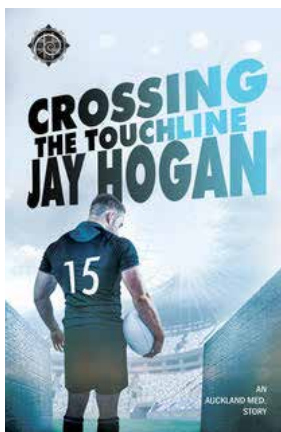
The down side of a small imprint publisher is that the editing is good but not as rigorous as a larger publisher and some mistakes still got through. The contract also wasn't as good for me rights-wise, but I just decided to just swallow that to get a book out there and then see if I wanted to continue with them. Email and other contact was also slower with fewer staff on their end but I got the book published and it did very well.

'Crossing the Touchline', the second in the Auckland Med series, took me only four months to write, I was getting the hang of it. Unfortunately by that stage the imprint publisher looked likely to close a hazard of small publishers. I was lucky in that they released my series rights, which allowed me to submit the second book elsewhere. I took a chance and submitted it to two of the larger publishers in the genre and got a contract from Dreamspinner. The imprint then released the full rights to 'First Impressions' once they closed formally, and Dreamspinner have since bought them to re-release.

My experience with a larger publisher has been excellent so far although the process is a lot longer, about 22 weeks from contract to publishing as opposed to twelve with the smaller imprint. I suck at being patient, but the editing is intense and a lot better; three full rounds of editing then two rounds of proofing and finally the galleys to check one last time. Hopefully that means mistakes are rare though it always seems something gets through.

I am delighted to have an All Black mm romance out there. The story has been sitting in my brain for a while now, and the fact it's a Rugby World Cup year, well that just seems fitting.





### CROSSING THE TOUCHLINE

*What if you've worked your whole life for a dream, to play rugby for the most successful sports team on the planet, the New Zealand All Blacks?*

*What if that dream is so close you can smell it?*

*What if you meet someone?*

*What if you fall in love?*

*What if your dream will cost the man who's stolen your heart?*

*And what if the dream changes?*

*Reuben Taylor has a choice to make.*

*Cameron Wano is that choice.*

*-Part of the Auckland Med. series that includes 'First Impressions'*

*Can be read as a standalone.*

*Buy Crossing the Touchline [here](#)*



*Jay Hogan is a New Zealand author writing in m/m romance, romantic suspense and fantasy. She has travelled extensively, living in a number of countries. She's a cat aficionado especially Maine Coons, and an avid dog lover (but don't tell the cat). She loves to cook- pretty damn good, loves to sing - pretty damn average, and as for loving full-time writing -absolutely... depending on the word count, the deadline, her characters' moods, the ambient temperature in the Western Sahara, whether Jupiter is rising, the size of the ozone hole over New Zealand and how much coffee she's had.*

*A writer who is afraid  
to over-reach himself  
is as useless as  
a general who is  
afraid  
to be wrong.*

—Raymond Chandler

## Step Right Up!: Putting Yourself Forward for the RWNZ Executive

Kendra Delugar



**On the 28th of June the call will go out for members to nominate themselves for positions on the RWNZ Executive. Is it something you've been thinking about? Is it your turn to step up?**

Romance Writers of New Zealand is a small organisation, we can't get away from that. It means there are times we'll all have to step up to keep our organisation vibrant and healthy and growing. In fact, having stepped up once in the past doesn't mean we won't have to again some time – I know I will once I've had a bit of a break!

Elections are important not only for the health of our organisation, but also so that members feel they have ownership of it – so the more nominations we get for each role the better. (I know the voting process is one of the things I love most about RWAmerica. It makes me feel that, even over here in New Zealand, I get a say in what's going on. I want that feeling for all our RWNZ members too.)

### EXECUTIVE ROLES – WHICH ONE BEST SUITS YOUR SKILL-SET?

**President:** chairs the monthly Executive meetings, keep the Executive working together as a team, is the main point of contact for the RWNZ, leads communications to members, ensures the Rules are adhered to, that the RWNZ meets its legal and financial obligations, and that all decisions are in the best interest of members. The President also steps in to cover various other jobs when necessary.

The President is not the boss who makes all the decisions. The President only gets a single vote, like all other members of Executive – they do though have the casting vote if there's a tie. The President is there to 'steer not star.'





And remember, while this role has huge responsibilities, by taking it on you don't have to do everything. Membership questions got to the Membership Secretary. Finance questions got to the Treasurer. The Executive is a team.

**Vice-President:** is the contact for all chapters and local groups, stands in for the President when needed, provides support to all other roles, and oversees grants and sponsorship.

**Treasurer:** manages all RWNZ finances using Xero, sends and pays invoices, refunds expenses, prepares clear and thorough financial reports for the Executive and members, completes tax returns and pays any tax owing.

**Secretary:** prepares and circulates the agenda and minutes for each Executive meeting, is responsible for the communication process and getting papers ready for the AGM at conference, eg. Executive nominations, remits and special resolutions.

**Membership Secretary:** is responsible for keeping an eye on all sign-ups and renewals via our website, oversees which members should (or should not) be on the Members Only Facebook Page and Newsletter Mailing List, and answer all questions about membership.

**Publicity Officer:** builds the reputation and raises the profile of RWNZ, publicises member successes and key events such as Conference, maintains RWNZ's social media presence, works with the Web Mistress, Editor of the Heart to Heart and the Conference Publicity Officer.

Full roles and position descriptions can be found here: <https://www.romancewriters.co.nz/membership/agm-remit-proxy-form/>

## STAYING SANE AS AN EXECUTIVE – IT'S EASIER THAN IT SOUNDS!

The best way to do this is to focus on just two or three things across your year/tenure – taking on too much will overstretch you. So pick the things that are most important to the organisation as a whole.

The other way to do this is to be realistic going in. When you step forward for the Executive, do so with an understanding that it will take time and effort - all good things do! But you'll be part of a team, and you'll make amazing friends.

(And we know that life circumstances can change, be it work, health or family – so if something does arise and you can no longer fulfil your commitments that's okay too.)

## SO, ARE YOU THINKING ABOUT STEPPING UP?

I hope you are. When the call for Nominations goes out on the 28th of June I'm hoping we get a flood of interest. We have three Executive Members who are definitely standing down – President, Membership Secretary and Secretary. Two who are unsure at this stage – Vice-President and Publicity Officer. And one who is willing to stay for another year, Tania Roberts, who is a Chartered Accountant and our Treasurer. But all roles are open to nominations!

If you're interesting or just mulling it over, feel free to get in touch – we're more than happy to talk to you about our roles. <https://www.romancewriters.co.nz/about-us/rwnz-executive/>

# From the Editor: Celebrating Mistakes

Gillian St. Kevern



**I would like to say how very humble and grateful I feel for all the kind comments I received about the April issue of Heart to Heart on Facebook and in my inbox. Honestly, I was a little bit overwhelmed! I am really pleased that it struck a chord with so many of you. I also want to thank Emma our formatter and our other contributors for working hard to make the issue special.**

In my April editorial, I shared my self-reflection following the Christchurch mosque attacks and my determination to make sure that my writing was more diverse and inclusive going forward. A lot of members said they appreciated my willingness to be vulnerable and admit that I still have a lot to learn. This surprised me, until I reflected that having spent over a decade teaching, I have learned to value mistakes in a way that other people might not have.

The Japanese school system is very focused on results. Right answers are praised, wrong answers ridiculed. When you teach English, something that is new to every kid in the classroom, this results-focused attitude means that you end up with a classroom where no one wants to risk getting things wrong. In other words: no one speaks. Students are even afraid to write down an answer in case it's wrong. It is an environment that makes it impossible to learn. A good part of my job was actually creating an environment where students felt safe and mistakes were welcomed.

Mistakes happen when we try new things. None of us learned to walk, to speak, to write without making a ton of mistakes along the way. In order to become authors, we've taken huge risks, putting something incredibly personal—our writing—in front of critics, editors, beta-readers, family members, reviewers, even our internal editors. Sometimes we get it right first try. More often than not, we have learned through trial and error.

Mistakes, uncertainty, doubt and fear are all good signs! They mean that we're branching out into new territory





and challenging ourselves in new ways. We won't always nail that new territory on the first attempt, but we will learn more than we would sticking to the tried and true. And what we learn will bring us closer to our end goal—whatever that is.

Recently, Janet Elizabeth Henderson shared a costly mistake she'd made booking a Bookbub on the RWNZ Facebook page. I really appreciated Janet's frankness, not only because it made me feel somewhat less embarrassed about two massive mistakes I've made recently. The fact that Janet felt able to share her mistake shows that we've created an environment where she feels safe enough to share the downs of her writing journey as well as the ups.

*"Recently,  
Janet Elizabeth Henderson  
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I really appreciated Janet's  
frankness, not only  
because it made me feel  
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about two massive mistakes  
I've made recently."*

That is something to be celebrated.

As I indicated in my last month's editorial, I want to make a bigger effort to include more diversity in my writing going forward. This means that I will be reading and writing outside my comfort zone. I'm going to be challenged. I'm going to make mistakes. But I am determined not to let those mistakes (or my fear of making those mistakes) hold me back. I encourage you to also embrace your mistakes as evidence that you are learning and growing!

This doesn't mean putting out shoddy or unedited books, but taking risks, learning to evaluate your work without beating yourself up over imperfections, and challenge yourself. When I am nervous about something, I find myself working harder on it—whether that means doing more research or seeking out sensitivity readers.

It also means embracing other people's right to make mistakes. At the RWNZ conferences I've attended, I'm always blown away at how supportive the majority of attendees are of the fact that I do not write mainstream romance. I want to thank the Christchurch chapter in particular for making me feel welcome as a queer author. I have attended other writing groups where this is not the case, and I've heard anecdotes of other authors encountering groups or receiving advice that was given

without ever considering the fact that they were on a completely different journey to the person giving the critique/advice.

We've got to be careful that our eagerness to share our own experiences and knowledge doesn't overwhelm the writer we want to help. It's important to keep in mind that not everyone has the same goal with their writing journey. Whether you want to be trad-pubbed, will settle for nothing but a 6-book deal with Harlequin, are committed to self-publishing, want to make a full-time living from writing or simply want to see your book on your bookshelf, not only is your goal different from your fellow authors, but what you will/won't do to reach that goal is different too.

In this issue, we've had a call for conference volunteers but also for volunteers to be on the exec. I urge you to consider volunteering, even if you feel you aren't sure what you're doing!

I will be honest, when Gracie stepped down as Heart to Heart editor, I thought about volunteering, but decided I didn't know enough about romance. Well, I have learned! And learned a lot. Editing Heart to Heart is sometimes a challenge, but once I realised that I could make this my own, bringing my own strengths to the role and asking for help on the bits that I am not as strong at, editing became a lot more fun. I strongly encourage you to bring your strengths to whatever role you take on, making the role your own.

*"If you're unable to volunteer,  
then I would like  
to ask that you  
support our  
volunteers by  
accepting their mistakes  
with good humour  
—if they are mistakes!"*

If you're unable to volunteer, then I would like to ask that you support our volunteers by accepting their mistakes with good humour—if they are mistakes! As an organization, I think we are sometimes too quick to label 'different' as 'wrong.' Recognise that as competitions expand and become more popular, or the make-up of our membership and our audience change, so will our approaches evolve. Publishing is an ever-changing world, and our challenge as writers is to evolve along with it. Which means making the inevitable mistake.

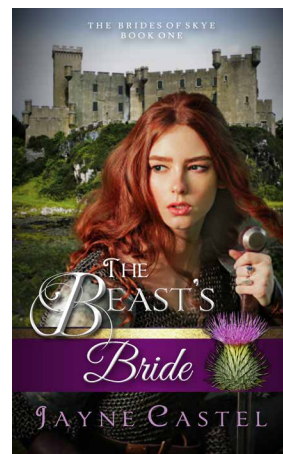
By the way, the two embarrassing mistakes I mentioned? The first was not checking my default mailing address on Amazon and sending 39 author copies to my previous address—in Japan. The second mistake was even more embarrassing. If you want to know what it was, ask me at conference.

# Woos and Hoos



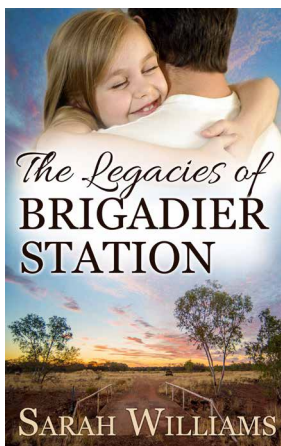
Yvonne Lindsay is releasing her second indie novel as E.V. Lind. *ONLY WHEN I SCREAM* is a Supernatural Suspense where the ghosts of the past are just as deadly as the secrets of the present.

Buy *Only When I Scream* [here](#)



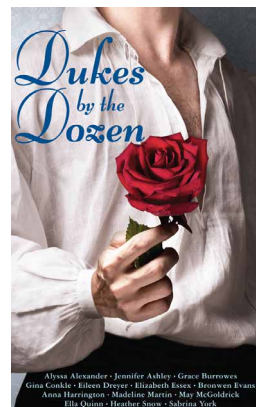
Samantha Burton (w/a Jayne Castel) released *THE BEAST'S BRIDE* on 16th April. Set in 14th Century Medieval Scotland, this novel (Book #1 in The Brides of Skye series) is a twist on Beauty and the Beast!

Buy *The Beast's Bride* [here](#)



*The Legacies of Brigadier Station* (Brigadier Station #3) by Sarah Williams, published by Serenade Publishing is out 28 May.

Buy *The Legacies of Brigadier Station* [here](#)



What's better than a dashing duke? A dozen of them! *Dukes by The Dozen*, a thirteen author boxed set that includes RWNZ's own Bronwen Evans, has already hit #1 Regency Romance bestseller on Amazon.

Buy *Dukes By the Dozen* [here](#)

Heart to Heart is always keen to share new book releases from members, news of awards, contracts, basically anything that we can celebrate. Send us a 2-3 sentence summary of your good news and, if it's a new release, your book cover and buy link, by the twentieth of each month online at <https://www.romancewriters.co.nz/membership/member-woos-hoos/> or directly to:

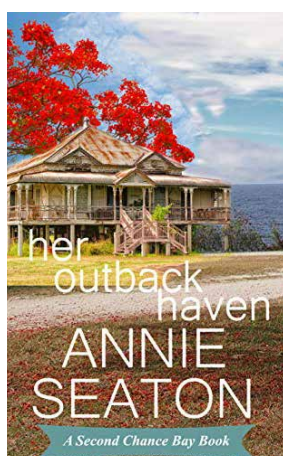
[heart2hearteditor@romancewriters.co.nz](mailto:heart2hearteditor@romancewriters.co.nz)



# Woos and Hoos

## CONGRATULATIONS TO OUR FIRST KISS FINALISTS:

- 1 - Astral Exile by Moya Bawden
- 2 - Second Chances by Susan Frame
- 3 - Reviving Roxie by Melissa Climo
- 4 - Heaven Sent by Em Lowe
- 5 - Reckless Curves by Bronwen Evans
- 6 - Gloved Heart by Charlotte Lowe



Great news for Annie Seaton! Her Outback Haven was released in April and was #1 on Australian And Oceanian fiction on Amazon during pre- order and in the first week of release!

Buy Her Outback Haven [here](#)



Congratulations Carole Brungar on receiving an IPPY award for her book! The IPPY's are the longest running competition for excellence in independently published books (started 1997) and run by IBPA. She got a medal and everything.

Buy The Nam Shadow [here](#)



Congratulations to Leeanna Morgan for her newest release! BEFORE TODAY is now available. Leeanna had a wonderful time writing Levi and Brooke's story, especially when it involved an old-fashioned candy shop with lots of chocolate fudge and marshmallow!

Buy Before Today [here](#)

Heart to Heart is always keen to share new book releases from members, news of awards, contracts, basically anything that we can celebrate. Send us a 2-3 sentence summary of your good news and, if it's a new release, your book cover and buy link, by the twentieth of each month online at <https://www.romancewriters.co.nz/membership/member-woos-hoos/> or directly to:

[heart2hearteditor@romancewriters.co.nz](mailto:heart2hearteditor@romancewriters.co.nz).

# The Bookshelf

**Do you have a writing resource you'd like to share with the RWNZ members? Or a review of a technical book (marketing/craft/writing life)?**

**Please send it to:**

[heart2hearteditor@romancewriters.co.nz](mailto:heart2hearteditor@romancewriters.co.nz)

**Thank you!**

## The Day the SPA Girls Came to Town: The Coast to Coast Regional Report

Bel Macfie



**On 13th April Coast to Coasters had the delightful pleasure of having a visit from the SPA girls. It was held at the Olde Creamery Café near Cambridge and a salubrious lunch was followed by a workshop crammed with ideas, suggestions and information about self-publishing, editing and marketing.**

The workshop covered how to find an editor, choosing covers, researching genres, writing blurbs, creating websites, writing newsletters, social media marketing and advertising. The group received lists of tools, podcasts, and websites that help on the self-publishing journey.

Shar started the session with the 8 steps to publishing: writing a manuscript, editing, finding a cover, writing a blurb, formatting, uploading to retailers, marketing,

pausing briefly to celebrate then writing the next book. "Simple!" Cue the Tui Billboard.

Bursting with copious tips, tools and techniques, the SPA girls bathed us in wisdom. The gifts of knowledge included:

- If marketing in the USA get an editor from the US and use American English.
- Put a huge focus on your cover (it's not about what you like it's about what the reader will like) and check to see what it looks like as a thumbnail.
- Spend time researching your genre: use Yasiv or K-Lytics. Trudi showed us the reports that authors can access – great information to guide your decisions.
- Get others to write your blurb, or at least workshop it with someone else.
- Factor time in for newsletters and social media and be consistent across all your platforms
- One of the main messages threaded through the discussion was to make it about what the readers like not what we like. Editing and marketing is not a solo sport!

Our writing royalty guests had an extra special treat in store from Meredith Reece who made SPA girls cup cakes and individual gifts for each of the three guests: Trudi, Shar and Cheryl (Wendy was away at a family event). The caliber of C2C creativity and talent is, of course, exceedingly high!





## Do you want to self-publish, but don't know how to start?

Join the SPA Girls for a one-day in-person workshop in CAMBRIDGE, NEW ZEALAND that will teach you how to take your precious manuscript from polished to published!

### WHAT WE'LL TEACH YOU:

- Pre-production preparation including finding an editor, choosing the right cover, writing a compelling book blurb, identifying your right readers
- Formatting your book for publishing in all ebook and print formats
- Publish your book to a global audience. We'll teach you how to upload your book to the key online retailers for an international readership including Amazon, Kobo, iBooks and Nook
- Marketing 101: including price strategy, social media, your author platform and the successful author mindset

Learn from four successful indie authors with more than sixty books published!

Earlybird just \$249 pp (incl GST) book before end of May.

Strictly Limited seats so don't delay. Questions? See:

<https://selfpublishingworkshop.co.nz/index.html>

## Submissions wanted!

Paper Road Press is pleased to announce the inaugural YEAR'S BEST AOTEAROA NEW ZEALAND SCIENCE FICTION AND FANTASY anthology, edited by Marie Hodgkinson.

Marie is looking for short stories (less than 10,000 words) from all genres and subgenres of science fiction and fantasy, by authors from Aotearoa New Zealand, and which were first published in 2018.

### ELIGIBILITY

This is a reprint anthology. Only stories that were first published between 1 January and 31 December 2018 will be considered.

### RIGHTS AND PAYMENT

For accepted stories, Paper Road Press will license worldwide non-exclusive anthology rights in English, in print and ebook formats. Payment of NZ 1.5c per word will be made on publication.

### DEADLINE

The deadline for submissions for the 2018 volume is 31 May, 2019.

### SUBMISSIONS

Please send digital copies of eligible works directly to the editor, Marie Hodgkinson, at marie (at) paperroadpress (dot) co (dot) nz, accompanied by details of where and when the story was first published and a short author bio. Any questions about submissions or the anthology can be directed to the same address.



## GET STARTED WITH SELF-PUBLISHING WORKSHOP

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



# Write With Love



March replay of the podcast.

G'day, I'm Sarah Williams Romance Author and host of Write with Love, a weekly podcast for writers and readers of love stories. Haven't heard of it? Well then here are four good reasons to tune in!



Lilliana Rose and I discussed her poetry, Australian romance and how she cultivates creativity in Episode 67

Author of paranormal romance, USA Today and NYT Bestselling author Darynda Jones appeared on Episode 68 and told me all about signing her books next to Nora Roberts!



Bestselling Kiwi author Kate O'Keeffe made me laugh on Episode 69.

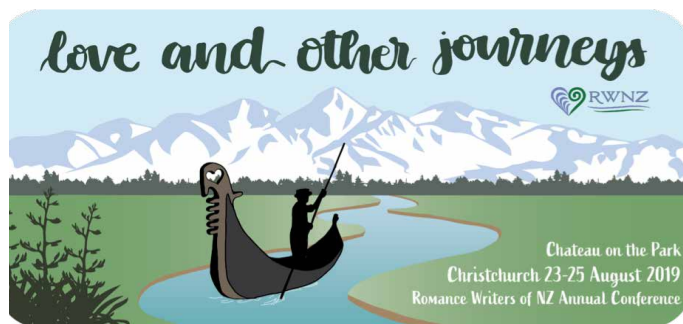
The next Liane Moriarty, Louise Guy appeared on Episode 70 to discuss her commercial fiction and Minecraft books.



Check out all the episode at [www.sarahwilliamsauthor.com/write-with-love](http://www.sarahwilliamsauthor.com/write-with-love)

Join in on the fun, including regular competitions at [www.facebook.com/WritewithLovePodcast/](https://www.facebook.com/WritewithLovePodcast/)

If you are an author who would like to be featured or have a promotion to share, email me [sarah@serenadepublishing.com](mailto:sarah@serenadepublishing.com) or become a sponsor on Patreon!



## RWNZ Conference 2019 Update

**Conference early bird closes at the end of May 2019!**

Yes, that's right - by the time you read this update it is only three months 'til conference (give or take). As I write this, we have about 50 registrations – but are eagerly awaiting at least fifty more ;) I know many of you have booked your travel and accommodation already – so please get online and register. Take advantage of the early bird prices.... and it really helps us to plan ahead too.

Harlequin editors are ready for your pitches:

Jo Mackay is coming from the Australia-NZ office, representing Mira, HQ and Escape imprints. Nicola Caws is coming from the Harlequin London and is representing Modern, Historical, Medical, Romance and Dare. Jump on the website for more information and send your pitch requests to the pitch coordinator ([jeh.author@gmail.com](mailto:jeh.author@gmail.com)).

The motel across the road:

We heard some people had difficulty last month with room availability at the hotel venue during conference. The hotel has recently released a further 30 or so rooms, so get in quick if you want to stay there. But as an alternative, if you can't get what you need, there is the Towers on the Park across the road from the Chateau – more information is on the website.

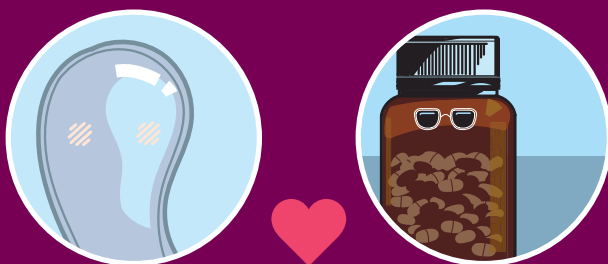
Looking for volunteers:

We'll be calling for our conference volunteers soon. This is a great way to meet others, and to get involved during the conference. Sell tickets, greet people, introduce speakers and much more. There are plenty of choices and we really do appreciate your help.

*Mel Climo  
2019 Conference Convener  
On behalf of the fabulous committee*

# It's a Match!

Mitochondria and MitoQ have liked each other.



MitoQ is a scientific breakthrough. It's the first supplement capable of entering your mitochondria and supporting their health in a meaningful way.

When your mitochondria are healthier they produce more energy, meaning you can be at your best for longer.

Order online at [www.mitoq.com](http://www.mitoq.com)

MitoQ®

## The Welcome Mat

Another red carpet roll-out this month for new members:



Julie Gilligan  
Mary Burgess  
Ruth Andrews  
Jacqueline Rosamond  
Helen McNaught  
Jianna Hirst  
Nyria Ratana  
Pia Buck  
Glenys O'Byrne  
Jennifer Ensor



Great to have you all with us.

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](#).



## Contacts

**Kendra Delugar:** [president@romancewriters.co.nz](mailto:president@romancewriters.co.nz)  
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To join the RWNZ Members-Only Facebook page, click [here](#).

# Regional Round-Up Reports

## AUCKLAND

Convenor: [Ruth Clough](#)

This month's meeting took place on Saturday 6 April at the Three Kings Tennis Pavilion. Twenty two members attended the meeting this month - it was lovely to see all of you.

This month we were lucky enough to have two speakers - Peta Mobberley and Tamsin Kingston. Together they presented an engaging, informative and interactive workshop about time management, resilience and work-life balance. Plenty of discussion was generated by the workshop and lots of advice and knowledge shared by the group. I know that I identified some areas in my life where I can make improvements - and not all of them were specifically related to writing. Thanks Peta & Tamsin for this fantastic workshop - I'm sure that everyone who attended the meeting got something out of it.

Our next meeting will be held on Saturday 4 May at the Three Kings Tennis Pavilion from 12:30 to 3:00 p.m. Our speaker will be Tessa Radley - topic TBA.

## HAWKES BAY

Convenor: [Debbie Williams](#)

Our April meeting was held at Mariana's.

We chatted about what we'd been up to and then discussed the synopses some of our members had prepared for their works in progress.

We meet on the first Saturday of the month at 1pm, and new members are always welcome. Our next meeting on May the 4th will be held at the Waipawa Library, where we'll be working on blurbs.

## WELLINGTON/KAPITI COAST

Convenor: [Jane Ashurst](#)

We met on Saturday 6 April in Holly's house, in windy Wellington. There were 18 of us, which included newbie Nyria, and we greeted Bonnie's new guide dog, the gorgeous Eclipse, who behaved so beautifully :)

On the agenda for April:

The big thing this month, was the visit from the Seven Sharp news team. We welcomed reporter Arrun, and his photographer, Casey. They interviewed some of us on a one-to-one basis, and then filmed us while we did our usual Cold Reads session. It was exciting and scary at the same time, but we managed to forget they were filming our every move (that's what it felt like!!), and relaxed into the knowledge that it will condense down to a few minutes in total.

Then when the film crew left, we continued with our agenda. Around the room catch-ups, a Round Robin story-game, a social media Q&A with Anne Kemp, and an update on the Amazon stuffing / scamming stories from Kris. We discussed how social media in general is now a difficult proposition for selling books, and how people are losing interest in Facebook.

Attendees

Holly, Jane, Anne Kemp, Kris Pearson, Gudrun, Tracey & Fred, Kara Isaac, Helen McNaught, Helen, Angelique, Sandra, Susan, Bonnie (with Eclipse)

Jenni Russell, Nyria Ratana, Moira, Sara





# Regional Round-Up Reports

## NELSON

Convenor: [LaVerne Clark](#)

We had a wonderfully constructive meeting discussing our pitches that we are aiming at agents/editors at conference. Each member was encouraged to bring along a sentence or high concept of their current WIP or finished manuscript to discuss and tweak if with the help of the group. We also had the pleasure of meeting a possible new member who impressed us all with her 'from the top of her head' tagline for her own WIP.

Next meeting, we will be discussing the pros and cons of maintaining a social media presence, and discussing marketing ideas to help with visibility of a book. It is never too early to start either of those conversations!

Everyone is welcome to join us at Nick Smith's meeting rooms, corner of Quarantine Road and Main Road, Stoke, on Saturday 11 May at 2:00 p.m.

## CHRISTCHURCH

Convenor: [Emma Lowe](#)

Christchurch's Chapter meeting was held in the amazing new Turanga Central Library for the first time this month, and what an amazing space we were treated to. We had an awesome turn out (including a handful of new members) to welcome fellow RWNZ member and best-selling author Natalie Anderson. Natalie generously offered to answer any questions our chapter group had relating to writing and publishing, and the afternoon proved to be both inspirational and informative, leaving us all with plenty of food for thought (editor's note: and also delicious actual food courtesy of Emma's family!).

Our next chapter meeting is on Sunday 19th May at South Library, Beckenham from 2pm until 4pm, where we'll be welcoming another of our talented chapter members, Wives of War author, Soraya Lane. Something we're all looking forward to.

## OTAGO

Convenor: [Samantha Burton](#)

The Otago/Southland chapter met up on Saturday 6 April and talked tropes! We discussed the different romance tropes and how they can be subverted. The next meeting will be on Saturday 4 May 2019 at 2pm. We're going to discuss 'setting' in our romance novels.

## COAST TO COAST

Convenor: [Bel Macfie](#)

See previous feature!

**BLLENHEIM AREA** Contact: [Iona Jones](#)

