

Aug / Sept 2020

Heart 2 Heart

Romance Writers of New Zealand

**SELF-PUBLISHING VS. TRADITIONAL
PUBLISHING—ONE WRITER'S VIEW**

+

**AN ASPIRING WRITER'S EXPERIENCE OF
ROMANCE WRITER'S AUSTRALIA ONLINE**

CONFERENCE

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EDITING DIALOGUE TAGS

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BUILD A MAILING LIST WITH BOOKFUNNEL

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NEWS FROM THE PRESIDENT

**Susan Sims**

Thanks to those of you who attended our virtual AGM. Normally we wouldn't be able to hold a virtual AGM but under COVID-19 conditions, the Ministry of Business, Innovation and Employment (MBIE), has worked with the Companies Office to put special rules in place. I spent a significant amount of time going through the Companies Office and MBIE's rules under the pandemic, including our constitution. The Exec, who also reviewed both sets of information, believed that the Zoom meeting was the best way to deal with the AGM.

But, as you likely know, we didn't reach quorum on Zoom, so you'll have seen the survey requesting your approval for the AGM as it was held. We've had a fantastic response to the survey with 149 members (98% of

those who filled in the survey) confirming the validity of the AGM. This was great because if we'd had substantial disagreement we would have had to hold another AGM and hope that enough people joined to make quorum. However, this wasn't necessary and during our executive meeting, the AGM was effectively ratified and we will pass the information on to MBIE and the Companies Office as required.

The AGM had no remits, and there are no new members of the Executive as most will continue in last year's roles. However, Deb Howell has switched from Secretary to Treasurer, leaving a vacancy as Secretary. Please consider volunteering for this position as RWNZ really needs your help.

I'd like to make special mention of Past President, Kendra Delugar, and former Treasurer, Tania Roberts, as they have both stepped down. The Executive and all our members are very grateful for all they've done for RWNZ.

I hope everyone has coped as well as possible under the latest lockdown levels. It's great to see numbers dropping on both sides of the



Tasman. We all still need to follow the guidelines from the [New Zealand Government](#) (both for health-related and business support information), and the [Australian Government](#) for our Australian members. This is really important and it is normal to feel stressed or anxious in these situations. For Kiwis who need support with grief, anxiety, distress or mental wellbeing, call or text the free 'Need to talk?' service on 1737. This is available twenty-four hours a day, seven days a week and you can talk things through with a trained counsellor. I've still got my fingers crossed for our double nation bubble to come to fruition so we can cross the ditch and see each other again.

The teams at NZSA and Copyright Licensing New Zealand led the extensive response to MBIE on the proposed changes to copyright law and have posted an update here: [Copyright legislation](#). This is great news and I'd like to express our gratitude for all they have done to protect us all.

Keep safe, keep well, and keep writing!

Love, Susan

WELCOME NEW MEMBERS

Rachel Peacocke - Central north
January Gilchrist - Overseas
Karina May - Auckland
Raewyn Edwards-Bercic - Northland
Naomi Barton - Blenheim
Anna Greene - Blenheim
Clare Griffin - Auckland
Kirsty Roby - Auckland
Katrina Green - Wairarapapa
Sarah Bramhall - Otago
Helen Stewart - Auckland
Marianne Bankovic - Overseas
Cheryl Baker - Overseas
Angela Pope - Otago

Great to have you all with us!

Don't forget to read the information for new members page on our website. 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.

<https://www.facebook.com/groups/RWNZMembersOnly/>

TEN SNAGS IN A PAN

**Corina Douglas**

I was really stumped as to what I would write about for my first editorial. I mulled it over for a day, the subjects going round and round in my head until a swag of recent comments from my writing friends on the other side of the world asked me a question I get asked a lot: How do you do it all?

You see, I'm a busy mum with four kids, three part-time jobs, and a writer. They often ask me, "How is it possible you get anything achieved in a day?" And my answer has always been quite simple: You just do.

There is no secret in multi-tasking, you just juggle your balls in the air and make sure that you tick off the ball that is going to drop first. This system has always gotten me through.

Until now.

We all get disruptions in our life every now and then, and Covid is a blatant example. No one in my family has been directly affected by Covid, but our eldest son has in an indirect way. He was recently diagnosed with OCD in the last few weeks, and is also suspected of carrying an autoimmune disorder. The OCD diagnosis was no surprise given what's going on with the world and how 'not normal' our lives are. He isn't the only one either. There are many kids out there presenting with the same symptoms, and I don't blame them. Our specialist told me that a child's frontal cortex isn't fully developed until they're around fourteen years old. This means they don't have the ability to self-calm and their brains get 'hijacked' by anxiety. I'm sure some of us can relate as anxiety is OCD. As a result, there are many children out there who don't have the ability to cope with what we're all dealing with—heck, even a lot of us adults don't have that ability either.

And for those with OCD, their anxiety quickly translates into crippling fear. After seeing a specialist, we've been guided to change how we currently 'do things'. As a result, this has



meant huge changes in the family home, one being where we are now a gluten, dairy, and refined sugar free family. Yes. Just what I said. There were no typos there.

And wow, this isn't easy. Not by any means. Especially as sugar is in absolutely EVERYTHING. This new diet has meant that I am now baking our very own bread every second day, including all other good replacements (muffins, biscuits, etc), and if I'm not baking, I'm preparing or planning our meals the following day.

This little curveball now takes up to two hours of my time every single day. Two hours that I would rather spend reading or writing or working. As a result, I have fallen behind and I feel like I've been drowning this past month. It's no surprise that I also became sick trying to be all and everything to everyone. And just like others used to look at me, I have been looking on my new FB support groups of families in a similar situation, wondering, "How do they do it?"

Until I reminded myself that they just do.

Life loves to throw us curve balls, but there is always a silver lining at the end, even if we

have to look really hard to find it sometimes. In my family's case, not only are we getting to the bottom of our son's autoimmune disorder, but as a family we are all eating well, eliminating not only sugar, but also processed food. Yes, the kids do feel like the odd one's out with their weird looking, natural lunchboxes, but they aren't complaining about their increased energy, more restful sleep, or their more 'balanced' emotions.

And if you know me, you know I don't do things half-pie. Which means when we delved into this whole healthy eating lifestyle (I refuse to call it a diet!), I began to explore our new base, dragging the family on bush walks, visiting the beach, and climbing trees. We're also nurturing seedlings and looking at ways to support ourselves without constantly buying food from the supermarket. In other words, the kids are learning to be kids, which in itself is a pretty hard thing to be in this modern day and age.

But with all this change, my writing suffered. It was pushed to the end of the queue because it wasn't a finished product nor was it making money immediately like editing or

planning does. And given writing is a creative endeavour, I also found that I couldn't write anymore. My spark had dwindled to a whisper because I couldn't focus on anything but the health of my son. Writer's block was my new best friend and if I hadn't put any words on a page that morning, I was as grumpy as the old man down the road when his newspaper gets wet.

For a while there, I felt like I was juggling about ten snags in a pan, only just keeping them all from burning as I got around to flipping one over at a time.

Life is like that. You flip a snag and then you flip another one, the decision based on which one is looking likely to burn first. It's a never-ending cycle which can be attributed to so many things. Because if our family wasn't dealing with this health issue, we would be dealing with the loss of a family member or a close friend, a natural disaster (the fires in the States are a prevalent example), a worldwide epidemic (Covid is the obvious choice), or even an injury where we would find ourselves laid up in plaster for weeks on end.

But that's not the point of this editorial. The point of this editorial is that I got through and

I put words down on a page. Again, there was no secret remedy, I simply pushed through by finding solace in routine and making time for the things that count, writing being one of them. So, I showed up consistently. Every. Single. Day.

And even though my life went crazy and it took me a whole month to reschedule, reprioritise, and find a new routine, I managed to squeeze some allocated writing time in—if not most days, then every other, even when I didn't feel like it. Eventually, my writing began to flow again, not words that I will later rewrite either, but words that I will edit, words that I will build on. Somewhere along the line, I got my spark back. No longer was writing a lodestone around my neck, but an escape hatch. A time to, again, enjoy and simply be.

I'm sure a lot of you can associate with that. Us writers are a complex, passionate bunch. We're not all in this for the fame and glory alone (although, that would be nice!), rather we're in this because it's a need, a compulsion that can't be quietened or shoved into a corner, forgotten about until another time.

So, next time, when someone asks me, "How do you do it?", I'm not going to say, "I just do", I'm going to say, "Because I need to."

Find solace in routine and make time for the things that count, writing being one of them.



SELF-PUBLISHING VS. TRADITIONAL PUBLISHING—ONE WRITER'S VIEW.



Lyn Rasmussen

A couple of months ago at one of our Coast to Coast RWNZ meetings, I talked about my experience with self-publishing vs. traditional publishing. After seeing the minutes of this meeting, Corina then invited me to share my thoughts in Heart to Heart. I'd like to say that this is my experience only; others will have different viewpoints.

My experience with traditional publishing includes acting as an informal agent for my partner who contributes regularly to NZ Outdoor Hunting magazine and has several titles traditionally published. We were also self-publishing a long time before the advent of Amazon and Kindle Unlimited.

Through the '90s we published a niche outdoor magazine and were able to use that as a vehicle for promoting Red's first two self-published collections. They sold well by New Zealand standards (around 1500-2000

copies), but we had a well-targeted market and our own magazine to advertise. However, the cost of printing and distribution versus sales still meant a fairly lean profit, so I approached two publishers with Red's third collection. Both were interested, and we decided to go with Reed Publishing.

From my point of view, the experience was so much easier and resulted in a clean profit. Again, sales were pretty good by New Zealand standards. Reed continued to publish Red's collections of stories and one YA title until Reed became Raupo, who were subsequently bought out by Penguin. The company then sort of disappeared from Aotearoa.

We then approached Halcyon and they produced Red's last collection. With these titles, all distribution and advertising was handled by the publishers (we had sold the magazine some years before), and Red received the standard royalty, and a share of the Creative Communities Scheme each year for titles withdrawn from libraries.

In the meantime, I had the idea of writing up some oral histories with the notion of helping primary school students learn how their



counterparts lived in the earlier part of the 20th Century. A publishing company, Lands End, published two series of the six books in this series. I loved interviewing these older people. Their language was so lively and many of them had lived such hard lives. While I provided a few photographs, Lands End sourced images from the National Museum. The oral histories were distributed to libraries and primary schools throughout New Zealand and I received standard royalties.

By this time, e-publishing was gaining ground. A contemporary romance I submitted to Harlequin had been rejected and the manuscript was subsequently stuffed into a drawer while we moved house. Once settled, I re-read it and thought (as we so often do) 'Actually, this isn't too bad'. I then went online and found The Wild Rose Press who was quite a new e-publisher but with a good record. They accepted *Kincaid's Call*. I signed a standard contract and received royalties as they came due. I then submitted a short (12,000 words) Regency Romance called *The Duke's Blackmailed Bride*, signed the contract and received royalties. This was a great little seller. It hit #1 in its category on Amazon, and I netted around \$4-5,000 over

the following couple of years.

It was expected that I would have a website and online presence, so I set up Facebook and Twitter accounts in my pen name and built a website. While there was an expectation from Wild Rose (as I'm sure there is from all publishers) that their authors promote themselves and their work, there was no financial commitment asked of me in terms of marketing and promotion. Cover design, editing, formatting, distribution, and sourcing reviews were all taken care of by the publishers.

I probably sound very mercenary, but even though my writing has been intermittent over the years, I've always seen it as 'work' and like to see some reward for the effort put in.

I took several years to finish my next title, a full-length Regency, *The Beaumont Betrothal*. The manuscript was rejected by several



publishers. One of my lovely writing buddies, Jen Yates, critiqued the story and gave me some sound advice. Bronwen Evans undertook a developmental edit and many of her suggestions echoed what Jen had told me. I didn't want to let this story go. I liked the characters I'd created and I decided to self-publish. I took the rights back for the two titles previously published by Wild Rose with the idea of using these as building blocks for promoting *The Beaumont Betrothal*. I had dipped my toes into the Kindle world with a couple of Red's collections and a title of my own, *How I learned to Paint – am I an artist yet?* None of these were selling particularly well, but I hadn't made any investment except my own time and I wasn't worried given learning about self-publishing was fascinating in itself.

With *The Beaumont Betrothal* however, I did want to give it my best shot. I had my website revamped, took part in a self-publishing course, invested in online workshops and resources, and had covers professionally designed. After participating in one of Bryan Cohen's free Amazon ad workshops, I've trooped into Amazon's advertising arena. I've been advertising on Amazon since April this

year and sales have certainly increased—but not quite enough to keep up with the cost of advertising or to reimburse me for other costs to date. While Amazon initially accepted the new cover for *The Duke's Blackmailed Bride*, they then came back to say it didn't meet their guidelines, so I had another cover designed without so much skin on show, presenting yet another cost.

And this is where self-publishing came unstuck. I love the creative aspect of the whole process, but I simply can't afford an ongoing loss, however small, or not to at least recoup costs to date. While it's true that self-published titles earn more royalties, the books have to sell in the first place to get those

SELF-PUBLISHING VS. TRADITIONAL PUBLISHING— ONE WRITER'S VIEW.

royalties into the bank. As a self-pubbed author, distribution of printed copies into bookstores and libraries is extremely difficult to achieve. While your local independent bookseller might help, chain stores or outlets like The Warehouse are unlikely to display and sell self-pubbed titles.

I've probably invested up to \$2,000 since the release of *The Beaumont Betrothal* a year ago and that's likely less than many other self-pubbed authors are spending. From observation, most self-pubbed authors who are doing well have many titles up for sale. Multiple titles and intense advertising probably results in read-throughs that, as a slow writer, (slow at everything really!), I'm not likely to see. Trying to produce numerous titles is simply not realistic for me. The intensity of advertising, promotion, distribution, and all the other facets needed to not only produce but sell a title, is quite difficult for my brain to manage. In comparison, traditional publishing gave me no headaches at all.

Submitting to traditional publishers is a useful exercise even if a manuscript (or several) is rejected. Especially for newer authors as it gives opportunities to learn about the industry, to polish a manuscript, write cover letters and synopses, and communicate with industry professionals. Rejections can be so disheartening, but they also offer a chance to learn more about your craft. As a result, I have loved working with the editors who have been involved with Red's and my work over the years.

I hope I haven't presented self-publishing in too negative a light, especially as this year *The*

Beaumont Betrothal took second place in the Koru Award for Long Romance, and I've just recently released another self-pubbed title, *Tips for Writing the Regency Romance—a light-hearted guide*, which I have high hopes for!

So much depends upon what stage of life you're at, where you are at in your writing journey, and what your expectations are. While accepting it's easier said than done, I prefer to go the traditional-publishing route. I think earning an income of any significance through self-publishing requires a real intensity of purpose, patience, the means to ride out that steep learning curve of advertising and promotion, and the ability to speedily produce and release new titles.



Bio:

LYN RASMUSSEN writes romance under the pen name Leigh D'Ansey. She lives in the beautiful Bay of Plenty with her life partner, also a writer, and Hutch, a black and white mongrel. She is a very slow writer, is exceptionally good at dawdling, and loves to spend time by the sea.

Find Lyn Online:

<https://leighdanseyauthor.com/>

Lyn's summary of Traditional Publishing pros & cons:

Pros	Cons
No cost to author – an important consideration for Lyn. With traditional publishing, the money goes only one way – to the author.	Securing a contract in the first place.
Opportunities to build relationships with, and get feedback from, industry professionals.	Whether positive or negative, it can take months to hear back.
High quality editing should be expected. This is great for a writer's learning.	Little input into cover or book design.
Freedom to write without needing to spend time on marketing, social media etc. (you do still have to have an online presence, but not as intense as when self-publishing).	Writing to tight deadlines – maybe multiple titles within a short timeframe.
Wider distribution – bookshops, libraries, reviewers ...	Once the title has 'had its day', it will likely slip from notice.
Learning how to polish your manuscript, write query letters and submissions – all valuable stuff for writers.	

Lyn's Summary of Self-publishing pros and cons:

Pros	Cons
Control over all aspects.	Cost of self-publishing can mount to thousands of dollars for editing, cover design, book formatting etc. Prices vary widely and there's no regulation so it's very much a case of writer beware.
Freedom to write to any length – this is an interesting departure from traditional publishing when books needed to be about 55,000 words plus. Now we can publish stories of any length.	Need to have an understanding of all aspects of publishing, marketing, and sales. Even if you contract out your book cover design, you still need to know what the market expectations are for your genre/sub-genre. Same goes for social media and websites. You're captaining your own ship.
Sense of achievement at pulling it all together!	Not always easy to get reviews.
Ability to 'refresh' already published books with amended text, new covers, and even new titles.	Marketing, promotion, and social media can really suck up your time.
	Almost impossible to get self-published books into bookstores and libraries on a wide scale.

DIALOGUE TAGS



Lola Goulton

Over the last year, I've covered several of the main issues I find in manuscripts that I edit. This month, I'll be discussing one area where telling often slips into writing: in dialogue tags.

Dialogue tags are how we indicate who is speaking. The main types of dialogue tags are:

- Speaker attributions
- Action beats
- Body language
- Internal monologue, and
- Dialogue cues

Speaker Attributions

The most common dialogue tag is the speaker attribution, and the most common speaker attribution is "said". Yes, your English teacher probably drilled you to find a creative

alternative to "said", an alternative that told the reader how the character was feeling. And that's the problem: alternatives are often telling. Sometimes that telling is repeating what the dialogue has already shown. For example,

"I'm sorry," Beth apologised.

There is a place for the humble "said". Said is invisible. In fact, said is so invisible that I often find myself ignoring the dialogue tags when I read them... so why waste time and brain power on picking an alternative dialogue tag when your reader either won't notice it, or won't like it?

Other common speaker attributions include:

- **Asked:** when the character is asking a question (some authors use "said" for questions, but I think "asked" gives a smoother read).
- **Whispered:** when a character is whispering.
- **Shouted:** when a character is shouting (with or without an exclamation mark).



The important thing is to ensure your reader knows who is speaking without breaking the flow of the story.

Here are a few more tips regarding speaker attributions:

- Don't confuse speaker attributions and action beats. For example, "she smiled" is an action beat.
- Avoid using adverbs in your dialogue tags. They are almost always telling.
- Begin the paragraph with dialogue, then add the dialogue tag at the first natural break.
- Put the character's name first. For example, "Jane said" not "said Jane".

Yes, you can occasionally break any or all of these rules. But know the rule so you know best how to break it.

This blog post gives more examples of good and bad speaker attributions: Why "Said" is the Most Effective Speaker Attribution. <https://christianediting.co.nz/speaker-attribution/>

Action Beats

In *Self-Editing for Fiction Writers*, Browne and King define action beats as:

The bits of action interspersed throughout a scene, such as a character walking to a window ... Usually they involve physical gestures.

Action beats serve a dual purpose. They show the reader who is speaking as well as sharing additional information about the scene. It also gets away from the perceived problem of overusing "said".

There is no need to combine a speaker attribution with an action beat. For example,

"I'm sorry," Beth said and smiled.

It's telling and showing when you only need to show. Instead, cut the tag and strengthen the action beat to better show what the character is thinking:

"I'm sorry." Beth gave a Hannibal Lecter smile.

Or:

"I'm sorry." Beth smiled a slow smile, a smile that said she had all the time in the world and nowhere she'd rather be.

The right smile will depend on your character and the specific scene. Play around with your actions and see how you can strengthen your smiles and other action beats.

Action beats are always visible. This means the action beat can be:

- Performed by the point of view character (when the point of view character is the speaker).
- Observed by the point of view character (when the point of view character isn't the speaker).

Action beats can be overused. It's rarely necessary to have more than one action beat in each speech. For example:

"Hi." Jake lifted a hand in greeting. "How are you?" He put his hand in his pocket. "I haven't seen you around for a while." He looked away, unable to meet my eyes. Was he embarrassed?

Instead, focus on what's important:

"Hi, Jane. How are you?" Jake looked past me, unable to meet my eyes. "I haven't seen you around in a while."

Body Language

Rather than using an action beat to show what the character is doing, we can use body language to hint at what the characters are thinking or feeling. This is particularly useful when we want to show the thoughts or emotions of the non point of view character. For example:

"Welcome." He was here? Now? How mortifying. The heat rose from her chest to her scalp, and she didn't need a mirror to know she must be the colour of a beetroot.

Equally, if another character blushes, the point of view character can only mention what is visible—the rising redness. Heat can only be implied. For example:

"Welcome." Her face turned redder than beetroot in the time it took her to say the two short syllables. He could probably fry an egg on her cheeks.

Body language is a way of showing the underlying emotions in a scene, the subtext, or what's going on beneath the surface.

Dialogue Cues

Dialogue cue is a term Margie Lawson uses to describe how the character is talking e.g. tone of voice, volume, pitch, or rate of speaking. Dialogue cues are a great way of sharing subtext, of cluing the reader into what's going on beneath the surface of the conversation.

Internal Monologue

Internal monologue is the term for the thoughts of the point of view character, expressed in their own words. As such, we can only use interior monologue as a dialogue tag when the point of view character is speaking.

When you're using interior monologue as a dialogue tag, it's best to keep it short so the reader doesn't lose track of the scene.

For more information, read *Three Alternatives to Action Beats*:

<https://christianediting.co.nz/dialogue-cues/>

I hope that gives you some powerful alternatives to "said". I'll be back next month to talk about the mechanics of punctuating dialogue.

About Lola Goulton

Lola Goulton is a New Zealand book reviewer, freelance editor, and writer. She holds a degree in marketing, has a background in human resource consulting, and works as a freelance editor specialising in Christian fiction. When she's not working, Lola is usually reading or writing her next book review.

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Twitter: <https://twitter.com/LolaGoulton>

AN ASPIRING WRITER'S EXPERIENCE OF ROMANCE WRITER'S AUSTRALIA ONLINE CONFERENCE



D. A. Quinn

I have a new set of heroines since August and all of them were introduced to me via the Romance Writers of Australia online conference.

Spread over several days, I got to listen to a variety of speakers on topics that covered an enormous range of material. I learnt so much that my head is spinning! These people were impressive in their knowledge of the topics they spoke about, and there wasn't one session that I came away from where I didn't think, "Wow!". I think the organisers did a tremendous job and I'm really grateful I was able to listen in.

Corina asked me if I'd be happy to share some of the takeaways I've gained, so here's some highlights:

Learning #1: What's your goal in writing?

Liz Pelletier (CEO of Entangled, found at <https://entangledpublishing.com/the-team/>)

was phenomenal, and I don't use that description lightly! If you ever get the chance to listen to her, then I suggest you grab this opportunity with both hands.

On the first day, Liz ran four sessions and during those sessions she covered writing, editing and marketing, followed by a Q & A session. One of the best takeaways for me, and an overriding theme that I heard a couple of times throughout the conference, is that if you aren't writing to make money then don't be disappointed when you come away with nothing.

If you want to make money then you need to approach writing like a job. Research your readers and understand what they want to read, and write for them—not for you. This advice was great because as an aspiring writer, I have this stubborn streak that makes me want to write what I want to write... because I can. Well, there is a saying that just because you can doesn't mean you should (or something like that). So, I'm taking Liz's advice on board and are currently taking a step back to work out why I want to write. If I decide that it's about the money, then I'll start approaching it like a job. I'll research my

audience, I'll set my hours, and then I'll write—for them.

Learning #2: Set up your conflict by flipping your characters

This is going to probably sound very obvious to a lot of experienced writers out there, but Liz also talked about setting your conflict up by writing a blurb about your main character, then flipping their qualities so you would have inbuilt conflict. For example, if they are shy and reserved, then their protagonist would be outgoing. If they want freedom, then their protagonist would crave security. The point of doing this up front is that you can establish what the simplest conflict will be in order to sustain the life of the story. Look to create internal and external conflict to give you a powerful storyline.

Learning #3: Does your dialogue sound different?

I confess, when I write dialogue too often my characters sound the same. I learnt that it's important that they don't sound like each other, or like me. Rather, they need to have their own voice to make the story immersive. There were a few tips dropped on this subject, including: ensure your characters have unique quirks in their speech, think about whether they speak a lot or little, or whether they swear or are they formal, whether they lisp or use humour, consider what educational background they have and how this affects their speech, consider their geographical location etc.

I'd never thought about how important this was, but as a result of this learning, I have reworked one of my stories to incorporate different dialogue quirks in my characters and they now sound more interesting!

Learning #4: Dialogue is more than waffle

Again, this may be another obvious point, but learning that dialogue has four main purposes was news to me. I learnt that dialogue has to reveal character, further an agenda, and provide backstory or subtext. If it isn't doing any of these four things, then you should cut and/or rewrite the dialogue.

Learning #5: Dialogue needs action not tags

You can make your dialogue so much more interesting by wrapping it around an action beat. These have movements or physical actions, emotion, expressions or internal thoughts incorporated into them. Liz covered this when she went over her 'Deep Point of View' talk, and then Rachel Bailey went into more detail with her talk about 'Sparkling Dialogue'. I've since found a few blogs and articles that go into more detail around this and here's a link to one I found particularly useful: <https://kmallan.com/2019/05/17/4-reasons-to-use-action-beats-when-writing/>

There were also a couple of resources that were on the website including, *The Emotion Thesaurus: A Writer's Guide to Character Expression (Second Edition, Writers Helping Writers Series, Book 1)*. I don't have this yet, but Santa has just ordered it for me from Fishpond for Christmas!

I could wax on because there was seriously a lot of great content delivered, but I will leave you all with this final thought that has dawned on me since the conference: Romance readers are voracious. One author would struggle to meet the appetite a romance reader has, therefore, it makes sense for writers to band together with other writers who share a readership base and support each other through cross-promotion of each other's books. The publishing houses are onto this concept and that's why you often see book launches/tours being done with more than one author in tow, including cross promotion in newsletters, on websites, blogs etc.

The great thing about collaboration is that it would share the marketing load, because pushing lots of content would get time consuming, not to mention exhausting if you did it all yourself. I liked what Rachael Johns has done here with her online facebook club: <https://www.facebook.com/groups/1417551485018792/>

I also like this collaborative found here: <https://blush-magazine.com/>

I think these are super smart marketing initiatives. For those of you who are indie publishing, I would encourage you to team up with other writers to expand your marketing



reach. This is just my opinion, but this is something that I will look to do down the track—once I’ve mastered writing dialogue, of course.

Bio:

Born and raised in Whangarei, Denise read romance from an early age, regularly ‘borrowing’ her mother’s books. By the time she moved to Wellington, she was able to spot her ‘Prince’ in a suit and knew he was ‘the one’. Together, they ventured across the ditch to Sydney. Twenty years—and three amazing daughters later—they’re living in rural New Zealand.

If Denise isn’t writing about strong willed women and their alpha men, she’s hanging out with her people or wrangling weeds in her garden. Her characters are women she’d love to be friends with, and men she’d love her daughters to date—minus the gang affiliations. She is currently writing her first novel.

Craft Tidbits:

Smashwords resources:

<https://blog.smashwords.com/2020/07/smashwords-author-day-spring-2020-now.html>

WritingNSW

is offering courses (including online and on demand) that are open to international participants. Check them out here:

<https://writingnsw.org.au/whats-on/courses/filter/course-delivery/online-courses/>

HOW TO BUILD A MAILING LIST FROM BOOKFUNNEL



Ashlee Robinson

For those of you who haven't heard of Bookfunnel, it's a handy tool that authors can use to give away free books, participate in group promotions, direct people to their sales pages, and send advanced reviewer campaigns. Bookfunnel is also an easy way for authors to grow their mailing lists. This article sets out how you can use it to do just that.

But before I begin, it's worth noting that in order to collect email addresses, you'll need to purchase the Mid-List Author Plan, which costs USD \$100, annually. For me, it's been an incredibly worthwhile investment.

For the following, you will need something you can give away in return for a reader's email address. This might be an eBook, novella, short story, sample, excerpt, article, or other material likely to be of interest to readers. For the purposes of this article, that item is your 'cookie'. The following outlines

the steps to set up your account.

Step 1: Sign up for a Bookfunnel account.

Step 2: Set up your pen name and upload the files for your cookie.

Step 3: Create a landing page for your cookie and select the option, *An email signup page to collect new readers*, then tick the box, *The reader is required to join my list in order to receive the book*.

Alternatively, you can choose to make it optional for readers to join your list, but personally, I find it best to make it compulsory and then give them the opportunity to unsubscribe within the first email.

Step 4: Send people to the landing page. You can do this by including a link to it on your website or social media. Alternatively, what I find a very effective method is to join group promotions. To do this, click *Promotions*, then find your genre or subgenre and choose some of the most relevant giveaways that are identified as being *Newsletter* type.

Read the rules and restrictions. Some require a certain reputation or number of newsletter



subscribers, but many have no limitations. You can apply to join a promotion, and often the only requirement is for you to share this within your newsletter or on social media on a date of your choosing.

These promotions work by cross-pollinating audiences. For example, if each of the participating authors sends people to a joint landing page, then they have the chance to select any book they like the look of—and you may end up with new readers.

NB: If you do not find an appropriate promotion, you can organize your own and open it for other authors to participate.

Step 5: Unless you opt in for the *Best-Selling Author Plan* with mailing list integration, you'll need to export your new subscribers as a CSV file and then upload it to your mail service provider.

Step 6: Once subscribers are signed up to your mailing list, they should be added by automation. An email automation is a series of emails (usually one to five) that are sent when a subscriber is added to your list, a group or segment, or when you tag them a certain way. This automation is the place to explain who you are, what you write, what subscribers can expect from you, and to weed

out the people who aren't really interested. Mine is a series of four emails queued to send over two weeks from when they first sign up.

Don't take unsubscribes personally during this time. You only want to keep the readers on your list who are engaged and interested in you and your content because people who don't open your emails decrease your visibility for everyone else and may prevent others from seeing your emails.

And there you have it. The six key steps to building an engaged mailing list using Bookfunnel. I'm happy to answer any follow up questions people may have. Just contact me at: alexa@alexarivers.com.

Bio:

Ashlee Robinson writes steamy, emotional contemporary romances under the pen name Alexa Rivers. She shares a house with a neurotic dog and a husband who thinks he's hilarious. When she's not writing, she enjoys travelling, baking and decorating cakes, eating those cakes, cuddling fluffy animals, drinking excessive amounts of tea, and absorbing herself in fictional worlds. Her latest book, *Two of a Kind*, can be found here: <https://www.amazon.com.au/dp/B088P8T8LB>

SEEKING EXPRESSIONS OF INTEREST FOR ROMANCE WRITERS AUSTRALIA'S 2021 CONFERENCE

RWA are seeking expressions of interest for workshop submissions and presenters for their upcoming 2021 conference. If you're interested, check out the information below.



RWA is seeking Workshop submissions

Romance Writers of Australia are looking for diverse, inclusive, unique and confident presenters for our 2021 Conference on the Gold Coast in the following professional development streams: Full day and Half day Masterclasses for beginners and advance writers; Writing craft for beginners and advanced writers in publishing, marketing, industry insights, advertising methods & platforms; Business; & Research and insights.

follow the link below to access the submission form
<https://forms.gle/bgcUrgipNxMhvaC4A>



Submissions Close 30th October 2020



Here at RWA we are expanding our reach for **workshop submissions** for our 2021 Conference, being held at **Mantra on View, Gold Coast from Thursday 12th to Sunday 15th August 2021.**

2021 is our 30th anniversary, and we are looking for suitable presentations for our Conference, themed **Looking Forward, Looking Back.**

We are looking for a range of confident presenters to reflect RWA's commitment to bring diversity and inclusivity to our conference program, while ensuring presentations truly reflect this is a romance writing conference.

Presentations will be filtered through the following criteria:

- Does the presentation promote excellence in romantic fiction?
- Will the presentation help aspiring writers get published?
- Will the presentation help published authors establish, maintain and advance their careers?
- Will the presentation provide continuing support for romance writers, whatever their sub genre?

The RWA annual conference is our premier event and brings together over 300 writers and industry professionals for four days of professional development workshops, networking, social events, and pitching opportunities. We invite workshop proposals for the following professional development streams:

- Masterclasses for beginners... small group (numbers capped) full/half day – plotting, editing, etc.
- Masterclasses for advanced authors... small group (numbers capped) full/half day – publishing, marketing, industry insights, advertising methods & platforms, etc.
- Writing craft for beginners... plotting, character development, self-editing, structure, dialogue, prose, submission process, tropes and themes, etc.
- Writing craft for advanced... deep editing, worldbuilding, etc.
- Business... indie publishing, marketing, promotions, accounting, legal, tax, estate planning, etc.
- Research and insights... researching methods, culture, diversity, inclusivity, history, profession descriptions, forensics, etc.

Workshops are either 60 mins or 90 minutes in duration, with Masterclasses either half (4 hours) or full day (6-8 hours).

We pay ASA workshop presenter rates, details of which can be found on their website <https://www.asauthors.org/findananswer/rates-of-pay>

If you have a presentation that fits the bill, please follow the link below to the 2021 Workshop Proposal Submission form.

<https://forms.gle/bgcUrgipNxMhvaC4A>

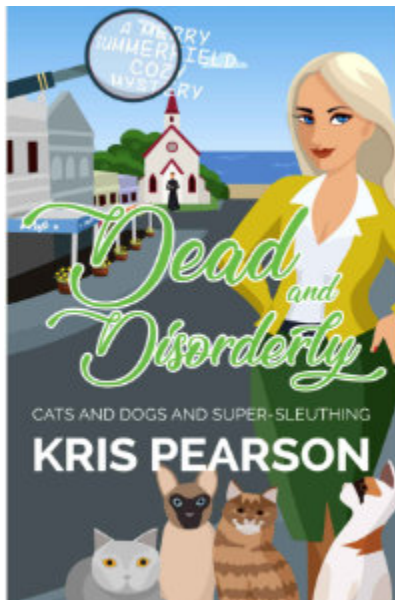
All submissions must be received no later than AEST 5:00pm Friday 30 October 2020.

The review process for submissions will take around 2 weeks and you should have a response regarding your submission mid November 2020.

Many thanks for your interest in presenting at our 30th anniversary conference. We look forward to seeing you there!

Regards

2021 Gold Coast Conference
Steering Committee



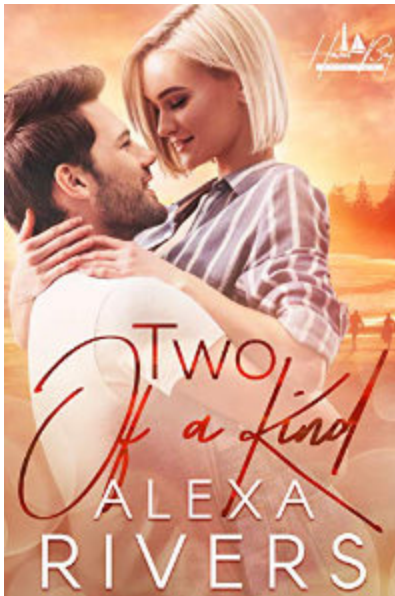
Kris Pearson

DEAD AND DISORDERLY

Kris Pearson is the author of 22 novels and novellas, ranging through sheikhs and steamies to flirty cozy mysteries.

Her latest book, *Dead and Disorderly*, is the third book in her Merry Summerfield cozy mystery series, and it launched on September 26th (which was also her 49th wedding anniversary!).

<https://www.amazon.com/dp/B08HCJ9JR7>



Alexa Rivers

TWO OF A KIND

Alexa Rivers released, *Two of a Kind*, on 24th September.

After years of battling with illness, Brooke Griffiths is ready for an adventure. Step one is convincing ruggedly handsome Jack Farrelly to help her prepare. If only she could put their mind-blowing kiss to the back of her mind... the kiss he literally seems to have forgotten...

<https://www.amazon.com/dp/B088P8T8LB>



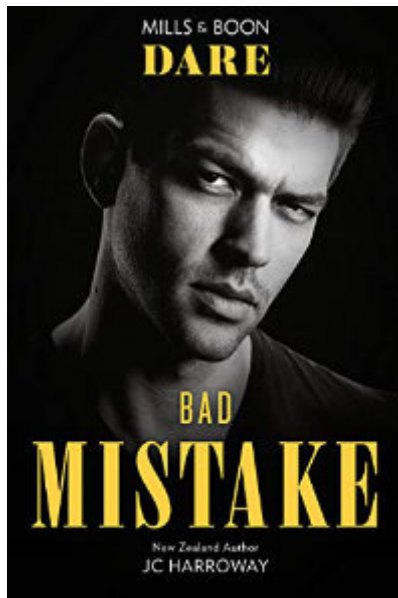
Anne Barwell

FAMILY AND REFLECTION

Anne Barwell has recently released, *Family and Reflection*, which is book three of The Sleepless City series. It is available on Amazon and KU for the first time and contains elements of paranormal romance, urban fantasy, vampires, werewolves, soulmates, found family, and #mmromance.

When a rebel werewolf and a vampire thief fall in love, only one thing is certain—trouble.

<https://www.amazon.com/dp/B08GHFWSSJ>



JC Harroway

BAD MISTAKE

JC Harroway has a new release publishing in October. It is called, **Bad Mistake**, and is the third book in the Pleasure Pact series for the Harlequin Mills and Boon Dare line.

<https://www.amazon.com/dp/B085B4M25B>



Corina Douglas

DAUGHTER OF WINTER

Daughter of Winter, Corina Douglas' debut book (and the first book in the series of the same name), recently won the Gold Medal Book Award in the Fiction - Mythology genre in this year's Reader's Favourite Awards. If you like Celtic mythology, stories with twin storylines (present day and ancient Scotland), fated mates, and Druidic magic, then you'll love this series.

<https://www.amazon.com/dp/B084L1LFXR>

How to get your title featured:

Heart 2 Heart is always keen to share news from members:

- new book releases
- news of awards,
- contracts, and anything else that is worth celebrating.

To submit email the editor heart2hearteditor@romancewriters.co.nz or use the form on the RWNZ website.

Supply: 2-3 sentences in the third person, a cover image (no other images will be accepted) and a CLEAN link direct to the retailer.

REGIONAL ROUND-UP REPORTS

Auckland**Convenor: Ruth Clough**

August meeting:

This month's meeting took place on Saturday 1st August at the Three Kings Tennis Pavilion. We had thirteen attendees on a very cold, blustery winter's day.

This month, Ann Russell gave us a presentation on Chinese Acupressure and guided us through some breathing and eye strengthening exercises—great techniques for those of us who spend too much time behind computers! And also good fodder for the writing! Perhaps someone will write some acupressure into one of their next novels?

We also had some general discussion around books, writing, and publishing. Topical at the moment is whether or not to include Coronavirus in contemporary fiction / romances. This prompted some lively discussion, with some people saying it's too soon, and others insisting that we have to start to include it in our fiction now. We also discussed at what point in time a book can be considered historical. For example, would a book that was set in the 1980s or 1990s be considered historical? Technically, these time periods are between 30-40 years ago but it did make us ponder as to whether we would consider books set during these times to be historical?

Thanks to everyone who turned up and contributed to the lovely and spirited conversation.

September meeting:

Frances Housden was our speaker for September and she presented on 'Who Makes the Rules', which was a lively talk about the rules of writing and who sets them, and what they mean for writers, especially those trying to get published. We also discussed tropes used across a variety of genres and that most perilous of topics—head hopping! Thank you to all those who attended and contributed to our discussion of all things writerly. I hope you enjoyed the session. And lastly, a big thank you to Frances for being our speaker and embracing the world of ZOOM!

Coast to Coast**Convenor: Jill Batty**

August Meeting:

C2Cs August meeting has been the first one to be held at a member's house since the end of lockdown. The topic was Traditional and Self-Publishing pros and cons taken by Lyn Rasmussen, a member with a lot of experience in both fields.

Lyn gave us some background which includes founding and self-publishing a magazine for about eight years, as well as a combination of traditional and self-publishing her own and her partner's work (Hunting and Outdoor) over a period of twenty or so years. Lyn stressed that this is her experience only and others might have other experiences and viewpoints. Lyn has an expectation that she will receive some income from her writing, but for others it's the journey that counts.



Everyone's experience and expectations have value and it's great to find that we can share these in our group.

Lyn says: *"Please don't think self-publishing is your only option. Investigate traditional publishing (royalty-paying whether ebooks or print). Rejections can be disheartening, but input from professionals in the industry can be invaluable to an author's learning and growth."*

NB: Lyn's summary of Traditional Publishing pros & cons: are supplied on Page 12. & 13

We have also lost Bel Macfie as convenor and have an interim convenor waiting for 2021 when Julie Gilligan will take the reins.

September meeting:

The September meeting for C2C was held in Rotorua. The speaker was Anne Potter, a life coach and author also from Rotorua. She started off talking about audible books, and after telling us about her experiences producing them, moved on to thoughts and emotion being vibration. We think, which leads to feelings, which leads to actions, which leads to a result. She provided a list of emotions from negative to positive showing their vibration, and referred to Dr Masaru Emoto who has looked at the effect of both positive and negative thoughts on water molecules.

Everything is created twice. Once as thought, and the second time in physical form. Our life, therefore, reflects the predominant thoughts we think, and because we are in charge, we can change the thoughts to improve our life.

She suggested we all think of some things we would really love, phrasing them as, "I am so happy and grateful now that I have...."

It was an interesting talk provoking a lot of discussion as we looked at the power of thoughts and words. Our stories and books are all words charged with emotion, and therefore energy, and can have a greater effect than we might realise. Bel pointed out that we must give ourselves permission to dream and "do" BIG.

It was a very interesting afternoon on a beautiful sunny day.

Next month's meeting is at 85 Orion Drive, Welcome Bay. The topic is the short story, so come armed with questions. The date has been set for the 10th October, and the meeting will start with a shared lunch at 12 midday.

Meanwhile, judging has begun for the C2C competition for those members commemorating the life and writing of Jeanne Drake, a long time and loved member who died in 2019.

Wellington / Kapiti Coast

Convenor: Moira Kay

August meeting:

A whopping twenty-two of us met at the Petone Library on 1st August, which made for a lively meeting and suggests that our needs to reconnect with the writing tribe post-lockdown have not dwindled. It was lovely to see some long-lost faces returned, and also, to welcome Kaye, from the Coast to Coast Chapter while she's in the neighbourhood.

A round of catching up was followed by a short workshop from (former psycho-therapist) Gudrun, about the way we humans process thoughts. Key points included steps on where we can trip ourselves up, and therefore, where we can adjust the way we think in order to improve perceptions we may have. This should come in handy when gearing up our motivation.

We also recorded our goals for the coming months, and we'll be checking in just before Christmas to see if we've been realistic!

September meeting:

Due to Covid-related distancing concerns, our September meeting was held via the homely comforts of Zoom. There was a modest attendance, but we got to catch up with a few faces that had escaped us for the last few months. All seems busy on the writing front, and as we shared our recent experiences, we got to discuss everything from cover art and comparable authors, to strategies for starting over in new genres.

The awkward case of hiccups that 2020 has thrust upon many of us seems to be clearing up, with several members completing, or very close to completing, their current WIPs, and enjoying the sense of accomplishment/exalted relief that accompanies such. Next month, we hope to reunite the Welly/Kap tribe again, face to face, and on double the scale!

Nelson

Convenors: *Annika Ohlson-Smith, Lorna Croft*

August meeting:

On the agenda was a card with the tasks of the Convenor. This was so new members knew what to do when it was their turn to convene a meeting. Then, it was time for our guest speaker, Bob Irvine, a journalist and former writer of a column in the Nelson Mail. Bob is an easy-going guy, so we had our cuppa, chocolate cake and coconut macaroons while he told us of the hard work required to meet deadlines and come up with ideas for an entertaining column. Bob also told us about some film manuscripts he'd written.

September meeting:

We were a small group at this month's meeting. A quick around-the-table, which caught everyone up on the current WIP in each member's writing life proved to be diverse and entertaining. Then, members participated in a short exercise that involved combining skills for each story. The resulting narratives ended up rather unexpected and quirky.

Our speaker was one of our members, Jaclyn Rosamond. She gave a presentation on 'Marketing Ourselves and Our Books Through Online Sources'. The information she provided, both verbally and in written form, covered the many aspects of marketing and advertising needed to promote yourself and your book sales. Although aimed at those who self-publish, some of the avenues discussed and Jaclyn's own personal experiences could apply to any author.

New members are always welcome.

Christchurch

Convenor: *Emma Lowe*

August meeting:

We met at South Library on Sunday, 10th August with Cold Reads in mind. August is traditionally our cold read month as we prepare for conferences, so we kept things as is and enjoyed a number of cold reads from our members.

We welcomed two new visitors to the group who were eager to scope out what we have to offer and we wound up discussing a whole host of things ranging from what the group brings to the local writing community, the value of entering contests, and the up-coming Canterbury Romance Writers anthology due for release in September.

With a retreat (mini-conference) booked for the end of August, there's lots happening amongst our local writers. (They're determined not to let Lockdown get the better of them!)

We congratulated Grace Lawler in finalling in the Killer Nashville Claymore Awards.

Otago / Southland

Convenor: *Samantha Burton*

August meeting:

Six of us met up on Saturday, 1st August and welcomed two new members, Dot and Angela, to the group! After introductions and a catch-up, we spent some time brainstorming solutions to planning, writing, marketing, and publishing questions. Next meeting, we'll discuss what's working for us with story planning at present.

September Meeting:

Nine of us gathered in the University of Otago link building. The discussion about planning was great, and lots of helpful advice was shared. The theme of the next meeting is 'great beginnings'.

WELCOME THE NEW H2H TEAM



Kura Carpenter, Formatter.



Corina Douglas, Editor.

What made you volunteer for this role?

I really value what RWNZ does for kiwi writers and I wanted to give back.

What do you write?

I'm working on a paranormal cosy mystery about a disgraced fairy godmother.

What is one thing that most people do not know about you?

I think stories with cliffhangers are

Regardless of time, location, and whether real or imagined, if you could live anywhere in the world, where would it be?

A bookshop in Paris filled with first editions—possibly with Colin Firth as the manager.

Name your writing dream. What do you aspire for?

It's a simple dream. I just want to make my living by doing what I love: writing good stories.

Bio:

Kura Carpenter is a Dunedin based writer who loves mysteries, Jane Austen, and greyhounds.

<https://www.kuracarpenter.com/>

What made you volunteer for this role?

When someone is looking for a volunteer, I usually put my hand up. As my editing clients are typically from the US or the UK, this was a fabulous opportunity to work on something closer to home. However, that said, I've never pulled a magazine together before so this will be a new challenge!

What do you write?

I write fiction based on Celtic mythology. My current series, Daughter of Winter, has two parallel storylines going on, with one set in the third century BC, and the other in the present day. My overarching genre is typically fantasy, however, my stories also fit into ancient historical fiction, paranormal romance, or speculative romance. And as you would have gleaned above, in the near future, I also intend to publish two non-fiction books based on my current family journey.

What is one thing that most people do not know about you?

I was born in Perth, Western Australia. Once people find out, it's a cause for ribbing and competitive spirit even though I'm a full-blown Kiwi now, having lived here for most of my life!

Regardless of time, location, and whether real or imagined, if you could live anywhere in the world, where would it be?

Definitely in a fantasy land, and one of my own making. I'm thinking of the world I've created in *Daughter of Winter*, where life is so much simpler than what it is today. We live on the land and respect what it provides, taking only what we need. At the same time, there is romance, intrigue, action, adventure, and magic! Sounds pretty good right now with the doozy of a ride we've had with 2020, right?

Name your writing dream. What do you aspire for?

I aspire to earn enough money to support my family as a part-time author/part-time editor. I also aspire to have my name recognised with the authors I adore. That alone is enough to fill my bucket to the brim with happiness!

Bio:

Corina Douglas lives at the bottom of the world in the paradise of New Zealand. She is mother to four crazy kids and wife to a wonderful husband. When she isn't kiddo wrangling and running her editing business, Burning Legacies Publishing, she can be found doing yoga or with her nose in a good book. She writes fantasy based on fairytales, folklore, and Celtic mythology with fast-paced action. Make sure you strap yourself in for an emotionally charged ride!

Visit Corina at: www.corinadouglas.com



PRIDE AND PREJUDICE QUIZ

Are you a devoted Austenite? How many questions can you answer? **Answers at the bottom of the page ...**

1. **What is Mrs Bennet's dearest wish?**

- A) To show up Mrs Long
- B) To marry off her daughters
- C) To show up Lady Lucas
- D) Emancipation for women

2. **What has Mrs Long promised to do for the Bennet's at the next assembly?**

- A) Introduce them to Sir William
- B) Stop her nieces from having fun
- C) Introduce them to Mr Bingley
- D) Bring her white soup recipe

3. **Fill in the blank: "I am convinced that one good _____ will starve it entirely away."**

- A) Couplet
- B) Stanza
- C) Sonnet
- D) Haiku

4. **What are the ingredients in white soup?**

- A) Potatoes and lard
- B) Almonds and white chocolate
- C) Chicken and veal
- D) Salmon and a drop of bleach

5. **What colour are Elizabeth's fine eyes ?**

- A) Green with a hint of hazel
- B) A vivid violet
- C) They don't say
- D) Is smouldering even a colour?

6. **At the ball, how did Bingley flatter Jane?**

- A) Twice asking her to dance
- B) Admiring the lace on her dress
- C) Assuming she was of noble birth
- D) Asking for a lock of her hair

7. **Who says: "How much sooner one tires of anything than of a book!"**

- A) Darcy
- B) Elizabeth
- C) Caroline
- D) Mr Hurst

8. **Exactly how is Bingley just "what a young man ought to be" ?**

- A) Sweet, kind and charitable
- B) Flirtatious, fit and fine
- C) Sensible, good-humoured, and lively
- D) Rich, handsome and rich

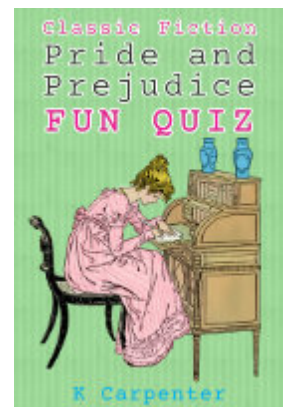
9. **What is Mr Collins 'plan of amends' ?**

- A) Pass on his estate to the Bennets
- B) Marry one of the Bennet girls
- C) Entreat Lady C to find the girls employment as governesses
- D) Burn down Longbourn for the insurance money

If you enjoyed this excerpt, the complete quiz of 600+ questions is available in Kindle and Large print paperback

'Pride and Prejudice: Classic Fiction Fun quiz'
K Carpenter

<https://www.amazon.com/dp/B088KS4G5G>



1B, 2C, 3C, 4C, 5C, 6A, 7C, 8C, 9B