



# KEYNOTES

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*The newsletter of the Romance Writers of America / New York City Chapter #6*    *FEBRUARY 2017*

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**NEXT CHAPTER MEETING & CRITIQUE SESSION: SATURDAY, FEBRUARY 4**  
**TRS, 40 EXCHANGE PLACE, 3<sup>RD</sup> FLOOR, 12-4PM**

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## **TOPIC: ASK THE EXPERTS! REAL PUBLICISTS ON BOOK PROMOTIONS!**

### **SPEAKERS:**

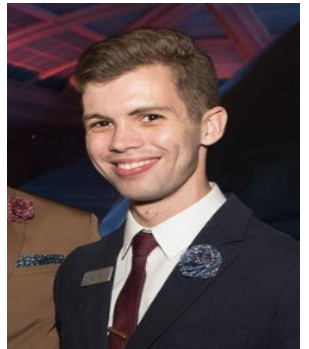
Lauren Jernigan, Social Media Specialist for Kensington Publishing Corp.  
Steven Pfau, Associate Publicist for Farrar, Strauss and Giroux  
Kayleigh Webb, Publicity Assistant for ACE ROC and DAW

You want to promote your book? Ask the experts! We have three of them with over 30 years of experience combined. They will share what works and doesn't with book promotions; how to get the most out of your social media platforms; how much in-house publicists really do to help promote your book; etc. Don't miss this chance to talk to a real publicist about how to promote your book.

**Lauren Jernigan** is the Social Media Specialist for Kensington Publishing Corp., and its digital imprint Lyrical Press. Her inner bibliophile's dream comes true every day as she works closely with best-selling authors, and creates creative digital content for some of her favorite books. She lives in New York, and spends her free time consuming all of the books she can get her hands on—and also tweeting about her cat. Follow her on Twitter: @LEJerni13 Instagram: @lejerni13; Website: notesfromlife.weebly.com



**Steven Pfau** is an Associate Publicist at Farrar, Straus and Giroux, which he joined in May 2014. He has worked on publicity campaigns for a wide variety of authors, including Jonathan Franzen, Jonathan Safran Foer, Asali Solomon, Jeff VanderMeer, Sinéad Morrissey, Ishion Hutchinson, and others. You can find Steven on Twitter at @stpfau and FSG's official account @fsgbooks.



**Kayleigh Webb** is a Brooklyn based young adult writer, publicist, and unabashed fangirl. She received her B.A. in English from The University of Mississippi and was awarded the Evans Harrington Creative Writing Award in 2012. She also collects vinyl records and is only a little bit obsessed with Bruce Springsteen. She can be found on Twitter at @by\_kayleigh.♥

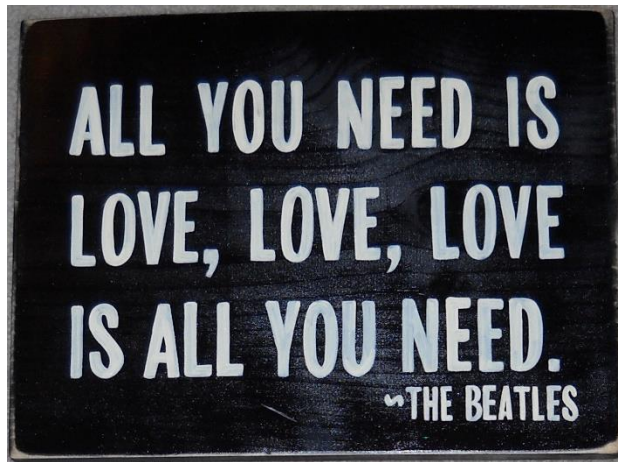


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### **CRITIQUE SESSION!**

**We will end our monthly meeting with a critique session. Bring 2-3 pages.**

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## THANK YOU!

To Our Contributing Writers  
 Maria Cox, Alexis Daria, Maria Ferrer,  
 Lise Horton, Harper Miller, Kate McMurray,  
 Ursula Renée, A.C. Rose, Mageela Troche

## 2017 CHAPTER CALENDAR

Jan 7	Feb 4	Mar 4	Apr 1	May 13	Jun 3
Jul 8	Aug 5	Sep 9	Oct 7	Nov 4	Dec 2

## KEYNOTES DEADLINE

Send articles to [keynoteseditor@gmail.com](mailto:keynoteseditor@gmail.com)  
 by the 15th of the month. All articles  
 must be typed and up to 500 words.

## MARCH THEME

### CONFERENCE REWARDS

Making the most out of any conference you attend; networking; what to pack; etc.

*\*\*We encourage members to share their conference tips and rewards with us.\*\**

## RWA/NYC BOARD OF DIRECTORS

President: Kate McMurray  
 Vice President/Events: Stacey Agdern  
 Vice President/Contest: LaQuette  
 Secretary: Lise Horton  
 Treasurer: Maria Cox  
 Past President: Ursula Renée

## LIAISONS & COMMITTEES

Keynotes Editor: Ursula Renée  
 PRO Liaisons: Alexis Daria  
 PAN Liaison: Mageela Troche  
 Blog/Social Media: Maria Ferrer  
 Craft Loop: Isabo Kelly  
 Critique Group: Ursula Renée  
 Publicity: Maria Cox, Lise Horton,  
 Jean Joachim, Michael Molloy  
 Website: Ursula Renée

**ATTENTION:** The Board welcomes all comments/suggestions/etc. Please send emails to [info@rwanyc.com](mailto:info@rwanyc.com).

**MEETING INFO:** RWA/NYC meets the first Saturday of each month. Meetings are held at TRS, 40 Exchange Place, NYC. 12 noon. Membership is at the discretion of the Board. Annual dues are \$40. Make all checks payable to RWA/NYC. There will be a \$20 fee on returned checks.

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[info@rwanyc.com](mailto:info@rwanyc.com)  
[rwanycblogginginthebigapple.blogspot.com](http://rwanycblogginginthebigapple.blogspot.com)



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**WELCOME NEW MEMBERS**

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**Kay Blake**  
**Rosemary Ellie**  
**Julia Bottles**  
**Margarita Triantafyllidou**



**RENEW YOUR  
MEMBERSHIP  
TODAY  
(p29)**

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**CHAPTER MINUTES: JANUARY  
BY SECRETARY LISE HORTON**

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**President Kate McMurray called the General meeting to order at 12:15 PM.** Kate called for approval of the November 2016 Chapter meeting minutes. Maria Ferrer made a motion to accept. Harper Miller seconded the motion.

**Treasurer Maria Cox gave the Treasurer's report** indicating the chapter had \$5,230.96 in the account as of January 5, 2017.

**Secretary Lise Horton reported** that we have a membership listed of 85 members, and that the roster is being double-checked for any early bird renewing, or new, members. Lise reminded members that the Chapter renewal period was now open.

**Vice President, Programs, Stacey Agdern** was not in attendance and there was no report on the Golden Apple Awards program.

**Vice President, Communications LaQuette reported** on the initial plans to revamp the contest to include both published novels as well as unpublished manuscripts, and said she would be asking for volunteers both to judge, as well as for entrants to participate in the contest.

**Keynotes Newsletter Editor Ursula Renée** asked for submissions to the newsletter, and provided her contact information. She said that the upcoming theme for the February newsletter would be self-sabotage: How you do it, how to stop it, and how to break the cycle.

**Social Media Report:** Maria Ferrer asked for members to support the Chapter's promotion efforts by retweeting and sharing posts. Maria further reminded members that newsletter articles are also recycled onto the Chapter blog, and that articles are shared on the RWA Editors' Loop, and are often picked up by other chapters, making articles a great promo opportunity for Chapter members.

**President Kate McMurray reported** that member Mageela Troche had volunteered to accept the role of PAN Liaison, and introduced Alexis Daria as the new Chapter PRO Liaison.

**Publicity Committee Report:** Maria Cox reported that there would be changes to the annual romance book festival, to be announced, and called for additional volunteers to assist.

**Website Report:** Webmistress Ursula Renée asked all members to check that their names appear correctly on the Chapter website, and to ensure that their links are working properly, and if not, to alert her. Kate added that members should check out the Chapter website for information on Chapter meetings and events.

**Maria Ferrer closed** by informing attendees that the annual Book Expo convention would be returning to New York City, and that RWA National would have a booth and if published authors wished to take part, they should contact National as soon as possible as slots are limited.

**The Chapter Meeting Adjourned at 12:31.♥**

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## RESOURCE CORNER

**BY ALEXIS DARIA**

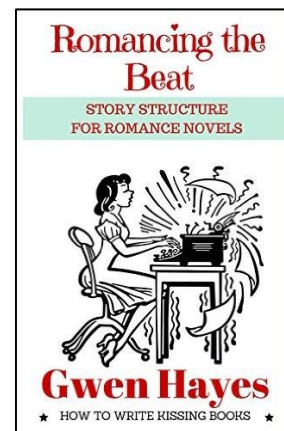
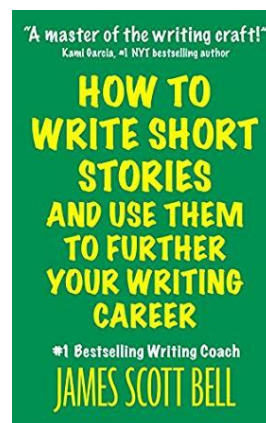
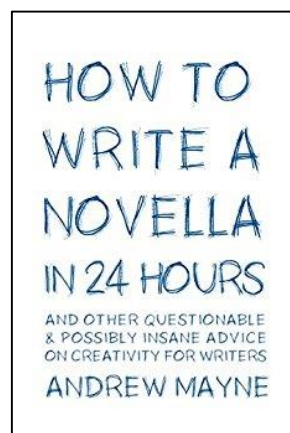
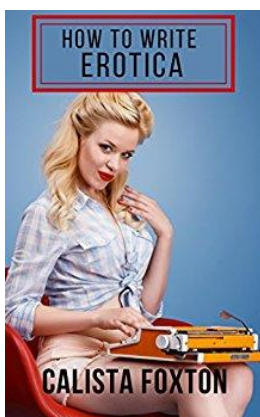
*Every month we'll bring you book recommendations from our members. If you would like to share your recommendations, email the editor at [keynoteseditor@gmail.com](mailto:keynoteseditor@gmail.com) by the 15<sup>th</sup> of the month.*

HOW TO WRITE A NOVELLA IN 24 HOURS (& OTHER QUESTIONABLE AND POSSIBLY INSANE ADVICE ON CREATIVITY FOR WRITERS) by Andrew Mayne

HOW TO WRITE EROTICA: A BEGINNER'S GUIDE TO WRITING AND PUBLISHING SHORT EROTICA by Calista Foxton

HOW TO WRITE SHORT STORIES AND USE THEM TO FURTHER YOUR WRITING CAREER by James Scott Bell

ROMANCING THE BEAT by Gwen Hayes♥





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**PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE:  
MONEY FOR NOTHING AND BOOKS FOR FREE  
BY KATE MCMURRAY**

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There's a big difference between publishing a book and having a writing career.

Before my first book was published, I had a desk job at which I frequently daydreamed about some time in the future when I'd spend my days writing fiction and not filling out Excel spreadsheets or whatever I was doing on the job that day. I imagine a lot of you had the same dream. However, you came to be a writer, it's likely a compulsion, a passion, something you do because you love it, and it's something you'd like to be able to do a lot more of.

There have been a rash of articles in major publications lately about writers who sold their first book and then went broke. Money is one of those things we Do Not Discuss, so I think a lot of writers don't know what to expect, or have unrealistic expectations, when that first book comes out. We tend to think that once we sign our first contract, that's it, we've arrived. But a career as a writer is a marathon, not a sprint. And maybe knowing what to expect will help better plan *how* to do what you love as your career, instead of wondering *if* you can do it.

I have a group of writer friends with whom I have dinner once a month or so. These are my People. One of the best pieces of career advice I ever heard was from Sarah MacLean, who suggested making friends with writers who are at approximately the same stage of their career as you are. You will face a lot of the same issues and can trade notes on how to deal with them. My group are authors I met and befriended mostly at conventions, but our first books came out within a year or two of each other, so though we've had varying levels of success, we have a lot of experience we can share that benefits each other. Sometimes we really get into it, airing grievances, giving advice, or just shouting about things we're frustrated with. But I always leave feeling inspired and ready to get back into the writing.

Anyway, we had dinner a couple of weeks ago, and the topic of money came up in the context of author behavior on Facebook. A trend I've noticed lately is writers who are diversifying their income streams. Not just by becoming hybrid authors, but by creating things like Patreon pages. (If you're unfamiliar, Patreon is a platform on which people can patronize artists they like by paying a monthly fee, usually in exchange for exclusive content. I'm neutral on Patreon, but there was some lively debate regarding it recently.) My friends and I discussed the trend and wondered if authors were creating Patreon accounts to increase their income because they weren't making the money they expected to when they started publishing.

So this got me thinking about the book vs. career problem. Because if you put out your first book and then sit back and wait for fame and fortune, you will likely be disappointed.





We hear about these success stories, authors whose debut novels were runaway bestsellers, or authors who have done amazingly well self-publishing. And I'm not saying this level of success is not possible, but it's rare. For every Carrie Ann Ryan or Sylvia Day or JK Rowling, there are literally thousands of authors publishing whom you've never heard of.

Nor do we really hear much about what went into making those books. If you've ever heard Nora Roberts speak or read any articles about her, you probably know she took up writing when her children were very young and she was struggling to make ends meet. Jude Deveraux was living in a trailer when she sold her first book. JK Rowling was a single mom living on public assistance. To me, these stories show us not just that it's possible to earn a good living from writing, but that these women have a tremendous work ethic. How many of us get bogged down in the day to day and don't write? The fact that these women were struggling and made time to write on top of that is remarkable.

And it's something they applied to their careers. Nora Roberts talks about treating writing as a full-time job. She does it at least eight hours a day no matter what, unless she's on vacation. Sylvia Day wrote and wrote and wrote books until *Bared to You* finally broke through. Success at that level *is* a full-time job, not just a hobby.

We approach self-publishing as if it's a cash cow, but even E.L. James had a platform before housewives started passing around copies of *FIFTY SHADES OF GREY*—she worked for the BBC, for one thing, and her Internet-published fanfiction had a huge following.

Or, just the other day, I got an email from a marketing firm that had done some analysis of sports romance. Since my bestselling book is a romance about baseball players, they thought I might be interested in their results. Research showed that sports romance is having a Moment, which I already knew, and that there's great potential to sell a lot of books in the sub-genre. But, on the other hand, because romance is so huge and so many authors are already writing sports romance, if you're just in it for the money, your odds of success are slim because it's a competitive market. Dashing off a book to cash in on a trend isn't a sustainable career plan, either.

Again, I'm not saying great success is not possible, but I think it's important to recognize how much work a *career* in romance takes, as opposed to just putting out a book.

Romance is the biggest selling genre of books, no doubt. But because it sells so well, there are a lot of writers publishing it. Writing a romance is not a good way to make a quick buck. Think about how many hours go into writing a novel, for one thing. But more than that, putting a book out is not a guarantee it will sell.

This all sounds rather dreary, but that's not my intention. I mean, I still daydream about a day when I can write eight hours a day like Nora Roberts without needing income from my other job(s). But I am saying that having a sustainable career requires some forethought and some elbow grease. You can't just put out a book and expect it to be a bestseller. What you can do is put in some time and work:

make your book the best it can be, do some of the work to build your audience, find people to help you along the way. Then when that first book is done, get to work on the next one.

Here's your task for this month: Who is your favorite romance author? Does she write full time or have another job? How many books has she written? Odds are pretty good she has not just published one book. How long has she been writing? What does she do to promote her books? A lot of this information will be available on the author's website. (So, for example, my favorite romance author is Suzanne Brockmann. As far as I know, she's a full-time writer, or at least doesn't have another job. She's written about sixty books. Her website says she's been publishing for twenty years. She's on Twitter all the time, but she also does a lot of conventions and book signings—I've met and fangirled her a half dozen times now—and she's published by a big house that does a bunch of stuff for her, too.)

Now let all that sink in. To me, sixty books—including a bunch of New York Times bestsellers—is a career. I'm not there yet. I'm working on it, though. I encourage you to do the same.♥

*Kate McMurray is an award-winning author of gay romance and an unabashed romance fan. When she's not writing, she works as a nonfiction editor, dabbles in various crafts, and is maybe a tiny bit obsessed with baseball. She has served as President of Rainbow Romance Writers, the LGBT romance chapter of Romance Writers of America; and as Vice President of RWA/NYC. She lives in Brooklyn, NY. Visit her at [www.katemcmurray.com](http://www.katemcmurray.com).*

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#### **ABOUT PAN (PUBLISHED AUTHOR NETWORK)**

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The purpose of the Published Authors Network (PAN) is to establish within the RWA framework a network of communication and support to effectively promote and protect the interests of published romance authors; to open channels of communication between those romance authors and other publishing industry professionals; and to encourage professionalism on all levels and in all relationships within the publishing industry.

To be eligible for General PAN Membership: RWA General or Honorary members in good standing should have earned at least \$1,000 on a single novel or novella that meets the definition of Romance Fiction.

To be eligible for Provisional PAN Membership: RWA General or Honorary members in good standing should have: (1) contracted for the publication of a novel or novella for an advance of at least \$1,000, but said work is not yet commercially available ("Option One"); or

(2) published a novel or novella, but not yet earned \$1,000 ("Option Two"). Works offered through Predatory Publishing companies shall not qualify.

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#### **About PRO**

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The purpose of the PRO Community of Practice is to establish within RWA a network of communication and support to effectively promote and protect the interests of romance writers in the areas between manuscript completion and PAN eligibility.

To help members reach the next level, PRO focuses on the business side of writing rather than craft. This program is available to any active General or Honorary member who: (1) is not PAN-eligible and (2) has one complete original work of romance fiction of at least 20,000 words, or multiple complete original works of romance fiction which combine for a total of at least 20,000 words.

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**FROM THE PAN LIAISON: MAGEELA TROCHE**

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**NEW YEAR, SAME BUSINESS**

In 2016, eBooks lost its shine. Samhain closed its digital doors and at the end of the year, All Romance pulled the plug on their site. If you have read any of the book trade magazines or blogs, you have heard the news that E-books sales have fallen “by 19.2% in 2016 compared to 2015.” What does that mean for us authors?

First, we must determine some possible reason for this decline. Could it be the book price? Many have complained about the price of books set by the Big 5. However, “the Codex Group’s April 2016 survey of 4,992 book buyers, which includes eBooks published by traditional publishers and self-publishers and sold across all channels and in all categories, found that eBook units purchased as a share of total books fell from 35.9% in April 2015 to 32.4% in April 2016.” So, prices may not have played a large part in the decline.

Another reason is digital fatigue. That is something I can understand. I find returning to print books even though the digital format is cheaper. My eyes can’t take the screen anymore. It seems I am not the only one. According to the Codex Group’s survey, “book buyers stated they spent almost five hours daily personal time on screens, 25% of book buyers, including 37% of those 18-24 years olds, want to spend less time on their digital devices. Since consumers almost always have the option to read books in physical formats, they are indicating a preference to return to print.”

For traditional published authors, this may not pose a problem but indie authors must search for other ways to get their books in readers’ hands by offering Print-On-Demand and seeking out bookstores that will stock their books.

The eBook decline may not be all bad news. Hardback sales have increased by 2.6% as well as the 8.4% growth of paperbacks. Audiobooks have grown by 31.1%. Since Amazon has acquired Audible, I suspect that audiobooks will have a growth as well. Amazon will be pushing their product. Audiobooks does require more cost and resources to produce but they do exist for indie authors. And

what is best about audiobooks for us authors is that with audiobooks, we do not have to compete with games, online videos or social media.

Readers will always purchase books. It is the format that fluctuates. As an author, traditional or indie, we must find ways to get our product into the hands of our readers.♥

*Mageela Troche is a past RWA/NYC Vice President and the new Chapter PAN Liaison. She started by writing “True Love” confessions and now writes historical romances. Visit her at [www.mageelatroche.com](http://www.mageelatroche.com).*





## FROM THE PRO LIAISON: ALEXIS DARIA

## USING A BULLET JOURNAL FOR REVISING

In mid-December, I decided to enter the Golden Hearts. The deadline was January 11th. On December 14th, I had a 100,000-word first draft and the holidays were approaching. If I was going to do this, I needed a plan.



One friend had recently shown me her bullet journal, and I knew of another author, C.L. Polk (author of *WITCHMARK*, coming 2018 from Tor.com), who uses journaling to develop new story ideas. My background is in art, so there's always something appealing to me about working on paper. I wanted to try using a bullet journal to help me revise and edit my novel in four weeks. Inspired, I grabbed one of my many spare notebooks, a 24-pack of Paper Mate Flair felt-tip pens, and a ruler, and got to work.



I use the revision method Rachel Aaron lays out in her book, *2K TO 10K: WRITING FASTER, WRITING BETTER, AND WRITING MORE OF WHAT YOU LOVE*. She advises having a plan for writing and a plan for revising. In a nutshell, the revision plan includes:

- Scene map: a scene-by-scene guide to your novel as it is written (which can of course differ from the outline you originally started with)
- Timeline: to keep track of the timing in your novel
- To-do list: a list of every revision item, large or small

I also added a few other sections to the journal:

- Calendar: a one-month spread and four weekly spreads
- Publishing: a space for any notes about seeking agent representation
- Notes: extra pages at the end (I ended up using this area for beta reader feedback, brainstorming, and journaling about the process)

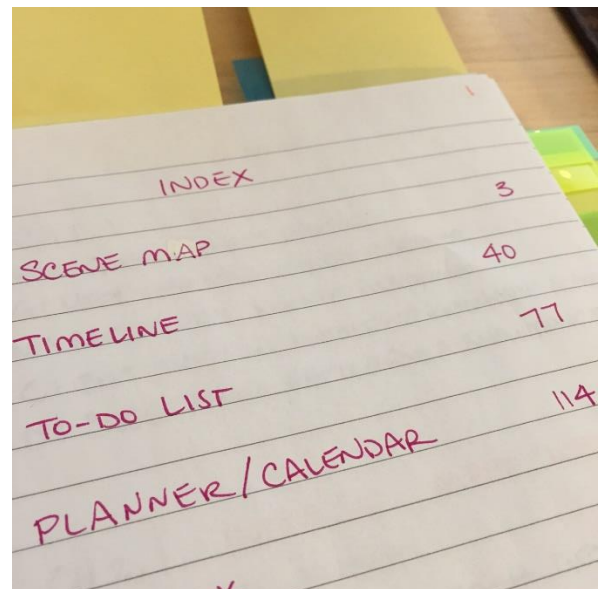


The first step was to make a table of contents and number all the pages in the notebook. I used a spiral-bound journal (\$1.50 at Michael's) with only 80 sheets of paper. Even with so few pages, this step was tedious and I wondered if I was wasting my time or procrastinating. But I kept going, divvying up the book into sections, labeling the index at the front, and creating my calendar pages.

For the calendar, I broke the revision process down into steps and determined what I needed to complete every week to meet my goal. I wrote these targets in the "notes" space included in the weekly spreads.

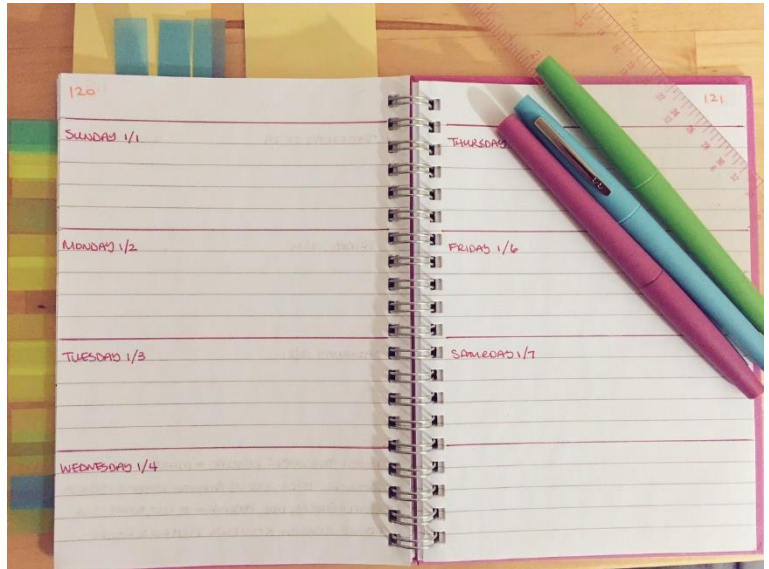
My next step was to make the scene map. For each scene, I noted:

- Chapter and scene number
- POV character
- Plot point/story beat
- Scene type (Anticipation/Event/Reaction)
- Goal (Character wants...)
- Motivation (Because...)
- Conflict (But...)
- Disaster (And...)



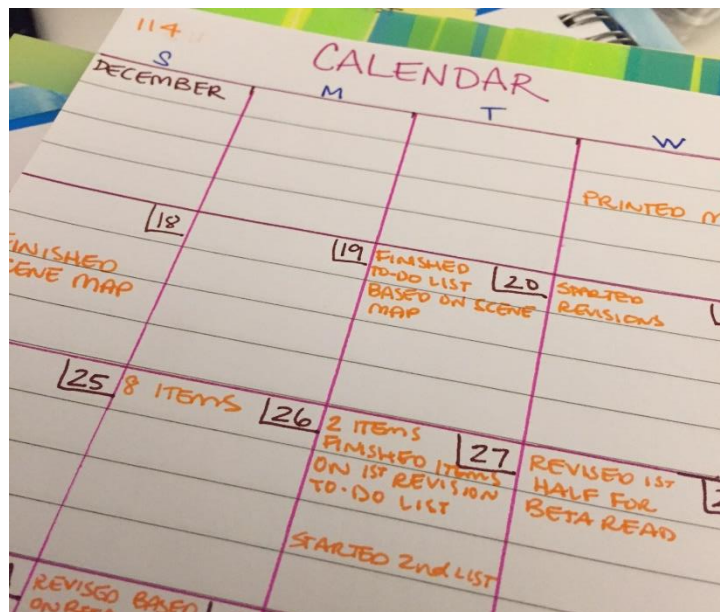
I also jotted quick revision notes as I went through the manuscript, then compiled them into a to-do list. Normally, I'd suggest doing a closer read of the draft and creating a more comprehensive list of all your revision items, but I was pressed for time. I categorized the items using color-coded sticky tabs, organized the categories by order of difficulty. Rachel Aaron recommends tackling the more difficult tasks first, so I went through the list, jumping around the manuscript and crossing off items as I went.

Since I didn't make a complete list of revision items at the beginning, I did the to-do list step four times. I also skipped the timeline, both because of the deadline and because my outline contained a clear week-by-week breakdown of the story. Then I did one more editing pass, beginning to end. And when I was too tired or distracted to revise, I researched agents and worked on my query letter and synopsis, steps that were also included in my calendar.



Using a bullet journal for revising was more fun and more helpful than I anticipated. Having a dedicated place to brainstorm and jot revision items by hand kept my notes organized, and being able to view and label a calendar specifically dedicated to this project helped me plan accordingly. I was delirious by the end of the four weeks due to the tight time frame, but by organizing my process and knowing what I had to do each day to stay on track, I was able to finish the book on time and meet my goal.♥

*Alexis Daria is a contemporary and paranormal romance writer. On Sunday evenings, she co-hosts #RWchat, a weekly Twitter chat for romance writers. Alexis also serves as PRO Liaison for the New York City chapter of RWA, and Municipal Liaison for the NYC region of National Novel Writing Month. You can find her on Twitter at @alexisdaria, and follow her blog [creativestaycation.com](http://creativestaycation.com).*





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**THE PUBLISHING GAME© – WRITER BEWARE!**  
**BY LISE HORTON**

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Too many of our members have been personally impacted by publisher difficulties. Ellora's Cave, Torquere Press, Samhain (which has experienced a rebirth), and Secret Cravings (which closure seems to have avoided major bumps, though I have no personal knowledge). But they are merely the most recent examples, and were preceded over the last several years by Triskelion, Crescent Moon Press, Dorchester Publishing, Aspen Press and the subsequent operation started by stranded Aspen personnel, Musa.

The abrupt closing of All Romance E-books has once again fomented that bitter backlash that has arisen in the past when a publisher has sunk into chaos and shut its doors. ARE's demise may have been without warning, but with publishers, both for the submitting author, as well as the author established with a particular house, there are ways to be vigilant and hopefully avoid a bad situation before it starts, or gets worse.



Of course, there will be times when a shutdown will catch everyone unawares, and if you are a contracted or published author with a house, you can perhaps be attuned to certain issues that can signal a problem and you can extricate yourself early in the process to avoid being tied up in legal issues or bankruptcy. I'll talk about that side of this unpleasant coin in the March Publishing Game© column.

So you want to submit. How do you vet a publisher?

First, go to the source. Check every nook and cranny of the publisher's website. Is it professional looking? One house that engendered criticism had numerous typos, grammatical errors and punctuation problems, and representative samples of authors' work showed bad writing and bad editing.

How much information is given about the principals? Their industry experience or credentials? (Too many turn out to be a couple of friends who self-published and then decided to become "publishers" with no real expertise, and sometimes merely a desire to make an easier buck.)

What details are included for submitting authors? It's vital you know what is TYPICAL in order to spot an aberration, such as the claim I saw on one site that no marketing would be expected of an author because they needed to immerse themselves in their art, and not deal with such trivial realities (the actual language was even more florid).

Do they include the most important details, such as formats they publish in and basic royalty rates? Response times on submissions?





Delve deeper. Pick a representative sample of the house's titles. Check out reviews on Amazon. Are there substantive complaints about bad editing, problematic formatting, lousy cover art and writing skill in the books? (Every book gets a couple of bad reviews, but be wary if a lot of the house titles get a lot of bad reviews.) If you can afford to, even buy a couple of titles and vet *them*.

Reach out to a few authors for references for the house.

And check out author sites like Writer Beware, Absolute Water Cooler, Preditors & Editors and Dear Author for *consistent* complaints and discussions about a house (a caveat being you'll

always find a couple of grumpy folk in the best of places). And keep abreast of your RWA email blasts and news because they keep on top of bad situations too, like ARe, and previously Ellora's Cave.

Give yourself a research window. Follow the publisher on social media. Do they promote authors? Do they have a blog, newsletter, author contributions? How do they comport themselves? Recall Tina Engler/Jaid Black's on-line meltdowns and threats, at the very worst of the EC scandal, yet they were still soliciting submissions and people were still submitting! That behavior should be a major red flag.

If everything passes the sniff test and you submit and are offered a contract, undertake phase 2 of your vetting (*you're not committed until you sign that contract*). NOTE: Do not be so eager to be published, no matter what, that you ignore concerns about any aspect of this process! And talk to your RWA friends! They've seen it all!

Your best option would be to consult a publishing lawyer (or literary agent) if you're given a contract. NOT your Uncle Dick, the personal injury guy. Publishing is industry specific and not knowing industry standards means they might not spot an egregious clause, or realize a vital provision is missing.

The entire contract is important, but a few areas are key when a house might be in trouble.

Reversion of rights. Know how you can request your rights back; under what circumstances (e.g., breach of contract terms such as scheduled payment of royalties or royalty statements).

If the publisher can assign the rights to a third party (typical), what are the terms and restrictions? Do you lose additional rights, do the royalties or reversion terms change?

Does the contract address bankruptcy (it is a quagmire, no matter what, but if they don't even MENTION the potential situation, that should make you very wary)?

As for basic provisions, if they're muddy, or missing, or vastly different than standard, ask for clarification. This is a business transaction and you need to embrace your power as a party to a legal

contract. Don't be cowed. And keep accurate records of email correspondence on these topics, because any promises made (such as "good faith negotiation") can be your legal ace in the hole.

Bottom line. You have to eventually make a choice. If the stars align, it may be a publishing match made in heaven. But if something goes wrong, from bad luck at a good house, to nefarious doings at a bad one, you should gird your loins, handle what needs doing and then move on. Hard to do. Painful, frustrating, maddening.

Then write your next book, find a new publisher, and get back on your author horse.♥

*Lise Horton* in published in erotica and erotic romance, including her Golden Flogger-nominated 2015 BDSM erotic romance, *HOLD TIGHT*, and she presented her workshop on sensory description, *A Feast for the Senses*, at the 2016 BDSM Writers Conference. She returns in 2017 as Chapter Secretary and at her day job is in her 26<sup>th</sup> year as legal assistant at an entertainment law firm dealing with publishing. Lise writes smoldering, intense romance replete with laughter, and kink. Visit her at [www.LiseHorton.com](http://www.LiseHorton.com)

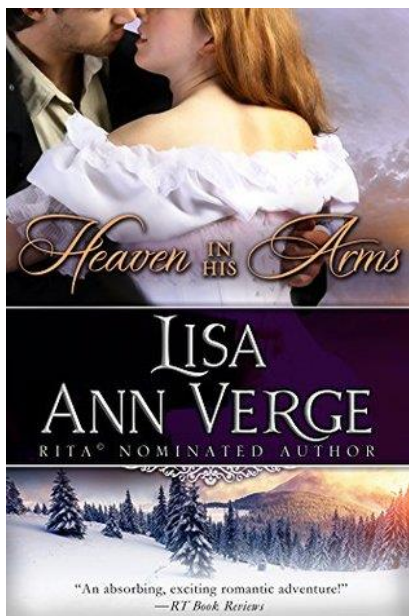
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## MEMBER NEWS

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### CONGRATULATIONS, LISA VERGE!

*HEAVEN IN HIS ARMS* ranked #1 in Amazon's Best Sellers in Kindle Store (paid books).

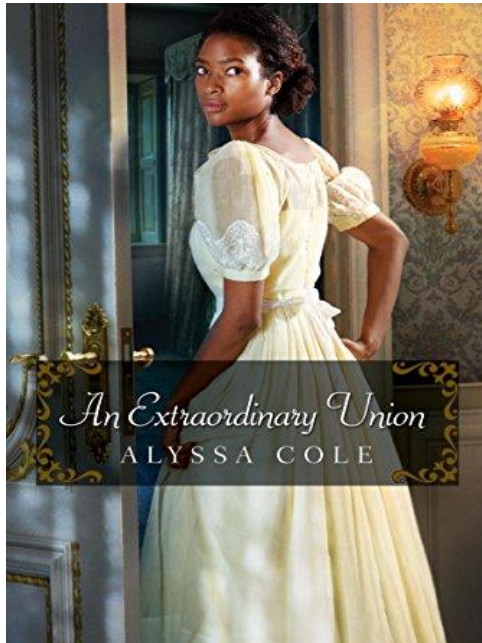


### CONGRATULATIONS, MINGMEI YIP!

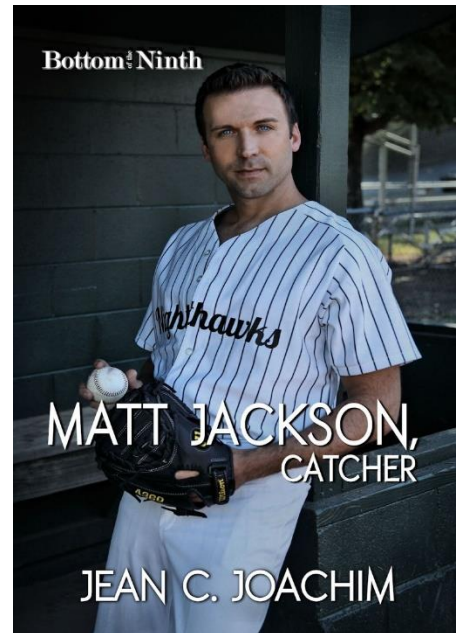
*SinoTV* interviewed Mingmei about her life and her art.



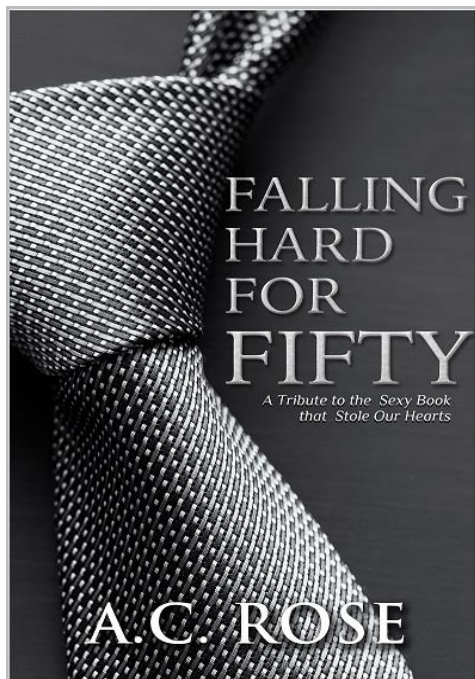
## MEMBERS ON THE SHELF



**AN EXTRAORDINARY UNION**  
by Alyssa Cole



**MATT JACKSON, CATCHER**  
Bottom of the Ninth Series  
by Jean C. Joachim



**FALLING HARD FOR FIFTY**  
by A.C. Rose

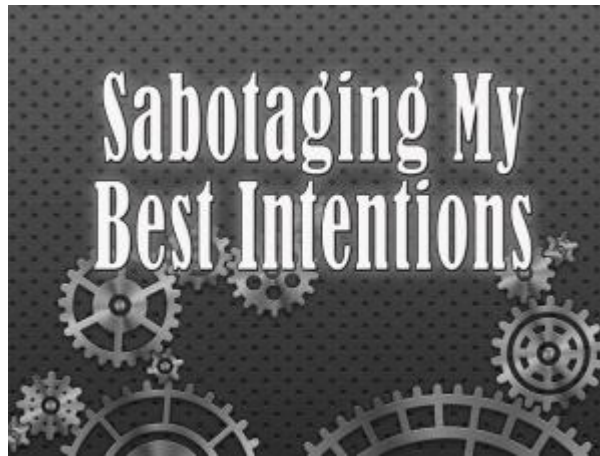


**THE F STUDENT**  
by Xyla Turner



**MONTHLY THEME: SELF-SABOTAGE**

*Why do we do it? How do we stop? Here's what some of our members had to say on the matter.*



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**WELCOME TO MY WRITING DEN!©  
THE ENEMY WITHIN  
BY MARIA COX**

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Do you ask yourself, what keeps me from meeting my goals? Why do others achieve theirs successfully? Most of us have goals, big and small, but the most realistic goals in the world won't materialize if you engage in self-defeating behaviors.

So, what is self-sabotage?

"Self-sabotage is when we say we want something and then go about making sure it doesn't happen."  
~ Alyce P. Cornyn-Selby

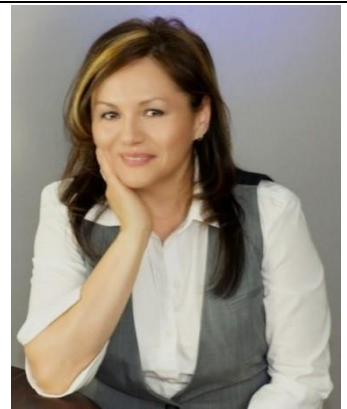
In today's business environment we're "on" all the time. All eyes are on us to achieve or fail. It's important that we don't give in to negative feelings and risk spiraling out of control.

If you're self-sabotaging you're not alone. Studies suggest that 85 percent of people engage in some form of self-sabotage.

Below are two of the most common behaviors:

"If only..."

We all have some regrets, whether they're about something we did (if only I hadn't dropped out of college), or something we didn't do (if only I'd ask for that raise). To dwell on these "if only" fantasies will only keep you idling in neutral.





The 'worry-wart'

You fret over things that really shouldn't matter. You fear that if you fail others will think less of you. You doubt your abilities even though "you're very capable". Listen, we all have insecurities; we just have to learn to manage them effectively.

Here are a few things that experts suggest we practice in order to minimize the self-deprecating inner talk:

Smile more  
Smile. Right now ☺

Emit good energy  
The energy you send out into the world comes back.

Do for others  
If you're wallowing in your own misery, why not pull aside and regroup? Focusing on others is a great way to gain perspective.

See the bright side  
Remember that the universe is in balance. Things aren't always as bad as they seem.

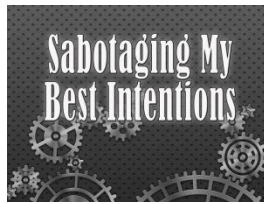
Get grounded and stay grounded  
Positive thinking without positive actions gets you nowhere. Be prepared to do the work.

Laugh  
Especially at yourself!

Anytime you feel like your plan has gone off course, fight against shutting down. If you get a bad review, don't throw in the towel. Before you give up on your strategy, before you decide to give up on your dream, sit down and plan a new approach.♥

*Maria Cox is a PRO member of Romance Writers of America; she has also served as President of the Phoenix Writers Club. Maria has been writing stories since she was a young girl. She picked up her first romance novel when she was just eleven years old and has loved the genre ever since. Maria writes sensual romance, stories that showcase strong, sassy, and sexy characters. When not writing fiction, Maria works as a technical writer. She lives in Queens, New York. Please visit her site [www.mariacox.net](http://www.mariacox.net) and/or follow her on Twitter.*





## PLAYING SMALL BY ALEXIS DARIA

Self-sabotage happens when we set a goal, then proceed to make choices that go directly against the accomplishment of that goal. With writing, self-sabotage can look like procrastinating when we're supposed to be writing. Or it can look like refusing constructive feedback, or failing to do necessary research before a big decision. There are many ways to self-sabotage, but let's talk about one of the less obvious ways we self-sabotage: playing small.

In the bestselling book *A RETURN TO LOVE*, author and speaker Marianne Williamson says:

*"Our deepest fear is not that we are inadequate. Our deepest fear is that we are powerful beyond measure. It is our light, not our darkness that most frightens us. ... You're playing small does not serve the world. There is nothing enlightened about shrinking so that other people won't feel insecure around you. We are all meant to shine..."*



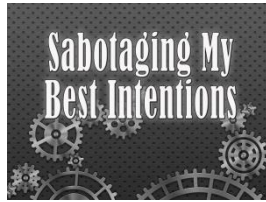
The flip side of fear of failure is fear of success. Fear of success brings up questions like: *What happens if we go big? How will our lives be different? Will the people around us still love us?* If we try and fail, we're right back where we started. But if we succeed? Things change. And we don't always like change, even if it's what we say we want.

Out of this fear, we play small and we hold back. We don't write that book we think is too "out there." We don't submit to our dream agents or editors, we don't ask for reviews, or we don't market ourselves effectively. In these ways--which don't seem too serious on the surface--we sabotage our writing and publishing goals. By playing small, what we're really saying is we're scared of change and we want to stay right here where it's comfortable.

If we want to play big, embrace change, and expand our comfort zones, we must allow ourselves to shine. By shining, by standing in our power, we inspire others to do the same. If we take a closer look at the areas where we're holding back and make a conscious effort to play bigger, we can turn around that fear of success and work *toward* meeting our goals instead of against them.♥



*Alexis Daria is a contemporary and paranormal romance writer. On Sunday evenings, she co-hosts #RWchat, a weekly Twitter chat for romance writers. Alexis also serves as PRO Liaison for the New York City chapter of RWA, and Municipal Liaison for the NYC region of National Novel Writing Month. You can find her on Twitter at @alexisdaria, and follow her blog [creativestaycation.com](http://creativestaycation.com).*



## KNOWING WHEN TO SAY NO BY KATE MCMURRAY

There's an episode of the sitcom *How I Met Your Mother* in which the running theme is being "on the hook." The character Lily wants to tell her ex-boyfriend Scooter that she never wants to be with him again, but she has trouble because she caves and takes it back whenever he makes a puppy dog face at her. Eventually, Lily's husband Marshall makes her practice the speech on a teacup pig, so she repeats, "I don't want to be with you." Then she caves and adds, "for now."

I think women in particular have a tendency to never want to hurt or disappoint anyone. We're also trained to keep our heads down and not ruffle feathers. It often behooves us to say no to things, but we tend to say yes. This tendency is not unlike Lily saying, "Teacup pig, I don't want to be with you... for now."

This applies to our careers in particular. Authors fall into this trap, wanting to be successful but not wanting to do anything to jeopardize that success. This is a way we self-sabotage—saying yes when we should say no.

Artists should ultimately have power over their art, but a lot of writers are so anxious to get their art in front of people that they give up the power they have. But authors, as content creators, should be advocates for themselves and their work. They should be able to say no.



A lot of authors, for example, take the first offer, which can cause them to end up with bad publishers or tied up in bad contracts. We've seen the outcomes of those situations too often the last few years, as small, digital presses fold. Others don't advocate for themselves with their publishers, worried about ruffling feathers or voiding their contracts. But the publisher has a financial interest in making the book as good as it can be, and editors want to work *with* authors, not against them. Authors should say no to bad deals, but often don't feel they can because they don't want to risk not getting published.

This goes for agents, too. Because in order to get an agent to work with us, we have to submit our work and be chosen, we tend to think we work for agents, but the inverse is actually true. Your agent is your advocate. They work for a commission on your work. Your agent works for you, in a business relationship.

I left my agent last spring. I don't want to get too deep into the particulars. It wasn't even that terrible of a situation. I've heard horror stories, and this was not that.

The issue I had was an agent who hadn't quite adapted to changes in the market, and who was not advocating for me in the best way, and whose time was split in so many directions I often felt like she wasn't listening or paying attention. I'd had bad gut feelings about my agent for over a year that I tamped down because I felt it was better to have an agent than not to have one.



I should have listened to my gut.

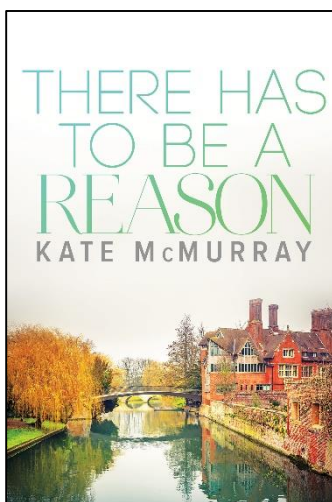
It wasn't one thing that led to my decision, but a series of small things. And I still hesitated to end the relationship, because I genuinely liked my agent as a person. But, as several people pointed out to me, she worked for me, and it was a professional relationship, so my personal feelings for her shouldn't have trumped that.

Delaying ending the relationship may have harmed my career. Not irreparably, but while I deliberated about what to do, I could have been querying new agents. The last book she tried to sell for me had its publication delayed by two years.

The lesson for me is that editors, agents, publishers, and authors—despite working on deeply personal art—are businesspeople and professionals, and they have professional relationships with each other. Meaning that, if something isn't working in the best interests of the author's career, that author has the right to put a stop to it. Which means the authors have the right to advocate for themselves and to say no. Say no to bad contracts, bad publishers, situations you aren't comfortable with.

Because it never hurts to ask. Maybe you don't like your cover. You're stuck with it if you say nothing. If you ask the publisher to make changes, they might say no, but they might also make the changes you want. You'll never know if you don't ask. The same applies to higher-stakes issues like clauses in your contract you take issue with or deadlines you can't meet—it's important to advocate for yourself and find compromises that will work so you don't get trapped in untenable situations. I was able to end my relationship with my agent via letter, and she immediately reverted the rights to books of mine she had that she hadn't sold, and it was pretty quick and painless. But there are bigger tangles you can find yourself in, and it's important to assert yourself to avoid larger problems.

So know when to say no, and remember that as the author, the book is yours, so you have the power to have it be published in the way that works best for the book. ♥



*Kate McMurray is an award-winning author of gay romance and an unabashed romance fan. When she's not writing, she works as a nonfiction editor, dabbles in various crafts, and is maybe a tiny bit obsessed with baseball. She has served as President of Rainbow Romance Writers, the LGBT romance chapter of Romance Writers of America; and as Vice President of RWA/NYC. She lives in Brooklyn, NY. Visit her at [www.katemcmurray.com](http://www.katemcmurray.com).*



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**A [DREAM] ROOM OF MY OWN**  
**BY LISE HORTON**

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*This is a new monthly feature. Members are invited to share their writing room with us.*



With my mother's death this past July, I became the sole occupant of our house. While I can now wander throughout, and write wherever I choose, the idea of a room designed to be the perfect creative haven dedicated to my authorial pursuits did not actually take root until the idea for these columns was mentioned. Suddenly, I began to lust for just such a place.

Previously, in inclement weather, I wrote in my bedroom, a room with a nature view. But when weather permitted, I sat outside for writing my first drafts, which I do long-hand, or for editing (which I do in hard-copy). It was bliss to be able to dwell in the bosom of Mother Nature, and enjoy the bounteous inspiration she provided, from flora to fauna, such as one picture shows.

But since we're in the thick of winter, however, I can only entertain my vast dreams for doing over a room into a writer's retreat.

What will it be like? I'm an eccentric, content amid clutter, so there'll be collections of research and towering piles of tomes on craft, history, and literary musing, in addition to floor to ceiling bookcases. Books "speak" to me, and I fancy that when blocked, I'll hear a literary whisper offering secret advice from among them. There'll also be newspapers and craft periodicals, with their slivers of headlines peeking out; a constant reminder there's always more to explore, to study, and innumerable stories waiting to be told. Drafts sprinkled (drenched?) with red markings will be piled precariously. Books will sway. Music will be the accompaniment, from classical to new age, jazz to disco, big band to Broadway.

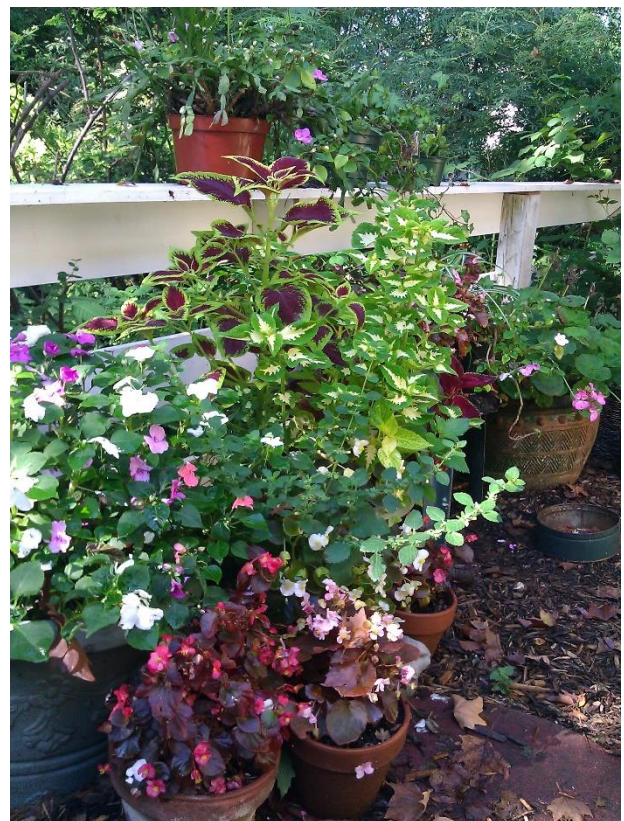
I'll be embraced by my eclectic belongings. Mementos of the past, quirky knickknacks, photographs, inspirational quotes, and softness. The rustle of green plants surrounding me, feeding me oxygen to keep me sharp. The comforting softness of pillows crowding a large chintz chair. The brightness of the outside pouring in through a window dressed in the sheerest of gauzy curtains, or the windswept winter sky looming beyond, making me think of gods and monsters and mythical adventures.

My gargoyle statues will have places of honor, along with my collection of crystals and pagan items. I'll have smudge sticks, and incense to help my creative energies flow freely. My collection of pens and pencils (a veritable tsunami of writing implements from dip quill pens to Bic ballpoints to well-used #2 pencils) will fill assorted containers. There'll be shelves of spiral and three-ring notebooks, for my long-hand first drafts, will fill more shelves. Soft rugs overlaying one another will be underfoot as I putter around. Antique doodads handed down from great and great, great aunts, including one's paintings in ornate gilt frames will fill nooks and walls.

My desk will be a replica of my very first grown-up workspace, made for me when I was a child pecking out stories on my father's hefty hand-me-down Smith-Corona. He purchased a door and lay it on top of four medium height bookcases and henceforth it was my desk. My *new* desk will be balanced on file cabinets for records and idea files. And the room I have selected is one from my childhood. My first bedroom, where I spent my formative years, hiding away suffering the pangs of teenaged angst, listening to the sirens of the 70's, singing songs of lost love and romantic dreams. Those vibrations still echo in the walls, and I often find myself smiling in remembrance.

So by Spring, I plan to be ensconced in my writing hideaway. It will no doubt quickly resemble the picture here, in all its lived-in coziness. I can already see myself, surrounded by the things that intrigue, amuse and inspire me, as I sit at my desk, or in the big chair with its squishy pillows, with a trio of furry muses perched nearby. They will watch the birds feeding in the yew tree outside as I write, the whispers of storytellers past keeping me company.♥

*Lise Horton* in published in erotica and erotic romance, including her Golden Flogger-nominated 2015 BDSM erotic romance, *Hold Tight*, and she presented her workshop on sensory description, *A Feast for the Senses*, at the 2016 BDSM Writers Conference. Having previously served on the RWA/NYC Board, she returns in 2017 as Chapter Secretary and has just received her Provisional PAN membership accreditation from National RWA. Lise writes smoldering, intense romance replete with laughter, and kink. Visit her at [www.LiseHorton.com](http://www.LiseHorton.com)





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**DATING: UGH!**  
**BY HARPER MILLER**

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Hi there. I'm Harper.

If you've read my cheeky bio, then you know I turned to writing because my dating life had been a pile of steaming poo. That's true. My dating life *is* a steaming pile of poo, but in my books, I create different versions of happily ever after. That's the draw.

Oh, what bliss.



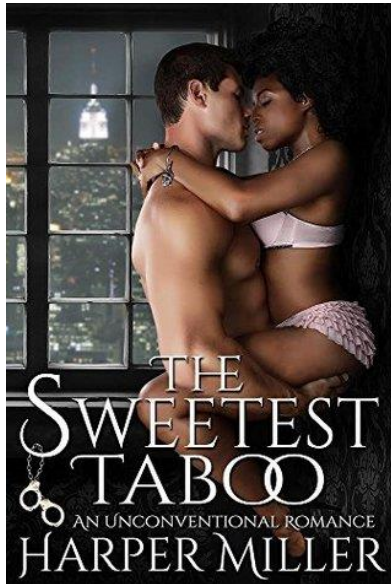
I get to create my perfect guy. It's like my own kinky Build-A-Bear Workshop: a hefty dose of muscle, a hearty helping of intellect, a smidge of cockiness, a scoop of humor, a pinch of self-deprecation, and two tablespoons of sex god. That right there ... delicious. I don't always stick to my recipe, though.

A few weeks ago I read an article in *The Establishment* about whether or not dating is part luck. My response was a resounding, "HELL YES." My horrible dating history isn't entirely my fault. I try to give menfolk the benefit of doubt, but I cannot control that their real lives often vary greatly from what they pretend to be. Regarding luck, I'm more likely to have a pigeon crap on my head while walking through Central Park than I am to go on a date with a guy who has his life together. All these Cosmo-type articles basically go through a 'why you're single' checklist of everything that's wrong with you that leaves you updateable. Do you breathe unevenly through your left nostril? It's no wonder you didn't get a second date!

I honestly want to headbutt the people who write those things. In most cases, there's nothing wrong with the woman. Hell, I know there's nothing wrong with me. I'm my own cheerleader. I'd date me, and I'd certainly fuck me. But relationships are really about compatibility and shared goals. Just how likely are you to find Mr. Right in a city of 8.5 million? Mr. *I'm-gonna-swipe-right*, sure, but the guy in it for the long haul? Nope. I haven't found him on Tinder. Then again, I read an article on xoJane about a couple who met on Tinder and got married a few months after their first date. Meanwhile, I'm like WHAT IN THE ACTUAL F--K? WHO ARE THESE PEOPLE? HOW DOES THIS HAPPEN? THEIR PHEROMONE TRANSMITTERS MUST BE INSANE!

I need to stop reading articles on the Internet. I'm old fashioned, I guess. I'd much prefer to meet my Mr. Right in line at a coffee shop or perusing the stacks of albums at Tower Records. But Tower Records doesn't exist in the city anymore, so that scenario is out.

Just about every girl I know has a laundry list of what would be considered their perfect guy. Those days are long gone for me. Now, my list is small. I still hold true to some things I had on my wish list back in the day, but in my wise old age of *coughthirtysomethingish*, I deal in realism. One thing I'm certain of is that I'd never ask for something I couldn't provide for my partner. I know what I bring to the table, and I'm not afraid to sit alone until I have suitable company.



Not only am I making moves in my author life, I'm plotting and planning for my personal life, as well. I need to get out of NYC. The dating pool isn't providing what I'm looking for at this stage of my life. Maybe I need more simplicity. Maybe I need a man who isn't city born and bred. Maybe I need a man who lives in a log cabin in the country somewhere with his dog and builds things with his hands. Lord, that's a story in the making...

I can tell you one thing about my horrible dating experiences in NYC: it makes for excellent plotlines. If you're friends with me on Facebook, you already know the saga about the police officer. That train wreck made it into an upcoming novella.

Winter is here, and I'm feeling frisky. A frisky Harper means I'll be brushing off my old dating profile. There will be many more horror stories to come, I'm sure. Stay tuned. ♥

*Harper Miller is a thirty-something native New Yorker. She's traveled the world and lived in a variety of places but always finds her way back to the Big Apple. A lackluster love life leaves time to explore new interests, for Harper it is writing. THE SWEETEST TABOO: AN UNCONVENTIONAL ROMANCE is her debut novel. In her mind, the perfect Alpha male possesses intellect, humor, and a kinky streak that rivals the size of California. When she isn't writing, Harper utilizes her graduate degree in the field of medical research. She enjoys fitness-related activities, drinking copious amounts of wine and going on bad dates.*

\*In case you're curious, the links for the articles I mentioned can be found here:

<https://theestablishment.co/how-much-are-we-responsible-for-our-own-bad-dating-history-bd7bfc3fbd58?gi=c68a6022b0e7>

<http://www.xojane.com/it-happened-to-me/i-married-my-tinder-match-after-five-months>

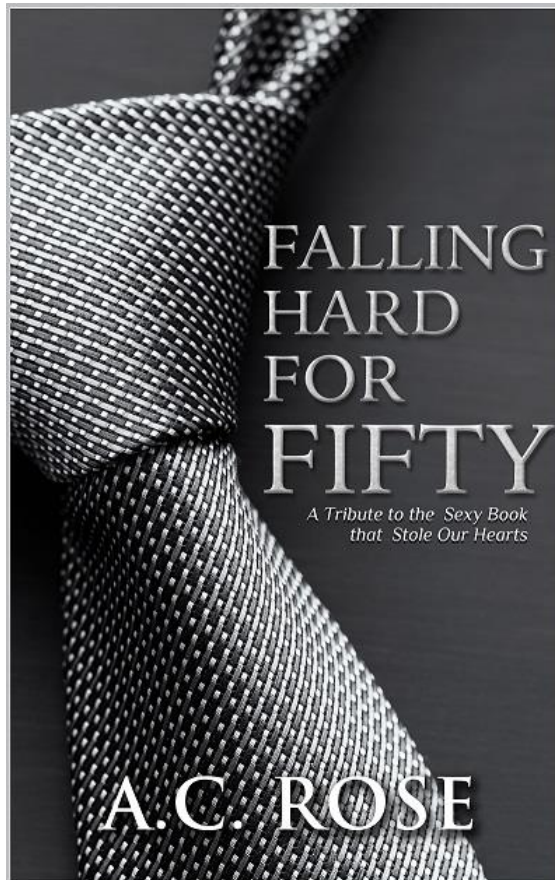




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**HOT ROMANCE: 10 REASONS READERS FALL HARD FOR CHRISTIAN GREY****BY A.C. ROSE**

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With the scheduled release of the *Fifty Shades Darker* on February 10, fans are getting excited about seeing their favorite characters and scenes come to life on the big screen.

Many of us remember getting pulled into 1,500 plus pages of non-stop reading and being stunned by the “book hangover” that ensued.

And may writers still wonder: *what made so many go ga-ga for Mr. Grey?*

Sex therapist Sari Cooper, LCSW, offered some great insights into this in “Fifty Shades of Grey: What You Can Learn about Sex Esteem from the Bestseller,” a lecture she gave in Manhattan a while back. Cooper, a columnist for *Psychology Today* and an ASECT certified sex therapist, outlined what she called “the erotic triggers” that are written into the book and said these triggers combined are what kept the heroine, Anastasia Steele (Ana) so stimulated and intrigued, and made the story so irresistible to readers.

“These are the multisensory messages that our bodies receive and that get us turned-on,” she explained. Writers of steamy fiction might find some new hints for making things hotter. With her permission, here are the top 10 erotic triggers:

**1. Powerful hero.** “He is dark, mysterious, and possibly dangerous — a total Alpha male. He’s wild, dangerous and unpredictable. Being with him is like a roller coaster ride.”

**2. Awakened Heroine.** “She is innocent. She is the yin to the yang of Christian Grey. She is a young woman awakened by this man who knows a lot more. “

**3. Christian Grey uses all the senses** — taste, touch, sight, scent, sound. “For example, Ana is always talking about how he smells and he about her scent. He also consciously uses these different triggers to arouse her.”

**4. Music is huge part of it.** There are many musical moments in the book that inspire erotic or emotionally charged moments.

**5. He appeals to her psychologically.** “He sends signals to throw her off-balance, such as his first gift of the collector’s edition of *Tess of the d’Urbervilles*. He attached a quote from the book that says there may be danger waiting. It creates more intrigue for her and she is intrigued by him.”



**6. There is stimulation of all the erogenous zones and multisensory anticipation.** “Christian does it with such expertise, and so much foreplay, with plenty of time to get Anastasia ready.”

- A. Primary erogenous zones. Genitals and breasts.
- B. Secondary erogenous zones: Earlobe, neck.
- C. Tertiary erogenous zones: Feet, arms, scalp.

**7. BDSM.** “The book has opened up the door a crack to things people may not have considered before. In *Fifty Shades*, Ana has many fears about being hurt, but when she is in the red room of pain she is not just in pain — she is in a state of arousal beyond what she would normally feel. Sexual arousal sometimes involves working with negative emotions such as fear and anxiety. It’s the experience of being on a roller coaster that enhances the state of arousal.”

**8. Love.** “Ana pushes for ‘more’ than being his submissive and he ‘tries’ because he will do anything to keep her. He’s only had subs [submissive female partners] before, women that he has controlled, and he is pushed to his hard limits by Ana who is demanding more. That’s what people love about the book. They want the romance, the emotional tension. Will it work out for them? They want to know!”

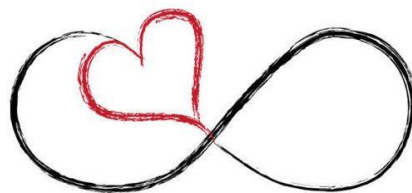
**9. The experience of being desired.** “This is a huge erotic trigger for women. It’s the experience of being that special someone. There is no one else in his eyes. He only has eyes for her. She is the one he longs for. It combines the erotic with the sensual. Being desired is such a turn on for women.”

**10. He’s very loyal.** “At first we are not sure if we can trust him. She talks about his ‘stalker tendencies.’ What wins Ana over, and wins the reader over, is he’s very loyal. And when she needs him, he’s there. I think it works because women can feel the fantasy of having that danger, with the security of having a good relationship.”

The reader is constantly barraged with these triggers or cues, along with a genuine emotional connection between the characters. Even if some of the writing is corny, the sentiments can set women’s hearts afire because they stimulate the fantasy of the perfect man who is not only gorgeous and rich, but is sexually masterful and desires her pleasure. His virility and her fertility are a turn-on and can help the reader feel young, just reading about their interactions. Sigh.♥

*A.C. Rose is a love and romance columnist and author of steamy romance books. Visit her at <http://acroseauthor.net/>. For more insights to why readers fell in love with Christian Grey, read *FALLING HARD FOR FIFTY* by A.C. Rose.*

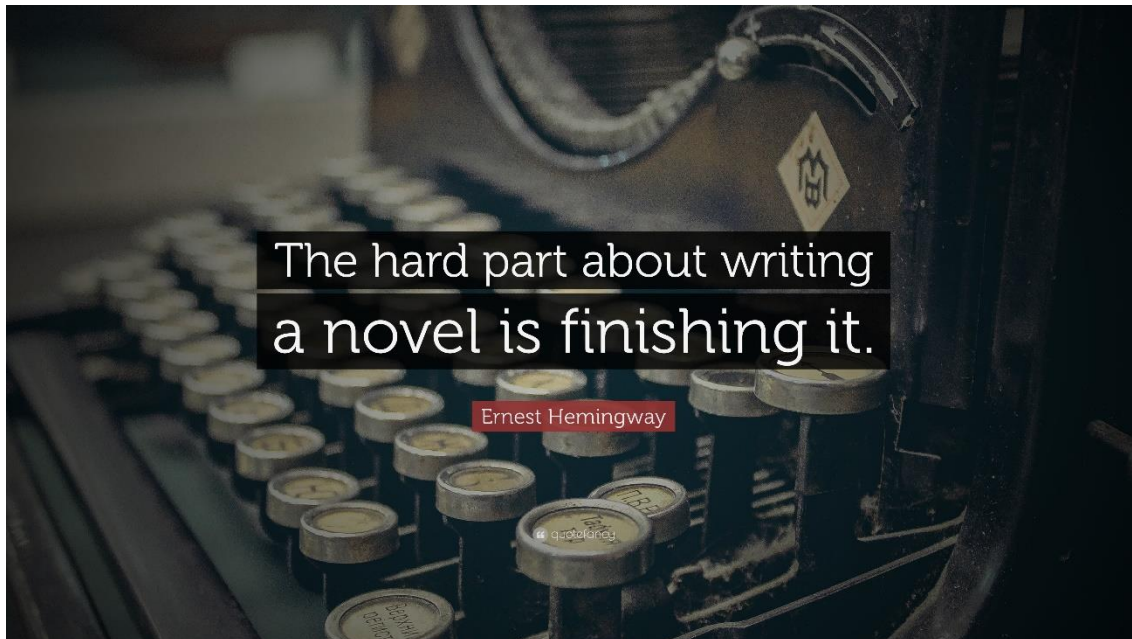
*Read the full article at the Three Tomatoes: <http://thethreetomatoes.com/category/love-sex/hot-romance>*



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**FINISHING UNFINISHED BUSINESS****BY MARIA FERRER**

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My new mantra for the New Year is “Finishing Unfinished Business.”

This means finishing editing my secret baby book and finishing the companion book. This also means finishing numerous other writing projects, and trust me, I have a LIST!

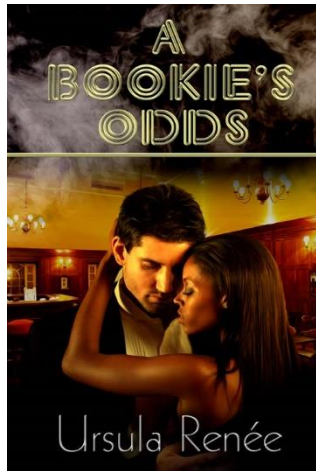
So instead of New Year’s Resolutions I made a 2017 To-Do Writing List.

I listed all my writing projects that are unfinished in one form or another. Plus, I listed events or opportunities that I’ve wanted to pursue but haven’t had time to do. For example, Del Carmen needs to make a comeback and she’s up first!

The first thing I have crossed off my To Do List is entering snippets of my erotica novellas to the Erotica Writers and Readers Association blog ([erotica-readers.blogspot.com](http://erotica-readers.blogspot.com)). Every 19<sup>th</sup> of the month you can add a snippet to the “comment” area and do a mini promo. Del Carmen’s snippet of “Wild Cards: Collared and Cuffed” from the Golden Flogger award-winning anthology, TIE ME UP, edited by F. Leonora Solomon (Riverdale Avenue Books) has been downloaded. And, I’ve added a reminder on my calendar to add another snippet every 19<sup>th</sup> of the month.

Hurray! One down a few more to go. LOL Happy Writing!♥

*Maria Ferrer believes strongly in the power of To Do Lists. When not busy writing out her lists, she writes contemporary romance, and her alter ego, Del Carmen, writes sensual satisfying erotica. Check out more sexy snippets from Del Carmen at [www.mydelcarmen.com](http://www.mydelcarmen.com).*



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**SHORTCUT TO SUCCESS****BY URSULA RENÉE**

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After years of writing and editing, I finally believed my first novel was ready for publication. Therefore, with the confidence of someone who knew she had a bestseller on her hands, I submitted the manuscript to an agent. Months later, instead of a contract, the agent sent a rejection letter. She did take her time to explain that she liked about the manuscript before going into detail about what did not move her.

Since the agent took the time to point out the areas I needed to work on, I searched for books that could help me improve my writing skills. I then applied what I learned from the books to the manuscript. I noticed a remarkable improvement in the manuscript after I finished the edits. However, it still took another three years and many more edits before a publisher was interested in my novel. During that time, I attended conferences and participated in online workshops. I also read books in my genre and studied how my favorite authors applied the skills I was learning.

Now, if you're read this far, I'm sure you're wondering when I'm going to reveal the shortcut to success. Well, I hate to break it to you, but I'm not.

**I cannot tell you the shortcut to success, because there is no shortcut.** Becoming a successful author requires hard work, patience and determination.

Yes, we have heard stories of those who submitted their first manuscript to a publisher and ended up on *The New York Times*, *U.S.A. Today* and *Publisher's Weekly* bestseller lists. These authors got raving reviews on Amazon and Goodreads. Finally, to top it off, one of Hollywood's biggest producers offered the authors movie deals.

However, these success stories are rare. Many bestselling authors spent year after year reading letters that include the phrase "I'm sorry, but..." before their first novel is published. The list includes J.K. Rowling, Stephen King and Sherrilyn Kenyon.

Successful authors study their craft then applied what they learned to their manuscripts. And, when they asked for advice, they did not ignore the tips because it was too much work. They understood that no one gets anywhere just sitting around waiting for success to knock on their door.

It may sound depressing, but consider that you would not toss an entire egg, shell and all, into a batter than expect a cake to turn out fine. Instead, you would follow a recipe in order to produce an edible dessert. So, do not expect a successful writing career if you are not willing to work at it.

*Ursula Renée writes stories with diverse characters, who struggle to achieve their Happily-For-Now. She prefers the time periods between the roaring twenties and the psychedelic sixties, when women were challenging the norms of society. Her novels include SWEET JAZZ and A BOOKIE'S ODDS. Her novella, BITTER BLUES, will be released in 2017. When she is not writing, Ursula enjoys photography, drawing and stone carving. She is the mother to one son, two cats, a variety of fish and hermit crabs.*



## RWA/NYC Membership & Renewal Application

DATE: \_\_\_\_\_ CHECK ONE: ☐ NEW MEMBER ☐ RENEWAL  
 NAME: \_\_\_\_\_ NATIONAL RWA MEMBER # (required) \_\_\_\_\_  
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**\*NOTE: All RWA/NYC Members must be members of RWA National. For national membership form, visit [www.rwanational.org](http://www.rwanational.org).**

**CHAPTER INVOLVEMENT:** Please volunteer to help out in at least ONE (1) chapter event. (check all that apply):  
☐ contest ☐ awards reception ☐ newsletter ☐ website ☐ retreat ☐ ALL!

**HOW DID YOU HEAR ABOUT US?** ☐ RWA ☐ Facebook/Twitter ☐ Website ☐ Other: \_\_\_\_\_

### MEMBERSHIP DUES

**Chapter dues are due March 4, 2017.** Make checks payable to RWA/NYC.

There will be a \$10 late fee for all renewals after March 1st; and, \$20 fee on all returned checks. Return completed form with your dues to RWA/NYC, POB 3722 Grand Central Station NY NY10163, or you can pay via PayPal at [www.rwanyc.com](http://www.rwanyc.com).

☐ **GENERAL MEMBER** -- \$ 40/year (Dues: Jun-Jul= \$30; Aug-Sep= \$25; Oct-Dec= \$20.)  
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**You can also pay via PAYPAL at [www.rwanyc.com](http://www.rwanyc.com).**

### WRITING CREDITS

CHECK ONE: ☐ PUBLISHED ☐ UNPUBLISHED

CHECK ONE if you are an RWA National Member of: ☐ PAN ☐ PRO

If UNPUBLISHED, tell us at what stage you are: ☐ New or ☐ Pre-Published (have submitted something)

If PUBLISHED, in what format? i.e., book-length romantic fiction, short fiction, electronic, confessions, etc.  
 \_\_\_\_\_

PUBLISHER(S): \_\_\_\_\_ PSEUDONYM(S)? \_\_\_\_\_  
 WEBSITE(S): \_\_\_\_\_ BLOG: \_\_\_\_\_  
 FACE-BOOK \_\_\_\_\_ TWITTER \_\_\_\_\_