

# The Love Knot

Newsletter of the Ottawa Romance Writers' Association



**AUGUST 2011**

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## **PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE**

### **QUOTE OF THE MONTH**

*"It doesn't matter how slowly you go  
as long as you do not stop."*

*-Confucius*

I'm sure a lot of us slow down with our writing in the summer, which is understandable. Some of us (me) come to a complete stop, which is not a good thing. I do have lots of excuses, but still... There are those who don't even slow down, who are motivated and productive all summer long. How do they do it? And then, of course, we have those with deadlines to meet who are going full steam ahead to get their books to market. We all have commitments, priorities, preferences. How we manage our writing time is very personal, but for those who want to get a motivational boost, come to the August meeting and learn about self-publishing from someone who took the leap and has lots to tell us. Perhaps the idea of self-publishing and the opportunities and excitement it offers will be just what is needed to get energized and super productive. For those of you who don't need the boost, come anyway, and learn about self-publishing and how it might work for you.

**REPORT ON OUR JULY MEETING**

We held a very brief meeting with no business except approving the minutes of the May meeting. We heard lots of interesting experiences from the members who attended the Nationals. From what was said, it was a very good conference. We also had the pleasure of welcoming Molly O'Keefe who presented the workshop.

**THINGS TO THINK ABOUT**

Registration for the Sabrina Jeffries all-day workshop on September 11, 2011 will be open on August 3. We will be taking registrations at the meeting on August 7. The fee for members is \$10.00. If you can't attend the meeting, you can register on line. Go to the ORWA website for information and methods of payment. [www.ottawaromancewriters.com](http://www.ottawaromancewriters.com).

**PLEASE BE AWARE THAT REGULATIONS GOVERNING THE RENTING OF THE CITIZEN MEETING ROOM DO NOT ALLOW US TO ACCEPT REGISTRATIONS OR PAYMENT AT THE DOOR ON THE DAY OF THE WORKSHOP.**

Malena Abel  
President

*I had a monumental idea this morning, but I didn't like it!*  
*Samuel Goldwyn 1882-1974*

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## Current Releases

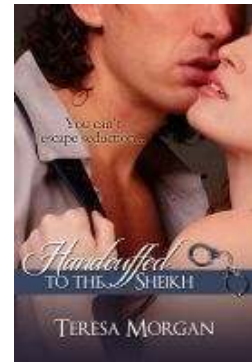
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ANNETTE MCCLEAVE  
**DARK DECEIVER**  
 May 2011



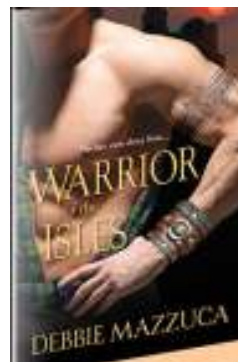
ANNETTE MCCLEAVE  
**TEMPTING THE KNIGHT: A NOVELLA**  
 May 2011

MAGGIE JAGGER  
**VAMPIRE MORGUE**  
 May 2011



TERESA MORGAN  
**HANDCUFFED TO THE SHEIKH**  
 May 2011

DEBBIE MAZZUCA  
**WARRIOR OF THE ISLES**  
 Kensington Books  
 May 2011



TERESA MORGAN  
**CINDERELLA AND THE SHEIKH**  
 May 2011

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## Upcoming Releases

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LINDA POITEVIN  
**SINS OF THE ANGELS**  
 Ace Books  
 October 2011

DEBBIE MAZZUCA  
**KING OF THE ISLES**  
 Kensington Books  
 January 2012

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## Upcoming Workshops

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### *August 7 - If the Self-pub Shoe Fits...* with Teresa Morgan

Digital self-publishing exploded in 2011 with news of the success of authors like J.A. Konrath, Amanda Hocking, and E.V. Mitchell (Julianne Maclean). Self-publishing for the Kindle, Nook, Sony eReader, iPad and other digital devices, is easy... and complicated. It has big advantages and deep pitfalls. In this workshop, you'll learn more about this intriguing new option for authors and get the info you need to help you decide if self-publishing is right

for you.

Topics covered include: The math: Why self-pubbing works

The technology: How self-pubbing happens

\* The business: What you should know before you take that step

\* The advantages: Why you might want to do it

\* The problems: What scary things to avoid

Thinking about dipping your toe into the wide ocean of digital self-publishing? Bring your questions, and let's talk about this new opportunity.

[Teresa Morgan](#) is the self-published author of *Cinderella and the Sheikh* and *Handcuffed to the Sheikh*, steamy contemporary romances available now on Amazon.



### *September 11 10:00 a.m. -4:00 p.m.*

#### *Toning Up a Sagging Middle & The Movie Eye: Choosing the Right Scenes* with Sabrina Jeffries

ORWA presents a special day of workshops with *New York Times* bestselling author [Sabrina Jeffries](#). Starting at 10 am, two workshops will be given:

\* **Toning Up a Sagging Middle** and

\* **The Movie Eye: Choosing the Right Scenes**

Please note: a special fee will be implemented for this workshop only. ORWA members \$10; guests \$30. We suggest you bring a bag lunch. Tea and coffee will be provided.

You may pre-register at the Aug. 7 ORWA meeting, or by Paypal or by cheque. Details will be available by August 7 on [www.ottawaromancewriters.com](http://www.ottawaromancewriters.com).

**PLEASE NOTE: WE ARE UNABLE TO ACCEPT REGISTRATION AT THE DOOR ON THE DAY OF THE WORKSHOPS**

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## Articles

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### Putting Backlist to Work

By Deborah Cooke

*The following article will appear in the August 2011 issue of romANTICS, the newsletter of the Toronto Romance Writers, Susan Haire, editor.*

There is a saying in publishing that "frontlist drives backlist". What this means is that readers will often look for more titles by an author once they've read and enjoyed one book – and quite frequently, the new or frontlist title is the one that has the visibility to attract a new reader. It makes perfect sense that a reader who impulsively bought the fourth book in a linked series and enjoyed it would then want to read books one through three in that series. That reader might also look beyond that particular series to read more of the author's work in general. As the internet makes information about authors more accessible, that reader might also read work the author has published under other names.

Romance as a genre is characterized by the enthusiasm of readers. Romance readers are voracious readers, so backlist has always been an important way to fill the time between an author's new releases.

What has changed in the past decade in publishing is the ownership of backlist.

Let's review one basic element of publishing contracts before continuing. An author has common-law copyright of a work as soon as that work is completed and committed to a fixed media. Write your book, print out the manuscript, and PRESTO the copyright is yours. The copyright is always yours. Copyright includes a group of rights – the fact that you created the work and hold the copyright gives you the right to reproduce the work, for example, to distribute it and sell it. A publishing contract is an author's assignment of some or all the rights inherent in copyright to a publishing company, in exchange for some remuneration. But the assignment is temporary, according to the law. As a result, every publishing contract includes both a grant of rights – stipulating exactly what the author is surrendering to the publisher – and a rights reversion clause – stipulating how and when all rights will revert to the author.

Once upon a time, it was assumed that the rights to books would seldom revert to the author, and if they did, it wouldn't matter. Either the rights would have value, so the house would exploit that value and continue to publish the works in some form, or the rights would have no market value. The author could then request the reversion of the rights and perhaps get them, but it would often be a hollow victory – if they had no market value, there would be nothing the author could do with them. One would hear occasionally of an author who had become very successful and subsequently sold some backlist rights to their publisher for new editions of those works, but that was the exception.

Then came the market changes of the 00's, the recession, the drop in book sales and the sudden demise of the historical romance market. Publishers had an enormous number of titles and no way to keep them all in some form of publication. Rights began to revert to authors in quantity – because they were perceived to have no market value.

Now this was all predicated on the assumption that books had to be physically printed to be marketed to consumers. The assessment of market value for



these historical romances was based upon whether the house could print a new mass market edition of the book, distribute it, and sell enough copies in thirty days to make the exercise worth the trouble. The rights reverted because the house believed they couldn't.

Using the same technology, an author would have

to vanity publish some quantity of physical books, stack them in the garage and handsell them out of the trunk of his or her car in order to make money from this backlist. The time commitment required to physically print and distribute books – never mind the cost – had always been a barrier to vanity publishing. In the case of backlist, the fact that there were used copies of the original book still out in the world just made it less viable.

But then technology changed. Digital books have existed for a while – what's happened in the last couple of years is that their popularity has exploded. And with that explosion of popularity have come a number of options for making backlist titles available digitally. It is now much cheaper and easier to make a book available to consumers – which means that many more works will be believed to still have market value. I think that the big wave of reversion is over. What authors hold now is probably the majority of what they will get in the foreseeable future.

The question becomes – what will you do with your backlist? Can you put it to work for you? How?

There are several options available to authors who hold the rights to backlist works.

### 1. Do nothing.

You can always sit on your rights, keep the reversion letters safely filed away, and decide later. You might be one of those authors who becomes very successful and can sell backlist rights to your print publisher for a nice advance. You might be happier to not have your backlist in print, if it's significantly different from your frontlist.

The advantage of this choice is that you don't have to do much – if anything. If one day, you do sell the works to a traditional publishing house, you could see a cash advance for the work. The disadvantage is that the backlist titles aren't working for you in the short term.

Another variable to consider is the fact that romance is a mirror of popular culture, perhaps more of one than any other genre. Books can easily become dated in our genre. It's entirely possible that your reverted backlist will only become less valuable over time, because it will be less interesting to new readers – and your established audience of collectors may buy fewer books as they become older.

It is also possible that a print publishing house will conclude that a digital edition of a work doesn't substantially affect their ability to sell a print version of that work. We have seen a number of bestselling self-published digital works sold in this past year to traditional publishers for print editions.

### 2 Sell the backlist rights to your current publishing house.

If you are doing well, and if the backlist works have some relation to the work you are currently selling, you might be able to sell your backlist rights to your current publishing house for print publication.

The advantage of this path is that there may be an advance paid to you, particularly if the intent is to create a new print edition of the work. The house may also like the idea of having your work in one place, and may offer increased promotional or creative opportunities as a result of that. The disadvantage is that you may see a lower royalty rate than the other available options.

### 3. Sell backlist titles to a digital press.

Most digital houses are interested in backlist rights – it gives them more products to sell without requiring much (if any) editorial work. The big advantage is that there is little work to be done on the part of the author to make this digital edition available.

It's unlikely that there will be an advance paid to the author, but the royalty rates will be higher than they were for the book's print release, and higher

than a print publishing house would pay now on digital editions. Digital presses also tend to report and pay more quickly than traditional publishing houses, and they can be more nimble in terms of getting books to market more quickly. It is possible – depending upon the house – that there will be a print edition produced again if and when sales reach a certain threshold.

It is important to make a good fit between the work and the house's area of marketing expertise to ensure that the book is packaged and sold as well as possible. This is true with all publishers, but an issue with digital presses. Many of them have great experience with erotica and erotic romance, which is not going to help if your book is sweet instead of sexy.

#### [4. Sell backlist titles to the digital subsidiary or affiliate of a traditional print press for digital publication.](#)

A number of traditional print publishers have launched digital subsidiaries or digital programs to complement their print list. Avon's Impulse would be one example, as would Harlequin's Carina and Random House's Romance@Random. These subsidiaries are structured much like digital presses but have ties with the parent house. They acquire rights to new work, the idea being that any work that sells really well could move to the print side of the house to be published in paper.

They also acquire backlist titles. Those backlist titles which are still owned by the house might be published through this subsidiary or might be published through the parent company. Generally, this digital subsidiary has a higher profile in the market than the parent company's digital program. (The obvious exception to this is Harlequin, whose eHarlequin site is extremely high profile.)

The advantages here are similar to the above options. Once again, the house is the publisher and manages all of the tasks associated with the publisher. The author really only has to provide the file for the work. On the disadvantage side, as in the previous option, there will likely be no advance paid to the author. These kinds of companies may pay lower royalties than purely digital presses but often higher royalty rates than their print publisher parent. On the flip side of the coin, they may have much higher market visibility which results in higher unit sales for the author. They also may be better at selling work in a wider variety of subgenres.

#### [5. Self-publish backlist digitally.](#)

This is a comparatively new option for authors, and it removes many of the issues associated with vanity publishing. The main advantages of self-publishing are the level of control and the availability of information to the author. Self-publishing also offers the highest royalty rates – because the author is doing more of the work. The disadvantages are the number of responsibilities that fall to the author – who acts as publisher – with this option.

There are a number of interfaces for authors to self-publish digitally. The easiest to use is undoubtedly the Kindle Digital Publishing platform from Amazon. The author can either upload a Word file or download a utility to create a MOBI file, then upload that. The author also uploads a cover – when the rights to books revert, the rights to the cover art do not – provides copy, sets tags and categories, etc. Another advantage of the Kindle system (besides ease of use) is that it solves the problem of distribution – as soon as the work is published, it is automatically listed for sale at Amazon and many of Amazon's international affiliates. A third advantage is their reporting system – an author can check on his or her sales on a real time basis. They pay promptly, like a digital press.

The biggest disadvantage to self-publishing is that of responsibility. When the author becomes the publisher, all of the tasks typically done by the publisher must be done by the author. The author must create a cover, format the work, distribute the work, and promote the work. There is also an issue of visibility, given the very high numbers of books being digitally self-published, so the stronger the author's marketing platform (and the greater his or her inclination to self-promote) the more viable this option is.

If you want to put your backlist to work, there are plenty of options available. The trick is to find a balance that is best for you, given your current time commitments and writing obligations, as well as your own desire to do production tasks and promotion. Any partnership you make should also be to the advantage of the work – as is always the case in publishing, it's best to ally with publishers who know how to sell what you write. You may wish to mix and match, dividing your works between different possibilities. The choice is yours, and that empowerment for authors is the best thing about these changes in the publishing landscape. —

*Deborah Cooke sold her first romance in 1992, a medieval entitled THE ROMANCE OF THE ROSE which was published under the pseudonym Claire Delacroix. Since then, she has published over forty romance novels and novellas, under the names Claire Delacroix, Claire Cross and Deborah Cooke, and won numerous awards. THE BEAUTY, part of her successful Bride Quest series, was her first book to land on the New York Times' list of bestselling books. In 2009, she was the Writer in Residence at the Toronto Public Library, the first time the library has hosted a residency focused on the romance genre.*

*Deborah currently writes the Dragonfire series of paranormal romances, as well as The Dragon Diaries paranormal YA spin-off series, both published by NAL under her own name. This year, she is also digitally republishing many of her Claire Delacroix historical romances. Deborah lives in Canada with her family and a lot of unfinished knitting projects. To learn more about her books, visit Deborah's websites: <http://www.deborahcooke.com> <http://www.thedragondiaries.com> <http://www.delacroix.net> Or visit her blog, Alive & Knitting, at <http://www.delacroix.net/blog>*



## 6 EZ WAYS TO PROMOTE

By Joan Reeves

*The following article first appeared in the July 2011 issue of In Print!, the monthly newsletter of Houston Bay Area RWA. Leslie Marshman, Editor.*

**1. Make Amazon your friend.** Whether you love the big A or hate them, they are a huge force in the book-buying world—especially in the ebook world. Have you ordered a book or anything at all from them? Write a review and post it on Amazon.

Actually, if you're a writer, then you should regularly be reading and writing reviews. For beginners, it's a great way to hone skills. For those with books to sell, it's another way to get your name out there, and positive name recognition is always a good thing.

**2. Add your URLs to your signature** on your emails and forums, but make sure you follow the rules. Again, name recognition is the goal.

**3. If you're just getting into Internet promotion, start slow** so you can get comfortable.

Most authors who goof up with this do so because they just dive in with no forethought. I'm thinking about a recent flurry of activity I saw online by an author who went to the national conference and came back with the goal of promoting herself by diving into one of the popular social networks, and she announced this intention on a half dozen RWA lists. Wow. Though rather amusing, I cringed when I saw the same notice pop up again and again. I knew she was going to get labeled with the BSP tag (blatant self-promoter) and censured. And she was.

Make a plan based on the amount of time you have to network. Don't post the same message to every forum, subscribed list, and social network available. Pick one place to get started. If it's a forum or subscriber list, get acquainted by reading what others say. Comment when you have something germane to add. Once you're comfortable there, find another venue: a blog, community, or social network. Start small and expand your efforts. Don't go overboard and lose sight of the fact that you still need time to write.

**4. Practice talking about your book.**

Rehearse. Do it in front of the mirror. Create a mock interview set in the den and have your kids interview you a la Oprah or Regis and Kelly style. Get comfortable talking about your book and yourself. This will pay off the next time you're asked, "What do you do?"

**5. Write articles and post them for free.**

Begin with your local RWA chapter newsletter. Expand to credible article sites online where you post articles for free in exchange for your byline and a link back to your website or blog. First, you create an account at the article site so you can write your bio and link to however many of your websites are allowed. When an article is used, your byline and linkage go with the article.

## 6. Ask your friends to let you guest blog and set up your own blog tour.

Take the readers from one blog to the next as you move through the day or the week. Most prolific bloggers, like me, are always looking for fresh content. In fact, feel free to contact me if you'd like to guest blog: Joan at JoanReeves.com (put Real Live Person) in the Subject box to get past my spam filters. By the way, if you already know me, just use my personal email addy instead.

Those in marketing say that a name must be read/seen/heard at least nine times before someone remembers it. Even if your promotion budget is zero, you can still get that all-important name recognition just by using these targeted approaches for online promotion.

*Joan Reeves is the Kindle bestselling author of 4 romantic comedy ebooks, all of which have served time on the Top 100 Paid List as well as on other independent lists. Recently, she published *Written Wisdom*, compiled from the posts of the same name from her popular blog *SlingWords*. She blogs about her ebook success on *SlingWords*, her long-running blog (<http://SlingWords.blogspot.com>), in the hope that her articles might help others find their own ebook success.*



## Interview with Sara Megibow of Nelson Literary Agency

By Cassandra Carr

*The following article first appeared in the Vol 7 No 3 Passionate Ink newsletter. Cassandra Carr, editor.*

I recently had the privilege of speaking with Sara Megibow, Associate Literary Agent with Nelson Literary Agency.

Thank you for speaking with me! Our members are excited to hear about all the exciting things happening at Nelson Agency. First of all, what is your title at Nelson and what general tasks does your position include?

I am the Associate Literary Agent at Nelson Literary Agency. \*waves\* Hi to everyone!

General tasks in my job? Read. Read. Read, read, read, read, read.

Honestly, I read query letters, sample pages, full manuscripts, client manuscripts, published novels, industry newsletters (like Deal Lunch) and industry magazines (like Locus and the RWR). Then, I take client manuscripts and sell them to publishing houses - this includes polishing/editing the book, researching editors, making submission lists, sending manuscripts and following up. Then managing offers, negotiating contracts, auditing contracts, tracking contracts, documenting contracts. Of course, this includes negotiating and organizing Audio/Ebook/Film and Foreign rights. Then, creating marketing plans, implementing social media campaigns, facilitating a healthy client/publishing house relationship, updating twitter, Facebook, the Nelson Agency newsletter and weekly emails to my clients, attending conferences, pimping books and responding to emails. Then, managing release dates, auditing royalty statements, tracking payments. I've forgotten about 6000 things - probably because I have too much to read. :)

Can you tell us a little bit about the submissions process at Nelson Agency? Do we submit to a general e-mail address? Where does the query go from there? What should we send?

It's pretty easy actually. We accept email queries only. No phone calls, no personal visits, no snail mail. So, a writer composes an email query letter and sends it to [query@...](mailto:query@...).

The tough part, of course, is composing the query letter itself. I know, I know - people say "ARG, it's the hardest paragraph to write, why do I have to do this?" Well, a couple of reasons. One: in our experience, the query letter is an accurate representation of the quality of a novel. If a query letter rambles, then the novel rambles. If the query letter is unclear on plot, then the novel is unclear on plot. If the query letter presents a generic character, then the novel has generic characters. So, for that reason alone the query letter is a tremendously important tool to master.

Two: the pitch paragraph in your query letter is how the agent introduces your work to an editor, it's how an editor introduces your work to the sales team, it's how the sales team introduces your work to the book buyers AND it's how the end user (the reader) decides to buy your novel. In essence, the query letter pitch should sound like the back cover of a novel.

Period.

Once the query letter is submitted to us via email, we review it looking for superior writing and a unique concept. Then, we ask for sample pages (the first 30 pages of your novel). If we like that, then we ask for the full manuscript. In 2010, we read 36,000 queries, 1200 sample pages, 98 fulls and offered representation to nine new clients. Our submissions guidelines are online at [www.nelsonagency.com](http://www.nelsonagency.com). There is a "submit manuscript" page that has lots of information, including sample query letters from our clients, FAQs and resources.

I've heard of "throw your book across the room" moments (and try to make sure my books don't have any!), but can you tell us what some of your "throw the query across the room" moments are?

Yes, those exist. :)

For me, it's comments like "my great-aunt's hairdresser says this book is the next HARRY POTTER" or "my self-published novel sold 100 copies last year" or "but in this book the vampires don't KILL humans - they make friends instead." I try not to be snarky though, because typically these are comments made by writers who are at the very beginning of their publishing journey. After they do some research and buff up on the process, they will know better how to pitch their book.

Many of our members are social media savvy, and I know you and Kristin are both on Twitter, but for those who aren't savvy, does Nelson Agency provide any guidance about how to set up Facebook, Twitter, websites, etc?

Absolutely! We have a marketing director on staff - Lindsay Mergens. Lindsay has been working in publishing and, specifically in marketing and promotions, for over 20 years! It's her job to help mold the online presence of our clients. To be fair, most of our clients are 95% up to speed in terms of professional website, Twitter account, Facebook page, etc. Frequently our marketing discussions are easy ones - try this, buff up this, flesh this out, more of this, etc. Lindsay also communicates with the publishing house to follow up on publicity and promotions from their side. It's a team effort for sure! Obviously, our marketing director is part of the package - clients don't pay to have access to Lindsay (just thought I should mention that).

What's hot in erotic romance these days?

Anything that's well-written! \*big smile\*

I know, I know - that's a cop-out answer. But, really it's true. If you'd asked me this time last year, "hey do you think a contemporary erotic romance starring a heroine who writes books, a Catholic priest, a British editor and a teenage virgin will sell?" I would have likely said "no way." And yet it did! That book is THE SIREN by Tiffany Reisz - out with Harlequin Spice in September

2011. It works and it sold because Tiffany's writing is just SOOOO brilliant! (yes, you can pre-order this book on amazon and cyber-stalk Tiffany on twitter at @tiffanyreisz).

Here's another great example. Roni Loren is a debut author with Berkley Heat/ Penguin. Her first book, CRASH INTO YOU, will hit the shelves in January 2012. Roni's books stood out from the slush pile because the hero and heroine have such smokin' hot chemistry. It was love-at-first-paragraph for me. I read the query letter and partial in the same week and offered representation within 24 hours of receiving the full manuscript! Roni is online at [www.roniloren.com](http://www.roniloren.com) and also on twitter at @roniloren

Seriously folks, if I could ask for \*anything\* in my inbox, it would be "superior writing." I read across genre - paranormals, historicals, contemporaries, etc. So it doesn't matter if the hero is a firefighter or a werewolf - make him smoking hot and utterly engaging. Same with the heroine - smart and irresistible is my style. Remember to include a plot that captures the reader's attention, strong world building and steamy sexual tension. If there were a straight up formula, that would be it for me!

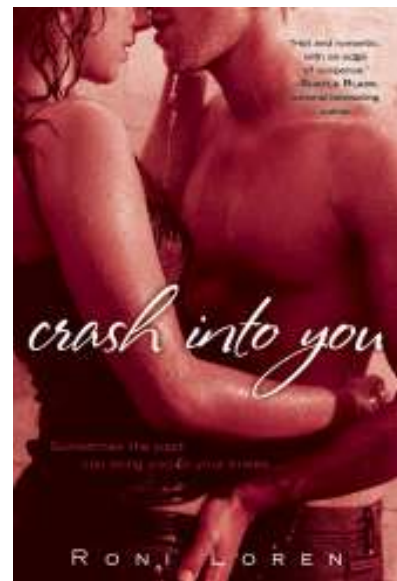
[What is one of the biggest plotting mistakes erotic romance writers make?](#)

The biggest mistakes I see are:

- 1) not having a big enough/compelling enough plot in general
- 2) not having character motivation fleshed out enough to make the conflict believable
- 3) using dialogue (character talking to him/herself or characters talking to each other) to move the plot forward
- 4) using some ineffective/ weak plot element to move the plot forward (a prophecy, dreams, a letter written to or by the hero/heroine - not always, but usually these are red flags for me)

[Are there any submissions you'd jump up and cheer if you received? \(Members - take note!\)](#)

- Sizzling hot romance set in a serious, intelligent, contemporary setting, especially if it tackles smart, difficult and relatable current situations (jobs, fertility, health, body image)



- Funny contemporary romance with dialogue that just leaps off the page
- Erotic romantic fantasy with outstanding, gorgeous, complex, unique world building
- Unique historical romance - from sweet to erotic
- Also, I'm an absolute sucker for a virgin hero

What are some things you either hate or love to see in a submission – in general?

LOVE to see in a submission? The word "completed." :)

Let's see...otherwise:

- Love short query letters!
- Hate queries for books in genres that I don't represent (coffee table books, picture books, self help books, thrillers)
- Love when sample pages start off with a BANG - DO open with action, brilliant characters, a hook. DON'T open with a prologue, a flashback, too much dialogue, a bunch of datadump, the hero (or heroine) peeing or someone waking up
- Love query letters that list the writer's website. Like "I have a completed work of contemporary romance at 100K words. You can find me online at [www.AuthorName.com](http://www.AuthorName.com)"

There's so much information out there about how to write a query letter and a synopsis. Does sending a bad query letter kill our chances of you reading the book or do you still read pages before making a decision? How long do you like the synopsis to be?

Yes, for our agency the query letter is your shot in the door. We receive 150-200 query letters a day and ask for sample pages from less than 5% of them. The query letter needs to be short, engaging, interesting, unique and supremely well written! To be fair, I love hearing pitches at conferences too - so that's another way to get me to read your work (my conference schedule is listed at [www.nelsonagency.com](http://www.nelsonagency.com) at the bottom of the "News" page).

Our website has an FAQ section under the page called "submit manuscript." Our clients' original query letters are posted there. Also, Chuck Sambuchino posts successful queries on his blog <http://www.guidetoliteraryagents.com/blog/>. Writers who want to learn more about writing queries could try [www.WEBook.com](http://www.WEBook.com) or [www.WritersDigest.com](http://www.WritersDigest.com). Finally, if you want a little insight into what NOT to do in a query letter, cyber-stalk here: [evileditor.blogspot.com](http://evileditor.blogspot.com)

Now, a few personal questions...

Do you have a favorite genre to read, either within or outside romance?

My favorite genre of all time is fantasy! Tolkien, Robin McKinley, Carol Berg, Patrick Rothfuss, Naomi Novik, Scott Lynch - can you tell I'm a fantasy lover? This, of course, translates to loving fantasy romance and YA fantasy also. My all-time favorites shelf holds MOON CALLED by Patricia Briggs (paranormal

romance), KITTY AND THE MIDNIGHT HOUR by Carrie Vaughn (paranormal romance), NEVER AGAIN by Michele Bardsley (paranormal romance), ASH by Malinda Lo (YA fantasy) and MATCHED by Ally Condie (dystopian YA).

I also have a fetish for historical romance and contemporary romance - especially if it is super sexy and smart. For example, I adore Pamela Clare's I-TEAM series (EXTREME EXPOSURE, etc), NAKED by Megan Hart and MY ONE AND ONLY by Kristan Higgins. In historicals, my favorites include SEDUCING THE DUCHESS by Ashley March (I'm biased of course because she's my client), SCANDAL by Carolyn Jewel, PRIVATE ARRANGEMENTS by Sherry Thomas and WHAT HAPPENS IN LONDON by Julia Quinn.

What's your favorite thing to do when you're not slaving over our manuscripts?

Hike or ski with my husband and son, or spend time with friends. Sounds like heaven, huh?

And one final question - if I was going to bring a bribe to a writer's conference, what would you prefer? Cookies? Chocolate? Booze?

COFFEEEEEEEE!!!! \*yum\* \*yum\* \*addict\*

Sara, thank you for taking time out of your ridiculously busy schedule to give us some insight on Nelson Agency. We appreciate it!

*To learn more about Sara: [www.nelsonagency.com](http://www.nelsonagency.com)*

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## Accurate Police Portrayal in Historical Works

### By Karen Goodchilds

*The following article first appeared in the July 2011 issue of DARA News, the monthly newsletter of Dallas Area Romance Authors. Vikki Wright Editor, DARA News*

The difficulty of accurately portraying a subject without firsthand knowledge can be a source of anguish for a writer. Research and interviews can only give a limited amount of information. For the historical writer, it can be a daunting process where to look to learn about essential elements that make for a compelling and realistic read.

The mistake of using information gleaned from other contemporary stories rather than relying on a writer's own research is also common. While the information may be accepted and plausible, it may make the knowledgeable reader disinterested in further perusal due to credibility issues.

Quite a few historical romance novels have elements of criminal suspense. This in turn requires a police presence. Even though the police are not the focus, it is important they are accurately portrayed to keep the story moving forward.

The role of the police force in England is well-documented. The book I have chosen to obtain information is the three volume series entitled "Mysteries of Police and Crime" written in 1904 by Major Arthur Griffiths. This author was the Inspector of Prisons from 1878 to 1896. In addition to his extensive knowledge about crime and police, he was also an expert on Jack the Ripper. To give the reader a flavor of how words and phrases were used, direct quotes have been used.

The Saxons brought the first concept of policing to England. People were divided into groups of ten, called a "tything" and overseen by a "tything man." Those groups were then grouped into ten, overseen by a "hundred man" or a "Shire-eeve," our present day Sheriff. The tything man over the course of time became the Parish Constable, and the Hundred Man became the Justice of the Peace.

According to Major Griffiths, the earliest effort to establish a police force was during the reign of Edward I in 1285. This statute was known as the Watch and Ward, and required every inhabitant to contribute to their own protection. This tradition continued through the Regency time period.

Specifically, this Act says that "none be so hardy as to be found going or wandering about the streets of the City with sword or buckler after curfew tolled at St. Martin's Le Grand." The seventh century church, located between Newgate and Cheapside, was responsible for sounding the curfew bells to close the City gates each night. It is in the area of Greater London that is referred to as The Square Mile, and is officially the City of London. This area is now the Financial District. Those unfortunate souls that did not abide the curfew would be put in confinement by the keepers of the peace. St. Martin's Church was demolished during the reign of Henry VIII, although it continued the tradition

of offering sanctuary until 1697. The General Post Office was established on the site in 1829. Further, the Act claimed taverns were the main meeting place of those who commit evil, so they were not allowed to remain open for the sale of ale or wine after the curfew tolled. Since "fools who delight in mischief" learned to fence, it also did not allowing fencing within the City limits.

Immigrants were not allowed to be innkeepers unless they had good standing from the country they left or had a letter of reference. The Act itself talks about immigrants who "do nothing but run up and down through the streets more by night than by day, and are well attired in clothing and array, and have their food of delicate meats and costly; neither do they use any craft or merchandise." It is interesting to read the bias and distrust directed toward immigrants at this time.

The next police Act was in 1585 called 27th Elizabeth. It specifically dealt with the "vice and idleness" of the city and borough of Westminster. The Dean of Westminster and the High Steward were given greater authority over this area to correct "all matters of incontinenes, common scolds, and common annoyances, and to commit to prison all who offended against the peace."

Westminster Abbey answers directly to the Sovereign, so this was an important way for Queen Elizabeth to reward certain loyal subjects. Sir William Cecil, Lord Burleigh (sometime written Bourghley), was the first High Steward of Westminster; he was a long-standing trusted advisor of Queen Elizabeth.



This Act also set out guidelines for regulating the domestic life of subjects, including rules for bakers, brewers, woodmongers, bargemen, butchers, poulterers, fishmongers, and "colliers." A collier is a coal merchant. Certain merchants attempted to "regrate" the markets by buying up all "victuals" as to increase the price due to shortage, which this Act prohibited. Other specifics of this Act prevented a man from selling ale while operating a cookshop, and rogues and "sturdy beggars" from wandering the streets under "pain of immediate arrest." Victuallers and tavern-keepers were responsible for lighting the City by keeping a "lanthorn" on their street door from six p.m. until nine a.m. the next morning, "except when the moon shall shine and give light."

In 1737, the Elizabethan Act was enlarged through the 10th George II Act. A night watchman had been instigated under Charles II, but this Act regulated it for the City. The night watchman was to help prevent "fires, murders,

burglaries, robbers and other outrages and disorders." The constables of the wards and precincts issued instructions for the night watch, and said night watchman acted as a constable to apprehend "all night-walkers, malefactors, rogues, vagabonds, and disorderly persons." The Common Council levied rates to pay the watchman salary. The night watch was sometime referred to as "Charley."

Forty years later another Act was passed in 1777, called 14th George III. This Act detailed the number of watchmen, their wages and how they were to be armed and accommodated. They carried rattles, staves, and lanterns. A rattle is a wooden noisemaker that is an archaic version of what is used to celebrate New Year's



Eve, and is sometime called a "Charley's rattle." Constables of the watch sometime carried billhooks, which has been one theory put forth on why "the Bill" is a slang term attributed to the police. While the intent of this Act was undeniable, the reality was that the watchmen often proved untrustworthy. Most often they extorted money, aided and abetted criminals, and concealed crimes that it was their duty to detect and suppress.

At the end of the 18th century, robbery and theft were commonplace. Skillfully laid plans were prepared and houses were watched for days or weeks in advance for the most opportune time to strike. The highwayman of this time also had spies in all parts of the country, and escaped detection with the support of public officials.

Even the lowly farmer was not free from theft, as his crops, fruit and vegetables were often plundered sometime in broad daylight. At one time an estimate was given that 1.5 million bushels of wheat were stolen directly from the fields of England. Millers, afraid their mills would be burnt to the ground, accepted the illegally-gotten gains from the thieves even though they were aware of the pillage.

Sir John Fielding, the blind Bow Street magistrate, was possibly the most notable judge of this time period. He was an influential person of his day in the efforts of social reform. After a full day on the bench, it was not uncommon for Fielding to resume his duties from seven p.m. until midnight. Taking a personal interest in crimes reported, he often visited the spot, took information, and set officers off to investigate. He was the originator of the Horse Patrol and Bow Street Runners.

In 1805, the Horse Patrol was an efficient force that was recruited entirely from old cavalry soldiers. They wore a blue coat with brass buttons, a scarlet waistcoat, blue trousers and boots, and carried a sword and pistols. Their patrol began about five p.m. and ended at midnight. It was their custom to call out to all approaching horsemen and carriages "Bow Street Patrol!" This patrol almost completely ended highway robbery.

Those who read historical novels have undoubtedly come across the phrase of "Bow Street runner." This is the prototype of the modern detective. During this time period there were eight such officers. According to Major Griffiths, they wore a scarlet waistcoat and were called "robin redbreast." They carried a small baton with a gilt crown as a mark of authority. The Bow Street runners were at the disposal of the public in pursuit of private crime; however, three of them were appropriated to the service of the Court. At least two Bow Street runners protected the Royals when they were out, similar to the present day U.S. Secret Service. It was the duty of the runners to interrupt duels.

About this time, over 200 offenses resulted in a sentence of the death penalty. The term "blood money" refers to payment to those who helped convict criminals. Crimes that would be considered minor often resulted in the death penalty, such as cutting down trees, an unmarried woman concealing a stillborn child, or pick pocketing goods valued at more than one shilling. It was the custom to divide forty pounds reward to those who helped bring about a conviction. At the beginning of the 19th century, this practice was so perverted that people seduced others into committing a crime so they could garner a reward.

Police were paid a guinea a week regular pay, plus any blood money they may acquire. A guinea equals one pound, one shilling. In addition, officers were allowed to sell Tyburn tickets, which were exemptions from serving as constables or in parish offices. One could purchase an exemption for twelve pounds. The Saxon practice of all inhabitants of an area helping to keep the peace was still in practice.

This brings us to the end of the Regency period and the beginning of the Modern Police, led by Sir Robert Peel. The establishment of the Metropolitan Police, also known as Scotland Yard, virtually abolished the Bloody Code, which had been the main threat to deter criminal mischief.

*Karen Goodchild is a freelance writer and antique dealer specializing in English furniture. She is a member of both the Dallas Area and North Texas Romance Writers of America chapters. When not coming up with ideas for a happily-ever-after, she is chasing her adopted two-year-old son through the corridors of his speech therapists or talking shop with her Cockney husband. She can be reached at [KarenGoodchild@...](mailto:KarenGoodchild@...)*



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## Editor's Message

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### Write a Love Knot Article

I am actively seeking article submissions from ORWA members. Since the Love Knot is electronic, there are no specific word count requirements. An article can be as long or as short as the topic requires. **Our articles are shared with all RWA chapter newsletter editors so writing an article is a good way to get free publicity.** Be sure to include a short signature line with the address for your website or blog.

If you have any articles or announcements you'd like included in our newsletter please forward them to me at [ykarenes@yahoo.ca](mailto:ykarenes@yahoo.ca) by the 20<sup>th</sup> of the month.

Thank you!

Karen Smock, Editor

