

LARA Confidential

The newsletter of the Los Angeles Romance Authors Chapter of RWA.

February, 2013

| | |
|---|-------|
| From the Editor's Desk | 2 |
| Presidential Prattle: Tongue Twisting | 4 |
| Upcoming Classes & Contests | 6 |
| New LARA Releases | 10 |
| Sex Sells: Now My Family has to Get With the Program | 13 |
| Dreaded Sex Scenes | 14 |
| How Phone Sex Led to a Marriage Proposal | 14 |
| The Passion of a Kiss | 16 |
| Promo & Tips | 17 |
| Performance Enhancers for Yet-To-Be-Published Writers (And They're Legal) | 18 |
| Speaker Spotlights: | 19&22 |
| Sex Peeves: The Top 10 things Writers Do, I Wish They Didn't | 20 |
| LARA Meetings 2013 | 23 |

LARA Presents

Erotica Workshop

With RWA's President Sylvia Day and Karen Erickson

February 17, 2013



Come ask RWA's President Sylvia Day and Multi-Genre Published Karen Erickson anything about Erotica!

LARA's featured speakers for February will tell you about their process, techniques for what makes erotica great, and what they see for the future of the genre.

To learn more about this month's guest speakers, check out our Speaker Spotlights on **Page 19 and Page 22**.

Join us on February 17th, 2013 for our General Meeting at our new location: the Bridges Academy (south of Ventura Blvd. and off Laurel Canyon).

From the Editor's Desk

A very sexy hello this fine February...

There is a classic line that I'm sure some knowledgeable librarian scrawled on a bathroom wall with an illicit ISBN number that says a dirty book is rarely dusty. While the line isn't exactly the classiest description of romance, the sentiment is mostly true. A few well placed, lip biting, heart palpitating scenes of physical attraction can keep your readers flipping pages eagerly until the end.

This doesn't mean everything revolves around tab A into slot B kind of love making. A chaste kiss that has been danced around for fifty pages can be just as electrifying and panty melting as "going all the way" in whatever erotic interpretation may strike your fancy. In this issue, we're talking about some of the more physical aspects of love that appear in our books. From the particulars of a kiss to pet peeves about doing the deed, we know as readers that sharing a loving, physical connection with someone is always an adventure. And as writers we know that adventure is just another word for a great story. I hope this issue warms up your cold February nights. As for next month...

MARCH NEWSLETTER: CALL FOR ARTICLES

Spring is coming. It's time for green and growing things. It's time to clear away the cobwebs of dusty thinking and prune back thickets of doubt. It's time to replant our writing garden and let some new life take hold. Next issue we're looking for articles on how to nurture our inspiration and creativity. How do you take those creative seeds of passion and grow them into a thriving story? What's your writer Miracle-Gro? Please send all articles or stories to me at LARACConfidential@LARARWA.com by March 1st.

For now let's take a walk on the steamier side of love and in the immortal words of Salt 'n' Pepa's '91 single...

"Let's talk about all the good things
And the bad things that may be
Let's talk about sex"

- Ariel Lawrence, *LARA Confidential* - Content Editor 2013

Words to Write by... Let's Get Physical.

"A kiss is a lovely trick designed by nature to stop speech when words become superfluous." — Ingrid Bergman

"Sex is emotion in motion." —Mae West

"For it was not into my ear you whispered, but into my heart. It was not my lips you kissed, but my soul."
— Judy Garland

"At the touch of love everyone becomes a poet." — Plato



Presidential Prattle

Tongue Twisting

Christine Ashworth

Ah, February, the tongue-twister month. The month no one can remember how to spell. The month of Love. My own personal festival month. The month where relationships bloom and – it must be said – break off. Heartbreak and happiness both hold sway during the shortest month of the year.

But...what is Love? Wikipedia, that Source of All Knowledge (hak*koff*) has this to say...

Love

From Wikipedia, the free encyclopedia

Jump to: navigation, search

For other uses, see Love (disambiguation).

(I love this part! Disambiguation? Off to the dictionary go I, lol!)

Love is an emotion of a strong affection and personal attachment.[1] Love is also said to be a virtue representing all of human kindness, compassion, and affection —”the unselfish loyal and benevolent concern for the good of another”.[2] Love may describe compassionate and affectionate actions towards other humans, one’s self or animals.[3]

In English, love refers to a variety of different feelings, states, and attitudes, ranging from pleasure (“I loved that meal”) to interpersonal attraction (“I love my partner”). “Love” may refer specifically to the passionate desire and intimacy of romantic love, to the sexual love of eros, to the emotional closeness of familial love, to the platonic love that defines friendship,[4] or to the profound oneness or devotion of religious love,[5] or to a concept of love that encompasses all of those feelings. This diversity of uses and meanings, combined with the complexity of the feelings involved, makes love unusually difficult to consistently define, compared to other emotional states.

(I LOVE this! Yes, yes, yes – part of the problem of writers everywhere!)

Love in its various forms acts as a major facilitator of interpersonal relationships and, owing to its central psychological importance, is one of the most common themes in the creative arts.[6]

Love may be understood as part of the survival instinct, a function to keep human beings together against menaces and to facilitate the continuation of the species.[7]”

Find the whole listing for Wikipedia’s Love here: <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Love>

Okay, I’m back. That last part, about Love being understood as part of the survival instinct, is to me a basic. Understood. As in, duh, of course, why even bring it up?

Because everyone's path to Love is unique, that's why. No two people fall in love the same way; no two people experience love in the same way. Sometimes, we (or our characters) are so damaged that we can't see how Love can help us survive.

Plus, Love changes over the years. I know now that I love more deeply, more profoundly, than I did when I married the Hubby, 33 years ago this month. And for those characters in our novels who have loved and lost, how they love one man will most likely not be the same way they love another.

We are Romance Authors, so this again should be a given for us – I'm not telling you anything new. We know that everyone falls in love differently. But sometimes, finding the right words to get two characters together, in a way you haven't done yet, can be frustrating. So you dig out the thesaurus, call your friends, hang out on Facebook, and find some inspiration. Because every romantic couple is different, which makes Love "unusually difficult to consistently define".

This month we have a LARA Confidential that is chock-full of Love and everything that goes with it. Read, enjoy, and remember to thank the people who have contributed! Our next LARA meeting, Sunday, February 17, 2013 where we'll hear Sylvia Day (the current President of RWA) and Karen Erickson talk about writing erotica. See you there!



Upcoming

Upcoming RWA University Classes

Beginning in February 2013, RWA University will offer two forum classes per month. One class will be offered at no cost to members. The other class will be offered at a cost to those members wishing to participate. Registration spaces are limited for the classes that have fees. These classes will be large enough to encourage participant interaction, but small enough so that participants have more opportunity to interact with the instructor. We hope you enjoy what we have to offer! Learn more at <http://my.rwa.org/rwau>, or e-mail RWAUniversity@rwa.org with questions.

Check out the March 2013 RWA U schedule:

March 18–22, RWA U Class (Paid): “Building Great Characters from the Inside Out.” Presenter: teacher and best-selling author HelenKay Dimon. This class will take place on the RWA U forum in myRWA and will only be available to participants who register and pay for the class. The cost to participate is \$10 for RWA members. Register for the class at <http://rwa.org/p/pr/vi/prodid=98>.

Upcoming RWA Contests

*Open to published authors **Open to published and unpublished authors

*13th Annual Inspirational Reader’s Choice Award

Sponsor: Faith, Hope and Love Chapter

Fee: \$20 FHL Members, \$25 nonmembers Deadline: March 1, 2013

Eligibility: inspirational books with a 2012 copyright, published by RWA approved publishers.

Entry: four new autographed of each entry.

Categories: Long Contemporary, Short Contemporary, Long Historical, Short Historical, Women’s Fiction, Romantic Suspense, Novella.

Judges: readers of inspirational fiction. Top prize: winner in each category receives an engraved box.

FMI, <http://www.faithhopelove-rwa.org/irc.html> or contest coordinator, Nancy Farrier:

nancyjfarrier@gmail.com.

**Everything but the Kitchen Sink Contest

Sponsor: Maine RWA

Fee: \$25 for non- MERWA members; \$20 for MERWA members

Deadline: March 1, 2013 Eligibility: unpublished work of fiction by published or non- published author.

Entry: six components: One page query letter, opening three pages, character introspection, dialogue scene, romantic tension scene, last three pages.

Categories: there will be a winner from each component and an overall winner.

Judges: published and unpublished authors; trained. Final judge: Editor Charles Griemsman, Harlequin

Top prize: each winner from the components will receive a certificate and a Maine memento. Overall

winner receives \$50 or free registration to Maine RWA retreat in May. Winners will be announced at the Maine RWA retreat.

FMI, visit <http://www.mainerwa.com>, 2013 Maine RWA contest.

****Fab Five 2013**

Sponsor: WisRWA (Wisconsin Romance Writers)

Fee: \$18 WisRWA members; \$20 non-WisRWA members

Deadline (received by): March 1, 2013 Eligibility: unpublished in novel length fiction in last 5 years.

Entry: first 2500 words of ms. No synopsis.

Judges: trained, published & unpublished.

Categories/final judges: Historical – Amanda Bergeron, Harper Collins; Inspirational – Natasha Kern, Natasha Kern Literary Agency; Paranormal – Latoya Smith, Grand Central Publishing; Romantic Suspense – Katherine Pelz, Berkley Publishing; Series Contemporary Long/Short – Dana Hopkins, Harlequin Enterprises; Single Title – Nalini Akolekar, Spencerhill Associates; Women's Fiction – Paige Wheeler, Folio Literary Agency; Young Adult – Laura Bradford, Bradford Literary Agency.

Top prize: Silver Quill Awarded to top entry in each category, finalists announced in RWR.

FMI, WisRWA website (<http://www.wisrwa.org>). Link to Fab 5 contest for rules, entry form, and sample scoresheet. E-mail contest coordinator Joe Fraser at jfraser6353@yahoo.com for questions not answered from website information.

Great Beginning Contest

Sponsor: Utah RWA Fee: \$10

Deadline: March 1, 2013 Entry: first 5 pages; electronic entries only

Judges: first round judges are trained and/or published. Final judges: agents and editors.

FMI, <http://www.utahrwa.com>.

Query Quandary Contest

Sponsor: New Hampshire RWA Fee: \$10–15

Deadline: March 1, 2013 Entry: one-page query letter

Judges: trained published & unpublished Final judges: agents & editors

FMI, <http://www.nhrwa.com>.

2013 Touched by Love Award

Sponsor: Faith, Hope, and Love RWA Chapter

Fee: \$20–25 Deadline: March 3, 2013, midnight EST

Entry: electronic entry only: first 20 pages of an inspirational manuscript, 2 page synopsis.

Final round judges: published authors.

Top Prize: editor critique by Raela Schoenherr, Bethany House Publishers.

FMI, <http://www.faithhopelove-rwa.org> or e-mail RileyK1@aol.com.

The 2013 Daphne du Maurier Award for Excellence in Mystery/Suspense for Unpublished Writers

Sponsor: Kiss of Death Chapter RWA

Fee: \$15–30 Deadline: March 15, 2013

Entry: prologue/first chapter up to 5,000 words. All electronic entry.

Final judges: See website.

FMI, <http://www.rwamysterysuspense.org> or email: Brooke Wills at daphnecontest@gmail.com.

Cont.

More RWA Contests...

*The 2013 Daphne du Maurier Award for Excellence in Mystery/Suspense for Published Authors

Sponsor: Kiss of Death Chapter RWA Fee: \$25 Deadline: March 15, 2013

Entry: 2012 copyrighted mystery or romantic suspense.

FMI, <http://www.rwamysterysuspense.org> or email: Brooke Wills at daphnecontest@gmail.com.

*2013 PRISM Contest for Published Authors

Sponsor: Fantasy, Futuristic and Paranormal Special Interest Chapter of RWA

Fee: \$30–35 per entry Deadline: March 15, 2013

Eligibility: book/novella must have first publication date in 2012.

Entry: Novels and Novellas with both romance and paranormal elements, published in 2012. Traditional and Indie published authors encouraged to enter.

Categories: Dark Paranormal, Light Paranormal, Futuristic, Fantasy, Time Travel/Steampunk, Erotica/Romantica, YA, Novella.

Judges: published and unpublished.

Top prize: Prism Award, certificate, pin for each category, Best First Book and Best of the Best.

FMI, <http://www.romance-ffp.com>.

**Spring into Romance Contest

Sponsor: RWA San Diego Fee: \$25 non-chapter member, \$20 chapter member Deadline: March 16, 2013

Eligibility: unpublished or not in the last five years. Entry: first 25 pages of novel.

Categories: Historical, Single Title, Young Adult, Series Romance, Romantic Suspense, Paranormal, Romantic Elements.

Judging: chapter members (trained / one published). Final judges: editors and agents.

FMI, e-mail rwasd.contests@gmail.com.

15th Annual Fire and Ice Contest

Sponsor: Chicago North RWA

Fee: \$25 for RWA members, \$30 for non-RWA members Deadline: March 22, 2013

Eligibility: entrants must not be published or contracted in novel-length fiction of 40,000 words or more as of March 22, 2013. NOTE: Chicago North members are NOT eligible to enter.

Entry: All electronic. First 6,000 words as RTF or DOC file.

Judges: each entry will be judged by two members of Chicago North RWA, a critique-based chapter in the first round. At least one judge will be a published member.

Categories and final judges: Erotic Romance – Jeane DeVita, Editor, Musa Publishing; Historical Romance – Jill Marsal, Agent, Marsal Lyon Literary Agency; Single Title Romance – Sha-Shana Crichton, Agent, Crichton & Associates; Series – Allison Lyon, Editor, Harlequin; Paranormal Romance – Deb Werksman, Editor, Sourcebooks; Woman's Fiction – Alex Logan, Editor, Grand Central Publishing; Young Adult – Kathleen Rushall, Agent, Marsal Lyon Literary Agency.

Top prize: first place winners in each category will receive \$30 (US dollars). All finalists will receive certificates and will be listed in the Romance Writers Report.

FMI, go to <http://www.chicagonorthrwa.org/contest.php>. For additional questions, e-mail B.A. Binns, 2013 Fire & Ice contest coordinator, at contest@chicagonorthrwa.org.

Cont.

Upcoming

****2013 Touch of Magic Contest**

Sponsor: Central Florida Romance Writers

Fee: \$25–30

Deadline: March 23, 2013

Entry: writers not published in book-length (40,000+ words) fiction during the past five years. All Electronic. First 25 pages in RTF format (include unjudged prologue and/or three-page synopsis, if applicable).

Judges: trained published and unpublished.

Final judges, editors (TBA).

FMI, visit <http://www.cfrwa.com> or e-mail contest co-coordinators Karen Blondeau at Karen.Blondeau.TOM.Coordinator@gmail.com or Joanne Calub at jcalub5@gmail.com.

22nd Annual Duel on the Delta

Sponsor: River City Romance Writers

Fee: \$25

Deadline: March 31, 2013

Entry: electronic entries only; first 20 pages of manuscript (optional one page, non-judged synopsis).

Electronic submissions only.

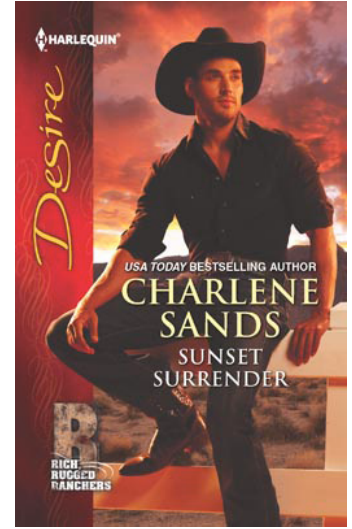
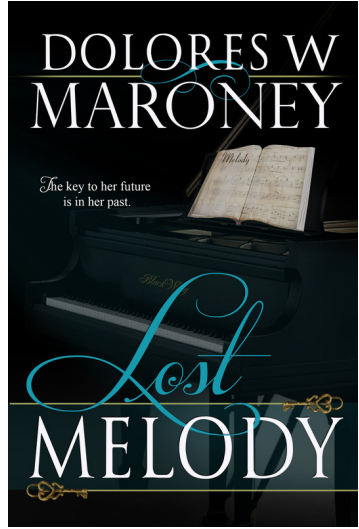
Judges: trained, published and unpublished authors.

Final judges: editors/agents.

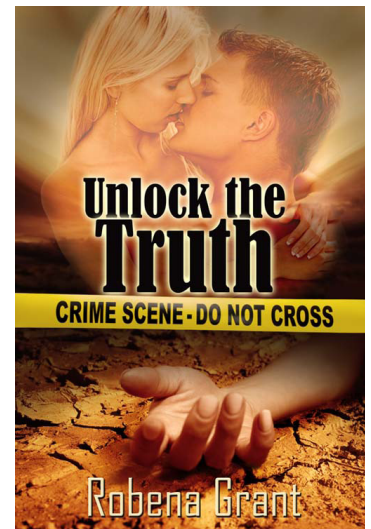
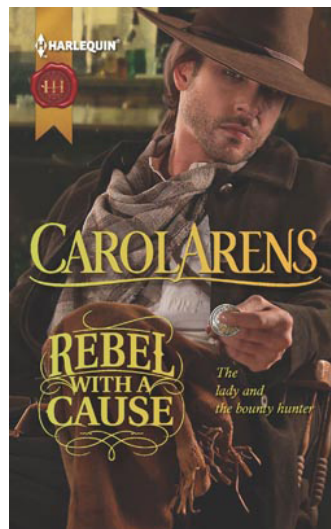
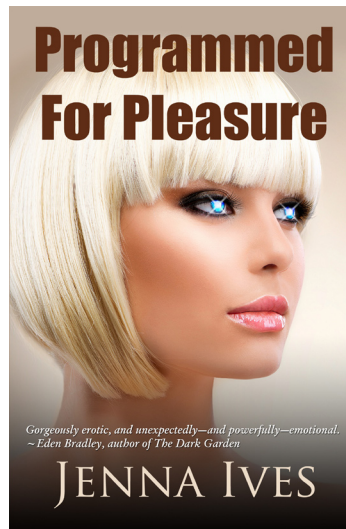
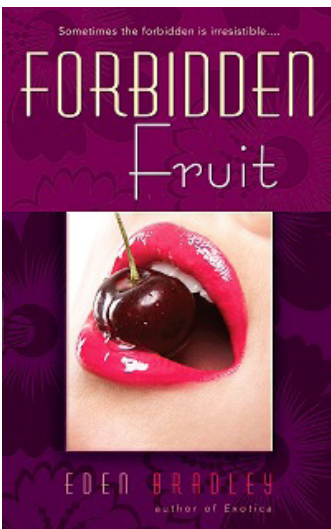
Top prize: Final round judge ranks top 3 entries in each category. Top prize, Duel on Delta pin, certificate, & \$20.

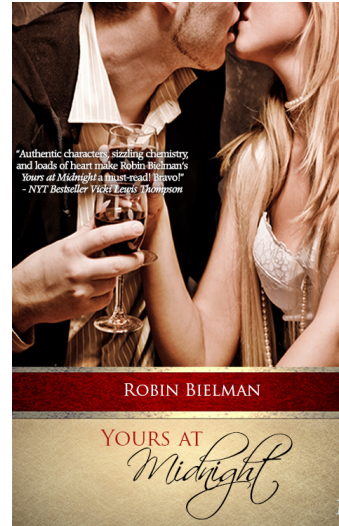
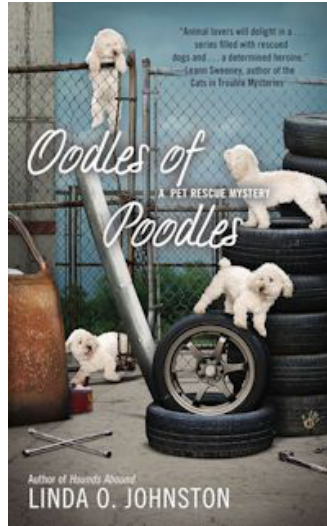
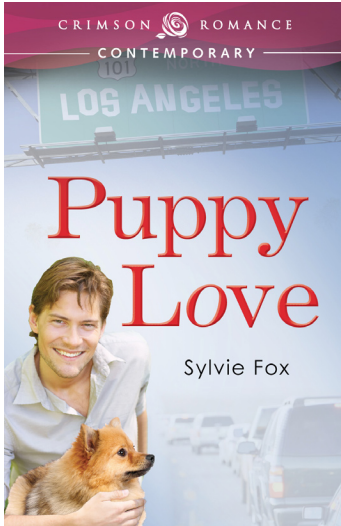
FMI, <http://www.rivercityromancewriters.org>; contest chair: duelonthedelta@yahoo.com.





NEW RELEASES





By LARA Members



LARA events

LARA Events:

March 10, 2013 General Meeting: Ask an Author Anything: Passion into Prose
Zoe Archer and Nico Rosso

SPEW: Don't forget that SPEW (Stop Procrastinating Everybody Write) starts the Monday after our regular monthly meeting. To join, please contact the Lynn Moses and the LARA-SPEW crew yahoo group.

Author Critique Opportunity Drawing: For just one dollar, you can buy a chance to get your manuscript read by one of LARA's fabulous published authors! You can buy your raffle tickets at the beginning of each General Meeting.

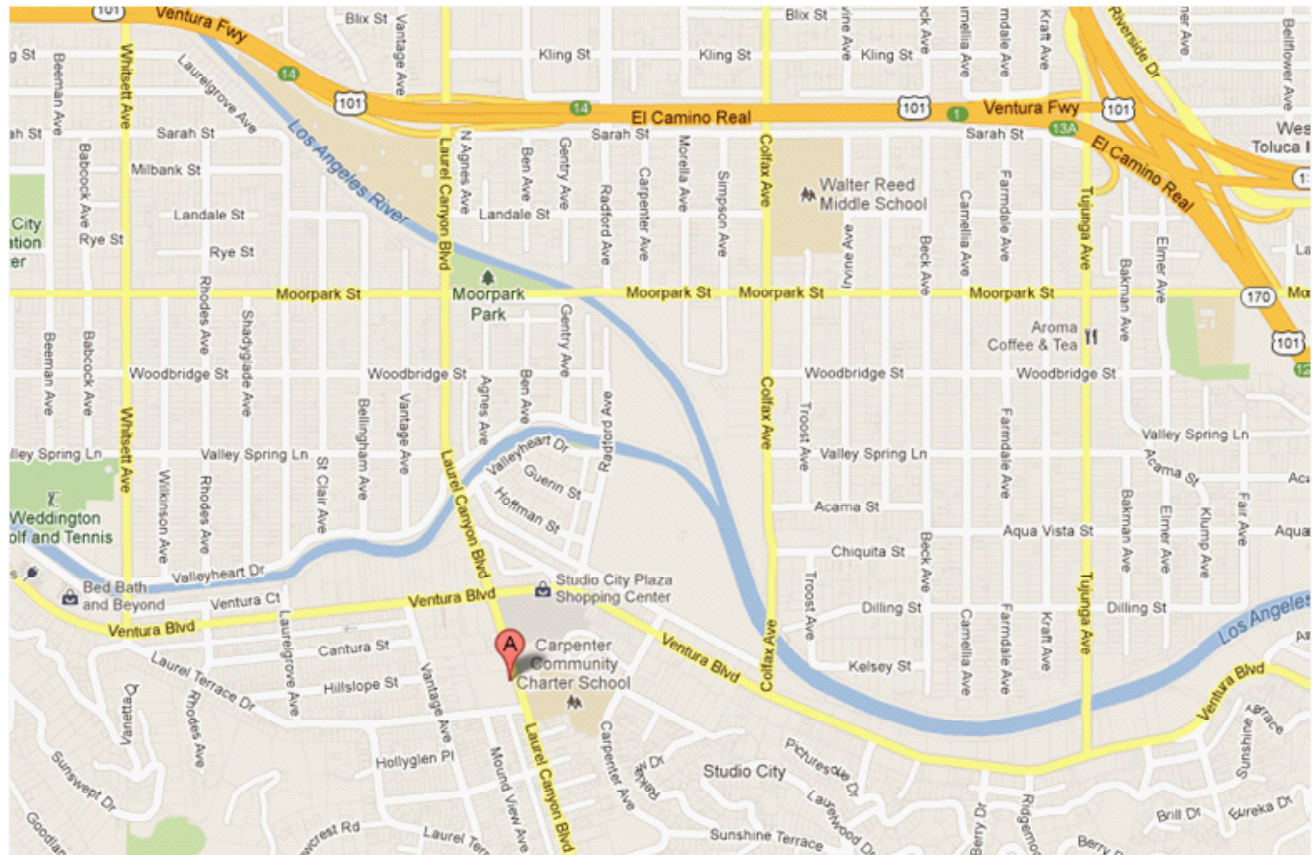
Next LARA Meeting

New Meeting Location

A new year and a new location! Starting this month, the LARA monthly meetings will be held at the new location at Bridges Academy, in the library.

Bridges Academy

3921 Laurel Canyon Boulevard
Studio City, CA 91604



This article was published in the RWA/NYC August 2012 newsletter. Permission is granted to share this article with the proper credits to the author and chapter. Thank you. --Shara Moon, Assistant Editor, RWA/NYC

Sex Sells: Now My Family Has to Get With the Program

Jeanine McAdam

I've been a writer of short, sweet romances for a long time. I started my career writing for the confessions market and expanded into zombie romance with 'Inhuman Resources' appearing in the anthology HUNGRY FOR YOUR LOVE. All my stories ended after the first kiss.

So when I submitted my latest bull riding novella 'Cowboy's Toughest Ride' to Secret Cravings Publishing, I carried on the tradition of resolving the conflict before fingers and mouths found intimate places. The response: Secret Cravings loved the story. They would buy it, but...if I spiced things up, I'd sell more books.

I wanted to sell more books. Yes, I could spice things up. I'm a writer, who cares what the content is, as long as I can write romance. A month later, 'Cowboy's Toughest Ride' was published with three flames (out of four) and the label 'erotic romance' appearing prominently under the title.

I was proud of myself. I pushed my limits, created a story outside my comfort zone and received two five star reviews for my effort. I held my chin high with a smug smile on my face until a few of the people I loved most learned of my work.

My mother (practicing Presbyterian/retired special education teacher) got anxious, but in a WASPY way. She kept asking me if it was soft porn. Did I want my name attached to this type of story? Maybe a nom de plume would be better? All of this happened after reminding me she wouldn't be telling her friends about the book. My father would chuckle in a way that pressed all my buttons and ask, 'How's that cowboy book thingy doing?' At his extremely conservative boarding school my fifteen year old son 'liked' the cover on Facebook and took a lot of ribbing from the boys on his dorm floor. They even threatened to read the passages out loud.

As a result of this, I got nervous and worried. Remember the puritanical blood runs deep in my veins. On the night 'Cowboy's Toughest Ride' was released, I was up until two in the morning. Yes, I should have been drinking champagne and celebrating instead I was pacing and rereading the book. Trying to figure out which parts were the most offensive to someone like my mother.

One particular passage stuck in my mind. "As his finger slipped deeper into her and nerve endings awakened that had been dormant for two years, Katie panted, pawed at his back and knew she wasn't walking away from this man tonight."

In the morning I spoke with my husband. I started with, "I'm worried about your business. What if your patients find out your wife writes erotic romance?"

His reply, "I don't care." He poured orange juice, scratched himself and made faces at the dog.

"What if the women working for you find out?"

"They don't care."

I tried to express my feelings again. He interrupted, "I don't give a flying fuck. You're good, you write a good story, stop navel gazing and focus on the next one." A few more curse words were thrown in to get his point across.

This is why I love my husband. Yes, he can be gruff and he sometimes curses like a sailor but he cut to the heart of the issue. I'm a good writer and I need to continue writing.

'Cowboy' has been out for two months. My parents are still concerned. My son hasn't gotten any less embarrassed. But, besides those three nothing else has happened except that my friends are super happy for me and I'm back to feeling proud. And when I get teased, here's how I explain it.

Writing is a business. I have a product. There is a consumer (the reader) interested in buying that product. In other words, the market is demanding a certain type of story. I fulfill that market. My stories aren't about me or how I kiss my husband, they are about how my character's feel, react and love.

Like every small business owner I try to create the best product I can. By the way, 'Cowboy's Toughest Ride' received another five star review. Yippee!

Jeanine McAdam's latest story 'Cowboy's Toughest Ride' is available at Amazon, Barnes & Noble and Secret Cravings Publishing. Besides appearing in HUNGRY FOR YOUR LOVE, An Anthology of Zombie Romance, Jeanine has published twenty-five short stories with True Romance and True Confessions (True Renditions LLC.).

Dreaded Sex Scenes

Robena Grant

Some years ago, I had decided to enlist a few Beta readers for my manuscripts. One of my former critique partners, TJ Bennett, had told me if I wanted to write romance I had to write sex scenes, there could be no quick fade, gently fluttering curtains like in an old black and white movie, or the closing of a bedroom door. It's about reader expectation, she'd explained.

I still secretly thought of it as voyeurism, but wanting to grow as a writer and needing desperately to work on more emotion in my stories, I put on some sultry music, poured a glass of wine, and worked those dreaded scenes. Then I handed off the manuscript to four ladies—two retired school teachers, one young devout Christian, and one happy go lucky spirit—all of whom I'd befriended as I walked my dog around the lake in my new desert community. A week later, the devout Christian lady told me she and her husband had been ill with the flu and they'd spent the weekend in bed. She had decided to read my story. When she got to the sex scene she read it out loud to her husband. By the smile on her face, I think he got better in a hurry. The worst part is, now when I see them walking around the lake I blush and wonder what he thinks of me, or if he's just anxiously awaiting the next read...

Robena Grant is Australian by birth but resides in Southern California. She loves to read and write about ordinary women in extraordinary circumstances. Her Desert Heat series will release in 2013. The third book in the series, Exposure, was a 2011 Golden Heart finalist manuscript and is now titled Desert Exposure.

Robena may be reached at www.robengrant.com

How Phone Sex Led to a Marriage Proposal

Beverly Diehl

This is a true story. Names have been withheld to protect the not-so-innocent.

Once upon a time, there was a young woman who was becoming a bit bored with her (kind of) boyfriend.

It wasn't that he was bad in bed, exactly, but their sex life had fallen into a rut. So one day, as they met for lunch, she told him, "Call me tonight," in her throatiest, sexiest voice.

The man blinked and looked confused.

"You know," she said. "Call me." *wink wink*

"Oh! Call you."

Later that night, long after the young woman had forgotten all about her (kind of) boyfriend and was sound asleep, the telephone rang.

"Hello?" she croaked into the phone.

"Hi," he said. "Sounds like I woke you up."

Aha, my smutty plan is working, she thought. "It's all good, baby," she said. "In fact, I was hoping you'd call and wake me up."

“Were you dreaming about me?” His voice sounded different, huskier, so she worked hard to put the sex kitten into her own voice.

“You know I was. I dreamed you were standing over me, watching me sleep and taking off your clothes.”

“Tell me what you’re wearing,” he growled.

She applied her imagination like the wand of Cinderella’s godmother, transforming her ratty, oversized T-shirt and white cotton sweat socks into the skimpiest of lingerie, a lavender thong and matching corset, trimmed in black lace and ribbons.

Her caller described his own state of dress – none – and went into much detail as to what her sexy outfit was inspiring him to do.

The young woman felt so motivated she found it difficult to maintain her grasp on the phone. Then again, she was only using one hand.

So she said and he said, and heavy breathing was had all around, till the - conversation - came to a highly satisfactory conclusion for both parties. Afterward...

“I never knew you could be so quick with your tongue,” she said.

“Baby, you ain’t seen nothing yet. And I can’t believe how many dirty words you know.”

As the young woman was falling back to sleep, the phone rang again.

It was her partner in lust. Quickly, the young woman realized that the man on the phone was not her (kind of) boyfriend. The man who gave good phone was a total stranger, who had dialed the wrong number, and then played along, because, well, why not? After hitting the jackpot, he pressed the redial button, hoping to uncover his partner’s identity.

After writhing in embarrassment and shame, the young woman decided that it wouldn’t hurt to get to know her silver-tongued partner. In person. Provided he wasn’t married or crazy. She obtained his name and phone number, and soon after arranged a safe meeting.

She discovered good chemistry between herself and her midnight caller, who was neither married nor (too) crazy, and shortly kicked to the curb the lame (kind of) boyfriend who hadn’t called.

Six months later, the midnight caller proposed marriage.

While the young woman ultimately declined marriage, having discovered that when it comes to men, there is such a thing as too big, the two parted amicably, and occasionally would call one another to relate their ongoing amatory adventures.

But that is a story for another day...

Beverly Diehl (www.beverlydiehl.com) discarded her earliest novels. “I thought the words were supposed to drip from my pen as perfect golden pearls. Then I discovered REwriting.” Beverly writes sexy women’s fiction, short stories (including Emergency Stop in the upcoming LARA anthology), and blogs at Writing in Flow (http://writinginflow.blogspot.com).

The following article was first printed in the Passionate Ink newsletter, Vol. 8, No. 3. Permission granted to reprint or forward with proper credit to author and newsletter.

The Passion of a Kiss By Louisa Bacio

Can you remember your first kiss? How about the best? The worst? Hmm ... simply writing those words makes me think back about all three. Definitely the first and the worst ring sharply in my memory, but the best?

When it comes to erotic romance, let's face it: sometimes we get so worked up in the action between the sheets that we forget some of the build up to passion. A piece of fiction doesn't have to be sweet in order to feature some smoking-hot hand holding and steamy kisses.

In fact, I miss those lazy days where I'd lay in bed with a partner and kiss without any thought of going further. These days, when I get a bit too hot and heavy with hubby and he's not totally in the mood, he'll stop me. What's wrong with kissing for its sake?

He's teased me that I'm a slippery slope: "A few hot kisses, and there's no stopping." I guess that's a good thing, and for the most part – that's exactly what's wanted in erotic romance. That passion of the kiss develops into so much more. The readers want to see these characters take their relationship to the next level.

All the stages of kissing can be erotic. Whether it's the slight lean-in, with lips parted in anticipation, or the licking of the lips in order to get them soft and ready. My personal favorite is sucking a partner's tongue, especially in foreshadowing of other, nether parts. Are they a nibbler? Whether it's the first tongue-tangling experience or the fiftieth, each person has their own personality and style, and these elements need to be brought into the writing.

Then there's taste and scent. Both will be memorable, and pleasant. Was the hero chewing cinnamon-flavored gum beforehand? Is this a same-sex F/F novel, and does one of the women wear cherry lip gloss? For men, what about facial hair? Is he clean shaven, or a little bit scruffy. Gotta love that fuzz on a burly man.

Once the lip-locking gets started, you can think of all those other wonderful activities that take place with the mouth, such as sucking behind the neck and ear, licking of fingers and I'm sure the writer's imagination can come up with much more.

Finally, imagine about the great side effect. Writing this column made me wet my lips, and pucker up for a nice one as hubby climbed into bed. "Wow, such soft and warm lips," he exclaimed. Yep: exactly what I was going for.

*Louisa Bacio is the author of five erotic novels, including the paranormal series *The Vampire, The Witch & The Werewolf*, and numerous steamy short stories. Visit her online at <http://louisabacio.blogspot.com>.*



Check out these fantastic promotional opportunities available for LARA authors through the new LARA Website:

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Have a blog? Now LARA can help you spread the word about it. LARA is doing an email blog tour to the Chapter's Readers. Once a month, a few members will have their blog spotlighted in the email newsletter. Simply click here to submit your blog information: <http://www.lararwa.com/blog-tour-form/>

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LARA will be posting "Say Hello To" articles about the various members on the main blog and in the newsletter. It is a simple and fun way to let the Chapter's Readership get to know you, your blog and your writing style better. Simply click here to fill out the form: <http://www.lararwa.com/submit-a-say-hello-to-article/>

WORKSHOP OR SPEAKER PROPOSAL

LARA is rebuilding the Workshop Page on the website to help our writers market their Speaking and Workshop events. To have your workshop added, simply click here to fill out the quick form:
<http://www.lararwa.com/submit-a-workshop-or-speaker-proposal-for-laras-website/>

The following article first appeared in the June 2012 issue of CONNECTIONS, the monthly newsletter of CTRWA. Permission granted to reprint or forward to sister RWA chapters with proper credit to author and chapter.

The Most Interesting Romance Writer in the World Jane Haertel writing as Susannah Hardy

Have you met The Most Interesting Romance Writer in the World? Here are a few facts about her:

- Her participles dangle, yet she is all the more attractive because of it.
- She does not submit to publishers. Publishers submit to her.
- Her books stay on the shelves at Barnes and Noble until she says it's time to remove them.
- Head hops – and is praised for it.
- Knows exactly how Margaret Mitchell would have given Rhett and Scarlett their HEA in a sequel, but will never tell.
- Reviewers ask her to review their reviews.
- Gave style tips to Strunk & White.
- Successfully puts "i" before "e" — even after "c."
- Literary agents pay her 15% of what they earn.
- Nora Roberts secretly asks her for career advice.
- Has solved the Mysteries of Udolpho – twice.
- Received a million dollar advance — for a single Facebook post.

Her subjects (and verbs) all agree: She IS the most interesting romance writer in the world. Stay creative, my friends!

Jane Haertel writes humorous romantic mysteries under the name Susannah Hardy. She serves as CTRWA's 2012 treasurer.

The following article appeared in the February issue of ShoreLines, the newsletter of the Long Island Romance Writers, Debora Dale, Editor. Permission is granted to sister chapters to reprint or forward articles with proper credit to authors, newsletter and chapter.

Performance Enhancers for Yet-to-be-Published Writers (and They're Legal)

Jolyse Barnett

Whenever I hear about a famous athlete's alleged use of performance enhancers, I can't help but wonder: Is the lure of gaining an edge in a competitive sport so powerful the person would risk losing his reputation? Does the athlete justify use of a banned substance as a short-term solution to recover more quickly from an injury and then become addicted, or does he fall prey to peer pressure and do it to level the playing field?

If you came here looking for the magic pill, I'm sorry to disappoint. Writing is about the joy of hard work. Luckily, there are tips to help serious writers along their way:

Immerse yourself in the craft: Read books about writing, attend workshops at conferences, chapter meetings, or online. Integrate strategies learned from other writers into your writing and discover what fits your style. The more you write, the better your craft and the clearer your voice. And voice is as critical to your success as a great story.

Surround yourself with talent: Join a writing group in your area or online, and network with other writers online through social media such as Facebook and Twitter. You may worry at times this will steal from precious writing time. If so, put a time limit on the socializing or meet your daily writing goal before you focus on platform and networking. From my experience, the connections I've made online are part of what spur me on when I hit a dead-end in a story or save me from quitting my dream when self-doubt creeps in.

Get the creative juices flowing: People-watch for character and dialogue inspiration, at the movies, the mall, restaurants—just about anywhere. Carry a journal at all times. Some of my best scenes have been gleaned from these notes, including a scene on an airplane, a jet skiing adventure, and another from a country wedding. In addition, hold periodic brainstorming sessions with your family, trusted friends, other writers, or your story's characters. Imagination is key!

Mix it up: During my first year of serious writing, I focused on one story and worked in a linear fashion from beginning to end. The second year, the novelty of writing had worn off, and I had difficulty sustaining focus on the next story. That's when I learned how to juggle. Perhaps some will disagree, but many writers say you're on your way to becoming an accomplished writer once you've learned how to bounce between projects in various stages. You may be querying a novel, finishing another, writing a rough draft of a book, and plotting or brainstorming others. If you become bored or stuck for ideas on one, let that one percolate and hop over to another. You'll still make progress toward your daily writing goals.

All these performance enhancers are part of what can turn your passion for writing into a career. With perseverance, you will succeed—without cutting corners.

Jolyse Barnett writes contemporary romance and romantic suspense, often with a dash of fantasy. When she's not creating adventures for the characters in her head or blogging at Margarita Moments & Other Escapes, she can be found playing Wii with her two children, sipping Malbec by the fireplace, or biking with her husband in Key West.

SPEAKER SPOTLIGHT

Speaker Spotlight Sylvia Day Answers 5 Questions

1.) What book do you wish you'd written?

I can't think of one. I have many books I love madly, but I don't wish I'd written them.

2.) If you weren't a writer, what profession would you do?

I'm not sure. I've wanted to be a romance novelist since I was 12, so it's a dream that has pretty much always been with me. I did briefly consider being a dolphin trainer.

3.) Who is your favorite fictional character, and why?

Scarlet O'Hara, because she's the ultimate survivor.

4.) What is your favorite dessert?

Tiramisu, but only if it's excellent. I can skip it if it's just average, which unfortunately is the most frequently found.

5.) What's next for you?

ENTWINED WITH YOU, the next installment in my Crossfire series. I can't wait!



SEX PEEVES: The Top 10 Things Writers Do, I Wish They Didn't

Christine Leo

We've all read those steamy passages that can make our eyebrows raise and our jaws drop. The ones that can make us sympathize with George Takei when he says, "Oh my!" Yet, as powerful as this sizzling prose can be, it can also be detrimental to the story and if done wrong, it can pull the reader right out of the moment. So with that in mind, I put on my reader's cap and tried to narrow down the top ten things writer's do, I wish they didn't.

10. King Kong's Ding Dong

You know him, you love him, his best friends call him "tripod"-- Yes, it's the well-endowed alpha male. Okay, so maybe this isn't that bothersome, which is why it made the bottom of the list, but there is still such a thing as going too far. For instance, if your hero's "South Pole" is hitting him in the face when he's lying on his back, then maybe it's time to make your male a little less majestic. Some writers will dedicate pages to discussing the hero's "dimensions." How long it is, how thick it is, how hard it is and "Oh my, will it ever fit?" Yet, somehow, magically, it always does.

9. The First Aid Frolic

There's a reason Barry White never sang about Neosporin. Because it's not sexy! I realize that sometimes it's necessary for characters to do the horizontal mumbo while one of them isn't 100%, but please, I beg of you, gloss over injuries. I recently read a book where the hero, during an intimate scene, mentioned that the scabs between the heroine's legs looked like they were doing well and should be falling off soon. Ah no. Just no.

8. Would you like some crackers with that cheese?

What would a love scene be without sweet nothings whispered into a lover's ear? I realize most bedroom dialog is inherently a bit on the cheesy side, but some cheddar has aged way past its prime. Lines like, "I want to look into your eyes while I take you," "We were made for each other," "Nothing has ever felt this right" and their various reincarnations have been used mercilessly in romance for years. And while some may consider cheesy dialog the necessary evil of a love scene, as writers, I think we should consider it a challenge to get creative.

7. The Instruction Manual

Sex scenes that come across as instructional manuals have a "this should be self-explanatory" attitude about them. The lack of emotion and internal dialogue leads to dry passages that sound like a step-by-step guide. My advice: It's better to have the camera pan left to a cozy fireplace, and then fade to black, than to give your readers the "insert tab A into slot B" rundown.

6. The Pitiful Monkey Wrench

While it may take an act of God to get some lovers together, once they are, no act of God should keep them apart. As a reader, I can look the other way when the first hurricane hits or when the tree comes crashing through the roof and falls onto their bed, but when an author halts an "almost there" sex scene with weather patterns more than two times, I have to resign. Unless it's a comedy, there should be more than external phenomenon that keep the lovers apart.

5. The Wind Up, but No Pitch.

Imagine, if you will, a friend promises to bring you the most delicious gourmet pizza you've ever had in your life and when they show up to your doorstep it's a 99 cent ice box knock off. No one likes false promises. I'm fine with books that have "sweet" heat levels or even no sex at all, but don't have the hero say, "Do you know how many times, how

many ways, I plan to take you tonight?” and then when it comes time to deliver, you gloss over the goods and say, “Hours later, [said hero] stared at [said heroine] and couldn’t help but wonder how he got so lucky.” Aww, how sweet... NOT! Don’t “hour’s later” me! I want to see the action you promised! If you start out on a hot note, then have the decency to finish on one.

4. The Hypocritical Virgin

These are the Bill Clintons of the lily white world. Their definition of sex and what keeps them “innocent” is obscured. They think if the rocket hasn’t come in for a landing yet, then no mission has been accomplished. I’ve tried to go along with these “everything, but” sex scenes, where the heroines value is often hinged on her remaining “pure” and it’s just so repugnant, I can’t.

3. The Party Pooper

Ah, the party poopers sadden me greatly. They are those “to die for” lovers, where you’ve ridden out the highs and lows of their relationship with them. Where you are not just entertained, but so invested in their story that when it finally comes time for them to express the physical side of their love, you practically hold your breath as you read the pages. And it’s perfect and beautiful and you’re jealous you didn’t write it yourself. There’s only one problem, the party train ends with one them saying a former lover’s name by accident or finding a picture of a former lover in the nightstand. The reason I’m not a big fan of these “conflict copouts,” is that it cheapens an otherwise incredible story. The writer takes us on this amazing journey with people professing their love for one another and bam, it becomes entirely derailed by one person saying the wrong name, really?

2. Leave the C-word out!

It starts with a “C” and rhymes with blunt. In fact, for me, that’s the problem. The c-word is far too blunt. In certain eroticas, it’s completely fine, but otherwise the term just lays there like a smelly dead fish in a field of flowers. It’s totally a personal preference, but once the c-bomb has been dropped it takes me right out of the story.

1. Rape-ish, much?

“No means no,” or so I thought. I recently read a book where a woman screamed the word “No” into the face of the man who was supposed to love her and he didn’t stop what he was doing. He continued on and said, “you’ll thank me for this later.” I couldn’t believe what I was reading! I thought we were past the days of “Luke and Laura” love. This is a best selling author whose entire series I’ve enjoyed immensely. However, after looking back at all the books in the series, I realized that several of the installments contained scenes that, for lack of a better term, were “rape-ish.” I thought I was being a bit overly sensitive until I went on to Amazon and found that even some of her four and five star reviewers recognized the scenes as questionable/ uncomfortable. As easy as it would be for me to go on a rant about this subject, I will simply say that this is such a shame. That it’s sad to see books that have given me and thousands of others hours of enjoyment be brought down by something so easily avoidable.

Christine Leo was born and raised in Southern California where she currently resides with her tech savvy husband. Her need to make a living led her to health insurance, yet her love of writing beckoned her into the exciting world of romantic fiction. She holds a BA in Communications, which would have been Creative Writing had the universe simply dropped a romance novel on her head a little sooner. A really heavy romance novel. At least six-hundred pages. Hardcover. You can find Christine at www.christineleo.com.

Speaker Spotlight Karen Erickson Answers 5 Questions

1.) What book do you wish you'd written?

There's never been a book that made me think, Wow I wish I'd written that, but I do admire so many writers. I'll finish a book and think, wow wish I could write like that. A recent book that did this to me was Kristen Callihan's Moonglow. I LOVED THAT BOOK. Ahem.

2.) If you weren't a writer, what profession would you do?

Well, I was a stay-at-home mom when I finally started to take my writing seriously. And prior to that, I worked as an assistant to the owner of a RV dealership. I'd probably be in an office somewhere if I wasn't doing this.

3.) Who is your favorite fictional character, and why?

Everyone in Stephen King's The Stand. That he could write such a giant book about the end of the world with so many different POVs (including a dog's - I mean come on!) and draw you in so that you care about every single one of those people...gah. They felt so real to me, all of them. From the good guys to the bad guys. One of my all time favorite books ever.

4.) What is your favorite dessert?

Cheesecake mmmm....

5.) What's next for you?

2013 is going to be a busy year for me. The last book from the Worth It series (Worth Everything) comes out February 5th. I have a book with Entangled's Bliss line coming out in April. I'm kicking off a new series with Samhain in June. There are more things in the works as well...

cont.

LARA Meetings

2013

March 10 - Zoe Archer and Nico Rosso;
ASK AN AUTHOR ANYTHING: PASSION INTO PROSE

April 14 - Jessica Brody;
SAVE THE CAT! WRITES A NOVEL

May 19 - Veronica Blade, Suzanne Lazear, Kathy Bennett, and Robena Grant;
CONTEST 101: EVERYTHING YOU NEED TO KNOW

June 9 - Julie Hurwitz;
PITCH WORKSHOP

July 14 - Debbie Decker, Beverly Diehl and Chellesie B. Dancer;
CONFERENCE PREP 101: EVERYTHING YOU NEED TO KNOW

August 18
THE WRITERS TEAM: How to establish the perfect team to support your career

September 15 - Maria Seager;
CONTRACTS 101: EVERYTHING YOU NEED TO KNOW

October 20 - Rick Ochoki;
NANO WRIMO PREP

November 17 - Louisa Bacio;
SYNOPSIS 101: EVERYTHING YOU NEED TO KNOW

December 15
FIRST SALES MEETING

Amendments to the January 2013 Newsletter:

These articles were reprinted in the January 2013 edition of the LARA Confidential with permission from our sister chapters:

“The Business Savvy Author” by Vicky Dreiling appeared in the December 2012 issue of In Print!, the monthly newsletter of Houston Bay Area RWA.

“What Do You Want out of Your Career?” by Addison Fox appeared in the October 2012 issue of the DARA News, the newsletter of the Dallas Area Romance Authors.

“The Right Word” by Margaret L. Carter appeared in the Fourth Quarter 2012 issue of Out of This World, the newsletter of the Fantasy, Futuristic, and Paranormal Chapter.

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