

URBAN LITERARY

MAGAZINE

ISSUE 03 / FEB 2016

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OF
WRITERS**

**Smart
Marketing
Best Fiction
Award Winners**

HOT NEW READS

Author Interview

**Find your confidence
as a writer**

- Finding out your favorite romance author is a man...
- Struggles New Authors Face
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NEW WRITING

SECRETS OF WRITERS

CONTESTS

SMART MARKETING

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STRUGGLES NEW WRITERS FACE

AUTHOR INTERVIEW

FAVORITE ROMANCE IS A MALE?

URBAN LITERARY MAGAZINE

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**BEST FICTION AWARD WINNERS
ANNOUNCED**

Jennifer Renson - 1st Place in YA

Ryan Hill - 2nd Place in YA

Lee Wolf- 3rd Place in YA

Courtney Psak - 1st Place in Romance

Hal Rappaport - 2nd Place in Romance

Anita Claire - 3rd Place in Romance

Kevin Anglade - 1st Place in

Mystery/Thrillers

Alan Joshua - 2nd Place in

Mystery/Thrillers

Robert Sparkman - 3rd Place in

Mystery/Thrillers

\$50.00

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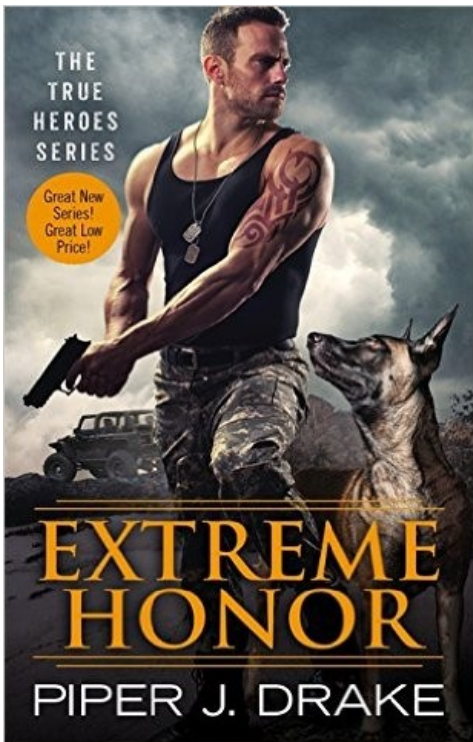
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Synopsis:

HONOR, LOYALTY, LOVE

David Cruz is good at two things: war and training dogs. The ex-soldier's toughest case is Atlas, a Belgian Malinois whose handler died in combat. Nobody at Hope's Crossing kennel can break through the animal's grief. That is, until dog whisperer Evelyn Jones walks into the facility . . . and into Atlas's heart. David hates to admit that the curvy blonde's mesmerizing effect isn't limited to canines. But when Lyn's work with Atlas puts her in danger, David will do anything to protect her. Lyn realizes that David's own battle scars make him uniquely qualified for his job as a trainer. Tough as nails yet gentle when it counts, he's gotten closer to Atlas than anyone else-and he's willing to put his hard-wired suspicion aside to let her do the same. But someone desperate enough to kill doesn't want Lyn working with Atlas. Now only teamwork, trust, and courage can save two troubled hearts

and the dog who loves them both . . .

Rating: 5 stars

Review:

Extreme Honor by Piper J. Drake is one sexy as hell romance novel. Readers won't be able to stay away from this juicy yet well-written plot. Piper J. Drake knows what readers want and delivers just that plus more. This was the first romance novel I have read by her and immediately I was impressed. Readers can tell a lot of research went into the makings of this stunning read. The way the characters interacted around and with each other was believable. It was like experiencing the whole scene as a witness rather than just as a reader. The sizzling heat will leave readers begging for more reads by Piper J. Drake. *Extreme Honor* is a military romance that shows readers what really goes on out there in the battle fields as well as the choices soldiers are left to make. Sometimes soldiers are left with no choice but to accept the bad and try to make good whenever possible. However, that wasn't the case for one soldier. There were others who were left to keeping a dark secret or else be killed for exposing it. Even if you deny any part of such operations, one risks the chance of being shot down. Piper J. Drake leads readers deep into a dangerous field that will tear at their heart as well as warm them. Love is just as much a risky business as dealing with military trained dogs and the soldiers that work with them. Readers will instantly be taken away from their seats into this exciting yet fast-paced story filled with action and adventure. Overall, I highly recommend this hot read to all. The passion within is enough to light a flame...

Undercover Author

By Samantha Cole

What would you do if your favorite author of romance novels, you know the one whose books you've been reading for years, turns out to be...*gasp*...a guy? Would you feel cheated? Disappointed? Cancel your pre-order of his next book? Or would you say, hell yeah?! Finally, a guy gets women...I mean, really understands how women feel, what they want, and is more than willing to give it to them.

Most women know that finding a romantic guy is like finding a diamond in the rough—they are very hard to come by. They want the guy that hands over the remote, along with a glass of wine, and then puts her feet in his lap and starts massaging them. They want the guy who sends flowers just because it's 3 pm on Tuesday. They want the guy who spills everything in his touchy-feely heart onto the floor without prompting. A fantasy, right? Wrong! Those guys do exist...we hear about them all the time and wish they were ours. So why can't those touchy-feely men write romance if they want to? Female writers have to understand the opposite sex (which in most cases, it's not hard to do) in order to write from a guy's point of view. So, if a guy really get us, why not read a story from his point of view?

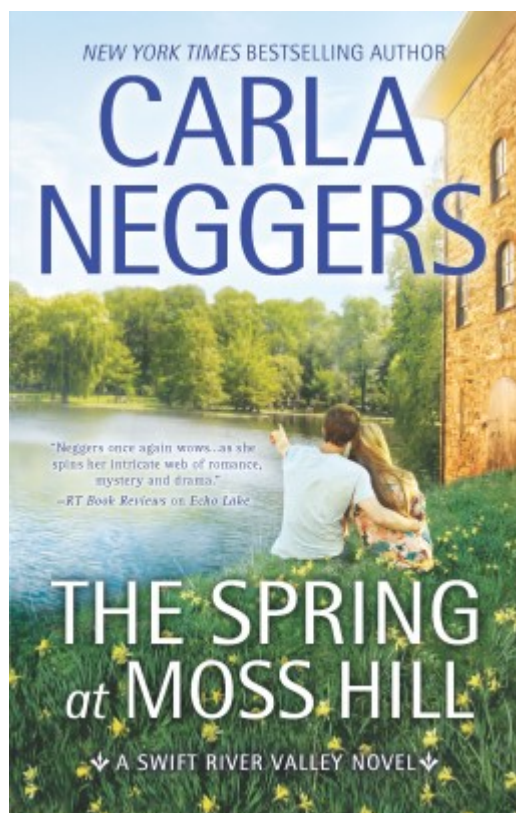
Maybe you'll learn something about men that you didn't know before. Heck, maybe you'll learn something you didn't know about yourself. So what if he doesn't know what it's like to have ovaries and that-time-of-the-month? Women don't know what it's like to have a prostate and a hard-on ten times a day, sometimes in an embarrassing situation. I, for one, would be fine with it if one of my favorite romance authors turned out to be a man under a woman's pen name. It would show me there is hope for the male gender. If at least one of them gets us, then there has

to be more out there, right?

And maybe one is your or my...*gasp*...soulmate. Wouldn't that be awesome? (P.S. – don't assume if a guy writes romance or erotica that he's doing it to meet 'chicks', and it's okay to proposition him. It's a pretty good bet that some woman has already



snatched him up and isn't willing to share or let him go.)



Synopsis:

Kylie Shaw has found a home and a quiet place to work as an illustrator of children's books in little Knights Bridge, Massachusetts. No one seems to know her here—and she likes it that way. She carefully guards her privacy in the refurbished nineteenth-century hat factory where she has a loft. And then California private investigator Russ Colton moves in. Russ is in Knights Bridge to keep his client and friend, eccentric Hollywood costume designer Daphne Stewart, out of trouble. Keeping tabs on Daphne while she considers starting a small children's theater in town doesn't seem like a tough job until he runs into Kylie. Her opposition to converting part of the old hat factory into a theater is a challenge. But his bigger challenge is getting Kylie to let loose a little...like the adventurous characters she depicts in her work. Kylie and Russ have more in common than they or anyone else would ever expect.

They're both looking for a place to belong, and if they're able to let go of past mistakes and learn to trust again, they might just find what they need in Knights Bridge...and each other.

Rating: 5 stars

Review:

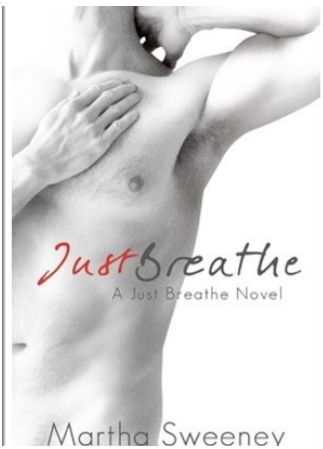
The Spring at Moss Hill by Carla Neggers is one fascinating romance. One that comes tapping the characters on the shoulders unaware. Or at least one of them is captured unaware. Carla Neggers never disappoints her readers. There's always a new surprising story filled with adventure, suspense, and romance. *The Spring at Moss Hill* will show readers a realistic way of how one man sweeps a woman straight into his arms and into his heart. Inside *The Spring at Moss Hill*, readers will get to see a fresh personality in a leading female character. Kylie isn't just the average of your mill character. She has a creative side to her that is highly remarkable. Yet, unlike the characters she creates she is more shy to the outer world. In her books is where she comes out more adventurous than she seems. But then there's the good looking stranger who is tempted to show Kylie how to let her hair down. Something about Kylie lures Russ to her. Like a moth to a flame both Kylie and Russ can't ignore what they feel. However, there's never an easy simple way when it comes to falling in love. Each of Carla Neggers's characters needs to get past their own issues before everything else can fall into place. The question is can they do it, or will they let a blooming romance fade? Overall, I have loved reading this beautiful, creative and intriguing novel. I highly recommend this read to readers everywhere.



———— 2016 ————

READING CHALLENGE

- A book based on a fairy tale
- A National Book Award winner
- A YA bestseller
- A book you haven't read since high school
- A book set in your home state
- A book translated to English
- A romance set in the future
- A book set in Europe
- A book that's under 150 pages
- A New York Times bestseller
- A book that's becoming a movie this year
- A book recommended by someone you just met
- A self-improvement book
- A book you can finish in a day
- A book written by a celebrity
- A political memoir
- A book at least 100 years older than you
- A book that's more than 600 pages
- A book from Oprah's Book Club
- A science-fiction novel
- A book recommended by a family member
- A graphic novel
- A book that is published in 2016
- A book with a protagonist who has your occupation
- A book that takes place during Summer
- A book and its prequel
- A murder mystery
- A book written by a comedian
- A dystopian novel
- A book with a blue cover
- A book of poetry
- The first book you see in a bookstore
- A classic from the 20th century
- A book from the library
- An autobiography
- A book about a road trip
- A book about a culture you're unfamiliar with
- A satirical book
- A book that takes place on an island
- A book that's guaranteed to bring you joy



Just Breathe Book Release

In just under a year, Martha Sweeney, author of the Just Breathe series, is releasing her third novel to complete the trilogy on February 16, 2016. The first book of the series, *Breathe In*, was released in May 2015 and was a No. 1 Amazon Best Seller within the same year and the second book, *Breathe Out*, was released in September 2015.

... **Synopsis 'Just Breathe' series:** A traumatic experience on her sixteenth birthday from the death of her parents, Emma Peterson is left an orphan, thrown into the foster care system where she's almost abused just two months later.

Desperate for control and distance, Emma leaves New Jersey and escapes to the West Coast.

Emma, now twenty-four years old, is a successful business woman who owns two companies and has an irregular attitude towards people and relationships. Other than her three closest friends, Jared, Maggie and Nathan, Emma keeps everyone at a distances — especially men.

To avoid relationships at any cost, Emma has created eight (8) golden rules when it comes to men, and letting them into

Pushing Boundaries

Every story that Martha writes, tests the societal, cultural and ethical beliefs and boundaries of her readers. Her goal is to present ideas and concepts that inspire the reader to think and feel beyond their comfort zone on all levels.

Where to Find Martha

Connect with Martha online.
www.marthasweeney.com

Facebook:

@AuthorMarthaSweeney

Twitter:

@MSweeney_Author **Instagram:**
@MarthaSweeneyAuthor

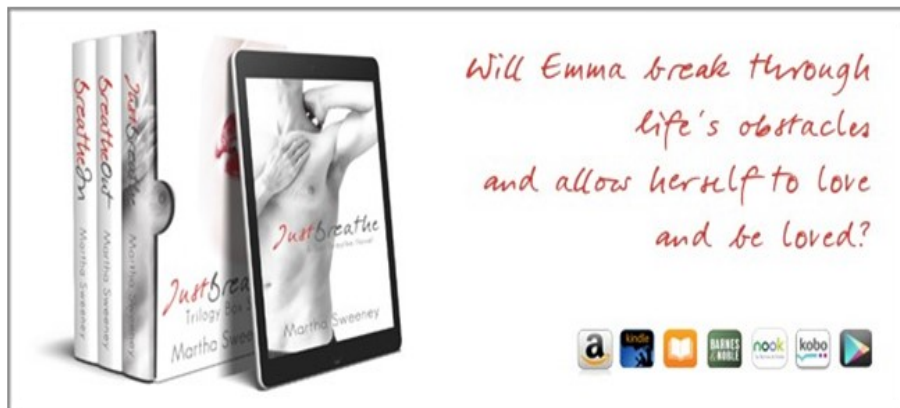
Unfortunately for Emma, her rules are called into questions when her friend Maggie finds a new boyfriend.



Maggie's relationship with Henry moves very quickly; faster than any of

Maggie's previous relations, and Emma is not excited about the newcomer to the group. On top of that, Henry's best friend, Joe Covelli, is the first man Emma has ever met who makes her call her own rules into question.

Emma embarks on a journey that tests her beyond the temptation of breaking her rules as well as having to face her past. She discovers that there's more to life than maintaining control. Will Emma break through life's obstacles and allow herself to love and be loved? ...



Please note: There are sexually explicit scenes F/M and F/F/M.

Martha is a self-published author and personally designed each of her book covers. She also assisted her husband, Thomas Sweeney, with editing and cover design for his first novel, *The Harem*, that was published November 11, 2014. Martha's work with *The Harem* inspired her to become an author too.

The Harem by Thomas Sweeney

Originally, The Harem was written as a screenplay. Several years later, after trying to find and work with an experienced novelist, Martha, Tom's wife, convinced Tom to write The Harem on his own. He'd had experience writing before, but only for songs.

Tom finally decided to personally write The Harem as a novel, realizing that no one else could possibly capture the underlying subtleties, themes and messages relayed in the story.

The Harem begins with a very powerful question, informing the reader that the story is NOT typical; *"Have you ever believed in something so completely that you were willing to give up everyone and everything in your life to protect it?"*

This book isn't for the faint of heart or the closed minded individuals. If your willing to test and expand your thoughts and beliefs, then you just might find the 'gold' between the lines of this beautiful masterpiece from first time novelist Thomas Sweeney.

****Rated R**** Erotic, Romance Novel

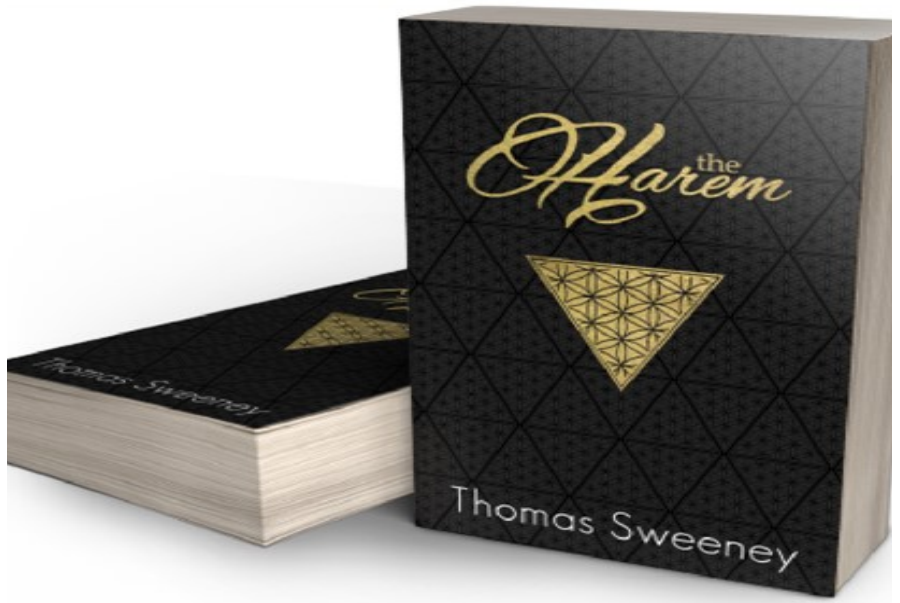
... **Synopsis:** The Harem is a dramatic romance novel testing cultural boundaries through the innocent eyes of Susan Winthrop.

Getting the dream internship of her life, Susan quickly discovers there is much more involved than she ever bargained for or could have possibly imagined.

Susan Winthrop, a shy, self-conscious, nineteen-year-old college student struggling to find her way in life without the support of family, discovers the position of her dreams, or so she thinks, until the requirements of the internship and potential employment are revealed.

While Susan struggles with her own morals, she discovers an entirely new world opening to her and her desires. Slowly, she begins to embrace this new position and excel, realizing her own amazing potential in ways she never envisioned and that some may fear.

However, her new found love, friends and colleagues prove fallible. Susan soon discovers that the result of making mistakes at this new level of life are far reaching and can be extremely



dangerous and damaging.

The innocent struggle of a young, budding college student suddenly unfolds into a struggle for life in an extremely hostile social and political world that abhors change and regularly embraces fear and persecution.

As Susan wrestles with her new found knowledge, power, wealth and life, she is forced to fight to defend her right to grow as she sees fit. ...

Where to Find Tom

Connect with Tom online. www.theharembook.com

Facebook: @TheHaremBook

Twitter: @tsweeneyauthor

@theharembook **Instagram:**

@tomsweeneyauthor @theharembook

More About Tom

Aside from being a novelist, Tom is a business owner, founder of the World Wealth Network and has been a musician for over 25 years with a No. 1 song on MP3.com, beating Blink 182 and Alanis Morissette, as well as appearing on major radio stations nationally and internationally, and performing on stage with internationally acclaimed artists.



Upcoming Books

Currently, Elisa is working on a number of writing projects. Her next novel will be a science fiction entitled The Remembrance.

Where to Find Elisa

Connect with Elisa online.
www.elisamariehopkins.com
Facebook: @HopkinsElisa
Twitter: @HopkinsElisa
Instagram: @ElisaMHop

Sophie doesn't know it, but the stakes are high: her life and her heart. Desperately needing support, she turns to a few trusted people, and to Oliver most of all. But can he be trusted, who speaks the truth, and the question on everyone's lips: who is the man in the mask?

Her checkered past returns to entangle her. She will come to realize that it is not dead after all...it is still very much alive.

A Diamond in the Rough is a love story, a thriller, funny in parts and moving in others. Most of all, it is a gripping debut novel that will have you guessing and turning pages until you reach the end. ...

Elisa's books are available in both English and Spanish for both ebook and print editions. You can find her books available on Amazon, Kindle, B&N and Nook.

AUHTOR ELISA MARIE HOPKINS

An avid reader and lover of stories, Elisa Marie Hopkins start writing her first novel, A Diamond In the Rough, when she was in college earning her degree in engineering. It wasn't until a number of years later that Elisa decided to self-publish. A Diamond in the Rough, book No. 1 of the Diamond in the Rough series, was published March 2015 with the sequel, Black Diamond, being published October 2015.

... Synopsis 'A Diamond in the Rough:' 25-year-old model Sophia Cavall has a seemingly nice life walking the runway until she begins to receive death threats through social media and is almost kidnapped by a masked figure. She tries to fight off her assailant, but luckily the attempt ends in failure when mysterious business magnate Oliver Black intervenes.



Historial Romance Author

Nicole Strycharz

Though Nicole has been writing for ten years, she has just recently self-published several of her Historical Romance novels on Amazon. Her love for history, her mother, and her best friend, inspired Nicole to create her stories: The Maybrook Trilogy, *A Valentine for August* (#1) and *A Passion for Henrietta* (#2); *The Duke of Golden Shire: King of Hearts*; and *Nollaig Shona Duit: A Christmas Tale*.

... **Synopsis for 'A Valentine for August:'** Abigail Everett and August Black have been sweethearts for years but when her politically ambitious, cruel father separates them their love takes the ultimate test...time. After nine years of being apart Abigail finds herself back in her hometown Maybrook to work as a governess, where people, places and things have changed. Especially her August, who is now an important part of the community. His new found success is due to more than just hard work however, it's also due to the many sacrifices he's made; including his own desires. Abigail finds he has come a long way from the boy she loved but the flame is not yet out. Will August be able to remember his love for Abigail and the man he was, before he is forced to be the man everyone now expects him to be? Valentine's Day was once August and Abigail's most meaningful day and now it's coming back around; but will they still be one another's Valentine ?

*"If it was allowed,
I'd make you feel
more like a bottle
of champagne after
it's been opened. I
would make you
feel...blown over.
Released." - Passion
for Henrietta*

.....

Synopsis for 'A Passion for Henrietta:' Henrietta Dexter wasn't devastated over her broken engagement but she was unsure of what to do next. That changes when her handsome lawyer cousin Ralf offers to get her away from the gossip and drama of

Maybrook. She agrees to go back with him to the city of D.C. only to learn the man isn't really her cousin! Her budding attraction to Ralf makes things complicated but it also forces her to confront the parts of herself she doesn't like. Her selfish and spoiled upbringing has made her into someone Ralf could never see himself with. She makes a point to learn more about the world around her meanwhile his handsome friend is sporting for her heart. Matters of the heart must wait however, when Henrietta ends up preoccupied with a murder case surrounding a local Jewelry shop, that she hopes will wipe her slate clean if she solves it. She's a long way from her little town of Maybrook and that distance is giving her the courage to break society's rules, romantic limits and even test family honor when her unfolding romance challenges everything. Finding her passion and herself may be her greatest adventure yet in the Nation's Capitol. ...



Where to Find Nicole

Nicolesbooks.wix.com/authorpage

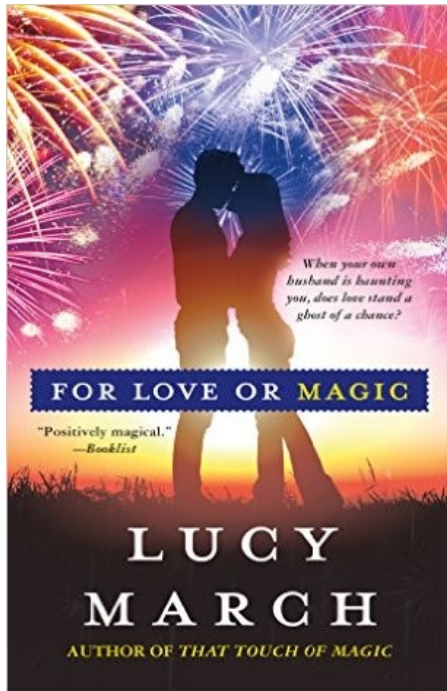
Facebook: [@NicoleStrycharz](https://www.facebook.com/NicoleStrycharz)

Twitter: [@asag4jupiter](https://twitter.com/asag4jupiter)

Instagram: [@nikkiwrites2](https://www.instagram.com/nikkiwrites2)

Where to buy these books?

They are available in both print and eBook on both Amazon and Kindle.



Synopsis: Eliot Parker's good-for-nothing deceased husband has left her a new lease on life: a house in sleepy Nodaway Falls, New York. But his offer comes with a cost: his ghost... As if being married to him wasn't hard enough! Nodaway Falls turns out to be a town with more than a little magic in the air. Eliot swore off using her own powers sixteen years ago, thanks to one catastrophic day when she lost the only people who ever mattered to her, and ran away from her spellbinding father and his reckless enchantments. Now, when a chance encounter with quiet, handsome Desmond Lamb results in a magical explosion that rocks Eliot to the core, she can't help but wonder: Has her heart fallen under some sort of spell? Or is this what true love *really* feels like? The real question, of course, is whether her husband will stop haunting her...and let Desmond give her a chance at happily ever after?

Rating: 5 stars

Review: *For Love or Magic* by Lucy March in one laugh out loud and romantic read. Readers won't be able to stop reading until they have read the last page. Suspense, in-

trigue, hot mysterious man and a father who messes with magic. A young woman had a lot to deal with while growing up. Her mother died and she lost many others that were important to her as well. Changing her name and keeping her magic away, Eliot has a tougher life than when she was younger. Just when readers think there's enough action and conflict to keep them turning the pages, Lucy March brings in the issue of Eliot having to put up with a ghost. A ghost she can't force to leave. When someone close to her dies recently, Eliot is left with three items. These three things being a small house in her home town, a slobbering dog, and a broken down truck. But there's the fact that her father is still in town and up to something. Exactly what he's up to and why as well as what happens between Eliot and the hot stranger is something readers will have to find out on their own. *For Love of Magic* is a romantic comedy that will leave readers wondering, if what happens between the protagonists was for love or magic. This was the first novel that I have read by Lucy March. I could not stop laughing or feeling sympathy for the main female character. She has gone through many tough paths only to come out surviving them all. But there's the latest set of events that make readers question, if she will indeed make it out of the current events or not. There are many things to love about Lucy March's story. A dog that slobbers and is fast at eating any food that is lying around. The dog, Seamus, kind of reminded me of Marley and Me. The dog was always getting into things, he shouldn't. Despite Seamus eating all of her food and slobbering everywhere, Eliot still took good care of him. Overall, Eliot is a funny, smart, and sweet woman who just so happens to have a lot on her plate. Readers can easily relate to her as well as following along this fast-paced story. *For Love or Magic* has it all. Romance, humor, and one heated magical experience that readers everywhere won't forget. I highly recommend this read to readers everywhere.



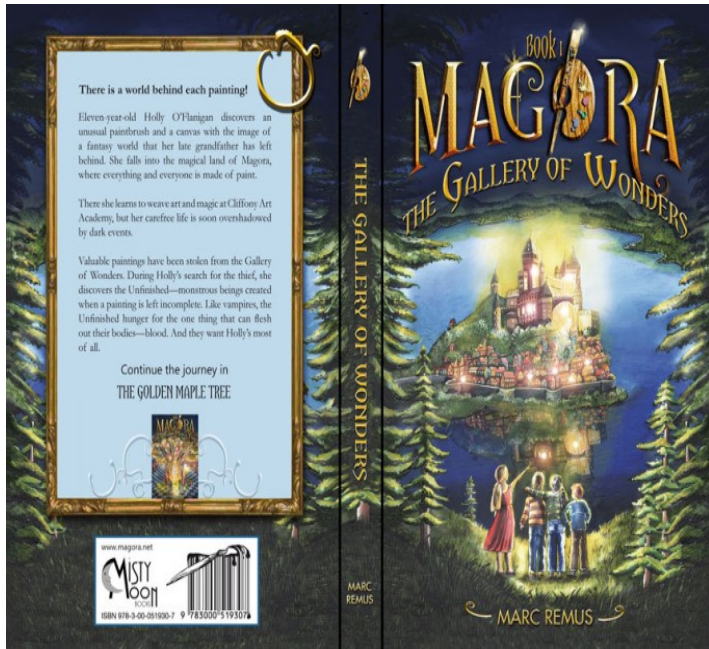
Synopsis:

Frannie Brisbane knew it was an impossible scheme, but unless she went through with it, the daughter she had given up thirteen years ago and who now wanted to visit, would discover that Frannie had painted a very different picture of her life in the letters they'd exchanged. Frannie's close friends rally around her, and next thing she knows, she is living in a mansion and wearing designer clothes. The only thing missing is a husband. Confirmed bachelor, Clay Coleman, has ulterior motives when he agrees to play the role of loving husband, but Frannie, who nursed a crush on him for years, fears she is flirting with danger in their role of let's pretend. But Frannie and Clay aren't the only ones keeping secrets. Sooner or later, the truth comes out, exposing everyone involved. Can Frannie ever get past her hurt when she discovers the truth about Clay?

My Rating: 5 stars

My Review: *Husband Wanted* by Charlotte Hughes is one fantastic read. Readers will love this

romantic comedy. Charlotte Hughes never disappoint her readers. She knows exactly what they like and how to deliver it in the best ways. Humor...check. Romance...check. Inspirational...check. Highly sweet and enticing...double check! *Husband Wanted* will intrigue readers from page one and keep them glued in until the very last page. I could not put this novel down at all. The only good news when I reached the last page, was knowing there were more novels written by Charlotte Hughes. Her novels will satisfy readers thirst for the best romantic comedies. This particular story will leave readers blushing, laughing out loud and feeling both surprised and happy at the ending. Unlike others within its genre, *Husband Wanted* out does itself. Bringing readers a realistic yet highly believable tale that can actually happen in our world. The scenes come to life on every page with the charming characters that round out each other perfectly. A woman who has gone through a tough and embarrassing life style when younger thought giving up her baby girl was for the best. Now, after having corresponded with her daughter, she is second guessing herself. Will her daughter like her or not? What is a woman to do especially, when she finds out that all the lies she told her daughter will have to happen asap? Frannie finds out that her daughter is coming to see her within days time. That puts Frannie on the spot. What happens next...and after that will keep readers coming back for more. Charlotte Hughes is clearly a talented writer whose work is always a must read for all. I don't know what would happen if I finished a novel and only to find that there wasn't another one to read afterwards. Overall, I loved reading *Husband Wanted*, and I highly recommend it to readers everywhere.



Rating: 5 stars

Review:

The Gallery of Wonders by Marc Remus is the most fascinating children's book that I have read. An illustrator at heart, Marc Remus has turned his illustrations into much more than just words on blank pages. He has beautifully created worlds where a child's imagination can soar. Adventure, suspense, and a fun world filled with extraordinary things and places one can only dream of. Marc's talent as a writer is definitely one that readers should look for. His writing is captivating. I highly recommend Marc Remus's novel, *The Gallery of Wonders* to both children and adults alike. Who would have thought that a world of painting can be so exciting?

The Gallery of Wonders is a must read for every child. The story is fast-paced and packed with enough action to keep the children turning the pages. Inside, this remarkable well-written masterpiece, readers will find a young girl worrying about her grandpa. She sees a fire coming from his place and tries calling for help. Her step family won't let her and yet she goes after her grandpa hoping to help him.

Soon, Holly will lose the only family member that cared about her...but all is not lost. Marc Remus then takes readers on one addictive rollercoaster ride of a life time. One that's involves a painting. A painting that takes Holly and a few others to a world no one knew about. There anything that is drawn comes to life. Readers will have a blast following Holly and friends on their journey. The ending will leave readers wondering what happens next...The good news is that Marc Remus has another book coming soon. Overall, I loved this children's book and look forward to reading more by Marc Remus in the future.

Reviews For Sale—Are They Worth It?

By Samantha Cole

If you're involved in the indie author community on Facebook at all, as an author, reader, blogger, editor, publisher, cover model or designer, it can be assumed, at some point, you've heard about the controversy over paid reviews. Run a search on 'paid book reviews' and hundreds of URLs pop up for you to choose from. As an author, I've even been private messaged on FB by unscrupulous people offering to review my books for a fee. Hell, they'll even let *me* write the reviews and they will post them on Amazon, Goodreads, and anywhere else I want them under one or more of their aliases. Five, ten, or twenty different reviews, if I'm willing to pony up more money. The cheapest offers I can recall seeing were \$5 for postings on three to five sites. The most expensive ones were in the \$500 range, which I'm still in sticker shock over—not that I used any of these services.

Now, as immoral as this sounds, these shysters wouldn't be peddling their services if people weren't taken them up on their offers. So, what does that say about the authors themselves? The ones who stooped to that low level, just above pond scum, where these rats can be found. It says one of the following:

A – They don't have enough confidence in themselves or their talent to seek out real, honest reviews;

B - They don't know where to find or are too lazy to seek out those honest reviewers

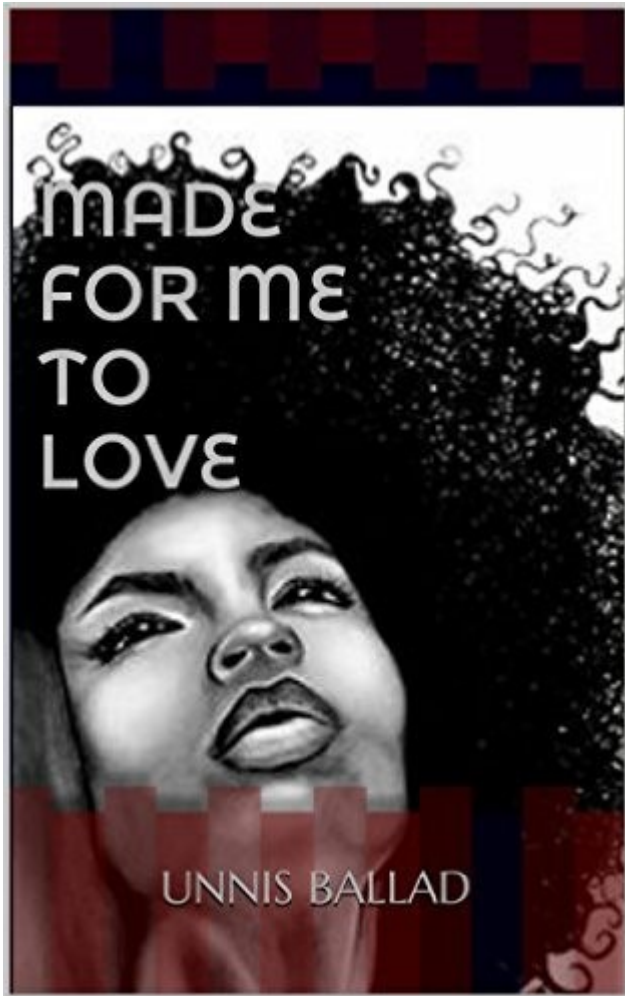
C - Their book is so poorly written, that instead of taking poor reviews and using them as a guide to fix the problem, they refuse to admit that they are the problem to begin with. They'll rip the reviewers apart, claiming they are ignorant people who couldn't review their way out of a paper bag!

Out of the three choices above, I highly recommend authors avoid #3 as several in the past learned the hard way not to respond negatively, or at all, to poor reviews. The few I happened to witness doing this will never be able to publish anything under the name they were using ever again without being a continued laughing stock of the literary and social media world.

So my advice to authors is this—so, you got a bad review, *huh?* Buckle, baby, it's going to be a bumpy ride. The cream of the crop on the New York Times' bestsellers list have bad reviews coming out their ears. If someone didn't like your book because it just was for them, that's fine—

not everyone has the same taste in food, so why should tastes in books be any different? But if someone is critical of your writing and it is mostly for technical reasons, then that's great! It means it's fixable. So, **FIX IT!** And then there's a good chance you won't have to pay for those fake reviews, because the real ones might just start rolling in!





Rating: 5 stars

Review:

Made for Me to Love by Unnis Ballard is an inspirational journey that readers will love. Heart-breaking at first, then there's the fight to stay strong despite everything that happens. Yes, life tosses us curves balls and pulls the rug from under our feet occasionally, but readers will find this one woman's fight is the hardest. Love created a precious gift and only to be taken away from the arms of one woman. Then, her relationship with her man is one that many women find themselves trapped within. However, Isabelle fights and she fights with all the passion and strength God has given her. Being happy is something we all want. Unnis Ballard's realistic and believable character, Isabelle believes that happiness just isn't within her reach, until fate brings something to her. Maybe, just maybe Isabelle will finally find what she deserves after all. Happiness.

Synopsis:

True love does triumph...in some shape and form. Isabelle has always risen above tragedy and heart break. When her baby died, she rose and survived. As she dealt with a cheating and abusive husband, she rose and survived. Isabelle thought her chance at finding happiness was fading, but real love was nearby. When true love presents itself she realizes accepting it is not the easiest thing to do. This tale tells the struggle of the human spirit's desire to be loved even when it is not entirely right.

Set in the 1970's, *Made For Me To Love* is a heart-warming story based upon actual events in the author's life.

Made for Me to Love is a remarkable African American piece of literature that is heartbreaking. A story how many lives come together all facing a future that none of them wanted. The ending was something, I didn't expect. It was definitely one that readers won't see coming. Unnis Ballard weaves family, love, and loss all into this beautifully written story. The characters are well-developed. I enjoyed reading this novel, and I highly recommend it to readers everywhere. It will definitely open up one's eyes to the world's cruel fates.

\$5.00

Express Book
Review Feature

Urban Literary Agency

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2 for 1

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Synopsis:

After being rejected and left alone, Alexandria finds herself going down a moral line. Slightly desperate for money, she takes a one-time 'job' as a paid for companion by a not so attractive but very nice wealthy man. Is getting paid to be in the company of men really such a bad thing if it feels good? She falls into a world of clients that are wealthy, powerful, successful men with fancy cars and country club lifestyles. But she sees the fragility in all of these men, the loneliness and need for acceptance that is the human condition. Alexandria becomes 'Catherine' a high-end escort with a beautiful laugh who finds the goodness and attractiveness in all men, falling in love with all of her clients just a little. By accepting these men and seeing the goodness in them, she pleases these men in many ways. Is it possible by pleasing others maybe Alexandria/Catherine can find her true self and find happiness?

Rating: 5 stars

Review:

The Moral Line by Vanessa Bogenholm is one journey readers won't ever forget. A woman who loves her husband and loves being intimate with him...then to lose it all. Her life then spirals into an unknown place. How will she survive? Then life

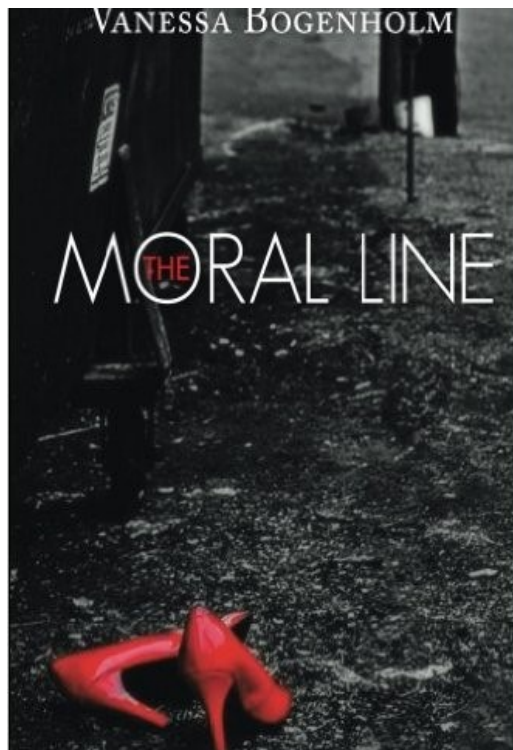
takes an interesting route and she finds a way to keep her feet firmly on the ground and her head up. Catering to men to support one's self is a risky business. It can be challenging and difficult. Especially, when some men attract one's heart to them. Lines can be blurred. Hearts can be worn out until there's nothing left.

The Moral Line shows readers an inside glimpse into love's good and bad sides. Readers especially women will see the

fragile side of men. Men can be violent and cruel. Sometimes bitter and this can change a woman. A woman just like Alexandria. At first love was good then went sour. This story is one adventure that will leave readers breathless and intrigued. Every page will lure readers deeper into its irresistible plot.

The one remarkable strong going woman like Alexandria give women hope. Hope

that they can carry on when life gives them lemons. Overall, I highly recommend this well-written story to readers everywhere. Vanessa Bogenholm is a talented writer whose words can persuade any reader to her fictional masterpiece.





Why is Literature So Important?

By Danielle Urban

Everywhere we look, literature is everywhere. It's talked about a lot. People are taught literature at a young age and all through their school life. Literature can be taught or passed on verbally or in written form. We share it with others. Literature is in a way a sort of communication. The kind of communication that brings forth a form of expression. Reading a piece of literature, we can find morals being taught or maybe it's a way of documenting life's events. Events that can be about important figures, places, and things. Maybe these are what educates us in shaping the future.

For example, history is a form of literature. It's told in way that documents who, when, where, and why. It not only tells us but also, shows us what happens when a certain event causes things like war, segregation, and death to many. We don't read what was recorded so that we may be aware of what happened and maybe to prevent us from doing the same mistakes twice. Literature cases emotion. Things in history may cause us to cry or feel sympathy. Maybe we feel hopeful or inspired to see that none of the bad things happen again.

History inspires, educates and causes expression within its readers. Literature teaches, entertains, and promotes. Teaches us right from wrong. Entertains us by taking us to different places and cultures we could possible never dream of. Promotes different agendas. Literature can be taken seriously or not so seriously, but no matter how we perceive it, it changes us and the way we analyze everything.

Literature is important because its education at its best. We learn things that we probably wouldn't have learned, if we didn't read or write it down and pass on to others. Once literature is written and shared, it goes around like a virus. One person passes it onto another person. Then that person passes it onto another person until soon a good majority of the populations have read and analyzed the piece of literature. It may sway some to change their political thinking or it may make other see the world in a new light. Or it might be something funny that teaches a child words. Words that take that child's imagination into a new place. Literature can explain why something happens the way it does or it might question we already know as fact. It causes us to analyze and to react in a way that may be the same as our neighbor or different than our neighbor. But that's why literature is important. We can pass on a culture or history to our people or teach them new things. Or to persuade others to our side. Maybe we just want to make people laugh or cry or feel good. Whatever the reasons are for literature, it has a strong impact on our lives and thus it is important. Not to us but to future generations.

Short Story Competition 2016

Apply Today!

Urban Lit Magazine

February 4th

We will be hosting a Valentine's Day Writing Contest. The contest will consist of 3 rounds of writing. Each round of writing will consist of a new writing topic and a word limit as well as the timeframe in which the writing must be turned in. Those interested must enter in by February 4th. Contest begins on the 8th.

1st Round— Contestants will be given a Valentine's Day topic. Each writer must write a 2,500 word story based on the topic given. Writers will have 6 days to write and submit their pieces. Judges will then choose the top 5 writers from round 1 to make it to round 2.

2nd Round— Contestants will be given a new writing topic. Each writer must write a 2,000 word story based on this given topic. Writers will have only 3 days to write and submit their story. Judges will then choose the top 3 writers from round 2 to make it to round 3.

3rd Round— Contestants will be given a new writing topic. They must write a 1,500 word story based on the new topic given to them. Writers will have 24 hours to write and submit their story. Judges will then choose 1 winner from this round. All writers will receive a digital seal for each round of writing they made it to as well as being featured inside of our February Issue. All stories written by the writers will be featured inside our February Issue for a one time publication. When writers enter into our contest they are agreeing to giving us the right to feature their stories within our issue. Writers can enter in by emailing us at: urbanliteraryagency@gmail.com. Please, put Valentine's Day Contest in the subject area. We will then email a confirmation of entry as well as an invoice for the \$5 entry fee.

In March, we will be hosting a Poetry Contest. All writers interested must sign up before March 7th. March 7th will be the start of the poetry contest. Entry cost is only \$5.00 per person. The three rounds of writing for the poetry contest will work out like this:

1st Round— Poets will need to write a full page of poetry based on the given topic. Poets will have 6 days to write and submit their pieces. Judges will then choose the top 5 poets to move onto round two.

2nd Round— Poets will need to write a half page of poetry based on the new given topic. Poets will have 3 days to write and submit their pieces. Judges will then choose the top 3 to move onto round three.

3rd Round—Poets will need to write a five line poem based on the new topic given. Poets will have 24 hours to write and submit their pieces. Judges will then choose the final winner.

All poets who made it to round 2 will receive a rating, a critique and a blue digital seal.

All poets who made it to round 3 will receive a rating, a critique, and a lime green digital seal.

The final winner of the 3rd round will receive a dark green digital seal, an interview, as well as a rating and critique.

All contests of each round will have their writings featured inside our literary magazine and website as well as social media.

To enter, please, email us at:

urbanliteraryagency@gmail.com

Please, put Poetry Contest in the subject line. We will then send a confirmation email as well as an invoice for the \$5.00 entry fee.



Meet Marc Remus

Children's Author & Illustrator

What were your first thoughts when told that you should write books?

Looking back to the years before college, I probably would have considered everyone crazy who had told me that I would write books one day.

As a teenager I was not very skilled with words and focused mainly on painting.

It was not until college that I began to illustrate picture books. My instructor motivated me to write my own stories and from that day on I began to improve my skills and learn how to write books.

Can you share with us readers what your inspiration was when creating your debut novel, *The Gallery of Wonders*?

I have studied illustrations at Art Center College of Design in Pasadena, California. There I learned everything about painting. When I got into illustrating picture books, I began to wonder what it would be like to enter my paintings physically. And so I came up with the idea of a magic brush that could open a painting and let you experience everything that is inside of it.

I created a picture book story called *Painting Brian* which was the foundation of the Magora series. Brian Findley was the main character of the story but over time he became a secondary character and gave way to Holly O'Flanigan, the leading character.

Which of your characters did you create first, when writing your children's book?

The main character is usually the one you start with. If the main character does not grab the reader, you can forget about the entire book. So it is important to

know what your main character's goals, wishes, hopes, dreams and fears are, before you can start writing.

Unfortunately, I didn't know much about writing when I started the Magora series. I didn't have a clear vision of the main characters at first. I wished I had known what I know now. I could have saved myself at least five years of rewriting the first book. Even though the first character I created was Brian Findley, he was not the one I should have started with. Today I would create Holly first, and then move on to the sidekicks.

How does it feel to be able to both illustrate and write your own books?

It is a blessing to be able to do both. Illustrating helps me with my writing and vice versa. The scenes I create are like movie sequences in my head. I can see the scene and just have to describe what I see. So the visuals make the writing easier. And once I have the writing down, I can always go back, pick a scene, and create an illustration from it.

Being an illustrator allowed me to create the world of Magora completely on my own without having to make sacrifices. I created the covers, the logo, the website at www.Magora.net, the layout of the paperback and the graphics. Being able to do all this on my own, feels very good.

Can you share with us readers what it is like being an illustrator?

Being an illustrator can be a joy and a nightmare at the same time. You spend a lot of time on your own. This allows you to focus on your work, and it reduces stress with other people. But it can also isolate you. I met a lot of visual artists who have communication problems due to their work. If you focus on visuals all the time you forget how to communicate with people. Therefore I studied acting as well so that I have a balance and won't lose my communication skills.

You have mentioned that there are more books in your children's book series. What is the next book called and can you briefly share with us what it's about?

There are six books in the series, all of which are completed. The third book, which I plan to release in September, is called *The Bridge in the Fog*.

I don't want to give away too much yet, but you will find out much more about the dangerous Unfinished, creatures that have not been completed by their master painter. The issue of the doubles will also be addressed in more detail and Holly will go on a journey to find the mysterious Bridge in the Fog that has been hidden for centuries.

The entire series has an overall story which will take a twist in the sixth book. Along the way new secrets will be resolved and things that didn't seem to make sense in the first books become clearer as the series continues.

If you had to choose which character of yours, which one would you say is your favorite?

Do you mean which character of mine is my favorite?

Of course, it would be Holly. I think every author loves his/her main character best. I wouldn't have picked Holly as a main character, if I didn't favor her. Even though she is filled with self-doubt at the beginning of the series, it was enjoyable to give her, over time, the confidence she deserved.

But I have to say that I also enjoyed Amanda a lot. She turns from an arrogant and obnoxious beauty queen to a likeable character. It was exciting to make the reader hate Amanda at first until she changes and becomes a friend.

Let's say, *The Gallery of Wonders* turns into a TV program series or a movie series for children. Which actors would you have playing the parts for Holly, Holly's Grandpa, and the Professor?

That is a very good question and I could have answered that right away twenty years ago.

When I started writing *Magora* I based the character of Holly on my cousin, who was born at the time. Sophia had the curls and the round face that I imagined Holly to have. But since then Sophia has grown into a beautiful woman in her 20s, who can't play the role of a child anymore. Therefore, for Holly I can't think of anybody who could fill that role.

It's a different story with certain professors. One of the profes-

sors, Gobeli, is based on a friend of mine who has been an actress in Florida for a long time. So I would want to see her in the role that I wrote for her.

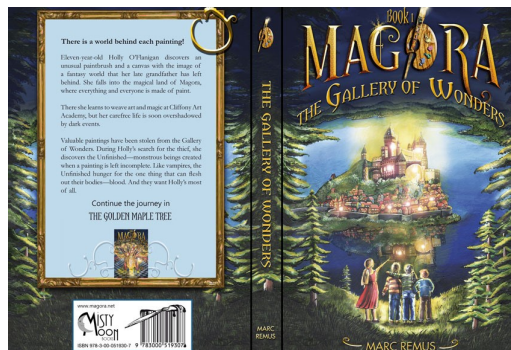
Ms. Hubbleworth is a crazy character with a lot of charisma, and her role would be hard to fill. Being a big fan of Meryl Streep though, I believe that she could portray that character perfectly.

The headmistress of Cliffony, Professor LePawnee, is a special character. Elegance, authority, and finesse are her characteristics. She belongs to a species called Ledesmas and is Asian looking. Therefore, I always thought of Lucy Liu when writing about Professor LePawnee. Of course, Lucy Lui would have to walk on stilts to measure up to the tall professor.

Last but not least there is Cookie. I believe there couldn't be a better choice than myself for this role. I studied acting for many years and have put so much of myself into this character that I would love to become this big, fat troll.

What advice would you give to other writers?

Be open to critiques by professionals and don't rush it! I see so many authors fail because they don't take any advice from people who are experts in their field. Writing is a learning process. Nobody knows everything and nobody is perfect from the start.



It took me seven years and hundreds of revisions to get the *The Gallery of Wonders* ready for publication and another thirteen years to finish the remaining five books in the series. You can't expect to get a book written, edited, and published within a year if you haven't written a book before. So be patient and focus on the writing rather than the publication.

Where can readers find you and your books online?

The first two books of the series are coming out on Amazon the beginning of February. Book 3 is scheduled for September. In April the books should become available in regular bookstores but they probably won't stock them. So it is always easier to get them on Amazon. I am always keeping readers updated about releases and publications on my Twitter (MarcRemusArt) and Facebook (Magorabook) accounts.

Secrets of Writers

We all want to know an author's great sauce for the perfect book recipe. But not every recipe is to every writer's taste. So, then we are left with nothing. One recipe worked for one writer yet it didn't work for me.

If we all take a moment to sit, look around us, and think for a moment...all is not lost.

Need a genre niche to write in? Take a look at Amazon at any genre that you have a feel for. Once there, look and see what sells the best. One that sells the most books is the niche to write in; however, it is also, an excellent idea to see what niche of writing isn't covered by today's market. Now, that's a secret worth exploring into. No, has written something in a particular niche and once you find out what that is, you can go ahead and plan your next steps to writing and selling that book or books.

Have trouble with coming up with the best title? A title is one part in grabbing audiences from all over. Again, go onto Amazon and Goodreads. Look at names of books that have been or will be published. Sometimes these sprout an idea that can be turned not only into a title but into a story as well.

You just wrote your first book. Now you need to know if it's worth publishing or needs major rewriting. Well, the best ways to accomplish this goal is to set out asking others to read your work. Look for sites that have beta readers and book reviewers. These sites will give you a good heads up on how well your book has been written and where it sits with readers. If you feel confident enough to publish after receiving the feedback and it's been through the editing process as well, then go ahead and publish it.

Smart Marketing

Let's say our writing has been through editing process. What next? First, if you haven't already you need to set up an author website, social media accounts, and learn how to use the internet in a way that makes you feel comfortable.

Author websites are free and easy to create. These are highly recommended for any writer wanting to publish and get their name out there. You can use Facebook, WordPress, Google Sites, and many others to create your author page. Most of these sites have it to where you just fill in the info and they design the site for you.

Next, social media is the number one way to spread word about your writing, new releases, and etc. You need to have Tumblr, Twitter, and Facebook. These must be updated daily until you have built up an audience that reaches over the 1,000 mile marker. Trust me this won't be easy, but it's a must do. You should make sure to use photos, hashtags, and great titles/lines to nab those readers so that you convince them to follow you regularly.

Also, look for blogs that feature free book reviews, and author interviews, spotlights, and giveaways. These all are excellent marketing strategies every writer needs to know.

Struggles New Authors Face

All writers face struggles but not like this...it has recently been a major issue that readers who follow their authors on Amazon run the risk of not having their reviews posted.

Can you imagine releasing your book(s) and have readers who posted their review only to have it taken down simply for following you on Amazon?

How do we avoid this issue? What can we do? No worries. Most authors have newsletters on their author websites that allow readers to get the latest updates on what their authors are doing.

Plus, many authors including bestselling authors have gone back to Facebook and set up pages strictly for their readers to follow them.

This way their readers can a) still post their reviews up on Amazon and b) still follow their authors.

Finding Your Confidence as a Writer

One way for writers to grow their confidence is to take online courses and or conferences in writing. These are perfect for brushing up one's writing skills and help build up connections with other writers.

Many of these courses can also, help writers improve their writing to a point where they can edit their own manuscripts without paying an editor a hefty price. Now, that's a plus to any writer's confidence. They better your writing becomes the stronger your confidence and writing grows.

So next time you see classes, webinars, or conferences near you, check them out and sign up!

Writing Prompts

Write a story using this title: Numbers Don't Lie.

Write a story that shows readers how prison systems can trigger violence.

Write a story that answers this question: What would the world be like if men were the ones fighting for equal rights?