

WHAT TO DO WHEN YOUR ARCs ARE FOR SALE ON THE INTERNET (Or...Maybe Not)

BY TINA WAINSCOTT

Advance Reading Copies—for sale on the Internet before your book is on the stands? Yes, I'd heard that it happens.

So one day this past June, for a lark, I entered my name in a search field at eBay.com, the online auction house. And there was an ARC of my November book, *Unforgivable*, up for auction a full five months before it was due to be sold in stores.

When I checked to see what else this eBay seller had on the block, I was even more astonished to discover many ARCs, among them Tess Gerritsen's and Kay Hooper's upcoming releases. It occurred to me that these could be ARCs picked up at a recent Book Expo America trade show.

FYI, ARCs are pre-publication

copies of book, cheaply bound, that are sent to reviewers and other people in the trade by publishers for the purpose of drumming up sales. They usually wear a prominent banner—NOT FOR SALE.

When I wrote to eBay with my concern and annoyance (while fuming and venting to myself), I received a polite response from Tony D.M. of the eBay Community Watch Team. He stated that eBay couldn't police the auctions for copyright infringe-

ment unless it was obvious. What he did suggest was signing up for the Verified Rights Owner (VeRO) Program "which was created to help intellectual property (IP) owners protect their rights by facilitating and simplifying the searching, reporting, and removal of infringing items on our site." The VeRO program allows you to fill out a form that will stop an auction; the form can only be filled out

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HEAVY ON THE MUSTARD, BUT HOLD THE PECCADILLOES

BY JEAN BRASHEAR

Revising first drafts is the best way I know to come face to face with one's feet of clay. While engaged in the process the other day, I encountered—yet again—one of my favorite transgressions (an unnatural and probably unhealthy attachment to the word "just") and found myself wondering about other writers. Am I the only sinner in the congregation? Do other writers, even my heroes, have recurring peccadilloes that must be

revised out of every first draft? Just in case you've ever wondered about that too, I decided to put on my girl reporter hat and investigate.

What I found out, fellow sinners, is that we're in good company. Our numbers are legion.

"Just," it seems, is favored by many. Pat Gaffney says, "I use the hell out of 'just,' but it's a hot button now, so I edit it out as I go along." Mary Jo Putney shares my affection for the word. Jo Beverley regularly

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THE PRESIDENT'S VOICE.....

Everyone is more successful than me.

All right. Maybe a few of you have never felt that way. You can go read the other articles in *NINK*. This column is for the rest of us.

Is it safe now? Are the confident ones all gone? Okay—let's talk.

Specifically, let's talk about that clammy panic you feel when you walk into a bustling, bubbling room at a conference and everybody seems to know what's going on—except you. That dread you experience when you open a fanzine and discover that not only did everybody get a better review than you but they're all advertising, getting hyped, being featured in articles. That nausea clenching your gut as you skim the e-mail gossip and read that Renata Writer has just broken the *USA Today* top 50, Artie Author's latest project went for mid-six figures at auction, and Prunella Pageturner was invited to participate in the latest Levy's tour—and they all started publishing years after your first book came out. You're such a loser, you're not even sure what the Levy's tour is.

And everybody has a more flattering PR photo than you, too.

We've all (other than those lucky few who are off somewhere reading "The Comely Curmudgeon" right now) experienced pangs of insecurity. Some of us have experienced weeks of it, months, years. We mourn that our print runs or sell-throughs are abysmal, that the local Borders doesn't carry our books...that it's been years since we've even published a book. That life—flux in publishing houses, family crises, calamitous writer's block, health problems, or the need to earn a steady salary—has kept us from our mission, our craft, and our art. For some of us, the fear that we are failures compels us to hold back, to deny ourselves the most valuable benefits a community of writers can offer. "I don't belong at conferences, or on the link, or even in the organization," we tell ourselves. "I'm not *really* a writer."

Well, here's a news flash: yes, we *are* writers. *Really*.

Ironically, it's when we're most afraid, most insecure, most blocked or panicked or suffering a spell so dry that compared to it, the Sahara is one big Starbucks, that we need organizations like Ninc the most. It's when we're down—when the muse has left us for some cute twentysomething with great legs and a sassy urban sensibility, when we no longer speak the same language as editors, when our agent has gently suggested that she can no longer do anything for us—that we need other writers more than ever.

Here's why: your fellow members of the community have been down, too. We know what it's like. Even those of us who haven't been quite as far down have glimpsed the abyss. We've heard its long, lonely echo. We all—even those successful authors who aren't reading this article—live with a constant awareness of how steep the precipice is and how easy it would be to slip and fall. Some of those successful writers *have* fallen to the canyon floor, and they've somehow managed to climb out. They're willing to throw you a rope and show you the best route back to sunlight, if only you'll reach out to them.

They know the fear. We all do. Living with it every day is part of what makes us writers.

When feelings of failure besiege you, don't withdraw. The support and camaraderie of fellow writers are exactly what you need. Let us, the community of writers, help. We're all here, and most of us have been there.

— **Barbara Keiler**

WHEN YOUR ARCS ARE FOR SALE

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by the copyright owner or an agent of same. The first time you report an auction, you must fill out the form and fax it to eBay. Thereafter, you may e-mail reports to them.

The VeRO form can be accessed by going to <http://pages.ebay.com/help/community/vero-program.html>. From there you can open Acrobat Reader to access the form and rules of VeRO. The fax number to which it must be sent is on the form. Basically, when you fill out the form, you're attesting to the fact that you are the copyright owner and that you're objecting to one or more auctions. It reads in part: "...I have a good-faith belief that the auction items or materials identified in the addendum attached hereto are not authorized by the above IP owner, its agent, or the law and therefore infringe the IP owner's rights according to state, federal, or US law. Please act expeditiously to remove or disable access to the material or items claimed to be infringing."

Publishers—Over To You

I wondered if our publishers

would be as incensed as I was. The one response I did get from a publisher was that the ARC was still serving a purpose in promoting the book, and the incidence of ARC selling is relatively low.

Judging from Kathy Lynn Emerson's experience, publishers may not care. "My December 2000 mystery showed up for sale on Amazon.com a few days before it came out in hardcover," she says, "No one at St. Martin's was all that upset (in spite of my bitching) about it. After I had a friend buy the book and it turned out to be a hardcover copy sent to a reviewer with a letter from a PR person inside, my editor at St. Martin's was irritated, but the PR people, apparently, still took the situation calmly.

"When all this happened last November, I checked all the St. Martin's ARCs for my Face Down series and none of them say on them that it is illegal to resell them. They don't even have the words NOT FOR RESALE on the covers. The only thing they say is 'advance uncorrected proofs.'

"The only result my complaints appear to have had is that this time, for my August title, I did not get the

25 or 30 ARCs I've always gotten to give to bookstore owners and reviewers at small review journals/fanzines. St. Martin's doesn't send to. They sent me three and informed me there were no more available. Since the ARC has a full color reproduction of the cover proof (complete with mistake corrected on final cover), instead of being plain paper, I'm pretty sure they printed more than just a few. Lord only knows where they sent them!"

What Can You Do?

What if you want to monitor eBay activity on your books? For that, you have to register at eBay and sign up for Favorite Searches, entering your keywords. Then you'll be alerted when an auction of your monitored books proceeds.

Going to the trouble of having the auction pulled may not be strictly necessary, as Kay Hooper discovered:

"Both eBay sellers I've communicated directly with...got their ARCs [from BEA]. Both pulled my ARC from sale after I protested—one of them silently and the other after communicating with me in response to my protest. She said she

► ► ►

INTRODUCING.....

The following authors have applied for membership in Ninc and are now presented by the Membership Committee to the members. If no legitimate objections are lodged with the Membership Committee within 30 days of this NINK issue, these authors shall be accepted as members of Ninc:

New Applicants

Cherry Wilkinson (*Cherry Adair*), Covington, WA
Eliza Shallcross (*Elizabeth Brodnax*), Metuchen, NJ
Barbara Schenck (*Anne McAllister*), Dubuque, IA
Malia Nahas (*Malia Martin*), Aliso Viejo, CA
Elizabeth Bevarly, Prospect, KY

New Members

Tara Taylor Quinn, Scottsdale, AZ
Cheryl Holt, Seaside, OR
Charlotte Hubbard (*Melissa MacNeal*), Jefferson City, MO
Debra Salonen, Catheys Valley, CA
Linda Triegel (*Elisabeth Kidd*), Ottsville, PA
Irene Bennett Brown, Jefferson, OR

**Ninc has room to grow...recommend
membership to your colleagues.**

**Prospective members
may apply online at www.ninc.com.**



BREAKING NEWS

BY OLIVIA RUPPRECHT

Dishing the Dirt

Lord Jeffrey Archer, whose works include *Kane and Abel*, makes one wonder if there really might be such a thing as bad press. After grabbing front-page headlines in London that knocked President Bush's visit into the B Section, the millionaire author was found guilty of perjury and sentenced to four years behind bars.

The case, filled with titillating testimony and juicy bits for the tabloids, was the result of an earlier trial in 1987 wherein he won an \$800,000 libel judgment against *The Daily Star* for printing reports that he'd paid a prostitute \$3500 in hush money to deny their liaison. To substantiate his innocence, Lord Archer produced diaries he'd written, which helped win his case against *The Daily Star*.

Also contributing to that favorable judgment was Lady Mary Archer's testimony that had quite a rapturous effect on the judge, Sir Bernard Caulfield. "Your vision of her will never disappear," Sir Caulfield instructed the jury. "Has she elegance? Has she fragrance? Would she have, without the strain of this trial, radiance?"

Then of Lord Archer, he said, "Is he in need of cold, unloving, rubber-insulated sex in a seedy hotel?" The judge's comments were considered a key element in the court's decision (methinks the judge was a wannabe romance writer and the court must have loved Barbara Cartland).

Over ten years later the past caught up with Jeffrey Archer with a wickedly ironic twist. The same day he was formally arrested for perjury, he appeared onstage in *The Accused*, a courtroom play he had written, casting himself in the role of the defendant. It was just one of many roles Archer had tried on in his made-for-the-movies life, having been charged over the course of it with serial philandering. And insider trading. Shoplifting suits in Canada. Fabricating war-hero credentials for his father and academic achievements and degrees for himself. Oh, and he had to resign from politics in disgrace on three separate occasions.

However, none of this compared with the revelation that his diaries were bogus fabrications he wrote to provide alibis for the night *The Daily Star* accused him of sleeping with a prostitute. A jury at the Old Bailey served unanimous verdicts of guilty on two counts of perjury and two of perverting the course of justice. The presiding judge ordered Archer to begin serving time immediately and directed him to pay \$250,000 in costs or face an extra year in jail. *The Star* said it would seek \$3 million from Lord Archer in a civil action based on his lies and forgeries.

His wife, the fragrant Lady Mary Archer, has suggested she might be persuaded to do a little dishing for about half a mil. As for the author himself, Lord Jeffrey Archer was carted off in a prison van



WHEN YOUR ARCS ARE SOLD



was pulling it because I was upset, but still "respectfully disagreed" with my position that selling ARCs was wrong. Said it was her property to do with as she wished—but didn't have much to say when I immediately countered that ARCs were promotional items given to reviewers and booksellers and never intended to be resold, that it was not a book she had bought and paid for, and that I believed it was wrong that she should profit by selling something that never cost her a cent.

"In any case, the e-mail addresses of the sellers are on their sites, and it is possible to e-mail them directly with 'questions' about their auctions. In my experience, some never respond to notes, some do—and whether they agree to pull the ARCs depends. I've had pretty good luck, though, being reasonable, low-key, and perfectly polite.

"Oh—and I always sign my name."

Here is what Kay writes to the seller:

"I hate to make a stink about this, but as it clearly states on the cover of the ARC you have, that these are promotional copies never sold or intended to be sold. They are given to reviewers and booksellers for the express purpose of review and advance publicity, and are an expensive undertaking for the publisher. I understand that some readers like to collect them and [I] have no problem with auctions for charity, but for anyone to profit by the sale of this item is illegal and certainly unethical. It is especially wrong when the ARC is being offered for sale months before the actual book is published.

If you do not pull this item from your auction, you will be reported to eBay and Random House."

For me, the most annoying aspect of ARC selling is that a book intended for a bookseller to read and become enthused about may never be read by a bookseller. Instead, the bookseller (or other industry person) makes a profit on it, and an avid reader of mine *a)* overpays for the book, and *b)* perhaps doesn't buy my book when it comes out.

Or maybe not. (See, nothing in this business can be straightforward.)

Another Take

Tess Gerritsen discovered a whole new angle to this situation when she got an e-mail from an avid fan who had purchased one of her ARCs on eBay. The fan was excited to

get an advance copy of the book but said that she has every intention of adding the hardcover to her collection when it comes out.

That e-mail was followed by another from a supportive bookseller who has had trouble getting ARCs of Tess's books. She loves to pre-read the book and prepare her customers for a release before it comes out. And guess where this bookseller *could* get an ARC—eBay! If we can get past the fact that the seller still made money unethically, we see that the ARC landed exactly where it belonged.

Tess says, "So now, I'm rethinking whether eBay auctions of ARCs are 100 percent evil. I'm rethinking it because I had to ask myself the question: who are the buyers? Are they folks trying to avoid buying the published hardcovers? It appears not. Rather, these buyers seem to be collectors and fans who would most likely buy the regular book as well and simply love the cachet of having read a book before its release."


And I'm wondering if Tess isn't right.

Which segues nicely into another worthy point of view that was offered by Laura Resnick: "In the science fiction/fantasy world, there is a huge population of collectors, and ARCs are sold within sf/f circles as collectors' items rather than as a way to 'cheat' the author out of a royalty. You'll see sf/f ARCs available in the dealers' rooms at sf/f conventions, and also on eBay, and they often sell for more than the book sells/sold for, because they are collectors' items, which collectors regard as different from books."

The collector books (ARCs, signed editions, etc.) are put up on a shelf never to be opened and a second copy of the book sits dog-eared on the keeper shelf. Since I know people who do this with my books, I understand this concept.

The Whole Picture

Finally, this is what I took away from the situation: don't jump the gun to condemn something. Think about the implications and ramifications—the whole picture. Out of the hundreds, perhaps even thousands of ARCs given out at BEA, only a small percentage are being auctioned on eBay. And some of those may be getting into the right hands after all.

But in this case, we authors are not at the whim and whimsy of fate. We can take action and possibly get the point across to greedy people who grab ARCs off the tables so that others might not get one. That point is, no matter what, selling ARCs for profit is WRONG. Perhaps if we all police our own books, we can send that message to the sellers making a profit on ARCs. 

Tina Wainscott writes romantic suspense for St. Martin's Press and romantic comedy for Harlequin Duets. Her November suspense release is Unforgivable.



BREAKING NEWS



with two other

inmates—a drug dealer convicted of stabbing a man to death and another man accused of child molesting.

And you think you've got problems?

He's Got It, Yeah Baby He's Got It!

If success is an aphrodisiac, Ray Bradbury sure doesn't need Viagra to keep up with the Young Turks in Hollywood. At 81 he has five published works ready to roll onto film this year: *The Martian Chronicles*, *Fahrenheit 451* (a remake), *The Sound of Thunder*, *The Illustrated Man* (yet another remake), and *Frost of Fire*. So how about a high five along with a toast to one of fiction's finest: "Here's looking at you, kid."

Also worthy of note is *The Kingdom*, a series set to air on ABC in the 2002-03 season. Horror-meister Stephen King is scripting the two-hour opening episode, and rumor has it he's so attached to the project that he might consider penning the remaining 13 hours.

Hip-hip, Hooray! It's Harry's Birthday!

Born on July 31, 1980, Harry Potter just turned 21—at least in real time. Thanks to the suspension of disbelief, Harry's just 15 in J.K. Rowling's upcoming fifth novel, *Order of the Phoenix*. As for his birthday, celebrations abounded for the intrepid, magical Harry with parties being thrown at bookstores and, one would assume, Hogwarts School.


The movie *Harry Potter and the Sorcerer's Stone* opens November 11 at a theatre near you.

A Fresh Idea Or Does It Stink?

That depends on whom you ask. About the advertising campaign for Strivers Row, that is.

Strivers Row, a new line of books from Random House, is aimed at black readers. The controversy is over what many consider a major advertising coup, with a million-dollar ad campaign being generated by support from Clorox, makers of Pine-Sol. Clorox has run ads in *Country Living*, *Woman's Day*, *Family Circle*, *Good Housekeeping*, *Martha Stewart*, *Rosie*, and other mags. One of the advertisements in the series announces, "Pine-Sol continues to honor African-Americans in art and literature by celebrating the release of three new books from Strivers Row, a new line of paperback books." Included is the chance to win a year's supply of books for a reading group, a great incentive since reading groups are considered a driving force in the expansion of this large and fast-growing market.

Yes, the industry is bringing out more books by blacks than ever before. Since 1992's explosive success of *Waiting to Exhale* by Terry McMillan, publishers have rushed to cash in on black imprints.

In 1992, Ballantine created the One World imprint, and in the last two years Random House has started Striver's Row; Kensington Publishing, Dafina Books. 



BREAKING NEWS

Next year

Doubleday plans to launch a new line called Harlem Moon. HarperCollins acquired the independent African-American-owned Amistad Press. AOL Time Warner launched Walk Worthy Press, religious books aimed at black readers. Walt Disney's Hyperion created Jump at the Sun for children of color. And then there's Black Expressions, a rapidly growing mail-order book club from the Literary Guild. According to *Publisher's Lunch*, about a third of Warner's Spring 2002 list is by and about African Americans.

So, what's all the fuss about? It has been speculated that the creation of specialized imprints for blacks runs the risk of ghettoizing new black authors, that grouping books by race limits their potential. David Levering Lewis, a Pulitzer Prize winner for his bio of W.E.B. DuBois, asserts, "This (the Pine-Sol ad campaign) is going to be viewed with a combination of hilarity and indignation" and adds that most writers aspire to address human themes that apply to any race.

Other high profile authors like Terry McMillan have been quite vocal in their disapproval as well. She charges, "What does Pine-Sol have to do with books? It is really insulting. It is sad. Once again we are back where we started." Novelist Walter Mosley, an outspoken critic of the industry's failure to recruit blacks, did say he was happy more black writers were being published whatever the context—but was quick to add that publishers are fickle. "In five or ten years," he warns, "when everything settles back down, these imprints will be closed down" (uh, Walter, can you tell us anything new?).

Actually, cross promotion of books with consumables isn't a new concept. Bags of dog food came with coupons for *Chicken Soup for the Pet Lovers' Soul*. Coca-Cola distributed excerpts from Elmore Leonard's novel *Be Cool* (more on E. L. later).

And when asked for their opinion of the Pine-Sol/Striver's Row campaign, the authors involved at least pretend to be ecstatic. "It's a great platform to get your name out there," contends Travis Hunter, author of *Hearts of Men*, previously a self-published book, now due for a heavy push from Striver's Row.

The editors involved are also quick to defend their motivations. Melody Guy, an editor for the line, insists the ads were meant to bolster the authors, not demean them. "We had a great opportunity to do something new and different. There are very few books that get this kind of marketing exposure. There are established authors who don't get a million-dollars worth of advertising...and we are featuring first-time authors. How can we pass this up for authors we believe in so much?" Anita Diggs, director of One World, is quick to point out, "I am doing 22 ethnic books a year. If Ballantine did not have this imprint, do you think it would be doing 22 ethnic books a year? Neither do I."

While Ms. Diggs gave high marks to the Pine-Sol ads for creativity, she candidly added, "I would want something more upscale if I had my druthers."

Hold the Peccadilloes

Continued from page 1

does search-and-destroy missions on it, and Linda Howard confesses to an unhealthy attachment, too, as well as to "only." (Well, drat... and here I thought "only" was the perfect cure for using "just." Although sometimes I get real fancy and say "simply.")

Tess Gerritsen admits to overusing "now" and "there." Kay Hooper counts "wry" and "rueful" among her closest friends. Sylvie Kurtz ruthlessly exorcises "Ands" and "Buts" at the beginnings of sentences. Karen Harbaugh finds herself awash in "thats."

That's a Pattern That's Common

Sometimes it's not a favorite word, but a pattern. Laura Resnick counts adjectives as her most persistent habit: "I seem to spend a lot of time putting in adjectives because I like them and I'm so determined to convey absolutely EVERYTHING as SPECIFICALLY as possible to the reader."

"Word repetitions make me nuts," says Susan Elizabeth Phillips. "He looked at her. She looked as if she were far away." Karen Harbaugh notes, "I'll write the same thought or write a character revelation I'd gone over before. I almost hate to admit this. It's like telling an old joke I've told over and over again but forgetting that I've told it."

Lucy Gordon remarks, "I'm so fixed on the sentence I'm writing now that I forget what I said in the last one." She puts it down to intense concentration. (And says that's her story, and she's sticking to it.) Harbaugh is quick to note, however, that some repetitions are important: "There's a difference between this and the repetition that comes from a character revisiting an issue and resolving it, or one that arises from a triggering thematic image."

Teresa Medeiros admits to a popular foible: Too Many Words. "I love them so much that I use too many. I frequently catch myself going back and simply cutting the last sentence of many paragraphs. It makes it so much cleaner! Once I get on a roll, I just don't know when to stop." (Amen, Sister. Count me in.)

Putney agrees: "My natural voice is 18th-Century essayist, with lots of words and phrases, and it's a constant effort to whittle away to clean, smooth prose. Things like 'a bit of a problem' instead of 'a problem' or 'more than a little upset' rather than 'upset.' This tendency suited traditional Regencies rather well, but quite gets in the way with American-setting contemporaries. I *love* dependent clauses—they spring out like warriors from dragon's teeth."

A corollary is what I think of as overwriting. Never trust the reader to "get it" when you can make sure of it with just a few more perfectly lovely words, seems to be my first instinct. Medeiros: "I find myself writing things like 'Holly Heroine's skin crawled with dread' or 'Herbert Hero's heart swelled with joy.' Well, my editor pencils them right out

because she says (God love her!) that my dialogue and actions are powerful enough that the reader already knows what my characters are feeling without my having to tell them."

Nasty ol' passive voice nails us all now and then. "I'll lapse into the passive voice out of laziness and must whip those sentences back to active form," says Gerritsen. Christine Rimmer rues that eradicating passive voice "never happens until the final edit, when all of a sudden I realize there's 'was' everywhere I look. Once I had so many passive-to-active changes in my AAs [Author Alterations] that I wrote an apology to my editor in my cover letter when I sent the changes back. She was wonderfully good-natured about it. Laughed on the phone to me, "One thing about you, Christine, you never give up. Most authors will get about halfway through the manuscript, get tired, and ease off a little on something like this. But not you."

Looks Like It Looks Strange

Stage direction trips up many of us, too. I sometimes have so much choreography going on that I could give the reader whiplash. Hooper's confession relieved me: "I had everybody looking at everybody else so often that it got funny. I mean, I'm big on stage direction, but that was ridiculous. And since the copy editor had flagged countless pages noting that I had 'used look or looked four times here,' I became even more conscious of it. In the book following that one, I was paranoid about it and doubt that any character even glanced at another one for chapters."

Punctuation issues bedevil us, too. Beverley does search-and-destroy on exclamation points which are, she notes, much more common in British style. Laurie Campbell pleads guilty to italics abuse. I'm a reformed comma-holic, though my English-major daughter swears I've simply transferred my addiction to em dashes.

Dang Those Curses!

Cursing presents its own challenges. Gerritsen relates that her first-draft male characters "tend to swear like sailors, and I need to clean up their language. Which is not easy, because there's nothing so laughably unbelievable as hearing a hard-bitten cop mutter a prissy 'oh, darn!'"

Writing in the fantasy realm, Laura Resnick is challenged by finding suitable replacements for curses. "Go to hell!" is anachronistic and 'F*** you!' is simply too colloquial to sound right in a sword-and-sorcery world, in my opinion." Her solution? "I mine Shakespeare and other long-dead writers for my curses."

Resnick is wary of other anachronisms in fantasy. "Sometimes I look at the previous day's work, for example, and discover I wrote something like 'they traveled many miles beneath the burning sun' or whatever. Well, oops! Miles—that's an anachronism unless you're setting your fantasy novel in our reality." Another example: "...the 'stygian darkness' of night. Well, oops! This adjective is derived specifically from the river Styx in Greek ▶ ▶ ▶



BREAKING NEWS



Gone But Not Forgotten

Sad but true, we could almost turn this month's Breaking News column into an obituary section. The recent losses to the publishing world range from Eudora Welty and Katharine Graham, to Fred Marcellino and James Hatfield. Each left behind a significant contribution, marked by greatness, genius, or scandal.

A legend in her own time, Eudora Welty, 92, expired after a lengthy illness in Jackson, Mississippi. She had lived there since high school in a home built by her father in 1925, and it was there that she wrote most of her novels, essays, and memoirs. Never married, Miss Welty was called upon by Henry Miller, who her mother had banned from the house because he wrote "dirty books." When she did manage a meeting, Miss Welty was quoted as calling him "the dullest man I ever saw in my life. He wasn't interested in anything but himself, that was the truth."

It was her own truth expressed in writing that won Miss Welty a Pulitzer Prize for *The Optimist's Daughter*. She received many other honors including several O. Henry Awards, an induction into the French Legion of Honor, and the Medal of Freedom. Perhaps her crowning achievement was to become the first living writer ever included in the Library of America's collection of works, thus joining the ranks of Walt Whitman, Mark Twain, William Faulkner, and Edgar Allan Poe.

A moment of silence, please, for the beloved Miss Welty.

A fatal fall took the life of Katharine Graham, publisher of *The Washington Post*. Mourned by a crowd of more than 3,000, the audience at her funeral included such notables as Bill Gates, Warren Buffett, former President Clinton, Vice President Dick Cheney, and Arthur Ochs and Arthur Sulzberger Jr. of *The New York Times*. It was Ben Bradlee, her former executive editor, whose past reflections won laughter and tears. In summing up the woman who left such an enduring mark on the American press, he said, "She had a love for news, a love for answers, and a love for a piece of the action."

Fred Marcellino, an award-winning illustrator for both adult and children's books, died on July 12. Mr. Marcellino challenged conventional covers in the 1970s and created a signature style that embellished the book jackets of Anne Tyler, Tom Wolfe, Margaret Atwood, and more. Nan Talese, who was editor of Margaret Atwood's *The Handmaid's Tale*, said Mr. Marcellino could "in one image, translate the whole feeling and style of a book."

After producing more than 40 covers a year for a decade, he abruptly switched from adult commercial fiction to children's books. Initially reinterpreting such classics as *Puss in Boots*, which received a Caldecott Honor for his artwork, he once more defied convention by illustrating stories that he authored as well. Mr. ▶ ▶ ▶



BREAKING NEWS

▶ ▶ ▶
Marcellino's *I, Crocodile* was named one of the

NY Times Best Illustrated Children's Books in 1999.

An apparent drug overdose brought a sad end to the sad life of James Howard Hatfield, author of the controversial 1999 biography *Fortunate Son: George W. Bush and the Making of an American President*. Hatfield's book alleged that Bush had been arrested for cocaine possession in 1972 but powerful connections allowed the charge to be expunged from his record. The only thing backing up Hatfield's accusation were three "unnamed sources," which raised questions as to how well publishers screen an author's facts and credentials.

Soon after publication, St. Martin's Press recalled 70,000 copies and left another 20,000 of *Fortunate Son* in storage. It seems the publisher found out that in 1988 Hatfield had been convicted of paying a hit man \$5000 to blow up his former supervisor (an editor, perhaps?). The bomb malfunctioned and the intended victim escaped without harm, but apparently Hatfield didn't serve much, if any, time for the crime since he went on to plead guilty to embezzlement in 1992.

Sander Hicks, the head of Soft Skull Press which picked up *Fortunate Son* after St. Martin's dropped it, said that Hatfield had been working hard to put the past behind him. Yet his disappearance was discovered when police came to arrest him for credit card fraud. Hatfield was found by a hotel housekeeper, along with his last bit of writing: suicide notes for his family and friends that cited alcohol, financial problems, and *Fortunate Son* as the impetus for his fatal decision.

That's the Biz

Well, well, what have we here? Something on AOL buying \$100 million of Amazon shares in late July... Random going after Golden Books since it went belly-up... some interesting details on old media rights in the digital age that's not really all that interesting....

Decisions, decisions—just which boring bit of news shall we get on with first? Flip a coin and it's... Golden Books! The assets of Golden Books were reportedly being considered by a number of parties. A leading contender joining the hunt was Random House (busy bees, aren't they?) and Classic Media, presenting a joint offer of \$86 million, with the assumption of a paltry \$30 million of debt out of the \$90 million outstanding.

Eric Ellenbogen, one of the top execs under Dick Snyder—who some say helped run Golden onto the rocks—heads Classic Media. Harvey Entertainment, the cartoon heavy, was also recently acquired by Classic. Will Random and Classic Media snag their bargain? At this writing the bankruptcy court hasn't said, but the *NY Post* did quote a previous Random House exec as saying, "Dick Snyder's whole career at Simon & Schuster was spent beating up on Random House. It was almost tribal. It is unbelievable that after running Golden Books ▶ ▶ ▶

Hold the Peccadilloes

▶ ▶ ▶ mythology; *In Legend Born* takes place in a completely imaginary fantasy world where, er, there is no Greece, let alone Greek mythology.

"Here's another one: We commonly use the word 'hell' in a variety of ways for a whole series of universal verbal needs (anger, frustration, menace, embarrassment, dramatic pronouncements, etc.); yet it is a word inspired by Christian mythology, and therefore out of place in a fantasy novel where, oops!, there's no such thing as Christianity."

No Medieval Potatoes

Likewise, historical authors must constantly be on guard. Putney notes the importance of learning to question everything. "You simply can't assume that the way it is today is the way it was two hundred years ago. Or that common animals or foods of today were around in other countries and other times. (A good way to irritate serious medieval readers is to have the characters eating potatoes.) The questions that you don't think to ask are the ones that will turn around and bite you."

Beverley notes the special attention that must be paid, when writing pre-16th-Century stories, to avoiding Shakespearean references. Hooper, though not writing historicals, has a similar concern in her current series of paranormal thrillers: "having to remember the 'rules' I've created—such as psychics cannot be hypnotized, for instance—and make sure those aren't broken from story to story."

So I'm in sterling company, I'm relieved to discover; not, after all, the only one guilty of transgressions so automatic that they don't even register in the first draft. (Oooh, "even"—another fave!)

Hooper summed it up best: "But hey, without our peccadilloes, copy editors wouldn't have jobs, right?"

A recovering commaholic searching for an em dash support group, Jean Brashear is reading e e cummings for shock therapy. Her latest release is Millionaire in Disguise from Silhouette Special Edition, August 2001.

*Make it a rule never to regret
and never to look back.*

~ Marjorie Kinnan Rawlings

Online.....by Lorraine Heath



BREAKING NEWS



I feel as though I've emerged from the Dark Ages. Last month cable, or broadband as it's also called, became available in our neighborhood, and we jumped on it as though we were starving dogs that had just spotted the last remaining bone.

I absolutely love it. We can travel the Internet at a speed 90 times faster (yes, we actually had it speed tested against our telephone modem)—which means I should be able to write this column faster, right? Since I always verify sites before actually listing them...

Well, maybe not, since my typing speed remains the same.

Anyway, the point is that during the month, I haven't run across any problems stemming from switching over to cable.

We've even networked all the family computers so I can sit at my desk and access files on my husband's computer or tell my son's color printer to print a particular document that's located on my computer. It probably sounds confusing here, but in practice, it is far from it and really opens up the world of communication.

For those who are considering networking their home computers, you will need a device for each computer in order to connect them all together. We chose the Any Point Home Network developed by intel®. We've experienced no problems with it. I know one Ninc member was told that Any Point would slow down individual computer processing times, but that has not been our experience.

The only bit of real bother I had to endure was changing my e-mail address after so many years. I was on America Online. When I tried to access it, it would reconfigure my Internet browser so that the cable modem could no longer access the Internet. Therefore, I went to a new e-mail provider.

As a result, I did learn how to

change my e-mail address on all my listserves that use yahoogroups.com—Ninlink included. I was always under the impression that people had to unsubscribe from listserves and resubscribe. Such is not the case at yahoogroups.com. You simply go to the site:

1. Select "Account Information."
2. Select "Edit Member Information."
3. Under "E-mail Information" add your new e-mail address.
4. Select your new e-mail address as your primary e-mail address.
5. Click "Finished."
6. Click "Finished" again.
7. Click "My Preferences."
8. Click "Edit My Groups."
9. You will receive a list of all the groups to which you subscribe.
10. For each group, click the arrow beside the e-mail address and select the new e-mail address.
11. Once you've changed the e-mail address on all the groups, click "Save Changes."

I know these steps seem like a lot of trouble, but this method is much simpler than unsubscribing and resubscribing to all your lists. Also, this method allows you to bypass the approval phase for those lists that require approval, such as Ninlink. Your membership has already been approved. You are simply changing your e-mail address.

This method is particularly a time-saver if you moderate or own lists. As moderator, you cannot unsubscribe until you remove your moderator privileges. As owner, you can never unsubscribe.

I'd dreaded changing my e-mail address because of all the lists to which I subscribe, but I found I was able to handle the whole process in about twenty minutes.



into the ground, he might have to sell it to Random House."

Nasty, nasty. Now, another flip of the coin and...darn, RosettaBooks vs. Random House (Random House, again?). Here's the skinny on this scoop: The founder of RosettaBooks is Arthur Klebanoff, a lawyer turned literary agent with something of a checkered and quite interesting professional past. He started out at a small law firm with Morton Janklow, who was branching out in the literary field, then parted ways once he decided he didn't like playing second banana to M.J.

Arthur Klebanoff eventually acquired The Scott Meredith Literary Agency in 1993, and after a series of misadventures that have nothing on Lord Jeffrey Archer, Klebanoff decided to offer digital editions of classically popular books via his brainchild, RosettaBooks. Mind you, he paid good money to authors or their estates for the right to reproduce them electronically; however, Richard Sarnoff, president of new media at Random House, insisted, "There is an advance that has already been paid to the author." He made it clear that the company had no plans to begin paying authors anew for digital rights to previously published books.

A judge in the Federal District Court in Manhattan disagreed with Random and refused to block RosettaBooks from selling the eight novels they had acquired. While Random has recently announced plans to sell electronic versions of nine Raymond Chandler novels and Truman Capote's *In Cold Blood*, Mr. Klebanoff thumbs his nose at that and waves any new takers on.

Now, where's that coin? Never mind, the only thing left is the big bucks AOL paid for Amazon stock, and since we're running out of room, I'll save that for another column. If you're disappointed, boo-hoo, here's the Kleenex.

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Promotion

Sharron McClellan informed me of a new company, A la Carte Author Services at www.alacarteauthor.com. Each service is individually priced with an amount indicated on the website. The author services include:

1. Clipping Services
2. Mailing List Management
3. Specialties Management
4. Galley and Review Management
5. Assistant Services
6. Online Services
7. Publicity

I've discovered two more postcards companies. Mega Color, www.mcolor.com/, offers 500 postcards for \$95. The other site, Vista Print, www.mcolor.com/, is offering 250 postcards for \$39.95 (at the time I'm writing, which is August 1). By the time you read this column, the price may have changed. The neat aspect to Vista Print, however, is that you design your card online. . .and then they print and send it to you. They have a wizard that walks you through the process. I've seen a postcard created via Vista Print, and it was a quality product.

Romance authors who have related books can promote their books at Romance Novel Sequels and Prequels. Visit members.tripod.com/~eventmaker/series.html to find the guidelines for submitting your titles for inclusion on the lists.

Young Adult

On Ninklink, the subject turned to keeping up with today's youth—styles, slang, interests—when they change so rapidly. Mary Kennedy suggested www.teenpeople.com, which is the teen version of *People* magazine. She also suggested www.Bolt.com and www.Billboard.com for current hit songs and artists.

Screenwriting

If interested in a discussion group for serious screenwriters, you can subscribe to logline, formerly scribelink, by sending a blank message to: logline-subscribe@yahoogroups.com or visit groups.yahoo.com/group/logline. Currently the list has 67 members.

Another list is 120pages2go. It is "strictly and undividedly for the beginning screenwriter." To subscribe, send a blank message to 120pages2go-subscribe@yahoogroups.com or visit groups.yahoo.com/group/120pages2go. This list has 365 members.

Research

With historical romance shifting away from westerns in favor of British settings, for those who need handy references, check out The British System of Aristocratic Honorifics at www.pemberley.com/janeinfo/honrific.html. The site provides a very nice table which explains how a lord or lady should be addressed.

If you're writing about Ireland, visit Writer in Ireland at homepages.about.com/writerinireland/. The site is hosted by two freelance writers who live in Ireland. Although their goal is to provide a haven for Irish writers, they welcome writers who write about Ireland as well. At the site, you can subscribe to the free e-zine that provides articles that range from writing tips, markets, and the history of Ireland.

For those who are sticking with the West, check out The Kansas Barbed Wire Museum, www.rushcounty.org/barbedwiremuseum/. The site is devoted to the history and legend of what is often referred to as the "Devil's Rope."

Information on the Devil's Rope Museum in McLean, Texas, can be found at www.barbwiremuseum.com/.

Outlook Tip of the Month

As I mentioned last month, changing e-mail providers now gives me access to Microsoft Outlook. I'm loving the rules feature that allows me to delete unwanted mail without my ever seeing it. Members on Ninklink were recently discussing their frustrations at receiving various offers for "enlargement" surgery related to specific body parts. If you can identify a particular phrase that you know you'd never want to read about, you can set up a rule that will search for that phrase in the body of a letter and automatically delete that letter. You do have to take care because you could inadvertently delete something you might want to read. . .but in

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Subscribe	NINCLINK-subscribe@yahoogroups.com
Unsubscribe	NINCLINK-unsubscribe@yahoogroups.com
Switch to Digest	NINCLINK-digest@yahoogroups.com
Switch to Individual Mail	NINCLINK-normal@yahoogroups.com
No-Mail	NINCLINK-nomail@yahoogroups.com
Moderators:	
If You Have Questions, E-Mail:	
Brenda Hiatt-Barber	BrendaHB@aol.com
Patricia de la Fuente	Patricia@hiline.net
Lorraine Heath	LorraineHe@home.com NEW

many cases, you can have the offensive mail delivered to your delete box rather than your in box.

Another tip: You can do a quick sort on your mail by clicking the appropriate box. Above your list of letters, you will see an exclamation mark, a paperclip, a flag, "From," "Subject," and "Received." Click the paperclip and all your letters with attachment will be listed together. Click Subject and all the subjects will be listed together. I find this particularly helpful when trying to follow the thread of a conversation on Ninclink or if I want to determine if someone has already responded to a question another member

asked. Of course, this works most effectively when members remember to change their "Subject: Digest" to the actual subject of the post. Hint. Hint.

Novelists, Inc. Listserve

At www.yahogroups.com/group/NINCLINK, you can learn more about Ninclink, subscribe, or set your preferences (digest, individual posts, etc.).

If you discover sites that you think would be of interest to Novelists, Inc. members, please e-mail me at my new e-mail address, Lorraine-Heath@home.com.



▶ ▶ ▶ ▶ Cont. from page 9

Old Dog Teaches New Tricks

Okay, so it's not exactly breaking news, but *The NYT* printed an article by Elmore Leonard that lists some of his rules for remaining invisible when he's writing a book. In "Easy on the Hooptedoodle," E.L. begins with this disclaimer: "If you have a facility for language and imagery and the sound of your voice pleases you, invisibility is not what you are after, and you can skip the rules."

While providing plenty of exceptions for those that can successfully transcend his own rules of thumb, these are the abbreviated suggestions he cheerfully offers, and I quote:

1. "Never open a book with weather. If it's only to create atmosphere and not a character's reaction to the weather...the reader is apt to leaf ahead looking for people.
2. "Avoid prologues. They can be annoying, especially a prologue following an introduction that comes after a foreword. A prologue in a novel is backstory, and you can drop it in anywhere you want.
3. "Never use a verb other than 'said' to carry dialogue. The line of dialogue belongs to the character; the verb is the writer sticking his nose in.
4. "Never use an adverb to modify the verb 'said'...he admonished gravely. To use an adverb this way (or almost any way) is a mortal sin. The writer is now exposing himself in earnest, using a word that distracts and can interrupt the rhythm of the exchange.
5. "Keep your exclamation points under control. You are allowed no more than two or three per 100,000 words of prose. If you have the knack of playing with exclamers the way Tom Wolfe does, you can throw them in by the handful.
6. "Never use the words 'suddenly' or 'all hell broke loose.' This rule doesn't require an explanation. I have noticed that writers who use 'suddenly' tend to exercise less control in the application of exclamation points.
7. "Use regional

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MEMBER NEWS.....Compiled by Kathy Chwedyk

Linda Hall Wins Faith Today Award

Linda Hall's novel, *Katheryn's Secret*, was awarded Best Canadian Christian Novel for 2000 in the God Uses Ink competition sponsored by *Faith Today Magazine* and the Evangelical Fellowship of Canada. *Katheryn's Secret* was published last year by Multnomah. Hall's current title is *Sadie's Song*, which was published in May by the same publisher.

Shirley Hailstock "Strikes Gold"

Shirley Hailstock reports that she felt like Cinderella at the ball at the Romance Writers of America annual conference in July. Her book, *More Than Gold*, has finished in 10 contests. Four of them were awarded during the RWA conference. In addition to the RWA awards, *More Than Gold* won the following recognition: Booksellers Best Contest (Greater Detroit Chapter)–Winner; Golden Quill Contest (Desert Rose Chapter)–Winner;

National Readers Choice (Oklahoma Romance Writers–Third Place; The Venus Award (Heart Rate Reviews) as the Romantic Suspense of the Year–Finalist; The Holt Medallion (Virginia Romance Writers)–Finalist. The book also placed on the 2000 *Affaire de Coeur* Reader-Writer Poll. In addition, Hailstock made a sale. The Silhouette Special Edition editor called her at the RWA conference to make the offer. No details yet, but Hailstock reports she's still walking in her Cinderella shoes and dancing on air.

More Than Gold was published by BET Books in October, 2000. Hailstock's current release, *His 1-800 Wife*, was released by BET Books in April, 2001.

Pinianski's Screenplay Finals In Competition

Patricia Pinianski's screenplay, *Kiss & Goodbye*, made the quarter-finals in the Nicholl competition (285 of 5,489 scripts). Pinianski

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Laura Resnick is

THE COMELY CURMUDGEON

“The Unfinished Conversation”

BY LAURA RESNICK

The old man died Sunday morning, finally releasing his tenacious hold on life. I had spoken to him a week earlier, shouting hello into his deaf phone ear across the distance of a thousand miles. I'm pretty sure he didn't know who I was. I'm positive he didn't understand me when I said I'd finally completed the book he'd been nagging me to finish so he could read it.

When Grandpa Resnick died, I lost my biggest fan.

The book is a sequel to *In Legend Born*, a novel I dedicated to him. Grandpa read *In Legend Born* twice—all friggling 250,000 words of it—and immediately began nagging me to complete the next book. However, he fell seriously ill as I began writing *In Fire Forged*, and by the time I finished it, he was so sick that he had given up reading even this column, never mind novels the size of small cars.

Perhaps it's no coincidence that the heroine's elderly relative falls ill and dies in *In Fire Forged*. Of course, this being an epic fantasy novel, the elderly character dies in active conflict with the forces of evil; not many characters in heroic fantasy get to die quietly in bed. But I knew the character *would* die. At some point early in the book, I understood that death was her destiny, and that loss of a beloved elderly relative was part of the heroine's destiny.

No, it didn't have to be that way. I'm the writer, I can do anything I want. And I know some writers—including critically acclaimed writers—who don't like reading about the death of a young, or a beloved, or a likeable character, and who won't write such a death. Fair enough. A valid choice, I won't dispute it.

But that's them, and this is me. Ever since beloved pets and people first started dying on me, I've struggled with the universal experience of losing loved ones. And ever since I started writing, I've felt compelled to explore death and dying in my stories. Not as a morbid, bleak, existential obsession, but because I learned early on that when someone or something dies, life goes on for the rest of us, and it *should* go on; yet that's not always easy, nor does it always feel right. I struggle with this paradox as a person, and it captivates me as a writer. And—like most writers—I inevitably find myself

writing about what captivates me.

It's fair to say that the death of my friend Fabian Cartwright in 1989 changed my life and my outlook—and therefore my work. He was a twenty-eight-year-old Irish actor whose career was starting to take off. I had abandoned my acting aspirations in favor of writing, and I'd abandoned Europe to return to the U.S., but we remained friends. During a hectic trip I made to London one summer, we kept trying to get together and kept failing. He overslept once, I couldn't show up once, he had to cancel once. Time ran out. Suddenly he was on his way to Barbados for an overdue vacation, and I was leaving England to meet a friend who had convinced me we should go to North Africa in high summer (yes, in retrospect, my acquiescence confounds me). Anyhow, in a few weeks, Fabian and I would both be back in London, and before he left again to start filming in Ireland and I left again to start writing a new book in America, we would finally sit down over dinner together for a few hours and catch up on everything. There was so much to talk about, and we made a fixed date which we agreed neither of us would miss for any reason.

A week later, a mutual friend sat me down to tell me he'd just received word that Fabian had died on vacation in Barbados. Fabian had seen someone drowning in the sea, had gone swimming out to help—and both of them drowned.

For months afterwards, I dreamed about him. He'd pop up, and we would have that long talk we'd been promising each other. I would deliberately not mention that he was dead, since I was afraid he'd have to leave if I reminded him. I suppose I only stopped dreaming about Fabian once I accepted that whether death comes slowly on lumbering wheels with plenty of warning or suddenly like an armed robber, you never do get to say everything you want to say. In the end, even if we'd had that dinner, our conversation would always be unfinished.

A year later, another friend of Fabian's and I both confessed to being furious at him. Who the hell did he think he was, swimming out into the sea to save a stranger from drowning? He had no lifeguard training! No experience at this sort of thing! We doubted he was even that good a swimmer! How DARE he go and get himself killed with such an irresponsible decision?

Death is complicated. And living after someone else's

death is *really* complicated.

Though I love a good swordfighting film, I almost never watch Kenneth Brannagh's *Henry V*, because it's always such a strange shock to see Fabian (in a small role as one of the traitors whom Henry orders executed early on), dead for over a decade now, still alive and talking (and talking, moreover, in a polished English manner very unlike his own Belfast accent). Maybe that uneasiness I feel whenever I see him onscreen is what led me to the idea of an entire cult in my fantasy novels which enables ordinary people to talk to their dead loved ones—and a hero who doesn't like to do it. Who knows? Maybe my guilt about not having phoned my Grandma Cain much in the final year of her life, when the dementia had swallowed up her mind, also led me to write about a dead relative whom this hero is forced to talk to while still consumed by guilt about his behavior to that relative.

No, that book is not remotely autobiographical. For one thing, I didn't murder my grandma; and for another, I'm not destined to save the world. None of my fiction is autobiographical. But where do the roots of our work first germinate, if not in the things which have captivated our waking hours and haunted our sleeping ones?

When Fabian died, he was young, entering an exciting phase in his career, full of plans, meaning to meet me for dinner in a few weeks... He was *in the middle* of so much. In the middle of *life*.

When Fabian died, I learned that anyone can die anywhere at any time. Yes, I had known that intellectually. But after Fabian died, I understood it emotionally, and that changed me.

Perhaps that's why I then wrote a *Silhouette*, *The Bandit King*—which I recently read for the first time in years while preparing it for a reprint edition—wherein the entire storyline revolves around the unfinished business and ongoing secrets of someone who died young, in the middle of plans, in the middle of life. I also started writing sf/f around that time, a genre well suited to exploring themes of death, loss, and sacrifice. Although I wrote a lot of humor, I also explored the sense of life's rightful pattern disrupted—and of this disruption *as* life's rightful pattern—as I tried to incorporate Fabian's death into the fabric of my life.

Because what I ultimately believe is that we must incorporate death into life, or we become bitter, cowardly, and squirrely. Nonetheless, it's very hard, and it doesn't necessarily feel right. So I keep looking at this paradox as a writer. Young death, old death, real death, fake death, heroic and self-sacrificing death, tragic and unfair death, funny and unregretted death, painful and heartbreaking death. I go there over and over as a writer, because I go there over and over as a person. I've been making this trip since the first time a dog I loved died, and I'll keep going there until it's my turn to shuffle off this mortal coil.

My very first book, *One Sultry Summer*, a *Silhouette Desire* written when I was twenty-four and (frankly) fumbling with the craft, is about a couple who come together

upon the death of a towering figure in both their lives. No, it's not (I repeat) autobiographical. But my Grandma Resnick had died a few years earlier, far away and with no funeral, and I think it was a natural impulse for me to explore, in my first real effort at writing, what we do after someone dies and is no longer there for us to thank or to castigate. I think it was inevitable that, even in my first *Silhouette*, I was drawn to the unfinished conversation.

I doubt there was even a connection in my mind between my life and the fictional lives in the book, but it did establish a pattern which has characterized my writing ever since—I'm a life thief. I suspect that most writers are, because you can only get so many ideas from late-night movies, cereal boxes, and newspaper stories. If you write about people and human relationships, sooner or later your own life creeps into the shadows of your prose. Not in the "thinly disguised" manner of an aspiring litfic writer who is convinced that his ordinary life will justify his tedious self-absorption by evolving into a bestselling novel of staggering genius; but in the manner of someone whose body of work reflects where she has been, what she has seen, and who she's known.

By coincidence, just a few weeks before Grandpa Resnick died, I was proofreading another book I'd dedicated to him, *Untouched By Man*, which is also being reprinted this year. The heroine's grandfather, a rapsallion multimillionaire whom no one in the family can control, is nothing like my intellectual and budget-conscious grandfather; and yet he is *very* like him in the lust for life and the sense of adventure he retains well into his eighth decade of life. My grandfather didn't go skydiving or catch strange diseases in the Amazon jungle as did my fictional character; but he did go on safari to Africa (twice), tour the Greek isles, and see the pyramids in his late seventies. In his early eighties, he still attended the World Science Fiction Convention regularly. When he was eighty-three, we took a trans-continental road trip together when he decided to move from California to Florida. I still remember his scandalized complaints about all the dry counties we drove through in West Texas—Grandpa's overriding philosophy of life was that whatever you were doing, you should stop every ninety minutes to have a margarita.

My grandfather was almost certainly on a government list somewhere. Although he always preferred to talk about the present and the future, once in a while I got him to chat about the past—which is how I found out he was a Communist in his youth, and that he and my grandmother used to hang out at gay bars when they were dating because that's where they found the most interesting conversations. He told me he became an ardent Zionist during WWII when his best friend learned about the death camps in Hitler's Europe; and he broke with the Zionist movement after the newly born Israeli government allowed religious factions to have so much influence—because Grandpa was also an ardent atheist.

He met my grandmother one day when they ► ► ►



BREAKING NEWS

▶ ▶ ▶ ▶ Cont. from page 11

dialect, patois, sparingly.

8. "Avoid detailed descriptions of characters.

9. "Don't go into great detail describing places and things. And finally:

10. "Try to leave out the part that readers tend to skip....Think of what you skip reading a novel: thick paragraphs of prose you can see have too many words in them. What the writer is doing, he's writing, perpetrating hoopedoodle, perhaps taking another shot at the weather, or has gone into the character's head and the reader either knows what the guy's thinking or doesn't care. I'll bet you don't skip dialogue."

Finally, Mr. Leonard lets us in on this: "My most important rule is one that sums up the ten: If it sounds like writing, I rewrite it."

Olivia Rupprecht is delighted to be the new Breaking News columnist. She'll try to adhere to Elmore Leonard's sage advice, which Pamela Browning did so well, by leaving out the stuff that no one wants to read.

CALL FOR ARTICLES

NINK needs articles, and we pay. Okay, it's not a lot, but it's not bad, either. As far as subject matter and style, anything goes. We particularly need lead articles, and I'd like to see pieces about serious issues written in a hard-hitting journalistic style.

We publish Op-Ed pieces, though we don't pay for those or for Letters to the Editor. You do not have to be a member of Novelists, Inc. to write for NINK.

E-mail me at: write2pam@aol.com with your ideas. Or snail mail me at 7025 Quail Hill Road, Charlotte, NC 28210.

Need a jumpstart? I'll send a list of suggested topics. No phone calls, please.

**— Pamela Browning,
NINK Editor**



THE COMELY CURMUDGEON

▶ ▶ ▶ were in the same crowded car on their way to the beach with a group of mutual friends. Only one person in the car besides Grandpa knew all the verses to some slightly risqué song, and he decided he had to get to know this girl better. By the end of the day, they agreed to get married—so I never find novels about whirlwind courtship hard to believe in. When I was a teenager, Grandma told me my grandfather was her best friend and her lover. (Of course, being a teen, I was totally grossed out by this at the time; but now I appreciate it.) After forty years of marriage and ten years of widowhood, I once overheard Grandpa describe Grandma to a friend of mine as "the love of my life." So I don't think the happy endings of romance novels strain credulity, either.

I have a picture of my grandmother in her bridal gown on her wedding day. Her veil is askew because Grandpa's best friend was weeping so copiously that he kept dropping the canopy on her head. Aspects of the wedding were rather hastily organized, since my grandfather (perhaps due to the burden of being the only son in a Jewish household) couldn't quite bring himself to explain to his mother that he was getting married and leaving home. According to my grandmother, he was cutting it awfully close by the time he finally broke the news to his eccentric and impractical family. Needless to say, farce seems a pretty reasonable form of fiction to me, and I've written my fair share of it—including some with, go figure, eccentric and impractical families.

In his sixties, Grandpa even became a writer for a few years, which makes me the third generation in my family to pursue this vocation. He loved recounting the time he and my grandmother co-wrote a book about Teddy Kennedy and Chappaquiddick in just eight days so it could be on the stands a mere two weeks after the incident occurred. (No, he did not write this—or anything else—under his real name.)

The old man died Sunday morning, and life goes on without him, as it should. Our conversation is unfinished, and it always will be. There were more things I meant to ask, more things I meant to say. There will be more of my work that I want to give him to read. There will be more books by other people that I want to send him because he was a voracious reader who enjoyed chatting with me about books I'd recommended. There will be more bars I'll know he'd have liked. More bands he'd have enjoyed hearing. (Grandma was always one to say, as everyone else started fading around 1:00 AM, "Let's stay for another set!") More restaurants where I or another relative would have sneaked back to the table to leave extra money after Grandpa paid the tab, because he was a lousy tipper. More arguments we'd have had wherein he'd have shouted, "You're an idiot," which was his way of expressing friendly disagreement.

What I've learned over the years is that when the person ends, the relationship doesn't. Grandpa will never do anything new hereafter, but he lives on in my memory. The conversation continues, forever unfinished, though it does become a little one-sided. And, at least in this instance, I know exactly what the old man would say if here were here right now:

"Have a margarita, kid."



AVOIDING BAD PUBLISHERS

BY ISABEL VIANA

More and more often, I've heard complaints by writers who delivered the goods but didn't get paid. Whether a signed contract was in place or not didn't seem to make a difference. Writers have fallen prey to both electronic and in-print unscrupulous publishers alike.

While no method is foolproof, here are some ways to avoid a bad deal.

1. Get to know the client.

I recently saw a call for submissions posted by a new electronic market that sparked my interest. Instead of preparing a submission package, I wrote and asked for more information: What are the terms of your contract? Tell me about your company, its history, and its purpose. How much do you offer writers for their work? Since I know nothing about them except that they're taking submissions, I won't bother with them unless they answer my questions.

In cases like this, Carol Celeste, a freelance writer based in Orange, CA, suggests that writers "[i]gnore offers that look suspicious: e.g., sell the exposure you'll get without mentioning pay rates, appear every few months (indicates rapid turnover of writers), omit the basic info needed [for writers] to decide if it's worthwhile." This scrutiny also lets the publication know how you operate as a writer, and will hopefully weed out dishonest publishers from your pool of clients.

2. Treat a new publication as you would a new employer.

When I contact a new publication, I act as if I were participating in a job interview and ask questions I'd ask of employers recruiting me for an office position: How long has your company

been in business? What benefits do you offer? What's the pay range? In other words, tell me why I should want to work/write for you. A New Jersey author also says that she's "normally not afraid to write for a start-up or newbie magazine, but [I] try to make certain they're in my own state so if need be, I can take them to Small Claims Court for non-payment and 'theft of services.'"

3. Get comfortable negotiating contracts.

Celeste advises fellow writers: "Read all contracts carefully and request changes when necessary. I've never seen a contract that didn't need changes to make it equitable, and usually my requests are granted." She adds, "Don't submit a new project until paid in full for work already submitted and make this clear from the start."

Some of us think that if we try to negotiate a contract or even say no to a job, we'll never get another chance again. We must understand that establishing rules for how we work and letting publishers know them isn't arrogant behavior, but part of building a professional relationship between two parties. Whether you rely on intuition, an agent, or surround yourself with the best team of lawyers, it's important that you always assume a professional attitude toward your work. Make the value of your work clear to your clients.

4. Stay informed of publications' practices through networking.

Keep in contact with other writers and read news releases from writers' associations. Whenever I hear of a publication that has breached a contract with a writer, I jot the name down on the last page of my Writer's Market. I'm not one to rely on mem-

ory when it's my hard work at stake. The following Web sites exist so you can stay a step ahead of fraudulent publishers:

National Writers Union's Writer Alerts

<http://www.nwu.org/alerts/alrthome.htm>

Byte Out of Crime Newsletter

<http://www.egroups.com/community/byteoutofcrime>

Writers Weekly Newsletter (includes a scam report in each issue)


<http://www.writersweekly.com>

Writer's Black Book of Deadbeats

<http://www.freelancewriting.com/forumdir/wbd/index.html>

The Writer's Center Test Kit for Scams

<http://www.writer.org/scamkit.htm#kit>

I would prefer not to think that an established publication would breach its contract with a writer, but a Cazadero, CA freelancer was recently taken by a magazine that has been in business for twelve years. No strategy will protect you 100 percent. Still, you should ask questions, not so much for the answers but to gauge how serious a publisher is. I have a hunch that most publishers who act in bad faith prefer passive writers, and I hope those very same publishers shy away from inquisitive professionals. Perhaps there's a reason why, three weeks after I e-mailed that new electronic market, I'm still without a reply. In that match, I consider myself a winner. 

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Isabel Viana lives and writes in the mountains of southern Colorado. Her work has appeared in the anthology Lessons in Love: Gifts from Our Grandmothers. She also frequently writes on home-related issues.

MEMBER NEWS.....

▶ ▶ ▶ Cont. from p. 11

reports that she's "been here before, but this is particularly exciting because it's based on the 'book of my heart' that took two years to work out as a proposal I liked. Now I'll have to wait on pins and needles to see if it makes the next cut."

As Patricia Rosemoor, Pinianski is the author of the upcoming Harlequin Intrigues: *Someone to Protect*

Her, October, 2001; *Mysterious Stranger*, May, 2002, and *Cowboy Protector*, June, 2002. An erotic thriller for Harlequin Blaze will be published in April, 2002.

Witmer-Gow Finalist for Willa Cather Award

Karyn Witmer-Gow (w/a Elizabeth Grayson) has just received word that her historical novel, *Painted By The Sun*, is a finalist for the Willa Cather Award, presented by Women Writing the West. This a contest that

focuses on books with western settings. *Painted By The Sun*, published by Bantam Books, was a finalist in the Write Touch Readers Awards as well. Bantam will publish Witmer-Gow's *Moon In The Water* in late 2002.

Send news for this column to Kathy Chwedyk at KChwed@ AOL.com or 1215 Fairmont Court, Algonquin, IL 60102.

Fast Track.....Compiled by Marilyn Pappano

The Fast Track is a monthly report on Novelists, Inc. members on the USA Today top 150 bestseller list. Members should send Marilyn Pappano a postcard alerting her to upcoming books, especially those in multi-author anthologies, which are often listed by last names only. Marilyn's phone number is (918) 227-1608, fax (918) 227-1601, or online: pappano@ionet.net. Internet surfers can find the list at: <http://www.usatoday.com>

Members who write under pseudonyms should notify Marilyn at any of the above addresses to assure their listing in *Fast Track*.

USA Today Bestseller List—July 2001

Catherine Anderson, *Phantom Waltz*, Onyx
Elizabeth Boyle, *Once Tempted*, Avon
Stella Cameron, *Glass Houses*, Zebra
Catherine Coulter, *Riptide*, Jove
Janet Evanovich, *Seven Up*, St. Martin's
Janet Evanovich, *Hot Six*, St. Martin's
Janet Evanovich, *Four to Score*, St. Martin's
Janet Evanovich, *Two for the Dough*, Pocket
Janet Evanovich, *One for the Money*, Harper
Patricia Gaffney, *Circle of Three*, HarperTorch

Linda Howard, *Mr. Perfect*, Pocket Star
Linda Howard, *Open Season*, Pocket
Iris Johansen, *The Search*, Bantam
Iris Johansen, *Final Target*, Bantam
Debbie Macomber et al*, *Rainy Day Kisses/The Bride Price*, Harlequin
Julia Quinn, *An Offer from a Gentleman*, Avon
Patricia Rice, *All a Woman Wants*, Signet
Nora Roberts, *Dance upon the Air*, Jove
Nora Roberts, *Reflections and Dreams*, Silhouette
Nora Roberts, *Carolina Moon*, Jove
Bertrice Small, *The Duchess*, Ballantine

* et al: additional authors who are not Ninc members at this time

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