

The
Wow

e-newsletter

by Ken and Dahlynn McKowen

Principles

Volume 4 No. 2 February 2008

www.PublishingSyndicate.com

Writing for the Heart

Two years ago, we presented romance writing in one of our e-newsletters. The piece included statistics that showed romance fiction controlled the largest market segment of book sales. Even though sales may have slipped slightly since then, more than 26 percent of all books sold are—you guessed it—in the romance genre!

So how do you become an author of one of the 6,400 or so romance titles that likely will be released in 2009? Start doing your research and your writing now. Research? Yes! What makes a good romance novel? The same things that make any novel good: a solid story with believable characters. To be a little more specific for the romance genre, your story must be a love story and its ending must be emotionally satisfying for the reader. And since love is such a wonderful and optimistic affair, horribly depressing endings are usually a no-no.



More research? Yes! You need to decide before you start writing whether you're interested in writing historical romance or a more contemporary romance story, suspenseful romance or inspirational romance, young adult romance or paranormal romance (future sci-fi stuff), or any of the other subcategories of romance fiction. The reason? Publishers tend to be very specific about what is appropriate for their many subcategories, so it's best to carefully study how your particular subcategory is structured and the kinds of details that must be included before you spend too much time writing.

Next, don't bother figuring out all the subcategories or even story plotting until you read a stack or two of the types of romance novels you wish to write. And target titles that make the bestsellers' lists to be certain

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Published by *Publishing Syndicate*

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The following is from *Chicken Soup for the Soul: Love Stories*. The story is included to help familiarize you with the Chicken Soup for the Soul writing style. Enjoy!

With *This* Ring?

This wasn't to be my first marriage, so you'd think I'd have this proposing stuff down. Being the somewhat typical male guaranteed that such would not be the case as I struggled through how and when to propose to my girlfriend Dahlynn.

We had been going together for several months—and had known each other for many years. We both assumed we were going to get married, although the date and circumstances were still residing in the great unknown void of, “we'll talk about that later when we have more time.” Things began to change when we were strolling through our friends' jewelry store in Old Town Folsom, where the many shops fill historic brick buildings leftover from California's Gold Rush days.

I've never been a connoisseur of fine jewelry, or even cheap jewelry. The fact that most of the gold and diamond rings in the store's cases were antiques meant nothing to me except that the original owners likely paid significantly less for them new than I was going to pay for any of them used 100 years later.

Even though we had gone into the store just to browse, Dahlynn quickly spotted her perfect wedding ring. I agreed that the ring was beautiful, and yes, I was crazy in love with her—and I am even more so in love with her today—but neither of us mentioned purchasing it. After all, I had not yet officially proposed to her, so buying a ring that day was not part of my planned proposal process.

Finding the perfect ring that Dahlynn loved did spur me to begin planning my proposal. I thought it would be great if I returned to the store and surprised her by purchasing the ring. I returned to the jewelry store alone a few days later and wandered over to the “antique wedding ring case.” I scanned the display case for Dahlynn's special ring—and scanned some more. I thought, *Oh no, these rings all look alike! Now what do I do?*

The same two women who had helped Dahlynn “choose” her special ring earlier that week were working, but their memories were as fuzzy as mine about which ring, in a case was filled with antique diamond wedding rings, had been Dahlynn's special ring. I left in a bit of a panic, hoping it hadn't already been sold.

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HOT STUFF! HOT STUFF!

The following Chicken Soup books need stories from you!

IMPORTANT: Please submit stories for the following titles to www.ChickenSoup.com.

Christmas Pet Book: Share your special holiday pet stories! Deadline: March 31, 2008

High School Student's Soul: The high school years are some of the most difficult but, at the same time, some of the best. Deadline: April 30, 2008

Middle School Student's Soul: Stories focused on the middle school years. Deadline: April 30, 2008

Catholic Soul: An affirming collection of powerful and heartwarming stories and poems full of faith and inspiration. Deadline: May 30, 2008



Actively-Retired Soul: Just as the title suggests, there is no “retiring” after you retire! Most retirees are busier than ever and this book will share humorous and fun stories from those who are actively enjoying their “senior years!” Deadline: May 31, 2008

A Cup of Comfort needs stories!

To learn more, go to www.cupofcomfort.com, click on “Share Your Story” in the left-hand margin and you’ll find detailed information for the books below.



A Cup of Comfort for New Mothers: Deadline: April 1, 2008

A Cup of Comfort for Adoptive Families: Deadline June 15, 2008

Go for it! Get published! 