



100<sup>th</sup> Issue

# Ink Spots



The Newsletter of Fremont Area Writers

*The "Centennial" Branch of the California Writers Club*

Nancy Guarnera Editor-in-Chief

Vol. 100 August 2020

inkspots@cw-c-fremontareawriters.org

Visit us at <http://cw-c-fremontareawriters.org>

August 2020

Our 100<sup>th</sup> Issue!

August 2020

## FAW General Meeting on Zoom – August 22nd

### August's Speaker

***Kilby Blades***

***Contemporary Romance Novelist***

Submitted by Knuti VanHoven

At 2:00 PM on August 22nd, FAW is looking forward to a hot August ZOOM meeting with contemporary romance writer **Kilby Blades**. Her topic, reprised from her presentation at the Writer's Digest conference in New York, will be ***"How and When and Why to Integrate Romance into Your Novels."***

The author writes about "relationships that can be defined on their own terms rather than following the formulaic path: "first comes love, then comes marriage...." Her books *Snapdragon* and *Chrysalis* deal with the romantic relationships of high achievers. She has garnered **"40 awards and counting."**

You've heard how "love makes the world go 'round." You'll probably have noticed that it also makes the metaphorical cash registers ring for everything from film scripts to histories.

Before the meeting, I suggest you check out Kilby's sales website at **kilbyblades.com**. Its graphics are great and her featured quotes include:

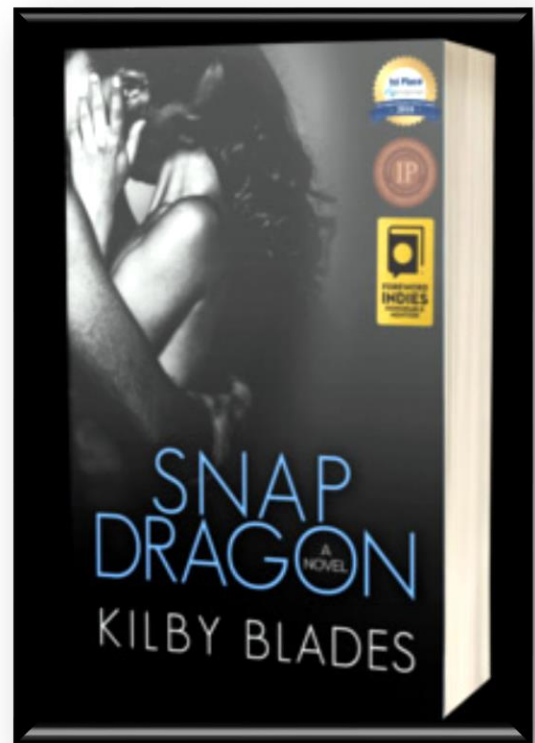
"Blades manages to ease feminism and equality into her novels, which is always a delight to see in a genre written and read mostly by women." - *IndieReader Critical Review*

"Kilby Blades is a fresh, new voice in smart, romantic fiction." ( - Literally, everyone!)

"Blades delivers a saucy romance full of lovely characters who complement each other like a fine wine does a good meal." - *Publishers Weekly Review of The Secret Ingredient*

Kilby comes to FAW, courtesy of Romance Writers of America's San Jose branch, thanks to a contact made by our own Tish Davidson.

See you on the 22nd! In the meantime, if you're looking for ideas about what makes a good sales website, and want to know more about the author and her books, remember to check out **kilbyblades.com**.



**kilbyblades.com**



**TERRY TOSH**  
FAW President

# President's Message

So, anyway...

Ever feel like you might just be a character in a badly written comedy/drama/tragedy in which the author couldn't come up with a nice wrap-up, and kept erasing and rewriting the chapter you are currently stuck in? Just wondered...

I am so grateful for our phenomenal Nancy Guarnera for her unwavering dedication and talent. She single-handedly kept the fires of inspiration burning while I chilled out, enjoying the summer break and feasting on the fruits of her labor as we devoured the weekly SIP Notes, TMAS teasers, and the latest edition of *Ink Spots*! (Normally, we don't publish a newsletter in July.) On behalf of the entire membership, I offer a hearty Thank You, Nancy!

Congrats to all of us; and Myrla Raymundo, Nancy Guarnera and Jay Swartz especially, on 100 issues of *Ink Spots*.

Please join me in welcoming Rekha Ramani to our Board. She will be taking over the position of Secretary from Carmen VonTickner. We offer our thanks to Carmen for her service to our organization. I'm looking forward to working with Rekha in the coming months as she settles into her new position.

It was weird not having our picnic this year, but par for the course, in this year of weirdness gone wild. I read that some groups had virtual picnics, and gave it a very short thought...then decided no, just wouldn't be the same.

I trust that everyone stayed safe and healthy during this past month, and those of us that work essential jobs are keeping to the safety protocols as strictly as possible.

Now, back to business as (un)usual. Let's continue to be "writers helping writers" in as much capacity as possible. Please renew your membership if not already done, as we need to maintain the numbers needed to qualify as a branch, as well as attempt to grow in this tough environment. Our board meeting will continue to be Zoomed on the Tuesday afternoon (3:30-5:00 PM) immediately prior to the 4th Saturday General Meeting (2:00-4:00 PM), which appears to still be destined to be Zoomed, as well.

Please do your best to attend our meetings as appropriate. We need your talent and interaction to achieve success as an integral part of the CWC body of writers and contributors to this creative and potentially lucrative field that we have chosen to pursue.

Here's to a healthy and productive month for all of you, and your families, and I hope to "see" you all soon.

**Terry**

## FREMONT AREA WRITERS MONTHLY CALENDAR

**SECOND SATURDAY**  
Meet Your Local FAW Authors

**Second Saturdays**

2:00 – 4:00 PM

Half Price Books  
39152 Fremont Blvd  
Fremont

**THIRD SUNDAY**  
Literary OPEN MIC

**Third Sundays**

Sign-up 3:00 PM

Reading 3:30 – 5:30 PM  
Half Price Books  
39201 Cedar Blvd  
Newark

**FOURTH MONDAY**  
WRITERS' SALON

**Fourth Mondays**

7:00 – 9:00 PM

Slap Face Coffee & Tea  
Meeting Room  
37324 Fremont Blvd  
Fremont

**MEMBERSHIP**  
MEETINGS

**Fourth Saturdays**

General: 2:00 – 4:00 PM

42 Silicon Valley Rm 106  
6600 Dr. Anton Circle  
Fremont

**CANCELED UNTIL  
FURTHER NOTICE**

**zoom**

**zoom**

# ***FAW Board Members***



**TERRY TOSH**  
President



**KNUTI VANHOVEN**  
Vice President



**REKHA RAMANI**  
Secretary



**CHERYLYN CHIN**  
Treasurer



**BOB GARFINKLE**  
Past President –  
Fremont Area Writers  
Past President –  
CA Writers Club

**BOARD MEETINGS**  
3:30 to 5:00 PM  
Tuesday before the Fourth Saturday  
Membership Meetings  
on ZOOM

## **JACK LONDON AWARDEES**

### **FREMONT AREA WRITERS**

2009 Bob Garfinkle  
2011 Myrla Raymundo  
2013 Carol Hall  
2015 Art Carey  
2017 Shirley Ferrante  
2019 Jan Small



# ***FAW Chairpersons***



**ART CAREY**  
Signage  
Facility Liaison



**SUE CURTZWILER**  
Volunteer Coordinator  
Hospitality Co-Chair



**SCOTT DAVIDSON**  
Webmaster



**TISH DAVIDSON**  
CA Writers Club  
Representative



**AMBER DeANN**  
Facebook Page  
Social Media



**BOB GARFINKLE**  
Historian  
Past President



**NANCY GUARNERA**  
"Second Saturday" HPB &  
"Third Sunday" Open Mic  
Ink Spots Editor



**CHERYLYN CHIN**  
CWC Advertising  
& Promotions



**TONY PINO**  
"Fourth Monday"  
Writers' Salon



**ANITA TOSH**  
Membership  
Nor-Cal Representative  
Authors' Table/Book Exchange



**KNUTI VANHOVEN**  
Speakers Program  
Publicity



**CARMEN VONTICKNER**  
Hospitality Co-Chair

## **FAW MISSION STATEMENT**

Fremont Area Writers educates writers and the public by providing:  
Forums for educating members in the craft of writing and marketing their works *and*  
Public meetings, workshops, and seminars open to all writers and the general public  
to facilitate educating writers of all levels of expertise. (*Article II Section 1:1.1 and 1.2 FAW Bylaws*)

# KUDOS – Members' News

KUDOS to Frank Arevalo, Amber DeAnn, Manjula Bhadraswamy, Marie Blanchard, Robert Cabello, Art Carey, Mary Jade Chiang, Cherilyn Chin, Terry Connelly, Joyce Cortez, Sue Curtzwiler, Tish Davidson, Scott Davidson, Paul K Davis, Shirley Ferrante, Bob Garfinkle, Nancy Guarnera, Carol Lee Hall, Marjorie Johnson, Janet Salinas, Dave Strom, Terry Tosh, and Knuti VanHoven for participating in the Tell Me A Story collaborative writing project. The story is getting very close to being finished; watch for updates. *Congratulations, All!*

Welcome to

## THE PROMPT PALACE

**Here we go again . . . another opportunity for writers to help writers write.**

We all suffer from writer's block now and then. Or, maybe we just need a break from our current project. Or, we just want to play a little! Well here's your opportunity to get the help you need or an opportunity to play. **The Prompt Palace** is a place to find topic ideas. Check below for a few prompts that we've suggested in the past, as well as a few new ones.

**Anyone can suggest prompt ideas:** put **FAW—Prompt Palace—Prompt** in the **subject line** of your email and send it to: [inkspots@cw-c-fremontareawriters.org](mailto:inkspots@cw-c-fremontareawriters.org). We'll add it to the list.

If you use one of **The Prompt Palace** prompts, and you'd like to share your work with the rest of us, put **FAW—Prompt Palace—Submission** in the **subject line** of your email and send it to: [inkspots@cw-c-fremontareawriters.org](mailto:inkspots@cw-c-fremontareawriters.org), and we'll publish it in the **Writer's Corner**.

### Tunnel Vision

Falling ...in ...out ...off ...etc.

What will FAW look like in 2021?

I am so grateful that...

Silver Linings

Life in the time of a global pandemic

A walk in the woods

Are humans *really* smarter than animals?

Skin Deep

### Photo Prompt



*from Terry Tosh*



# A Word from Our Editor



**Nancy Guarnera**  
Editor-in-Chief Ink Spots

Welcome to our August 2020 issue of *Ink Spots*. Last year we celebrated our tenth Anniversary and this month we celebrate our 100<sup>th</sup> issue. This is my 24<sup>th</sup> issue—first as assistant editor and then as Editor-in-Chief. That seems like a lot to me, until I remember that Myrla Raymundo was responsible for most of the other 77 issues, with assistance from former member Jay Swartz. I hope that through the years *Ink spots* has served our membership well, and especially so, since I became editor. If there's something you'd like to see in your newsletter that we aren't currently providing for you, please let me know. Send suggestions to [inkspots@cw-fremontareawriters.org](mailto:inkspots@cw-fremontareawriters.org).

Our **General Meeting on Zoom** will be on August 22<sup>nd</sup> from 2 to 4 PM watch for an invitation from Scott Davidson. Our speaker will be **Kilby Blades**, romance novelist; her topic, "**How and When and Why to Integrate Romance Into Your Novels.**" Don't miss this one!

The "**Fourth Monday**" **Writers' Salon** is continuing to meet and will be Zooming on August 24<sup>th</sup> from 7 to 9 PM. Check with Tony Pino before the next meeting for an invitation, if you haven't attended before

and would like to, contact info for him is on page 12. This is open to your writer friends, as well, so let them know about this valuable opportunity to share their work.

**We will continue to publish Ink Spots** for you as always; and you should be receiving your **Weekly SIP NOTES** on Mondays. If you decide to send us a **SIP NOTE**, please send it to [nguarnera16@comcast.net](mailto:nguarnera16@comcast.net). Please put **FAW SIP NOTE Submission** and **your name** in the **subject field**. I always need more! Thanks!

The next installment of "**Tell Me A Story**" can be found on page 16 of this issue, and look for it in your email (inbox & spam) every Wednesday; this month's installments will be emailed on August 12<sup>th</sup>, 19<sup>th</sup> and 26<sup>th</sup>. We hope you're enjoying the story.

Remember, send your creative work for the **Writers' Corner**, your shout outs for **KUDOS**, and your prompt suggestions for **The Prompt Palace**, our new feature, to help stimulate ideas for your writing (see page 5), to the newsletter email address [inkspots@cw-fremontareawriters.org](mailto:inkspots@cw-fremontareawriters.org) for publication in *Ink Spots*.

**Stay safe, healthy and happy! Nancy**

## Submission Guidelines

Please send all submissions for *Ink Spots* to [inkspots@cw-fremontareawriters.org](mailto:inkspots@cw-fremontareawriters.org) by **August 1<sup>st</sup> for the August issue**. Remember to put **FAW Ink Spots Submission** and **Your Name** in the **Subject field** of your email. Thank you for sharing your writing with the rest of us!

### SUBMISSION DEADLINE:

On or before the **First Day of the Publication Month** (e.g. August 1st for the August issue, etc.)  
Please submit as attachments, rather than in the body of your email.

### WORD COUNT:

**Feature articles** (Presidents Message, The Spark, features, etc.): **350 - 400 words max.**  
**Creative Submissions:** **1,000 words max.** (unless you are willing to have longer pieces serialized)  
**Weekly SIP NOTES:** **350 - 400 words max.** **Kudos:** **75-100 words max.**

**FORMAT:** Text – Word.doc/docx in Arial 12 pt. **Photos** – JPEG

Please **DO NOT** use special formatting. **ONLY** use the return key at the end of each paragraph.  
Please don't double space between sentences. Thanks!

# ***Your Weekly SIP NOTES***

## **WEEK #13 JUNE 29<sup>TH</sup> CHERILYN CHIN**

Wouldn't you know, my computer crashed after I wrote my SIP note. Here's what I remember saying:

As an introvert, I've found staying home a good thing. I always tell myself that I'll write more, especially because I (supposedly) have more time. I try most mornings to write for at least 15 minutes upon waking, but I fail miserably when my emails beckon. I get sucked down that hole and I skip writing for the day.

But, I discovered the other week, I have a first draft of my middle-grade children's novel about a Hawaiian girl and boy who discover that their beloved coral reef has bleached, and they have to solve the mystery of why.

I hand write my first drafts and only recently typed up a few pages. I quickly realized I have a 30,000 word first draft, the low end of a middle-grade novel. I'm not done by any means, but I can edit while I type up my manuscript.

I have put up a few blog posts on my ocean conservation blog, "Ocean of Hope," which I invite you to check out. It's been a labor of love for me for the past 10 years! I welcome any feedback and suggestions for future posts.

<https://protecttheoceans.org/wordpress>

## **WEEK #14 JULY 6<sup>TH</sup> TISH DAVIDSON**

### **Unstructured Time: A Summer Project**

I live across the street from an elementary school. Normally the street teems with cars and school buses, kids on scooters, kids on bikes, kids on foot. Today it is empty. It's late March, and we are all sheltering in place.

Parallel to the street, between a row of scruffy bushes and the playground, lies a strip of hard-packed naked dirt. A teenage boy appears with a shovel and begins to dig. This strip does not inspire visions of sandcastles or buried treasure, so I watch him. The day is hot. The boy takes off his t-shirt, hangs it on a bush, and continues to dig. His back glistens in the sun. He digs and digs then puts on his shirt, and he and his shovel leave.

He appears the next day, and the day after that, and the day after that, and continues to dig. On the fifth day, he is joined by two more, slightly younger, kids. They move to a different spot where bushes obscure exactly what is going on. I am intrigued.

It is now the second week of April. Four kids, helmeted and masked, arrive on bikes. One boy takes off down the strip. He partially disappears into a dip, then flies through the air. He is followed by two boys and a girl. The light dawns. These kids have built a bike challenge course. After several runs, they sit on their bikes, social distancing and talking. After a couple more runs, they disappear, but after dinner two of them are back with tools. They begin to build a ramp.

The bike brigade appears the next day and the next. Then something interesting happens. Several new kids come on their own and try out the course. Then two young kids with their father come by and ride the course at low speed. A couple of adults detour off the street to give it a try. A few days later, two preschoolers appear and creep through the strip, parent at their side. By now, the ramp has been extended and the older kids are getting bigger air.

By May the course has a steady trickle of users from lunchtime until dark. One day two adults on motorcycles ride through. Every evening two or three teens stop by to do maintenance.

One evening I approach them. They look apprehensive, as if they think I am going to yell at them. They tell me they have permission to keep the course until school starts. I tell them I am impressed with the diligence of their upkeep and allow them to get water from the spigot in front of our house.

This project, teen initiated, teen maintained, and used by the neighborhood makes me appreciate the value of unstructured time in young lives. Other summers, these kids likely would be in sports camps or academic enrichment programs. The oldest might have summer jobs. Instead, they have imagined and created a summer project they will remember for the rest of their lives. Perhaps we should all be more appreciative for the doors that open when routine is broken.

# More Weekly SIP NOTES

WEEK #15 JULY 13<sup>TH</sup> URMILA PATEL

## Finally, I found my space

When I was working, I wished I could be home. I know I'll be happier sitting in front of a television with a hot chocolate than at this stupid job. I'm getting goosebumps whenever I think of my couch, a friend said.

"Bang." something invisible dropped out from nowhere, and it's harmful. It's all over in the news. California governor announced shelter in place. No one is allowed to go out.

Does that mean I can't meet my friends for a chit-chat? I can't go to the gym? That's ridiculous. This friend said. My heart is drumming, and my blood pressure is going up. I feel imprisoned. I miss my work.

Ladies and gentlemen, this has happened to many people.

What I want to point out is that we are continually looking for happiness on the surface level while it's within us. It's in our creativity, our cooking, reading, writing, even looking at certain things in the house we never saw before. We take things for granted. Don't we?

How many of us have looked at every detail in our house and said, "Wow," I never knew this blue tile has a smiley face.

When I heard California ordered SIP, I thought for a moment. What did that mean to me? Nothing much would change except I'll be missing meetings in person, giving hugs, and not liking wearing a mask in public.

But something happened to me during this period. I thought I was happy, but I wasn't. There was something I was missing—a corner. For years I've been struggling to find that space, a small hole from where I could feel safe doing my creative work. I was running like crazy, so all I did was suppress that pain inside.

Now I was home. I had no TV cable to watch those depressing news shows and no meetings to attend. Life became simpler. With the extra time I had now, I asked myself a question and meditated upon it. Why am I feeling what I am feeling?

As a month passed by, there was something greater happening beyond my conciseness. As the atmosphere was removing the toxins away that it had gathered from our rat-race life, my mind became closer and closer to my answers. I started connecting with my house, which I never did before. How did that happen, I thought?

I painted the ceiling of a room I felt I never wanted to go in before. Guess what? I moved my office space over there. After 17 years, I realized I have a balcony.

Now I wave to my neighbors passing. Evenings, I watch the light pinkish color of the sky as the sun goes to sleep, and I lay with my grandson on the balcony for hours to count the stars and watch the Milky Way as they blink at us.

That's not all...

In the backyard, the soil in the garden started breathing. We've been told for generations, "When Mother Earth breathes, we breathe, too."

For years, the garden was sad. Hardly any vegetables showed up to say hello. Now, tomato plants wearing their yellowish head-cover on every figure started lifting their spines as high as they could reach. "How did you get here?" I asked. Remember, they said, in the winter, you threw the bad ones away. Like these: dill, potatoes, onions, garlic, and strawberry plants filled up the space, which it never did for many years, but the mint still shows a bit of grudge. So I moved its home to the sunny area.

Now every corner is being used. Every space gets my energy.

But what about my killer smile? No one can see it when I go shopping.

"Well, it's okay!" I said. At least you will save on makeup, and creams that you buy to remove those dark spots from your face.

The missing space within is filled. I feel balanced!



# More Weekly SIP NOTES

## WEEK #16 JULY 20TH MARIE BLANCHARD & TONY PINO

Hi Nancy,

I liked your comments on gratitude, so I'll share with you the thing I have been most immediately grateful for in the past month: mucous. After emptying a vacuum canister, I accidentally inhaled a large amount of dust and grit. Coughing and sneezing were not enough. It took about 30 minutes for me forcibly coughing the stuff out, each cough producing a thumbnail size mucous glob neatly surrounding a feather-like piece of dust. Without this wonderful substance working for me, I would be dead of pneumonia instead of writing to you.

But I had to laugh when I said right after I felt my lungs open up, "I'm so grateful for mucous."

**Marie Blanchard**

**Really nice piece, Tish.**

You've touched on a hot button for me and one I'm passionate about, though have learned to keep my mouth mostly shut. Kids need free, unstructured time without manufactured playthings.

Creativity isn't learned in putting something together the way someone else has mandated. Self-esteem isn't built by someone saying to every motion, every right answer, "Good job," or "That's wonderful."

Enough rant. But thank you, Tish.

**Marie Blanchard**

Tish,

I like your story! It shows that you don't need endangerment to hold a reader's interest, and that something positive can be described and narrated in an engaging way. Congrats!

**Tony Pino**

**Send us SIP Notes and  
your creative submissions!**

## WEEK #17 JULY 27TH MARGOT ROLETT

I've been pursuing some legal, energetic, and satisfying escapism lately. Normally, I procrastinate to avoid serious house cleaning activities, boring paperwork, or activities involving fear of failure or unnecessary discomfort. However, as a gardener and nature lover, playing in my compost bin takes me to a whole different world.

I feed a few hundred wriggly earthworms and a variety of tiny creatures and organisms. They help me turn fruit and vegetable kitchen waste, coffee grounds, green garden cuttings, and dry leaves and twigs into rich garden soil, and it all feels extremely creative.

My tools are simple: gloves, trowel, clippers, and enough water to keep everything moist. The only danger involves back pain from prolonged bending. Sadly, this problem increases with age. Some people worry that compost will smell like a garbage dump, but because it's kept very vegetarian, mine has no strong scent at all. As I add to the feast, I'm reminded of salads and side dishes I've served my husband at our dinner table, and I wonder which critters prefer which fruits and veggies.

"Anyone for slightly brown lettuce or bright orange carrot peelings? Like a few smashed eggshells to add calcium, or how about some peels of sweet golden mango? I'm adding "Peet's" coffee grounds, still in brown filters—no bleach used."

This bin, with its hungry inhabitants, helps me forget briefly the pandemic situation all around me. I hope I'm not alone enjoying a creative, backyard compost escape.

### FAW BOOK LAUNCH

**Evelyn LaTorre** will present a Zoom launch of her book, *Between Inca Walls, A Peace Corps Memoir* on **Wednesday, August 19**, from 6 to 7pm PDT.

For more info, contact her at [elatorre@aol.com](mailto:elatorre@aol.com).



**Sue Curtzwiler**  
**Volunteer Coordinator**

## Getting Involved during the Pandemic

*Sally paused a minute before entering the room into her first writer's conference. It was at a beautiful location with a view of rolling hills from the huge windows on the third floor of the conference center. She selected a place to sit and enjoyed the dinner served before the meeting. And then it's time for her 30-second elevator speech and she's nervous. But, she stands and shares her "story."*

*"Hello, my name is Sally Bakersmith. I've been working in a Marketing department for three years. As a volunteer at the Ardenwood Historic Farm in Fremont, I publish short articles to promote nature walks, and recently began mentoring junior high school students. I enjoy writing. My goal for today's seminar is to learn more about creative writing, and how to publish short stories."*

*Why was Sally nervous? She was afraid she wouldn't fit in. Young and not a published author, she hoped that her introduction of her writing and volunteering experience would pique interest and help her socialize after the seminar.*

Due to the Covid-19 pandemic, we don't have the pleasure of attending an in-person meeting. However, as your volunteer coordinator, I encourage you to become involved in our Fremont Area Writers (FAW) group. Don't be anxious like Sally. **You have a treasure of talents.** We would like to hear from you. Here are some ideas of how you could be an integral contributor to FAW: send reminder emails for the board and general meetings; collect copies of the free, weekly Tri-City Voice newspaper and clip articles, calendar listings, and our ad mentioning about FAW and our branch's activities. These are just a few areas where we need assistance.

Would you like to be a mentor and show someone that whatever their level, they belong here with FAW? **Your experience is precious**—help with that first paragraph or encourage someone to enter their first writing contest. Anything is possible. Is the shelter-in-place your time to shine and be more involved with FAW? Please contact me (**[smcurtzwiler@comcast.net](mailto:smcurtzwiler@comcast.net)**) with your interest in any of the above options and with your own ideas to find a connection for you. We are in this together; we need each other to belong and see our dreams come true.

*Sue Curtzwiler*

# Notes from the World

## Two Not-So-New Contests

The **35th Annual Tennessee Williams & New Orleans Literary Festival** is seeking submissions of original *Fiction, Short Fiction, Poetry, and One-Act plays* for our 2020-2021 Writing Contest. This contest is open to U.S. and international submissions. Prizes are awarded for the winning submission, as well as for the top finalists in each category. Fiction and One-Act Play deadline is October 1, 2020. Poetry and Very Short Fiction deadline is October 15, 2020. For complete guidelines and submission details, please see our website

[tennesseewilliams.net/contests/](http://tennesseewilliams.net/contests/)

**Saints and Sinners, our LGBTQ Literary Festival**, also has an annual Fiction Contest. Deadline for submissions is October 1, 2020. More information can be found on our website.

[sasfest.org/#contest](http://sasfest.org/#contest)

Follow us @TWFestNOLA & @sasfest on social media.

## Call for Romance Submissions

**Belonging Books**, a new, inclusive, feminist publishing house, has begun accepting submissions for launch in June. Submissions can be of all lengths from and about minorities—people of color, people with disabilities, religious minorities, LGBTQ+ people, etc.—and non-traditional romance. Mission: diversify and modernize the genre.  
[belongingbooksonline.wordpress.com](http://belongingbooksonline.wordpress.com)

## Two FREE Writing Webinars

Writer Jane Cleland is offering two free Zoom craft webinars open to all writers. **Crafting a Bundle of Prose: Tools of the Trade** is on Saturday, August 15 from 10–11 AM and **Crafting a Bundle of Prose: The Metaphor Machine** is scheduled from 10–11 AM on Saturday, September 15<sup>th</sup>.

Cleland writes crime fiction, middle grade, espionage, and the long-running Josie Prescott Antiques Mystery series, all published by St. Martin's Minotaur. She also contributes craft articles to *Writers Digest* and teaches professional writing at the university level.

Sign up at [www.janecleland.com/events](http://www.janecleland.com/events).

*Submitted by Tish Davidson*

## Call for Photos & Artwork 2020 CWC Literary Review

Fred Dodsworth, from the Berkeley Branch, will be producing the **2020 Lit Review** and he'd like help with photo and artwork submissions.

If you're an artist or a photographer and would like to submit your work for consideration, please email your work to Fred at this email: [fdodsworth@comcast.net](mailto:fdodsworth@comcast.net).

Images must be at least 1 megabyte in size and may be either **B&W or color**. Please use **CWC Art** in the subject field of your email. It's not necessary for you to be a professional; Fred's looking for images that are "stunning, catch the eye, and speak to you."

He will be curating the work he receives, so submission is not a guarantee that your work will appear. Submit as many pieces as you'd like for consideration.

**DEADLINE: AS SOON AS POSSIBLE**



# *More Notes from the World*

## ★ CONTESTS ★

**Writers Weekly.** Free newsletter. 24-hour short story contest once each quarter. Topic and word length revealed after signing up. Limited to 500 entrants. \$5 entry fee. Also lists some paying markets for fiction and nonfiction. [writersweekly.com](http://writersweekly.com)

**Winning Writers.** Free newsletter. Lists free contests (many age or location restricted) as well as pay-to-enter contests. Lots of poetry contests. [winningwriters.com](http://winningwriters.com)

**The Write Life.** Website. Lists free contests (with a few exceptions.) Includes book, short fiction, essay, and poetry contests. Many contests are very specific, e.g. book by first generation immigrant, book of military fiction. [thewritelife.com/writing-contests](http://thewritelife.com/writing-contests)

**Poets & Writers.** Website. Searchable contest database with filters for cost, genre and deadline. [pw.org/grants](http://pw.org/grants)

## ★ CONTESTS ★

**Submishmash Weekly.** Free newsletter. A curated arts newsletter with select publishing opportunities including contests, publications seeking submissions, and artist residencies. Run by the submission platform [Submittable.com](http://Submittable.com).

**The Writer.** Website and free newsletter. Listing of mostly pay-to-enter contests. [writersmag.com/contests](http://writersmag.com/contests)

**Fan Story.** Paid site. Seven-day free trial. \$9.95/month or \$69/year. Feedback on writing you post and almost daily contests that can be entered at no additional fee. [fanstory.com](http://fanstory.com)

## **Free Online Workshops**

*scriptwriters check out*  
[roadmapwriters.com](http://roadmapwriters.com)

## **Fremont Area Writers**

**“Fourth Monday”**

## **Writers’ Salon**

**August 24<sup>th</sup> 7:00 – 9:00 P.M.**

*For details on Zooming in August, contact Tony Pino*  
[up.dragonfly.com@gmail.com](mailto:up.dragonfly.com@gmail.com) or 510-745-0761

# WRITING CRAFT

## Building Characters

by Tish Davidson

Characters and their motivations are what drive fiction, so it is important to have well-developed characters who are easily distinguishable from one another. Developing and differentiating characters begins with giving them distinctly different, but not necessarily quirky, names. It confuses the reader when characters have names that are too similar—for example, Dan and Don or twins named Larry and Harry.

Characters have to be distinguished beyond their names. There are multiple ways to make the people in your story stand out by using telling details about their looks, speech patterns, and personalities. Often writers bring their main characters to life, but fail to develop the minor characters, so that the main characters end up supported by a cast of cardboard, clichéd figures. Fortunately, there are tools and books to stimulate the writer's imagination in ways that help fully develop the entire cast.

Making a character map can be helpful both in defining main characters and in discovering memorable details about less important players. There are two types of character maps: those that help the writer determine the physical appearance, background, and habits of their characters and those that define interactions among the characters. Using the first of these, the author can explore his characters' appearance, family, favorite activities, attitudes, and more; and then select the traits that best fit the character's motivations and actions in the story.

The second type of character map defines the relationships among characters. This is done visually using a form that shows connections and relationships. This type of map is most useful after the writer is well into the story, when relationships begin to get tangled. It is especially helpful in multi-generational novels or when a large cast of supporting characters dances across the pages. A Google search using "character map template" brings up examples of both these types of templates.

Orson Scott Card's book *Characters and Viewpoint*, part of the Writer's Digest Elements of Fiction Writing series, is another good resource for writers struggling with creating realistic characters. The book goes beyond character development and discusses what makes a good character, how to use minor characters effectively, and how to help your characters grow and change throughout the novel. The viewpoint section shows how different viewpoint characters can be used most effectively.

Finally, a useful book on building characters is *What Would Your Character Do? Personality Quizzes for Analyzing Your Characters* by Eric and Ann Maisel (Writer's Digest Books). Eric Maisel is a family therapist with a Ph.D. in psychological counseling. The format of the book takes full advantage of his expertise. The authors propose thirty scenarios such as your character flirting, being caught in a big lie, or playing poker.

After a brief description of the situation, the authors ask a series of questions such as (for poker night) "After winning a big pot, your character would?" Then they give five choices about how your character would react and explain what each reaction means in psychological terms. For example, if you answer the above question by saying your character would "gloat," the commentary would explain, "Gloating is consistent with an immature, oppositional, and perhaps anti-social character who lacks empathy, blames others for his failures, and always has an excuse for losing." See, your character just went to the shrink without you ever getting off the page (or paying for a session).

So, if your characters are just lying there flat on the page, use some of these tools to jump-start them into becoming memorable people.

# **FREMONT AREA WRITERS' CORNER**

\*\*\*\*\*

## **Boredom**

I see boredom,  
a wrecking ball of sorts.  
I reach into its pockets  
and extract novelty.  
time lays stagnant in its belly,  
and if you peer close  
makes room for more novelty.  
I recoil in it's shadow,  
the sun spiraling down a vortex.  
the air suspended in front of me  
is heavy with defeat.  
every time I dodge its thrust,  
I am pushed deeper towards its core,  
vowing to mush my mind,  
but even here,  
there is novelty.  
a clover pushing out of  
the unforgiving concrete,  
sees stalks of rainbow  
springing forth from an ashen sky.  
I become transparent in this world,  
clear glass wiping off the mist  
from my reflection.  
now I can see where I am,  
a rainbow sprung from an ashen sky.

**Rekha Ramani**

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## **Fresh**

Well, well,  
What have we here?  
Some uninvited, yet somehow welcomed  
Time on our collective hands!  
Hey, it wasn't MY fault.  
I didn't ask for it.  
Who knew?  
God.  
  
O...Kay then.  
What?  
We've been given that which we  
constantly crave.  
We've been allowed so much more than  
we dreamed.  
Go ahead, make something of it.  
Ummm, right. sure.  
So, anyway, Now what am I going to do?  
My next excuse is elusive.  
Let me sleep on it!

**Terry Tosh**

**Welcome to Rekha Ramani,  
our new Board Secretary.**

**Thank you for your  
willingness to serve our  
writing community!**

## **I CAN'T BREATHE!**

I can't breathe...  
Is it your knee...or CoronaV?  
Does it really matter?  
I CAN'T BREATHE!  
I can't.....breathe.....  
  
I can't.....Momma

**Nancy Guarnera**

©2020



## **FREMONT AREA WRITERS' CORNER** (Continued)

\*\*\*\*\*

### **Mental Paroxysm**

Love,  
So open to a spectrum of Interpretations  
Yet,  
So Pure in initial Context.

Self,  
So needy to be Loved  
Yet,  
Endangered if Over-indulged.

Hope,  
So Fleeting in circumstance  
Yet,  
So long suffering and Ambiguous.

Joy,  
So misunderstood  
Yet,  
So Desired.

Peace,  
...IF ONLY...  
Yet,  
Is there ever any for long?

Emotions,  
Ever changing...ever-evolving  
Yet,  
EVER PRESENT.

**Terry Tosh**

### **TRUE COLORS**

If my true colors were to show  
would I run away from courage?  
would my soul bleat  
to the drums of guilt?  
if only I could dip my brush  
in the palette of someone else's anguish,  
trace the shadow of its eclipse,  
seeping into the soul of the sky,  
then I might just lift my quill  
and speak words to my brazen soul,  
hammer it into the shape of love,  
and then perhaps  
a rainbow would reach down to me  
and show the universal truth  
of being and,  
of what I can become.  
it is only true courage,  
that can paint universal love  
on the tapestry of mankind.

**Rekha Ramani**

### **Endless Supply**

We act as if there's an endless supply of everything  
We take and we use and we take some more  
There are places where people have nothing  
There are places where people are starving  
There are places where folks sleep on the streets  
It used to be someplace else  
Look around you...watch the news...get a clue  
It's happening here and now...to me and you  
The only thing that's in endless supply is LOVE  
And its children: Compassion, Empathy, Kindness,  
Generosity, Gratitude, Joy...these never run out  
Time to dive deep...and remember  
We are the endless supply

**Nancy Guarnera**

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# Tell Me A Story

## FAW “Tell Me a Story” Up-date!

“*Tell Me a Story*,” our collaborative writing project, is now over 13,000 words and 23 of our members have contributed. The working title is “**A Time, A Place . . . and The Right Person.**”

We’re in the final stages of the story. Those who’ve participated seem to have enjoyed the experience and are anxious to read the story once it’s complete.

We started serializing the story on Wednesday, July 1<sup>st</sup> and will continue to send out the next part of the story every Wednesday starting August 19th. Keep an eye on your email. A final copy of the story will be sent by email to all FAW members, once it’s been thoroughly edited.

This serialized version has been lightly edited. We will do a final edit once the story is complete. If you notice inconsistencies, POV issues, continuity problems, things that don’t make sense, or holes you could drive a MAC truck through, please bring them to our attention. Thank you!

It will need a title, so once you’ve read enough of the story to inspire an idea, send us your suggestions.

Thank you to all of you who participated; and to those who did not, thank you for reading it and sharing your thoughts.

### A Time, A Place... and The Right Person

*(working title)*

7

He left. Astra’s mouth fell open. Was this a joke? If so, she wasn’t amused.

Still...Curious, she opened the package, which was wrapped in thick, brown butcher’s paper, and unfolded the tissue inside. She found a blue beret with a dark stain on the brim. She ran a fingernail over the stain and dried fragments flaked off. Blood? Could it be blood? Why would her grandmother own a beret? She had never seen her wearing one.

Astra put it on her head. It fit snugly. She gave the beret a tug, attempting a saucy French tilt. The walls wavered and dissolved. She felt disoriented and looked for something to grasp and...

She found herself standing on the corner of a busy street, holding a sweater that was too warm to wear. Bicycles and horse-drawn wagons flowed passed. There were few cars. One uniformed driver blasted his horn to open a path, and she

noticed a small flag containing a swastika on the front right bumper of his sleek, black vehicle.

She looked around. Small shops ringed a cobblestone square. The crowd was mostly female, wives gathering meat and vegetables for dinner. She smelled fresh-baked croissants and heard the strident calls of a young boy waving newspapers for sale. She almost fell after being bumped by a man in a dark suit who was hurrying to cross the intersection. “Pardon, Mademoiselle, Pardon...” he apologized and hurried off.

For a moment, Astra froze, overwhelmed by the strange sights and sounds and smells. Then it came to her. France! Somehow, she had been transported to France during World War II!

Bang...bang...bang.... Gunfire shattered the hum of business. The black car swerved, crossed the sidewalk, and careened into the tables of an outdoor café. A crowd began to form.

“Here...take the gun, Cherie!” a voice hissed. She felt something hard poke her in the side. She grasped it instinctively. A small, mustached man in overalls darted into the crowd. Whistles blew. Shouts rang out.



## ***Tell Me A Story (Continued)***

\*\*\*\*\*

She wrapped the gun in the sweater and began walking rapidly away from the commotion. The beret had been her mother's. Somehow, when she put it on, she had been transported back to the past. Her mother had been part of the French resistance during the war, but had never talked about it?

Astra shivered. Who were these people with the bag? Why had they given her the beret? What had she gotten into?

### ***Art Carey***

8

She needed to think. Step by step, she hastened her pace, almost breathless before spotting a small café to take refuge. She slid into a corner table, cautious of her movements, keeping watch, making sure she was not followed or noticed. "Think, Astra, think! What would mother do?"

"That's it!" Her eyes widened. She motioned for the waiter. He directed her to the telephone booth in the back by the restroom, where she located the phone directory. Flipping to the "S" section, her fingers moved slowly down the page, coming to Sibille, Sidot, Sigismund, passing Silhouette, then there, with two entries...Silverwing.

Astra tore the page from the directory and tucked it into the front pocket of her pants, then hurried back to find the waiter. Through gestures and broken French, she managed to exchange American dollars for French coins and francs.

Once again in the phone booth, she dialed the first entry. No answer. She moved on to the second number: one, two, three rings—no one. Then four rings, then five, then six, maybe seven would be the lucky charm—but nothing. But it wasn't over. Determined, she asked the waiter for directions to the addresses listed and then set off with a handful of francs for travel. With the sweater gripped to her chest and the gun secured beneath, she left the café.

### ***Mary Jade Chiang***

9

Where was GPS when you needed it? Having no cell phone service was much worse than having a dead cell phone. Astra looked at the tattered piece of paper from the phone book, 124 Avenue Victor Hugo. Aha, she recognized it as a street starting at the Arc de Triomphe. For once she was glad she hadn't slept through French class. She looked around and saw the Eiffel Tower within a mile or so, and headed in that direction.

It was a warm summer day and the people Astra passed by barely looked in her direction. She felt self-conscious carrying a sweater with a gun wrapped up inside and dressed in clothes that did not match the time period, but pressed on. Soon she arrived at the Eiffel Tower. Wow, it was even more impressive in person than in pictures. The tourist in her wanted to take a detour and go up the tower to look at the view; she had no idea when she'd be in Paris again. But finding her relative was of the utmost importance now.

Astra walked on and crossed the Seine River towards the Arc de Triomphe. She was on the Avenue Kléber now. An old woman walked by Astra. She stopped the woman and asked, "Avenue Victor Hugo?" The woman nodded and pointed the way.

"Merci," Astra said.

Astra crossed a busy street and soon found herself on Avenue Victor Hugo. There were many quaint shops including a bookstore, a pastry shop, and even an electronics store with early televisions showing the news of the war. She was on the 100 block and soon came to a vacant storefront that read "124."

### ***Cherilyn Chin***

10

The faded blue door spoke of poverty. Disillusioned, as she had hoped for a good, long shower, clean clothes, and a hearty meal, Astra hesitated to ring the bell. But desperation forced





## ***Tell Me A Story*** (Continued)

\*\*\*\*\*

her finger up and up until it pressed firmly on the tiny, white button grimy with age. The musical notes relieved a bit of Astra's apprehension for they reminded her of love, of comfort, of home.

With a growing realization that things are not always as they appear, Astra was not particularly surprised when the storefront dissolved into a tiny house squeezed between two shops, as the final doorbell chime sounded.

A wizened woman answered, saying, "I've been expecting you." With a bow and a wave, the woman ushered Astra into a dark, front room crowded with ancient heavy furniture in various stages of decline. "I'm Sylvia Silverwing, a great, great aunt on your father's side. Sit."

She pulled tins of biscuits out of a cabinet, pried open the lids, and offered them to Astra. Sweets were her favorite food, and hunger called her name. The biscuits were tasty and fresh. Astra ate two lemon flavored ones and two of the chocolate and then before she could ask for water, an ice-filled glass magically appeared.

Sylvia waved her hand and a tray of sliced salami, Gouda cheese and French bread slowly materialized. "Will that be enough or would you like more?"

With a stuffed mouth Astra mumbled, "This is awesome. But afterward, could I take a bath and borrow a change of clothes?"

Sylvia led her up a winding set of stairs and down a hall covered in portraits; all of them resembling faces she knew back home. Astra breathed a sigh of relief, for this confirmed that she was, indeed, in the home of a relative.

What remained to be seen was whether or not Sylvia could help her solve the mysteries of the leather bag, her mother's beret, and the gun wrapped in an old sweater. And then, if it wasn't too much trouble, help her get back home to her own time.

### **11**

After a luxurious bath, Astra donned the vintage WWII clothes Sylvia had laid out for her. She slipped into the short-sleeved, dark-blue cotton dress with a red rose pattern. It did, indeed, fit perfectly. She admired herself in the mirror before bouncing downstairs. The black and silver oxford heels, held snug to her feet.

Sylvia sat by the front window; her crossed leg swinging impatiently. Her face betrayed a serious situation.

"You must hurry, dear," Sylvia began, before Astra had even reached the bottom of the staircase. "You must get to Professor Martin Dubois before the Gestapo does. He is in grave danger."

"Wait." Astra's relaxed state after the bath faded. "Let's start with some basic information. First, I'm in France. What year is this? What is this beret and how did I get here, why was I chosen...what's going on?"

"This is August 15, 1943. Please sit." Sylvia motioned to a chair nearby. She waved her hand over the small table between them and a white porcelain tea set with steaming tea appeared. Astra picked up a teacup, sipped, and set the cup down.

"We, Silverwings, use our magic to benefit humanity," Sylvia said. "We can assist and steer, but not magically change history." She waved a dismissive hand. "We have discovered a brilliant young scientist is to be kidnapped and forced to create a devastating weapon to change the course of this war, and history. But, more important, his future offspring will follow his scientific path and eventually provide the world with a safe, renewable source of energy that could save the planet, *if* you can rescue Dubois in time. He is stubborn and may refuse the Germans. If so, they have orders to kill him. They...in fact...did." Letting that sink in, Sylvia took a sip of tea. She nodded to the beret on the sofa, where it sat atop the sweater containing the gun. "The beret is nothing more than a convey-



## ***Tell Me A Story*** (Continued)

\*\*\*\*\*

ance, like your subway, *n'est-ce pas*? Your father said you could handle this assignment. Was he wrong?"

"I know nothing about any of this," Astra said. "My father...Alexander Silverwing...said that? He's said nothing to me. Dad's some kind of time-traveling, magical spy? And my mother? This was her mother's beret. We don't have magical powers. I don't. And, the Gestapo already killed the professor? You're not making sense." Astra picked up her tea; hands shaking.

"I had hoped he'd have prepared you better. *C'est la vie*." Sylvia sipped, contemplating how to proceed. "Not a spy, more of a modifier of history. We tweak history."

"And this professor was killed during World War II," Astra said, "but I can save him, and his child or grandchild will save our planet in the future...in my lifetime...in my present. No pressure there. I am not a magical spy. Find someone else." She set down her tea, waved her hands in protest, and stood. "Now get me home."

"There isn't time for this. Your vehicle is outside. Here are the instructions to find Dubois and where to take him for safety." Sylvia pushed a slip of paper into Astra's hand. "Humanity's fate depends on you. Hurry, it will be dark soon. On silver wings, you must fly." She placed the beret on Astra's head, picked up the sweater and the gun hidden within, and placed them into Astra's arms.

"What am I supposed to do with the gun?" Astra was almost in tears.

"Use it, if you have to," was all Sylvia said.

"Wait, is this stain...blood?" She fingered the brim of the beret.

"Yes, dear. This is dangerous work. But you will be fine...I'm sure. Beware; there are those who will try to stop you. Now, hurry." Sylvia pushed her out the front door.

As she turned to object, the tiny house disappeared, replaced by the storefront with the faded blue door and the number 124.

**Joyce Cortez**

**12**

Astra was overwhelmed. Settling into the back seat of the car, she unfolded the piece of paper that her relative had given her. As she read the instructions, Sylvia's last words pounded in her ears, "This is dangerous work. But you will be fine...I'm sure."

Professor Dubois taught physics and chemistry at the Université de Paris, an institution highly regarded for its scientific curriculum. The note said she would find him there, but if she didn't, she was to locate the head of his department. Perhaps he would know where the professor might be. Timing was critical. She must find Dubois and then rendezvous with another operative, Claude Bastille, before 12:00 at the Gare du Nord train station. Bastille would escort the professor to London and see him safely aboard a plane to America. Sylvia had told her that Dubois was stubborn and might not cooperate. If she found him in time, would he let her take him to safety? With all this in mind, she told her driver to take her to the university.

\* \* \*

He hid behind a New York Times as he sat at a sidewalk table outside a Brooklyn delicatessen and smoked a cigarette. He watched people as they passed by on their way to and from the subway; it was late morning with a cool breeze. He had just finished his tuna salad with lettuce, tomato, and Swiss on toasted Rye, and a coffee. He was waiting for a car. He must take a trip upstate to look for Astra at her father's. His mission—steal a gym bag. His client had told him to look for an emblem of silver wings to identify an otherwise ordinary brown gym bag.



## ***Tell Me A Story (Continued)***

\*\*\*\*\*

The waiters at the deli called him the Mystery Man; to them, he always seemed to be smirking. In appearance, he was average; of sturdy build, with a fair complexion and graying light brown hair. He appeared to be in his mid-40s. He always wore a navy blue suit with a white shirt, blue striped tie, and black leather shoes. His demeanor suggested ex-military.

Only his hat and cane were distinctive. The hat was a Walrus dark-blue Fedora with a silver-toned Walrus button on the band. Though he walked steady, he had a slight limp and appeared to support himself with the cane. The handle was a smooth grained wood; with an almost-invisible button within reach of his thumb. The shaft was sturdy and gnarled, as though fashioned from an oak tree branch, and stained black. The tip of the cane had a protective artistic metal cap.

Each day over the last week, the Mystery Man had visited the deli; though today he was running later than his usual 7:30 AM visits. The waiters made up stories about him and wondered if his cane might contain some kind of hidden weapon. They would never know.

A nondescript, four-door sedan pulled up to the curb. The driver got out of the car, left it running, and walked away. The Mystery Man rose from his seat, folded his paper, placed it on the table, and cane in hand, went to the driver's side of the vehicle, got in, and drove off...leaving his usual 18% tip for the last time.

***Sue Curtzwiler***

**13**

The Mystery Man heard a pop. He glanced in the rear-view mirror and saw a guy in the back seat, with shaggy brown hair, dressed in a shapeless raincoat.

"Pay attention to the road, Fred," the intruder said. "The traffic in Brooklyn is murder."

"And if I don't?" the driver said.

The man lifted a cylinder. It looked gun-like.

"You going to shoot me with that?" Fredricks asked. "The crash will kill us both. And don't call me Fred."

"Not shoot, but you'll itch like hell. No more back talk, drive over the Manhattan Bridge to 1200 West 35<sup>th</sup> street."

"That's in the middle of the Hudson," Fredricks protested.

"You let me worry about that." The man glowered. "You and the Silverwings, and the bag, and that damned beanie have gotten the time stream tied into knots."

Fredricks started to protest, but the man cut him off. "I know you have a job, but you're working for me now."

"And you are?" Fredricks asked.

"Sergeant Shineglass of the Time Patrol," the man said. "But you can call me Andy." Shineglass took something that looked like a cellphone from the raincoat and pushed the screen. The lights started to turn green just as Fredricks reached them.

"Time Patrol?" he asked. "What's that?" And to himself, *"Like hell, I'm calling you Andy."*

Shineglass smiled, he loved talking about his work; though he knew he shouldn't. "We keep time straight. Amateurs like the Silverwings don't appreciate how fluid it is. If someone called your parents at the wrong time, poof, you wouldn't be here. The slightest change can have disastrous consequences."

They made good time thanks to the lights. The Javits Center loomed ahead of them. The sergeant pressed his phone again; the building shimmered and 35<sup>th</sup> street extended. They drove right through the Center and a horde of oblivious convention-goers. A tunnel opened as they hit the Hudson, and they drove downhill, under the water.





## ***Tell Me A Story*** (Continued)

\*\*\*\*\*

"Stop up ahead," Shineglass commanded. Fredricks stopped the car in a huge chamber, filled with light and machinery. "Now get out." For now, Fredricks obeyed.

A plastic bag fell from the middle of the air. Andy pointed to it. "Those clothes are more appropriate for where we're going. Put them on. You won't need the cane or the hat."

A changing room appeared five feet away. As Fredricks entered, he noticed his car vanish and a new car appear in its place. A nice car. A big car. A French car, from the late 1930s.

When he finished dressing, he emerged to see Shineglass waiting impatiently for him still wearing the same raincoat. Noticing Fredricks' stare, "The great thing about this raincoat," the sergeant explained, "is that it works for almost any time period. Haven't tried it in ancient Rome, though. Not yet."

Fredricks was not getting a good feeling about this. "Where are we going?"

"Paris, 1943," Shineglass replied. That's where the woman you were following went." He sighed. "We have to cut her off, and fast," he said. "Astra has no idea of what she's getting into. The future depends on what we do next."

**Scott Davidson**

**14**

They got into the car, this time with Andy in the driver's seat and Fredricks as his passenger. The car surged forward, down the tunnel and out the other end. Soon they were driving past farms, and then into the outskirts of a city. From the back seat, Fredricks could not tell where they were, but it did not look like New York or anything he knew in the vicinity.

"Huh..." Shineglass grunted, "I think we've been redirected by a higher authority. This is not World War II Paris. I'll check in for instructions. When

the car chooses to stop, you should probably get out and stretch your legs. Then we'll see where the car takes us after this stop."

A few minutes later, the car pulled up in front of a two-story, brick apartment building, and parked itself. The building was old and needed some attention. Fredricks got out of the car and lit a cigarette, while the sergeant rummaged around in the trunk. "Take this," Shineglass said, handing him a brown, oversized gym bag with a faded pair of silver wings on the side.

"I've been looking for this!" he blurted, tossing the un-smoked cigarette aside.

"Enjoy it while you can; it's not yours to keep." He paused. "Go and give it to the woman inside."

"Which woman?"

"You'll know her when you see her."

\*\*\*

Fredricks entered the building; and there she was, at the top of the stairs. She was young and quite lovely, with gleaming honey-colored eyes and raven hair flowing over her shoulders and down her back. Barefoot and wearing a long, red Japanese robe tied at the waist and embroidered with pink and blue flowers, she looked, to him, like a young Geisha ready to entertain a client.

"Astra?" he whispered, casting his eyes over her and wondering just how much time he would have to "stretch his legs."

With a quizzical expression, she smiled at him and pointed to the bag, saying nothing. Unable to mask his lust for her, the smile he attempted became a suggestive smirk. He started up the stairs as she started down. She stopped—two steps above him. She was still smiling, but he could tell she didn't trust him.

She reached for the bag, and he pretended to give it to her. But as she took hold of the strap, he



## ***Tell Me A Story*** (Continued)

\*\*\*\*\*

grabbed her wrist. She resisted and shoved him with her free hand. As he lost his footing, he released her and the bag, and tried, to no avail, to catch himself before falling over backwards.

As he fell, he wondered if he would break his neck. When he reached bottom, he was lying on his back, spread-eagle, looking up at the top of the staircase. She was gone; though he heard a door slam and the click of a lock on the landing above him.

He'd had the bag and lost it. His employers would not be pleased. It didn't feel like anything was broken. If he could walk, he might still retrieve it.

"Hey, Freddie!" It was Shineglass at the entrance of the building. "Chop, chop. We have to go; Paris is waiting!"

**Paul K. Davis**

***To Be Continued...***

***watch for more installments in your inbox on Wednesdays***

## **General Zoom Meeting August 22<sup>nd</sup>**

***Our speaker will be Contemporary Romance Writer Kilby Blades.***

Her topic, reprised from her presentation  
at the Writer's Digest Conference in New York, will be

***"How and When and Why to Integrate Romance Into Your Novels."***

You don't need a Zoom account to attend, but you do need to have Zoom on your smart phone, tablet, laptop, or computer—something with a camera and sound. Here's a link for a tutorial to help you set this up: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9isp3qPeQ0E>.

You will receive an email invitation with a link to use for the meeting. You will also receive a reminder email with the invitation and link the week of the meeting. If you need help with connecting to Zoom, contact Scott Davidson [scottfrombayside@yahoo.com](mailto:scottfrombayside@yahoo.com) by Wednesday, August 19<sup>th</sup>. Put **FAW Zoom Meeting Help** in the subject line and he'll be in touch.

Please start logging into the meeting by 1:45 p.m.

**See you on August 22.**

**Stay safe, healthy and happy!**