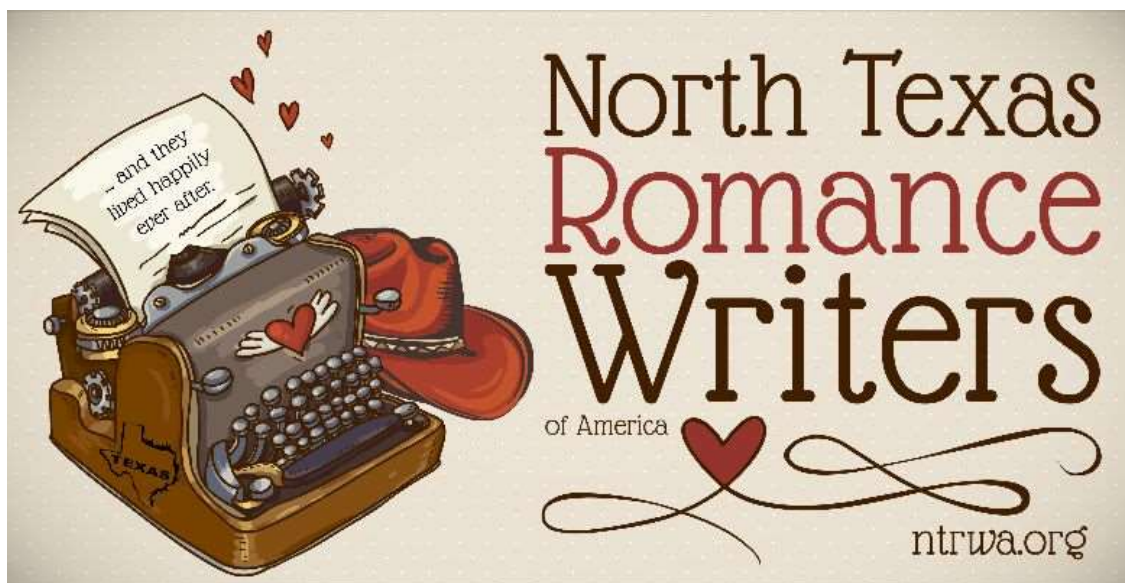


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A Message from Your President

August 2020

Howdy, Pardners...

I know I said it about June, too, but I can't believe it's now August. I know time is flying for everyone, but it's passing far too quickly for me.

How are you surviving the summer temperatures so far?

Let me apologize about the lack of a July newsletter. Time got away from me and I had fireworks on the brain. In the meantime, sent out a meeting report and I tried to get you up-to-date with that.

Our president-elect, Celia Naples, has been working hard to put together a slate of nominees for the upcoming Board and that will be announced soon. Thanks in advance to those of you who've stepped up to keep NT a viable and active group although I don't know who you are just yet. :0)

In other news, I recently returned from a lovely writers retreat with my writer besties, though we were missing one beloved member, and it's been tough to get back into the groove of work. However, it was a fun (as always) and

Now it's time to hunker down and huddle at home for the next month— There's a new baby in my family and I have plans to go visit Omaha over Labor Day.

There's been a lot going on at the RWA level. I'm gonna bullet point some of that below. If you missed any notifications and want to know more, let me know and I can forward you mine.

And in case you're not on their email list, Savvy Authors is having a conference in September (11-13) and all classes are being offered for free to members. Basic membership IS free. <https://savvyauthors.com/savvywritercon2020/> I've registered for several workshops—maybe I'll see you there.

WORDFest is also coming up this weekend (the 8th) if you need something to do last minute. <https://www.dfwordfest.org/> The schedule is here: <https://www.dfwordfest.org/schedule-2>

~*~*~

The Annual General Meeting of the RWA membership will happen August 9 from 12-2 PM via Go to Webinar. View the agenda and sign up if you're interested in attending: https://www.rwa.org/Online/About/Governance_Folder/AGM.aspx

Election voting began August 3. General members received info directly, including login information. If you didn't get one or can't find yours, contact info @ rwa . org (remove the spaces, of course).

As a reminder, RWA is now able to offer health insurance and related coverage options. Members should have received email about that as well. There will be an informative webinar on August 18. If you're interested in attending, find your email and register.

RWA is also looking for folks to volunteer for various committees. There's an email for that too. If helping RWA 2.0 is of interest and you don't have the email, let me know.

~*~*~

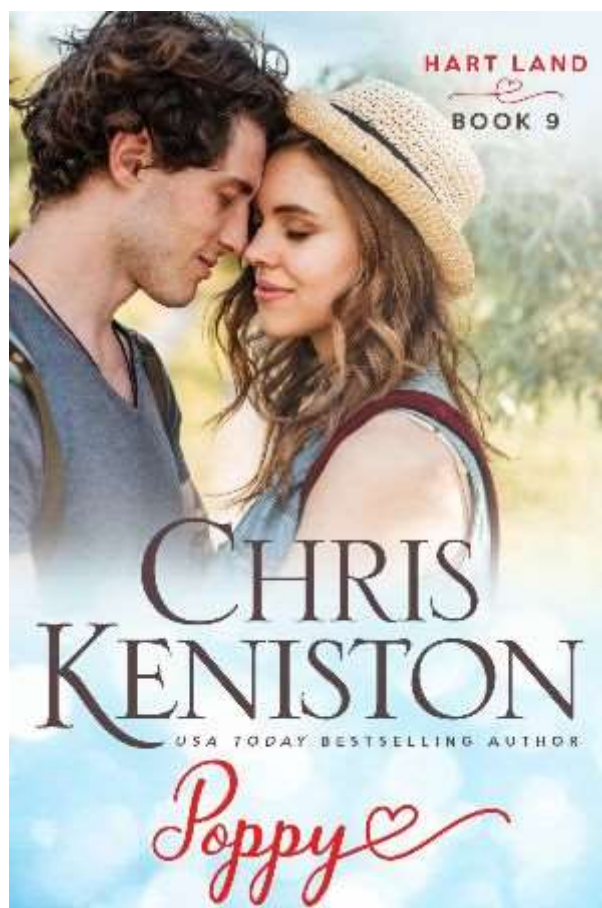
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we'll be offering our speaker programming via Zoom for the rest of the year. With any luck, perhaps at Christmas we can gather for our holiday party someday somehow.

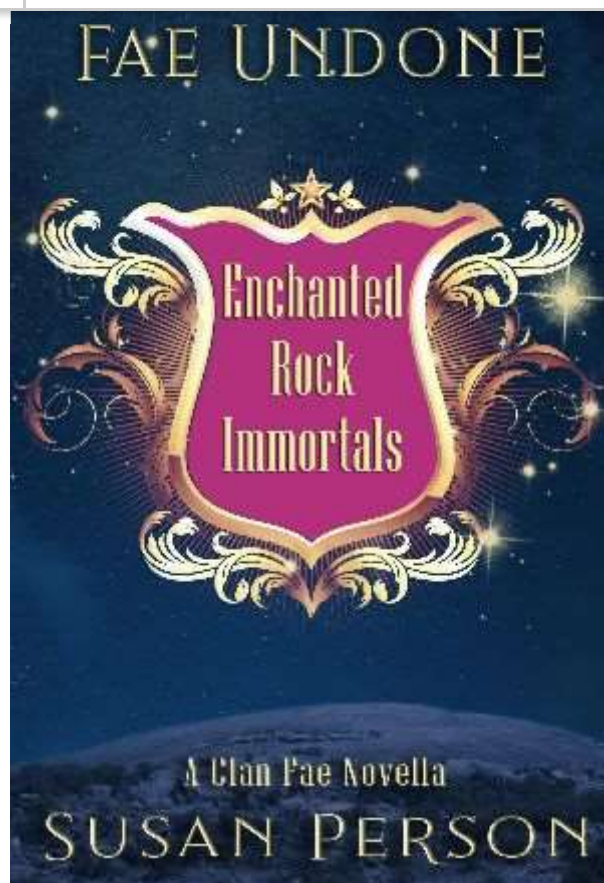
Take care and stay safe.

Jen

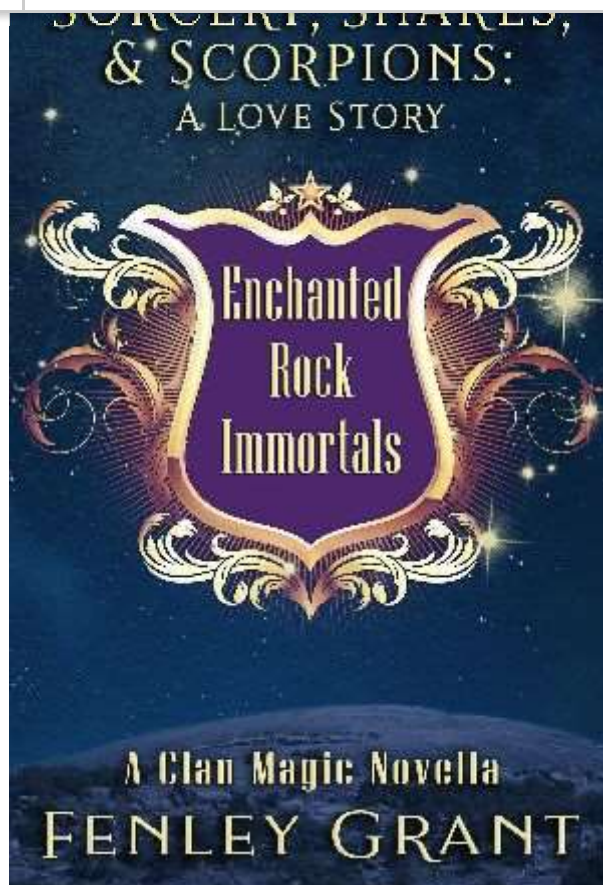
NTRWA News



Chris Keniston released Zinnia on July 29, 2020.

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Susan Person Miller is releasing Fae Undone on August 4, 2020.

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Fenley Grant is releasing *Sorcery, Snakes, & Scorpions: A Love Story* on August 4, 2020.

ARTICLES

This article first appeared in the February 2020 issue of In Print!, the monthly newsletter of Houston Bay Area RWA. Permission granted to reprint or forward to sister RWA chapters with proper credit to author and chapter.

Grammar Gremlins: What is Foreign
by
Kay Hudson

One of the many rules we had drummed into our heads back in junior high school was to italicize foreign words. But English is a hungry language, eagerly

(from Spanish) or honcho (oddly enough, from Japanese) as foreign? How about chaise (from French) or kindergarten (from German)? Karaoke? Croissant? Sudoku? Sushi? Tsunami? Enchilada?

I really hadn't given this much thought until I read a recent article, "Italics, Other Languages and You," by British author KJ Charles, in which she points out that italicizing foreign words marks them as "other," which we as authors may very well not want to do.

Charles' point is particularly directed at dialog. If a character who is fluent in both English and Spanish shifts back and forth while speaking, it's because all the words are part of his or her vocabulary--none of them are "foreign." Even those of us who are not fluent in Spanish happily order flautas de pollo or enchiladas marisco without being particularly conscious of the language switch. (I used to work with two men who slipped easily from English to Vietnamese and back again, often in one sentence.)

Charles, who writes British-set historical romance, is a fan of Filipino romance (I did not know this was a subgenre, but why not?), which tends, naturally, to have a lot of Tagalog words sprinkled through it. The authors and readers of these stories are happy to see their native tongue not marked as different or foreign. And Charles enjoys her immersion in another culture, far from London, without being battered by the constant typographical reminder of the difference.

This is apparently not a new discussion, although perhaps it has reached wider interest in these days of emphasis on diversity and inclusion. Twenty years ago, the well-known Dominican American writer Junot Díaz persuaded editors at The New Yorker to stop italicizing the Spanish words in his stories (although they made this concession only for Díaz). Díaz' reasoning was that he wrote for the people he grew up with, and he trusted other readers to figure it all out. (For more on this see "Bilingual authors are challenging the practice of italicizing non-English words," by Thu-Huong Ha.)

This certainly makes sense to me. People don't switch into some sort of italicized speech when they mix languages; why should characters on the page do so? (For a vivid demonstration of this, see Daniel José Older's short, funny video, "Why We Don't Italicize Spanish," on YouTube.)

example, the little two- or three-line bio at the bottom of an article). If we want to point out a word as foreign, we italicize it (did you know that the French word for paper clip is trombone?).

Italicizing non-English words, in dialog or narrative, is not wrong in any technical sense, but the implications are certainly worth thinking about. As writers, we are free to upend the conventions when it suits our intent.

**This article was used in the July 2020 issue of Happily Ever After.
Permission granted to reprint or forward to sister RWA chapters with
proper credit to author and chapter.**

Creating Distinctive Character Voices

by
Pamela Pitts

As writers we've heard show don't tell, watch your POVs, no talking heads, and don't use purple prose, but we can't forget character voices. In any story, whether it's a Contemporary Romance with three to four characters or a Romantic Suspense with five to seven characters we want the reader to be able to identify which character is talking or internalizing without a tag.

Some characters are easily identified by using terms that are synonymous to where they're from. If your hero or heroine is Scottish, English, or from the South, tossing in a word here and there such as och, bairn, bonny, poppet, cor, 'ello guv, or ya'll immediately tells the reader who is speaking. But you must be careful. Using colloquial words and phrases too often can slow the pace of the story, especially if the reader isn't familiar with the terms. You don't want the reader to think I dinna ken what you're saying followed by I'm scunnered wae that.

Character voice encompasses much more than dialogue alone. It's also body language, internal thoughts, speech patterns, and how they relate to other characters. Is your character shy? In a social situation they might cross their arms and look down, speak softly, or even stammer. Internally they might compare themselves to others and feel that they're lacking. They might force

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act? Do they tend to monopolize conversations and interrupt others who attempt to chime in?

In order to write distinctive voices, you need to know the character's background. Every character is defined by their past which influences how they relate to others. Maybe your character had their heart crushed by a significant other. Fearing rejection or believing that they will never find love again, they might act like they don't mind being alone, they prefer their company to others. In conversations with friends, they might denounce relationships. When someone appears interested in them, they could speak in short gruff sentences with clipped tones to indicate disinterest so as not to be potentially hurt again.

To deepen the reader's understanding of the character's internal thoughts, the author needs to offer a glimpse into their heart and show what motivates them to act a certain way. For instance, they sabotage new relationships before the other person gets the chance to hurt them because, although they fear rejection, they fear being alone forever even more.

Once you create a backstory for your characters, you should know how each will respond in certain situations. It can be jarring when your character's actions change for no apparent reason. For three quarters of the book they might lash out when stressed out over a deadline, but suddenly they do a 180 and calmly and quietly get the job done. Unless there's a good reason for this, the reader might experience a what the...moment. Being consistent is key. The character can change throughout the story, but it's important to include internal dialogue to show how they change.

Some elements that can help create distinctive characters are body language, speech patterns, internal dialogue, interactions, and dialogue. But don't forget that character development begins with voice, which is influenced by the main qualities of the character.

SWEET TREATS

I asked for your faves...

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Susan Person Miller loves ice cream with berries.



Jen FitzGerald's favorite is Blue Bell's Pecan Pralines & Cream.
And, yes, she'll eat the whole pint.

UPCOMING MEETINGS

REGULAR MEETINGS

August 15, 2020: Krystal Shannon ~ Newsletter Automation

September 19, 2020: Kathleen Baldwin ~ The Truth About the Writing Life and Money

October 17, 2020: Laurie Schnebly Campbell ~ TBA

GET PUBLISHED! PROGRAMMING

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September 19, 2020:TBD

October 17, 2020: TBD

If there's a specific topic you'd like to see featured during the GetPublished! portion of our meetings??? Please send your ideas and requests to [jen.fitzgerald.writer AT gmail DOT com](mailto:jen.fitzgerald.writer@gmail.com)

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