

Many times as a writer you have a question on different aspects of writing. If we tried to answer all those questions, this would be a very heavy magazine.

To help you improve your writing, each issue we will feature online help. Below are few links to help you in your writing journey.

Theses links were checked before we went to print; however links change everyday.

GETTING STARTED

Writing Terms You Should Know
<http://www.vivianbeck.com/writing/tips/terms.htm>

Capturing Ideas
<http://www.theromanceclub.com/writers/articles/art0004.htm>

Open Your Book With A Hook
<http://www.barbaradawsonsmith.com/writing%20hooks.htm>

WRITING THE BOOK

Plotting and Characterization:
<http://www.theromanceclub.com/writers/articles/art0020.htm>

Setting: The Writer's Secret Weapon
<http://www.likesbooks.com/wb18.html>

The Exquisite Heat of Sexual Tension
<http://www.likesbooks.com/tension.html>

COMPLETED NOW WHAT

Self Editing Tips
<http://www.barbaradawsonsmith.com/selfedit.html>

Formatting Your Manuscript
<http://www.fictionwriters.com/tips-formatting.html>

SUBMISSION HELP

Eight Steps To Getting Published
<http://www.vivianbeck.com/writing/tips/eightsteps.htm>

Query Letters: Do them Right!
<http://www.eclectics.com/articles/query2.html>

About Agents
<http://www.sff.net/people/dan.perez/writing/agents.htm>

PROMOTION

Book Promotion Countdown Checklist
http://www.geocities.com/~lorna_tedder/virgins.html

Editors & the Author's Road to Success
<http://www.likesbooks.com/wb20.html>

If you're looking for a particular subject about writing, send it to sormag@yahoo.com and we'll see if we can find an article to help you.

SHADES RADIO

The online radio show for readers and writers of multi-cultural literature

sormag.com/radio.html

ONLINE EVERY TUESDAY

on

www.bookcrazy.net

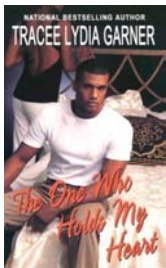
Shades Of Reading Magazine: Please give the readers a brief bio on you the person and the writer?



Tracee L. Garner: I, Tracee L. Garner am a Virginia native. I enjoy cooking, reading of course and my two true loves are reading and writing. Writing, however, I only really explored a few years ago when

I won the BET/Arabesque First Time Writers Contest. I had written poetry and did some personal journaling, but for the first time upon learning of the contest tried my hand at longer genre's. That experience and achievement changed my life. The writing person and the me person really are one in the same. I'm always adapting my surroundings to the written word, wondering how I can put what I see and hear around me, on paper.

SORMAG: Tell us about your current book?



GARNER: The One Who Holds My Heart, I believe is a rather racy suspenseful tale and continues the saga of the Jameson family, from book one about them, Come What May.

Dr. Dean Jameson has loved his neighbor, Chyna Lockhart, for a very long time. He was young and foolish however, when he turned her away and he vowed if he ever got a second chance, he'd make her his, forever. Chyna Lockhart is absolutely done with love, she's recently divorced from a corrupt senator and trying to get her life together. She doesn't count on old feelings for Dean and they take her by surprise. When her past comes back to haunt her, she and Dean find themselves fighting to battle away enemies and put their re-found love on solid ground.

SORMAG: What would you like readers to take away from this book?

GARNER: From every book, it's about triumph over evil, circumstance, past heartache and pain.

My founding message is about coming out on top of things, more aware, smarter, stronger and hopefully finding and loving that special person in a lifetime through all time.

SORMAG: Our theme for this issue is Family Literacy. If you have children, what type of reading activities do you do together.

GARNER: I don't currently have any children, but I do read to my nephew. Beings that he is a boy, his reading time is often a short period of "I like to read time and now I don't," but I do try to make it a point to give at least one or two age appropriate books for birthdays and Christmases, mixed in with other electronic-imagination-lacking toys. I often love to buy children's books and purchase them for the girls at church and other places, and keep some for myself.

SORMAG: What do you do to promote literacy?

GARNER: I can't say that I've done a whole lot to promote literacy. As I aforementioned, I give children's books to my church, and to organizations and book clubs. Last year, I participated in the Authors Supporting Authors Positively (ASAP), Back 2 School Literary tour. This wonderful event was arranged by author Deirdre Savoy, also the president of ASAP. I signed with fellow author Dr. Lois Center-Shabazz ("Let's Get Financially Savvy") at an African-American Bookstore in my area. With each book of ours, patrons purchased, they could obtain a coupon toward a children's book. To me, more bookstores should do this making it a week-long or more frequent event and get everyone/families, reading together.

SORMAG: What was your favorite book as a child, and as a teenager?

GARNER: As a child I loved books by Judy Blume and Beverly Cleary. Superfudge by JB was

CONTINUE ON PAGE 12

CONTINUE FROM PAGE 11

told by a wonderful teacher whom I dedicated my first book to. His story telling abilities brought the stories alive and it wasn't anything worth listening to if Mr. Brennan, one of my kindergarten teachers, didn't read it.

As a teenager, my love for books waned a bit, I do remember reading Tiger Eyes which after some research is also by Judy Blume and a book that touched me deeply at a young age was Bridge To Teribithia by Katherine Patterson.

SORMAG: What advice do you have for the aspiring writer?

GARNER: Never give up. Opportunity abounds. I tell people that opportunity knocks, it writes you a letter, it's a whisper, and sometimes it's so loud and blaring that it rings (on the telephone). Sometimes opportunity is hidden and you have to be a detective to find it, but it's there. Keep looking and once it comes for you....Be ready, be prepared, be receptive and keep on, writing!

SORMAG: What is something readers would be surprised you do?

GARNER: I do the church bulletins every Saturday night for my church's Sunday service and I'm a PK.

SORMAG: What do you do to keep motivated?

GARNER: I dream, about where I'm going, the steps to get there, and how far I've come already. I also have list upon lists, those keep me going, they keep me organized, and when I'm organized, I'm excited about the ORDER of my life to come. I think writing things down or speaking them into existence is VERY important.

SORMAG: How can readers get in contact with you?

GARNER: E-mail me at Teegarner.com
www.TEEGARNER.com, or write me a snail mail

letter at Tracee Lydia Garner / PO Box 651362 / Sterling, VA 20165

SORMAG: Can you give us a sneak peek at your next book?

GARNER: Right now, I'm exploring many different projects. I'm writing what I call, the book of my heart, where things don't always end happily. Just a few of those are inside me, but romance is forever in my eye so there's plenty more to come, on all fronts. Please stay tuned.

**SHADES OF READING
MAGAZINE
IS
WRITER FRIENDLY**

**WE LOVE MEETING
NEW WRITERS**

**INTRODUCE YOURSELF
TO US
AND WE'LL INTRODUCE
YOU TO OUR READERS**

Marathon Marketing

'Going the Distance... Getting Back to Basics'

General Colin Powell once said, 'There are no secrets to success. It is the result of preparation, hard work and learning from failure.' And never is that more true than in the business of marketing your book. You have finished it. Either the representatives at the publishing house are doing a push, or if you are self publishing, you will be doing the old heave ho through the buying world, but now is the time to get back to some basics.

Marathon runners know how to go the distance. The sprinter won't make the finish line if he has to run the full race of many miles, and neither will an author in any genre.

Whether this is your first book or you have published many, hunkering down over the keyboard, and leaving the bulk of your marketing to someone else is a big no no. I don't care if you are shy, retiring or just plain uncomfortable being in the public eye, getting a bigger buzz for your book will take far more than just writing a great story and having unique characters. Remember that no one else will hustle your book like you. And if you plan to sell books beyond family, co-workers and at a few local bookstores, you need a marketing plan. You need to start the year now with something that's realistic and workable in your own lifestyle.

One place to start is the Romance Writers of America Industry Statistics page at <http://www.rwanational.org/statistics.stm>

You will find the basics that every writer needs to know, as to what is being published in certain romance categories, and more importantly, the percentages of readers in a category. It is probably not surprising to know that 75% of all romance readers are white, and 11% are African American, but it may surprise you that in 1998 the readership was 12% for African American romance. Considering that the romance market garnered 1.63

Billion dollars in sales in 2002 (compiled statistics as of October 2003) to grab a chunk of that change will take focused targeting.

You do have your web site in place right? You are updating it regularly, it is easy to find, and isn't taking forever to load with all of those photos I hope. That is a sure way to have people click you off before your information can even be read. A published writer without a web site is like a surgeon with no scalpel. In doing a Google search of the top 20 African American Romance writers, every single one had a web site where there is feedback from the reader, tips, links, ideas for writers, or a way the reader can contact the author, and book excerpts. One of the best I have found at a very reasonable rate is Go Daddy at <http://www.godaddy.com/>

You don't need to know HTML to do a really great web site yourself. Check out their Website Tonight option. And yes, I use it myself.

How about your press release? Is it up to date? Here is a great site at <http://www.prweb.com/> and as you browse through one of the top three newswire services on the Internet you can target the market, determine where you want it to go and you can distribute a free press release. If you are new to all of this? Tips on how to write a good release are right there. A lousy press release will cut you off before you even get out of the gate. I have seen great books that just never got many reviews or mentions because the press release was so bad.

Where is your book setting? And are you looking at the setting as a marketing hook? You should. Sometimes the one thing that will set your book apart from many others with the same kind of theme, is the place. Use that to get your book publicized as a, 'Writer uses locale as setting for book' for book signings in that area. I think this is a vastly overlooked avenue for marketing a book. Of course if your book is set in New York, Atlanta or Paris, you are going to have a harder time getting

CONTINUE FROM PAGE 13

publicity, but smaller towns, and more unusual locales can be just the ticket to have you at the bookstore signing your romance for local residents.

Are you linking to other sites to get a higher ranking in the big search engines? Next issue we will go step by step through using meta-tags, keywords, links and other tips to bounce YOUR site higher and higher, and yes, for free. See you then!

Rebekah Fawn Cochran

THE RISKY WRITER-No Good Writer Plays It Safe! <http://theriskywriter.com>

Rebekah Fawn Cochran is a nationally published writer and author, with a special focus and interest in Native American history and events, human interest stories and minority issues. Her book ECHOES OF A SILENT RIVER (Booklocker.com) is a true stereotype breaker.

The author loves to write *outside of the box* and has completed her research for her next book with a Romantic Native American and Christian theme, as well as anticipates a early 2004 release for THE RISKY WRITER- A Christian Writers Guide To Writing With Purpose.

Pick up a copy of

Southerland

Strength

by

Lavelle J. Lemonier