

Liberty States Fiction Writers

New York - New Jersey - Pennsylvania



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Let Freedom Ring!

www.lsfwriters.com

**Liberty States
Fiction Writers
PO Box 2914
Westfield, NJ 07090**

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Contests, Conferences, and Classes: Monica Liming—mjliming@comcast.net

Author Spotlight: Kathye Quick—KathyeQ@aol.com

President's Column



Two years ago a small group got together and held their breath as the idea for Liberty States Fiction Writers was born. We made bets amongst ourselves that our membership would be 50 members by June. We were wrong. It was over 100 members strong. People gave us great feedback and seemed to like what we have done. And we've continued to grow. It won't be long before our membership numbers reach 200!

I think that part of the reason we have grown and prospered is because of the members. We want and need your feedback and ideas. It's part of what makes

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Member Spotlight

Journey to Writing by Vikki Bakus

“Now class, I would like all of my fantastic second graders to read your stories aloud one at a time. Vikki, why don’t you begin?”

My stomach flipped like my brother’s Hot Wheels off the plastic tracks. I began, “Once upon—”

“I’m sorry, I didn’t make myself clear. Stand up *in front of the class* and read your stories. Come along, Vikki, come up.”

I stood, my left leg throbbed from the heavy metal brace and my feet in special orthotic shoes cursed each step. My heart pounded and I swiped away a sweaty mustache but I began—again. “Once upon.....

Fast forward to high school...

Heat warmed my face. I knew my cheeks glowed radish red. “Yes, Mrs. Jailer, you can read my poem to the class.” Ugh. I had written the personal piece in a jiff, almost forgetting the homework due date until the last second. I had plopped upon my bed, closed my eyes and unearthed a vision of myself limping down Columbia Presbyterian Hospital’s marbled corridor, mom beside me, our footsteps clicking over slick waxed hallways.

As Ms. Jailer read my poem, high school creative writing seemed a less attractive elective. She encouraged me to continue, encouraged me to study grammar. I hadn’t planned on additional creative writing credits to my high school record. But I began—again.

Fast forward to higher education...

Ms. Jailer had been right. I should have studied grammar. I failed college remedial English.

Twice.

And Biology.

And History.

The college sent me a certified letter.

Your presence is no longer requested...

The exact moment I signed collegiate life away, my mother had been on the phone scheduling my new patient consultation with a highly recommended orthopedic foot surgeon.

One calendar year and three operations later, I returned to college with a newly discovered passion. Social work. I reentered the same college and passed remedial English under the tutelage of Dr. Brawer. Of course, I followed him into his American Literature classes like a lemming. Instead of falling off a cliff and certain death, I fell in love with poetry.

Summer breaks were met with joint replacement surgeries and poetry.

I graduated and took a one year waiver. Right hip replacement loomed, so I waited until after surgery and rehabilitation. Finally, I began—again.

Fast forward to class of life...

As a social worker, I wrote social histories. My clients' pasts read like fiction, but they weren't fiction; they were real-life stories. I made certain to document the details, so they too could begin—again.

My career stammered filled with stops and starts due to erratic bouts with adult/juvenile rheumatoid arthritis. After eighteen years, I stopped.

Instead, I wrote poetry. I called it my "Diary in Prose" phase. I published a poem in a local magazine. The leader of a popular poetry group solicited my membership. I joined and was rewarded by additional published pieces.

I read, aloud, swiping my sweaty moustache.

I stopped—again.

My old hip replacement fell apart leaving me homebound. I stopped for months at a time. Stopped by necessity. Stopped by fear.

At my sister's recommendation, I read fiction other than the *Harry Potter* series. Romance. Paranormal. Historical. Suspense. With time on my hands, I devoured them all.

Later, after my hip reconstruction and what felt like a thousand novels, I realized I had changed. My internal shifts had altered my external world. That's when opportunity crossed my path once again. While savoring a particularly delicious novel, the second in a long-awaited series, I took the time to read the acknowledgements page. There, in black and white, were the icons, RWA and NJRW. *What? Who? Where?*

Fast forward to learning the craft...

No longer housebound by my left hip, I joined RWA and NJRW. I discovered the joys and perils of craft along with the joys and perils of contests.

I discovered wonderful people, critique partners, and the joys and perils of writing a well-crafted, polished, page turner novel. And I continued to write—badly as it turned out. So I re-wrote and it was better but not perfect.

But I don't stop. I *can't* stop. The stories in my linear consciousness beg for a voice, and not all of those stories fit inside the parameters of the romance genre.

Opportunity crossed my path—again. Liberty State Fiction Writers gave me freedom. My stories no longer feel bound and gagged within me. Poetry, children's books, short stories, women's fiction, nonfiction—LSFW has a place for them all.

So now, I can finally be—a writer.



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Road Story

My journey from reader to writer to publisher and beyond
by Jennifer Talty-Holbrook

I didn't set out to be a writer. When I was a little girl my only goal in life was to "out do" the boys. I wanted to prove that girls could do anything boys could do...only better. I was a very active child in both activities and in imagination. If I wasn't hiking up mountains or sailing across lakes, I was in the dance studio. If I wasn't doing those activities, I was living inside my head, creating stories, imaginary places, and finding ways to express them. I used to do one-person plays I wrote myself and invite the neighborhood (for a fee of course) to come watch me perform. My family wasn't quite sure what to make of me. I was different and I sort of knew it. These plays would come alive inside my head like a movie. I would see scenes and conflict and actually have conversations with imaginary characters all the time. Even though I was an outdoorsy kind of kid, I was one who used the outdoors to think. I wasn't little Miss Social. I preferred the social activity that I played out in my mind. I learned as I got a little older to socialize more, but still, my imagination was alive and well and very active.

When I went to college, I majored in Business Education. It was what was expected and a good way to earn a living, so it made sense at the time. I focused on my core classes until one day I was told I had to take an English class. I took American Literature. It was fascinating until I got to the final paper. I had to write 75 pages and the topic was "compare and contrast the role and concept of the land as it is depicted in *The Grapes of Wrath* and *Go Down Moses*." For a business major, this wasn't going to be an easy task. When I handed in the paper I thought *well, there goes my 3.75 grade point average.*"

The professor asked to see me about my final paper, and I was a bit on the nervous side. When I went to his office, his first words were, "Have you ever thought of being a writer?" I laughed. Um, no. He told me that I had a real knack for the written word. That the way I approached the paper was incredibly creative and unique. I thanked him, but didn't give it a second thought. However, I did fall in love with reading during that class. For the next ten years or so, I read at least a book a week, if not more.

Fast forward to 2003 and three children later. I was sitting at the lake, watching my children swim and reading a Sandra Brown novel. I set it aside and thought *I could write something like that*. Without telling anyone, I wrote my first book that summer. I did it long hand, then typed it into the computer. What a great feeling it was to finish. So, I wrote another book. Then another. Then I Googled Romance Writers and went to my first Central New York Romance Writer's meeting. It was there I found out I wasn't "different." I found out a lot of other people had imaginary characters and towns and even crazy murdering characters living inside their heads. Then I went to Nationals in Reno and for the first time in my life, I felt like I fit in. Like I belonged somewhere.

I learned about the craft of writing and the business side of publishing. I entered contests. I finaled in a few and I also won The Beacon and The Molly. The movies that played constantly inside my head were finding their way to my fingertips and onto the computer screen. I was the happiest I had ever

been.

I submitted everywhere and got rejected everywhere. ePublishing was on the rise and since I did read ebooks, I submitted to a few of the ePublishers. My book was accepted by Triskelion around the same time they received RWA recognition. I was thrilled. I knew it wasn't the big leagues, but it was a start and I was doing what I loved.

And then, Triskelion started having trouble and went bankrupt. For those of us writing for them, we could see it coming, but there wasn't anything we could do. During this time, I had also made the decision to leave my agent. It was a very difficult decision. I think the world of my first agent and all of her clients. Many of them have gone on to great things, and I am very happy for them. However, at the time, I was having some medical problems and for me, it was time to step back and take a good look at what I wanted to achieve with my writing.

This decision to evaluate my goals lead me to Bob Mayer. I had met him a few times at various conferences, and I was also lucky enough to have had him critique my work. I decided to take his retreat. It was the hardest week I ever had, but at the same time, the most enlightening. I took a lot of what he taught in the workshop and applied it to my writing. But also took a lot of what he said about the business and started writing down my goals and making a plan of action. First order of business was to find a way to get a teaching position at Writers and Books of Rochester.

I also decided to publish the books I had with Triskelion with The Wild Rose Press. They are good books, and I wanted them to have a home. For me, it was a great decision. I have had 4 books and 2 short stories published with them. I also got the job teaching. I was achieving goals and moving forward, but wasn't sure what I wanted to do next. I felt like I had hit a stumbling block. Bob was working on developing his Warrior Writer program and since I had taken his Novel Writing course, I was very interested in this new workshop and decided to ask him about it. Again, he was very gracious and answered my questions.

During one of our conversations, the concept of epublising and backlist came up. Bob had received the rights back to many of his books and wanted to re-release them. Some of the technical aspects of file conversions and cover design he was going to have to outsource, except I knew how to do those things. Somewhere along the lines, we decided to create Who Dares Wins Publishing in January 2010. We started with his backlist, and we now have 3 other authors and more in the pipelines. It's hard to believe that we have been in business now for almost a year. We are constantly re-evaluating our goals and looking to the future. With all the changes and uncertainty in publishing, two things remain the same...readers and authors.

I'm currently working on a book titled *Legacy of Lies* and working with an agent to hopefully get it traditionally published. I spend half my workday on my writing and the other half working on Who Dares Wins Publishing. The truth is,

my journey has really just begun.

Jennifer Holbrook-Talty co-created *Who Dares Wins Publishing* with NY Times Best-Selling Author Bob Mayer, an independent Publisher and helps run the day-to-day administrative side of the company. She is published in romance under the pen names of **Jenni Holbrook** and **Hollie Brooks**. She also teaches Creative Writing at various writing conferences across the country. She is the Rochester's Writing Examiner for Examiner.com and does freelance editing and technical writing.

Jennifer Talty received a BS degree in Business Education with a concentration in Marketing and Sales from Nazareth College of Rochester. She taught Business Applications at both the high school level and in continuing education. She was a co-leader of Distributed Education Clubs of America and worked with students in developing marketing, sales, and public speaking skills. After leaving the teaching profession, she worked as product and sales trainer for various hardware and software companies and was the regional merchandising representative for Buena Vista Entertainment. She has also done contract work for various companies doing technical writing, bookkeeping, and sales invoice tracking.



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★This Month's Articles★

President's Column
Gail Freeman

Two years ago a small group got together and held their breath as the idea for Liberty States Fiction Writers was born. We made bets amongst ourselves that our membership would be 50 members by June. We were wrong. It was



Gail has been writing for twelve years and is a yet to be a published author. Ms. Freeman served as President of another writing organization for two years and has also served as Vice President, Treasurer, Special Events Chair, and Hospitality and Critique Chair in that organization. On a national level, Gail was one of the founding staff members of the Romance Writers of America's electronic newsletter, eNotes and served as editor of that publication for a number of years. In 2005, she was awarded the RWA's prestigious Service Award for her commitment and volunteer efforts. She also chaired the RWA's 2007 Chapter Newsletter Contest and the 2008 ad hoc committee for reform recommendations and changes to that contest. For the past eight years she has been a member of the RWA Communication Committee. After being out of high school for twenty years, Gail went back to college and obtained her associate degree in accounting. A lifelong resident of the Jersey Shore, Ms. Freeman believes in happy endings and working towards your goals, no matter how long it takes.

over 100 members strong. People gave us great feedback and seemed to like what we have done. And we've continued to grow. It won't be long before our membership numbers reach 200!

I think that part of the reason we have grown and prospered is because of the members. We want and need your feedback and ideas. It's part of what makes us strong. Everyone is here because of our love for the written word. Part of our quest is to become published. As we reflect on our accomplishments from this year and begin to think about our goals for next year, please let us know if there is anything we as a group can do to help you with your goals.

The Board has been looking into projects for next year. One idea is to participate in Comic Con in New York City. This would be great exposure for our organization and for our published members. The cost of the three day event would be split between Liberty and the published authors. Until a final decision is made, we will be allocating funds in our temporary operating budget for 2011. Funny thing about budgets, you have to plan ahead for projects when you're not sure what those projects will be. So again, I urge every member to submit ideas to any Board Member so we can make decisions for next year.

I hope every member had a great Thanksgiving, and I send you warm wishes for a Happy Holiday!

Gail

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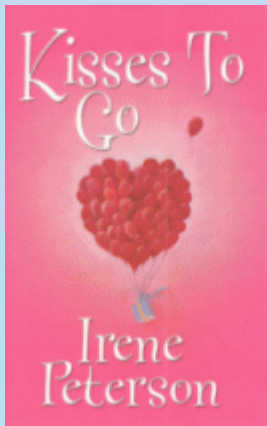
Where and When: The Setting by Irene Peterson

Beginning reporters learn one thing immediately about writing news stories. The first paragraphs of the story should answer the Who, What, Where, When, Why, and How of the event or situation. While this applies directly to journalists, some of it is just as important to writers of any kind of prose, be it literary fiction or genre fiction.

Starting your story off with a bang, that grabber hook, is quite necessary. After you've gotten the readers interested in the beginning of your plot, you have to give them a location for the plot. A *where* and a *when* before you go headlong into the *who* and the *why* and the *how*. Settle the readers into a



Born in Central Jersey, raised in Central Jersey...Irene Peterson is the author of two books, mother of two girls and wife of one Central Jersey guy. She asks, "Why travel the world when you have it all in this part of the state?"



place. Get them to know what to expect from the locale. Let them know the time, too. Is it this century or in the past? The time a story takes place is just as important as the where.

Now, if you've established the time (future) and decide on the place (Bellarius II), you can proceed with the *what* and *how* and *why*. If you decide to locate your story on another planet, you'd better be prepared to describe something about it so the reader doesn't think it's earthlike and all earth settings apply. What's the weather like? How many suns are there? Is the sky greenish or bluish? Is it a water planet or a desert? What kinds of beings inhabit it? They'll sort of have to make adjustments for their environment if water is scarce or there are three small suns in the sky. If your story will make reference to a past history of the planet, say, when it was green and lush, well, you'd better include that information because it will be in the memories of the inhabitants.

Example: Moving along, we followed a wide stream into a lovely lush valley where in the distance, white towers rose and glinted in the sun. The horses stopped at the edge of the valley, giving us the opportunity to look down at the glistening magnificence below. Wow. Nice stuff.

As we entered the valley, however, I noticed that the buildings were not quite as solid and clean as I'd initially thought. There were cracks in the façades and some of the golden ornamentation appeared to be coming loose. There was an air of tiredness, of Old Russia trying to put on a brave face, about everything. In their day, these buildings must have been incredibly beautiful.

Now, to me, they just looked faded and worn and very, very tired.

If it takes place on earth, where on earth are you? Are the mountains outside the window in the US or Italy or Nepal? This is quite important to the story. It fits into the whole thing as surely the altitude will have some part in how your characters react and the government of the country with these mountains might direct some of the action or problems encountered by your characters. The landscape has to be there somewhere because your characters probably will have to walk outside at some time. And the mores and culture might intrude on them, too.

Then, there are certain settings that need to be right. The vampire you've crafted ought to be in Romania or New Orleans, for example, because that's where they *usually* hang out. If you put them in New York City, you'd better give them a place to hang out at night to avoid the sun. A vampire would not do too well in Arizona, and Florida isn't too hot a place to put them either. Well, it is hot, but the sunshine would not lead the reader to take the dark dealings of a creature of the night too seriously. Or, would it? The problems brought on by a coffin delivered to the Sunshine State might make for an interesting problem.

Certain places are just associated with certain things. A character in Seattle might be addicted to coffee. One from Wisconsin might be into cows and

cheese. Witches are usually associated with either New England or the South, for some reason. Areas without an urban setting would do better and be more realistic than having a coven in Newark or Phoenix.

Oh, wait. Either one of these settings might work quite well, if you wanted to be different!

So, let's tighten up the setting. Plays sometimes take place in one room or a creepy old house. Your story could take place in a laboratory—one room—or a living or bed room. That room would have to be described quite well. The reader would want to know where the equipment is located, where the doors are, if the floor has carpeting or there are overhead lights or standing lamps. If there's a bed, is it made? Is it a sissy room for a guy? Is it a small, dark room with shadows and places for books to pile up on the floor?

Example. *For a fraction of a second, the man dithered. Ross gestured with one hand for the man to enter. He did. Once inside, Ross watched as the dragon surveyed the interior, walking slowly across the flags of the floor, touching the old wood of the bar and inhaling deeply.*

"Have a seat," Ross suggested. He indicated one of the chairs around a scarred table in the corner near the kitchen then hid a smile as the dragon checked out the chair, tested its strength, then gingerly lowered his body onto it. Ross pulled a pint for the dragon and one for himself and brought it to the table before sitting across from the dragon.

All these details are important, even if you brush over them lightly. You have to give the reader a place to be, for your characters to live and maybe die. Once that's in the reader's head, you can go easy throughout the rest of the story. When the characters move somewhere because of the plot—from Bellarius II to a water planet, Aquaria IV, things are going to change big-time. Then you have to do some setting details all over again.

So, do it. Paint the living space, the outdoor situation, the trees or cacti or dust and rocks and blend the description into your story. No one, not even writers, lives in closets in the dark. While you may feel detached from your surroundings, remember your readers need to know where the story takes place. They need to know the *when* and the *where* so they aren't stuck thinking your characters live in a vacuum. Once this is stated, the *who*, along with the *why* and the *how* can move along.

Some writers travel to get the feel of the setting of their next story. They might even be inspired by the places they've traveled to or something they've encountered on their trips. Taking stock of your surroundings makes life more interesting on a long, boring road trip. Listening to the accents or regionalisms of the folk you encounter, then including these quirks in your dialogue will add color and musicality if you do it right.

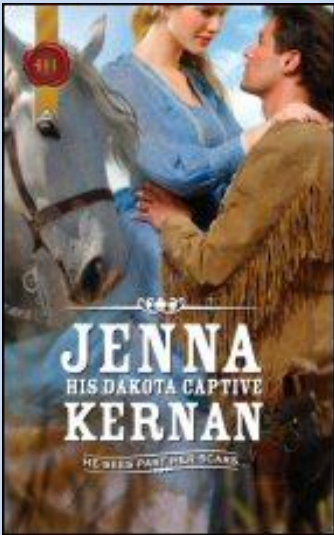
Next topic for *Irene Knows It All*: "Dialogue—Who Said That?"

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Conflict and Connection

Part 1: Conflict: Anyone But Him

by Jenna Kernan



September 2010

Conflict and Connection are two equally important components of any romance. A story needs characters in conflict in order to make the reader wonder if the protagonists will be able to resolve their differences; while building connections gives the reader hope that, no matter how great their problems, these two **MUST** be together. The push and pull between these forces provides the delicious tension that holds readers and keeps them flipping pages to see just how this will all work out.

The balance between these yin and yang components must be exactly right. If the connection overpowers the conflict, the reader might wonder what is keeping the protagonists apart. If the conflict overwhelms the connection, the reader might decide that no matter what the characters say in the final chapter, their differences are simply too great for them to achieve a lasting relationship. The two components are interwoven, but I'm still trying to tease them out into two separate articles. This first part will deal with the push of conflict that drives protagonists apart while Part 2: Connection: Made for Each Other, will explore the forces that pull two people together, making them more than compatible, but perfect for each other. So perfect, in fact, that they are willing to do anything to win the love of their opposite, including becoming who they were meant to be: happy, fulfilled and committed—in other words—worthy of love.

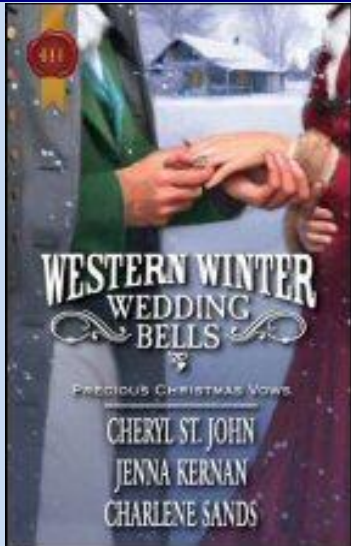
So let's get started by exploring the forces of division and the creation of believable roadblocks that convince both protagonists that the other person is the absolute worst possible choice for them to love.

We've all read stories (and probably written stories) where a potential love scene is interrupted by a ringing phone, a knock at the door or some other outward, coincidental blockade. This does occasionally happen, but it is not the way to separate people for long. The readers might tend to roll their eyes and think, "Yeah, right" or worse, "Cheating." Bickering is equally ineffective because, while it does keep the protagonists apart, it also tends to convince the reader that the relationship is doomed to fail because they just can't get along.

So what's a writer to do?

It helps to build outer barriers which are tied to the protagonists' beliefs of who they are. This can make your people act in ways that help them continue to be who they have become, while impeding them from getting what they really want or really need. These beliefs are the result of a painful experience or wound that occurred in the past, but that has left a mark on what they have become. This wound has changed their belief system. Their wound and their fears now have them operating in ways that often run counter to what is really best for them.

You need to show the hero and heroine making true connections (which I'll write more about in part 2), but the writer must also keep the protagonists



December 2010

Award-winning author, Jenna Kernan has over a dozen novels published including Western historical and paranormal romance. She has received two RITA® nominations and in 2010 she won the Book Buyers Best Award for her debut paranormal, Dream Stalker from Silhouette Nocturne. The second book in the Nocturne series, The Trackers, is due out in the spring of 2011 as is Jenna's next Western romance, Partnering Lily.

Jenna grew up in the Catskills and is every bit as adventurous as her heroines. Her hobbies include recreational gold prospecting, scuba diving and gem hunting. Her adventures have taken her above the Arctic Circle in Alaska in search of gold nuggets and most recently to Maine for tourmaline. She lives in the Hudson Valley of New York State with her husband. Visit her online home, www.jennakernan.com, for release dates, articles on craft and news.

from falling in love too soon and spoiling the tension in the story. They need to come to this conclusion only at the bitter end. Until then, they need to fight, fight, fight what draws them together with all the valid reasons that being together is either impossible or a very, very bad idea.

Romance writers need to have protagonists connect and clash. They have to show character growth, for not just one protagonist, but two. So let's consider the clash. How do you make it strong enough to sustain tension and true enough to have the protagonists believe that this person is the worst choice in the entire world for them? Your heroine needs to believe absolutely, "anyone but him." She needs to be baffled as to why she is drawn to this guy who is so obviously all wrong for her. Why she can't do the sensible thing and keep her distance when this relationship has disaster written all over it? Then you need to do the same thing for him.

Oh, you want to know HOW to do that? Me, too. Here is what I've figured out so far.

First, the protagonists need to have goals that are in opposition. And, second, they need to be pursuing these goals for admirable reasons. For example, he could be a duck hunter and she's runs a bird rehabilitation center, but I'm going to have a hard time rooting for a guy who blows little ducks' heads off with a shotgun. The opposition is there, but she has the admirable goal and he sure doesn't. Now, if he were killing ducks in an effort to feed the homeless, it might be better (but I still am rooting for the ducks). So here are a few that might be better: He wants to renovate the house to make a youth center; she needs to tear it down to put in a community bike trail. She wants to save the family ranch; he wants to buy the note to expand his own land. He's an environmentalist protecting the wetlands; she's a geologist exploring for possible natural gas deposits to bring jobs to an economically strapped community. He's an innocent fugitive; she's F.B.I. assigned to bring him in or lose her job.

Third, the protagonists' goals have to be essential—truly, deeply, and vitally important. If it is not crucial, then the hero and heroine will not dig in their heels and stay in a bad situation when the fight begins in earnest. No sane person will stand and fight over some trivial matter. Instead they will shrug and think, "life is too short to bother with this," and then walk away. The author needs to build a goal that is way too vital for the protagonists even to consider giving up. Over time this vital goal becomes less important than gaining a new desire (the love of the other protagonist). But it will be a long struggle to come to this realization. The conclusion might be getting something unexpected that suits them better or sacrificing their original goal in order to ensure they gain something more important—the love of the other protagonist.

So let's look at a few examples of the conflicts that tear interpersonal relationships to shreds.

Finding Nemo

Marlin, the dour clownfish dad is a complete kill joy. He is outwardly overprotective, obsessive-compulsive, and full of fears that something will happen to his only son, Nemo. He is in opposition with his son who needs autonomy. His dad is crushing him to death with his overbearing, dictatorial, domineering personality. Nemo needs some control; Marlin needs to protect. They are in opposition from the start and both have an admirable goal, and the goal is way too important to just throw up one's flippers and give up. So, Marlin clashes with his son about going to school, then on arrival embarrasses Nemo by recommending his son play on the sponge beds with the baby fish. Marlin argues with the other parents at school, argues with the teacher fish, the sharks, the whale, the school of silver fish, the turtles, the pelican, and poor Dori. He opposes any efforts to do other than what he feels is best for his son. It is obvious to everyone but Marlin that he is being a jerk and that his efforts to protect Nemo are actually the impetus that placed his son in danger in the first place.

It is his fears, caused by death of his wife and offspring, that have changed Marlin into what he has become, and these fears have changed his belief system. Now, his truth is that he knows best and he needs to keep Nemo safe, even if it kills them both.

Neither Nemo nor Marlin can swim (walk) away. Nemo is growing toward adulthood and he will fight to earn his independence, even if it kills him. Marlin will not let anything, including his own son, endanger his boy. Locked in opposition with no way out, they are destined to clash.

Toward the end of the story, Marlin, after finding Nemo, allows his son to endanger himself in a trolling net, because his son believes he can save all the fish. He has learned something on his journeys because, at the beginning of the story, Marlin would have overruled Nemo and ordered him away. In fact, he tried to do just that before Nemo was captured. Now he gives up the goal of being sure that nothing happens to his son in order to support his son's efforts, dangerous though they are.

Lethal Weapon

Marty Riggs has a goal that puts him in opposition with his new partner. Marty is a suicidal detective and his partner, Detective Murtaugh, is about to retire. So you have a man who wants to be dead, partnered with a man with everything to live for. This is great opposition. Neither one can walk away because they have both been ordered by their superior to make this situation work, and they both have the admirable objective of wanting to solve a crime (involving a suicide which nicely, echoes Riggs' dilemma). Neither man wants to walk away because they both really want to solve this crime.

Riggs is experiencing the paralyzing grief caused by the recent death of his beloved wife of eleven years, killed in an auto accident. Riggs believes that the only way to end his crushing pain is to die. This leads him to recklessness while doing his job (jumping off buildings to control the suicidal man and

facing a sniper alone). His risky behavior is correctly perceived by Detective Murtaugh as a threat to his own health, safety, retirement, and life.

Lt. Murtaugh and his boisterous, loving family will help Riggs reconsider what he wants. Ironically, it is when he decides he wants to live that he almost dies protecting Murtaugh's family from the villain who is just like Riggs in every way except he is already dead inside. The screenwriters have created two characters with important, admirable goals that are in opposition and a situation that makes it impossible for either man to walk away.

Pirates of the Caribbean, Search for the Black Pearl

Elizabeth Swan, the proper daughter of the governor of Port Royal, is caught in a love triangle between the man she knows is a "smart match" and the secret longing she has for the son of a pirate, whose identity she protected when they were both children. She wants Will Turner to overcome his deference to her social superiority and pursue her as a woman, but he knows his place and is unfailingly polite and respectful, which irritates her no end.

They are stuck on an island, so they are trapped by geography and by their mutual desire for one another, which they are unable to control regardless of the inappropriateness of such a liaison and the complications it will cause. But just why does that mutual desire work as the glue that keeps Will and Elizabeth from walking away from each other and doing what they both know is expected?

We will look at this in our next article, as we explore the connection that explains why, despite their differences, your protagonists might be perfect together.

Next month: **Part 2: Connection: Made for Each Other**

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