

Overview of the Confession Magazines

True Romance – Stories about romance, love and relationships. Tend to be set in the country. Rural feel to them. Woman telling the story is usually working class. (monthly)

True Experience – Stories that pertain to women's lives. Experiences that center around career, marriage children, family. Even love. (4 issues a year)

True Love – Stories range from light romances and current social concerns to more passionate romances and "stories with a twist." A chick Lit voice. Heartfelt stories about young women and their dilemmas in life and love. Think, Sex In the City meets The Lifetime Channel. (monthly)

True Confessions – True Confessions is a women's magazine featuring true-to-life stories about working class women and their families. Family problems, relationship issues, realistic romances, working woman, single moms, single woman problems, abuse, etc. Stories should help women lead better, more victorious lives. (monthly)

True Story – Subject matter can range from light romances to sizzling passion, from all-out tear jerkers to happily-ever-after endings. Stories about parenthood, relationships, careers, family affairs, and social concerns. Chock-full of heartfelt and inspirational stories of tragedy and triumph, life and love.

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HOW TO WRITE SERIES

A SAMPLING OF THE SEVEN STAGES OF LOVE APPLIED TO CONFESSION STORIES

By Jeanine McAdam

Over the past six months I have been writing for the confessions market (specifically True Romance) and enjoying it tremendously. My specialty is love stories and I thought I would share my process of using the seven stages of love to shape my stories. Since the stories are approximately 7,000 words at the most, I don't apply all the seven stages when writing a confession story.

Every confession has the first meeting. The first meeting establishes the attraction between the hero and heroine. It also incorporates back story and characterization. The reader learns the setting, the professions of the hero and heroine and the external conflict. For example, the hero is a fireman and the heroine's black cat is stuck in a tree a few days before Halloween. The first meeting is usually about 2,000 words.

The first kiss, which I wouldn't necessarily write as a kiss or physical contact, I use the idea of the first kiss to establish that the hero and heroine find each other attractive and may even like each other. The writer needs a reason to bring them back together after the first meeting. For example, if we go back to our firefighter, let's say he gets hurt while rescuing the heroine's cat. This is an opportunity for one of them to reach out to the other. I don't usually have the hero ask the heroine out to dinner or a movie, too simple. I like the meeting to have a purpose which moves the story forward. I would



have the heroine visit the hero in the hospital to thank him for saving her cat. The first kiss is another 2,000 words.

After the heroine decides she's interested the dark moment arrives. This is when the heroine has her doubts about the hero. I usually throw in a secondary character that is intent on creating trouble so that the heroine stumbles on her path to true love. For example, the heroine's superstitious grandmother says, "he got hurt saving your black cat a few days before Halloween. My Ouija board says this relationship is doomed." The dark moment is another 2,000 words.

Then the heroine gets over her doubts, tells her grandmother to butt out and realizes she loves the hero. The story ends with the resolution and the admission of love. Even though these two stages come at different points in the seven stages of love, I've paired them together because it's a short story and the writer doesn't have the word count to explore each individually. Also, I always try to reassure the reader that this is a love which will last. At the end, I add something like, "three months later, with my cat in his lap, my fireman proposed and I joyfully

accepted." The resolution and the admission of love cover the last 1,000 words.

Please note, I've eliminated the almost love scene and the big love scene from the seven stages when writing a confession story. Physical love scenes, except for the first kiss, are rare in this type of short story. However, Michel Bracken, author of over one hundred and sixty confession stories explained to me, "sex scenes, with or without love, tend not to be graphic, but there's no clear reason to avoid them if they are appropriate to the story you're trying to tell."

Also a few more tips to keep in mind when writing for the confessions market. Confessions are in the first person. Usually, it's the voice of the heroine. The trick for the author is to portray the hero's internal thoughts even though the reader is not in his head. Giving him defining dialogue helps to relay his feelings to the reader. Plus, the heroine needs to observe the hero's facial expressions and body language, this helps the reader to understand his motivation and external conflict.

To learn more about the confessions market join the True Writers yahoo group. To join go to: <http://groups.yahoo.com>. Search: True Writers. Click on "Join this Group" (right side of page). Remember you must be a member of Yahoo to join the group. ♥

Jeanine McAdam's has a story in February's issue of True Romance magazine. It's called "Love in Small Bytes." Look for "Cozumel Canoodle" in March's issue.

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Resources

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Allen, Moira. "Writing Confessions: An Interview with Bea Sheftel." Writing-World.com. (2001) <http://www.writing-world.com/fiction/confessions.shtml>

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Fielding, Peggy. Confessing for Money: Writing and Selling to the Secret Short Story Market. 2nd Edition. Denton, Texas: AWOC.COM, 2005

Puett, Marilyn. "Short-shorts: Not Just a Fashion Statement." Writing for DOLLARS! Vol. 13 No. 2. (January 13, 2009)
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(Note: scroll down the page the article is at the bottom)

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