

Words of Paradise

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Rejected? Okay, Now What? by Lynde Lakes

Accept it. It is part of the process. Writing is our joy, but face it, getting our work published is a whole other hurdle to leap. And the “subjective” bar is set high.

The easiest way to accept rejection is to have another title in the works. I recommend that the day after you send off your “slaved-over” work, that you write a synopsis for the next. By the time you hear back on the first, a rejection won’t hurt as much. Your interest has moved on.



So, do you chuck the work that was turned down? No way. After a few days, you reread the rejection letter. What did it say besides “no”? If you were lucky enough to get a caring rejecter, it will read something like this:

Two editors looked closely at your manuscript. Though both ultimately recommended against acquiring the work, both also thought your writing showed great promise and was quite close to “there.” Please submit again. [Notice this next line; it is telling you something very important.] *But with a different manuscript and story that might be better suited to our line.*

[This line is telling you that you sent them the wrong story for their line, but they like your writing. The next paragraph drives this message home. Don’t ignore it.]

Though we aren't able to accept this manuscript, it is greatly possible that your other manuscripts in the pipeline may find a home with us. We invite you to submit future submissions. Please remember that publishing is subjective, and what doesn't work for one publisher may work for another. We wish you the best of luck in placing this manuscript elsewhere.

My point is, a rejection can be a learning tool and not all bad. So, dry your tears, read one of the

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President: Lynde Lakes
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rejecter's books again to see exactly why yours didn't make it, and then get busy. Try to give them what they want. In addition, send out the rejected manuscript to a publisher who is waiting for just your kind of story.

Writers who don't get rejections may not be sending their work out. Join the "rejectee" party and keep sending your work out. But remember, do your research on the publisher's line first. And read, read, read.

The very best of luck to each of you. Everyone in the Aloha Chapter is gaining the skills needed. And those who want to be published have a very good chance of making it. Reach for the dream. Enjoy the wonderful friendships gained along the way, live your life, and enjoy the trip. It might be a long, hard journey.

*Aloha,
Lynde*

Aloha Chapter News



March 6: Aloha Chapter Hosts HelenKay Dimon at Hickam

On **Saturday, March 6**, at 10 a.m., Aloha Chapter will host romantic suspense writer **HelenKay Dimon** at Hickam AFB. HelenKay is an award-winning author of more than a dozen novels and novellas. Her first single title, *Your Mouth Drives Me Crazy*, was excerpted in *Cosmopolitan* magazine in August '07 and spotlighted at E! Online. She made *Cosmopolitan* a second time in December 2009 with her novella

"It's Hotter At Christmas" from the Kissing Santa Claus anthology. Her books also have been published by Doubleday Book Club and Rhapsody Book Club and translated into several languages.

To read more about HelenKay Dimon, check out www.helenkaydimon.com, where you'll discover that after twelve years as a divorce lawyer specializing in unhappy endings, HelenKay now writes romance for a living.



April 3: Jill Marie Landis at Borders Ward Centre for a Talk and Signing

Aloha Chapter meets at Borders Ward Centre on **Saturday, April 3**, at 10 a.m., to welcome New York Times bestselling author and Kauai resident (and long-time Aloha Chapter member) **Jill Marie Landis**.

Jill will be giving an informal talk about writing, answering questions, and signing her new novel, *Heart of Stone*. Following the talk and signing, for those who can stay, Jill will join us for a leisurely lunch down the street at P.F. Chang's.

For more about Jill and *Heart of Stone*, visit www.jillmarielandis.com, and read Jill's take on "Leave 'Em Laughing" in this issue of *Words of Paradise*. Jill was the featured speaker at the Aloha Chapter luncheon last November. It is always a special treat to welcome Jill to Oahu!

Bulwer-Lytton Contest, Aloha Chapter Edition



Want to have some fun? And write at the same time? Looking for a writing contest that won't have thousands entering, and is absolutely free? Well, look no further! Aloha Chapter RWA's newsletter, *Words of Paradise*, announces a chapter writing contest in connection with the annual Bulwer-Lytton Fiction Contest (“a whimsical literary competition that challenges entrants to compose the opening sentence to the worst of all possible novels”).

Our chapter members have written some wonderfully bad opening sentences in honor of Bulwer-Lytton in past years, and it's always fun (and free) to enter. Winners are published in the newsletter and celebrated at a chapter meeting.

Choose your genre, or genres. Multiple entries are welcome! Just email your entries to the *Words of Paradise* editor, Michael Little, at mlittlehi@gmail.com. **Deadline is April 1.** The contest will be judged by an independent local writer or editor, to be announced. Winners will be announced and honored at the May 1st chapter meeting at the Aina Haina Library, when Lynde Lakes will be leading a workshop on plotting and brainstorming.



To see some sample “opening sentences to the worst of all possible novels,” and to connect to the official Bulwer-Lytton Fiction Contest site, check out Michael’s recent blog on HawaiiReaders.com: www.hawaiireaders.com/blog/2009/12/28/dark-and-stormy-night.



Schedule of Meetings for 2010

Aloha Chapter meets at the Aina Haina Library in Honolulu, on a Saturday from 10 a.m. to noon, except as noted.

January 9 - “Rewriting Dialogue Workshop”

Led by Michael Little.

February 6 - “Reading at Kapolei Library”

Lynde Lakes, Leslee Ellenson, and Michael Little reading and talking about opening scenes.

March 6 - “Romantic Suspense: Helen Kay Dimon”

At Hickam AFB. Hosted by Aloha Chapter.

April 3 - “Jill Marie Landis”

At Borders Ward Centre. New York Times bestselling author and Kauai resident Jill Marie Landis will be talking about writing, answering questions, and signing her new novel, *Heart of Stone*.

May 1 - “Plotting and Brainstorming Workshop”

Led by Aloha Chapter President and author Lynde Lakes.

June 5 - TBA

July 10 - TBA

August 7 - TBA

September 11 - TBA

October 2 - TBA

November 6 - Annual Luncheon at Hale Koa.

Make 'Em Laugh
by Jill Marie Landis

After reading Michael's blog "If you tickle us, do we not laugh?" I recalled a quote I heard in a writing workshop eons ago. It was attributed to Charles Dickens. "Make 'em laugh, make 'em cry, make 'em wait." (I'm not sure that's the correct order, but you get the gist.) When I googled the quote today, I found it attributed not only to Dickens, but also to Wilkie Collins and after that a host of today's writers who have been quoting it in their workshops and blogs.



The bottom line is that writers must strive to move readers emotionally. We all know we're supposed to make 'em laugh, cry, and wait, but no one ever says exactly how to do that. "Show, don't tell." That's another good one. Show the reader, don't just tell them what's happening or what the character is feeling. Show them. Put the reader in the story. Give them a character they will connect to, a character they're willing to follow off a cliff ... if that's where the character chooses to go. (Remember Thelma

and Louise? We followed both of them right over the edge and loved the ride.)

So how does a writer create emotion? John Gardner, in *The Art of Fiction: Notes on Craft for Young Writers* (1985), said that "The writer's business is to make up convincing human beings and create for them basic situations and actions by means of which they come to know themselves and reveal themselves to the reader."

Our job as writers is to create a continuous dream the reader becomes absorbed in. A dream that they don't want to end. A dream vivid with details that excite emotion. A dream alive with action that keeps the characters on the move and the pages turning.

My goal with every book has been to write a heartwarming, emotional story with unforgettable characters and a page-turning plot. This month my 23rd novel goes on sale. *Heart of Stone* is a western historical romance set in Texas in 1875. It's the story of a former prostitute who falls in love with a small-town preacher, a man with a few secrets of his own.



Romantic Times Magazine recently said of *Heart of Stone*: "Landis writes from her heart and is able to speak to her readers through her characters. In this start to her new Irish Angels series, the characters are believably flawed and relatable." 4*****

Believably flawed and "relatable." The ability to speak to my readers through my characters. That's what I like to hear. That means I'm doing my job.



I'll be on Oahu on April 3rd at 10 a.m. signing *Heart of Stone*, along with Michael Little and other RWA Aloha Chapter authors at Borders Ward Centre. Do stop by and chat about reading and writing!

Editor's Note: Jill has some good advice for new writers on her website, www.jillmarielandis.com, along with some great book covers and photos, including this one at age 8:

"Jill Marie obviously started writing at an early age! The author's cousin, Pamela Nickless, is standing by to offer editorial assistance. Dr. Nickless is now a professor of Women's Economic History at the University of North Carolina at Asheville."

Take Five

If You Tickle Us, Do We Not Laugh?

by Michael Little

If you tickle us, do we not laugh? This is the first of several questions I want to begin to explore, with the goal of understanding how readers and writers connect. The tickle question comes from Shylock's speech in Act 3, Scene 1 of *The Merchant of Venice*.



Shakespeare's topic in that speech is the common humanity of Jews and Christians. Shylock asks, "If you prick us, do we not bleed? if you tickle us, do we not laugh? if you poison us, do we not die?" I'm intrigued by the mixture of tragedy and comedy in those lines, with laughter surrounded by bleeding on one side, and dying on the other.

If I put on my reader's hat for a moment, and reflect on my favorite writers of fiction, I quickly discover that many of these writers do tickle me and make me laugh. Think of your own favorite writers. Do some of them make you laugh? Do you share their sense of humor? Do you share their view of the world? I'll talk about

Shylock's questions about bleeding and dying at another time, but for now let's listen to the laughter.

Laughter is one behavior that defines us as human. Laughter is best when we share it. There are few moments I enjoy more in life than sharing a good laugh. I may be in the audience, or in a small group, or at times I may be the one telling the joke or reading a humorous scene. The sound of laughter, sharing in that moment, is one of the best ways of bonding with others, right up there with sharing a meal.

But what about those times when it's just ourselves alone with a book, an audience of one for the writer we've chosen to spend time with? We may not laugh out loud, or even smile, when the writer tickles us, but the connection has been made. The writer has given us characters we want to know more about, the writer has put these characters into action, and along the way we are on board with the story, ready to be tickled whenever the moment and the words are right.

We may not think about it at the time, but we have shared a moment with the writer, and, in a way, shared that moment with all those who read the same story. We have connected.

Let's close with a laugh, shall we? William Goldman, the author of *The Princess Bride*, also wrote the screenplay for *Butch Cassidy and the Sundance Kid*. In that film there's a famous scene where the two train robber heroes, played by Paul Newman and Robert Redford, have been chased by a posse to the edge of a high cliff. Their only escape is a long jump into the river below. As they stare down at the distant water, Sundance, the Redford character, has a confession for Butch:



Butch Cassidy: *Alright. I'll jump first.*

Sundance Kid: *No.*

Butch Cassidy: *Then you jump first.*

Sundance Kid: *No, I said.*

Butch Cassidy: *What's the matter with you?*

Sundance Kid: *I can't swim.*

Butch Cassidy: *Are you crazy? The fall will probably kill you.*

Aloha,

Michael

