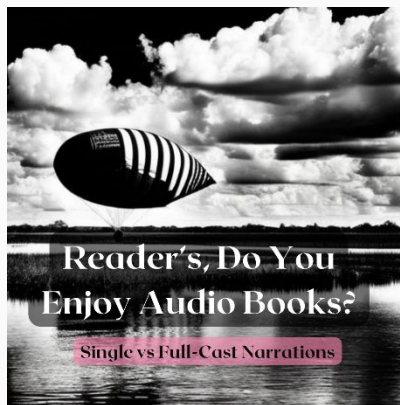




Edition 9 - March 15, 2023



Reader's, Do You Enjoy Audio Books?

by Jolene MacFadden

If you are an avid reader "on-the-go" you have probably purchased an audio library subscription through places like Audible, Spotify or even iTunes.

However, a great resource for FREE audiobooks is still with your local library. They will purchase audio books that their patrons request, when their budget allows. These purchases are handled through their Library Direct Dealers such as Overdrive and Libby that offer free apps for you to download and add to your phones. The authors will receive compensation for these purchases and sometimes they are entitled to royalties from each patron that checks out their audiobooks. That is, of course, an excellent way to help your favorite authors. Amazon/Audible does not distribute to the libraries.

I used to go into my local branch library before any of our family trips and pick up a couple 'books-on-discs', pop the cd's into the player and enjoy the ride. Sometimes, the kids complained but mostly they enjoyed them as well. It depended on the story and how creative the narrator was. And on those long commutes, they were a real lifesaver to me. However, I did find it kind of a pain to make sure I cleaned them before using them in my car or popping them into my computer's DVD drive. As with most things you get from the library, they are well used and most of the time abused.

Now-a-days, we can access them digitally on our smartphones and even eReaders through various apps. You can download or purchase many great titles to listen while you take a walk, drive down the road, or just relaxing in your favorite spot. You do not have to keep track of any CDs or worry that you might scratch one bad enough to make it unusable. And, YES, Listening to audiobooks is still considered "READING". I do not care what other people say about it. You are still consuming literature just through your ears instead of your eyes.

Today, I wanted to ask my fellow audiobook listeners if they have purchased or checked out any books that have a "Full-Cast" narration with background music like the old-timey radio programs? If not, you really should try a couple. To me, it just brings the story more to life. Don't get me wrong there are some great narrators out there who can and do change their voices, accents, etc. to reflect the different characters voices but not all of them can do that. Goodreads has a listing of over 200 of the most popular full-cast narrated audiobooks available today. https://www.goodreads.com/list/show/89457.Full_Cast_Audio_Books

It is wicked expensive to get one produced:

- Approximately \$15,000 for full cast of about 5 to 10 characters includes the background music and the book having around 115,000 words.
- A single person narration can run between \$2500 to around \$3500 for books of the same size.

This would be a very special adaptation of the story that may well be worth the expense. There are more and more authors turning to crowdfunding to produce various special editions of their stories. If you know of any, please, share their fundraisers on your own social media pages. That is such a great help even if you are unable to contribute to their efforts. Spreading the word is a tremendous way that we can help our favorite authors reach their book business goals and keep writing those incredible stories.

Would You Pay Extra (or strongly encourage your local library to purchase) Full-Cast Narrated Audiobooks?

Your favorite authors would really like to know!

Reader's, Do You Enjoy Audio Books? by Jolene MacFadden

<https://www.facebook.com/jolenesbooksandmore>

This Month's Group Promo

Each month the **Gazette** hosts a Book Funnel Group Promo highlighting a variety of romance genres. This month's event is for **Romantic Suspense** novels.



Help us to grow participation in these events by posting this link on your social media or in your author newsletter. Share Links are available on the promo website.

[Explore 'Romantic Suspense' Books Here](#)

Up next month, **Futuristic/Fantasy Romance**. If you've written a book in this genre and would like to promote it...

[Join Here](#)

Upcoming Workshop

FCRW holds monthly meetings on the 2nd Saturday of each month at the [West Regional Branch of the Duval County Library](#), and online, unless otherwise posted. Part of these monthly meetings include an Author Workshop where we host a guest speaker to teach a specific area of the writing, publishing, and promoting process. You may attend all the upcoming 2023 workshops by joining the **First Coast Romance Writers** for the annual dues of \$40, or you may attend individual workshops online as a visitor for \$10 each. You may also attend in person, as a guest, three times for free, before becoming a member.

Visit <https://firstcoastromancewriters.com/> for more information.

If you're a non-member, and would like to attend, here's the link to sign up: <https://firstcoastromancewriters.com/fcrw-workshop-sign-up-form/>

Please **check each meeting description** to see if the meeting is **ZOOM-ONLY** or **IN-PERSON & ZOOM**. If you need the Zoom link to attend, email the chapter president: president@firstcoastromancewriters.com You will be provided with a link to log onto the meeting. You can log in virtually for social time at 10am, and our business meeting will begin promptly at 1015am.

Our next workshop, on April 8, 2023, will feature **Kevin Tumlinson** from **Draft2Digital**.



Kevin Tumlinson is an award-winning and bestselling novelist, and is known as “The Voice of Indie Publishing” for his work in helping hundreds of thousands of will-be authors to start, build, and grow their author careers. Kevin is the Director of Marketing & PR for Draft2Digital—the leading distributor of indie published titles in the world. He has served as host, co-host, or guest on thousands of podcasts and other media. You can learn more about Kevin at his work at KevinTumlinson.com.

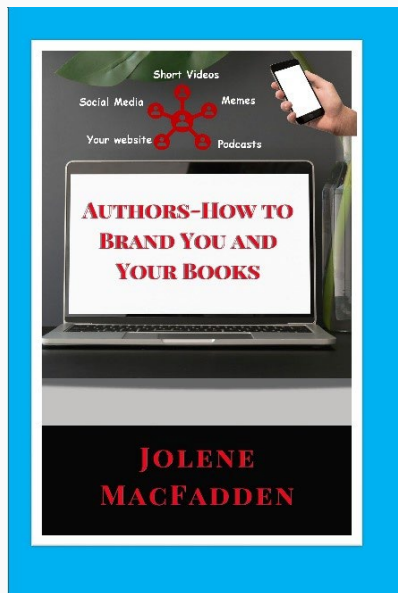
Bootstrapping Your Author Career

Kevin talks about what he’s learned about building and growing an author career when you’re short of time and budget. From “writing anywhere” using a smartphone to low- and even no-money ways to market your books, Kevin is presenting all the tricks and tips he’s learned since starting his publishing career.

Handy Things Authors Can Do with Draft2Digital

D2D offers authors an entire toolbox of resources for starting, building, and growing their author careers. And all of those tools are FREE for authors to use—no contracts, no fees, no obligations. In this talk, Kevin Tumlinson walks through some of those resources, introducing them and sharing how you can put them to work right away, even if you aren't distributing your books through us!

Books by Friends of FCRW



Authors - How to Brand You and Your Books

by Jolene MacFadden

"From websites to the most popular social media platforms, I have experienced it all, and will provide you with most of the tips and tricks I have learned through the years. This book will also help you gain some basic understanding behind the 'why you should do these tasks yourself.'"

[Buy Here](#)



“Helping Authors Achieve Their Publishing Goals”

Jolene MacFadden of Southern Dragon Publishing is a published author of non-fiction books and is currently working on her first historical fiction story under the pen name L.J. Green. She and her company strive to help new and established authors who wish to become independently published with their book formatting, setting up book publishing accounts, create social media accounts and content and get their websites and newsletters up and running.

<https://SouthernDragonPublishing.com>

<https://www.facebook.com/jolenesbooksandmore>



Leah Miles

Author and President of First Coast Romance Writers

I’m an avid reader of all genres, but my preference is for stories with a clear

path to happiness. Life in general is busy and complicated, so when I read, I want escape into the lives of the characters on the page. My husband doesn't read novels, preferring educational tomes and podcasts. However, he's tremendously supportive of my writing endeavors. We recently moved and where we live now is much smaller, but I have a whole room for my writing space. (Sometimes I even let him sit in here.)

Before meeting him, I lived half my life in Atlanta, Georgia and planned to have career as either a television reporter or a successful author. After getting a Bachelors in English and Communications, I worked for CNN for over a dozen years—but, I never managed to sit behind the anchor desk. As for writing, I've got boxes of stories written years ago, and more works in progress than I care to divulge.

We now live in a small town in South Georgia and I work full-time managing an insurance agency and my husband is the pastor of our church. Our three kids; doctor, lawyer and journalist; have left the nest, so *operation successful author* is finally in the works. When I'm not selling insurance or writing stories, I'm actively involved in our local theatre productions as well as our church.

I'm currently published in three anthologies with two more coming out this year in addition to my first novel, a Romantic Suspense.

Romancing the Holidays, Volume 1: A Pug Thanksgiving: An adorable pug is the catalyst for love in this Thanksgiving tail.

Romancing the Holidays, Volume 2: Stolen Christmas: A Navy SEAL and a single mom join forces to save a little girl's Christmas.

Romancing the Holidays, Volume 3: Fireworks Again: Fireworks bring them together, but she must face down her past and he must accept his future before they can find love.

COMING SOON:

Releasing July 19th, 2023 - Anthology story in ***Romancing the Tropics: Love***

in the Conch Republic: Her future is bright, until the long-lost son of her employer returns to steal it from her. Tensions mount along with attraction for the one person neither of them wants to love.

Releasing Sept 20, 2023 - Anthology story in ***Autumn Embrace: A Barking Chance:*** Forced to work together, a Navy SEAL on medical leave and a dog trainer find more than memories in the office files. Now someone's willing to do anything to destroy the evidence, including burning the building with the dogs she's rescued inside.

Release date TBD in 2023 - Romantic Suspense: ***Father Identified:*** A killer is after her, so she grabs her daughter and goes in search of the baby's father. Except she doesn't know his full name, only that he's a Navy SEAL she met one time in San Diego.

Please visit my website leahmilesauthor.com and sign up for my newsletter to get updates on works in progress and new release information.

[Sign Up for My Newsletter Here](#)



Happy St. Patrick's Day



Get Your Next Happily Ever After for Women's History Month!

Buy one book or the entire series: <https://books2read.com/ri/Romancing-theHolidaysAnthology>

The ***Romancing the Holidays*** collection has various holiday themed short stories including: New Year's, Three Kings Day, Valentine's Day, President's Day, St. Patrick's Day, Spring Equinox, May Day, Memorial Day, Fourth of July, Labor Day, Halloween, Thanksgiving, and Christmas.

Proceeds from these novels will benefit the First Coast Romance Writers. An independent non-profit organization, which helps writers hone their craft and expand their knowledge of the publishing industry.

[Buy Here](https://books2read.com/ri/Romancing-theHolidaysAnthology)



Creating Compelling Characters

by Leah Miles

I find it fascinating how authors create their characters, because those compelling book boyfriends and girlfriends you love didn't get on the page by accident. In fairness, some authors say they've had characters "walk on the page" while they're writing, completely uninvited, and they're forced to add them to the story. However, most of the time, it's not that easy.

- I asked some writer friends how they get inspired for their characters, and the answers were very interesting.

Melody Johnson writes about vampires and aliens and even humans in contemporary settings. She's inspired by nature more than anything else. (I don't want to hike where she is hiking if she's running into vampires!) But in all seriousness, she said that when she watches TV, she begins to spin alternative stories and ideas about the action on the screen. And gaming is also a big inspiration for her; character creation in video games encourage her to really think about the physical builds of her characters.

Maggie FitzRoy writes historical and contemporary characters in her romance stories. She says that her dreams give her inspiration through vivid songs and melodies, and she's able to build characters and plots after having a good night's rest.

Abigail Sharpe writes her characters in contemporary romances, and her inspiration comes from a variety of sources. "From a tweet about Ryan

Reynolds (yes, please!) to an offhand comment about house cleaning to the smell of a parking lot.”

Lia Davis writes speculative romance, and for her, the slightest thing in her daily life will trigger her muse to develop a story. Which to her chagrin, often causes her to have multiple projects, four or five going at any one time.

Susan Smith says that inspiration for characters in her stories comes mostly from people she knows with a close tie to the ideas already in her head. (I hope she writes me in as a dragon!)

I’m current writing a suspense series about a group of Navy SEALs. My inspiration is not from real interactions with them but stems from a deep admiration for our armed forces and what they do to keep us safe. The key for me is combining research with imagination.

Inspiration can hit anywhere, but building characters takes more time than you’d think. Mostly, there are two kinds of authors, plotters and pansters, with a mixture of both in between. The authors who plot must know the characters almost as well as you knew your college roommate, and then figure out why they’re important to the story. Eye color, hair color, height, weight, accent, financial status, family tree, maybe even a one-page dialogue with them to figure out their personalities—all this must be planned before they slap a name on the page. Pansters, on the other hand, often create as they go, jotting down a character description as they write to keep their facts straight—it wouldn’t do for the main character’s eyes to change color in the third chapter.

Just imagine, that’s what writers do as they create compelling characters in the books you read.

Creating Compelling Characters by Leah Miles

<https://www.facebook.com/leahmilesauthor/>





**NOW OPEN - NERFA 2023
Calling All Contestants!**

If you wrote a romance novel or novella in 2022, and it is in one of the categories below, you are eligible to enter the contest!

Categories: contemporary romance, romantic suspense, historical/regency romance, speculative romance, young adult romance, mainstream fiction with a central romance, romance novella (all sub genres) (15,000 – 40,000 words), and best first book.

Entry Fee: \$40.00 (Entry into the best first book category is a \$5 additional fee.)

Contestant Entry Form Link: <https://nerfa.firstcoastromancewriters.com/nerfa-entry-form>

Prizes: All 2023 finalists will receive a NERFA Finalist web logo and certificate. Winners will receive a NERFA Winner web logo, a beautiful trophy, a write up in our monthly newsletter *The Reader & Author Gazette*, and be highlighted in a video posted on all our social media accounts including FCRW's Facebook page and website.

Judging: The first round will be judged by reader judges and the final round by bloggers, booksellers, and librarians.

Encourage your favorite authors to enter this well-respected long-standing romance writing contest at this

link: <https://nerfa.firstcoastromancewriters.com/nerfa-entry-form>

For your information: Here's the full **2023 NERFA** schedule of events.

OPEN for contestants, March 1-31

First Round Judging. April 10 - May 21

Finalists Announced June 1st

Final Round Judging June 1-30

Winner announced July 8th



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