

Critique This WIP Interview of Belinda Kroll

Written by [Suzie](#) at [Critique This WIP](#) on August 16, 2010

It's that day of the week again! Monday... and you know what that means - at least here at CritiqueThisWIP! Author Interview day!

Today I got the pleasure of getting to know a very smart, creative lady who writes historical romances. Grab your cup of coffee and get ready to meet Ms. Belinda Kroll!

Suzie: Welcome to CritiqueThisWIP! Thank you for allowing our readers a peek into your life and mind! Before we get to the seriousness of an interview, let's begin with something purely for the fun of it! :)

How about a little either/or!

Would you rather write and sell one Novel. Get rich and famous from the sale of that novel but never be able to write another Novel again...

Or would you rather write and sell a hundred novels and only make enough money from the sales to eek by?

Belinda: *Definitely write and sell a hundred novels and only make enough money from the sales to eek by. Storytelling is in my blood. When I don't write I become moody, cranky, and generally unpleasant. It's better for the world if I write and make a little money. Plus, it's never been about the money for me. It's been about the story. Always the story.*

Suzie: *laughs* I agree 100%! Let's start off with some of the easier questions to answer and get to know a little more about you before we dig into your writer's brain. Writing seems to be in my blood, as it does yours. What's your favorite genre to read?

Belinda: *Oooh, tough question. I enjoy historical fiction and historical romance, of course, but I also love fantasy, paranormal, and mystery. I think this is why my writing tends to be historical romance with other influences. I read just about whatever I can get my hands on.*

Suzie: When you're not behind the computer screen where can you usually be found?

Belinda: *I work as a usability analyst, which is a form of research but relating to digital artifacts. I like to find discarded furniture and apply new paint and fabric. I play a little piano, I practice my violin, I draw, paint, sing. I attend tea tastings, swing and lindy hop dances, practice yoga and t'ai chi. I'm a busy woman. I wouldn't have it any other way.*

Suzie: Favorite books? Authors? Movies? Songs?

Belinda: *Books - Warbreaker by Brandon Sanderson, Persuasion by Jane Austen, Enchantment by Orson Scott Card
Authors - Jane Austen, Brandon Sanderson
Movies - You've Got Mail, Beetlejuice, Stargate
Songs - "Any Other World" by Mika, "Prelude for Time Feelers" by Eluvium*

Suzie: Now let's get down to the nitty-gritty of writing. What inspires some of your best ideas?

Belinda: *Mainly real life. I let my life inspire me, by taking a step back and allowing time to dull wounds or passionate emotions. With the gift of time, I'm able to abstract out the lessons I've learned from the event or person, and often those lessons become the theme of my work.*

Suzie: What's your favorite genre to write?

Belinda: *Historical fiction. I love the research that comes along with the genre.*

Suzie: Where did your love/passion for creative writing come from?

Belinda: *I have a very visual imagination, and reading historical fiction and fantasy gave me the best use of it. Writing seemed to be the natural extension, and when I would tell my stories to friends and family, they never failed to be entertained. So I suppose it's the entertainment factor that has always drawn me to creative writing. It's a way for me to pull out the minutia of life and poke fun at them as a way to cope with the tougher days.*

Suzie: Some writers plot. Some writers prefer a "write by the seat of their pants" style. And still, others are a bit of both. What's your plotting style?

Belinda: *A bit of both. I have a plot where I outline the big plot turns with sticky notes, but I "pants" the scenes that transition between them.*

Suzie: Are you a pen-name kinda gal? Or do you prefer to publish under you're legal name?

Belinda: *I use a pen name, and I think it's a wonderful idea. I use a pen name because I'm publishing in my profession as well, which has nothing to do with my chosen writing passion, historical fiction and romance. Some people have implied that I use a pen name because I'm ashamed that I write romance, which is bunk. The fact is, I don't write steamy romance; if I did, then maybe that implication would be a little more accurate. Really, I use my pen name to separate the purposes behind my writing. Is it academic? Or is it to provide an escape for my readers?*

Suzie: I agree. I've seen several authors' use different pen names for different sub-genres. That's what I'll be doing. When did you first begin writing?

Belinda: *I think I was about six years old when I wrote my first story. I was nine when I wrote my first novella, and eleven when I began my first book, which eventually became published as Catching the Rose.*

Suzie: How great that your first novel, one that you began at eleven was published!

Belinda: *I am published! I have a book out called Catching the Rose. I suggest people wait until I release the second edition in print. It is currently available as an eBook.*

Suzie: Not many writers want readers to wait to read their novel. Why suggest they wait for the print release?

Belinda: *Well, I'm pretty proud of this edition. I did the page layout, cover design, everything. I've been studying the structure of books for years and I think that work is starting to pay off.*

It's trade paperback, so it's about \$15. The eBook is only \$2.99. However, the trade paperback is down five dollars from the original price because I did everything, and honestly, it's just better quality this time around. It feels good in your hands. I don't know if an eBook can do that.

Suzie: Wow! I bet that is a major sense of accomplishment! What writing project(s) are you working on now?

Belinda: *I'm in the middle of releasing the second edition of my first novel, Catching the Rose. I published it under my real name for the first edition, and*

there were some glaring grammatical errors. I took the time to learn more about the publishing industry, cover layout, page design, etc, and for the second edition, I'm self-publishing. I fixed the beginner mistakes, repackaged the product, and have it out for eBook and soon, print.

I'm in the middle of writing my second novel, Haunting Miss Trentwood. I'm using the awesome [website](#) to make sure I write at least 750 words a day. It helps me maintain good progress on the story while I'm busy releasing the other book.

Suzie: How many writing projects do you work on at once? Do you write one book at a time, or do you have a few going at once?

Belinda: *I write a book at a time. I have so many other projects that don't pertain to writing that it's difficult to balance my time as it is.*

Suzie: Now for the word most writers dread to even read. Writer's Block! Do you ever suffer from it?

Belinda: *I used to.*

Suzie: Used to! You're amazing, Belinda! Okay, I'm going to ask what most all writers would love to know! How in the world did you get writers block to become a "used to" for you?

Belinda: *I reverted to writing in a journal. I found if I wrote by hand, I got out all the crappy writing, so when I typed it into the computer, it was like writing a second draft. I've also come to rely on [750 Words](#). My theory is that I used to do marathon writing sessions, thinking it was better to blast through the work as soon as possible before I lost hold of the topic. Using this website, I'm able to pace myself. There's no incentive to write more than 750 words a day, so there's always a little bit of creativity left over for tomorrow.*

Suzie: I always thought I was a weirdo because I feel most creative with a notebook and pencil! It's great to meet other writers that are similar. As for characters, what process do you use to come up with your characters?

Belinda: *It's not a definite process, that's for sure. I sometimes dream about my characters, or will have a conversation with someone and that sparks a character idea, or I meet someone in passing and wonder about their life...*

Suzie: Which of your characters do you most relate with?

Belinda: *Right now, it's my current heroine, Mary Trentwood. She's had a rough couple of years which have dampened her once ebullient spirits. She doesn't even realize that she's lost her energy, her vivre; she needs someone to remind her. I had the same happen to me over the last year; I had my family remind me who I actually am, but it took my wanting to regain my energy that influenced the change.*

Suzie: Naming your character – How important is finding the right name for your characters?

Belinda: *It's so important to get the right name. There's a reason why one of the romantic interests in this book is called Hartwell.*

Suzie: What process do you use to name your characters?

Belinda: *I will give characters a filler name while I scour the internet for meanings behind names until I find the perfect one. My current character has changed names three times, I think. She was originally named Mary Wilson. Then I had a dream that Mary wasn't a servant but rather the daughter of a viscount and she became Mary Winslow. Now she is Mary Trentwood.*

Suzie: How do you “get in the zone” when writing? What's your perfect writing setting?

Belinda: *I always thought I needed music or background noise to write, but it turns out I need quiet. I lock myself in my bedroom for an hour and am able to blast out a thousand words, which is all I hope for at the end of the day. I write at the end of the day, because I tend to do a lot of my plotting in the back of my mind as I go through the workday. Depending on how I feel, I'm either writing in bed with my laptop in my lap, or at my desk, with my research notes strewn around me.*

Suzie: Do you use critique partners, groups, or beta readers to help you with your story? Why or why not?

Belinda: *I would love to have a critique partner, group, or beta reader. But I haven't had the time to find one. I don't really trust internet critique groups because I don't know the level of writing. And many of the local writing groups are kind of like the blind leading the blind, no offense to them.*

Suzie: I understand. It takes quite a while to find the right person or group of people to compliment your writing and that you can trust. I was very fortunate when I stumbled on CTW's contest. *sly grin* Well, the info about the contest

stumbled on my comments. But, ya know - either way. I was fortunate. When you do get criticism how do you respond to it? Love it? Hate it? Learn from it?

Belinda: *Criticism always stings the first time around, so I always wait a week after reading the critique before acting on it. That's when I'm objective enough to learn from it.*

Suzie: That's a very good idea. Everyone handles criticism differently, at least you've found a way to stay objective. What's your favorite part of being a writer?

Belinda: *The thrill you get when you hear through the grapevine that someone loved your story.*

Suzie: And your least favorite part?

Belinda: *The marketing and competition.*

Suzie: What are some of your favorite lines from your books?

Belinda: *"Veronica laughed at Brad's tendency to study her as though she was something interesting." Belinda Krill, Catching the Rose, Chapter 7*
"[Anne Elliot] had been forced into prudence in her youth; she learned romance as she grew older: the natural consequence of an unnatural beginning." Jane Austen, Persuasion, Chapter 4

Suzie: Is there anything else you would you like to share with the readers?

Belinda: *I've released the [book trailer for Catching the Rose](#), and I'm really excited about how it turned out. I'm blogging my process with my new book, Haunting Miss Trentwood, as well as the re-release of Catching the Rose. I invite questions, critique, suggestions, etc. If you're an author, I can help with cover design, page layout, and book trailers. If you're a reader, help me help you: tell me what you're interested in; how do you decide what you're going to read next? Thanks for having me!*

Suzie: You're very welcome! Thank you for taking the time to let us interview you! I know you are super busy!

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Belinda Kroll is a published author under multiple names. She is a word nerd, history geek, and computer dork. She is a user researcher/usability analyst by day and a historical fiction writer by and night. She resides in Central Ohio with many, many, delicious books. She drinks gallons of tea a week, which may or may not be a gross overstatement.

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ORDER BOOKS

Catching the Rose is available at Amazon in:

- Kindle: <http://www.amazon.com/Catching-Rose-Second-ebook/dp/B003Z4K04Y>
- Print: <http://www.amazon.com/Catching-Rose-Second-Belinda-Kroll/dp/1453745084>

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