

Duolit interview of Belinda Kroll

Originally posted on September 22th, 2010 by [Duolit](#)

Today we're speaking with Belinda Kroll, a self-proclaimed “word nerd, history geek, and computer dork” who is the author of the historical romance novel [Catching the Rose](#) as well as the upcoming [Haunting Miss Trentwood](#). We discuss how her day job as a usability analyst affects her night job as an author, what drew her to the Historical Romance genre and what she's learned though the self-publishing process.

ON WRITING

What is your earliest creative writing memory?

I think I was four years old when I wrote my name on the wall behind the family room sofa. In red crayon. My mother stood over me, arms crossed, as I scrubbed the crayon off the wall.

What does your writing space look like?

Right now, a complete mess. I'm in transition from one apartment to another so I have everything half-packed. In the meantime, I have a long folding table which operates as my desk, piled high with books, publishing references, my writing notes, and promotional materials.

How has your day job as a usability analyst/user researcher influenced your writing & marketing efforts?

Excellent question. Because I have a background in computer science, I use this to my advantage by maintaining my own website. The interviews I conduct for my day job give me insight into how people expect website information to be presented. When I hear a great idea, I run home and make changes to my website so it's easier for people to get the information they want. Especially when it comes to web, people don't want to “read a novel,” they want the information, and they want it now. Make it easy for them by presenting information horizontally when possible, with visual identifiers.

Describe your writing process. Is it structured (scheduled time devoted to writing and word count goals) or more free-form (when inspiration strikes)?

When I was younger, it was free-form all the way. I felt more “Writerly.” Now, with a full-time job and outside activities/responsibilities taking up my time, I need a little more structure. In the evening after work I log into 750words.com. This is a website that ensures I write at least 750 words before midnight. If I don’t write, I lose my writing streak. By maintaining such a low daily writing goal, it’s far more attainable, and it takes the pressure off.

ON HISTORICAL ROMANCE

What drew you to the Historical Romance genre?

I grew up reading books like *A Lantern in Her Hand*, the *Little House* books, *Little Women*, *Pride and Prejudice*, etc. Even as a child, I yearned for the elegance, decorum, and respect that these women wrote about.

To this day, I feel as though I was born in the wrong decade, perhaps even the wrong century (though I’d have to be a different race, and would certainly have been an Emancipated Woman). In all seriousness, I am almost obsessed with understanding relationships. The dynamics of men and women, fathers and daughters, both today and in history, fascinate me. Historical romance is the perfect genre for me to explore these dynamics.

Some readers can be pretty picky about the historical details in Historical Romance novels. Do you enjoy going in-depth into the research process or do you set a limit as to how deep you’ll dig?

I took three years to studying the historical details for my current work-in-progress, *Haunting Miss Trentwood*. I was a full-time student at the time, however, so take that length of time with a grain of salt. The fact is that I adore research. It’s my day job, and when I go home, I do more research pertaining to my chosen historical era. There does come a point where you start to find repeat information, and that is when I know to stop.

ON SELF-PUBLISHING

What made you decide to self-publish? What has been the most difficult part of the process?

I first published my senior thesis in high school. I vanity-published because I wanted a book in hand when I graduated, and the timeline going with a vanity publisher was a perfect fit. As I've gone through school learning how to program, do page layout, cover design, etc, through my undergrad and masters degrees, I've gotten to the point where I can produce a product that matches my perfectionist expectations. I am self-publishing because I am a perfectionist with an idea; I'm an entrepreneur with a plan.

The most difficult part of the process is marketing, hands down. I haven't figured out everything I need to do to get to my audience. I don't know what works and what doesn't yet because I put my writing and marketing aside for two years to get my masters. It's a patience game that strains my nerves.

What advice would you give to other indie authors?

As annoying as it is to hear it, don't rush what you're doing. It's better to get a quality product out there than to get feedback that you had a lot of typos. I know. That's what happened to me with the first edition of my first book, *Catching the Rose*. As proud as I am of that book, when I think of it, I think of the people who gave me "constructive criticism," and not the ones who gushed about it to me.

ON UPCOMING PROJECTS

Can you tell us a little more about your upcoming novel, *Haunting Miss Trentwood*? Do you have any other projects in the works?

Haunting Miss Trentwood is a historical romance with paranormal elements. To put it simply, the tagline is "Father knows best... even after death." It is about Mary Trentwood, a woman who gave up the love of her life to take care of her ailing father, something she never questioned, but always mourned.

When her father dies, she begins to pick up the pieces of her life, which proves more difficult than she expected for her father has begun to haunt her and he's just as opinionated in death as he was in life.

I have a number of short stories I wrote for a class while attaining my masters degree. I plan to clean them up and release them for free on Scribd.com and in print as a part of an anthology of short stories/poems.

HOT SEAT QUESTIONS

Now it's time for the just-for-fun **Duolit Hot Seat questions**. Let's learn a little more about Belinda, outside of her life as a writer and self-publisher.

What's your favorite junk food?

Anything salty and crunchy, like sour cream and cheddar potato chips. Oh, how I love them. Oh, how my hips don't.

In the movie of your life, who would play the lead role?

Hmm... probably someone like Rosario Dawson, or Jada Pinkett Smith. Both are awesome kick-ass women, and people often tell me I look like them. All three of us have broad smiles and loud laughs, and that is an important part of who I am.

Pencil, pen or computer?

Pen and paper, for sure. I write on a computer, as I mentioned earlier, but I love writing in pen because it slows me down, and I'm forced to accept the mistakes I make. There is artistry to writing in pen that I just adore.

Which is your favorite holiday and why?

I'm a foodie, so holidays where food factor in are always a favorite. Thanksgiving, of course, is wonderful because I love turkey and I've made it for my family every year since I was eighteen. Let me tell you, you haven't cooked until you fought with a 25lb bird.

What's your favorite TV show?

Pushing Daisies and Psych. Ok so I cheated and I have two. I certainly have more, but I love the cleverness of these shows. Unfortunately, Pushing Daisies was cancelled after a season or two, which is such a tragedy.

WRAP-UP

Thanks for a great interview, Belinda! If you'd like more information about Belinda, check out her great website and blog, [Worderella Writes](#), or follow her on Twitter [@worderella](#). She's also started a [Kickstarter project](#) to fund her upcoming novel, *Haunting Miss Trentwood*, so be sure to check that out and help if you can!

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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