

Interview with Author Belinda Kroll

Written by [Jen Lane](#) at [Jennifer Lane Books](#) on December 16, 2010



It's a pleasure to interview Belinda Kroll, author of *Haunting Miss Trentwood*.

Jennifer Lane (JL): How did you get hooked on historical novels?

Belinda Kroll (BK): *First, thanks for having me! Now to answer your question... My mother had the Little House books and A Lantern in Her Hand in her small library... I picked them up when I was about six or seven and I never looked back. Those books emphasized the importance of honesty, integrity, loving people because they were good. I liked that.*

JL: What are your biggest influences as a writer?

BK: *Well, I grew up reading Louisa May Alcott, Jane Austen, and L.M. Montgomery, so they have forever influenced me and my penchant for historical fiction. However, I also read outside of the genre I write, which is why I'm a "quirky" historical fiction writer. I never know what genre I'll mash up with historical fiction next. I love Neil Gaiman, Jasper Fforde, Brandon Sanderson, Mary Jo Putney, Amanda Quick... the list goes on!*

JL: Not only do you write, but you also have skills in computer programming and math. Your left and right hemispheres must get a constant workout! Have you always been interested in a wide range of areas? How is your career development going?

BK: *I'm an artist, an engineer, and a design researcher. You're completely right, I have always been interested in a wide range of areas. In high school, my mother began calling me the modern renaissance woman because I had my hand in everything, and I do it fairly well.*

In terms of my career development... I just graduated with my masters this past

May, so I'm still determining what I want to do, professionally speaking. Right now I'm doing usability analysis, but who knows where I'll be in a year or two. I'm really young, professionally-speaking.

JL: I love the story about how your first novel, *Catching the Rose*, became published. Would you share that with us?

*BK: Sure! So I began *Catching the Rose* when I was 11 years old. Seven years later, I had a novel that I felt was ready for publication. I had been following *Writer's Digest* since I was 13... first by borrowing the issues available from my library, and then I bought a subscription. So I knew about print-on-demand and subsidy publishing.*

*Given the fact that I wanted a book in hand by the time I gave my high school senior thesis presentation, I knew traditional publishing wasn't the way to go. It just takes too long! So I did my research online, my dad looking over my shoulder, and chose *Aventine Press*.*

My dad paid the fees to have the book published, and I had submitted a cover... but the publication process was pushed back a couple of weeks because the exterior and interior designer had a root canal. Apparently, he read my book while laid up in the hospital, and offered to give me a professionally designed cover for free to make up for the lost time!

JL: Now that I've read *Haunting Miss Trentwood*, I want to hear about the different teas you had at your signing and how they represented each character! And you also had coffin soaps for readers? :-)

BK: So I had three teas available, all provided by Ava Misseldine of [Sugar Inc Tea and Cupcakes](#)

The first was a roasted almond chai rooibos tea that represented Alexander Hartwell. He's a Beta Hero, through and through. The tea is comforting, with a slight kick in the pants to get something done. Mr. Trentwood, the ghost, is also represented by the tea for similar reasons even though they have different personalities and motivations.

*The second tea, *Cherry Whisper*, represented Mary, the heroine. She is a solid English girl, sweet and loyal without being cloying, strong yet subtle.*

The third tea, Shaman's Dream, was an herbal tea to represent Mrs. Durham, poor woman. She's a bit mad. And what better way to represent her than to pick a tea that has an unexpected combination of flavors that is delicious, but confusing.

And yes, I had coffin soaps bundled with the people who helped make the book happen. I got the soaps through the Etsy shop [My Vintage Vanity](#). It was all kinds of brilliant and a lot of fun.

Thank you, Belinda. Now go read her marvelous Victorian ghost story!

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 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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