

Kindle Author Interview: Belinda Kroll

Written by David Wisehart at [Kindle Authors](#) on January 8, 2011



Belinda Kroll, author of [Haunting Miss Trentwood](#), discusses her book, her journey as a writer, and self-publishing on Kindle.

DAVID WISEHART: What can you tell us about [Haunting Miss Trentwood](#)?

BELINDA KROLL: [Haunting Miss Trentwood](#) is a humorous, gothic historical fiction about father knowing best, even after death. The protagonist, Mary Trentwood, is mortified when she sees her father crawl from his grave. Imagine her reaction when she realizes she's the only one who saw!

As she deals with her father's continued presence after his death, she welcomes

London lawyer Alexander Hartwell to her home, not realizing he is on the hunt for a blackmailer.

DAVID WISEHART: How do you develop and differentiate your characters?

BELINDA KROLL: Great question. I spend a lot of time with my characters, imagining how they would react to situations that I see on a daily basis. "Hmm, the pizza is late, how would Mary react to this?" or "That guy just cut me off! How would Hartwell react?" I ask questions like this while working through the plot so that when I sit down to write, I know who these people are very well.

DAVID WISEHART: Who do you imagine is your ideal reader?

BELINDA KROLL: My ideal reader is someone who loves historical fiction (and/or historical romance) but is looking for something a little different because maybe they are a bit burned out by the similar plot lines. I read almost every genre, and my writing is influenced. My readers enjoy the quirkiness of my writing due to what I read.

DAVID WISEHART: What was your journey as a writer?

BELINDA KROLL: I've been writing since elementary school. I wrote my first

"novel" is fourth grade... I actually just found a copy the other day and was impressed that it ran forty pages! I began my first published novel, *Catching the Rose*, in sixth grade and worked on it until my senior year in high school, where I subsidy published it for my senior thesis.

That was my first foray into the publishing world. It was a good experience because it taught me that putting your book out there isn't enough, you have to support it with marketing and word of mouth.

Fast forward seven years, during which I earned my undergraduate and masters degrees. I write my second book, [*Haunting Miss Trentwood*](#), and self-publish it. I set up a publishing company, Bright Bird Press, and use my tech skills from my degrees (computer engineering, human computer interaction design) to produce the interior layout, cover, website, etc.

DAVID WISEHART: What is your writing process?

BELINDA KROLL: I like to take a historical event as my inspiration point. [*Haunting Miss Trentwood*](#) was inspired by Queen Victoria's Golden Jubilee... now in the book it's a very small moment, but at inception, the event helps me wrap my mind around what the characters are thinking and feeling based on their environmental context.

From there, I do research, all the while waiting for the characters to form in my mind. If I'm having trouble with the characters, I look for photos of actors to help me visualize them. I make a map of character names and the relationships between them; who does this character dislike, love, want to ruin, and how do they relate to the protagonist?

Once the map of characters is complete, I have a visual I can refer to when I do a time line of the plot. Usually my time lines are little sticky notes placed on an index card. Each card can represent a day, month, or even year. I like using sticky notes because I can move events around if I need to.

And then I begin writing...

DAVID WISEHART: What authors most inspire you?

BELINDA KROLL: I adore Brandon Sanderson, Jasper Fforde, and Neil Gaiman. They are so clever, and have such original stories to tell.

DAVID WISEHART: What one book, written by someone else, do you wish you'd written yourself?

BELINDA KROLL: Brandon Sanderson's *Warbreaker*. Just a gorgeous story,

with a lovely balance of politics, religion, love, espionage, magic, etc. Read it.

DAVID WISEHART: How did you create your cover?

BELINDA KROLL: I used a stock photo to represent the protagonist, Mary, and went from there. I used Adobe Photoshop CS4 to create layers of text around the image, and added filters to tone down the original sharpness of the image. The background is a texture that I faded into Mary's image, etc. Basically, I used Photoshop and played for hours until I got the layers and blending the way I wanted it.

DAVID WISEHART: How have you marketed and promoted your work?

BELINDA KROLL: I have utilized social media such as Twitter, Facebook, and my blog to get my name out there. I prefer interacting with people rather than being a salesman that screams at the potential customer to buy a book. This of course means it's a bit slow going, but I'm hoping things will pick up.

I'm using FReado's Author Buzz package to get my book covers out there as well... I'm not sure if it is helping or not. I also participate in GoodReads giveaways; if readers agree to give me a review, they will get a free copy. It's important to get my name out there and sometimes giving stuff away from free is the best way to do it.

DAVID WISEHART: Why publish on Kindle?

BELINDA KROLL: I'm publishing on the Kindle because Amazon is such a big player in the book business. It would be silly not to recognize that.

DAVID WISEHART: What advice would you give to a first-time author thinking of self-publishing on Kindle?

BELINDA KROLL: If you format your interior text for Smashwords, you are set to publish on the Kindle. My suggestion is to make sure your book passes the Smashwords standards by uploading it to their system. Once it's passed, opt-out of distributing your book through Smashwords to Amazon. Upload your Smashwords file straight to the Amazon DTP and you will be good to go. Good luck!

DAVID WISEHART: Thanks, and best of luck with your books.

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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