

Author Spotlight by The Publishing Maven

Written by [Christy Pinheiro](#) at [The Publishing Maven](#) on October 12, 2010

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I was introduced to author [Belinda Kroll](#) by my editor, Cynthia Sherwood. Cynthia's notoriously difficult to impress, so I knew that Belinda's work must be fantastic. Ms Kroll is a firm believer in independent publishing, and plans to publish her books independently, even though her work is superb and could easily bag a traditional publishing contract.

She already has a huge legion of fans, and the kickstarter website for most recent book, [Haunting Miss Trentwood](#), shows that it is 107% funded, which means she broke her original sales goals for pre-orders. Impressive for any author, but astounding for an author who is self-published and self-funded.

So... tell us your secret!

When did you first realize you wanted to be a writer?

I was about five years old when I knew I was a writer. I have no idea how I could have possibly known that. I just remember writing pages and pages whenever given the opportunity to write a story, whereas other people struggled to write a page, if that.

What inspired you to write your first book?

It was kismet, really. I had read the Southern Angels series by Cheryl Zach at a time when I was extremely bitter my history teacher had skipped over the Civil War so we could get to World War 2. By seventh grade (yes, I wrote the first draft in sixth grade), I had a novel. I worked on it for another seven years until it was ready for my high school senior thesis, named Catching the Rose.

What was one of the most surprising things you learned in creating your books?

That my perfectionism has a time and place. Which isn't really about creating the books, but something I learned about myself in the process. I am a perfectionist, sometimes to the point of true obsession. This is why I'm publishing independently. I want to control the interior layout so it portrays the appropriate feel. I want to find the perfect image that represents the characters and mood of the novel.

I will say it surprises me that people don't realize how much work goes into doing everything yourself. I do my interior layouts, and I studied books from similar genres and authors for a month. I collect images of book covers so by the time I made my own, I knew exactly what I wanted. People talk about how easy it is to self-publish, and I think that's the wrong way to think of it.

Self-publishing is easy to access, but it isn't easy to make a good product.

Do you have any suggestions to someone become a better writer? If so, what are they?

Read! And I don't mean books about writing. I mean well-written books, of all genres. My imagination is most stimulated when I read something outside of my genre, such as fantasy, mystery, and horror.

Push your boundaries as a reader and it will happen with your writing. Pick up books you don't know anything about. I like to pick up my library's Book Pages and select at least one straight (literary) fiction book, just to see if I will like it, and see where it will take me.

Tell us a little about your current project:

My newest release is *Haunting Miss Trentwood*. It will be available for purchase in late October in multiple formats, both digital and print. The basic idea is "father knows best, even after death."

Imagine Mary Trentwood buries her father after nursing him the last year of his life. Imagine she sees him crawl from his grave during the funeral. Imagine her reaction when she realizes she was the only one who saw...

I have an ISBN assigned for the print version: 978-0983078609

Do you have a specific writing style?

It seems I have a sort of formal quirkiness. I write as though I've been influenced by the classics, which I have, with a healthy dose of harmless snark. I am a character writer; writers like Ayn Rand infuriate me because the characters are a vehicle for the message, rather. My characters have doubts and emotions, they're happy and angry, they speak their mind and pull back. I want them to be authentic. I want them to feel real.

How did you come up with the title?

Haunting Miss Trentwood came out of nowhere. I have been working on this book for seven years while I was a full-time engineering undergraduate and then graduate student. The first draft was *The Winslow Girl*, because the main

character was named Mary Winslow at the time. But you have no idea what that book is about, right?

So then I worked with it while going through draft after draft, and came up with *Trentwood's Orphan*, because the book was inspired by adult (mid-life) orphans and Mary Winslow had become Mary Trentwood. But that inspired thoughts of children, not an adult who had lost her remaining parent.

Finally, in a time of intense frustration, I threw up my hands and said, "I just want to write a story where a dead man is haunting Miss Trentwood!"

Years of work, and the title I stick with is something I came up in a minute.

Is there a message in your novel that you want readers to grasp?

As a society, we have grown uncomfortable with grieving, or anything negative in our lives. We see the Victorians as morbid and obsessed with death, but they couldn't escape death the way we can. They didn't have the hospitals we do, the mortuaries and funeral homes.

When our parents die, society backs away bashfully, not having any idea what to do or say. The Victorians had it built into their society that it takes time to come to terms with such a loss; an entire year was designated for mourning a parent.

So what is the message of this story? Life knocks us down, and we shouldn't kick ourselves when it takes a while to pick ourselves up again. It will come with time.

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 in:

eBook: <http://www.smashwords.com/books/view/18692>
Print: <http://www.amazon.com/Catching-Rose-Second-Belinda-Kroll/dp/1453745084>

Haunting Miss Trentwood is available in:

eBook: <http://www.smashwords.com/books/view/26975>
Print: <http://worderella.com/books/haunting-miss-trentwood/>

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