

CONNECTIONS

the newsletter of the Connecticut Romance Writers Association
Romance Writers of America, Region One, Chapter One

President's Letter

As some of you may know, I participate in a group blog called *The Deadline Dames*. Recently, we got a letter from a writer who said that he had stopped writing after a non-writing friend had made some critical remarks about his work. He said that he had been surprised how much these comments hurt, and was now afraid to try to write for submission, because he had heard that professional editors and agents could be even more critical.

Here, slightly abridged, is the response I sent him:

Bill, I won't lie to you--the farther along you get in your writing, the tougher the critiques will get.

Now, some authors who are major multiple NYT hardcover fiction bestsellers may eventually have the pull to tell their editors "print my book as-is or not at all." But not all NYT bestselling authors exercise this privilege, and I hope that if, er, I mean WHEN it happens to me, I have the good sense to remember that two (or three or four) heads are better than one.

I meet with my critique partners once a week, and we are BRUTAL with each other. Which is exactly how it should be. Seriously, it is not unusual to hear one of us say something to the other like "Your heroine is too stupid to live" or "I can't find anything in this scene that carries the story forward." We've deliberately chosen critique partners who are tough and don't let us get away with a centimeter--people sitting at nearby tables would be astonished to learn that we are the best of friends.

To give you an idea how much I appreciate this tough love, I dedicated my last novel to my critique partners. I shudder at the thought of writing without this honest, strong group. We're all writing for publication, which means we are serious. We write because we love it, but not JUST because we love it. We also want to get paid.

If you are serious about writing for publication, you are going to have to grow a thick skin. The first novel I wrote was sold after I cut the first TWO CHAPTERS. And they were good chapters, with lots of fabulous, clever things in them. But after the second editor told me that I wasn't starting the story in the right place, I bit the bullet and amputated my precious child's limb so that the child could live.

It hurt. It was the right thing to do.

Now, the good thing about tough critique partners is that, by the time my novel gets in front of the actual editor, it is pretty clean, and she doesn't have many changes to suggest. This is only my experience, however--other writers tell me they get very long revision letters from their editors. Most of them seem to react the same way. They get upset, they get mad, they drink some wine, they complain to their fellow authors, they make voodoo dolls in their editor's likeness and set them on fire, then they eat some chocolate and drink some more wine for good measure.

Then they go to bed, get up in the morning, put on their big girl panties and make the suggested revisions.

It's a tough gig. And it's totally worth it.

~ Toni



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NEXT MEETING:
March 13th

The Tax Man Cometh!
Bob Verna, CPA

See page 2 for details.

CTRWA MEETING SCHEDULE

Critique Group: 9:30
General Meeting: 10:30
Speaker: 11:00

Ask a Published Author (APA)
Craft Corner
LUNCH
(pay your own way)

CALENDAR

March 13th...Taxes and the Writer. Which expenses can you claim as a writer? Can you deduct some of your home expenses? Car? Conferences? Even before you're published, there are quite a few things you should know. Join our speaker, Bob Verna, CPA, and learn how to make the most of the investment you make on writing.

CRAFT CORNER...Jennifer Fusco, Manager of Marketing Communications and Brand for GE, will present Creating Your Personal Brand. As ten year veteran in marketing, she has compiled her knowledge of the importance of a Brand into an easy to understand, idea generating presentation to help you lay the foundation to build your own personal brand.

APA...Lindsay Downs will answer any writing questions you might have...e-mail him at lindsay@lindsaydowns.com.

April 10th...You asked for it, you got it! Hands-on plotting & brainstorming workshop! We'll have a quickie introduction followed by small groups. Come prepared to discuss a work-in-progress or to flesh out an idea.



CHAPTER NEWS

Conference Update...Did you register? Don't forget, Leslie Wainger is once again offering a critique to the first 20 who request it, so don't miss your chance. Registration is open...visit www.ctrwa.org and click on FictionFest.

We need goodies for the raffle and VIP bags (the gift bags for our agents and editors). Please ask your local businesses if they'd donate a few items. Thank you!

Website...Don't forget to use our website for information! Under the members-only section (password is *wallingford*), there's information on a whole bunch of things, from helpful websites, informative blogs, program guidelines and suggestions on how to write a query letter and synopsis.

Contest...The finalists for The Write Stuff have been posted on our website. Thanks to all who volunteered, entered and judged...and please make sure you've answered the survey and sent your response to Bob.

MEMBER NEWS

Peter Andrews placed FIRST in the Beacon Contest for Unpubbed Writers with *The Charm Offensive for Contemporary Series*. Proud to know you, Peter!...**Susan Hanniford Crowley** is being courted by an agent and has submitted a partial to said agent...The lucky residents of Holland and Thailand can now buy **Kate Smith's** *When Seducing a Duke*. **Toni Andrews** signed a contract for the first book in a series of 7 for Ellora's Cave, writing as Virginia Reede. The first book, *Carnal Healing*, will be a 2010 release. **Linda Avellar** was rejected (grrr) by an agent, but the good news is, that same agent is interested in seeing future work, so take the good and run with it, Linda, and leave the rest. **Kelly Morse**, after procrastinating for a year and a half, finally became a PRO member! She and the DH were on a cruise last week and "met a HOT Australian by the name of Steele Stride. Seriously..."...*No More Secrets, No More Lies* by **Marie Roy** was reissued by The Wild Rose Press and will be available in April...**Joy Smith** is not getting any writing done, poor lamb, while she sails around the Caribbean: "Just returned from a pretty anchorage in Culebra, PR. Picking up friends at the BVI airport (in our dinghy) and planning to sail to Anegata."...**Stacy Werner** was featured in Connecticut Lawyer Magazine as an attorney who "balances time and talent." Keep it up, Stacy! Stacy also became a PRO member....**Jennifer Fusco** is headed for Vegas, baby, ("on business") and welcomes tips on how to win big while gambling! **Karen Pinco**, or Dolphin Girl, as she is known, swam 50 meters in 45 seconds! Boo-yah! Karen will start her much-anticipated revisions March 1st...**Kristan Higgins** will be guest lecturing on working with your agent and editor, March 12th, www.RomanceUniversity.org. She'll also be presenting a humor-writing workshop called "What's So Damn Funny?" for the Long Island Romance Writers down in New York. Very close to where Derek Jeter lives. Coincidence? Or is it kismet?

Member of the Month...Eleanor Sullo

Granted, she rarely makes a meeting, but for years now, Ellie Sullo has been a dedicated member of CTRWA. Her hard work and dedication have paid off with recent sales!

What are you working on right now?

Right now I'm wrapping up the PR details for launching **Too Damned Hot** in Tucson, where we will spend the month of March. Mostly vacation in what I hope is sunny, warm weather, but also about 3-4 talks/signings set up. (*Ellie's local signing will be at the Connecticut Fiction Fest signing on April 24 and the Suffolk Literacy Event on May 8, 1-4, at Pindar Winery in Peconic, NY on Long Island*). Meanwhile I'm toying with Book Four of my Menopause Murder Series, just adding lists of scenes and plot bends for now.

What have been some of your writing highs?

The highs are definitely those days when the publisher writes or calls and says we want your book. I was one day out of surgery, still on pain meds, when Wings called in November and took on the six-book hot flash mystery series. I healed immediately!

What are you reading right now?

I'm currently re-reading **Pope Joan** by Donna Cross, because it's just come out in film and I can't wait to see it. It's a beautifully researched and told story of a female pope who very likely existed in the Middle Ages. I love the idea of it, strong women overcoming massive odds! I also loved my last read, of Elizabeth Buchan, **The Good Wife**, or anything by her or Elizabeth Berg. Like them because they tell the women's side of the picture so poignantly, but not sentimentally. They're smart, their characters are smart, but always have a large nut normal psychological obstacles to overcome in order to love with all their hearts.

Favorite CT restaurant?

Haven't done much fancy dining lately, but if the dh suggests lunch out, the first place I think of is Corner Grinder, on Franklin Avenue in Hartford. The best (like Nona's) green salad you'd ever want, and a luscious spinach-sausage-potato pizza that's a meal on the plate. I hear the soups are great and very Old World, too.

Who'd you cast for the hero or heroine of your books?

I guess for the hero I'd want to pick my up-and-coming off-Broadway actor grandson, Jason Williams. Unbelievable talent. For a female lead, definitely Streep. I could see her as the heroine in **Hostage, A Menopause Murder**.

You can learn more about Ellie and her books at www.eleanorsullo.com.



Quote from *Menopause Murders: Hostage* by Eleanor Sullo

"Coffee later," Bernie Cascone said, his hand on my shoulder, one finger tucked into the hemmed neckline of my silk shirt. "...Let's have dessert right now."

Timed Writing

by: M.V. Freeman

45 MINUTES. That's all it takes.

What, you may ask? Writing of course! I got this idea at a Heart of Dixie meeting. The topic being discussed was writing a 50,000 word book in a month (Don't ask me the details, because all I came away with – is the 45 minutes—ok, so my memory is going along with all sorts of things... *sigh* but that's another blog).

I struggle with finding time to write and I know every single writer out there has the same problem. Worse, procrastination is written into my DNA, which no amount of caffeine, threats, etc ever get rid of. BUT, I can trick it. How? Setting a timer for a certain amount of time (like 45 minutes), sitting my rear into a chair and typing away. Yes, I admit, sometimes I only get a page done, but other times I get five or more pages done. It's not perfect (thank goodness for revisions)—but it's WRITING.

The trick is to slap down that inner critic (and trot it out only when you are at the revision phase), and write. That's been the hardest thing, because I'll be writing and think, "Well, that sucks, I need to change it..." but I tell myself "FINISH THE STORY FIRST". It's been painful.

Try it though, 45 minutes (or even 15, 20, or 30 minutes). See what happens. Note: It's been proven that you should only sit at the computer for 45 minutes max, and then get up get a drink, walk around, and then return. You are more productive. (Hey—maybe I can tell my boss that...) Keep writing everyone!

This article first appeared in the January issue of Magic Moments, newsletter of Southern Magic, Birmingham, AL. M.V. Freeman is a writer of dark paranormals and a member of Southern Magic and Heart of Dixie. She can be found blogging at RomanceMagicians.blogspot.com

"Face your deficiencies and acknowledge them; but do not let them master you. Let them teach you patience, sweetness, insight."

— Helen Keller



Which Workshop Would Work for You?

Is there a particular subject with which you could really use some help? Shaunee Cole, who handles scheduling our guests, would love to know which subjects you'd really like to learn about...issues of craft (characterization, plotting, structure, grammar); industry (what agents and editors are looking for right now, how to write a synopsis or query letter, pitching); or career (website design, blogging, making the most from conferences, self-promotion). Whatever topic you're interested, shoot Shaunee an e-mail and she'll do her best to get something going on that subject: shaunee@comcast.net.

Notes from the Trenches

from Jessica Andersen

Editor's note: Jess sent me an e-mail in the hope of us learning from her mistakes. Bless you, Jessica!

Jess just turned in revisions on her October book, BLOOD SPELL. Based on her editor's notes, feedback from her critique partner, and some ruthless self editing, she distilled the following points that now reside on a small herd of sticky notes attached to her monitor.

1. What's important to these characters RIGHT NOW? What are they feeling RIGHT NOW? It's fine to tell the backstory/plot through the characters, but only if that's what they're logically focused on right then. They shouldn't be talking about a food fight back in fifth grade if the house is on fire.
2. When seeking to put more emotion on the page, do not have characters gaze at their navels and ponder their feelings. Similarly, having two characters talk about their feelings is not good writing. Put them in an active situation that reveals those feelings AND propels the story.
3. When seeking to 'make your writing more accessible,' the key is not to explain all the minutiae in excruciating detail so all readers should be able to understand the world...the point is to LEAVE THE BORING SH*T OUT.
4. When one of the major overall story goals is to reunite a family, it would be wise to, yanno, write a scene that includes the actual reunion. And a passing thought of "Oh, look, the kids are back. They grew!" isn't really sufficient.

Agent Stalking

by Ainsley MacQueen

A WRITER MUST have invented Twitter.

Seriously.

Wish you could get to know these agents a little before deciding whether or not to query them? Agent doesn't blog, but does she tweet? Going crazy waiting to hear back from an agent or two? Wish you could see what their day is like, if they ever spend any time looking at submissions, and why in the world haven't they reached out for yours, which you're sure is sitting right in front of their faces? (ahem).

If I had the capacity for internet program design, and and I were a similarly neurotic writer, I'd invent a program that would seduce agents and editors, and famous writers, to jot down a line or two during their days, telling me just what it was they were thinking or doing at the moment. I'd arrange their comments to be sent to my own little window on their world. I'd make sure I could send off a pithy response or two which they actually may read...sometimes.

I'd make it the coolest thing to join. I'd give it a cute name. Twitter, maybe. What is cuter than taking a moment to tweet? Okay, so Twitter may just as easily have been created by someone who likes to stalk others... Sounds like a writer to me.

Of course it's not as exciting as stalking them in person, at a national conference, for instance. It's not as professional as linen stationary correspondence. But it's great for weeding out agents whose attitude rubs you raw, or who lets it slip that something incredibly close to what you're shopping around is really not her cup of freakin' tea, even though she requested said cup of tea which is currently sitting on her desk, getting cold.

On the other hand, you may find an agent's sense of humor makes you laugh EVERY TIME she tweets. You see that she just may be the one to GET you. You may find that this perfect agent is going to participate in a conference just a state or two away and if you're quick, you may get a face to face appointment!

Disclaimer: as someone who has tried to limit her time on-line, joining Twitter was the last thing I had planned to do. But I'm happy I did. My neurosis has lessened. I don't spend time wondering what an agent is doing. I now have a good guess. I know she has a lot more on her plate than I used to think. Client reads, edits, edits, edits, submissions to read, then a hundred more tomorrow. When I get a reply back, I feel a bit more blessed.

So, if you have some stalking to do... I'm just sayin'. After all, that's what the Indians used to do. Hide in the bushes and make bird calls.

Ainsley MacQueen writes Scottish historical romance and time travel. Visit her website at

www.ainsleymacqueen.com. This article first appeared in the Utah RWA November 2009 newsletter.

Grammar Me: Semicolons

by Nancy Purdy

A WRITER IN our group thought it odd to find a semicolon in dialog. The semicolon, that comma with a period on top, sometimes acts like a period, sometimes like a comma; it can show up anywhere it normally would, even in dialog.

So where does it normally show up? Usually between different elements in a sentence:

-- To join two closely related independent clauses instead of using a coordinating conjunction (and, but, for, nor, or, so, yet – I bought a book by my favorite author; I couldn't wait to read it.

-- To set off two independent clauses joined by a conjunction if either clause contains commas – After I wrote the chapter, I set it aside; but when I read it later, I found several grammatical errors.

-- To separate items in a series if any of the items contains commas – The writers met at the convention; set up their tables, book displays, and handouts; and waited for their fans to arrive. Or, groups containing commas: We could recycle aluminum cans; cardboard, newspapers, and other paper products; glass bottles, jars, and other glass items.

-- To join two independent clauses connected by a conjunctive adverb (however, also, therefore, thus, finally, etc.) or parenthetical expression (after all, for example, etc.) – Writer's block can be a stumbling block for many authors; in fact, it is a common complaint.

As a reminder, an independent clause is basically a sentence. It has a subject and a verb and is a complete thought. We join two related sentences with conjunctions to create a compound sentence. Or, we can use semicolons for emphasis and clarity, as in the examples above.

When in doubt, simply omit the semicolon by writing two or more less complicated sentences.

Or, email your writer friends, and say, "Please grammar me."

About the author: Nancy Purdy teaches vocational education to high school students in special education. A former English/language arts teacher, she has worked as a newspaper reporter and corporate publications editor. Her writing interest is Elizabethan Ireland. This article was originally printed in the April/May/June 2009 issue of Romancing the Prairie, newsletter of Prairie Hearts RWA.



How To Conduct A Winning Interview

by Bob Hoffman

AS THE INDUSTRY Liaison for the Kiss of Death Chapter I've interviewed more than 50 publishing professionals. What is a winning interview? I define it as a series of questions and answers that provide new and insightful information about a topic of interest to the reader. The critical elements are the questions being asked, the person answering the questions, and the manner in which the interview is conducted. Let's take one at a time.

As writers we seek information that will identify the agents and editors most likely interested in representing or publishing our manuscript. A winning interview will answer questions that help identify the people most likely to read our story and become genuinely excited about it. It will also reveal important caution flags warning about things they don't want to see and any pet peeves. My favorite questions involve having the interviewee identify the critical elements of a good story, the most common mistakes they see, their personal favorite books and movies, and the authors they currently publish or represent. The answers to these questions provide clues about the likelihood of that person being a good match for your manuscript. One of the best ways to develop insightful questions is to read published interviews and identify the questions of most value to you. Then ask yourself what else you'd like to know. Whatever it is, it's probably the foundation of a great question.

Next you need to identify the people of interest (your targets) and ask for the interview. Contact agents and editors who represent or publish books in your area of interest. You'll raise your chances significantly if you begin with the telephone. Although an email blitz is infinitely easier for making contact, it's also infinitely easier for your target to hit the delete key than turn down an eager caller. In this age of email, instant messaging, texting, and twitter, a personal phone call makes a statement about the value you place on interviewing THEM. A phone call tells someone they aren't merely on the receiving end of an email blast that included 500 other people. A phone call says, "you're important and I value your insights." Be sincere and human nature will place the odds of success in your favor.

Make sure you give the prospective interviewee a reason to grant the interview. Your target wants to know who you are and your motives. I explain my role as the Industry Liaison for the Kiss of Death Chapter of RWA. I mention that KOD is the largest on-line chapter of RWA, and that our 700+ members would love to learn more about their agency/publishing house. I tell them the interview is short (about 12 questions) and I explain how it will be distributed to the membership.

The best interviews I've conducted were by telephone.

The advantage of phone interviews is that people like to talk, which usually translates into a longer answer with more depth. A phone interview also offers the opportunity for spur of the moment follow-up questions. The downside of phone interviews is the work required to turn a conversational exchange into a coherent answer on paper. Written communication follows a different set of rules than spoken communication, so if your interviewee talks fast and uses lots of fragmented sentences the clean-up will take some time. When interviewing by phone, get the interviewee's permission in advance to record the interview. When you finish, type the interview and allow the interviewee to review it and suggest changes before publishing. Don't be surprised if it requires several exchanges to get it right.

Finally, expect the unexpected. I remember a few occasions when my interviewee re-stated a question to their liking before responding. On several occasions an agent/editor had second thoughts about an answer they provided the previous day and asked me to change it before publishing. I revised the answer as requested by one and indicated "no response" as requested by the other. In each case I deleted their original response from my files as a professional courtesy.

I'll wrap this up with a bit of perspective. It's important to remember the only steps within your control are the content of the questions and the people you solicit to be interviewed. You can't control who decides to grant an interview or the quality of the response they provide. And don't get discouraged when someone agrees to the interview and the person flakes out. I estimate roughly 25% of those who initially agreed to my interview never kept their commitment. When it happens don't worry about it. Their failure to respond has nothing to do with me or you. After interviewing more than 50 editors and agents I've learned that all of them are human, and we all know sometimes humans don't follow through on commitments. That's life. Be positive and find someone who is more eager to share information with the writing community. I wish you every success as you go forth and interview. We're eagerly waiting to read it.

Bob Hoffman writes romantic thrillers and has been a member of RWA for 5 years.

This article first appeared in the January 2010 issue of MARA Matters, Mid-America Romance Authors.

Power Titles

by Adele Dubois

YOUR BOOK TITLE is a powerful marketing tool. Whether your romance novel sits on a bookstore shelf, is listed on an e-publisher site, or is yet an unpublished manuscript, your title makes a critical first impression on readers and editors. Does your title have that wow factor that hooks your target readership and makes them want to know more? Is your 'working title' so powerful your publisher will approve it?

Here are tips on how to write a 'working title' that will increase your chances of publisher acceptance when your contract is signed.

- Keep it short. A great title should be read at a glance. Four words are the maximum recommended length, but three words or less is best.
- Encapsulate your genre. Your title should offer a snapshot of your story genre (Romance) and sub-genre (Paranormal, erotic, suspense, comedy, science fiction, fantasy, inspirational, historical, etc.).
- Use compelling key words that evoke vivid mental pictures. A strong visual of your story concept creates the emotional response needed to produce sales.
- Make it original. Use 'power words' in combination that are fresh and memorable. Be unique.
- Be cool and current. Avoid old-fashioned expressions, cliché, glib, pretentious or trite language.
- Use active, not passive, phrases. DESERT FEVER is active. "Fever in the Desert" is passive and packs less punch.

Editor Advice

Raelene Gorlinksy, Publisher, Ellora's Cave Romantica Publishing, says, "Have a focus word. Make it grab the reader—it should be interesting or intriguing or suggestive."

Hilary Sares, Editor, Kensington Publishing Corp., says, "Long, Latinate, erudite titles seem to be a particular weakness of newbie historical authors... ditto legal thriller writers. The contemps, anything goes—but authors often get too 'telly' or too trite. I wish I had a nickel for every contemp romance I saw that was called Second Chances. If you want your manuscript to be remembered, try to do better than that."

Rhonda Penders, Editor-In-Chief of The Wild Rose Press, says, "Titles with double meanings are always fun for the erotic reads. Something different, unusual. If you have the same title as a dozen other books it doesn't work. You want to be unique and original without being too strange. Titles, like

covers, are big marketing pieces, and sometimes it's best to let the marketing department help the editor and author choose what would work best for a story. The best advice I can give is to make it catchy, cute if it fits the story, and make it grab the reader."

Adele Dubois is the author of DESERT FEVER and INTIMATE ART, DREAM TRAVELER, and MOTORCYCLE HEAT-- titles Adele created that were approved by her publishers at Loose Id and Ellora's Cave. Visit her website at www.adeledubois.com.

This article appeared in the September 2008 issue of The Romantic Penns, newsletter of Valley Forge RWA.



Pitching & Moaning

By Kristan Higgins

Let me start by saying I've never pitched, so no, I can't share this particular pain (thank you, Jesus!). However...I've listened to dozens of pitches as a conference volunteer and a voyeur. Here are a few tips I've picked up.

1. Don't try to convince yourself not to be nervous. You will be. It's natural. They understand.
2. Your career does not ride on this pitch. Even if you fail utterly, publicly and hugely, you can still sell your book.
3. These people are used to hearing pitches. They will hear worse, they will hear better. They really are listening and want you to be the next big deal.
4. Bring your notes. Look at them. S'okay.
5. Be polite. Shake hands. This is a human being, not just a conduit to your book launch.
6. There are a lot of ways to pitch. Find the one you're most comfortable with and run with it. Practice it. It will make you less nervous.
7. Know with whom you're dealing. Check her client list. Mention that you love Writer A, B or C. That goes a long way.
8. At the end, shake hands and get the heck out. Your ten minutes in hell is up, and maybe — maybe! — you get to submit!

Pointless But Fun

How did your parents meet?

My dad spotted my uncle at bootcamp, reading the newspaper from his home town. He took the opportunity to bum a ride from the train station when they both went home on leave prior to heading overseas. My mom went along as chaperon when my aunt and her boyfriend went to pick up my uncle. The backseat of the car got crowded and my dad asked my mom to write to him while he was at war. For patriotism's sake, my mom said yes. — Peter Andrews.

My parents met at a dance. She thought he “strutted around like a rooster.” ☺
— Kate Smith

Mum and Dad were both working at the Androscoggin Paper mill in Jay Maine. Dad was an accountant and Mom worked in another section of the mill doing data entry. Their paths occasionally crossed. One day Mum returned to her desk, from a break, to find dad in her chair, his feet propped up on her desk. Needless to say Mum wasn't too happy. And Dad, being the smoothie that he is/was commented on the fact that her dress looked just like curtains hanging in his apartment. They've been married for over 35 years.
— Kelly Morse

Read 'Somewhere in North Africa' and you'll get a very good idea. It's all true except for the special ops and sinking of the ship he was on.—Lindsay Downs

They were in an ice cream shop- the old fashioned kind. Not together. My mother was eating a butterscotch sundae- huge. My father walked over to her and bet her that she couldn't finish it. Of course she rose to the challenge. Nearing the end of the ice cream covered with gooey sauce, she could barely take another bite. Realizing an embarrassing situation was near, she conceded. To this day they celebrate the Day They Met, not their wedding anniversary. — Cassy Pickard

Loooong ago, in New York City, my mother, age fifteen, would go to the street corner, where she would buy a pail of milk, (from a vendor, I guess). She saw my father coming home from work one day, and he saw her. He offered to carry her milk pail and romance bloomed. They married six years later. — Bob Bonitz

My parents met in high school - went to some kind of dance together. It didn't click then, but after college, they were both visiting their parents during the summer and my paternal grandmother suggested to my dad that he “give that nice girl Helen a call.” Long distance dating led to an engagement, and my mother 'moved in' with my dad before the wedding (a huge shocker in those days, but they couldn't afford for her to move near him and rent separately without a job).

My mom worked at Saks, and my future grandfather was her boss. He told my dad a “real cutie” worked with him. Dad resisted, feeling he needed no help meeting women (he looked like a young Elvis Presley). So Pop-Pop was forced to drag him into the store, ordered him to shave, change and be polite. When Dad saw Mom, it was love at first sight. The day after their first date, my mom went shopping for her wedding dress. Sigh! No wonder I'm a romance writer! —Kristan Higgins



Holly Golightly: I'll tell you one thing, Fred, darling... I'd marry you for your money in a minute. Would you marry me for my money?

Paul : In a minute.

Holly : I guess it's pretty lucky neither of us is rich. huh?

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