

Successful Elements For Writing Series Romance

by Wendy Vella and Cheryl Phipps



Welcome to Successful Elements for Writing Series Romance.

The different Types of Series

- ▶ **Dynamic Series** – follows the same characters or organization through the series as they head toward a goal. They are common in fantasy, YA and science fiction. Books like the Lord Of The Rings series are written this way. This could be thought of as a single book broken into many.
- ▶ **Static Series** – readers follow the same characters or organization, but the series is more about separate events than one overarching plot. The books are like a different episode in the character's lives. They tend to be longer as there is no finale.
- ▶ **Anthology Series** – these are books bound together by a world or character relationship. The characters change in each book. Readers like this type of series as they invest in not only the characters but the setting!

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Why Write Series?

- ▶ If we love something we want more of it. Reading is no different. We live in an age where binge watching, and reading, is the norm. If we pick up the first book and read it, we will go on and read the rest.
- ▶ Once you have set up the world where your stories take place you won't need to do it again. The same goes for the main characters. Often, you'll bring new ones in, but there will be the original cast already there.

Note: You may need to reiterate a few things at the beginning of each book in case book 1 is not where a reader starts your series.

- ▶ As we said earlier, writing in a series will save time as your world is already set up. By weaving in one or two secondary characters, who will become the main characters in the next book, you're already ahead of the game.
- ▶ Series enables you to make box sets, thereby creating more products for people to purchase.
- ▶ If you publish exclusively to Amazon, read-through on a series will increase your KU page reads. Kindle Unlimited subscribers love series!
- ▶ If you are wide, and you have multiple books in your series, you can put the first book free (perma free) and run promos that will increase sales for the rest.
- ▶ Writing series improves your ROI (return on investment) on your advertising spend

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Setting up your Series

Start brainstorming ideas

- ▶ You need to decide what is the theme of your series, what is connecting the books.
- ▶ Is it the town that is the consistent link the way Jill Shalvis uses it in her Lucky Harbor series? Or is it the town and a family connection like the Bootleg Springs series by Lucy Score that binds it all together?
- ▶ Perhaps you are writing about a group of duchesses, or is it that your characters all work for a secret organization?
- ▶ There must be a link that runs through each of the books. Something that the readers will come back for and want to revisit each time they pick up a book in your series.
- ▶ Learning to brainstorm ideas from the get-go will help you moving forward.
- ▶ Open a word doc, or use Scrivener, and just start getting plot, scene, or character ideas down.
- ▶ How many family members are there? (It helps to have a few if it's going to be a series!)
- ▶ Make sure whatever main idea or theme you choose will work through all books.
- ▶ Is it broad enough to keep you going right through to the end of the series.?
- ▶ Don't restrict yourself too much from the start and you'll have more room to grow with each book.

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Setting up your Series cont.

- ▶ Whether you are a plotter or a pantsier you need to get some of your ideas written down from the start.
- ▶ Often you'll be dropping little hints through the series about a character who will have a book in the future. Plot points may will run through multiple books. Working these out beforehand will help the series be more cohesive.
- ▶ Work out who the supporting cast will be. Secondary characters are important to move the plot forward and can have their own books in the future!
- ▶ Create a spreadsheet making a note of each character's unique characteristics. Tracking age, eye color, traits, what makes them "tick" etc. as you write will save time when writing subsequent books. A reader will always let you know if a hero had blue eyes in the first book and brown in the third!
- ▶ Remember nothing is set in stone. You can move and adjust your story so there is room to grow. Let's face it, you may have outlined two years ago. Things change, and that's ok.

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Timelines are important

- ▶ The spreadsheet will help you with this, but it's vital that you keep track of things like age in a character. If the series spans five years, the characters need to grow older with it.
- ▶ If you have readers who stay with you through the entire series, they must 'see' the changes you've mentioned. Pregnant women should have a baby in the right time frame, and what about grey hairs or wrinkles! But seriously, they're investing time and money into reading what you write, so to keep their attention make sure you get this right.
- ▶ Reader expectation is always something to keep in mind. If you promise and don't deliver, they won't be happy. If you can't deliver on that promise, you better have a good reason why!

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Tips

- ▶ Know your setting
- ▶ Craft your main characters with care
- ▶ Choose a series conflict if necessary, or some events/issues/ that will carry through each book
- ▶ Make the world is a place your reader will want to visit
- ▶ Get an outline worked out before you start
- ▶ Introduce new characters and give them an arc
- ▶ Each book should be its own story and stand alone
- ▶ Subplots are important
- ▶ Think carefully about a series title
- ▶ Make sure your endings are carefully worked and strong

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Thanks for joining us!!

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