



COFW

*Professionals, Writers & Friends Perfecting the
Happily Ever After*

September 2021

Issue 9

Welcome to Central Ohio Fiction Writers Newsletter

Contents

1. COFW Basics: Contact and Meeting Info. Dues. Media Connections
2. September Meeting
3. COFW Fiction Plotters
4. September Minutes
5. Volunteers Needed!
6. September Recap: Trope Your Way to a First Draft with Juliette Hyland
7. Upcoming Releases
8. COFW Magic Spreadsheet

Newsletter Editor: Rachel Dye

Central Ohio Fiction Writers (COFW) <http://cofwevents.org> is a non-profit professional association for romance writers that offers monthly meetings. Since 1987, COFW has promoted excellence in fiction writing, encouraging writers to grow and gain knowledge in their craft. Members provide a networking system to share knowledge and support the goal of becoming published.

2021 Leadership Board

President: Bernie Miller

Secretary: Shari Heinrich

Treasurer: Michelle Orloff

Non-Board Positions

Newsletter Editor: Rachel Dye

Programs Chair: Vacant

Education Chair: Vacant

Social Media Chair: Vacant

Incentives Coordinator: Vacant

Ignite the Flame Contest Chair: Vacant

Monthly Meetings Facility Coordinator: Vacant

Equipment Inventory Coordinator: Vacant

Meetings

First "Teen" Saturday of the Month. Social: Noon to 12:30. Business: 12:30. Guest Presentation: 1:30. Location: Check www.cofwevents.org

Dues

Members: \$50

- Dues run January to December
- Membership fee waived for new member through Dec 31, 2021.

Follow COFW

Twitter <https://twitter.com/COFWRiters>

Facebook: <https://facebook.com/COFWRiters>

Instagram: <https://www.instagram.com/cofwriters/>

Closed Facebook Group <https://www.facebook.com/groups/177462723049177/>

Central Ohio Fiction Writers

P.O. Box 24254 Dayton, OH 45424

Next Meeting: October 16th, 2021; Sexual Tension – Getting Away from Wham, Bam, Thank you, Ma'am

High heat sex scenes are popular like never before. But what makes a scene go from ho-hum to cold shower-worthy? The key is sexual tension. Without that basic conflict – as with all stories – the momentum of the scene will falter and lose steam. Not what you want with your sex scenes!

In this class, students will learn first what creates sexual tension and then how to build it in their own stories for maximum impact. Dubbed by her editor as “The Queen of Sexual Tension,” Jeffe Kennedy will give away her secrets for drawing out the suspense, building expectations and finally delivering those crucial climactic moments.

Jeffe Kennedy is an award-winning author whose works include novels, non-fiction, poetry, and short fiction. She has won the prestigious RITA® Award from Romance Writers of America (RWA), has been a finalist twice, been a Ucross Foundation Fellow, received the Wyoming Arts Council Fellowship for Poetry, and was awarded a Frank Nelson Doubleday Memorial Award. She serves on the Board of Directors for the Science Fiction and Fantasy Writers of America (SFWA) as a Director at Large. She lives in Santa Fe, New Mexico, with two Maine coon cats, plentiful free-range lizards and a very handsome Doctor of Oriental Medicine.

Business meeting at 12:30 pm, Discussion at 1:30 pm
Hope Hotel: 10823 Chidlaw Rd, Dayton, OH

Please Note: To get to the Hope Hotel, you will turn off 235 towards the entrance to Gate 12A and IMMEDIATELY turn right. The Hope Hotel is not on Wright-Patt do not attempt to enter the base gate.

Our meeting will also be held via Zoom for those unable to attend in person. The password will be posted on the Central Ohio Fiction Writers Group Facebook Group.

COFW Fiction Plotters Meet Monthly - East

Need a boost with a story idea that has yet to see words on a page? Can't get your protagonist out of a hole you've written her into? Not sure whether the antagonist is antag-ging enough? Consider stopping by the COFW Fiction Plotters group. We meet the first Wednesday of the month at 10 a.m. at the Panera Bread in Taylor Square in Reynoldsburg, Ohio, 43068.

If you have questions, contact:

Andrea McConnell: fyrefly93@gmail.com
Saralee Etter: saralee_etter@yahoo.com

COFW Fiction Plotters Meet Monthly - West

All the same fun as above but located in Huber Heights. We meet the second Monday of the month at 6:30 pm at the Panera Bread off I-70 exit 36.

If you have questions contact:
Jeanne Estridge: jeanneestridge@gmail.com
Rachel Dye: juliette.r.hyland@gmail.com

Central Ohio Fiction Writers

The mission of the Central Ohio Fiction Writers is to promote excellence in romantic fiction, help writers become published, and establish careers in the writing field.

Minutes, Sept. 18, 2021 12:30 PM

**On Zoom & Live at Hope Hotel, Dayton
10823 Chidlaw Rd., Wright-Patterson AFB, Dayton, OH 45433**

12:00 Networking

12:30 Call Business Meeting to Order

Feel free to adjust your names on Zoom so we know what to call you all. Remember to silence your phones to reduce interruptions.

I.Welcome Visitors & Round Table: introduction of members and visitors.

II.Works in Progress

- Erin, revising a book
- Marissa, working on getting her first novel published
- Michelle, rewriting
- Bernie, *Oz* Retelling
- Rachel, *Kit's Story*
- Julia, *Monster Under the Bed*
- Sandy—Contemporary Women's: Reworking the outline
- Stacy—*Ghostly Protector*
- Jeanne, *The Demon Wore Stilettos*, first draft done
- Shari—revising *Queen of Wands* because of a revised and resubmit from Entangled Teen last year—she has crested the minimum window they gave before re-submitting.
- Janice, *Winning Haley's Hart*

III. Reports

1. **President Bernie Miller**—October meeting will again be at this Dayton location, while Forge is off at the Renaissance Festival.
2. **Secretary Shari Heinrich**—August minutes are accepted as posted in the last newsletter.
3. **Treasurer Michelle Orloff**—At the end of the month of August our current assets were as follows:
 - Checking = \$5,146.08
 - PayPal = \$655.98
 - Available cash = \$5,802.06 (less the \$1,541.28 we owe RWA upon disaffiliation = \$4,260.78)

We are in the process of sending the check to RWA. Balance in the Perseverance Fund = \$1,519.95

Speaker Nikki Sloan donated her check back to COFW.

4. **Programs Chair Jeanne Estridge**

- September—Trope Your Way to a First Draft, Rachel Dye. Rachel is kindly donating her proceeds back to COFW.
- October— Sexual Tensions, Jeffe Kennedy
- November— Storyteller's Toolkit, by Patricia Sargeant: The presentation will diagram premise, high concept, and conflict in a movie to demonstrate how the three elements work together to make a compelling story.
- January 2022— Priscilla Oliveras, potentially, and to be confirmed, topic still TBD based on the Facebook poll.
- Possibility for February 2022, Brian Meeks, Optimizing your ads, 150 fee, if we want to use it. Board gave Jeanne the green light to work with him to set that up.

5. **Ignite the Flame**—contest not being held this year.

6. **Education Chair**—position vacant. (Laurie from Pubcraft is running for us). October e-program is “How to write unforgettable weddings” by Laurie Sue Lachlan

7. **Newsletter Editor Rachel Dye**—recap is by Sandy. Buy links for the newsletter—Shari regrets she did not yet work on the state of Ohio non-profit laws to see if we can include buy links. She'll complete that for the October meeting.

8. **Incentives—Shari brought the basket and asked for incentives**

- a. Jeanne, finished that first draft of *The Demon Wore Stilettos*
- b. Rachel, Newsletter amidst novel deadlines
- c. Sandy, hosted the Writing Retreat. Can't get author commitments for 2022 (amidst pandemic lingering), but does have 2023 authors lining up
- d. Bernie, set up this Dayton location for our meeting
- e. Shari, finished 6 of 18 in the 4-round competition where writers worked with a mythical beast; she's participating in the FIYAH CON for BIPOC spec-fic writers, started Friday and ends Sunday
- f. Erin, pitchfest happened and she got a request for her romantic suspense
- g. Marissa, updated her website
- h. Matt (guest): attending his first COFW meeting. Knows Rachel
- i. Other incentives, Shari may have missed. She'll make sure at Oct. meeting she asks someone else to walk around the incentive basket.

9. **Social Media:**

- . Rachel won the August spreadsheet challenge, and thus takes home the emu.
- a. M/W/F Sprints, anyone can run. Shari had to step down because she could no longer commit to leading. No one has stepped up. If you find you can lead a sprint, post on the Facebook page, and see if folks can join in.

IV. Unfinished Business

1. **DUES**—discussion

- IF \$50 annually, assuming membership of 30, would be 1500 (assuming 30).
- The constant costs we have, budget for 2018, 5465 spent, 2019; 8552; 2020, 4299, 2021, 2750 so far as of August.

- But what is the MINIMUM to keep us up and running? Think [700 website + paypal 150 + pos box 100 + insurance 500 = 1450]. Cutting back where we can to begin with.
- How about Student Rate = 25, which is half. Student: could be university, college, does not matter if full or part time; HAVE a student email (.edu) and pay that.
- For legal purposes, all members must be 18 or over.
- **Motion by** Sandy: Beginning 1/2022, COFW dues are \$50 annually for members and \$25 a year for student members. Stacy seconds. No additionally discussion was requested.

Motion passes unanimously.

2. Members joining, now that they don't flow through RWA

- Shari gave the update that she was working with the Webmaster to get it up there; but part of getting a link up with content management is that we need a host that PROVIDES content management. This would be conjoined with a host that gives us the ability to be https (which represent a secure connection). The board met virtually and discussed the best option that our webmaster found, DreamHost.com. This would be a cheaper website, plus we would get a nonprofit discount as long as we could provide our federal exemption from tax. That will occur later, because we've been using RWA's number (we cannot use it now that we are disaffiliated). We will thus pay the regular price until we get that new identifier when we do our 2021 taxes. We can add the exemption once we have it.
- Shari and Bernie have to make the new webhost purchase, since Bernie has the website and Shari has some technical savvy, so they will see if they can do it on ac call, while navigating the DreamHost website.
- Once we have the new host, Rachel would take over to move the domain over to the new host. Then, once Rachel has made the move, she would add the Join option.
- In the meantime, if anyone wants to join, we will ask for their name, their email, and make sure they understand that they must conform to the group rules honoring all writers (our DEIA statement from updating our status with the State of Ohio). Make sure to provide that information to Michelle.
- There is NO cost to join in 2021. Writers must be interested in romance writing.

V. New Business

1. Website Hosting—see above, Shari covered it as part of the answer to the members joining. We have our current host until the end of December, we think.
2. Winter Party—Bruce, at The Forge Tavern, is a potential location. Party is typically the first Saturday in December. Bernie will ask if The Forge Tavern is willing to host. Else, we will need a host.
3. Ignite the Flame 2022?
 - Renaming it for Karen Harper was a decision at an earlier meeting. Did we want to limit it to Romantic Suspense? Mainstream romance is what Kiss of Death gets most of. We will continue to allow all types of romance despite the name.
 - October meeting, Shari will bring the paper files for Ignite the Flame. She has them because she was going to be the chair the year RWA blew up. We cancelled because we lost the chance at industry professionals to judge.

- Shari reminds that it typically takes a year to organize an event—as you reverse the timelines of when to do which steps, and set up everything. The good news is that the paper files have a wealth of information.
 - We will talk about this as old business at the October meeting.
4. Nominating Committee—has not officially been formed, but is still needed.
- Stacy would be willing to be nominated for Treasurer.
 - Shari would be willing to be nominated for Secretary.
 - Bernie would be willing to be nominated for President.
 - Rachel would be willing to be nominated for newsletter editor (but, is anyone else willing? She is stretched thin with her novel deadlines). If Rachel does continue as Editor, this will be her final year. Additionally, we will limit the newsletter to minutes, program writeup, and publishing links. People saying LOTS of good things about the newsletter—that it is the organization's life blood.
 - Nominating Committee would seek to fill other chair positions as well: Education, Programs, Social Media, Contest, as well as Membership and Incentives
 - PUT in the newsletter that we need a slate of candidates for the November election. Board are voted in; Chairs are confirmed by the board, but the nominating committee seeks to provide willing names for *all* positions.
 - At the October meeting, we will again ask for volunteers for nominating committee. We would vote at November meeting.
5. Guest Jan Irvin (writing as J.E. Irvin): She is a member of the Springboro historical museum, and Christmas in Springboro is in November, with a “meet the authors” opportunity in the museum. You get 1.5 hours, share a table with another author, and meet with the folks coming in. Asks for donation of 1 book for giveaway. In the past—widely attended depending on weather. This will be the 6th annual event.

Janice & Jeanne are already signed up to do it. There are 2 slots left, anyone interested?

- Marissa
- Rachel

After the meeting, Shari IM'd them with Jan's email.

VI. Announcements:

NEXT meeting will be in Dayton, in this same Hotel. Bernie is kindly paying for the room reservations for Forge and for this.

Meeting adjourned at 1:25 PM.

Next up, Program at 1:30, Rachel Dye writing as Juliette Hyland, Trope Your Way to a First Draft.

A Call for Volunteers!

Seeking Volunteers

COFW needs to round out the chair positions, many of which have gone vacant this year or become vacant because current chair needs a breather. Can you step up for 2022? Your term would run 1/1/2022-12/30/2022.

- Education--vacant
- Programs--vacant
- Social Media--vacant
- Writing Contest (Ignite the Flame, being rebranded for Karen Harper)--vacant
- Membership, Linda Rice (willing to continue?)
- Incentives, Julia Blaine (willing to continue?)

A Recap of Juliette Hyland's “Trope Your Way to a First Draft” by Sandy Kachurek

Writers begin their stories using a variety of methods. Some start with an image; others use fleshed-out characterizations; many create a plot outline. Quite a few authors write whatever comes.

COFW member, newsletter editor and author of five Harlequin romances published by Mills & Boon, Rachel Dye, writing as Juliette Hyland, writes out the tropes of her stories first.

What are tropes?

Tropes are commonly recurring literary and rhetorical devices, motifs or clichés in creative works.

Still unclear?

A small sample out of the hundreds of tropes that writers use in romance novels includes Enemies to Lovers, Friends to Lovers, Playboy, Virgin, Jilted Bride, Return to Hometown, Marriage of Convenience, Opposites Attract and Fish Out of Water.

By the end of her presentation during our recent COFW meeting, Juliette made us aware of what tropes are and how particularly necessary they are for writing successful romances, especially in the beginning process of laying out the story before writing it.

Though a key element in romances, tropes are not restricted to the romance genre. The Chosen One trope, for example, is the main theme in the Harry Potter stories. Romantic movies, however, are replete with tropes, as seen in *Runaway Bride*, *Sleepless in Seattle*, *Cinderella*, *Beauty & the Beast*, *Titanic*, *Twilight*, *The Blue Lagoon*, *Mystic Pizza*, *Grease* and more.

In addition to being an integral part of a romance story's structure, tropes are key marketing tools.

Maybe without even knowing it, faithful romance readers look for their specific tropes when they buy books. If they love a good Forbidden Love or Maid story, they want to know right away that their favorite trope is in the book.

Knowing the attraction between romance readers and tropes, agents and editors look for a book's tropes in cover letters, queries and pitches by potential author-clients. Marketing people emphasize the tropes by writing them into book titles, back cover blurbs, even cover images.

"I have no say in creating the titles of my books," Juliette said. The marketing department makes it their business to ensure the main trope is front and back of every Harlequin romance. The first sentence on the back cover's blurb of Juliette's *A Stolen Kiss with the Midwife*, for example, lets us know Friends to Lovers will be the main trope: "Midwife Quinn Davis and Dr. Milo Russell have been friends forever." The title, *The Pediatrician's Twin Bombshell*, and its cover image of a pregnant woman, publicize its main tropes, Secret Baby and One Night With Consequences.

To help us realize the usefulness of tropes for our stories, Juliette passed out materials. One packet covered seven common wound themes and over 70 tropes. The other packet was a worksheet where we applied fill-in-the-blank responses to the information Juliette shared throughout her presentation. By the end, she promised, "You should be ready to write your own trope-filled romance story."

Fill-in-the-Trope and More Worksheet

The following information reflects Juliette's personal process in developing a story before she begins to write it and we followed along with her worksheet.

Trope

Juliette shoots for five tropes in every book and sometimes the tropes are blended. "Try out different tropes, even ones you're not fond of reading," suggested Juliette. She wasn't totally committed to the One Night With Consequences trope but her *The Pediatrician's Twin Bombshell* has been her best seller.

She gave us a few moments to select three to four tropes from the list of several she provided with a star for the primary trope, which would be the basis for most of the story's conflicts.

Wound

Wounds are also extremely important in carrying out a story's tropes.

Wounds come from your characters' pasts and never go away. They make characters hesitate, lessen their characters' sense of satisfaction and happiness and are barriers to their ability to heal.

Seven common wound themes listed in Juliette's packet and taken from Writers Helping Writers website, include: physical wounds, an injustice, a failure or mistake, misplaced trust/betrayal, isolation, neglect/abandonment/rejection and disillusionment.

In romance, explained Juliette, the Wound is mainly internal, though characters can have physical wounds as well. "The Wound is emotional, it's the character's misguided belief, the reason they can't be loved, the reason they can't love someone. It's that struggle that drives the happily ever after (HEA) ending."

Juliette found that having both Main Characters (MC) share a version of the same emotional wound works very well in getting to their HEA. As seen in the movie *Sweet Home Alabama* where the main trope is the Reunion of Childhood Sweethearts, the emotional Wound for each is Home Limits Me. For Him, he believes, "If I can make something of myself, she'll come back to me." For Her it's, "If I don't leave my hometown, I will never amount to anything."

Conflict

Juliette stressed how important conflict is in every story. "Many writers say they don't want their characters to suffer, but even in romance, if you don't have conflict, you don't have a story."

Conflicts are built into tropes, she added. In *You've Got Mail*, a main trope is Enemies to Lovers with the conflicts stemming from a big business taking over a smaller business.

On our worksheets, we identified the internal conflict for our two MCs by finishing the line for each: "I can't love or can't be loved because

For the rest of the worksheet and presentation, Juliette had us create a response for each MC. As examples in her slides, she referenced her current work in progress.

Goal

Juliette reiterated information out of what most romance writers have sitting on their bookshelves, Debra Dixon's book, *Goal, Motivation and Conflict* (GMC), which is an excellent

source for understanding these three key ingredients in making tropes work successfully in getting the story to the HEA.

In its simplest form, Juliette said to think of GMC as “Your character wants something (goal) because (motivation) but can’t have it because (conflict).”

The goal must not be negative but it must be measurable; otherwise, the reader won’t know if the character has reached it.

Juliette explained that romance characters must change before getting to the HEA. If either character’s goal is negative, to not do or believe something, it’s easy for the MC to stay in that same mental spot for the whole story. When nothing changes, the story falls flat.

Some of the members at the presentation said when they found themselves stuck in the middle of their works in progress, the main reason tended to be having given their characters a negative, not positive goal.

The story goal should not be the MC’s Wound nor should it be to fall in love with the other MC.

Motivation

A goal without motivation doesn’t move a story. “Motivation is what drives your character and your entire story,” Juliette said. “That motivation has to be big and personal.”

Conflict

Conflicts are the road blocks. They keep the characters from getting what they want. Juliette added, “You need both internal and external factors here.”

How do we put them together?

Juliette suggested Gwen Hayes’s book *Romancing the Beat*, which helped her learn how to utilize the building blocks to make her stories for category romances work.

The following titles in bold are the beats of category romance stories. Each beat can have its own trope.

Starting Points

“Where are your characters starting from?” Juliette asked. “It’s important that the story’s main trope is in each MC’s starting point. Her work in progress is a new medical romance with a primary trope of Opposites Attract.

Her female MC is a veterinarian at a clinic owned by the male MC's father. The male MC, also a vet, doesn't want to be tied down to a clinic and is a traveling "relief" vet. Although they are both vets, they are opposite; she is a workaholic and he is not.

Meet Cute

The most distinguishing element in the romance genre is the Meet Cute moment, where the MCs meet for the first time. In *You've Got Mail*, Tom Hank's character, who is the owner of a huge bookstore chain, meets Meg Ryan's character when he enters her small bookstore to buy a book for his niece.

"The Meet Cute is the moment when readers know the MCs will go somewhere. It's the initial kick-off moment," Juliette said.

No Way

As important as the Meet Cute moment is to the story, so is the No Way beat and its trope. Think: "No way will I fall for him/her/them!" In *You've Got Mail*, the No Way moment is when he enters the cafe where they've agreed to meet. When he realizes the woman he'd been falling in love with over emails is his small bookstore owner nemesis, he turns around and leaves the cafe without her seeing him.

Adhesion to Plot

Also known as the "Sticky Moment" and "The Point of No Return," the Adhesion to Plot beat and its trope are where the MCs can choose a different path but agree to walk the same path together.

Maybe

The Maybe I Could Fall for Her/Him/Them part is where the MCs had been believing they could never fall in love with the other but at this Maybe trope moment, they're feeling ready to take a risk.

Midpoint

This section of the story is one of Juliette's favorites because, as she admitted, "I love to twist the knife."

The Midpoint is where at least one MC gives the other something they've never had, which gets them thinking they just may love the other.

Now's the time to twist the knife.

But now is also when the writer brings in the Wound again, which creates hesitation and doubt. The following beats and choice of tropes for each just keep twisting the knife into their path to love until the final, Grand Gesture.

Doubt

It's looks like a possible HEA until the internal Wound surfaces big time and causes the MCs to doubt that their love will work. The Doubt beat and choice of trope may have them questioning: Did they jump in too fast? Maybe they can't be in this relationship.

The possibility for love goes downhill until each one realizes their problem is within themselves (Wound) and not with the other person.

Deepening Doubt

In this part of the story, the MCs go from hesitation to truly believing something about their relationship is broken. The Main Trope comes in here and the Wound as well. Juliette emphasized that trust is a major component at this time and ties in to the Wound.

One more strike or doubt and they'll be out of the other's life forever. Your job as a writer is to make sure that strike comes.

Breakup

At this point the emotional Wound has taken over. The MCs' worries have come to fruition. Their relationship won't work. "Really twist the knife here," said Juliette. "They're seeing each other as they initially saw each other in the first place. Bring out their emotional Wounds."

Dark Night of the Soul

Their lives go back to before but this time something is missing. They both realize in their separate spheres that the other was right. What he accused her of and what she accused him of was true.

Grand Gesture

This is the Make Up Scene. The HEA coming together. The internal Wound for each MC should be resolved by showing that each MC has done what he/she/they had refused to do. At this point, the MCs are fully formed people done in a believable way.

Juliette said, "The HEA is the moment when they show they have overcome their emotional Wounds. They are now full people."

We have our Story Bones.

Giving us a couple minutes to jot down the trope that goes with our Grand Gesture, Juliette announced, “You now have completed the bones for your first draft.”

It took us almost two hours to create the bones of a category romance story full of the tropes, beats and the journeys to HEA that our readers crave. For someone like Juliette Hyland, the same process takes her 30 minutes.

Whether your story pre-work emphasizes imagery, plot structure, characterization or something else, you may want to try Juliette’s method of focusing on tropes. With five published Harlequin romances and a sixth nearing deadline, her approach certainly works for her.

It may work for the rest of us, too.

Follow Juliette Hyland

<https://www.juliettehyland.com/>

FB <https://www.facebook.com/authorjuliettehyland/>

Twitter <https://twitter.com/juliettehyland>

IG <https://www.instagram.com/juliettehyland/>

Juliette highly recommends the following resources:

~*The Emotional Wound Thesaurus* by Becca Puglisi and Angela Ackerman

~*Romancing the Beat* by Gwen Hayes

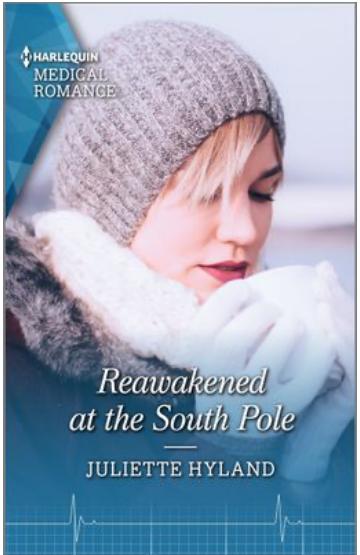
~*GMC: Goal, Motivation & Conflict* by Debra Dixon

~*7 Common Wound Themes* by Writers Helping Writers,

<https://bit.ly/3iKJ8g8>

~*Starting Tropes* at <https://www.mindyklasky.com/index.php/for-writers/> romance-tropes/

New Releases!



**An antarctic adventure
and a reunion of a lifetime...**

ER nurse Helena Mathews wants just one thing: to show her parents that she's no longer the fragile, premature baby they cradled in the NICU. So her new South Pole-based job is the *perfect* way to break free! But Dr. Carter Simpson's arrival proves that you can't just erase the past. Her one-time best friend may have left without a trace after a life-altering discovery, but he never left Helena's heart...

Out now at your favorite retailers!

COFW has a goal sheet!



Want to track a daily word count and compete with your fellow COFW members for the highest point total? Add your name and goals to our Magic Spreadsheet here:

<https://bit.ly/2Wprwt0>

September Winner: Rachel Dye
The winner gets Eddie!

COFW

*Professionals, Writers & Friends Perfecting the
Happily Ever After*