

No.12 / January 2008



Yeah, Write!

Mortimer Literary Agency Newsletter



The Dirt

Well, it's not really dirt, just some industry news. Since I haven't had a newsletter out in a while, some of it's stale, but just in case, better late than not at all.

COPYCAT?

The question hovers: Did Cassie Edwards plagiarize? Nora Roberts says yes. RWA prez Sherry Lewis questions the works, but says there's no clear-cut answer. She added that there are similarities in the writing, but she isn't qualified to judge, and couldn't say if Cassie Edwards committed plagiarism.

Here's two excerpts from Cassie Edwards' historical romances, *Savage Longings* and *Shadowbear*. Beneath them, the non-fiction passages written by other authors.

From Cassie Edwards' *Savage Longings*:

"The women who belonged to this society created ceremonial decorations by sewing quills on robes, lodge coverings, and other things made of the skins of animals. Snow Deer had told Charles that the Cheyenne women considered this work of high importance, and when properly performed, it was quite as much respected as were bravery and success in war among the men."

From *Cheyenne Indians*:

"Of the women's associations referred to the most important one was that devoted to the ceremonial decoration, by sewing on quills, of robes, lodge coverings, and other things made of the skins of animals. This work women considered of high importance, and, when properly performed, quite as creditable as were bravery and success in war among the men."

From Cassie Edwards' *Shadow Bear*:

"Researchers theorize that polecats crossed the land bridge that once linked Siberia and Alaska, to establish the New World population."

From an article in the summer 2005 issue of *Defenders of Wildlife*, "Toughing It Out in the Badlands":

"Researchers theorize polecats crossed the land bridge that once linked Siberia and Alaska to establish the New World population."

Hmm. What da y'all think?

A WIN FOR KELLY MORTIMER, is a WIN FOR ALL WRITERS

For anyone who thought it was "sour grapes" when I went after Cheryl Ferguson of the Ferguson Literary Agency, I'm vindicated. As Romance Writers of America (RWA) members might already know, the RWA revoked the Ferguson Agency's "RWA Recognized Status." That took me a year to accomplish. Ugh. Predators and Editors now has the Ferguson Agency listed as "Not Recommended."

Adding to that, I've won my civil lawsuit in superior court against Cheryl for breach of contract, which, of course, she refuses to pay. I'll provide updates in future newsletters.

New Literary Agency Opens

Name:

Red Sofa Literary Agency

Agent:

Dawn Michelle Frederick

Contact Info:

2163 Grand Avenue #2, Saint Paul, MN 55105

651.224.6670

dawn@redsofaliterary.com

<http://www.redsofaliterary.com>

Genres:

Reference, Mind/body/spirit, Health, Travel, Lifestyle, Cookbooks, Sports, African-American, Pop Culture

Submission Requirements:

Book Proposal, Query Letter, and SASE. Remember, NO biographies or personal memoirs.

MARKET NEWS

- Jessica Alvarez is leaving Harlequin/Steeple Hill to freelance.
- Krista Stroever will return to Steeple Hill from maternity leave in mid-February.
- Nichole Argyres will return to St. Martin's from maternity leave in March.
- Lauren Marino is back at Gotham (Penguin) from maternity leave, but only for a couple of hours per day.
- Katie Day is leaving Penguin Praise for greener pastures.
- Anne Goldsmith now goes by her married name, Anne Horch.
- Kim Moore from Harvest House will now manage gift books, but will still acquire fiction. She won't edit as much non-fiction, but new editor Rod Morris will take up the slack, as well as acquiring fiction.
- Trace Murphy, Doubleday Religion's editor-in-chief, will also act as an associate publisher, and his assistant, Darya Porat will now be an assistant editor.
- Harper San Francisco is now HarperOne.



IT'S BAAAAACK!

I'm reinstating the match-the-initials-I-draw-and-you-can-query policy. Each month I'll randomly draw a set of initials. If your initial's match, and you write in a genre I accept submissions for, you can send me a query via e-mail.

Read carefully, as this has confused many writers in the past (I was gonna make a comment, but I held back ... painfully). The initials have to be from your maiden name (the one you were born with), your married name

(hyphenated okay), or your pseudonym. For example, if I draw J.W., you can query if you were born Jane Writer, if Jane marries a man whose last name begins with a "W," or if you have any name, but write as Jennifer Wonderful, etc. Easy enough. How much ya wanna bet I still get questions and rogue queries. I still think the most creative was the writer who said she had a manuscript in a cat's point of view, and the cat had the same initials I'd drawn. How dumb did the writer think I was? What cat has a last name. Duh! You gotta work to find the initials. Go to the "News" page at www.mortimerliterary.com. Read the page. Somewhere you'll see, "The initials to query for the month of January are:"



Boo-Yahs!

I'm pleased to announce the winner of Mortimer Literary's "Writer of the Year" award for 2007, **RAZ STEEL**. For those who don't know, Raz was a *Romantic Times*/Dorchester Publishing American Title III finalist with *Pass the Kryptonite*.

I'd read his submitted chapter, but hadn't offered representation. Raz didn't have an appointment with me at the '07 RWA conference, but showed up hoping I'd have a cancellation. When I didn't, he waited outside the appointment room until I emerged, then asked for 5 minutes of my time. I had 30, so he got 'em. He'd flown to Texas at the last minute to convince me to sign him. *That flight convinced me*. We're still working on *Kryptonite*, but I have no doubt it'll sell when we're done. Raz has a go-to attitude, listens to sound advice, and showed the lengths he'd go to to be a Mortimer Lit client. For all that, and his exceptional writing talent, Raz is this year's winner. Boo-Yah, Raz! Your plaque's in the mail.

Robin Miller w/a Robin Caroll's *Romantic Times*-reviewed, 4-1/2 star, October Top Pick, *Bayou Justice*, is a finalist for *Romantic Times* Reviewers Choice Award!

Kelly Mortimer made the *Publisher's Marketplace* list of the "Top 100 Dealmakers, 2007" - Romance Category, coming in at #11!

The *Romantic Times*/Dorchester Publishing American Title IV finalists asked me to post a blog last Friday night. I did mine on the top five grammar mistakes that make a writer look like a rookie. Here's the link: www.tittlemagic.blogspot.com.

Congratulations to **Robin Miller w/a Robin Caroll**. Robin was asked to write the second book in the *Without a Trace* Suspense Continuity Series for Krista Stroeveer at Steeple Hill Love Inspired Suspense. Robin's book is titled *Framed!*, and will be a February 2009 release.

Congratulations to **Charlene Sands**. Three more sales to the *Desire* line at Harlequin. Three books, Three brothers, Three hotels. Intriguing, Char! Watch for the first in the trilogy in early 2009!

Congratulations to **Janet Dean**. Her manuscript, *Distant Hearts*, sold to Emily Rodmell of Steeple Hill Love Inspired Historicals. We could never keep our hearts distant from you!

Congratulations to **Robin Miller w/a Robin Caroll**. The fifth book in her *Bayou* series, *Bayou Betrayal*, sold to Krista Stroeveer at Steeple Hill Love Inspired Suspense as a January 2009 release.

Congratulations to **Debra Holland**. Her sweet historical and former GH winning manuscript, *Wild Montana Sky*, took third place out of over 100 manuscripts in the Orange Rose contest! But that's not all. Her fantasy manuscript, *Sower of Dreams*, grabbed second place in the 2007 On the Far Side contest, and Alicia Condon of Dorchester requested the full manuscript!



New Additions to the Family

Mortimer Literary can't believe our good fortune in being chosen over 19 other agencies to represent international motivational speaker, **Patrick Snow**. His book, *Creating Your Own Destiny, How to Get Exactly*

What You Want Out of Life, was self-published, and Patrick sold one hundred, twenty-five THOUSAND copies on his own. Let's all help make that one hundred, twenty-five MILLION!

Mortimer Literary is over the moon we've signed Terri Pilcher. Her non-fiction manuscript, *Secrets of Christian Millionaires*, will sell lickety-split. Terri, you're one-in-a-million!



Feature

ROBIN MILLER NEEDS OUR HELP!

This is not an American Christian Fiction Writers (ACFW) sponsored message.

Robin Miller w/a Robin Carroll: ACFW President, Christian author, my client, my friend, my sister; needs her mortgage paid from Feb thru Dec, 2008. That's 2k a month. I'm accepting monthly pledges on her behalf in amounts from \$5.00 and up per month for 11 months. Also, one-time donations in any amount are warmly received. Send me an e-mail if you plan to help, so I can count your dollars in the monthly total. Make checks payable to Kelly Mortimer and send checks to:

Mortimer Literary Agency * 52645 Pauli Rd. * Aguanga, CA 92536

Or, by PayPal (but they charge me a fee): www.paypal.com . My email is: kelly@kellymortimer.com Username is: countrysudz

We had eight people, including myself, pledge. If all the ACFW members stepped up with ten bucks a month, we'd be there. Non- ACFW members are welcome to help as well.

Robin works her heart out for ACFW, with no compensation. She has to fly out of town in March for the board meeting. That's leadership. Were we in her position, many of us would've stepped down. Not Robin. I'm proud to say I'm a follower of Robin Miller. Robin is a faithful Christian woman who needs our help. I'm supporting her. ARE YOU?

ANYONE NEED an EDIT? GO to MY eBay AUCTION!

In case the last plea didn't move ya, I set up an auction on eBay. I'll edit the first chapter of your manuscript via e-mail. ABA or CBA. Anything but Erotica or Romantica. I'll need two weeks to go over it. The money will go to Robin's mortgage fund, minus the fees. The minimum bid opened at \$24.99. I'll be doing an auction every month this year. Go to www.ebay.com The auction is listed under: Kelly Mortimer, Literary Agent 1st Chapter Edit.

I'm thrilled to say agent Tamela Hancock with the Hartline Agency heard about my auction, and she's offered to do so as well. She'll do four auctions: two in March, and two in April. I'll set those up so the same information applies, except the name.

Anyone who wishes to help Robin by editing a chapter, raffling autographed books, etc., through an eBay auction, please contact me.

Please distribute this info to any loops you're on. Thanks!



The Hot Seat

INTERVIEW with DEBUT AUTHOR on the RISE, JULIE LESSMAN

First:

I'd like to review one book per month for my newsletter, and Amazon.com. Any genre but erotica. If you'd like me to review your book, please e-mail your first chapter and short synopsis. I'll notify you if I've chosen your book. Thanks! Now, for my January/February review...

Hi, Julie. Thanks for agreeing to answer a few questions about your new release, *A Passion Most Pure* (formerly *A Chasing After the Wind*), the first novel in the *Daughters of Boston* series published by Revell.

Q: Congratulations on the publication of your first manuscript! What has been the most exciting time on your road to publication, and why?

A: That's easy! It was the moment I got "the call" from my agent. I was in the middle of praying with my prayer partners when my cell phone rang. My heart dropped when I heard Natasha's voice, but when she told me the pub board went well and she was 99% sure we had a sale, I started crying. I repeated everything she said so my prayer partners could hear, and they were screaming and jumping up and down in the background. Believe me, after 42 rejections and another publisher giving me a slice-n-dice rejection the week before, this phone call was balm to my battered soul.

Q: You have a three-book contract. Can you tell us about your stories and when we can get them?

A: Book One of the "Daughter of Boston" series is *A Passion Most Pure*, available now.

Faith O'Connor always dreamed of falling in love—just not with her sister's fiancé! Bent on a love relationship with God at the center, she steels her heart against her secret attraction for Collin McGuire, a rogue courting her sister and bitter at God. When Collin's affections shift her way, Faith finds herself in a struggle as explosive as the Great War raging in Europe. Because although God holds her spirit, and Collin her heart, her sister wields the power to betray them all.

Book Two, scheduled for release in Sept. 2008, is *A Passion Redeemed*. It stars Faith's sister, Charity, who puts her faith in her beauty rather than in God. It's a story of redemption and faith rising from the ashes of temptation, desire, and shame.

Depth of beauty ... shallow of heart, Charity O'Connor is a woman who gets what she wants. She sets her sights on the cantankerous Mitch Denney, an editor at the *Irish Times* who has stolen her heart. Although the sparks are there, Mitch refuses to fan the coals of a potential relationship with the sister of his ex-fiancée. Charity burned him once, destroying the only true love he'd ever known. He won't play with matches again. But Charity has a plan to turn up the heat, hoping to ignite the heart of the man she loves. And she always gets what she wants—one way or another.

Book Three, working title *A Passion Denied*, is the story of Faith and Charity's younger sister, Lizzie, a shy bookworm who dreams of a fairy-tale romance. It unfolds a man's dark past and a young girl's shattered dreams ... and the God who redeems it all.

Elizabeth O'Connor is the little sister John Brady always longed for. With a fire for God in his belly, he has been her spiritual mentor since she was thirteen, sharing her love of literature and her thirst for God. But when his gangly protégé blossoms into a beautiful young woman bent on loving him, John refuses to act on the attraction he feels. His past won't let him go there. Unfortunately, "Lizzie" won't let him go anywhere else ... until his dark and shocking secrets push her away.

Q: What was your inspiration for *A Passion Most Pure*?

A: Oh, another easy question! Undeniably, *Gone With the Wind*. When I read that novel at the age of twelve, I was swept away into the world of romance for the very first time. It captured me like no other book had done, and I immediately set out to write (along with thousands of other love-struck young girls, I'm sure), what I hoped would be "the great American novel." Obviously my dreams of grandeur didn't go anywhere (grin), but I did write 150 pages (single-spaced and practically no margins) of a story that is actually the basis for my debut novel, *A Passion Most Pure*.

Q: So *A Passion Most Pure* is the book you started writing at age twelve? When did you pick it up again and what inspired you to do it this time?

A: Without question, I strongly believe that this time my motivation was God. I was actually waiting to get a haircut in a beauty parlor, when I read a *Newsweek* magazine July 16, 2001 cover article about Christian entertainment. It said Christian books, movies and music were on the threshold of exploding. My heart jumped, and something in my spirit said, "It's time to write your book." Now, I have to be honest with you—up until that moment, I had never seriously considered writing a book. But the pull was so strong, that I started writing *A*

Passion Most Pure one month later-almost forty years after penning those first 150 pages.

Q: What was the journey to publication like for you?

A: An emotional rollercoaster, like it is for every writer, I suspect! Lots of tears, trials, and prayer (an ongoing process) to become the writer that God wants me to be. Even though I held a part-time job as a commercial writer, the first thing I did was take a fiction-writing class at a local community college, then a writing seminar. Next, I joined ACFW, FHL and RWA and got into a great critique group, ACFW 19. I started entering contests like crazy and never finaled, but the feedback from judges was invaluable. I went to writers' conferences and invested in paid critiques with published authors I respected. Then I hooked up with a fabulous critique partner by the name of Kelly Mortimer (grin), and before I knew it, I started finaling in contests. As far as getting published, I would have to say that the best thing that happened was signing with my agent. Within six months, she not only sold my novel to Revell, but garnered a 3-book deal to boot, despite my personal track record of 42 rejections on my own (agents and publishers). That said, I think an agent is invaluable in the whole publishing process, and I regret wasting time trying to do it on my own!

Q: You refer to your book as "Edgy Inspirational." What do you mean by that-more sensual than the majority of books in the CBA?

A: No, I would definitely not call it "sensual." This book is NOT about sensuality. It is about real people with real emotions, desires and temptations, doing their best to deal with them according to God's precepts. Yes, it is a saga of deep passion-but passion for God as well as romantic passion. It's a love story on a number of levels-the heroine's romance with God ... her romance with the hero ... and an inspiring and deeply romantic relationship between the parents. I refer to it as "edgy Inspirational" because I utilize strong and realistic romantic tension in order to convey the difficulty of living for God in a fallen world, as well as the joys and blessings of applying His precepts.

Q: What would you say is the strength of your book?

A: I think one of the biggest strengths, other than the fact that the heroine is a "real" person who lives and breathes for God in a natural and believable way, is the strong family relationship in the book. It's really more of a family saga than just a romance, epitomizing for me what I believe God intended a family to be. Not perfect, not plastic, but real and loving, with plenty of failings to underscore just how much we need the grace of God in our lives.

Q: Is it true we can order copies of *A Passion Most Pure* right now, and pre-order *A Passion Redeemed* at www.amazon.com, by typing JULIE LESSMAN in the "search box"?

A: My kind of gal, Kel! Yes, you can! And I hope all those reading this interview who enjoy passionate love stories along with strong spirituality will do so, as well as check out my Web site at <http://www.julielessman.com/>. Thanks, Kel, for your precious time and friendship. Love ya!

Back to Kelly:

I'll put in my five cents (inflation, and all). I've read the book, and it's fabulous. And Bravo to Revell for being open-minded and letting Julie portray her characters as real people. Her book is honest, and a great read. I highly recommend it, and I believe it'll skyrocket to the best-seller lists. Not because of any controversy surrounding it, but because Julie Lessman wrote a heartwarming family saga full of laughter, tears, love, and dare I say it, PASSION. See "Worth Reading" for my Amazon.com review.



Worth Reading

Julie Lessman's *A PASSION MOST PURE* wreaks havoc on your emotions--in a wonderful way. Enter the lives of a warm and loving Irish family living in Boston, as their adopted nation teeters on the brink of forging into WWI.

In *A PASSION MOST PURE*, Ms. Lessman yanks you in, never letting you go. Her characters are living, breathing human beings, suffering all the problems and passions a person at that tumultuous time encounters: polio, loss of faith in God, unrequited love, the draft, escaping the ravages of war.

Battle with Faith O'Connor as she denies the love of her life, a man engaged to her beautiful and often selfish sister Charity, to remain true to her Heavenly Father.

Journey with Collin McGuire as he embraces a roughish lifestyle in a bitter attempt to escape his broken family's curse.

I turned page after page, desperate to know the outcome, yet dreading the end as I thirsted for more. To miss reading *A PASSION MOST PURE* would be like erasing from memory the best day you've ever had.

I could go on, but won't deny you the unbelievable satisfaction you'll get from plunging into this epic saga of love, loss, and comfort only the Almighty God provides. Everyone should read Ms. Lessman's book. It's one of the finest I've come across in years. If you don't buy a copy you're cheating yourself, and you'll regret missing the best read since Francine River's *REDEEMING LOVE*.

As a literary agent, I read a lot of manuscripts. *A PASSION MOST PURE* receives my highest rating, and no, unfortunately, Ms. Lessman isn't my client! Hurry, Ms. Lessman. I can't wait to get my hands on the next book in your Daughters of Boston series, *A PASSION REDEEMED*. Can I review it ... please?



Other Junk

Special thanks to my friend Gayle Link, who's given of her time and expertise to help me with my Web site and my newsletter. She's always ready to jump in whenever I call, and refuses to let me pay her. I need more friends like that! If you need a Web site, whatever she charges, she's worth it. Gayle, you just wait. I'll find a way to pay ya back. Gotta find my red pen....



Wise Words for the Month by "The Sassy Sage"

"When ya can't think of any wise words, stop typing."

That's all for now. The February newsletter will be out at the first of the month.
Smiles,
Kelly

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