

Arts & Entertainment

Heroes must be reliable

• from WRITING on page 12
British creators a few decades back, a new kind of heroine was born. She can best be described as average. Pretty, not stunning. Holding her own, not rich. In other words, much like the reader.

But where these fictional heroines really luck out is with men. Flesh and blood men read on with peril because it's not easy to match up to the strength and beauty so effortlessly exemplified by the romance novel male.

"The first most important quality for a hero is that he must be sexy," said Mr. Henry. "The second is that he must be sexy. And the third is that he be sexy, too. He's the guy in black leather who rides up on his Harley."

Okay, there are some human types that can accomplish that. The oldest Baldwin brother, Andy Garcia and Doug Flutie, for example. Even Leonardo DiCaprio, if the female is under age 12.

But it's the second part that makes the going tough. Because in the land of romance, every bad guy is aching to prove there's a little armour gleaming beneath that handsome exterior.

"Strength of character is the number one quality. He's the guy who can be absolutely relied on when the chips are down," said Mr. Henry. "It may be possible that he lies, cheats and steals. He

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BRIAN HENRY

may not have the ideal job. But he's 100 per cent reliable. And at the end they turn into great husbands and fathers."

Romance, it appears, is not for the commitment-shy.

"The values of the romance world are skewed towards family. They end up married in the end," said Mr. Henry. "Not just holed up at a Holiday Inn for a few weeks."

So the guy is hot, he's sexy and he has granite-like shoulders hovering conveniently near when a girl needs something to lean on.

But what's most important about the hero is the heroine really digs him.

"He speaks in a voice that sends whispers down her spine," obligingly explained Mr. Henry. "What does that tell you about his voice? Absolutely nothing."

But it does let on that the heroine thinks he's the cat's whiskers, and that's the point.

Reading romance may appeal to a whole host of women but those

who want to write them can be broadly separated into two groups.

The first is the disenchanted reader.

"What generally happens is they read a story and throw it across the room and say, 'I could write better than this,'" said Mr. Henry. "And it's true."

The second is the true blue writer who has just discovered their name isn't as likely as they thought to be stacked alongside this century's literary greats.

But writers unfamiliar with the genre can get tangled in a nasty nest of clichés, some that haven't seen a printed page in years.

And while originality counts, romance novels do tend to follow a basic pattern.

"You need a hero, you need a heroine, you need a conflict, and you need a happy ending," recited Mr. Henry. "The best thing is to make sure your manuscript doesn't sound like it's formulaic."

Unlike a virtually stagnant pool of Canadian literature, about 1,700 romance books are published each year.

Money can be made doing it, too.

A relatively successful romance novel can net its author about \$20,000 in U.S. funds.

The seminar will begin at 7 p.m. and costs \$7. To register in advance, call Bev Meincke at 336-1279. The event is hosted by the Quick Brown Fox Writer's Association.

Calling all area artists

Time is running out for entries to the Fourth Annual Art on the Escarpment juried show and sale.

Fine art, fine photography and sculpture will be exhibited at the event held May 27 and 28 at Springridge Farm on Bell School Line.

Applications for entry must be in by April 14.

For visitors, the event will boast a vibrant variety of quality work judged by three well known local artists. And Springridge will offer farm animals, produce and a gift shop.

For entry forms and further information,

artists are asked to call Doug Elliott at 854-2122. The show is hosted by the Fine Arts Society of Milton.

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Audition for seniors' acts

Talent is ageless and Miltonians 55 years and older can help prove it.

Older adults from across the province are invited to audition for the Royal Bank Seniors' Jubilee 2000, a five-day extravaganza that features the talents of more than 1,300 performers.

Sponsor the Royal Bank is looking for singers, dancers, comedians, musicians, bands and novelty and cabaret acts for the annual event.

The Jubilee was established in 1989 as an opportunity for older adults to leave their limitations at the stage door and stand in the spotlight. Each year, more than 12,000 people from 155 communities watch participants perform.

This year's show will be held at Toronto's prestigious Roy Thompson Hall August 14 to 18. There will be a different line-up each day.

To audition, contact producers Wayne Burnett at Richburn Entertainment Inc. at (416) 962-3819 or send your name, address and telephone number as well as a brief description of your act to: Wayne Burnett, Richburn Entertainment, Toronto, Ont., M5J 2N3.

People can also fax to (416) 260-5627 or email their application to girich@netcom.ca. The deadline for applications is April 30.

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