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WRITE & SELL A
*Well-Seasoned
Romance*



STELLA FOSSE

#1 New Release

in Words & Language!

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Sneak Peek Edition

When I turned back the covers the other evening, there was a millipede, a big one, smack in the middle of my pillow. Yes, it's North Carolina in August: thunderstorms, lizards, deer everywhere, and crazy bugs. This particular August is also book launch season, at least at our house. *Write & Sell a Well-Seasoned Romance* is available now, ready to inspire Women of a Certain Age to create, edit, publish and market late life love stories with vivid older characters.

Comments from Beta readers, those saints of the book world, are incorporated. The very last proofread is done. Lovely reviewer comments circulate on social media. Book trailers are set for release. I've been interviewed on podcasts, some up now, some to drop soon. It's a full-court publicity press, unfolding day by day while I regain my strength after breast cancer surgery. Good thing my own book includes the recipe for a successful launch, even a pre-booked one. And best of all, *Write & Sell a Well-Seasoned Romance* is ready to order at your [favorite online store](#) or to order from your local bookshop.

The inspiration for this book came from online classes I taught at the height of the pandemic. My course, "Thee and Me Could Write a Bad Romance," gave newbie writers 65+ the tools, and just as importantly the permission, to write about vibrant older characters. These writers drew on their imaginations and memories of people and places to create vivid new stories. I later taught this same group about editing, publishing options, and marketing plans. I finished teaching those courses

determined to share the ideas with more writers. And so this book, *Write & Sell a Well-Seasoned Romance*, was born.

I am super excited about the reception the new book is receiving.

- "Wow! What a book!" gushed my shero, Joan Price, an expert on senior sexuality. "I'm more than impressed! I'm blown away by how comprehensive, clear, and inviting it is!"
- Another of my sheroes, Ashton Applewhite, wrote: "Stella Fosse lays out why women at midlife and beyond are ideally positioned to portray the inner and outer lives of women like them in ways that surprise and delight."
- And Ruth Saxton, an expert on women's literature, said this: "Perhaps I should caution readers: This how-to manual is seductive."

So perhaps it's no surprise that several Beta readers have already started writing their own Seasoned Romance novels with ideas from the book. No wonder I'm jazzed! In fact, I'm so excited that I want to share with you just a taste of what *Well-Seasoned Romance* has to offer. So here is your sneak peek, and may it inspire you to write your own late life love story!

Scroll down for the preview.



Please keep the pen moving (or the keys clicking) and keep thinking about getting your words in front of readers.

All the best,

Stella,

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From the blog this month



The Power of Late Bloomers

Stella Fosse

The attempts to disempower an American woman unfold across her lifetime. She is [sexualized as a young girl](#), loses her [reproductive freedom](#) as a young woman, takes on the “[Second Shift](#)” as a mother, and [becomes invisible](#) after menopause. Rendering women over fifty invisible is insidious because in reality age liberates us. Not only do we [live longer](#) than men, our healthspan is longer as well. Our energy is liberated as our children establish independent lives. And when our original careers wind down, we can devote ourselves to projects of our choosing. This period of life is a rich asset for each of us and for society.

But the time of our natural power is stigmatized. In the workplace and in the culture at large, women are [judged more harshly](#) for the appearance of aging. We are deemed sexless and irrelevant in ways that men of equivalent ages are not. And

there's another catch: If we dye our hair or take other steps to counter the visible signs, we are [judged](#) for that as well. Proposals to enact age limits on public service would add to gendered ageism because women's opportunities to lead start later and, on average, our capacity for effective leadership extends later in life.

None of this is inevitable. We know that in some cultures older women are revered. We know from anthropology that older women's roles in early human societies were essential to the development of human culture (see the [Grandmother Hypothesis](#)). And even today there are powerful older women leaders, including Nancy Pelosi, who began her political career after her children were grown.

A different view of older women is possible. What does it take to be visible and powerful as an older woman? It starts with each of us. We can claim our power, own our sexuality, and both [radically define](#) and [accept our appearance](#). We can push back on our own internalized gendered ageism, countering ageist self-talk with positive messages.

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Living The Dream

Lynne Spreen

All my life, I dreamed of literary success. I wanted to write and publish a blockbuster novel and enjoy the life of the successful author. The universe had other plans, so I set the dream aside and applied myself to earning a paycheck. While rearing my son, climbing a career ladder, and working my way through three marriages, a singular fantasy sustained me. It looked something like this: a phone call, a breathless literary agent asking if I was sitting down, and the conveyance of a massive monetary offer for my debut novel. In my dreams, it was four hundred thousand dollars.

Cue the hysterical laughter, right?

In 2009, after decades of keeping the dream alive through evening and weekend classes and conferences, slavish self-study, and pre-dawn writing sessions, I could finally throw myself at writing full-time—only to find that everything had changed. My first clue that the dream had shattered was learning that, in order to attract the attention of an agent, the aspiring writer was now expected to accumulate, on her own, a minimum of ten thousand fans. This was called the platform. I had no platform. True to form, I threw myself at its development. As I worked to create a [website](#), blog, and professional presence, indie publishing was on the move. Self-published authors were achieving success.

About that time, a rebellious thought occurred. With ten thousand adoring fans, why would I need an agent? If I could sell ten thousand of each of my books, wouldn't I be happy? Traditional publishing houses were merging, consolidating, and disappearing. Might I self-publish?

Another factor influenced my thinking: ageism. Now in my fifties, I wanted to write about the impressive and underappreciated lives of older people, but doubted the industry would bite. So I decided to go it alone.

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From the Introduction to Write & Sell a Well-Seasoned Romance

Why (and How) to Write and Publish Seasoned Romance

This book is for you, whether you've written ten books or zero, whether you are a Romance fan or a Romance skeptic, whether you are thirty or eighty. It's a soup-to-nuts guide to write, publish, and market a Romance novel with vivid older characters. But before we get to *how* to do it, let's talk about...

Why You Should Write Seasoned Romance

Back in the day, I could not wait to retire from my technical writing career to write every sexy, vibrant story I had in my head. Then I read an article in the *New York Times* Book Review section by a Romance writer in her fifties giving advice to her sister writers. Her message in a nutshell:

If you want to get published, create characters in their twenties.

Was the publishing industry that ageist? Had the demands of career and parenting made me miss the boat? No way would I let that happen. Right then and there I decided to push back by writing sexy characters my own age.

The good news is that traditional publishers have been through a sea change in recent years. Indie publishing is eating their lunch, partly because more diverse voices are represented—including the voices of older women. Meanwhile the number of people over sixty keeps growing, and older women read a lot. We make up almost half of the enormous market for Romance novels. And many of us want to read about the love lives of people our age, not our children's ages. Look at reader reviews for Romance novels with older main characters and you will see comments like these:

“Being a woman who is now a part of the senior population, I deeply appreciate reading books with characters who live with the same hopes and dreams.”

“Reading the word 'menopause' in a Romance novel is rewarding.”

“Being a tad over 60 I enjoy reading books of Romance with more senior couples. With vibrant personalities.”

“I needed the reminder that love can happen at any time.”

There are a lot of books out there, but not enough for this niche market. Recognizing that pent-up demand, more publishers are following the money and setting aside their biases. “Seasoned Romance” is the publishing sub-genre for Romance novels with main characters over forty—or even thirty. But *thirty*? That’s lightly seasoned. Let’s write characters in their fifties, sixties, and beyond, and call our books “Well-Seasoned Romance.”

How to Write, Publish and Market Seasoned Romance

The book in your hands takes you step by step through the process, starting with highlighting joyful approaches to writing (and why that benefits you), then grounding you in the Romance genre, and continuing through creating Romance plot and characters, and finally developing a full story. Then we’ll talk about editing, publishing and marketing your novel.

I organized this book to make the most of your writing and publishing experience. Part One covers writing. Each chapter focuses on a different stage in the Romance novel, from the initial meeting of your characters all the way to the happy ending. The chapters also coach you on the craft of writing, including setting, plot, characters, how to create dialogue that moves the story forward, and how to build a great love scene. Each chapter also includes writing prompts to take your writing in fun directions that build toward your full novel.

This is an *exciting time* to be a writer because our options for publishing have never been greater. And for those of us past midlife, it’s also an *exciting time of life* to be a writer because we have the dreams and experiences of all our years to draw upon.

Stories are how humans understand reality, so the more vibrant stories we tell, the better for us all. I’m so glad to have you along on this creative journey. Keep the keys clicking and above all...

Enjoy!

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