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ROCK ON

**Power,
Sex &
Money
after
60**

STELLA FOSSE



Our Dual Reality.

Rock On: Power, Sex and Money after 60 published last August, just before the whole mastectomy business. The book didn't get the launch it deserved. The one bright spot in the traditional launch season (the first three months) was the lovely nomination for the Advantages of Age Award in [Nonfiction](#).

I recovered from surgery and, boom! The holidays. So it was January before my thoughts returned to marketing, and how Crone Authors (brought up when girls were supposed to be demure) market books. The first thing was to set aside the traditional focus on the three months after publication. Given that Print On Demand keeps our books in print indefinitely, we can find new ways to publicize every book we've published. That three month rule is obsolete.

Older women make up a substantial part of the reading public. And while marketers and advertisers notoriously ignore us, I for one focus on that segment. So how can I, and similarly situated women authors, connect with those readers more effectively?

In partnership with the [Grandmother Collective](#), I'm launching a new monthly online forum, Crone Authors Together (CAT). It's a sort of Stone Soup gathering, where we share ideas and successes, and find new ways to reach our audience. It's free. Please click [this link](#) if you'd like to join our next meeting and share your voice.

Last November, with my surgeon's blessing, I flew to London for the [Advantages of Age](#) awards where my book was shortlisted. Such a terrific experience, and it got me wondering why we don't have a ceremony like that in the US, to lift up olders who push back on stereotypes to create the culture of older adults. I've launched a project which is still in early stages to start a similar US event. So far there's a planning group, a venue, and initial ideas. More to come as that project develops.

I'll keep my focus on marketing for the rest of the first quarter, including [podcast appearances](#) to talk about my latest book.

So that's what my waking mind is up to. The rest of my brain is on a different wavelength. This morning while half asleep a story circled back that first popped into my head eight years ago.

It's evening and a woman walks into her well-lit garage. Her partner's car is gone; he's out with friends. She crosses to her car to go shopping, her purse tucked under her arm. Her sedan is past its prime, and he has been teasing her about it. She always tells him she likes having a car old enough that it can't be tracked. Might she be a bit neurotic? More teasing. She smiles at the memory.

As she opens the car door, her phone falls from her pocket onto the concrete floor. She doesn't notice. When she backs up the car, the front tire crushes the phone. She pauses on the driveway to hit the garage door button and sees a tiny burst of smoke from the floor of the garage. How odd, she thinks; What's that?

Driving to the store she passes a burning car at the side of the road. Then another in the median. She reaches for her phone to call for help. Her pocket is empty. She turns on the radio. Static. Pushes square buttons. Static. Turns the dial to find a station.

...detonated every cell phone that belongs to members of that traitor party. Genius! Sheer genius!

Sounds of men crowing with delight. She slams the round button to turn it off.

The grocery store is ahead on her left. She doesn't stop. Freeway onramp? Better not. She turns onto a woodsy back road and opens her window to the lovely damp scent of a Southern night. She takes off her smart watch one-handed and throws it out the window. Throws it as far as she can.

On she drives, southward, window open, gas tank full.

When her tank runs dry she's a few miles from the border. She picks up her purse and walks. There's a wall, of course, but she finds a broken place, a place where in years past desperate people squeezed through, fleeing north. There is no room for irony in her mind. She still clutches her purse, though

her money is in American banks that believe she is dead. She pulls herself, scratched and bleeding, through the wall, into the unknown.

We in the United States (and, regrettably, in other countries) now live in a dual reality. There's the ordinary day-to-day, where we do what we've always done; even folks in Minneapolis can have regular days. And then there's the reality where things are different, through the looking glass, upside down. May each of us be mindful that the upside down exists. May we find creative ways to support freedom as we step into the unknown.

Don't let them tame you.

—Isadora Duncan



Keep the pen moving, or the keys clicking.

All the best,

Stella,

stella@stellafosse.com

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This Month's Blogs



In Praise Of Color



Setting Lights The Way

In Praise of Color

Stella Fosse

Deanna Raybourn's terrific novel *Killers of a Certain Age* starts with the retirement cruise of a trio of crone assassins. As a special surprise, their erstwhile boss has hired a younger killer to bump them off mid-cruise. Once the women overcome their hitman and safely land, they get away with murdering their heavily guarded former boss. How? By wearing gray wigs and beige clothes. Nobody notices them—which proves once and for all that invisibility has its uses.

But when we're not plotting murder, when we're telling our vibrant stories or just living our lives, visibility can be a marvelous thing. And here I want to praise the value of color. Whether it's painting your walls burnt orange, wearing a bright green jacket or trying out red lipstick, how we play with color defines us to ourselves and the world.

Let's start with hair. I have the utmost respect for older women

Setting Lights the Way

Rebecca Hodge

I love talking to authors about where their ideas come from, and I'm fascinated by the small seeds that blossom over time into a full-fledged novel. In workshops, I hear about starting the writing process with a character in mind (*a nurse, grieving the death of her nephew*), and one of my writing friends won't write a word until her main character is living in her head and carrying on conversations. Other instructors advise plot outlines to start things off (*three criminals invade and take hostages*), then characters develop along the way.

I'm a bit of an outlier. Each of my books has been kickstarted by its setting. Years back, my Colorado son mentioned that he was standing on his apartment balcony watching helicopters drop water on a nearby forest fire. The mom part of my brain got a bit freaked, but the writing part began wondering what sort

who embrace the graying of their locks, but doubt I'll ever reach that point. I like being blonde. It's a badge of having grown up on the beach in San Diego (though if I'd grown up in Idaho I'd probably find some other reason)..

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of story could be set against the backdrop of a forest fire. My book *Wildland* was the result. Then after I got trapped underwater during a nasty whitewater rafting accident, one of the guides shared the story of a kayaking tragedy. The details of his tale stuck with me—and that was my starting point for *Over the Falls.*

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Stella Fosse



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