

## Being Creative and Analytical

Many romance writers get into the field because they loved reading romance. So when Bella Andre crafts a series, she finds it easier because she can write the characters and stories that she would want to read. But as a self-publishing author, she still has to find that balance between creativity and structure to keep her business going.

### **Why do readers connect with romance novels?**

Romance has always been my favorite genre. It still is and always will be. I can't imagine anything would replace romance. And I think that I love it for the reasons that everybody loves it. It makes you feel good. It's cathartic. The characters have a definite path that they go on.

And for the books that I write, I like to write about two strong, intelligent people who for whatever it is they've experienced or seen in their life have fears or things that are holding them back from being really their very best selves. And when they find each other, that's when they basically love each other into being their best selves.

So that's what I do, and that's when I created my Sullivan series, which is my best-selling worldwide contemporary romance series about the fictional Sullivan family. That's what I do. That's what every one of those books does. I've done it now 10 times in a row, and readers want more. They want more because going on that journey with the Sullivan family, with a hero and heroine in every book, is so much fun. It's so enjoyable.

People write me all the time and say "I just want you to know that the Sullivan family has been the entire last week of my life. I have read all nine books in one week" because they're addictive. It's so enjoyable, and I understand. When a reader says that to me I'm like "I get it," because I am that reader. I love it. I love romance

### **How do you balance creativity and structure?**

I wear two hats in this business. I am the writer. I'm the creative writer, where it's all magic all the time. And I don't analyze. I try not to break it down. I try not to figure out where it comes from. I just go with it.

And then, the other part of every day, I take that hat off and I put on the business hat. Where I am entirely 100,000 percent analytical. So I think it's a perfect blend. I get to be 100 percent creative.

I was on a panel at the Romance Writers of America conference and somebody asked about conflict. "Well, how much conflict do you need in a book?" And everybody else and all the agents and editors were answering, you know, probably answering the question as she intended for it to be answered. And I said, "You know, I really don't care about conflict. I really don't care about plot. I don't even really like those words. And I find those words to be very stressful. Those words have a lot of "do's" and "do not's" to them for me.

I want to tell a beautiful, magical, engaging story. That's what I want to do. I want to please myself and I want to please my reader. And if I let myself get caught up in an idea of, "Well, is there enough conflict here?" Where I start using words like that, for me, that really, really doesn't work. Now, that's not to say that my books don't have conflict and they don't have tension and they don't have plot. Certainly they do. But I really like it when it's an organic thing. For me, it all comes from the characters.

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