

## Quality Rises

As a writer, Sherry Thomas says she needs time and space to step back from her work. Only then can she find the parts of the novel that are working, and those that have room for improvement.

### **What is your writing process?**

Everybody's muse works differently, mine requires time, the time and the space to step back and say, "That was totally the wrong thing to do," and do something else.

I've had tremendous editors. When you don't have time to think for yourself, they're the ones who say, "This sucks," and I believe firmly for any writer who wants to make it long-term you have to be able to react to "this sucks" not with, you know, soufflé like deflation, but with almost a sense of excitement. As in "So okay so at least now I know it sucks, so what can I do to fix it?" You know, because room for improvement is infinite, you can always do something better, so I love to be edited hard, it spurs me on.

### **What have you learned from other writers?**

I've always said the romance community has the best girlfriends. I don't think I was mentored specifically, but I belong to a wonderful Romance Writers of America chapter, the Austin chapter, where we have, you know, a great deal of talent, and also a great deal of dedication. It's not a social chapter. People there are seriously trying to get published, and our veterans have always given back, you know, their knowledge, their expertise, you know, the tales of their struggles, how they got to be- their hard won victories, their hard learned lessons. So we've always been surrounded by good advice in that sense, and so I also try to give back to my local community as much as possible, you know, I give workshops and whenever somebody is actually brave enough to come and ask me for a critique, because I am a blood in the water critique-r, because I think that's the only way to improve for someone to actually tell you it's not working. So whenever somebody's brave enough to come to me for, you know, to ask, "Would you like to look at this," and most of them aren't, I will do it.

## **What are your biggest challenges?**

Biggest challenges for me? Professionally I've always thought it was quality. That's actually the only thing I am usually concerned about.

Whether I can maintain that quality so that, you know, each one of my books would serve as a recommendation for other books. So that's the only thing I am seriously concerned about, the others are incidentals. I can handle the business side, I can, you know, if I have to self-pub I will, but in the end it's always about the work, always about the quality. That's my concern for myself.

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