

Smart People in Romance

Jen Lois and Joanna Gregson set out to study romance writers and see what made the community unique. Along the way, they found that romance writers come from very different backgrounds than they expected.

What did you expect to find while studying romance?

Jen Lois and Joanna Gregson

Joanna Gregson: Everybody's writing romance. Which, people often ask us. What are you most surprised by? And I think one of the things that we've said again and again is the diversity of the people who write. Not from the gender, because it is...

Jen Lois: Not in terms of gender.

Joanna Gregson: Because it is predominantly women. Not exclusively, but predominantly. Um... But all the other variables that we talked about in sociology? Gosh, there's diversity. Social class background, occupational status...

Jen Lois: Age.

Joanna Gregson: Age!

Jen Lois: Education.

Joanna Gregson: Education.

Jen Lois: Race.

Joanna Gregson: Race.

Jen Lois: It's... highly white, but there is diversity. So that was surprising to us. And um... The level of professionalism. When you go to RWA, the women who run this industry are smart, driven, professional women.

Joanna Gregson: Yeah, the stereotype, you know, of women eating bonbons. And writing a romance with one hand and the glass of wine in the other...

Jen Lois: With a feathered boa.

Joanna Gregson: Yeah! A feathered boa and a tiara. Um.. So yeah. That has not been our experience at all. We kind of joked after our first RWA, that every time we turned around, we bumped into another PhD And people once they found out about our background, our academic background, they would say, “Oh, have you met so-and-so? She writes under this name, but in her day job, she has a PhD in English and she does this.” And so... certainly met educated people, but also just smart people.

Jen Lois: And techie people! Lots of high science background, lots of tech background, which... just surprised me because I thought it would be all people with like creative writing or English background.

Joanna Gregson: Oh yeah.

Jen Lois: Just the diversity of discipline and occupational fields... and... degree. That surprised me.

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