

RMFW 2024

Going Pro With Your Mad Reading Skills

Presented by Amy Armstrong

Agenda

- ◊ Expectations for this 50-minute session
- ◊ Introductions
- ◊ Why read when you want to write?
- ◊ Getting free books
- ◊ Literary Citizenship (reading for journals and Colorado Humanities)
- ◊ Book reviews from blogs to magazines



Photo by Aaron Burden on Unsplash

This is an overview

I'll start with a story

Why read when you want to write?

- ◊ Agents need current comp titles
- ◊ Writers need to know the market
- ◊ It's part of learning craft
- ◊ Book reviews can be a way to get published



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Getting Free Books

- ◊ Brand new hardcovers are expensive. How do you get the new releases?
- ◊ ARC and PR lists
- ◊ Edelweisse Plus, NetGalley, PR lists from your favorite authors
- ◊ Judging or selecting nominees for the Colorado Book Awards
- ◊ Writing reviews for literary journals, magazines, and blogs



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Colorado Book Awards

- ◊ Selectors read all of the books entered for a given category and forward three nominees to the judges.
- ◊ Judges review the three selections and choose one book.

Literary Magazines

- ◊ As with all things related to literary magazines, applications are competitive
- ◊ Find opportunities on Submittable
- ◊ Complete application
- ◊ Reading test or sample blurb
- ◊ Often require a writing sample
- ◊ Time commitment is around 4 to 8 hours a week for at least 6 months

How Ratings Work

- ◊ Yes/No/Maybe
- ◊ A screener marking a piece as yes or maybe gets it another read and requires justification
- ◊ A piece can be read by six different people before it's published
- ◊ Publication is about consensus not just quality

Book Blog Basics

- ◊ Who is your *ideal* audience?
- ◊ Name your blog & buy a domain
- ◊ Find a host/platform
- ◊ Set a schedule
- ◊ Tell *everyone* about it



Disclosures & Stuff

- ◊ You know those FTC Disclosures on reviews for books, makeup, etc. Yes, you need to include those in a conspicuous place in your post *if* you receive anything of value in exchange for reviewing the product *and/or* if you have a relationship with the author or company.
- ◊ The FTC even has a [guide](#) for Social Media Influencers. (Yes, as a blogger that means you.)

The Good, The Bad, & The Mid

You read the book and you hate it. What now?



What Does Your Audience Expect?

- ◊ No need to review *every* ARC you receive—especially if you hated it
- ◊ Consider who it *might* appeal to. Is anyone in your audience interested in something like it even if you feel it fell short of expectations?

Draft & Post a Review Policy

- ◊ Specify what genres you review
- ◊ Do you accept digital ARCs or only hardcopy? How do they get them to you?
- ◊ Do you accept indie authors? Or maybe you only accept indie authors. Either way, good to note this.



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Enjoy

- ◊ Have fun with the reading and content creation.
- ◊ Use the opportunity to build relationships with authors and editors.



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Questions?

- ◊ Contact amyarmstrongwriting@gmail.com
- ◊ Handout includes a lot of helpful information.