

LELITA BALDOCK

AUTHOR

Writing Newsletter

February 18 2021

The sun is shining and the air smells of blossom and garlic-grass. I think Spring is on its way. I don't know about you, but spring always makes me smile. While we are still in lockdown here, the warmer days mean it is easier to get outside and do some exercise (socially distanced of course), which makes everything feel better.

But for the evenings I have a great edition here for you today! So many things to look forward to, and writing participation opportunities for March, as well as a fantastic interview with Holly Tinsley, author of *We Men of Ash and Shadow* (I mean – what a title!).

I hope you enjoy.

Cheers,

Lelita



Lelita Baldock

Author – Writer - Editor

What I'm excited for!

I'm in the paper!



Thrilled to be featured in Woking News and Mail for the second time, talking about my novels *Widow's Lace* and *The Unsound Sister*.

"Leleta Baldock attracted glowing reviews for Widow's Lace, a historical mystery set in her native Australia, but has opted for a change of pace with The Unsound Sister."

You can read the full article here: <https://www.wokingnewsandmail.co.uk/?p=29971>

Blog Tour starts March 8th

Widow's Lace is going on blog tour. Be sure to follow me to keep updated with all the stops!

Instagram: @LelitaBaldockWrites

Twitter: @Baldock_Lelita

Facebook: @LelitaBaldockWrites

LELITA BALDOCK

Widow's Lace

A NOVEL

Blog Tour

March 8th – March 19th 2021

THE COFFEE POT BOOK CLUB

March 8th <i>Eclectic Ramblings of Author Heather Osborne</i> <i>MJ Porter's Official Blog</i>	March 15th <i>B for Book Review</i> <i>Candlelight Reading</i>
March 9th <i>The Magic of Wor(l)ds</i> <i>Linnea Tanner's Official Blog</i>	March 16th <i>Woven From Words</i> <i>I got lost in a book</i>
March 10th <i>A Darn Good Read</i>	March 17th <i>The Whispering Bookworm</i>
March 11th <i>The Historical Fiction Blog</i>	March 18th <i>Oh look, another book!</i>
March 12th <i>Historical Fiction With Spirit</i> <i>The Writing Desk</i>	March 19th <i>Zoe's Art, Craft & Life</i> <i>Judith Arnopp's Official Blog</i>

March Writing Challenge with the Kick Ass Author's Club

Win merch and have fun! Follow @kickassauthorsclub to see the daily writing prompts and get creative!



Featured Creative – Holly Tinsley, author / blogger



A little bit about Holly Tinsley

I'm an author and blogger from the UK, currently living near the countryside in a beautiful 19th-century miner's cottage with a brick fireplace and plaster that falls off the walls every time you shut a door. I have a husband, a teenage son, two very opinionated cats, and a Romanian rescue dog that loves cushions and hates the rain. I write grimdark fantasy and gothic horror stories, and articles on board games, gaming, TTRPG, and pop culture.

She started as a blogger, and it rolled on from there

I started writing seriously around 2018, starting with blogging before moving on to creative writing. I won my first competition within a month of starting to write fiction, which was very exciting but unfortunately set me up for a massive reality check when I later realised it wasn't going to be that simple every time. I've since had a poem published by the British Fantasy Society in their Horizons publication, had a few gothic horror stories featured on Horla Magazine online, and published around twenty articles for various e-zines and blogs. I self-published my first grimdark gas-lamp fantasy 'We Men of Ash and Shadow' in October 2020.

What inspired her to start writing?

I'd always enjoyed writing since my school days and had it in the back of my mind, but I wasn't sure I would be good enough or have the level of commitment for it. Instead, I pursued a number of creative outlets – music, singing, theatre – but found I was pretty terrible at all of them. Over the years a lot of people suggested writing but I never found the time to really sit down and focus on it until a few years ago when I lost my job suddenly. I'd had a run of poor luck with jobs due to closing businesses and staffing restructures and I was in a really bad place mentally and emotionally. I decided I didn't want to go back to working a normal 9-5 job so I sat down and started blogging about it. Six weeks later I had the first draft of a 110k word fantasy novel and I haven't looked back since. I'm a big believer that sometimes you just have to do what you think is right, even if it means taking a risk or making some sacrifices.

History and truth equals a story idea

I'm very inspired by true historical events, although I don't necessarily write historical fiction. The study of human nature and civilisation is fascinating to me – looking at the ways in which we've grown, molded, and shaped the world around us. I like characters that reflect our nature as a species and look to find answers or challenge preconceptions about what we are, our flaws, and our experiences.

What's great about writing?

The most exciting thing for me as a writer is getting to be a part of all the fascinating conversations that this industry opens up and learning from it all. I've met people I never thought I'd meet, engaged in all sorts of discussions, and found support and friendship within the writing community that's unlike any other. It's thrilling when someone buys your book, but it's even better when people talk about it. You get to see the thoughts, questions, and reactions it provokes, positive or negative. It makes you feel like you've created something that people can feel something about, and that's a great feeling.

What makes writing tough?

You have to have a lot of self-discipline as a writer, which is something I'm trying to get better at – finding that balance between work and other aspects of your life. There's nobody telling you when to switch off or take a break, so when I first started I was putting in twelve hours a day minimum and that takes its toll. I've gotten better with it, but I still find there are days when the pressure to push harder is incredible. As much as this is a wonderful, supportive community to be a part of, it's still a job and you have to remember not to burn out or you can't be at your best.

Holly's proudest achievement (so far!)

'We Men of Ash and Shadow' was the fourth full-length novel I wrote and the first one I decided to publish. Having that come out and garner a largely positive response was a really defining moment for me. It was the first time I felt like a real author.

An indie with a bright future

'We Men of Ash and Shadow' is a self published novel. I wanted to find out what I could do on my own, so I never really shopped it around to traditional publishers. It's been a great experience. However, it is a steep learning curve. The great thing about it is that all of your successes are your own. But on the other hand, so are your mistakes - you have to be prepared to weather both. You have to learn what works for you and what doesn't by just doing it and putting in the time and effort. There are no easy fixes. You have to decide what your measure of success will be and set your targets. I'd love to be traditionally published in the future, but I have no regrets about taking the indie route with

my first book. It's helped me to learn and discover a lot about myself that I didn't know before.

Some great advice for other budding authors, Hollys says, "Be professional, be kind, be resilient and be realistic."

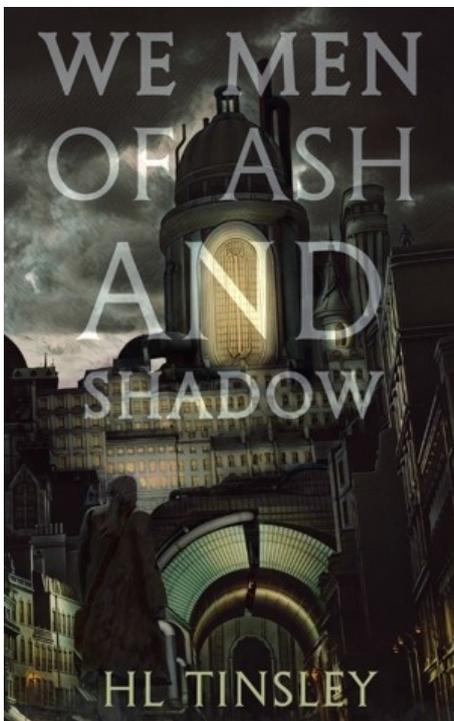
You only need to look at the numbers to see what a densely populated industry this is – you're not going to get there overnight. Always look for ways to learn, improve and get better. You're going to take criticism and praise so learn how to get the best out of both.

The author she would most love to meet?

At the moment, I'd have to say Anna Stephens would be my first choice. She wrote the Godblind trilogy which I've recently started reading. I've also watched her on some convention panels and videos and she just seems like a really interesting, fun person. Plus she's into Doctor Who and Dungeons and Dragons so I feel like we'd have a lot to talk about.

Holly Tinsley's novel *We Men of Ash and Shadow* is out now through Amazon

<https://www.amazon.co.uk/Men-Shadow-Vanguard-Chronicles-Book-ebook/dp/B08FJ6PY9M>



Praise for *We Men of Ash and Shadow*



Alan

★★★★★ **Shadow Men**

Reviewed in the United Kingdom on 4 February 2021

Verified Purchase

Astounding debut novel by HL Tinsley, captivating from start to finish, it's very dark and gritty and you will love the main protagonist the one and only John Vanguard, guilt ridden by memories from his past and looking to set them straight, great characters and worldbuilding, can't wait for the next installment, highly recommend... 😊

Helpful

Report abuse

Connect with Holly

Twitter: @hollytinsl3y

Website: <https://htinsleywriter.wordpress.com/>

How to grow your social media following.



Social media can be a powerful promotional tool for writers. But before you can make the most of your platform, you need followers. Engaging content, forming connections and inspiring interactions are the tenets of enticing followers. Here are my top tips to make the most of your social media presence to grow your reader-base and ultimately, sell your books!

Know your audience

Sounds obvious, but it's easy to overlook. As a writer, you have a specific audience in-built: people who would enjoy your book. As tempting as it is, a general approach will make your time on social media harder.

Get specific: genre, age, location.

As a writer, your audience also includes fellow writers, reviewers, bloggers and podcasters. These connections help you to cross-promote and grow your audience. More below.

Images and video

People are visual creatures. We like to see clean, crisp photos and we like to see people's faces. Take the time to create good quality images of you, your books and related content. You can take these pictures yourself or use a free online generator such as: <http://diybookcovers.com/3Dmockups/#> for book cover images.

Short videos of yourself chatting about your work, writing journey or sharing tips, are a great option too. When people watch you talking, the connection they have with you is increased and they are more likely to follow you.

Connect with community

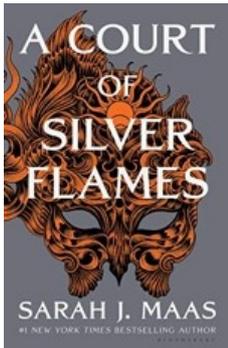
Cross-promotion is a powerful tool. There are many other creatives out there who are also trying to grow their audience. So help each other out! Chat with fellow authors, reviewers, bloggers and podcasters who work within your genre. Reach out and ask if they would like to review your book, or interview you for their blog. Keep an eye out for promotions and community groups that you could be involved with, and like and share. The more connections you make, the more people you are cultivating to share your work. That exposure leads to followers.

Specific post ideas create engagement and increase followers

- **Competitions:** create a competition to win a free copy of your book. All people have to do is: follow, re-tweet/ share and tag a friend. This is a great way to grow your followers and reach a wider audience.
- **Encourage interaction:** run polls. Ask questions that relate to your audience: what is your preferred genre; who is your favourite author? This gets people to interact with your feed, leading to follows.
- **Tag other creatives:** regularly post about the authors, reviewers, bloggers that you have been interacting with and tag them in your post. They are then likely to retweet/ share your post to their feed and tag you in similar posts in the future, again creating more exposure for you.
- **Share reviews:** One of the most powerful tools to gain a reader's trust is a great review. Share them regularly. Don't forget to tag the reviewers too!
- **Cross-promote your own social media:** share your own posts from different platforms so people can find you across the internet, follow you and share your posts in more places.
- **Share your journey:** create posts about your writing experience— anything that has been part of your journey. This will help you connect with other writers, growing your community and exposure.
- **Give back:** start your own blog, newsletter or other, to connect with and promote other creatives.

But the greatest tip of all? Don't give up! Try new things. Experiment. Find your social media voice. And enjoy the journey.

What I'm currently reading



***A Court of Silver Flames* – Sarah J. Maas**

Ok, ok, I know – it's not high literature, though I genuinely loved her first two books in the Throne of Glass series. But I enjoy the escapism, and the easy read, especially when I am working on my own writing and editing. Nothing wrong with that!

Writing Quotes / Inspiration

"If there's a book that you want to read, but it hasn't been written yet, then you must write it."

-Toni Morrison

Advice for every person with a story in their soul

"You never have to change anything you got up in the middle of the night to write."

-Saul Bellow

I bulked at this at first. Then I realised, it is absolutely true!

"Don't bend; don't water it down; don't try to make it logical; don't edit your own soul according to the fashion. Rather, follow your most intense obsessions mercilessly."

-Franz Kafka

Do you!

Are you an author, blogger, reviewer, editor, podcaster, or other writing content creator?

**SUPPORT
LOCAL
AUTHORS**

I want to feature you!

This year I want to open up my newsletter to feature people from all aspects of the writing process – creatives, promoters, enthusiasts and more.

If you would like to feature in an upcoming edition of my newsletter, please email me: lelita.baldock@gmail.com and we can get started!

Coming Up Next

The Writing Newsletter will be moving to once a month from this edition. I am just so super busy with editing book 3 and planning book 4 that I need to give myself more time. But I will be back from the first week of April! Watch this space!