

3 Million Books SOLD ... and Counting – In Conversation with Romantic Storyteller Amy Andrews

Warning: Swearing and blasphemy ahead, along with bloody good advice for aspiring writers.

Amy Andrews is an award-winning, USA Today best-selling Brissie and proud Aussie author who has written sixty-five plus contemporary romances. She's been translated into over a dozen languages. In her words, her books bring all the feels from 'sass and quirk and laughter to emotional grit to panty-melting heat'. Yes, her books feature lots of sex and kissing. 'You probably shouldn't try one if you think that stuff belongs behind a closed door,' she says. She loves good books and great booze although she'll take mediocre booze if there's nothing else.



To dip your toe into her style, here's a quote from 'Numbered', the book Amy co-authored with her sister Ros Baxter. 'Numbered' this month (August 2017) won the Romance Writers of Australia, RUBY (Romantic Book of the Year) award in the Romantic Elements Category. The RUBY is the most prestigious award for romance writing in the country. 'I bet if cancer of the penis was more prevalent there'd be a cure for this fucker. I bet if dicks were being amputated or dropping off left, right and centre there'd have been a cure decades ago. There'd be a whole fucking government dick department dedicated to it.'

Yep, this author is your best friend – the person who tells you as it is, political correctness be damned. If all your friends are straighty one eighties because that's your preference, Amy is not for you. But My God, she's definitely for me. [Amy Andrews](#) is full of energy and charisma – great company for an afternoon interview over a bottle of good wine (I'm super professional); the stories! ...She describes writing a book as 'hard' but having written a book, 'awesome'. Amy has contemporary romance novels in these categories: Sexy, Small Town, Medical, Sport, Urban Family, and Mystery. Her books are in translation all over the world from Russia to South Africa and Iceland, and have even gone into Japanese manga and been turned into graphic novels. Super talented, and happy to share hard-earned knowledge.

More than 65 books... Share with us two of your most precious experiences.

That first phone call from London at nine o'clock at night to tell me they were buying my first book – after trying to get published with Harlequin for 12 years! – was very special. It was State of Origin night and everyone I rang to tell was out somewhere or not answering their phones!

Another precious experience was being in the Times Square Marriot in New York for the Romance Writers of America conference a few years back and discovering my book cover was on one of the elevator doors. *My cover!!!* It was ridiculously thrilling!

When did you decide to leave your job as a Registered Nurse and become a full-time writer, and how big a decision was that?

I retired three years ago – so I'd been published ten years at that stage – and it was a *very* big decision for me. I loved being a nurse – loved it from the moment I first put on my uniform at the age of 17. And I loved the people I worked

with. But changes at work were making me rethink my direction and I started to wonder if maybe the universe was telling me I should just write instead of trying to juggle two professions. Financially, though, I knew I'd be cutting my income in half so it was a leap of faith. Luckily it's worked out okay, with my writing income increasing year on year. I haven't made up the short fall yet but I'm getting closer!

That's a lot of books! How do you find new story lines at this stage in your career?

I don't. They reckon there's only about 9 original plots in the world and all stories are a fresh twist on them. I mean, a boy wizard was hardly a new idea, right? But, it's how each writer tells that age-old story that sets each book apart. So I guess I try to do that, bearing in mind there's something very comforting to a reader – a *genre* reader anyway – about the familiarity of stories. Writing something to be new and innovative is, for me, the wrong way to approach my job. I don't write to be clever with words or to set the world on fire. I write to entertain. I am Netflix!

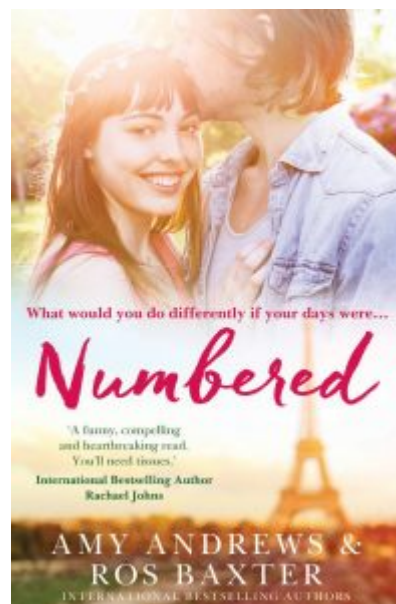


What have you learned about writing, agents and publishers along the way?

I've learned that all you can really control is the writing side – so much is actually out of your hands unless you self publish but even then, there's no guarantee your book is going to find an audience. I've learned that it takes talent, persistence, agility and a sprinkle of luck (sometimes a shit load of it) to make it as a full-time writer. I've learned that a good agent and a good publisher /editor is gold but they're all not created equal and they are first and foremost a business.

You wrote the novel *Numbered* with your sister. Can you tell us about that process? At any point did you want to strangle one another?

At no point did we want to strangle each other. We'd already written 2 books together so we were confident in our process and we have such similar writing styles and personalities, it was actually incredibly easy. And fun! I think the secret to co-writing is to plan/plot as much as possible in advance. Our process was to each own a POV character and tell the story in alternating POV chapters. Then we sent the chapters via email when we were done and the story came together.



I used to love getting Ros's chapter and reading her take on what we'd decided was going to happen. It was always fresh and wonderful and inspired me to go on and write the next chapter. I really think it pushed us to be better writers because I wanted my contribution to be just as good.

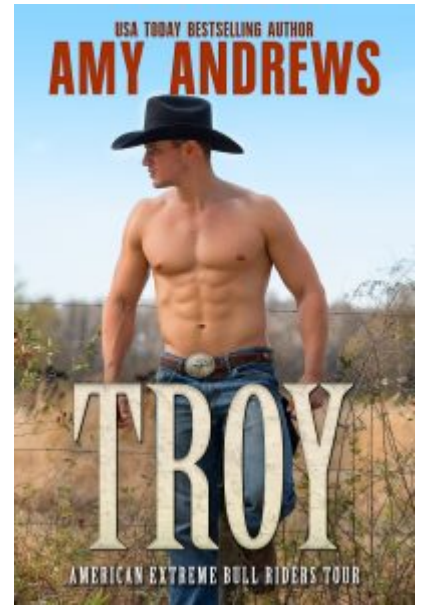
Describe your life as a writer for us. I know you occasionally get whisked to Europe for decadent lunches with publishers. Is that common?

Lol – I do visit my publisher when I'm overseas and they do take me to lunch which is hands down soooo freaking cool! But no one's shouting me business class airfares to swan around the world just yet. I might have to be more like JK or EL before something like that happens! Sadly the everyday reality is me staying in my PJ's for way too long and bleeding all over the keyboard. Writing a book is hard! *Having* written a book is awesome.

I've heard you say that networking is a cornerstone of a successful writing career. Any additional advice for fellow authors who may be earlier in their careers? For instance, how

important are competitions and awards, writers conferences, etc?

Comps are great for learning craft as long as you only enter the ones that give you feedback. Awards are lovely but not something you can count on. Conferences are gold. G.O.L.D. Find your tribe – the body that’s there to support your particular genre – join them and go to their workshops and conferences and get into their online communities. Not only will you find kinship but you’ll improve your craft and get to know industry people as well. This is where your networking really comes into force. You can face-to-face pitch manuscripts at a lot of writer conferences these days to an editor or an agent. That’s worth the admission price alone! If I had one piece of advice I’d recommend you invest in attending a writing conference (appropriate to what you’re writing) every year. If you’re looking at ROI, it’s the best bang for buck IMHO. But make sure you work it work it, when you’re there – get your money’s worth! Learn craft but also go to industry workshops, introduce yourself to people etc. The connections you make at conferences may not be immediately evident but they can be career starting/building.



Intrigued? – [Freebies and loads of new Amy Andrews titles.](#)

Her latest release is [Troy: American Extreme Bull Riders Tour.](#)

Carolyn Martinez is an [author](#), [editor](#) and [author's coach](#).