

## Kathleen's Bio

I was born trying to do things my way. The doctor told my mother she could expect her baby (me) to be born December 1<sup>st</sup>. I arrived two weeks late. I always wanted to be a writer. As soon as I could hold a pencil (learning to spell helped considerably), I was scribbling words on paper and stringing them into stories. "Go outside and play!" my mother insisted. Little did she know that I had more fun writing my stories than anything else I could do. Plus, writing was the only way I knew how to quiet the voices chattering away inside my head. It took years before I realized that not everyone else heard voices the way I did. But the people



in my head seemed so real, and they were carrying on conversations and doing things that were always much more interesting than anything in my own life. No wonder I wanted to spend all my time learning about them and writing down their stories!

Santa brought me a typewriter for Christmas when I was ten years old. I happily traded in my pencil and began pounding out stories on that teal-colored Olivetti. I went through lots of typewriter ribbons and correction tape. White-Out had yet to be invented (yes, I'm that old) and computers were not yet on the horizon. "What do you want to be when you grow up?" people would ask as I got older. "A writer!" I'd tell them, but they never liked my answer. "Go to college, study business," they advised. "There's no money in writing." But I didn't care. I just kept writing.

My teachers pointed me in the direction of creative writing. Short stories! Poetry! I resisted their well-meaning efforts. Why waste my time creating Haiku and journaling when all I wanted was to write novels? Meanwhile, no one was providing me specific directions on how I might achieve that. Deep down, I had a hunch that the only way I would accomplish writing an entire book with sustainable plot and believable characters would be to lock myself in a quiet room, sit down with my characters, and let them take over. So that's what I did. I just kept writing.

I pounded out stories on the manual keyboard as I finished high school. I spent a year studying abroad in Europe. I graduated from college with a degree in Sociology and a minor in German. Not much you can do with those credentials, but I was lucky enough to find a job with a local newspaper. But one of the main drawbacks about journalism is that it deals with sources, facts, and truth. Fiction is so much more fun! I got married, had a baby, and then decided to switch career paths. After sixteen years working for the catholic church (I've served my time in purgatory on earth), an attorney convinced me that my skills were perfectly suited for the field of law. I moved on to a world filled with legal briefs, court mandated deadlines and corporate politics (not my favorite thing in the world). Seven years later, I literally fell into a fairy tale job as staff writer at an American castle listed on the National Registry of Historic Places. Being paid to write about a beautiful castle steeped in history and romance didn't feel like work at all. My official retirement was some years ago, but I'm still writing for and about the castle. Nowadays, I do it from home.

Frank Sinatra and I have something in common. We both preferred to "*do it my way.*" Despite all the pundits constantly telling me I was doing it wrong, I kept on writing. The agents and editors I met through the years kept advising me on how to make my stories more marketable. "That 35 yr. old overweight schoolteacher who's looking for love at the bottom of a cookie jar? Swap her out for a neurotic teen binge eater who cuts, and you might hit it big in the Young Adult market!" No thank you. Not what I

wanted to do, and neither did my characters. I kept on writing as the rejections piled up. 28 lbs. worth of rejection slips by the time I quit counting and threw them in the trash. I refused to allow them to define who I was. I just kept writing.

Over the years, I slowly built up a cache of stories that turned into eight published full-length novels. Books for women. Books about women. Ordinary women living ordinary lives, who suddenly find themselves in extraordinary circumstances. And though I constantly dream of happily-ever-after endings for all my characters, the stories usually end up surprising me. Hopefully, my books will speak to you of courage and faith, of family and friendship. Of hearts that are often broken but always mended by the one thing that never fails us if we allow ourselves to truly embrace it.

And that, of course, is love.