

Speaker: Jeannie Lin

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SELLING THE "HARD SELL"

WORKSHOP OUTLINE

If your labor-of-love manuscript defies the publishing mold, you won't want to miss this presentation. Join Golden Heart® winner and Asian-set historical romance author Jeannie Lin (*Butterfly Swords*, *Harlequin Mills & Boon*) as she shares how she took her "hard-sell" novel from slush pile to sale! Gain unique insight on using a marketing perspective to get that partial in the door, and tips to position your partial to hook that agent or editor.

Summary:

1. Writing the book of your heart
 - a. The blessing and curse of being "unique"
 - i. Pros: no market saturation/stand out
 - ii. Cons: risky/no prior data/hard to place or visualize
 - b. When a "no market" labor of love meets the market
 - i. Persistence and getting it out there!
 - ii. A compelling story, no matter the backdrop
2. The business side of creativity
 - a. Marketing perspective: It's about sales!
 - b. Know your market – comparable works/authors
 - c. Use an advertising mentality
 - i. Short attention span: think billboard and magazine ads
3. Pitching the "hard-sell" book
 - a. Identify agents likely to be interested or open to your premise/era
 - i. Research (QueryTracker/AgentQuery/Publisher's Marketplace or Lunch)
 - ii. Similar books—acknowledgments
 - iii. Conference panels
 - iv. Search for "crossovers"
 - b. The query or verbal pitch: provide reasons for a "yes" vs. "no"
 - i. Mechanics
 - i. Professionalism
 - ii. Query scan
 - ii. Stand out from the pile—even more than usual
 - i. Marketable elements – don't tell your story
 - ii. The hook: loglines and high-concept
 - iii. Unsolicited sample pages
 - iv. Awards

4. Your partial is in the door, now keep those pages turning!
 - a. Know your market
 - i. What's working in the genre
 - ii. What's not working in similar books
 - b. First five pages
 - i. Voice & Distinctive writing
 - ii. Opening scene
 - i. Action scenes vs. active scenes
 - iii. World Building
 - i. Unique, but accessible
 - ii. Handling unfamiliar elements
 - iv. Character
 - i. Sympathetic and memorable
 - ii. Deep POV & GMC
 - c. Overall Partial:
 - i. Five senses, solid writing, story structure, GMC, good mechanics – Are PAR FOR THE COURSE
 - ii. Handle background info and backstory seamlessly
 - iii. Anchoring and hooking – every chapter like a short story
 - iv. Don't assume emotion/conflict/drama – punch it up!
 - v. Pacing and progression – readable
 - i. Avoid repetition
 - ii. Scenes differentiated?
 - iii. Tension & conflict growing?
 - vi. What's REALLY going to sell your partial?
 - i. Voice
 - ii. Character
 - iii. DISTINCTIVENESS
 - d. Sanity check – How do you know if your pages are working?
5. Conclusions and Q&A