The background of the cover features a wooden bookshelf filled with books, a green upholstered chair, and a desk with papers and a pen. The text is overlaid on this scene.

LIVING, BREATHING, WRITING:

A Lesson A Day Volume 2

by **Chelle Cordero**
Author in Residence

Living, Breathing, Writing: A Lesson a Day

Volume 2

by

Chelle Cordero

Sampler

Living, Breathing, Writing: A Lesson a Day
Volume 2

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Dedicated to the talented writers of Vanilla Heart Publishing



Introduction

“Having Chelle Cordero's blog on my Kindle is like having an author here in residence with me. She gives inspiration, motivation, and best of all, practical advice and solutions. I love the ‘writing exercises’ she offers at the end of each blog, as well as the ‘writing prompts’.” ~J.B. Naylor

And now, Kindle owner or not, writers are able to get in on the fun and active lessons from the Kindle Blog—*Living, Breathing, Writing*, by Chelle Cordero.

Welcome to a complete month of lessons about the craft of writing and being a writer. In the BONUS Section of this book you’ll find more than 50 brain-starting exercises to help you get those words on paper.

These short lessons and activities have been previously published as part of the acclaimed Amazon Kindle blog *Living, Writing, Breathing* available by subscription for Kindle owners, and consistently in the Top 100, for just 99¢ a month.

from Chelle Cordero:

”Living, Breathing, Writing is filled with weekly articles about writing, tips, trends, methods. Imagine a weekly writers' workshop and the convenience of your Kindle!”

<http://bit.ly/pILcG>

Full Book Table of Contents

Where Do Story Ideas Come From?
Thinking Outside The Box & Promotion
Opening The Door With Your Query
Marketing Yourself Online
A Picture is Worth A Thousand Words
The Time is Now
Challenge Yourself
Beginning To End
If You Build It, They Will Come
Thinking Outside The Box & Promotion
Be Careful What You Write
KISS: Keep It Simply Simple
Your Editor – And The Final Word
When Life Gets in The Way
Living in Excess
Writing Right
The Three W's: Writing, Words and Work
Being a REAL Writer...
Manners Matter
Who, What, When, Where, Why, and How
Working The Network
The Idea Well
Far Reaching Efforts
A Boy Named Sue
Write To Read
D.I.Y. Your Way to A Published Book
It's Electric
Setting the Setting
Perspective Makes a Difference
Imagery
Back to Basics

A Sampling

Beginning To End

When Life Gets in The Way

Being a REAL Writer...

Write To Read



Beginning to End

There is a beginning, middle and end to every plot in books, movies, TV shows and country songs (ballads). It's how you build each of those components that keeps your readers interested and turning pages.

A writer should make use of more than narrative in telling the story – the characters, setting, and conflicts are all important. Use the way a character walks, dresses, talks and even flinches when they are startled to help lay out your back-story. Make your characters real and multi-dimensional so that your readers can relate, sympathize and like (or maybe hate). Develop your character's personal history – even if most of it never comes out in the story – and use that to help your character react to events and conflicts. Keep an edge of tension and a touch of mystery about your main characters and your readers will try to get “inside his/her head” – why is he brooding, why is she so suspicious, etc?

The setting is when and where your story takes place. Is your story contemporary, futuristic or back in history? And where does your story take place – a battlefield full of death and misery, a school campus loaded with students dreaming of the future, a factory where the workers feel bored and underappreciated? Your setting will help to tell the story and even “set the stage”. Use the gloom of an old mansion to communicate the undercurrent in a wealthy but dysfunctional family; or use the bright lights and busy city sidewalks to emphasize the energy in your plot.

Your plot is the telling of the story, an introduction and the order of events, the conflicts, climax, and the resolution. Pace the events throughout your story, too much action at once may confuse your readers whereas too much time between events may get boring. If you are the type of writer that I am and you let your characters write their own story, this pacing has to come while doing editing; if you work by outline you can pretty much lay out the events and conflicts so that your readers interest remains piqued.

Short stories should remain focused on one or two major conflicts, don't clutter up your plot. Full length novels can add side stories and multiple conflicts so long as they don't draw away from the major conflict and eventual climax and resolution. In real life we often face different challenges and have several surprises along the way so it wouldn't be farfetched for your hero/heroine to face several tests between the beginning and end. Your ending doesn't always have to be "happy ever after", it does need to be a solution or a resolve of the conflicts encountered.

Every story begins with a concept, an idea. Build on that idea, decide what the major conflict is and sprinkle (liberally) little mini-structures of action and blocks. Allow your characters actions and dialogue, as well as the setting, help to pull your readers into the story – remember "Show Don't Tell". Let your characters smile and laugh when they are happy and slam doors and stomp when they are mad. Let the pleasant scent of blooming flowers show the reader that it's a new day fresh with morning dew.

Writing exercise: Did you have a favorite story you were told as a child? Perhaps it was a family tale, a nursery rhyme, or something comforting you were told as a bedtime story? It's time to rewrite the story – bring it into today and let the problems be like those adults encounter. This might be the time for you to give the story the ending you really, secretly, wanted all those years ago.

Writing prompt: Choose five items within your site and reach – make up a slogan about each that you would use for an ad campaign if you were selling these things.



When Life Gets in The Way

There will be days when you will believe that the only thing to get you through the day is a good, loud “primal scream”. Maybe you’ve had an unexpected family emergency, or even an unexpected visit – or maybe you’ve been under the weather with a good, old fashioned, exhausting flu... there are any number of things that can happen “naturally” in your life to throw your whole routine askew. You begin to feel as if deadlines are closing in on you and you check the calendar hoping that you did remember to list your upcoming assignment due dates. The pressure builds and your brain literally freezes.

The worst thing a writer can do when they are under extreme stress is to avoid the need to write, to express feelings from deep within, and absorb themselves in menial and stifling tasks. Ignore your writing and you begin to feel as if your head will explode. Writing is indeed a treat, but it is not a reward, it’s a necessity. Remember to breath. Dig yourself out from under the excess. Be who you are, a writer, and make the rest of your life fit around it. Here are a few tips to help you get there:

Get a calendar, one that won’t get lost in a clutter of papers on your desk. I use my computer’s Outlook calendar as well as a pocket notebook calendar I frequently update. List all of your deadlines and any important events you really must tend to – whether you work from an office or from home, there are times you absolutely must be away from your desk to keep

appointments and other obligations. Remember though that you are still working and let those you need to make appointments with know that you are working on a schedule and your time is limited. Don't let yourself get bullied – you still have to answer to a “boss” (literally, yourself, editors who gave you assignments, bills you have to pay with your earnings).

Any memo size pad of paper will suffice for writing out periodic to-do lists. You can also use erasable memo boards, project books or student assignment notebooks, Prioritize the things you have to do starting with your writing assignments. Deadline work is important and make sure that you block out your time to allow for research, writing and editing before submission. Sometimes we all miss deadlines; if you have built a good reputation with editors and this is a very rare, possibly solitary, time to miss a deadline, you will most probably find understanding so long as you are upfront and honest. Be careful, there is always the exception. If you frequently barely make your deadlines and your work consistently looks hurried, you certainly won't last long or get repeat assignments.

Priority number one, list any looming deadlines and already scheduled and unavoidable appointments. Priority number two is all about writing, take time to scratch that story idea down, edit a manuscript you shoved in a drawer a few months back, plan out a new project. Send out query letters. Read and answer to your work related emails, phone calls and other correspondence. Notice the pattern, your job as a writer comes first.

Your next priority is scheduled “me-time”; schedule healthy and rejuvenating pursuits such as exercise, relaxation, meals. Now add to the list, if you need to, non work related responsibilities such as family obligations, housework, personal business and social activities; include family and roommates in your everyday household responsibilities. Make sure that you have set realistic and attainable goals and be sure to cross items on your to-do list as you get them done. You won't need to complete your entire list every day, but you will enjoy a huge sense of accomplishment when you see items that you have taken care of. Decide on both short term and long term goals and dreams and include those on your list so you can focus your work.

For at least the first week or so, you should also keep a loose journal of your daily activities and time. After a while you will begin to see a pattern where you can make your time more efficient or where certain unavoidable tasks create a test of your self-discipline. Establishing a pattern to your work day is important; you will find that you can condition yourself to

“produce” and you will also help your family and friends understand time that you need without their interruptions.

Writing exercise: Set up a to-do list of things you can realistically tackle within the week. Remember to prioritize items with work coming first. Then keep a journal of your week to see how you can fit your life around your needs. Try to establish a written routine that will help you accomplish the things on your to-do list.

Writing prompt: Tick-tock, tick-tock. Time is clicking away. Listen to the clicking (or hum) of your clock and describe the emotions that makes you feel.



Being a REAL Writer...

We watch TV and see Hollywood's stereotype of a published author – some reclusive soul clacking away at typewriter keys all day long. Somewhere along the line a well-dressed and wise agent enters the scene and talks about a frantic national book tour that visits bookstores in multiple small towns; there's always a huge placard announcing the event in the window and with rare exceptions a room filled with panting fans waiting for personally autographed books.

Ok, shut the TV off and meet the real world...

At a time when it is easier than ever to be “published” there are some facts that might surprise you: Most writers do NOT make a living writing. It is rare AT ANY PUBLISHER that someone will do all of your marketing and promotions unless YOU are paying for it. Some book sales will be as low as the number of your close family and friends. Some writers invest more monetarily than they ever recoup in royalties. Not every publisher offers an advance. While it may seem that no one has ever heard of you no matter

how hard you've tried to promote your book, do something vindictive and suddenly everyone will know of you – and want to avoid you.

I am certainly not telling you these hard facts to discourage you. I want to encourage you. I want you to choose to write. The people who go into this field with unrealistic expectations will usually frustrate easily and may even give up their dream. I want you to go in with your eyes wide open and your fingers busy on the keyboard. The first time, every time, you see your name on the spine of a book is an incredible feeling of accomplishment and joy. Seeing your published words (either in a printed book or in an electronic document) is amazing and the knowledge that someone, anyone, somewhere is reading YOUR words is empowering.

The field is a hard one. Yes, I said it is easier than ever to get published and it is. The economy has actually increased the number of “publishers” – the BIG New York houses, once the pinnacle of the publishing world, have had to reduce staff and lower their risk by not accepting as many new and unknown authors. Promotion budgets (when and where they are still available) are drastically reduced and spent only on the houses' top and proven performers. Costs of printing coupled with modern technology have made it more feasible for some to electronically publish a book rather than place it on a bookshelf in some retail outlet.

A number of Small Press and Independent publishers have popped up, and sometimes out, over the past few years. Authors have turned to forms of self-publishing, sometimes with the help of a vanity press and sometimes through other means. It still remains though that the first important step is getting your book out there. Being a successful published author takes more than talent, you need a good sense of business, specifically publishing business. Do your research and by all means do your math. Let your dreams guide you, but not blind you.

Some general publishing terms to understand –

Traditional Press, Small Press, and Indie (independent) Publishers: Press that offers full design services, distribution through international distributors and wholesalers, layout and design, carries back-list and mid-list authors along with front-list (big name) authors, has editing department, sometimes offers advances. Big Houses, the “Big Six”, use a traditional format.

Self-pub: A writer manages every phase of production across all venues. It is difficult to get in-store distribution, printing is often higher priced. Self published e-books eliminate costs of printing but must be

highly promoted on websites. It is very important to pay attention to good formatting, editing, proofing, and cover design. The author must market extensively. The self-pub end of the industry has a bad name that can work against a great author; while this is slowly changing – it is VERY slowly changing.

Subsidy and Vanity publishing: Often very expensive, authors almost never see their investments returned. The author pays for everything including any marketing and promotion. Some companies offer up-to-very-expensive packages to design and promote your book that they claim will ensure “success” – be careful. Some subsidy may be worthwhile if you are looking for a very limited run to distribute within a family or group.

Print-on-Demand and Publish-on-Demand: These terms refer to the method of printing. Instead of printing a set run of books and running the risk of getting stuck with unsold copies, books are only printed after confirmed sales. The costs of printing are usually higher and the retail price of the books needs to compensate.

If you have done your homework and ensure you are not falling for some ridiculous scheme, then don't let someone talk you out of being a published author. “Hang out” on forums and social network sites with other writers to hear industry news. If you decide to go with a “Small Press” or such, don't let someone snub you because you are not with a “Big House” – often those are the folks who are still waiting to get published.

Writing exercise: Using YOUR name, write a “story” where each sentence begins with the letters in your name (ie: CHELLE = Cars came to a screeching halt. Hurrying across the street, an old lady had tripped. Everyone craned their necks to see what had happened. Leaving his car running, a young man went to her assistance. Lots of onlookers cheered. Even more cheers erupted when the woman stood, seemingly unscathed, and continued on her journey.)

Writing prompt: Describe yourself so that you would be recognized by a stranger in a crowded subway station – make it a pleasant description.



Write to Read

You must be able to read in order to write – in most cases it doesn't matter if you are actually reading the black and white print on paper, text on a computer screen or listening to an audio tape. A writer must keep his mind alive with words. I personally love the scene in "Short Circuit" where the robotic hero Johnny-5 is speed-scanning books (of ALL subjects) for "Input". We need constant input. Words come in and words go out, it needs to be a constant flow.

Don't limit your reading to a genre, all fiction, writing guides, technical manuals, newspapers, etc. Read them all. The writer who steadfastly refuses to read "those kinds of books" is limiting their imaginations. If you really think the book would be better without a certain theme, then use it as a writing exercise and RE-WRITE it the way you would like to see it written – if you didn't like the ending, RE-WRITE it. Use every opportunity to grow as a writer, to expand your mind.

A true writer NEEDS to read. Every time you can see the world through someone else's eyes, you develop your own abilities to visualize the world and pass it along to your own readers. Reading dialogue becomes another form of people watching and every writer needs to do that. You will

hear new words and colloquialisms, you will learn about different cultures, beliefs and behaviors – in short, you will experience life at your fingertips. If we as writers are expected to “write what we know” then it is certainly helpful to know about life.

By all means read for enjoyment. Also read to critique. If you, as a reader, think the author might have made a passage stronger, more believable or flow smoother, then exercise away and re-write the section the way you think it should have read. Notice the way the author describes characters and settings – were you able to get a clear vision based on the author’s descriptions? Did you feel swept up in the action? Did you feel the emotions or did you have to be told how the character was feeling?

Don’t be afraid that you will “steal” a story, in reality there are only some many stories to be told and most of the art is in the telling. Using a very simplistic approach to the romance genre: boy meets girl, boy falls for girl, boy wins girl, boy does something stupid and loses girl, boy proves himself and wins girl back, and they live happily ever after. Yet there are so many successful romance stories out there because the writers have found a way to tell the story in a unique way and in their own style. At the same time, if you read extensively, you have a solid idea what kinds of stories sell and how many times specific plot twists have been used.

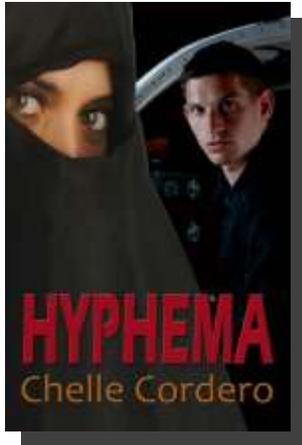
Reading is also an excellent way to get past writer’s block. If you feel that your creativity is stymied and you are finding it difficult to put words to paper, jostle your mind a little with reading. Let your mind wander as you read, let it form pictures in your mind, get to know the characters. The more you allow your mind free reign with imagination, the sooner you will get those creative juices flowing. Get the juices flowing and the words will follow.

Writing exercise: Write a 1-to-3 paragraph review of a book, short story or even a movie and explain what you liked or didn’t like. Don’t include any spoilers (don’t give the story away). Convince your readers why they should or should not read/see it. Join a forum like <http://www.goodreads.com/> and post your reviews (ESPECIALLY the good ones!)

Writing prompt: Describe all of the things that made you smile in the last 24-hours and explain why you smiled. Next, why not describe all of the things that annoyed you?

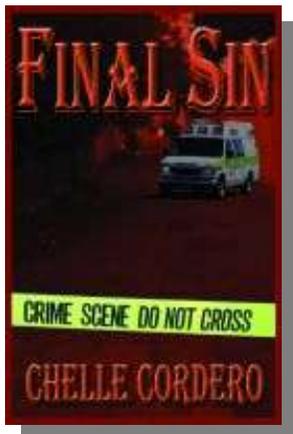


Novels of Passion and Suspense
by
Chelle Cordero



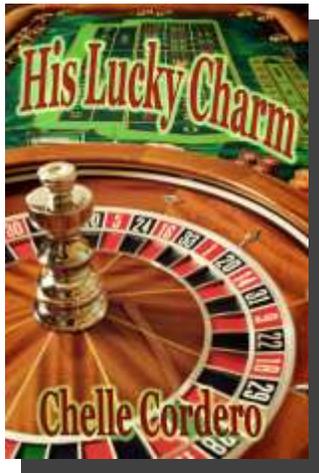
Hyphema

Hyphema: Bleeding in the eye caused by trauma... Matt Garratti, a paramedic from New York, moves his wife and son to North Carolina to work at his dream job as a flight medic. Pakistani born Sudah, his wife, receives frosty stares and insensitive comments from their new neighbors... Matt wonders if he is pursuing his dream or bringing his family into a nightmare from which they may never wake.



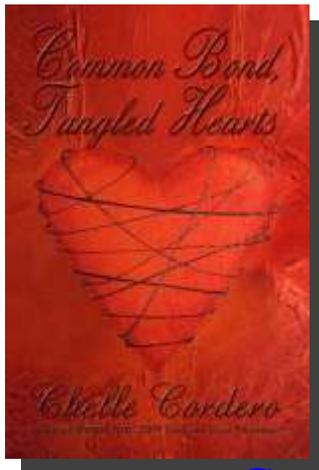
Final Sin

Deputy Sherriff Commander Jake Carson has his hands full... investigation of a brutal multiple homicide, a troubled son and a vindictive ex-wife. He meets young, free-spirited paramedic Julie Jennings. When Julie becomes the subject of an obsession, it puts both of them in danger...



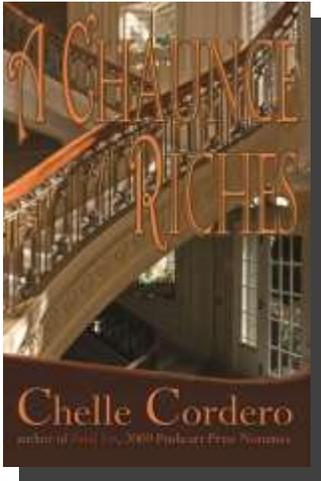
His Lucky Charm

What happens in Vegas doesn't always stay in Vegas... this time it follows Brandon and Caitlyn across the country and into a world of espionage and danger. The one thing that Brandon knows for sure is that he can't afford to lose his lucky charm, Caitlyn.



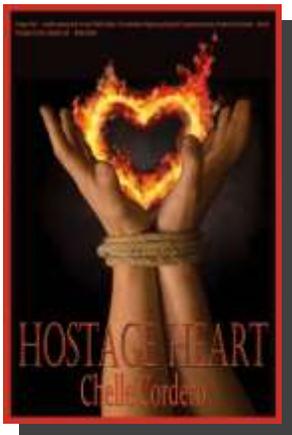
Common Bond, Tangled Hearts

Layne Gillette's world is turned upside down when a man she has never met shows up to lay claim as the father of her 6-year old son. When Layne's abusive "ex-husband" shows up, they are torn apart by danger, kidnapping and lies.



A Chaunce of Riches

Ben Johnson was hired as a bodyguard for a rich widow and her kid, but he never expected to be working for the woman who had abandoned him just when he had needed her the most. Damn it all, he still wanted her. Samantha Chaunce never thought she would have to explain why she married the rich man instead of Ben. Or that her husband had been murdered...and Ben was the prime suspect.



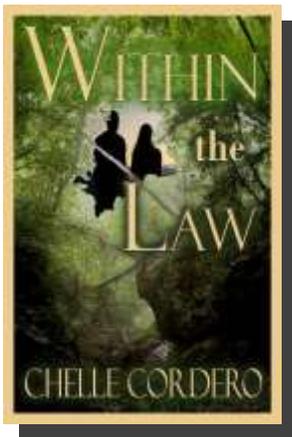
Hostage Heart

Life was hard after the hurricanes swept through, destroying her parents' home and livelihood... An errand for her boss - a chance encounter with a crew of bank robbers - a kind man who tried to help her ... a man who isn't all he seems...no, he is so much more.



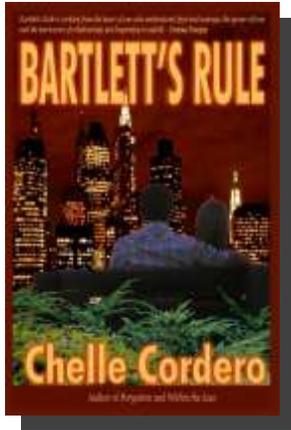
Courage of the Heart

Courage of the Heart shows us that sometimes love is the only cure for the very deepest of emotional wounds. The story of the two lovers takes a series of unexpected and fast paced turns where lives, sanity and love are put in jeopardy. Their commitment to one another results in a spirit that binds them together and helps them to overcome physical and emotional dangers



Within the Law

Tom gave up on ever falling in love again the day that he buried his high school sweetheart and fiancé. He started a career in law enforcement just so that he could find her murderer and rapist. Just when he is about to see justice done, he meets Alli Davis- the defense attorney for the murdering rapist who took his love from him.



Bartlett's Rule

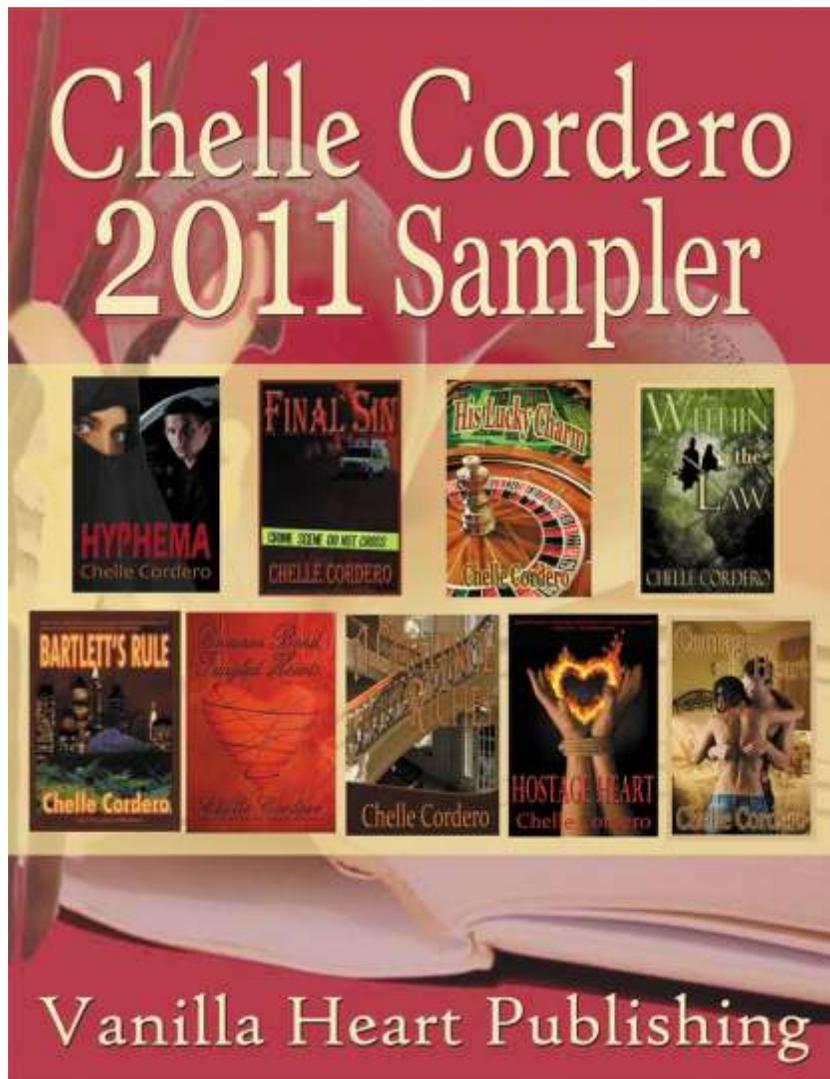
Bartlett's Rule shares the story of Lon and Paige's love affair; a romance filled with hardship, emotion, danger and triumph. Falling in love was never the challenge; being there for each other, knowing just what to say and making it work is the real test. Paige and Lon are real; they are human, they cry and they laugh. Paige has to learn to trust. Lon has to learn to be patient.



Photo by Mark Engelman

Chelle Cordero is author of seven romantic suspense novels and two mystery novels (Vanilla Heart), and short stories in five anthologies. She also writes for several national newspapers, magazines and regional publications; her articles have appeared in Gannett Newspapers, SPOT-LIGHT Magazine, Hudson Valley Magazine, and EMS Responder.

Ms. Cordero has conducted several writing workshops and authors the Amazon Kindle blog, Living, Breathing, Writing (available by subscription). She also does book and project editing in her “spare” time. Along with her husband Mark, she is a partner in By-Lines, an editorial and photography company catering to the business community. They live in the scenic Hudson Valley of New York with their son; their daughter and son-in-law live nearby. She is also a NYS EMT and the entire family volunteers with their local ambulance corps.



[2011 Chelle Cordero Novel Sampler](#)

This sampler of Chelle Cordero's novels is free for your enjoyment. All of Chelle's novels are available in both print and ebook editions for every reading device, through online retailers and in select bookstores around the world.