



STRANGER IN A FOREIGN LAND

Michael Murphy

Losing his old life and finding a new love.

DREAMSPUN DESIRES

LOVE ALWAYS FINDS A WAY

These are contemporary category romance novels, complete with your favorite heartwarming heroes, crazy clichés, and terrific tropes. It's all about the feel-good loving that will leave you grinning.

CATEGORY RECIPE

Combine your heroes in a baking dish, add three cups of cake-mix conflict, and blend well. Pour in a pint of your favorite homemade flavor for flair, stir in a pound of sugar to make your cake's heart swell, and add a dash of spice for something *really* nice. Don't be afraid to crack a few eggs and let the flour fly! Your three-tier happily-ever-after wedding cake construction will be a great success!

COMPOSITION RULES

- **Word count of 50,000-60,000.**
- Point of view and overall tense must be *third person, alternating viewpoint, past tense* unless preapproved by the acquisitions editor. Perspective may switch from section to section or chapter to chapter. First-person POV may be considered for standout stories if the overall



tone and feel is clearly adult and the story's angst level is low. Past tense is *required*—no present tense accepted for this line.

TROPES

- **Dreamspun Desires** features a variety of reader-pleasing themes and tropes to bring our heroes together: love at first sight, second chance romance, arranged marriage, forbidden love, exotic settings, millionaires and movie stars, dancers and royals, friends to lovers, CEOs and bodyguards, and so much more! Add a fresh twist to your favorite classic romance element and feel free to swirl together more than one!

PLOT

- Romance, romance, *romance*! The primary plot line must feature your heroes falling in love and working for that happy ending. **We're looking for original stories featuring classic contemporary romance themes.**
- No fantasy, paranormal, supernatural, science fiction, or horror plots.
- Each love story should be a complete arc in each volume. No cliffhangers, please.
- Each volume within a grouped series must focus on a new set of lead characters.
- Choose a setting and make it sing! Your story can take place anywhere in the world and should connect logically to the heroes and plotlines. Where can your story take our readers?
- **Dreamspun Desires** stories are *contemporary romance*. No historical.

tone

- Tone can range from light and sweet to humorous to dramatic, and the story should sweep readers up in an exciting journey away from their everyday lives.

- **We want to feel the emotions, but go easy on the angst!** We're looking for surmountable obstacles, not tragedies and painful backgrounds. Love does conquer all!
- Focus on your heroes' internal emotional conflicts and the sensual tension between them, then bring in pressure from outside. Let readers feel the thrill of finding love and working for that happily ever after.

CHARACTERS

- **Heroes must be likeable, featuring only fixable flaws and appealing character:** social media darlings and celebrities, world-class athletes, snappy and suave businessman, dashing modern-day princes, or ruggedly handsome cowboys, for instance. These are the strong and successful men we dream about.
- **Dreamspun Desires** features male/male stories exclusively. No female *lead* characters or ménage relationship dynamics.

SEXUAL CONTENT

- Sexual content should be restricted to two to three significant events of any heat level up to explicit. Please note that sex for sex's sake, kink, BDSM, etc. are not appropriate. We reserve the right to request sex scenes be scaled back or removed to preserve the tone of the line.
- **Dreamspun Desires books should be considered "sexy romance,"** which means showing the full arc of the relationship. Rather than a "sweet romance," where the story may close the door on the intimacy or fade to black, Dreamspun Desires stories welcome the reader into the couple's growing relationship. That said, your scenes can be as general or specific as fits your style. We're not looking for an erotic handbook here, just an authentic peek inside the forming relationship.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

- All **Dreamspun Desires** novels will feature a specific cover format that is not negotiable, including the House Line design, color elements, and use of photorealistic images.

- Dedications, acknowledgments, and/or author's notes are restricted to a single page for all desired elements combined.

For an in-depth peek at the nuances we consider ideal for Dreamspun Desires and for recommendations on which books to research, check out these content guidelines:

<https://tinyurl.com/DRM-Content-Guidelines>

**If clicking the link above leads to an error page,
try pasting it directly into a browser.*

ADVANCES AND CONTRACT TERMS

- All **Dreamspun Desires** novels are contracted in print and digital formats, which are released simultaneously. A \$500-\$1,000 advance is paid in a single payment upon receipt of the signed contract. Once the advance is satisfied, novel digital royalty rates are 40% to 60% (based on copies sold). Novel paperback royalty rates are 30%.
- Copyright remains with the author.
- Electronic contracts are exchanged via e-mail.

TO SUBMIT A FULL MANUSCRIPT

Completed works will receive priority review and qualify for earlier calendar placement, as well as the opportunity to move up the calendar and be considered for targeted marketing.

Mail full story submissions to: submissions@dreamspinnerpress.com.

Please include “**Submission: Dreamspun Desires**” in the subject line.

- We will acknowledge all submissions by e-mail within five to seven days.
- Submissions will be read by multiple reviewers and an editor, and you will have a response within eight weeks.
- All accepted works must be provided to us as an electronic file.

In the body of the e-mail:

<https://www.dreamspinnerpress.com/submissions>

- Your legal name, pseudonym if applicable, and contact e-mail address.
- Working title, series name if applicable.
- Genre and manuscript length.
- General story description in two paragraphs.
- Writing credentials.

Attach to the e-mail:

- **A complete story summary or synopsis.** *This summary must include all major plot points, the decisions the characters make that move the plot forward, and how the story ends.*
- Key character profile information (like their goals, motivations, and conflicts in the story). **Please fill out a character profile chart for each of the story's heroes and include them with your submission*:**

TEMPLATE: <https://tinyurl.com/Dreamspun-GMC-Chart>

EXAMPLE: <https://tinyurl.com/Dreamspun-GMC-Chart-Example>

**If clicking a link above leads to an error page, try pasting it directly into a browser.*

- **The complete manuscript.** Dreamspinner Press does not accept partial manuscripts, previously published material, or simultaneous submissions.

Publication dates cannot be promised until we have received and approved your full manuscript through the submission process, including any requested revisions for content or tone.

FORMATTING YOUR SUBMISSION

Please follow these simple formatting guidelines.

- Submissions will be accepted in .docx, .doc, .rtf, .odt, and .txt formats. Please note that the Apple Pages program and Wordperfect are both incompatible with our editorial systems; .doc and .docx files exported from these programs exhibit critical

compatibility errors. Authors will need to make program accommodations.

- Standard 12 pt Times New Roman, 1 inch margins, .5 indent for the first line of each paragraph. 1.5 line spaces between lines. No tabs or spacing to indent, please! Page numbers in the upper right corner, author name in the upper left corner with the title of the work following. Example: Jane Smith / The Apple of His Eye
- All submissions must be spellchecked and edited for American English grammar and spelling. Regional words and slang are acceptable when appropriate.
- Dreamspinner Press edits works using *The Chicago Manual of Style* as its primary reference. Editing your work to these standards prior to publication will greatly facilitate the publication process.

TO PROPOSE A STORY IDEA

In lieu of a complete manuscript, you can send in a well-developed story idea for consideration.

Mail story proposals to Dreamspun Acquisitions Editor Sue Brown-Moore (sue@dreamspinnerpress.com). Please include “**Proposal: Dreamspun Desires**” in the subject line.

We will acknowledge all proposals by e-mail within five to seven days.

In the body of the e-mail:

- Your legal name, pseudonym if applicable, and contact e-mail address.
- Working title, additional series information if applicable.
- Genre and target length for the manuscript.
- General story description in two paragraphs.
- Writing credentials.

Attach to the e-mail:

- **A complete story summary or synopsis.** *This summary must include all major plot points, the decisions the characters make that move the plot forward, and how the story ends.*

- Key character profile information (like their goals, motivations, and conflicts in the story). **Please fill out these character profile charts and include them with your submission:**

TEMPLATE: <https://tinyurl.com/Dreamspun-GMC-Chart>

EXAMPLE: <https://tinyurl.com/Dreamspun-GMC-Chart-Example>

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That will give us an early look at the planned tone and details of your storyline so we can provide guidance during your writing process. Sue (or her designate) will reply to discuss your proposal and set a possible submission deadline. See “*Tips for a successful submission*” below for *proposal tips*.

Some additional notes on proposals:

- We require a draft of at least 5,000 words, preferably from the beginning of your story, as the second step of the proposal process. From that story sample, we may give you a thumbs up, we might provide feedback, or we might decline the idea. If your draft chapters are approved, we will set up a submission deadline for the full manuscript to judge the overall story themes, tone, and appropriateness for the line.
- **We strongly recommend studying our Content Guidelines document** to determine if your story idea will be a good fit for the line. Tone and tropes are extremely important, as we are looking for a specific story feel. You can view or download the Content Guidelines at this link: <https://tinyurl.com/DRM-Content-Guidelines> **If clicking the link above leads to an error page, try pasting it directly into a browser.*
- Publication dates cannot be promised until we have received and approved your full manuscript through the submission process (below).

TIPS FOR A SUCCESSFUL SUBMISSION

Keep these dates in mind if you want to maximize your opportunity for the earliest publication slot possible. These dates reference a fully finished manuscript:

- Submit no later than 3/1 for 1st Quarter of the *following* year.
- Submit no later than 6/1 for 2nd Quarter of the following year.
- Submit no later than 9/1 for 3rd Quarter of the following year.
- Submit no later than 12/1 for 4th Quarter of the following year.

The **Dreamspun Desires** line features a specific type of romance (category style), and we are looking for strong, developed, unique voices in the gay romance genre. Here are some tips to keep in mind as you write your story and prepare your proposal or submission:

- **Read a few of our recent Dreamspun Desires releases** (3-4) to get a feel for our style of category romance. Adapt or pen your story appropriately:
 - https://www.dreamspinnerpress.com/books/_/dreamspun-desires-7023-s?sort_by=publication_date&x=&format=-1&subtype=0&language=0
 - *If clicking the link above (or below) leads to an error page, try pasting it directly into a browser.*
- See suggestions in our Content Guidelines here: <https://tinyurl.com/DRM-Content-Guidelines>
- **Be flexible about taking story feedback.** We will make suggestions throughout the proposal and submission process, so if you prefer a hands-off style of collaboration, this is not the line for you.
- (For story proposals, rather than full submissions) **Have draft chapters ready** to send if we like your proposal. This will get you in the review queue faster.
- **Choose traditional themes and tropes but feature high-profile or swoon-worthy characters.** We do publish boy-next-door romance in this line, but our category romances are romantic fantasy—we're looking for the archetypes readers dream of and drool over. Light-heartedness and humor are encouraged.
- **Strive for a clear three-act story structure.** We want to see these characters meet, fall in love, and overcome adversity.

- **Ground your story with solid goals, motivations, and conflicts.** We want to *feel* how these character traits push and pull at one another.
- **The drama in the plot arc should be relationship-focused,** even as external events help drive the characters' choices. We prefer a believable mix of emotional internal conflicts and external pressure over characters reacting *solely* to external story elements. Balance is key.
- **Your characters should meet on page within the first 5,000 words, and *sooner is better*.** Got an idea for a great first-page meet cute? Great, let's see it! For second-chance romance, we understand they'll already know one another, but we want to see that spark of reunion quickly.
- **Avoid any implication of cheating in your story!** This makes certain tropes—like escorts and porn stars—challenging to pen, but it is doable. Be wary of showing the lead characters engaged in sexual activity with other (secondary) characters. The depiction of sex for money should be treated professionally, and any other background setup that requires sex with a secondary character should be referred to off page and happen before the story starts.