

# Interview with Newly Published Author - Missy Tippens

by Tami Brothers

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**Missy Tippens** - I've been writing since I got my very first computer in 1995. I joined RWA about 1997 and GRW soon after. In 2004, I had a short story included in *Blessings of Mossy Creek*. Then on January 30, 2007, I FINALLY made my first sale of a full-length novel to Steeple Hill Love Inspired. The book, *Her Unlikely Family*, was a February 2008 release. *His Forever Love* will be out in June 2009 and *A Forever Christmas* will be out November or December 2009.

**Can you tell us about “The Call”?**

I was lucky enough to get a revision letter from an editor, then a second revision letter after I made the first set of changes. And of course, I did every little thing she asked! A couple of weeks after resubmitting, I came home from the grocery store, put everything away, took my time making lunch, then happened to walk by the phone. I decided to check for calls. Harlequin Books popped up on the caller ID! I listened to message, and it was the editor asking me to call her when I got in. I was blown away, because I knew they don't call for rejections!

About that time my husband came home for lunch, so he got to be there when I made the call. The editor said she loved the book, told me what she loved about it, and said they wanted to offer me a contract. I was totally in shock. When I called my critique partner, Lindi Peterson, she just laughed at me because I was unnaturally calm. She told me to call her back when it had sunk in. And several hours later, I did call her back—laughing and celebrating.

**How did you go about getting an agent (if you have one) or did you submitted directly to an editor? If you have an agent, how long was it before they sold your story?**

I don't have an agent. I submitted straight to the editor from a contest request. (Which leads nicely into your next question!)

**What is your take on writing contests and critique partners? Would you recommend an unpublished writer seek these out?**

I've been in a critique group that met weekly for a couple of years, then moved to working online as needed. I also critique with another critique partner. And I have a few brainstorming partners. I highly recommend a writer trying it out and evaluating whether it works for her. Most writers I know have found it very helpful. As for contests... yes!! I think they can be very valuable. (Obviously, since my first sale came from a contest request!) I suggest entering contests that have a final editor or

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agent judge you're targeting. Also, the feedback can be excellent (although, sometimes difficult to hear). Take that feedback and try to look for consistency between judges. If two or three judges say the same thing, then you should probably try to work on that aspect of your writing. And the jewelry prizes aren't too bad either. :) By the way, I'm part of a group blog that's all about contests and the road to publication. We met by coming up against each other in contests over and over and formed a support group, then a blog. Of the 15 of us, eight are now published or contracted!  
[www.seekerville.blogspot.com](http://www.seekerville.blogspot.com).

**Did you have a website or blog before you sold? If yes, do you think it helped to have that up before hand? And if no, do you wish you had set one up before The Call?**

Yes, I reserved my domain name several years ago. And I set up a one-page website before the sale. I used it to announce contest finals and wins. Then once I sold, I easily expanded it to a 5-page site. I definitely think it's great to have that done ahead of time. Once you get The Call, you're ready to go. It can also be a great way to start building a mailing list early.

**Is there something about this whole process that made you say, "If I knew then what I know now, this would have been much easier?"**

As far as the sale and publishing itself, there's not anything I wish I'd known. RWA and GRW had prepared me well! But there is one thing I would do differently if I had it to do over again. I would not spend so much time re-writing the same books but would

plow ahead and have more books fully written.

Once I sold, I didn't have much else to offer my publisher, so it has put my first two sales with a long gap in between.

[www.missytippens.com](http://www.missytippens.com)

[www.lifewithmissy.blogspot.com](http://www.lifewithmissy.blogspot.com)

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[www.craftieladiesofromance.blogspot.com](http://www.craftieladiesofromance.blogspot.com)

[www.loveinspiredauthors.com](http://www.loveinspiredauthors.com)

Way to go Missy. We are very proud of you and we wish you all the best. You can support Missy by checking out her website and blogs. Take a moment and look for one of her books.

*Tami Brothers is the Registrar for the 2008/09 Moonlight & Magnolias Writers conference, as well as a one of many PROs currently serving on the National PRO Communications Committee. She is a full-time college student and slowly working on her fifth and sixth books. You can read more about Tami on her website at [www.tamibrothers.com](http://www.tamibrothers.com).*

