



# LOVE CHAT NEWS

from *Abigail Dane*

*History happily ever after...*

## THE VISCOUNT AND THE VALET The Whitleigh Saga Continues!

### News and Events

March 3, 2018  
Author Fest 2018  
Waynesboro Public Library  
Waynesboro, VA

April 28, 2018  
"Interactive Editing Playshop"  
Blue Ridge Writers, Charlottesville, VA

May 17, 2018  
Author Expo  
Augusta Co. Public Library  
Fishersville, VA

June 12, 2018  
Vendor Fair  
Zane Grey's West Society Convention  
Cowboy Village Resort, Jackson, WY

December 2017  
*The Viscount and the Valet*  
Published and **NOW AVAILABLE!**

October 2017  
"Confessions of a Romance Writer:  
Seven Things I Didn't Know Before I Became One"  
Marco Island, FL

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Welcome to  
[AbigailDaneRomance.com](http://AbigailDaneRomance.com)

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Writer: Seven Things I Didn't  
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**AT LAST!** *The Viscount and the Valet*, Book Three in the Whitleigh series. And so, the Whitleigh saga continues. This book builds on characters from the first two but centers on Viscount Merrivale, originally introduced in Book Two as John Tremaine's boyhood friend. The heroine is...well, here's what the back cover blurb says:

When George Merrick, Viscount Merrivale hires a new valet, he has no idea he has hired a female in disguise. Furious upon learning the truth, he assumes she is conspiring with his three overbearing older sisters, who are willing to use any trick to compel him to marry. He sets a trap to teach his valet a lesson—but soon finds himself snared in it, as well...

Hunted for crimes carrying a *death without mercy* sentence, Olivia Neville will do whatever she must to protect her younger brother and toddler sister. Even if she has to serve as valet to a whimsical lordship. Even if she has to run away when she finds herself falling hopelessly in love with a man she can never have...

**Want to hear a secret?** I hadn't planned to give Merrivale his own story, but he was just so much fun to write in Book Two that I decided he had to have a romance of his own! Besides, he insisted...and what can a writer do when a character takes over?

After the delay caused by moving in 2017, I knew finishing this book by year end would be a challenge. However, I had promised it in time for Christmas giving and, knowing my readers were asking for it, I pushed myself to write over 10,000 words a day in November. Frankly, I astonished *myself* with that level of sustained effort, but I was motivated by my beta readers who were waiting to read each day's output! I was truly heartened that, *without knowing the others had said it*, all of them thought that *Viscount* was the best in the series to date.

Since then, I've received many nice comments from *Viscount* readers, including:

*I'm only in the first few pages of the book but already intrigued. Loving the history woven into it.... I like her writing style...choice of words, descriptions and imagery.* —Cherill, NV  
(a new reader who received the book as a gift)

*Just finished...even more fun to re-read. The [first] two were fine...but this one is so clever. Love the elements of suspense and danger as well as romance...remarkable and most clever. Don't want to put the book down. I love it all!*  
—Kathleen, TX

*Your books are a good mix of action and emotional development...I like the [setting] of 1600s....more interesting as...I'm learning about the culture at that time. Hope I'm on your signed book list. Need to keep up my collection.*  
—Jan, NM

*The Viscount and the Valet,*

Book Three in the Whitleigh series,

the story of Merrivale and Olivia,

by Abigail Dane.



You'll find more reviews on my website: [AbigailDaneRomance.com](http://AbigailDaneRomance.com) (click on Updates). You can purchase *Viscount* and the rest of the Whitleigh saga books there, as well.

## The Viscount and the Valet Opening, Chapter 1

Cornwall, England  
Stable at Merrivale Court  
Home of George Merrick,  
Viscount Merrivale  
3 September 1652

Olivia's face, hands, hair and clothes were dirty. Her body was pungent with horse and stable and her own sweat. Her stomach growled for appeasement. She shivered with the chill of the night. And she was exhausted from walking all day.

More exhausted than she had ever been. More frightened than she had ever been, as well.

Not surprising under the circumstances. Being under the threat of a *death without mercy* sentence is bound to have some effect on a person.

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To get the book *NOW*, go to:  
[AbigailDaneRomance.com](http://AbigailDaneRomance.com)

Or contact me directly at:  
[AbigailDaneRomance@gmail.com](mailto:AbigailDaneRomance@gmail.com)



Above: Covers for *The Pirate and the Virgin* and *The Baron and the Black Widow* were created in the same way as the cover for *The Viscount and the Valet*.



Original artwork: mixed-media collage created as wrap-around cover for *The Viscount and the Valet*

## Viscount Book Cover Backstory

When I young and foolish—that is, after I wrote my first historical romance novel and while I was still figuring out how to get it to print—I contacted no fewer than sixteen artists about a cover for the book. I knew just what I wanted, but couldn't seem to translate my vision into anything anyone else could envision. Eventually, one of my artist friends (who had also turned down the project!) suggested I do the cover myself.

The result was...ummmm...enlightening. Mainly, it proved that I really could *Do It Myself*. The major advantage of doing a thing yourself—besides not having to pay or wait for someone else to do it, of course—is that you can create your own vision of the thing without the frustration of trying to explain it to someone who can't see into your head. Naturally, you also have only yourself to blame for less-than-spectacular outcomes, but that's a small price to pay. And, as I like to tell my trainees: "That's a different workshop."

This mixed-media collage above is the original art piece I designed as the cover for *The Viscount and the Valet*. The background is 12x12 scrapbooking paper, as are the figures' clothing, the stable and swirl patterns. The flowers are pre-made of paper, placed over layers of ribbons and mini mosaic tile pieces.

The coiffures are doll hair and I added a "jeweled" sticker as an ornament for the lady. The decorative elements in her skirt are gold Starform stickers, with a layer of tulle as an underskirt to soften the dress and add dimension. The horses are dimensional stickers. The hero's boots are cut and shaped from scraps of leather. The lock and key in his hand are tiny jewelry charms. With model train fencing and a few jeweled swirls to add more *bling*, the piece was ready to photograph.

After taking dozens of photos to get one that I could use, I sent the best image to my graphics specialist who added the titling. (That's the only element of my book prep I don't do myself.) Frame the finished artwork. Hang in my studio. *Voila!* Another DIY project completed.

Since I don't use patterns for my artwork, I'm often asked how I know when a piece is finished. Whether it's a paper-engineered piece, an art doll or something else, my answer is always the same: "When I've gone one step too far...it's finished." Oddly (or perhaps not), this somewhat haphazard approach is similar to my rather haphazard writing process; I simply write what comes to me as it comes to me. If asked, my advice for any creative endeavor would be: *Do whatever works for you...and make it FUN.*

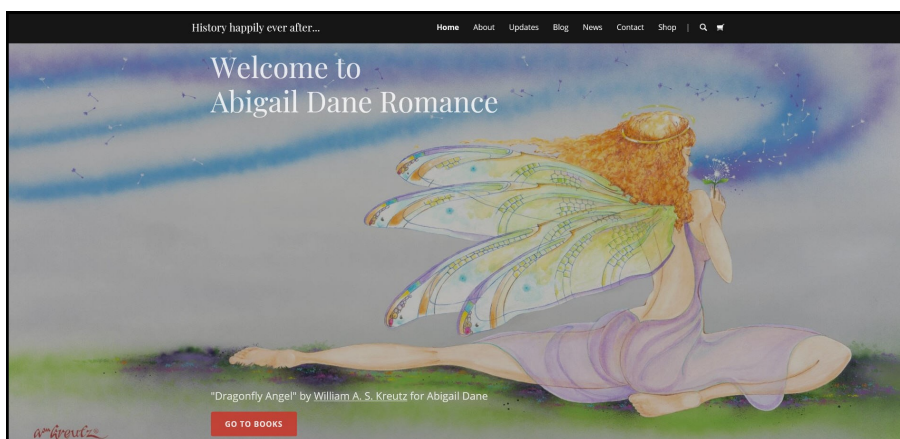


## *The Viscount and the Valet* Wins "1st Place/Historical" Award

I rarely enter contests. For one thing, I've found I tend to write very differently when I'm planning to send a manuscript for judging. Nervousness about the outcome interferes with my usual enjoyment of the writing process, and I don't like that! Recently, however, on a late-night impulse, I decided to enter the Gateway to the Best contest, sponsored by Missouri RWA (MORWA). Honestly, I had no aspirations about winning. More than anything, I was just looking for some objective feedback on my story prior to finalizing it. Then in early December, I was notified that I had won the "1st Place/Historical" award for *Viscount*. I was amazed—and thrilled, of course!—and very gratified by the judges' feedback, including these:

- I'm running out of superlatives...all was as it should be and more.
- Captured me from the very beginning all the way to the end.
- The GMC, POV, action and suspense were all spot on. VERY rare to find someone who hits all of them well...
- I was hooked from 1st page...disappointed there wasn't more to read.
- The opening action creates a good amount of tension.
- You built really three-dimensional characters. I love these characters already! I want to read on!
- I like these characters already and how the author tells their stories...
- Great hero and heroine! I can't wait to see how they reach their happy ever after!

*Thanks so much, MORWA and judges!*



## Welcome to AbigailDaneRomance.com

I recently decided to start from scratch and redesign my website. I wanted to make it more readily accessible via desktop or mobile.

More particularly, I wanted it to be:

1. easy for readers to find, access and navigate; and
2. easy for me to update—*OFTEN*

I hope you'll take a few minutes soon to visit and see what you think!

**About:** pictures and info about the incurably curious, creative, easily-amused Abigail

**Updates:** news, reviews, awards, offers, programs, Abigail sightings

**News:** downloadable "Love Chat" newsletters, flyers and other fun stuff

**Blog:** (*still in beta testing*)—Abigail's odd insights, stray musings and wacky ideas

**Contact:** online contact/comments form; and newsletter "join-up"

## *The Viscount and the Valet* Excerpt, Chapter 29

Her eyes, filled with luminous tears, shined up at him. Her lips trembled. Her hair was wild. Her body shivered with cold or fear or distress. Perhaps all three.

Releasing her face, the viscount seated himself on the ground next to her then dragged her into his lap, where she settled without complaint. Gathering his cloak about her, he drew her trembling form tightly against his body to warm her. "This is the only tenderness I can offer you," he explained as he took her mouth with his.

There was nothing of tenderness in his kiss. Rather, it was demanding, reckless, urgent. His light nips at the corners of her mouth compelled her to open for his invasion. He took her whimper not as complaint but greed. When he pressed, played and pleaded for more, she pressed and played in return, giving more until both were breathless and panting.

At last he pulled away, but continued to hold her tightly as if to reassure himself that he had found her at last.

"Idiot!" he growled close to her ear.

His voice was a blend of frustration and fondness, the word itself both epithet and endearment. As chastisement, however, it failed completely. With another *hiccupping* laugh, she swallowed the last of her weeping.

He rubbed his hands briskly across her shoulders and down her arms and back again to chafe her warm. "You are chilled to the bone."

"Yes."

"You ran off without telling anyone where you were going."

"Yes."

"Without saying good-bye to Fry or Mandy."

"Yes."

"Without giving your master proper notice."

"Yes."

"And you stole my horse."

"Yes."

He shook his head. "Well, whatever you deserve for your many transgressions, we cannot stay here the night. We must get you indoors where you can be warmed properly."

She sank against him, curling into the welcome heat of his body. "Are you taking me back to Merrivale?"

"Not tonight, but yes."

"To take care of me?"

"No."

She lifted her head and drew back far enough to search his face.

"Why, then?"

"To charge you with horse theft, of course. Well, come along."



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*Abigail—"Little Edith Ann"?—in Kanab, Utah (June 2017), at annual Zane Grey's West Society Convention.*



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- 1) a training agency for customized personal and professional development programs;
- 2) a consultancy for individual, group and corporate clients; and
- 3) a publishing company.

Dr. Vrugtman has earned five university degrees and her professional background includes careers in business, social services and education. She holds many professional certifications and is a Certified HBDI Practitioner, utilizing the Herrmann Brain Dominance Instrument® to create individualized brain dominance profiles and conduct Whole-Brain® training for individuals and groups. She now writes award-winning historical romances as Abigail Dane.

LinkedIn profile: [tinyurl.com/VrugtmanLinkedIn](http://tinyurl.com/VrugtmanLinkedIn)



*Abigail Dane*

## Confessions of a Romance Writer: Seven Things I Didn't Know Before I Became One

I had taught undergrad and postgrad courses in business, academic, technical and creative writing for more than 15 years. But when I completed my first historical novel in 2014, I realized just how little I knew about getting a book from first draft to manuscript, from manuscript to publication, and from publication to reader.

I've had a crash course in romance writing and publishing since then; and in the "Confessions" program, I share what I've learned. Typical audiences for this wide-ranging program are other writers with the dream of seeing their work in print someday; and readers and non-writers who are curious about writing in general or romance writing in particular.

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### Other programs you might like:

- ◆ DIY Book Trailers and Videos: Easy, Fast, Fun and (almost) Free!
- ◆ Writing Foibles and Fixes: An Interactive Editing Playshop
- ◆ Jumpstart Your Intuition
- ◆ Success from the Inside Out
- ◆ Intrepid Board Leadership for the Trepid Board Leader

*Or let me create something special just for your group*

### Program Description:

Romance writing, a powerful \$1.5 billion-dollar/year industry, is driven almost exclusively by women. So why are the women who write (and read) romance novels so reluctant to admit it?

This lively, visual, interactive session utilizes presentation, discussion, readings, and stories to answer this question, along with participant questions about the joys and perils of a romance writing career. Handouts provided, along with lots of practical information you can really use. Whether you aspire to become a romance writer yourself or are just curious about the fascinating field of creative writing, this fun session is for you!

Questions? Need more info?

Contact me at:

[AbigailDaneRomance.com](http://AbigailDaneRomance.com)

*For program flyer, click on "News"*

Or email me at:

[AbigailDaneRomance@gmail.com](mailto:AbigailDaneRomance@gmail.com)

